

Grammar at a Glance

accusative case [See case.]

adjective An adjective modifies a noun or a pronoun. (See also **demonstrative adjective, interrogative adjective, and possessive adjective.**)

EXAMPLES The Browns live in a **beautiful old** house.
Die Browns wohnen in einem **schönen alten** Haus.

adjective agreement [See agreement.]

adverb An adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.
EXAMPLES He eats **slowly**, but walks **briskly**.
Er isst **langsam**, aber er geht **schnell**.

She is a **well** educated girl.

Sie ist ein **gut** erzogenes Mädchen.

agreement Agreement is the correspondence, or match, between grammatical forms. Grammatical forms agree when they have the same number or gender.

subject-verb agreement Subject-verb agreement refers to the form of a verb that goes with its subject.

EXAMPLES I **read** the paper in the morning, but **she reads** it in the evening.

Ich **lese** die Zeitung morgens, aber **sie liest** sie abends.

adjective agreement Adjective agreement refers to the form of an adjective that matches the number and gender of the noun it modifies.

EXAMPLES I like this **blue** sweater, and I would like a **brown** belt.

Mir gefällt dieser **blaue** Pulli, und ich möchte einen **braunen** Gürtel.

article An article refers to a noun. Articles are the most frequently used type of adjectives. The three articles in English are *a*, *an*, and *the*.

definite article *The* is the definite article and refers to a specific noun.

EXAMPLES The dog won't come out of **the** house.

Der Hund kommt nicht aus **dem** Haus.

indefinite article *A* and *an* are the indefinite articles and refer to nonspecific nouns.

EXAMPLES They ate **an** apple and **a** pear.

Sie haben **einen** Apfel und **eine** Birne gegessen.

case Case refers to the function of a noun or pronoun in a sentence. In

English, function is most often indicated by word order or context; in German,

function is indicated by inflection (changes to the word) or by context.

EXAMPLES

My grandpa lives in Bavaria. **Mein Opa** wohnt in Bayern.

I visit **my grandpa** in Bavaria. Ich besuche **meinen Opa** in Bayern.

I'll send **my grandpa** an e-mail. Ich schicke **meinem Opa** eine E-Mail.

This present is for **my grandpa**. Das Geschenk ist für **meinen Opa**.

accusative case Accusative case refers to a noun or pronoun that is functioning

as either the direct object of a sentence, or the object of certain prepositions.

EXAMPLES

Whom are you calling? Are you calling **your German friend** for me?

Wen rufst du an? Rufst du **deinen deutschen Freund** für mich an?

dative case Dative case refers to a noun or pronoun that is functioning as the indirect object of a sentence, the object of certain prepositions, or the direct object of certain special verbs.

EXAMPLES **To whom** are you giving the book? I'm giving **my father** the book.
Wem gibst du das Buch? Ich gebe **meinem Vater** das Buch.
I help **my brother** with **his homework**.
Ich helfe **meinem Bruder** mit **seinen Hausaufgaben**.

genitive case Genitive case refers to a noun or pronoun that is functioning as a possessor, the object of certain prepositions, or the object of certain special verbs.

EXAMPLES My sister's car is in front of the house.
Das Auto **meiner Schwester** steht vor dem Haus.
We are thinking **of the victims**. -We'll drive **despite** the weather.
Wir gedenken **der Opfer**. -Wir fahren **trotz** des schlechten Wetters.

nominative case Nominative case refers to a noun or pronoun that is functioning as the subject of a sentence.

EXAMPLES **My brother** and **I** are visiting our grandparents tomorrow.
Mein Bruder und **ich** besuchen morgen unsere Großeltern.

comparison Comparison refers to the inflection of an adjective or adverb to indicate the three degrees of relative intensity: positive, comparative, and superlative.

EXAMPLES She is as **old** as my brother, but **older** than my sister. She is the **oldest** child.
Sie ist so **alt** wie mein Bruder aber **älter** als meine Schwester.
Sie ist das **älteste** Kind.

compound nouns Compound nouns are noun combinations that in English may or may not be spelled as one word. In German, compound nouns are always spelled as one word.

