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The purpose of this book is not to teach you the German language, but to introduce you to it. By learning German through the use of cognates with English, you will have a big headstart before you go on to formal language learning through classes or other means.

By the time you finish this book, you will have a clearer understanding on German and be ready to tackle any lesson materials.

Speak Up! in German

A FEW THINGS TO BE AWARE OF BEFORE WE BEGIN...

IDENTIFYING NOUNS

A noun is defined as a person, place, or thing. They can also be an abstract things or idea. For example, **Glück** (*happiness*), **Freiheit** (*freedom*), and **Geschichte** (*history*) are nouns.

Nouns in German are easy to identify because they are always capitalized:

Unser Sohn fährt mit dem Auto in die Stadt.

Our son is driving to the city by car.

In the above sentence, **Sohn** (*son*), **Auto** (*car*), and **Stadt** (*city*) are nouns.

NOUNS AND GENDER

Unlike in English, in the German language every noun has a gender. This is easily indicated (for the most part) by the definite articles **der** (masculine), **die** (feminine), and **das** (neuter), which all mean *the*.

der Mann - the man

das Feuer - the fire

die Frau - the woman

der Stein - the rock

das Kind - the child

die Frage - the question

der Tisch - the table

das Buch - the book

die Sonne - the sun

Because the gender of nouns is a grammatical concept, it has little to do with the specific qualities of the object it refers to or represents. For this reason, a single object might be identified with nouns of different genders. A car can be called **das Auto** or **der Wagen**, depending on a person's preference. A camera is **die Kamera** or **der Fotoapparat**. The season spring can be either **der Frühling** or **das Frühjahr**.

When a noun refers to a person, the gender usually corresponds to the person's physical gender: **Mann** is masculine, **Frau** is feminine. But, grammatical and physical gender are not always consistent: the word **Kind** is neuter whether the child referred to is male or female.

It may help to think of the genders as simply categories of nouns to avoid confusion with the notion of physical gender.

GENDER PATTERNS

While the genders of many nouns may seem random and unpredictable, there are several categories of nouns that have tendencies to belong to a certain gender category. These clues are given on the next page. You are not required to memorize all of it. Use it as a reference tool. Everything is covered in the **Speak Up! in German** language course.

MASCULINE GENDER:

1. **Male individuals, citizens, and professionals:** der Mann, der Vater, der Amerikaner, der Lehrer, der Chef, der Psychologe
2. **Days of the week, months, seasons, compass points:** der Montag, der April, der Winter, der Norden *EXCEPTION: das Frühjahr*
3. **Weather features:** der Schnee, der Regen, der Wind, der Tau
4. **Nouns ending in -ig, -ling, -ich, -or, -us:** - der Pfennig, der Schmetterling, der Teppich, der Tutor, der Kommunismus

FEMININE GENDER:

1. **Female individuals, citizens, and professionals:** die Frau, die Schwester, die Kanadierin, die Ärztin, die Kandidatin
2. **Most nouns ending in -e:** die Blume, die Straße, die Karte *EXCEPTION: der Name, das Auge*
3. **Nouns ending in -ei, -heit, -keit, -schaft, -ung, -tät, -nis:** die Malerei, die Slowakei, die Schönheit, die Eitelkeit, die Landschaft, die Erzählung, die Universität, die Erkenntnis *EXCEPTION: der Papagei*
4. **Nouns derived from foreign words, ending in -anz, -enz, -ie, -ik, -ion, -ur:** die Toleranz, die Frequenz, die Sympathie, die Musik, die Information, die Kultur
5. **Numbers used as a noun:** die Eins, die Dreizehn, die Million *EXCEPTION: das Hundert, das Tausend*

NEUTER:

1. **Names of continents, countries, islands, places:** Europa, Österreich, Helgoland
2. **Nouns derived from verb infinitives:** das Schlafen, das Essen, das Einkaufen
3. **Diminutives ending in -chen, -lein:** das Mädchen, das Männlein
4. **Many collective nouns beginning with Ge-:** das Geschirr, das Gepäck, das Gebirge, das Geflügel
5. **Nouns derived from foreign words, ending in -tum -um, -ment:** das Heldentum, das Studium, das Datum, das Instrument
6. **Names of the letters of the alphabet:** das Ypsilon, das große A

NOUNS WITH TWO GENDERS??

