

Summary of grammar

Contents:

A Word order

- I Coordinating conjunctions used to join main clauses
 1. The coordinating conjunction **und**
 2. The coordinating conjunction **aber**
 3. The coordinating conjunction **sondern** (after a negative)
- II Coordinating conjunctions used to join main and subordinate clauses
 1. Subordinate clauses introduced by **weil**
 2. Subordinate clauses introduced by **daß**
 3. Subordinate clauses (adverbial clauses of time) introduced by **als** or **bevor**
- III Summary of word order in a main clause
 1. Verb in second position
 2. Verb in first position
 3. Word order in sentences containing a modal verb or a separable verb
 4. Verbs followed by an accusative and dative object
 5. Position of prepositional phrases
 6. Position of adverbs

B Individual parts of speech

- I Verbs
 1. The future tense
 2. The imperfect tense of regular verbs
 3. The imperfect tense of modal verbs
 4. The imperfect tense of irregular verbs
 5. Verbs with prepositional constructions
- II Adjectives
 1. The declension of adjectives
 2. Comparison with **wie**
 3. Adjectival suffixes
- III Indefinite pronouns (articles used as pronouns)
- IV The interrogative pronoun **welch-**
- V Prepositions

A Word order

I Coordinating conjunctions used to join two main clauses

Two main clauses can be joined by a coordinating conjunction, such as **und**, **aber** or **sondern**. The coordinating conjunction is placed between the two clauses.

1. The coordinating conjunction *und*

und (and) joins two main clauses where the second clause provides additional information to the first. There must be a comma before **und** when it is followed by a main clause with a subject.

- a) Hier gibt es sehr viel Industrie.
- b) Hier leben sehr viele Menschen.
Hier gibt es sehr viel Industrie, **und** hier leben sehr viele Menschen.

2. The coordinating conjunction *aber*

aber (but) introduces a clause which contradicts what is said in the first clause. When **aber** is used as a coordinating conjunction, it is always preceded by a comma.

- a) Früher gab es hier sehr viel Eisenindustrie.
- b) Heute ist das anders.
Früher gab es hier sehr viel Eisenindustrie, **aber** heute ist das anders.

3. The coordinating conjunction *sondern* (after a negative)

sondern (but) is used instead of **aber** when it introduces a clause which contradicts a negative statement in the first clause. **Sondern** is always preceded by a comma.

- a. Der Himmel ist **nicht** mehr grau.
- b. Der Himmel ist wieder blau.
Der Himmel ist nicht mehr grau, **sondern** (der Himmel ist) wieder blau.

If both clauses contain the same subject and the same verb – here, for example, the subject *der Himmel* and the verb *ist* – the subject and verb can be omitted after the coordinating conjunction.

Der Himmel ist nicht mehr grau, sondern wieder blau.

II Coordinating conjunctions used to join main and subordinate clauses

Subordinate clauses cannot stand on their own. They always require a main clause to which they refer (implicitly or explicitly). A main clause can be joined to a subordinate clause by a subordinating conjunction. Note: in the subordinate clause the conjugated verb always goes to the end of the clause.

Usually a sentence begins with the main clause, which is then followed by the subordinate clause. This is normally the case when a subordinate clause is introduced by *weil* or *daß*. In the case of adverbial clauses introduced by *als* or *bevor*, the subordinate clause usually precedes the main clause.

1. Subordinate clauses introduced by *weil*

weil (because) is a subordinating conjunction which expresses a reason for something. In a subordinate clause introduced by **weil**, the verb goes to the end of the clause.

Main clauses:	Wir fahren in die Kantstraße.	Wir schlafen da.
Main clause:	Wir fahren in die Kantstraße,	
Subordinate clause:	weil wir da schlafen.	

Subordinate clauses cannot stand on their own. They always refer to a main clause. In spoken German, however, the main clause to which the subordinate clause refers is often omitted for the sake of brevity.

Question: *Warum heißt der Bahnhof Zoo so?*
 Full answer: *Der Bahnhof Zoo heißt so, weil der Zoo ganz in der Nähe ist.*
 Short answer: *Weil der Zoo ganz in der Nähe ist.*

2. Subordinate clauses introduced by *daß*

daß (that) is also a subordinating conjunction. It is used after certain verbs, such as to say, to think or to know.

