



Phrase Book

English-German



Contents

1. German alphabet.....	3
2. Facts about German language.....	3
3. Wonderful world of German grammar	4
3.1. German sentence structures.....	4
3.2. The four cases in German.	4
4. Useful vocabulary.....	8
4.1. Question words.....	8
4.2. Personal pronouns.....	8
4.3. Useful phrases.....	9
4.4. Restaurants and products.....	10
4.5. Emergency, weather.....	11
4.6. In the city.....	11
4.7. Shopping.....	12
4.8. Signs.....	13
4.9. Useful verbs.....	13
4.10. Useful prepositions.....	14
4.11. Numbers.....	16

This phrase book is meant for all who wish to become familiar with the basics of the German language. Here you can find vocabulary, phrases and general information which may come in handy in everyday life. Have fun!

1. German alphabet

The German alphabet is an extended version of the Latin alphabet and consists of **30** letters. German language uses the same 26 letters as English language as well as four extra letters. These include three letters with umlauts (Ää, Öö, Üü) as well as the double s, ß. German uses all of these to a good measure.

German words are commonly pronounced as they are written.

A a	[ɑ:]	N n	[ɛn]
B b	[b:]	O o	[o:]
C c	[tse:]	P p	[pe:]
D d	[de:]	Q q	[ku:]
E e	[e:]	R r	[ɛr]
F f	[ɛf]	S s	[ɛs]
G g	[ge:]	T t	[te:]
H h	[hɑ:]	U u	[u:]
I i	[i:]	V v	[fɑʋ]
J j	[jɔt:]	W w	[ve:]
K k	[kɑ:]	X x	[ɪks]
L l	[ɛl]	Y y	[ɪpsilɔn]
M m	[ɛm]	Z z	[tset]
Ä ä	[ɛ:]	Ü ü	[y:]
Ö ö	[ø:]	ß	[ɛstset]

2. Facts about German language

German is part of the West Germanic group of languages within the Indo-European language family and is a close relative of English. It's one of the originators of the English language, to be exact – so you are likely to discover plenty of familiar-looking words!

Unlike English, though, German nouns have three grammatical genders - masculine (der), feminine (die) and neuter (das). The gender is purely grammatical, however, as it doesn't necessarily reflect the actual gender of the corresponding real-life object. The word for *child* is understandably neuter in German (das Kind). However, the word for “girl” (*das Mädchen*) is neuter for some reason, as is the old-fashioned equivalent for “wife” (*das Weib* – a mostly obsolete word also meaning "female" or "woman").

German language is particularly famous for forming long compound words.

- Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz
A 63-letter compound word meaning: Beef labeling regulation & delegation of supervision law!
- Hottentottenpotentatentantenattentat

The first letter of all nouns in German is capitalized: *das Buch* (book); *die Frau* (woman).

Two-digit numbers (starting from 21) are read backwards. For instance, “24” in German sounds *vierundzwanzig*, which can literally be translated as “four and twenty”.

3. Wonderful world of German grammar

3.1. Overview of German sentence structures

German sentence structures are famous for being on the heavy side. This is mainly due to the fact that German language loves subordinate clauses, which may follow each other consecutively and could, in principle, continue until all eternity. As a rule, the conjunctive (such as *that* or *but*), which kickstarts a subordinate clause, pushes every single verb to the end of this clause. The resulting constructions may look confusing or intimidating or both, but, thankfully, they are perfectly logical.

To put it briefly, the verb is **always either the second or the last element in a clause, depending on the clause's position in the sentence.**

A **main clause** is quite simple to construct: the subject is followed by the verb; the word order is the same as in English. *Ich trinke Tee* (I drink tea).

A **subordinate clause** is dependable of the main clause and couldn't exist as an independent clause. You can recognise a subordinate clause from a conjunction such as "*that*" following the main clause. In a German subordinate clause, the conjugated verb's position is often at the end of the clause (but not always!). *Ich trinke Tee, weil er gesund ist.* (I drink tea because it healthy is)¹.

An **inversion** occurs when the clause begins with anything but the subject, such as an adverb. The rule regarding the conjugated verb's secondary position applies, but in this case, the subject follows the verb: *Abends trinke ich Tee* (in the evening I drink tea). This example shows the difference between German and English sentence structures. Adverbs of time may stand at the beginning of the sentence both in German and English, but German inverts the positions of the verb and subject following the adverb.

Remember: The subject and the verb are soundly married in German, so never try to separate them!

3.2. The four German cases

There are four cases in the German language: the nominative case (subject of the sentence); the accusative case (the direct object); the dative case (the indirect object), and the genitive case (the possessive form).