Some nouns vary in gender depending on regional or individual choice.

- | | |
|---|---|
| der or das Bonbon - candy | der or das Salbei - sage |
| der or das Joghurt - yogurt | der or das Schrot - whole wheat |
| der or das Keks - cookie | der or die Sellerie - celery |
| der or das Liter - liter | der or das Sims - sill, ledge |
| das or der Poster - poster | der or das Virus - virus |

Words You Already Know

The task of learning German is simplified by words having have similar spellings and identical or similar meanings. You can see these in the following words:

Adapter	CD	Hand
Aftershave	Cola	Hockey
Apartment	Computer	Hotel
April	Deodorant	in
Arm	Digital	Information
Aspirin	extra	international
August	Fax	Internet
Auto	Film	Jazz
Baby	Finger	Jeans
Bank	Florist	Ketchup
Baseball	Foto	Kilometer
Basketball	Gate	Kiwi
beige	Golf	Liter
Bus	Halt	Lotion
Camping	Hamburger	

More Words You Already Know

Sometimes you'll see words that don't quite look like English, but they are pronounced very similarly and can also mean the same thing.

Makkaroni	Picknick	Tee
Maniküre	Preis	Telefon
Markt	Programm	Telephon
Medizin	reparieren	Toilette
mein	reservieren	Tomate
Milch	romantisch	Vanille
Musik	Salat	Vegetarier
Nudel	Sandalen	Wasser
Nummer	sehen	Wein
Oktober	Sellerie	Woche
Omelett	Shecks	Wodka
Paket	Sommer	Zentimeter
parken	Stadion	Zigarre
Pediküre	studieren	Zigarrette
Perle	Supermarkt	

You will also encounter words that look like English words but may have secondary meanings, and words of similar spellings with no related meanings at all.

Existenz = existence but also subsistence

Rock = coat, skirt

Fleisch = flesh but can also mean meat or pulp

Kind = child

The **Speak Up! in German** language course will help you learn how to recognize these differences

Good News!!

Looking back at those words that look like English, but spelled slightly different, you can see just where these slight changes will turn these German words to English. Here's what you should look for:

f, ff either in the middle or at the end of a word usually becomes a 'p' in English:

Schiff - ship Hilfe - help

pf usually corresponds to **p** or **pp**

Pfeffer - pepper Apfel - apple Trumpf - trump

b (medial or final) usually corresponds to **v** or **f**

Silber - silver

d usually corresponds to **th**

Erde - earth Bruder - brother

ch usually corresponds to **k**

Milch - milk Monch - monk

cht usually corresponds to **ght**

Macht - might Licht - light

g usually corresponds to **y** or **i**

Weg - way Magd - maid

k usually corresponds to **ch** or **c**

Käse - cheese Klasse - class

s, ss, ß (medial or final) usually corresponds to **t**

Straße - street Wasser - water Los - lot (*as in 'fate'*)

tz, z usually corresponds to **t**

Katze - cat Salz - salt

t usually corresponds to **d**

Wort - word Traum - dream

Check Yourself

Take a look at these words. Write in the English equivalents in the spaces provided. If you need to look at the previous page for the letter/sound changes, go right ahead.

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Affe: _____ | 14. Storch: _____ | 27. Schweiß: _____ |
| 2. Pfeffer: _____ | 15. Kuchen: _____ | 28. Regen: _____ |
| 3. Pfund: _____ | 16. Leuchte: _____ | 29. Kammer: _____ |
| 4. pflaume: _____ | 17. Nacht: _____ | 30. Hitze: _____ |
| 5. Tropfen: _____ | 18. Recht: _____ | 31. Zinn: _____ |
| 6. Dieb: _____ | 19. Leder: _____ | 32. Herz: _____ |
| 7. Leber: _____ | 20. Tochter: _____ | 33. Tag: _____ |
| 8. Öffnung: _____ | 21. Pfennig: _____ | 34. Blut: _____ |
| 9. Pfeife: _____ | 32. Auge: _____ | 35. Netz: _____ |
| 10. Ding: _____ | 23. Nagel: _____ | 36. Zunge: _____ |
| 11. Feder: _____ | 24. Kirche: _____ | 37. Tür: _____ |
| 12. Schmied: _____ | 25. Kinn: _____ | |
| 13. Milch: _____ | 26. Kamerad: _____ | |

Definite and Indefinite Articles

In English, we have two types of articles:

1. **Definite article** - This is used to identify a particular thing or person.