Here are examples of two verbs and a phrase that can be followed by a subordinate clause introduced by **daß**:

denken, daß ...	Ich denke, daß wir Berlin besichtigen.
wissen, daß ...	Du weißt, daß es Kriege gibt.
es ist schön, daß ...	Schön, daß Sie da sind.

3. Subordinate clauses (adverbial clauses of time) introduced by *als* or *bevor*

als (when) is a subordinating conjunction of time. When it introduces a subordinate clause, the action in the main clause takes place at the same time as the action in the subordinate clause. **Als** can only be used in conjunction with a past tense (for example, the imperfect). **Als** sends the verb in the subordinate clause to the end of the clause.

MC = Main clause, SC = Subordinate clause

MC:	Es gab zwei deutsche Staaten. Bonn war die Hauptstadt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.
SC:	Als es zwei deutsche Staaten gab,
MC:	war Bonn die Hauptstadt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

bevor (before) is also a subordinating conjunction of time. When it introduces a subordinate clause, the action in the main clause takes place before the action in the subordinate clause. **Bevor** sends the verb in the subordinate clause to the end of the clause.

MC:	Hier war (früher) viel los. Dann war die Mauer da.
SC:	Bevor die Mauer da war,
MC:	war hier viel los.

Subordinate clauses introduced by *als* or *bevor*

- The verb always goes to the end of the subordinate clause.
- If the sentence begins with the subordinate clause, the word order in the main clause is changed. The verb in the main clause precedes the subject. This is known as inversion.

Subordinate Clause		Main Clause	
Verb		Verb	
Bevor die Mauer da	war	war	hier viel los.
Als es zwei deutsche Staaten	gab	war	Bonn die Hauptstadt der BRD.

- If the sentence begins with the main clause, the normal word order is unchanged. The verb remains in second position.

Main Clause			Subordinate Clause	
Verb			Verb	
Hier	war	viel los,	bevor die Mauer da	war.
Bonn	war	die Hauptstadt der BRD,	als es zwei deutsche Staaten	gab.

- The sequence of tenses in the main and subordinate clauses:
als: the main and subordinate clauses are in the same tense (never the present tense)

bevor: Tense in subordinate clause: Present tense
 Imperfect

Tense in the main clause: Present or perfect
 Imperfect

III Summary of word order in a main clause

Nom. = Subject, **Acc.** = Direct (accusative) object, **Dat.** = Indirect (dative) object

1. Verb in second position

In a normal statement, the subject is in first position and is followed by the verb.

Subject	Verb	
Mein Auto	ist	weg.

In questions introduced by an interrogative pronoun, the verb is also in second position and is followed by the subject.

	Verb	Subject	Object
Warum	sagen	Sie	das?
Wie	bekomme	ich	mein Auto jetzt wieder?

Sometimes another part of the sentence other than the subject (for example, the complement or an adverb, such as **natürlich** or **schließlich**), is placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis. In this case the verb remains in second position and is followed by the subject.

	Verb	Subject	
Natürlich	bin	ich	ganz sicher.
Schließlich	bin	ich	ja nicht blind.
Das	glaube	ich	nicht.

2. Verb in first position

In simple questions without an interrogative pronoun, the verb is in first position. In commands (imperative), the verb is also in first position.

Verb	Subject	
Sind	Sie	ganz sicher?
Überlegen	Sie	mal!

3. Word order in sentences containing a modal verb or a separable verb

- When a sentence contains a separable verb (a verb with a separable prefix) in the present tense, the verb goes to the end of the sentence.
- In the perfect tense the past participle goes to the end of the sentence.
- When a sentence contains a modal verb, the second (dependent) verb goes to the end of the sentence.

	Verb ₁		Verb ₂ /	Prefix
a) Ich	hole	meine Frau		ab.
b) Ich	habe	meine Frau	abgeholt.	
c) Ich	möchte	meine Frau	abholen.	

4. Verbs followed by a direct (accusative) and an indirect (dative) object

- a) In a sentence with normal word order, the direct or indirect object comes after the verb. Sometimes, however, the object is placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis. This is often the case with the direct (accusative) object. For example: **Das glaube ich.**
- b) If both objects are **nouns**, the indirect object precedes the direct object.
- c) When one object is a **noun** and the other is a **pronoun**, the pronoun precedes the noun.
- d) When both objects are **pronouns**, the direct object precedes the indirect object.