¹The translation is done literally for better comparison and understanding.

The nominative in German

The **nominative**, the simplest and least headache-inducing case in German language, is regarded as the standard form of nouns (including adjectives and articles) in dictionaries. The nominative case indicates the subject of the sentence, and nouns in the nominative cannot be identified from specific endings, but rather from their context and position in the sentence.

In the sentence “The teacher went to the school” (in German, *Der Lehrer ist in die Schule gegangen*), “the teacher” or “der Lehrer” is the grammatical subject of the sentence and hence takes the nominative case.

Below is a table of some nominative case forms.

German nominative case			
Definite articles	Indefinite articles	Personal pronouns	Adjectives
der Hund (masculine) = the dog	Ein Hund (masculine) = a dog	Ich = I Du = you	Ein alter Hund (masculine) = an old dog
Die Stadt (feminine) = the city	Eine Stadt (feminine) = a city	Er/sie = he/she	Eine schöne Stadt (feminine) = a beautiful city
Das Haus (neutral) = the house	Ein Haus (neutral) = a house	Wir = we	Ein großes Haus (neutral) = a big house
Die Leute (plural) = the people		Ihr = you Sie = they	Die vielen Leute (plural) = the many people

The accusative in German

The **accusative** case equals the direct object in a sentence. In the sentence “I see the teacher” (Ich sehe den Lehrer), “the teacher” or “den Lehrer” is the direct object of the sentence, hence it’s in the accusative. Furthermore, since “der Lehrer” is a masculine noun (as indicated by the article der), it assumes a slightly different form in the accusative case: “den Lehrer”, not “der Lehrer” as in the nominative case. This is a minor worry, though; neither feminine or neuter nouns change shape in the accusative form.

German accusative case			
Definite articles	Indefinite articles	Personal pronouns	Adjectives
Den Hund (m.) = the dog	Ein en Hund (m.) = a dog	Mich = me	Den alt en Hund (m.) = the old dog
Die Stadt (f.) = the city	Eine Stadt (f.) = a city	Dich = you	Die sch öne Stadt (f.) = the beautiful city
Das Haus (n.) = the house	Ein Haus (n.) = a house	Ih n /sie = him/her	Das gro ße Haus (n.) = the big house
Die Leute (pl.) = the people		Uns = us	Die viel e n Leute (pl.) = the many people
		Euch = you	
		Sie = them	

The dative in German

Brace yourself – things are going to get serious now. The **dative** case is very important in German, and nouns in the dative case assume different forms depending on their grammatical gender (masculine, feminine or neuter) and whether the noun is singular or plural.

The dative case in German is just like the indirect object in English, that is, the receiver of the direct object. For example, in the sentence “I give the book to him” (Ich gebe ihm das Buch), “I” is the subject of the sentence, “the book” is the direct object, and “him” is the receiver or indirect object and thus the object of our attention is this section.

German dative case			
Definite articles	Indefinite articles	Personal pronouns	Adjectives (masc., fem., neuter, plural)
Dem Hund (masculine) = to the dog	Ein em Hund (masculine) = to a dog	Mir = to me	Ein em /dem alt en Hund = to a/the old dog
Der Stadt (feminine) = to the city	Ein er Stadt (feminine) = to a city	Dir = to you	Ein er /der sch önen Stadt = to a/the beautiful city
Dem Haus (neutral) = to the house	Ein em Haus (neutral) = to a house	Ih m /ihr = to him/her	Ein em /dem gro ßen Haus = to a/the big house
Den Leuten (plural) = to the people		Uns = to us	Den viel e n Leuten = to the many people
		Euch = to you	
		Ih n en = to them	

As seen in the table above, a translation of the German dative into English usually includes the preposition *to*: I give the book *to* him. German language, however, prefers to skip such small words and indicate their meaning or grammatical function in the words themselves. For example: *to* him = ihm, **to the** teacher = **dem** Lehrer. So, it's not that complicated after all!

The genitive in German

The last, but not the least, case in German is the **genitive**. It's not used as often as the other cases, but it carries certain weight since it indicates possession – it's roughly equivalent to the pre- and postpositions *of* and *-s* in English. For example, the equivalent of the phrase "The story **of my** life" would be "Die Geschichte **meines** Lebens". In case this confuses you, it's often possible to skip the grammatical genitive by using the preposition *von*, equivalent to the English *of*, before a noun. However, this doesn't let you entirely off the hook - nouns following the preposition *von* require a dative, after all!