I'm going to the supermarket.

That's the woman I was talking to.

2. **Indefinite article** - This is used to refer to something unspecific, or something that you don't really know about.

Is there a supermarket near here?

I need a day off.

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

In English the definite article *the* always keeps the same form no matter how it's used in a sentence.

the book *the* books with *the* books

In German, the definite article changes for masculine, feminine and neuter singular nouns.

Masculine der Mann the man

Feminine die Frau the woman

Neuter das Mädchen the girl

Indefinite Articles

In English we have the indefinite article **a**, which changes to **an** in front of a word that starts with a vowel. In the plural we say either **some** or **any**.

In German, the word you choose for a depends on whether the noun is masculine, feminine or neuter, singular or plural and it also depends on the case of the noun

Masculine ein Mann a man

Feminine eine Frau a woman

Neuter ein Mädchen a girl

THE SCARY PART

In German, the definite and indefinite article can take on about twelve forms depending on the following factors:

1. The gender of the noun (*masculine, feminine or neuter*)
2. Are they singular or plural?
3. What is the case of the noun?

Traditional teaching methods will show you an entire chart of all the different forms of the definite and indefinite articles but they do that on purpose - to scare you. Don't worry about that too much. The **Speak Up! in German** language course will teach you everything you need to know quickly and painlessly, no fear.

In this introduction to the German language, you won't see that mess, so you can relax. 😊

Recognizing Plural Nouns in German

English usually signals the plural by means of a final **-s** (*table, tables*), a vowel change (*man, men*), or by a quantity word + **-s** or a vowel change (*some chairs, some men*). German will signal the plural of nouns by the use of the definite article **die** (or a quantity word) plus:

1. The noun endings **-e**, **-er**, **-n**, **-en**:

der Arm - the arm	die Arme - the arms
das Kind - the child	die Kinder - the children
der Staat - the state	die Staaten - the states
die Frau - the woman	die Frauen - the women
der Bauer - the farmer	die Bauern - the farmers

2. An umlaut is added a middle vowel:

der Vater - the father	die Väter - the fathers
die Tochter - the daughter	die Töchter - the daughters

3. A combination of noun endings and an umlaut:

die Hand - the hand	die Hände - the hands
der Fuß - the foot	die Füße - the feet
der Mann - the man	die Männer - the men
das Buch - the book	die Bücher - the books

Keep in mind that you have to look for a combination of **die** and one of the plural markers as shown above:

das Mädchen - the girl	die Mädchen - the girls
die Mutter - the mother	die Mütter - the mothers

Notice the word **Mädchen** already carries an umlaut. So the only way to tell if it's in the plural is by the addition of **die**.

Mutter, being feminine, takes **die** as the definite article in the singular form. The plural is therefore recognized only by the addition of the umlaut.

There are a few words ending in **-el** or **-en** that do not have a plural marker or an umlaut. For these, you'll need to rely on the definite article **die**:

der Onkel - the uncle	die Onkel - the uncles
der Wagen - the car	die Wagen - the cars

Check Yourself

Which of the following is the plural form? What clues made you decide?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> der Garten | <input type="checkbox"/> die Gärten | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Töchter | <input type="checkbox"/> die Tochter | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> der Finger | <input type="checkbox"/> die Finger | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Maus | <input type="checkbox"/> die Mäuse | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> der Arm | <input type="checkbox"/> die Arme | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> der Fuß | <input type="checkbox"/> die Füße | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Haare | <input type="checkbox"/> das Haar | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> das Buch | <input type="checkbox"/> die Bücher | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Männer | <input type="checkbox"/> der Mann | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Felder | <input type="checkbox"/> das Feld | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> der Onkel | <input type="checkbox"/> die Onkel | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> das Haus | <input type="checkbox"/> die Häuser | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Lippe | <input type="checkbox"/> die Lippen | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Klassen | <input type="checkbox"/> die Klasse | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Familien | <input type="checkbox"/> die Familie | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Türen | <input type="checkbox"/> die Tür | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Radios | <input type="checkbox"/> das Radio | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> das Café | <input type="checkbox"/> die Cafés | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Minute | <input type="checkbox"/> die Minuten | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> der Satellit | <input type="checkbox"/> die Satelliten | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Nacht | <input type="checkbox"/> die Nächte | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Schulen | <input type="checkbox"/> die Schule | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Sofas | <input type="checkbox"/> das Sofa | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> das Licht | <input type="checkbox"/> die Lichter | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> die Sonne | <input type="checkbox"/> die Sonnen | _____ |

