

German Grammar

Summary of German Grammar

THE GERMAN ALPHABET

There are twenty-seven letters in the German alphabet:

A	ah	O	oh
B	boy	P	py
C	tsay	Q	koo
D	day	R	ray
E	day	S	shon
F	stuf	T	toy
G	gy	U	oo
H	hah	V	fueh
I	ih	W	vay
J	yah	X	icks
K	kah	Y	eyp-ee-the
L	lull	Z	tsah
M	mayn		tsah-tsah
N	nohn		

There are three "Umlaute" in German:
ä = ah, ö = oh, ü = oo

NUMERALS

0	null
1	eins
2	zwei
3	drei
4	vier
5	fünf
6	sechs
7	sieben
8	acht
9	neun
10	zehn
11	elf
12	zwölf
13	dreizehn
14	vierzehn
15	fünfzehn
16	sechzehn
17	siebenzehn
18	achtzehn
19	neunzehn

CARDINALS

20	zwanzig
21	einundzwanzig
22	zweiundzwanzig
30	dreißig
31	einunddreißig
32	zweiunddreißig
40	vierzig
50	fünfzig
60	sechzig
70	siebzig
80	achtzig
90	neunzig
100	hundert
200	zweihundert
300	dreihundert
400	vierhundert
1000	tausend
2000	zweitausend
1 000 000	eine Million
2 000 000	zwei Millionen

ORDINALS

1st	erste
2nd	zweite
3rd	dritte
4th	vierte
5th	fünfte
6th	sechste
7th	siebte
8th	achte
9th	neunte
10th	zehnte
11th	elfte
12th	zwölfte
13th	dreizehnte
14th	vierzehnte
15th	fünfzehnte

CAPITALIZATION

All nouns are capitalized, whenever they appear in a sentence.

Adjectives denoting nationality are not capitalized.
amerikanisch - American
deutsch - German

Unlike English, the personal pronoun "Ich" ("I") is not capitalized in written German.

The personal pronoun "Sie" (you, formal, sing./plural) however, is capitalized.

The numeral *eben* drops the "n" whenever used as an indefinite article (man: ein Mann, kein eine Frau)

CASE SYSTEM

The four cases of the system define the function of a particular noun in a sentence. Nominative - subject, predicate - possessive, dative - indirect object, accusative - direct object. Nouns and their articles, adjectives, prepositions and the usage of some verbs are based in the case system and its endings.

NOUNS GENDER

All German nouns, whether they represent persons, things, or ideas, have grammatical gender. When referring to people, the grammatical gender usually follows the biological sex, all other nouns can be any of the three genders. The gender is indicated by the definite article (feminine: die, masculine: der, neuter: das).

The following types of nouns are usually feminine:

Words referring to female beings, their nationalities and their professions:

die Frau - the woman, die Chemikerin - the chemist, die Spanierin - the Spanish woman

Agent nouns formed by adding the feminine suffix -in to masculine agent nouns:

die Professorin - the professor (the biologist)

Most nouns ending with the letter -e:

die Kirsche - the cherry, die Maschine - the machine, die Kontrolle - the control

Names of many German rivers:

die Elbe, die Donau, die Spree

Nouns ending with the suffixes -heit, -keit, -schaft, -ig, -ung, -er, -el, -ik, -ion, -er, and -ant:

die Revolution - the revolution, die Prozedur - the procedure, die Sicherheit - the security

die Demokratie - the democracy, die Unschuld - the innocence, die Macht - the power

die Gewerkschaft - the union, die Konsequenz - the consequence, die Universität - the university

die Bibliothek - the library, die Übung - the exercise, die Toleranz - the tolerance

The following nouns are usually masculine:

Words referring to male beings, their nationalities and their professions:

der Mann - the man, der Chemiker - the chemist

der Spanier - the Spanish man

Agent nouns derived from verbs by adding suffix -er to the stem of the infinitive form of verb:

der Fahrer (fahren) - to push, der Fahrer (fahren) - the driver

The seasons, names of the month and days of the week:

der Winter - (the) winter, der Dezember - (the) december, der Freitag - (the) Friday

Most nouns ending with -er:

der Ofen - the oven, der Garten - the garden, der Westen - (the) west

Nouns ending with the suffixes -ig, -ing, -en, and -er:

der Honig - the honey, der Frühling - (the) spring, der Motor - the motor

der Kapitalismus - (the) capitalism

Names of most non-German rivers, except for those ending with -e or -en:

der Nil, der Rhein, der Mississippi, der Senne, der Thonsee

The following nouns are usually neuter:

Names of continents, cities and most countries when used in connection with an adjective:

das moderne Amerika - the modern America, das neue Berlin - the new Berlin, das alte Spanien - the old Spain

Letters of the alphabet:

das G, das X

Most nouns ending with the suffix -ness:

das Christentum - Christianity

Most nouns referring to metals:

das Gold - the gold, das Eisen - the iron

Adjectives when used as nouns:

Das Leben - the living

Nouns with diminutive suffixes -lein, -chen, and the suffix -chen, -el, and -chen:

das Mädchen - the girl, das Tischlein - the little table, das Meinchen - the meadow, das Däumchen - the daisy

PLURAL

The article for all nouns used in the plural is *die*. Each gender follows different rules on how to make the plural form:

Feminine nouns usually add -en or -n:

die Form - the forms (the form), die Hose - the hoses (the pants)

Masculine and neuter nouns ending in -er add an Umlaut or retain the same:

der Bruder - the brother (the brother)

das Fenster - the window (the window)

Masculine and neuter nouns add usually -er or -n. If the plural ends with -er, stem vowels a, o, u, and au become Umlaute:

der Tisch - die Tische (the tables), das Buch - die Bücher (the books)

Nouns ending with an -e or most nouns of English or French origin add -n:

das Auto - die Autos (the cars), das Radio - die Radios (the radios)

COMPOUND NOUNS

Compound nouns are always written as one word.

die Deutschlehrer - the German class

The last word of the compound governs the gender and number of the compound:

die Kaffeemaschine (der Kaffee, die Maschine) - the coffee machine

PRONOUNS PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Nominative:

Singular:

ich - I

du - you (familiar)

Sie - you (formal)

er - he

sie - she

es - it

Plural:

wir - we

du - you (familiar)

sie - they

Sie - you (formal)

Masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns can be replaced by the personal pronouns *er*, *sie*, *es*:

Der Tisch ist groß. (The table is big.)

Er ist groß. (He is big.)

Die Lampe ist hell. (The lamp is bright.)

Sie ist hell. (She is bright.)

Das Fenster ist sauber. (The window is clean.)

Es ist sauber. (It is clean.)

Genitive:

Singular:

ich - my

du - your

Sie - his

er - his

sie - her

es - his

Plural:

wir - our

du - your

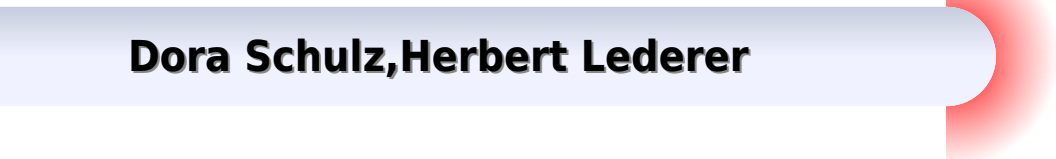
sie - their

Sie - their

The substitute personal pronouns are extremely rarely used in German.

Reference Grammar Of The German Language

Dora Schulz, Herbert Lederer



Reference Grammar Of The German Language:

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Suggestions

and References for Modern Language Teachers Thomas Edward Oliver, 1917

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