

D. Practice. Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of *welcher*.

1. _____ Buch ist das?
2. _____ Mann kommt jetzt?
3. _____ Bilder sind das?
4. _____ Assistentin ist das?
5. _____ Leute arbeiten hier?

Teil 3,6

r /- e s /- e

ein and *kein*

As you learned in *Kapitel Eins* the indefinite article *ein* is used when referring to a person or thing in a general way:

- Ein Stuhl ist kaputt.....A chair is broken.
- Eine Studentin ist im Klassenzimmer.....A (female) student is in the classroom.
- Das ist ein Heft.....That's a notebook.

Note: For an obviously logical reason, there is no plural form of the indefinite article.

The word used to negate nouns referred to generally is *kein*, not *nicht*. Observe the following sentences that contrast with those above:

- Kein Stuhl ist kaputt.....No chair is broken.
- Keine Studentin ist im Klassenzimmer.....No (female) student is in the classroom.
- Das ist kein Heft.....That's not a notebook.
- Keine Studenten machen das.....No students do that.

Note: In contrast to *ein*, *kein* does have a plural form: *keine*.

ein and *kein* : nominative forms

In *Teil 2,3* you saw that definite articles, pronouns, and some question words shared common sounds and printed endings, and that these common elements could be reduced to a single sound or letter. Let's compare the nominative forms of *ein* and *kein* to the definite article, pronouns, and question words. Consider the following:

Do the masculine forms *ein* and *kein* fit the *r*-sound/ending pattern of *der*, *er*, and *wer*? Obviously not. Both *ein* and *kein* are deficient with respect to the expected *r*-sound. All we hear or see are the stem-forms of *ein* and *kein*. No case ending is sounded at all. These forms are said to be "naked."

Do the feminine forms *eine* and *keine* fit the *e*-sound/ending pattern of *die* and *sie*? Well, yes and no. An explanation is in order: The forms *eine* and *keine* can be reduced to their lowest common denominator, the final letter *e*, in the same way that *die* and *sie* can be reduced to their final letter, *e*. Therefore, in terms of printed endings, they reduce to the same letter. However, the sound of the *e* on *eine* and *keine* is a different sound from the *ie* of *die* and *sie*. Nonetheless, for the sake of simplicity and efficiency let us accept the reduction to *e* as a common bond, keeping in mind, however, the different sounds represented.

Do the neuter forms *ein* and *kein* fit the *s*-sound pattern of *das*, *es*, and *was*? Obviously not. The anticipated *s*-sound is nowhere to be heard or seen. As was the case with the masculine forms, the neuter forms are also deficient. All we have are naked stem forms. No case ending/sound is used or heard.

Does the plural form *keine* (*ein* does not exist in the plural, so we'll use *keine* for the purpose of illustration) fit the *e*-sound pattern of *die* and *sie*? Again, the answer is both *yes* and *no* for exactly the same reasons given above for the feminine forms. Let us again accept *e* as a common bond.

For the sake of clarity, let's put the full nominative paradigm up for scrutiny with the forms that are deficient in bold italics:

	<u>masculine</u>	<u>feminine</u>	<u>neuter</u>	<u>plural</u>
nominative:	der (Mann)	die (Frau)	das (Buch)	die (Studenten)
	er	sie	es	sie
	wer?	—	was?	—
	ein	eine	ein	keine

synthesis:

We can integrate our knowledge of least common denominators as follows for a much simpler picture of the system at work:

	<u>masculine</u>	<u>feminine</u>	<u>neuter</u>	<u>plural</u>
nominative:	r /-	e	s /-	e

As you can see, with *ein* and *kein* the two areas of nominative deficiency are the masculine and neuter, indicated by a slash and dash. In other words, nominative masculine forms will either have the expected *r*-sound or nothing at all. Neuter nominative forms will either have the expected *s*-sound or nothing at all. Spend some time with this simplified paradigm until its significance is understood fully and until you can reproduce it quickly and accurately. It will prove to be a very valuable cognitive device in learning about the German case system, especially when your knowledge of the case system in German expands in the following chapters.