Note that **masculine** and **neutral** nouns indicate genitive with an *-s*, as in our example: the story **of my** life = die Geschichte **meines** Lebens. **Feminine** and **plural** nouns don't require any *-s* at the end.

German genitive case			
Definite articles	Indefinite articles	Personal pronouns	Adjectives (mas., fem., neuter)
Des Hundes (m.) = of the dog	Eines Hundes (m.) = of a dog	Meines = my Deines = your	Eines/des alten Hundes (m.) = of a/the old dog
Der Stadt (f.) = of the city	Einer Stadt (f.) = of a city	Seines/ihrer = his/her	Einer/der schönen Stadt (f.) = of a/the beautiful city
Des Hauses (n.) = of the house	Eines Hauses (n.) = of a house	Unseres = our Eures = your	Eines/des großen Hauses (n.) = of a/the big house
Der Leuten (pl.) = of the people		Ihrer = their	Der vielen Leuten (pl.) = of the many people

Can't get enough of German grammar? Let's move on to the vocabulary section, then.

4. Useful vocabulary

4.1. Question words

Who?	Wer?	[ve:ɐ]
What ?	Was?	[vas]
Where?	Wo?	[vo:]
When?	Wann?	[van]
How?	Wie?	[vi:]
Why?	Warum?	[va'ʀʊm]
Which?	Welcher?	['vɛ çɐ]
How much?	Wie viel?	[vi: 'fi:l]
How many?	Wie viele?	[vi: 'fi:lə]

4.2. Personal pronouns

Singular

	Nominativ (nominative)		Akkusativ (accusative)	Dativ
(dative)				
1. Person	<i>ich</i>	[I]	<i>mich</i>	<i>mir</i>
2. Person	<i>du</i>	[you]	<i>dich</i>	<i>dir</i>
	<i>Sie</i>	[You]	<i>Sie</i>	<i>Ihnen</i>
3. Person	<i>er</i>	[he]	<i>ihn</i>	<i>ihm</i>
	<i>sie</i>	[she]	<i>sie</i>	<i>ihr</i>
	<i>es</i>	[it]	<i>es</i>	<i>ihm</i>

Plural

	Nominativ		Akkusativ	Dativ
1. Person	<i>wir</i>	[we]	<i>uns</i>	<i>uns</i>
2. Person	<i>ihr</i>	[you]	<i>euch</i>	<i>euch</i>
	<i>Sie (formal)</i>	[You]	<i>Sie</i>	<i>Ihnen</i>
3. Person	<i>sie</i>	[they]	<i>sie</i>	<i>ihnen</i>

4.3. Useful phrases

Yes.	Ja.	[ja:]
No.	Nein.	[naɪn]
Please.	Bitte.	[ˈbɪtə]
Thank you.	Danke.	[ˈdanke]
Thank you very much.	Danke schön/Vielen Dank.	[ˈdanke ʃø:n] ˈfi:lən danke]
Hello!	Hallo!	[haˈlo:]
Bye!	Tschüss! (informal)	[tʃy:s]
Goodbye!	Auf Wiedersehen! (formal)	[aʊf ˈvi:də,ze:ən]
Good morning!	Guten Morgen!	[ˈgu:tŋ ˈmɔʁɡŋ]
Good afternoon!	Guten Tag!	[ˈgu:tŋ ˈta:k]
Good evening!	Guten Abend!	[ˌgu:tən ˈa:bənt]
Good night!	Gute Nacht!	[ˌgutə ˈnaχt]
I am pleased to meet you. (official)	Ich freue mich, Sie kennenzulernen.	[ɪç frɔyə miç zi: ˈkɛnən tsu:lɛrnən]
Excuse me? (to attract attention)	Entschuldigung?	[ɛntˈʃʊldɪɡʊŋ]
I'm sorry.	Es tut mir leid.	[ɛs tu:t mi:r laɪt]
Enjoy your meal!	Guten Appetit!	[ˌgutŋ ˌʔapəˈtɪt]
See you soon!	Bis bald!	[bɪs balt]

Good luck!	Viel Glück/Viel Erfolg!	[fi:l glyk]
Wish you all the best!	Alles Gute!	[aləs gu:tə]
What is your name?	Wie heißt du?	[vi: haɪst du:]
My name is...	Ich heiÙe...	[Iç haɪsə]
How are you?	Wie geht es dir?	[,vi: 'ge:t əs ,di:ç]
I'm fine, thank you. And you?	Danke, gut. Und dir?	['danʁə gu:t ʊnt di:r]
Where are you from?	Woher kommst du?	[vo:he:ç]
I am from...	Ich komme aus...	[Iç 'kɔmə aʊs]
This is...	Das ist...	[das ɪst]
What time it is?	Wieviel Uhr ist es?	[vi: fi:l u:r ɪst ɛs]