EXAMPLES football folk song basketball player
Fußball Volkslied Basketballspieler

conditional mood The conditional mood is used to tell what you *would* or *would not* do under certain conditions, and to express polite requests.

EXAMPLES I **would go** with you if I **had** the time.
Ich **würde** mit dir gehen, wenn ich Zeit **hätte**.
Would you **go** with me tomorrow?
Würdest du morgen mit mir **gehen**?

conjugations Conjugation refers to the inflection of verbs. A verb is conjugated in order to agree with the subject in number.

EXAMPLES We play soccer well, but Mia plays soccer a lot better.
Wir **spielen** gut Fußball, aber Mia **spielt** viel besser.

conjunctions Conjunctions are words that connect sentences or clauses.

EXAMPLES I would like to go now, **but** I can't **because** I have no money.
Ich möchte jetzt gehen, **aber** ich kann nicht, **weil** ich kein Geld habe.

contraction A contraction is a shortened form of a word or group of words. Apostrophes in contractions indicate where letters have been omitted.

EXAMPLES **We'd** rather go swimming right now.
Wie **geht's**?
zu + dem = **zum**

dative case [See case.]

definite article [See article.]

demonstrative adjective A demonstrative adjective points out a person, a

place, a thing, or an idea.

EXAMPLES Karen wants **these** shoes and **that** backpack.

Karen möchte **diese** Schuhe und **diesen** Rucksack.

demonstrative pronoun A demonstrative pronoun stands for a specific person,

place, thing, or idea.

EXAMPLES **These** are better.

Diese sind besser.

direct object A direct object is a noun or pronoun that receives the action of the

verb or shows the result of the action.

EXAMPLES We saw **an opera** and **a play**.

Wir haben **eine Oper** und **ein Hörspiel** gesehen.

direct object pronoun [See pronoun.]

gender Gender refers to the classification of German nouns into three

categories, or genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. German nouns can

belong to any of the three genders, and there is no logic to it. Gender markers,

especially the definite article, are used to indicate to what gender a noun belongs.

the apple **the pear** **the fruit**

der Apfel **die Birne** **das Obst**

imperative mood A sentence in the imperative mood gives a command or

makes a request and is followed by either a period or an exclamation point.

EXAMPLES **Go** shopping. **Let's leave** now!

Geh einkaufen. **Gehen wir** jetzt!

imperfect The imperfect is a form of the past tense in which the conjugated verb

changes its form to reflect the past tense.

EXAMPLES I **went** to the park, **bought** ice cream, and **read** a book.

Ich **ging** zum Park, **kaufte** ein Eis und **las** ein Buch.

indefinite article [See article.]

indirect object An indirect object is a noun or pronoun that tells to whom or to

what, or for whom or for what, the action of the verb is done.

EXAMPLES I bought **my brother** a cell phone.

Ich habe **meinem Bruder** ein Handy gekauft.

indirect object pronoun [See pronoun.]

infinitive An infinitive is the form of a verb listed in a dictionary or in your

vocabulary. In English, the infinitive is often preceded by the word *to*.

EXAMPLES **To err** is human. **To be** or not **to be**, that is the question.

Irren ist menschlich. **Sein** oder nicht **sein**, das ist die Frage!

inflection Inflection refers to the change of form by which a word indicates

certain grammatical elements such as case, gender, or number.

interrogative adjective An interrogative adjective is an adjective that introduces a question.

EXAMPLES **Which** book do you want? **Welches** Buch willst du?

interrogative pronoun An interrogative pronoun is a word that stands for a noun and introduces a question.

EXAMPLES **Which** (book) do you want? **Welches** (Buch) willst du?

interrogative sentence An interrogative sentence asks a question and is followed by a question mark.

EXAMPLES Are Sven and Laura going to be home tonight?
Sind Sven und Laura heute Abend zu Hause?

irregular verb An irregular verb is a verb whose forms do not follow a regular, predictable pattern.

mood Mood is the form a verb takes to indicate the attitude of the speaker. (See also **imperative mood**, **conditional mood**, and **subjunctive mood**.)

negation Negation refers to the act of denying or giving a negative answer.