Compound Nouns

Most language course books, classes and teachers have a very sick mind when it comes to teaching the German language. They love to point out early on that German has these really long words that you must memorize as a single entity. That is really discouraging to the beginning student.

To make it less scary, and really easy to learn these words, simply break them down, because:

Those long words are actually short words all put together:

krank (sick) + **Haus** (house) = **das Krankenhaus** (*hospital - the sick house*)

Hand (hand) + **Schuh** (shoe) = **der Handschuh** (*glove - the hand shoe*)

Wasser (water) + **Stoff** (stuff) = **der Wasserstoff** (*hydrogen - the water stuff*)

Volk (people) + **Wagen** (car) = **der Volkswagen** (*the people's car*)

The gender of these types of words is determined by the last word in the sequence:

krank + **das Haus** = **das Krankenhaus**

die Hand + **der Schuh** = **der Handschuh**

das Wasser + **der Stoff** = **der Wasserstoff**

das Volk + **der Wagen** = **der Volkswagen**

Turning these into plurals is simply formed from the last word:

das Krankenhaus = **die Krankenhäuser**

der Handschuh = **die Handschuhen**

der Volkswagen = **die Volkswagens**

A couple more examples:

Freundschaftsbezeugungen = *demonstrations of friendship*

Freund - friend

schaft - -ship

s - a connecting sound for easier pronunciation

bezeugung - demonstration

en - plural marker

Siebentausendzweihundertvierundfünfzig = 7,254

Sieben - 7

tausend - 1,000

zwei - 2

hundert - 100

vier - 4

und - and

fünfzig - 50

Check Yourself

Here are some examples to help you learn how to build a compound noun, or to recognize them when you see them. The first one is done for you as an example.

*dentist = tooth (der Zahn) + (der Arzt): **der Zahnarzt***

1. **season** = year (das Jahr) + time (die Zeit): _____
2. **airport** = flight (der Flug) + harbor, port (der Hafen): _____
3. **pork** = pig (das Schwein) + meat (das Fleisch): _____
4. **mayor** = townspeople, citizens (die Bürger) + master (der Meister): _____
5. **razor** = to shave (rasieren) + apparatus (der Apparat): _____
6. **grocery store** = life (das Leben) + means (das Mittel) + business, shop (das Geschäft):

7. **subway** = under (unter) + ground (der Grund) + railroad, railway (die Bahn):

8. **production of leather goods** = leather (das Leder) + goods (die Ware) + production (die Produktion): _____
9. **solar system** = sun (die Sonne) + system (das System): _____
10. **silver mine** = silver (das Silber) + mountain (der Berg) + work (das Werk):

11. **cemetery** = peace (der Friede) + yard, court (der Hof): _____

Building on

Now that we've seen how the German and English languages work together due to the similarities between them, let's jump right into reading actual German sentences.

Yes, it looks like a lot, but I am not requiring you to memorize every single one of them. In fact, you really won't have to. Casual observation and comparing them with their English equivalents will help you see just how much German you already know!

Das ist frisch. - This is fresh.

Das ist kalt. - This is cold.

Das ist nicht frisch. - This is not fresh.

Das ist salzig. - This is salty.

Das ist zu kalt. - This is too cold.

Das ist zu salzig. - This is too salty.

Die Licht funktioniert nicht. - The light does not work.

Die Mikrowelle funktioniert nicht. - The microwave does not work.

Die Telefon funktioniert nicht. - The telephone does not work.

Die Toilette funktioniert nicht. - The toilet does not work.

Die Ventilator funktioniert nicht. - The fan (ventilator) does not work.

Die Waschmaschine funktioniert nicht. - The washing machine does not work.

Es ist gebrochen. - It is broken.

Es ist interessant. - It is interesting.

