

Teil 1,4

Was ist das? Wer ist das?

informational questions (*w-Fragen*)

An informational question differs from a yes/no question in that you must answer by providing specific information. If someone were to ask you "What time is it please?" and you responded "Yes," the person asking the question would at the very least be startled. He or she would be expecting you to actually give the time, i.e., give information. Obviously, a more appropriate response would be something like "It's ten o'clock."

eliciting and identification: *wer* and *was*

To find out the identity of a person, use the question word *wer* (who). To elicit the identity of a thing, use the question word *was* (what). Observe the examples:

What is that?.....That's the eraser.
Was ist das?.....Das ist der Wischer.

Who is that?.....That's the student.
Wer ist das?.....Das ist der Student. Or: Das ist Willi Oberding.

As you can see from these sentences, the word order in German for both the questions and the responses is the same as in English. In both languages most of the question words (interrogatives) used to initiate the question begin with *w*, just as they do in English. For that reason, German informational questions are called *w-Fragen*. For now you need only learn two question words: *was* (what) and *wer* (who). You will learn the others as the need for them arises.

Useful Classroom Expressions

Here are some additional commands you are likely to hear from your teacher soon:

Lesen Sie bitte.....Read please.
Lesen Sie zusammen bitte.....Read together please (i.e., in a group).

Stehen Sie auf!.....Stand up.
Setzen Sie sich!.....Sit down.

Gehen Sie an die Tafel!.....Go to the board.

Nehmen Sie ein Stück Papier!.....Take a piece of paper.

Schreiben Sie!.....Write!
Schreiben Sie an die Tafel!.....Write on the board.
Schreiben Sie in das Heft!.....Write in the notebook.
Schreiben Sie auf das Papier!.....Write on [the] paper.

Öffnen Sie das Buch! or Machen Sie das Buch auf!.....Open the book.
Schließen Sie das Buch! or Machen Sie das Buch zu!.....Close the book.

Machen Sie es schnell!.....Do it quickly.

Machen wir jetzt eine Pause!....Let's take a break now.
Machen wir eine Pause von fünf Minuten!....Let's take a five-minute break.

Exercises: Übungen:

A. Guided Communication. Formulate the question that would elicit the given answer:

Model: Was ist das? Das ist die Kreide.
Wer ist das? Das ist die Studentin?

1. _____ Das ist die Tür.
2. _____ Das ist die Tafel.
3. _____ Das ist der Professor.
4. _____ Das ist der Kugelschreiber.
5. _____ Das ist die Lehrerin.
6. _____ Das ist der Student.

(See answer key (*Lösungen*) and correct.)

Teil 1,5

Sind Sie Deutsche oder Amerikanerin?
Ich bin Amerikanerin.

sein

Perhaps the most important verb in German is the verb *sein*. This verb corresponds to the verb *to be*. Thus far you have used only one form, *ist*. In this section you will learn three more forms.

infinitive: *sein*

First of all, the form *sein* is known as the infinitive. The infinitive is the base form of the verb, the form that is listed in dictionaries. As you will see, the forms of *sein* do not look much like the infinitive, and for this reason we say that the verb is *highly irregular*. As you saw in the example sentences and in the exercises you have completed, verbs are not used in isolation, but rather, in sentences. You have also seen that verbs always have subjects. Until now, the subject of all of the sentences you have been using