4.4. Restaurant, products

Pub	Kneipe	['knaɪpə]
Menu, please.	Die Speisekarte, bitte.	['ʃpaɪzə ,kaʁtə 'bitə]
Bread	Brot	[brɔ:t]
Coffee	Kaffe	['kafə]
Tea	Tee	[te:]
With milk	mit Milch	[mit mɪlç]
With sugar	mit Zucker	[mit 'tsʊkə]
Orange juice	Orangesaft	[o 'Rã:ʒəzaf]
Soup	Suppe	['zʊpə]
Meat	Fleisch	[flaɪʃ]
Fish	Fisch	[fɪʃ]
Vegeterian dishes	vegetarische Gerichte	[gə 'RIçtə]
Egg	Ei	[aɪ]
Salad	Salat	[za 'la:t]
Dessert	Nachtisch/Dessert	['na:çtɪʃ /dɛ 'se:ç]
Vegetables	Gemüse	[gə 'my:zə]

Fruits	Obst	[o:pst]
Ice cream	Eis	[aɪs]
Beer	Bier	[bi:ə]
Water	Wasser	[ˈvasə]
Breakfast	Frühstück	[ˈfʁy:ʃtʏk]
Lunch	Mittagessen	[ˈmɪta:k,ʔɛsn]
Dinner	Abendessen	[ˈa:bnt,ʔɛsn]
Cheque please?	Bitte zahlen.	[bitə ˈtsa:lən]
It tastes good.	Es schmeckt gut.	[ɛs ʃmɛkt gu:t]

4.5. Emergency, weather

Help!	Hilfe!	[ˈhɪlfə]
Call the police!	Rufen Sie die Polizei!	[ˈru:fən zi: di:, poliˈtsaɪ]
He is wounded.	Er ist verletzt.	[e:ə ɪst fəʁˈlɛtst]
I am lost.	Ich habe mich verirrt.	[ɪç ˈha:bə mɪç fəʁˈɪrt]
Thunderstorm	Gewitter	[gəˈvɪtɐ]
Weather forecast	Wettervorhersage	[ˈvɛtəfo:ʁ, he:əza:gə]
Storm	Sturm	[ʃtʊʁm]
Rain	Regen	[ʀe:gn]
Wind	Wind	[vɪnt]

4.6. In the city

I am looking for...	Ich suche...	[ɪç ˈzu:xə]
Where is/are..?	Wo ist/sind..?	[vo: ɪst/ zɪnt]
City	Stadt	[ʃtat]

Street	Straße	[ˈʃtʁa:sə]
Metro/subway	U-Bahn	[ˈu:ba:n]
Bus stop	Bushaltestelle	[ˈbʊs, haltəʃtɛlə]
Post office	Postamt	[ˈpɔst, ʔamt]
Payphone	Telefonzelle	[teleˈfo:n, tʃɛlə]
Could you show it on the map?	Können Sie es mir bitte auf der Karte zeigen?	[kœnən zi: ɛs mi:r bɪtə aʊf de:ɐ̯ ˈkartə tʃaɪən]

4.7. Shopping

I'm just looking.	Ich schaue nur um.	[ɪç ʃaʊə nu:r ʊm]
Could you show it to me, please?	Bitte zeigen Sie mir das.	[bɪtə ˈtʃaɪən zi: mi:r]
I would like...	Ich suche...	[ɪç ˈzu:xə]
Could you please give/hand it to me?	Bitte geben Sie mir das.	[bɪtə ˈge:bən zi: mi:r das]
How much does it cost?	Was kostet es/das?	[vas kɔstət das]
I take it.	Ich nehme es.	[ɪç ne:mə es]
It's too expensive.	Es ist zu teuer.	[ɛs ɪst tsu: tɔɐ̯]
Can I try it on?	Kann ich es anprobieren?	[kan ɪç es ˈanpro:bi:rən]
My size is...	Meine Größe ist...	[maɪnə grø:sə ɪst]
I need ...	Ich brauche...	[ɪç braʊxə]
It is too small.	Das ist mir zu eng.	[das ɪst mi:r tsu: ɛŋ]
It is too loose.	Das ist mir zu groß.	[das ɪst mi:r tsu: grø:s]
It fits me.	Das passt mir.	[das past mi:r]