Subject	Verb	Indirect Object	Direct Object
b) Er	zeigt	dem Mann	das Halteverbot.
c) Er	zeigt	ihm	das Halteverbot.
		Direct Object	Indirect Object
d) Er	zeigt	es	ihm.

5. Position of prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases are usually placed after the direct or indirect object and before the second verb (for example, the infinitive after a modal verb, separable prefix or past participle):

- a) **Phrases of time or place** (*am Samstag; in Berlin*)
- b) **Phrases of place denoting direction** (*nach Berlin*)
- c) **Prepositional phrases after certain verbs** (*helfen bei*)

Subject	Verb ₁	Indir. Obj.	Direct Obj.	Prep. Phrase	Verb ₂
a) Er	schreibt	ihnen	einen Brief	aus Berlin.	geschrieben.
Er	hat	ihnen	einen Brief	aus Berlin.	
b) Er	schreibt	ihnen	einen Brief	nach Hause.	
c) Er	hilft	ihm		bei seiner Arbeit.	

6. Position of adverbs

There are no hard and fast rules about the position of adverbs in a sentence. Normally they come after the subject, direct object and indirect object. But they are often placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis.

Er hat **dort** einen Termin.
 Ex ist **damals** verschwunden.
Vielleicht war Ex bei Andreas nicht glücklich.

B Individual parts of speech

I Verbs

1. The future tense

The future tense is formed with the present tense of the auxiliary verb *werden* plus the infinitive of the verb in question. The infinitive of the verb always goes to the end of the sentence. The future tense has two functions.

- a) It refers to a future event or state.
- b) It expresses an assumption.

	Verb ₁		Verb ₂
Da So eine Szene	werde wird	ich mehr Geld es bald nicht mehr	verdienen. geben.

<i>werden</i> : Present Tense				
	Singular		Plural	
1st person	ich	werde	wir	werden
2nd person (familiar)	du	wirst	ihr	werdet
(polite)	Sie	werden	Sie	werden
3rd person	er/sie	wird	sie	werden

2. The imperfect tense of regular verbs

a) Use

The imperfect tense – like the perfect tense – is used to describe events in the past. In contrast to the perfect tense, it is used to record events or scenes belonging definitively to the past and without reference to the present. It is the tense most commonly used in German fiction.

b) Formation

The imperfect is formed by adding a **-t-** to the verb stem before the verb ending. If the stem already ends in **-t** or **-d**, the ending **-et** is added to aid pronunciation.

Infinitive	Verb Stem	Imperfect Marker	Ending (1st + 3rd pers. sing.)
hören	hör-	-t-	-e
arbeiten	arbeit-	-et-	-e
reden	red-	-et-	-e

Thus: ich/er **hörte**, ich/er **arbeitete**, ich/er **redete**

The 1st and 3rd person singular of the imperfect tense end in **-e**. Together with the marker **-t**, the ending in both cases becomes **-te**. Thus: **ich hörte** and **sie hörte**.

Present: *sie hört* Imperfect: *sie hörte*

Present		Imperfect
	Singular	
1st pers.	ich höre	ich hörte / arbeitete
2nd pers. (familiar)	du hörst	du hörtest / arbeitetest
(polite)	Sie hören	Sie hörten / arbeiteten
3rd pers.	er/sie hört	er/sie hörte / arbeitete
	Plural	
1st pers.	wir hören	wir hörten / arbeiteten
2nd pers. (familiar)	ihr hört	ihr hörtet / arbeitetet
(polite)	Sie hören	Sie hörten / arbeiteten
3rd pers.	sie hören	sie hörten / arbeiteten

3. The imperfect tense of modal verbs

German uses two tenses to describe events which have happened in the past: the perfect tense and the imperfect tense. Modal verbs, however, are mainly used in the imperfect tense and only rarely in the perfect tense.

a) Formation

Modal verbs form their imperfect in the same way as regular verbs. A **-t** is added to the verb stem before the normal verb endings. The **-t** is the sign of the imperfect tense.

Infinitive	Verb Stem	Imperfect Marker	Endings
wollen	woll-	-t	-e, -est, -et, -en

Thus: ich **wollte**, du **wolltest** ...