Es ist kalt. - It is cold.

Es ist kühl. - It is cool.

Es ist lang. - It is long.

Es ist romantisch. - It is romantic.

Es ist warm. - It is warm.

Es ist zu lang. - It is too long.

Haben Sie ein Auto mit Automatikschaltung? - Do you have a car with automatic (shift)?

Haben Sie ein Auto? - Do you have a car?

Haben Sie ein Kindermenü? - Do you have a kids menu?

Haben Sie ein Moped? - Do you have a moped?

Haben Sie ein Motorboot? - Do you have a motor boat?

Haben Sie ein Snowboard? - Do you have a snowboard?

Haben Sie ein Surfboard? - Do you have a surfboard?

Haben Sie eine antiseptische Creme? - Do you have antiseptic cream?

Haben Sie eine Batterie? - Do you have a battery?

Haben Sie eine Kinderportionen? - Do you have kid's portions?

Haben Sie eine Nagelfeile? - Do you have a nail file?

Haben Sie eine Reservierung? - Do you have a reservation?

Haben Sie eine T-shirt? - Do you have a T-shirt?

Haben Sie einen Adapter? - Do you have an adapter?

Haben Sie einen Computer? - Do you have a computer?

Haben Sie einen Fitnessraum? - Do you have a fitness room?

Haben Sie einen Jet Ski ? - Do you have a jet ski?

Haben Sie Haarspray? - Do you have hairspray?

Haben Sie Ibuprofen? - Do you have ibuprofen?

Haben Sie Informationen über [Berlin]? - Do you have any information on [Berlin]?

Haben Sie Internet? - Do you internet?

Haben Sie Kinder? - Do you have kids?

Haben Sie Livemusik? - Do you have live music?

Haben Sie Lotion? - Do you have lotion?

Haben Sie WiFi? - Do you have WiFi?

Hier ist meine Adresse. - Here is my address.

Hier ist meine E-Mail. - Here is my e-mail.

Hier ist meine E-Mail-Adresse. - Here is my e-mail address.

Hier ist meine Nummer. - Here is my number.

Hier ist meine Telefonnummer. - Here is my phone number.

Ich bin allergisch auf Antibiotika. - I'm allergic to antibiotics.

Ich bin allergisch auf Gluten. - I'm allergic to gluten.

Ich bin allergisch auf Milchprodukte. - I am allergic to dairy (milk products).

Ich bin allergisch auf Penicillin. - I'm allergic to penicillin.

Ich bin Asthmatiker. - I'm asthmatic.

Ich bin Diabetiker. - I'm diabetic.

Ich bin für ein Meeting hier. - I am here for a meeting.

Ich bin für ein Seminar hier. - I am here for a seminar.

Ich bin für eine Konferenz hier. - I am here for a conference.

Ich bin mit meinem Freund hier. - I am here with my friend.

Ich bin Student. - I am a student.

Ich habe Arthritis. - I have arthritis.

Ich habe ein Apartment reserviert. - I have an apartment reserved.

Ich habe ein Erste-Klasse Ticket. - I have a first class (plane) ticket.

Ich habe ein E-Ticket. - I have an E-ticket.

Ich habe ein Meeting mit Fritz. - I have a meeting with Fritz.

Ich habe eine allergische Reaktion. - I have an allergic reaction.

Ich habe eine Reservierung. - I have a reservation.

Ich habe Fieber. - I have a fever.

Ich muss ein Fax senden. - I must send a fax.

Ich muss eine E-Mail senden. - I must send an e-mail.

Ich muss eine Kopie machen. - I must make a copy.

Ich muss telefonieren. - I must make a phone call.

Ist das der Bus nach Berlin? - Is this the bus to Berlin?

Ist das der Bus? - Is this the bus?

Ist das der Weg nach Berlin? - Is this the way to Berlin?

Kann ich das Brot haben? - Can I have the bread?

Kann ich das Sandwich haben? - Can I have the sandwich?

Kann ich das sehen? - Can I see that?

Kann ich der Bluse sehen? - Can I see the blouse?

Kann ich der Jacke sehen? - Can I see the jacket?

Kann ich der Jeans sehen? - Can I see the jeans?

Kann ich [Kaffee] haben? - Can I have some [coffee]?