EXAMPLES I do **not** hike in the winter. I have **no** money.
Ich wandre **nicht** im Winter. Ich habe **kein** Geld.

nominative case (See **case**.)

noun A noun names a person, place, thing, or idea.

EXAMPLES **Grandpa** has **pictures** of his **trip** to **Spain**.
Opa hat **Fotos** von seiner **Reise** nach **Spanien**.

number Number is the form a word takes to indicate whether it is singular or plural.

EXAMPLES My **sister** bought terrific **jeans** and three **sweaters**.
Meine **Schwester** hat eine tolle **Jeans** und drei **Pullis** gekauft.

passive voice A verb in the passive voice expresses an action done *to* the subject of the sentence.

EXAMPLES The car **is being repaired** by a good mechanic.
Das Auto **wird** von einem guten Mechaniker **repariert**.

possessive adjective A possessive adjective is an adjective that indicates to whom or what something belongs.

EXAMPLES This is **my** pen. That is **his** CD.
Das ist **mein** Kuli. Das ist **seine** CD.

preposition A preposition shows the relationship of a noun or a pronoun to another word in a sentence.

EXAMPLES Lucy bought a cake **for** Sarah's party **at** the market.
Lucy hat **auf** dem Markt eine Torte **für** Saras Fete gekauft.

pronoun A pronoun is used in place of one or more nouns or pronouns. (See also **demonstrative pronoun**, **interrogative pronoun**, and **relative pronoun**.)

EXAMPLES **Tyler** told **his** parents that **he** would drive **them** to the airport.
Tyler hat **seinen Eltern** gesagt, dass **er sie** zum Flughafen fährt.

direct object pronoun A direct object pronoun is a pronoun that stands for the direct object of a sentence.

EXAMPLES Have you seen **it**? (i.e. my coat)
Hast du **ihn** gesehen? (i.e. meinen Mantel)

indirect object pronoun An indirect object pronoun is a word that stands for the indirect object of a sentence.
EXAMPLES Let's send **them** a postcard. (i.e. our teachers)
Schicken wir **ihnen** eine Karte. (i.e. unseren Lehrern)

subject pronoun A subject pronoun stands for the person or thing that performs the action of the verb.
EXAMPLES **She** plays soccer and **he** watches.
Sie spielt Fußball und **er** sieht zu.

reflexive pronoun A reflexive pronoun indicates that the subject of the sentence also receives the action of the verb.
EXAMPLES The cat sees **itself** in the mirror.
Die Katze sieht **sich** im Spiegel.

reflexive verb A reflexive verb is always used with a reflexive pronoun in certain idiomatic contexts.
EXAMPLES He **injured himself**.
Er hat **sich verletzt**.

regular verb A regular verb is a verb whose forms follow a regular, predictable pattern.

relative pronoun A relative pronoun introduces a clause that refers to another word in the sentence.

EXAMPLES This is a movie **that** I really like.
Das ist ein Film, **den** ich wirklich mag.

subject The subject is the part of a sentence that names the person or thing spoken about in the rest of the sentence.
EXAMPLES **Linda** plays chess with her math teacher.
Linda spielt mit ihrem Mathellehrer Schach.

subject pronoun [See pronoun.]

subject-verb agreement [See agreement.]

subjunctive mood The subjunctive mood is used to express a suggestion, a necessity, a condition contrary to fact, or a wish.
EXAMPLES If I **were** you, I **would** leave at once.
Wenn ich du **wäre**, **würde** ich sofort gehen.

tense The tense of verbs indicates the time of the action or state of being that is expressed by the verb.
EXAMPLES I **run**. I **ran**. I **will run**.
Ich **laufe**. Ich **lief**. Ich **werde laufen**.

verb A verb expresses an action or a state of being. [See also **irregular verb**, **reflexive verb**, and **regular verb**.]
EXAMPLES Evelyn **wears** a blue jacket. **Are** we almost home?
Evelyn **trägt** eine blaue Jacke. **Sind** wir bald zu Hause?