Imperfect				
	Singular		Plural	
1st pers.	ich	wollte	wir	wollten
2nd pers. (familiar)	du	wolltest	ihr	wolltet
(polite)	Sie	wollten	Sie	wollten
3rd pers.	er/sie	wollte	sie	wollten

Modal verbs which have an umlaut in their infinitive (*können, dürfen, müssen, mögen*) drop the umlaut in the imperfect tense.

können: ich konnte, dürfen: ich durfte, müssen: ich mußte, mögen: ich mochte

b) Word order

Modal verbs are mainly used as auxiliary verbs in conjunction with another verb whose significance they modify. In a sentence with normal word order, the auxiliary verb (**Verb₁**) is in second position. The second (dependent) verb (**Verb₂**) comes at the end of the sentence and is always in the infinitive form.

	Verb ₁		Verb ₂
Niemand	konnte	uns	sehen.
Wir	wollten	unsichtbar	bleiben.
Das	solltest	du selbst	entscheiden.
Warum	durfte	euch niemand	sehen?

4. The imperfect tense of irregular verbs

Irregular verbs change the vowel of their stem in the imperfect tense:

geben – gab, kommen – kam, sehen – sah, einfallen – fiel ein

There are no hard and fast rules for the change of vowel. Whenever you learn a new verb, you should learn its three forms:

Infinitive	Imperfect	Past Participle
kommen	kam	gek o mmen

At the end of the book you will find a list of all the verbs which have occurred in Parts One, Two and Three of this course. They are listed as in the above example.

In the first and third person singular of the imperfect tense, irregular verbs do not add an ending. Otherwise they add the same endings as in the present tense.

Imperfect					
	Singular			Plural	
1st pers.	ich	kam		wir	kamen
2nd pers. (familiar)	du	kamst		ihr	kamt
(polite)	Sie	kamen		Sie	kamen
3rd pers.	er/sie	kam		sie	kamen

The following three verbs have irregular forms in the imperfect tense:

Infinitive	Imperfect
gehen	er ging
tun	er tat
stehen	er stand

5. Verbs with prepositional constructions

As in English, many verbs in German are commonly used in conjunction with a preposition. The verb and its preposition form a set phrase. Usually the preposition is followed by the accusative case (Acc.) or the dative case (Dat.).

berichten von + Dat.:	Das Lied berichtet von den Taten von Mackie Messer.
denken an + Acc.:	Er denkt an eine Arbeit beim Rundfunk.
es geht um + Acc.:	Es geht um einen einfachen Straßenhändler.
handeln von + Dat.:	Die Geschichte handelt von Räubern.
helfen bei + Dat.:	Er kann ihm bei seiner Arbeit helfen.
hoffen auf + Acc.:	Andreas hofft auf kleine Aufträge.
Probleme haben mit + Dat.:	Er hat Probleme mit dem Computer.
sprechen mit + Dat.:	Andreas muß mit seiner Chefin sprechen.
überzeugt sein von + Dat.:	Er ist von der Heilung durch die Natur überzeugt.

II Adjectives

1. The declension of adjectives

When adjectives are placed **after** a noun, they are not inflected. That is, they do not take an ending. For example: **Der Bahnhof ist alt.**

When adjectives are placed **before** a noun, they are inflected. That is, they add endings according to the preceding article (which may be definite or indefinite) and the gender, number (singular or plural) and case of the noun they qualify.

Adjective endings after the definite articles (<i>der/ die / das/...</i>)				
Singular				Plural
	Masc.	Neuter	Fem.	
Nominative	-e	-e	-e	-en
Accusative	-en	-e	-e	-en
Dative	-en	-en	-en	-en

Nominative	Accusative	Dative
der alte Bahnhof die alte Klinik das alte Haus	den alten Bahnhof die alte Klinik das alte Haus	auf dem alten Bahnhof in der alten Klinik in dem alten Haus
Plural: Nom+Acc.: die alten Bahnhöfe, Kliniken, Häuser Dative : mit den alten Bahnhöfen, Kliniken, Häusern		

Adjective endings after the indefinite articles (<i>ein/ eine,</i>)				
Singular				Plural
	Masc.	Neuter	Fem.	
Nominative	-er	-es	-e	-e
Accusative	-en	-es	-e	-e
Dative	-en	-en	-en	-en