Kann ich [Kaffee] mit Milch haben? - Can I have some [coffee] with milk?

Kann ich [Kaffee] mit Zucker haben? - Can I have some [coffee] with sugar?

Kann ich der [Ketchup] haben? - Can I have the [ketchup]?

Kann ich der Pullover sehen? - Can I see the sweater (pullover)?

- Kann ich der Sweatshirt sehen?** - Can I see the sweatshirt?
Kann ich die Telefonnummer haben? - Can I have the telephone number?
Kann ich der Apartment sehen? - Can I see the apartment?
Kann ich eine Kamera sehen? - Can I see a camera?
Kann ich eine Telefonkarte haben? - Can I have a phone card?
Kann ich einen Adapter haben? - Can I have an adapter?
Kann ich hier campen? - Can I camp here?
Kann ich hier ein Fax senden? - Can I send a fax here?
Kann ich hier parken? - Can I park here?
Kann ich Ihre E-Mail haben? - Can I have your e-mail (address)?
Kann ich Ihre Telefonnummer haben? - Can I have your phone number?
Kann ich Informationen über [Berlin] haben? - Can I have information on [Berlin]?
Kann ich mein Gepäck hierlassen? - Can I leave my luggage here?
Kann ich mit dem Manager sprechen? - Can I speak with the manager?
Kann ich mit Jan sprechen? - Can I speak with Jan?

- Können Sie das Licht reparieren?** - **Can you** repair the light?
Können Sie das warm machen? - Can you make this warm?
Können Sie die Toilette reparieren? - Can you repair the toilet?
Können Sie es reparieren? - Can you repair it?
Können Sie mir helfen? - Can you help me?
Können wir hier sitzen? - Can we sit here?

- Mein Name ist Jan.** - **My** name is Jan.
Mein Telefon funktioniert hier nicht. - My phone does not work.
Meine Auto ist kaputt. - My auto is broken down.
Meine Auto wurde gestohlen. - My car was stolen.
Meine Kreditkarte wurde gestohlen. - My credit card was stolen.

- Wann geht den express Bus?** - **When is** the express bus **going**?
Wann geht der Bus nach Berlin? - When is the bus going to Berlin?
Wann geht der Bus? - When is the bus going?
Wann geht der erste Bus? - When is the first bus going?

Wann geht die Fähre? - When is the ferry (going)?

Was kostet ein taxi zum Terminal? - **What does** a taxi **cost** to the terminal?

Was kostet ein Taxi? - What does a taxi cost?

Was kostet es pro Kilometer? - What does it cost per kilometer?

Was kostet es pro Nacht? - What does it cost per night?

Was kostet es pro Woche? - What does it cost per week?

Was kostet es über Nacht? - What does it cost over night?

Was kostet? - What does it cost?

Wie ist die Adresse? - **What is** the address?

Wie ist die E-Mail-Adresse? - What is the e-mail address?

Wie ist die Telefonnummer? - What is the telephone number?

Wie ist Ihre Adresse? - What is your address?

Wie ist Ihre E-Mail-Adresse? - What is your e-mail address?

Wie ist Ihre Telefonnummer? - What is your telephone number?

Wo ist das Feld? - Where is the field?

Wo ist das Museum? - Where is the museum?

Wo ist das Parkhaus? - Where is the parking garage?

Wo ist das Parkplatz? - Where is the parking place (lot)?

Wo ist das Stadion? - Where is the stadium?

Wo ist das Theater? - Where is the theater?

Wo ist der Bankautomat? - Where is the ATM?

Wo ist der Supermarkt? - Where is the supermarket?

Wo ist die Bäckerei? - Where is the bakery?

Wo ist die Bank? - Where is the bank?

Wo ist die Information? - Where is the information (desk)?

Wo ist die Kasse? - Where is the cashier?

Wo ist die Post? - Where is the post office?

Wo ist die Toilette? - Where is the toilet?

Wo ist diese Adresse? - Where is this address?

Wo ist ein Café? - Where is a café?

Wo ist ein gutes Restaurant? - Where is a good restaurant?

Wo ist ein Hotel? - Where is a hotel?

Wo ist ein Internetcafé? - Where is an internet café?

Wo ist ein Restaurant? - Where is a restaurant?

Wo ist einen Bus? - Where is a bus?