Übungen:

A. Concept Check. Fill in the blanks with the correct information.

1. Does the indefinite article *ein* have a plural form? _____.
2. The word used to negate nouns referred to generally, not specifically, is _____.
3. Does this negator have plural forms? _____.

4. Does the pattern of endings of *ein* and *kein* match those of the definite article? _____.
5. The nominative form of the indefinite article when used with a masculine or neuter noun is _____.
The corresponding form of *kein* is _____.
6. The nominative form of the indefinite article when used with a feminine noun is _____. The form of *kein* is _____.
7. The plural form of *kein* is _____.
8. Because the masculine and neuter forms of *ein* and *kein* do not supply the expected *r* and *s* sounds, these forms are said to be _____, or _____.

B. Practice. Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of *ein*.

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|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Das ist _____ Studentin. | 6. _____ Kind ist jung. |
| 2. Das ist _____ Mädchen. | 7. _____ Professorin ist intelligent. |
| 3. Das ist _____ Tisch. | 8. _____ Mutter ist oft müde. |
| 4. Das ist _____ Bleistift. | 9. _____ Verkäuferin verkauft Dinge. |
| 5. Das ist _____ Assistentin. | 10. _____ Sekretärin schreibt viel. |

C. Practice. Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of *kein*.

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. _____ Studenten sind hier. | 6. _____ Leute machen das. |
| 2. _____ Lehrer macht das. | 7. Das ist _____ Mann. Das ist eine Frau. |
| 3. _____ Mensch sagt das. | 8. Das ist _____ Buch. Das ist ein Heft. |
| 4. _____ Mädchen ist so unfreundlich. | 9. Das ist _____ Bleistift. Das ist ein Kuli. |
| 5. _____ Kind arbeitet. | 10. Das sind _____ Jungen. Das sind Mädchen. |

D. Practice. Rewrite the following sentences. Substitute the correct form of the indefinite article for the definite article to create sentences with a more general meaning.

1. Der Bleistift ist aus Holz. _____.
2. Der Kugelschreiber ist aus Plastik. _____.
3. Der Student studiert. _____.
4. Der Deutschlehrer spricht gut Deutsch. _____.
5. Das Kind macht das. _____.
6. Die Lehrerin versteht Kinder. _____.

E. Practice. Negate the following sentences:

1. Das ist ein Buch. _____.
2. Das ist das Heft. _____.
3. Das sind Studenten. _____.
4. Das sind die Leute. _____.
5. Das ist ein Schild. _____.

F. Communication. Answer accurately.

1. (The teacher points to the floor and asks you:) *Ist das die Wand?*
2. (You have a pencil in your hand, but I can't see it. I ask you:) *Ist das ein Kuli?*
3. (You're carrying a notebook, but I can't see it clearly. I ask you:) *Ist das ein Buch?*
4. (I'm the teacher, and I'm quite late for class. You are the last student to leave the classroom. I see you in the hall and ask:) *Sind die Studenten im Klassenzimmer?*
5. (I'm a new student in the German class and don't know who the teacher is. A woman enters the classroom. She's not the teacher. I ask you:) *Ist das die Professorin?*
6. (I'm meeting you for the first time. Your German is so good, I can't tell whether you're a native German or an American student. I ask you:) *Sind Sie aus Deutschland?*
7. (You've bought a new blue sportscar, but I haven't seen it yet. I ask you:) *Ist das Auto rot?*
8. (I bump into you on the way to work. You look awfully sick. I diplomatically ask you:) *Warum sind Sie heute so müde?*
9. (I am your German teacher. You haven't handed in your homework in three days. I ask you:) *Warum sind Sie so faul?* (Get out of this one!)
10. (I am arguing with you about a political issue about which I know very little. You, conversely, are just finishing your Ph.D. in Political Science. In exasperation I scream at you:) *Sind Sie wirklich^o so dumm?*
(Now it's your turn!) ^oreally