Nominative	Accusative	Dative
ein alter Bahnhof eine alte Klinik ein altes Haus	einen alten Bahnhof eine alte Klinik ein altes Haus	auf einem alten Bahnhof in einer alten Klinik in einem alten Haus
Plural: Nom + Acc.: alte Bahnhöfe, Kliniken, Häuser Dative: mit den alten Bahnhöfen, Kliniken, Häusern		

2. Comparison with *wie*

When adjectives are used in comparisons (without an accompanying noun) they are not inflected. The correct form of a comparison (as ... as) in German is **so ... wie**. In colloquial German, the word **so** is often omitted:

Colloquial use: *Ex ist neugierig wie die Frau vom Schneider.*
 Correct form: *Ex ist **so** neugierig wie die Frau vom Schneider.*

3. Adjectival suffixes

Many adjectives in German are formed from other parts of speech (for instance, nouns or verbs) with the addition of a suffix. For example:

Noun + -lich:	<i>der Freund</i> + <i>-lich</i>	= <i>freundlich</i>
	<i>das Glück</i> + <i>-lich</i>	= <i>glücklich</i>
Noun + -ig:	<i>die Neugier</i> + <i>-ig</i>	= <i>neugierig</i>
	<i>die Trauer</i> + <i>-ig</i>	= <i>traurig</i>
Verb + -bar:	<i>lernen</i> + <i>-bar</i>	= <i>lernbar</i>
	<i>sehen</i> + <i>-bar</i>	= <i>sichtbar/unsichtbar</i>

- **isch:** *komisch, phantastisch, praktisch, französisch*
- **sam:** *seltsam*

III Indefinite pronouns (indefinite articles used as pronouns)

Articles can also be used as pronouns. That is, they can stand on their own in place of a noun. For example: *Möchtest du einen Wein? Ja, ich möchte **einen**.* In this case, the indefinite pronoun usually has the same form as the indefinite article. However, there are three exceptions:

- a) The neuter indefinite article **ein** (and the corresponding noun) are replaced in the nominative and accusative cases by **eins**. The pronoun assumes the **-s** of the definite article **das** to denote the neuter gender.

das Geschenk:	Hier ist ein Geschenk für dich.
eins	Ich habe auch noch eins .

- b) The masculine indefinite article **ein** (and the corresponding noun) are replaced in the nominative by **einer**. The pronoun assumes the **-r** of the definite article **der** to denote the masculine gender.

der Teller:	Hier ist noch ein Teller.
einer	Hier ist auch noch einer .

- c) The plural definite article **die** (and the corresponding noun) can be replaced in the nominative and accusative by **welche** (some). (Compare the English usage: Here are the plates. Here are some.)

(die) Teller:	Hier sind noch welche . Es gibt noch welche .
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Nominative		
Masculine	Neuter	Feminine
Da steht ein Teller. Da steht einer . Da steht keiner .	Da steht ein Glas. Da steht eins . Da steht keins .	Da ist eine Serviette. Da ist eine . Da ist keine .
Plural		
Da stehen welche .	Da stehen welche .	Da sind welche .
Accusative		
Masculine	Neuter	Feminine
Ich habe einen Teller. Ich habe einen . Ich habe keinen .	Ich habe ein Glas. Ich habe eins . Ich habe keins .	Ich habe eine Serviette. Ich habe eine . Ich habe keine .
Plural		
Ich habe welche .	Ich habe welche .	Ich habe welche .

IV The interrogative pronoun *welch-*

The interrogative pronoun *welch-* is inflected. That is, it adds endings according to the noun which it precedes. The endings are the same as for adjectives preceded by an indefinite article:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Nom.	Welcher Dichter ...?	Welche Kirche ...?	Welches Auto...?
Acc.	Welchen Dichter ...?	Welche Kirche ...?	Welches Auto...?
Plural: always -e : Welche Dichter, Kirchen, Autos ...?			

V Prepositions

The following examples are taken from the lessons in this book and refer only to the context in which they occurred.

durch + Acc.:	Das ist eine schöne Tour durch Berlin.
neben + Dat. (+ Acc.):	neben den Niederlanden
über + Acc. (+ Dat.):	Wir fahren über den Rhein.
von + Dat. ... nach + Dat.:	von Westen nach Osten
von ... zu + Dat.:	eine Fahrt vom Zoo zum Alex
wegen + Dat.:	wegen Bello (wegen dem Hund)