Wo ist einen Campingplatz? - Where is a camping place?

Wo sind die Taxis? - Where are the taxis?

Improving Your Skills

Tips and advice to help you
start learning German quickly

Listening Strategies

What is the key to learning German? Speaking or listening? If you cannot hear the sounds, you cannot make them. We need to hear words and expressions before we comprehend them and begin using them ourselves.

Listening is not just a passive skill. When we listen to a conversation, or something on TV or the radio, we are trying to transform those foreign sounds into something we can understand. Listening requires active thinking - taking the pieces of conversation that we understand, and use guessing and context to put them together into something meaningful. When you want to learn to say something, you first *listen* to how others say it. Of course, you may need to ask for clarification or repetition until you can do it yourself. So when we listen to how something is said, we try to remember how it was said so we can use it later if the chance arises.

To help you out, here's a few things you can do to keep your listening skills sharp (you can do this outside the classroom, too). Listen to something that has German speakers in conversation, newscast, music, etc. and listen to it on a regular basis. If you can get a transcript of the recording, follow along with it. Learn how to listen selectively, i.e. one item at a time. Listen for:

- Tone of voice
- Similar sounds in English and German
- Sounds not found in English
- Individual words or phrases
- Grammatical forms

Before you open your dictionary or vocabulary lists, try to guess the meaning first. Listen for any clues. If you find yourself in a face-to-face conversation with a native German speaker, listen for key words, gestures, intonation and facial expressions. If need be, check if you understood by repeating back to the speaker what you think the speaker said and ask for confirmation. Watching movies in German without English subtitles is also a good way to look at the speaker's mannerisms to see what the person is talking about.

Other ways you can sharpen your listening skills are:

1. When listening to radio or watching TV, imitate and repeat what is being said to the best of your ability.
2. Record TV programs or songs to see how much more can be understood after listening several times.
3. Get together with the other German language students to listen to the recordings and help each other understand any new words or phrases that come up.
4. Listen to a news broadcast in the target language and see how much you understand.

Always listen to conversations in public whenever the opportunity presents itself. Listen for words and phrases you already know; try to get the gist of the conversation; observe the gestures, facial expressions, and other non-verbal ways people communicate.

See also: <http://seanlyoung.com/improving/listening-skills.php>

Speaking Strategies

In order to express ourselves, we need to speak - get a message out there to give our needs, concerns or opinions. If we do this, we're only halfway done in our part of communication. The other part is someone understanding our thoughts from the sounds we make and the body language we use.

To speak German effectively, you have to make the sounds of the language flow the best you can in a way that can be understood. Despite what is traditionally taught (*and believed*), you do not have to have 100% perfect pronunciation to communicate with others. The goal is to put the words, phrases, and sentences together in a way that can be understood by the native speaker.

In addition, to speak the language effectively we must speak it in a culturally acceptable way. This means learning rules of behavior for each situation. These include knowing when and how to begin the conversation, interrupt, ask for clarification, change the topic, and end the conversation.

LEARN HOW TO CONTROL CONVERSATIONS

When a language student is taught to speak to someone in another language, he or she is taught to give most of the control of the conversation to the other person. It's usually - say something, listen to answer, say something, listen to response and so on, etc. A useful strategy for speaking practice is learning to control the conversation.

The most basic conversation controlling strategy is to ask questions that have "yes" or "no" answers so there's more practice in speaking, and you can gauge if the other person has understood. Other tips for conversation control are:

- Keep the listener guessing so they do not know what may be said next. For example, when going shopping, first get what you are looking for, and then ask one or two questions about something else you have no intention of buying.
- When asking for a particular item, hold or look at something (*a bag of apples*) and ask about the freshness of the bananas or the price of a container of milk. If more than one of the same item is needed, practice the routine in several different places. This will allow you to practice speaking as well understanding different responses.
- Prepare a conversation starter in advance so you will be in control of at least the first topic you talk about, then strike up conversations on public transportation. If you are afraid of getting into a long conversation, then wait until you are close to your destination before starting a conversation.
- You can also pair up with another German language student and agree on a common topic to speak about. Sit in different places in a public place, strike up a conversation with someone, and then compare notes afterward.