4.8. Signs

Entrance	Eingang	[ˈaɪŋaŋ]
Exit	Ausgang	[ˈaʊsgaŋ]
Information	Auskunft/information	[ˈaʊskʊnfʏt]
Push	drücken	[ˈdʁʏkn̩]
Pull	ziehen	[ˈt͡siːən]
Airport	Flughafen	[ˈfluːkˌhaːfn̩]
Train station	Bahnhof	[baːnhɔːf]
Central station	Hauptbahnhof	[haʊptbaːnhɔːf]
Bus stop	Bushaltestelle	[ˈbʊsˌhaltət͡ʃtɛlə]
Free/occupied	frei/besetzt	[fʁaɪ]
No smoking	Rauchen verboten	[raʊxən fɛɔ̯ˈboːtən]
Do not touch	Nicht berühren	[nɪçt]
Open/closed	Offen/geschlossen	[ˈɔfn̩] [gəˈʃlɔsən]

4.9. Useful verbs

To be	sein	[ˈzaɪn]
To become	werden	[ˈveːɐ̯dn̩]
To bring	bringen	[ˈbrɪŋən],
Called, to be named	heißen	[ˈhaɪ̯sn̩]
Can (to be able)	können	[ˈkœnən],
To come	kommen	[ˈkɔmən]
To find	finden	[ˈfɪndn̩]
To give	geben	[ˈgeːbn̩]

To go	gehen	[ˈge:ən]
To have	haben	[ˈha:bən]
To know	wissen	[ˈvɪsən]
To let, allow, leave	lassen	[ˈlasn]
To like	mögen	[ˈmø:gən]
To make, to do	machen	[ˈmaxn]
Must (to have to)	müssen	[ˈmʏsn]
To say, to tell	sagen	[ˈza:gŋ]
To see	sehen	[ˈze:ən]
Should, ought to	sollen	[ˈzɔlən]
To sleep	schlafen	[ˈʃla:fŋ]
To stay	bleiben	[ˈblaɪbm],
To take	nehmen	[ˈne:mən]
To want	wollen	[ˈvɔlən]

4.10. Useful prepositions

Above	über	[ˈy:bə]
After	nach	[na:χ]
Around	um/herum/circa	[ʊm]
At	(Time) in; (date) am; (hour) um; (place) an	
Because of	wegen	[ˈve:gŋ]
Before	bevor	[bəˈfo:a]
Beside	neben	[ˈne:bm]
Between	zwischen	[ˈtʃvɪfŋ]
But	aber	[ˈa:bə]
Close to	nah bei / in der Nähe von	

Down	unten	[ˈʊntn]
During	während	[ˈvɛːRənt]
For	für	[fyːʁ]
From	von / aus	[fɔn]/ [aʊs]
In	(Time) in; (place) in	
In front of	vor	[foːʁ]
Inside	in/drinnen	
Instead of	anstatt	[anˈʃtat]
Like	wie	[viː]
Near	nahe	[ˈnaːə]
Next to	neben	[ˈneːbn]
On	Zeit(time): am / Ort(place): an, auf, in, zu	
On top of	auf	[aʊf]
Out	aus	[aʊs]
Outside	draußen	[ˈdraʊsən]
Over	über	[ˈyːbɐ]
Since	seit	[zaɪt]
Than	als	[als]
To	zu	[tsuː]
Under	unter	[ˈʊntɐ]
Until	bis	[bɪs]
Up	oben	[ˈoːbn]
With	mit	[mɪt]
Without	ohne	[ˈoːnə]

4.11. Numbers (1-20)

1	Eins	<i>(ighnss)</i>	11	elf	<i>(elf)</i>
2	Zwei	<i>(tsvigh)</i>	12	zwölf	<i>(tsvoolf)</i>
3	Drei	<i>(drigh)</i>	13	dreizehn	<i>(drigh-tsayn)</i>
4	Vier	<i>(feer)</i>	14	vierzehn	<i>(feer-tsayn)</i>
5	Fünf	<i>(fuunf)</i>	15	fünfzehn	<i>(fuunf-tsayn)</i>
6	Sechs	<i>(zekhs)</i>	16	sechzehn	<i>(zekh-tsayn)</i>
7	Sieben	<i>(zee-ben)</i>	17	siebzehn	<i>(zeeb-tsayn)</i>
8	Acht	<i>(ahkht)</i>	18	achtzehn	<i>(ahkhttsayn)</i>
9	Neun	<i>(noyn)</i>	19	neunzehn	<i>(noyn-tsayn)</i>
10	Zehn	<i>(tsayn)</i>	20	zwanzig	<i>(tsvahn-tsigh)</i>

For more information, visit the website of a free
online German language course:

<http://www.dw.de/dw/0,,2068,00.html>