Of course, using different phrases to check if you expressed yourself works wonderfully, such as, "Did I say that right?," "What would it mean if I said, _____?" or "Would you say _____ to a man / a woman / a child / someone older?"

See also: <http://seanlyoung.com/improving/speaking-skills.php>

Speaking Strategies (cont.)

WORD WHISKERS

At times your slow speech in the beginning phases of learning will make your tongue run and hide while your brain is trying to find the word or answer they need. Don't panic, this is completely normal - even in your own native language. This creates what are called "word whiskers" and usually come out as ...um..., ...uh..., ...you know... - This part of language is important and useful in making smoother conversation, even though it's seriously neglected in textbooks and language courses. Take a look at the examples here:

Ich war gestern auf der .. Ähhh .. Kirmes. (*Forgetting what you want to say*)

Und, .. ähm, ja, das ist mir jetzt echt peinlich. (*Embarrassment*)

Hm, na ja, was soll ich jetzt dazu sagen? (*Speechless*)

Ich war das wirklich nicht, Äh, also, ich glaub' das zumindest. (*Uncertainty*)

There are many more, and knowing how to use these word whiskers in any language is good exercise and gives the brain a moment to find the right word or grammatical structure while native speakers will see that you have a good grasp of the language.

As you advance through your lessons, gradually and deliberately increase your amount of socializing with other students learning German, or with native speakers. Limit the amount of time in English. Keep a record in your journal of your progress.

See also: <http://seanlyoung.com/improving/speaking-skills.php>

Reading Strategies

Although most people have a main goal of conversing in their target language, learning to read the language can still be helpful for those who learn best by seeing things in writing, using dictionaries or reading lesson materials and texts.

When a student is presented with reading text, they often find themselves a bit scared or overwhelmed, especially when you see words like **Rechtsschutzversicherungsgesellschaften** and **Kraftfahrzeug-Haftpflichtversicherung**. Sometimes they'll become frustrated because they cannot understand every single word. The good news is that you don't need to understand every word or every grammatical construction to get the main idea of what is being read - we don't do that in English, so why get upset in another language? In order for you to improve in your reading skills, learn to develop the ability to read for overall meaning and specific information. Here are a few ideas to help out:

- Before reading, make some guesses about the topic or main idea by looking at the title of the text and any accompanying pictures. Is there anything you might already know about the topic?
- Read through the text once to get a general idea of what the text is about. You can skip over unfamiliar words or grammatical constructions in the initial reading.
- Take a few moments to rest and then read it again without stopping to see how much more you understand.
- As you go through it, underline only the words or grammatical constructions that keeps you from understanding the main part of the text.
- If you're really stuck, then check the dictionary.

Of course, there are other ways you can improve in your reading skills:

- Practice reading sentences you've written in your journal.
- Read things written in German and see if you can figure out the meanings.
- Read excerpts from newspapers, magazines and children's stories. Make good use of headlines, pictures and diagrams found between the pages.

Writing Strategies

Writing is an activity that places fourth in my list of language activities. When learning a new language, you will be writing in your lessons, and also any notes for later learning needs. Writing also does double duty. Not only does it give you practice in writing and correct spelling, but it also helps the memory and the brain can store that word's information quicker than just listening and repeating. Thus developing other communication skills.

TIPS FOR WRITING PRACTICE

The good news is that most of the world's languages have just one sound for one letter, making writing the simplest thing that can be done, and German is in that category. Once you learn the sound/letter correspondence of the alphabet, you can write just about anything in German.

Some ideas to help sharpen your writing skills include:

- Check out selected texts from newspapers, magazines and children's books, in German. As you write them, focus on things such as spelling and word order, ways to mark tenses in verbs and other grammatical points.
- Always write the answers to any exercises fully (e.g. in a fill in the blank exercise) instead of writing just the answer. This will help you see how the sentence is constructed and any grammar involved.
- Ask someone in the group to dictate parts of a newspaper article or sentences and then write down what you hear. Compare what you wrote with the text to see how well you've done.
- Listen to a reading passage, or some other recording and practice writing it.

Take some texts from previously learned lessons and let you change them with what they already know (change the verb tenses to reflect other people, change singular to plurals, etc.) Some texts can be summarized or paraphrased as if describing what is happening in a newscast.

See also: <http://seanlyoung.com/improving/writing-skills.php>

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