

Introduction to Adjectival Nouns (*Nominalisierung*)

An adjectival noun is a noun that takes the same declensional endings as an adjective. Adjectival nouns in masculine, feminine and plural refer to people. Adjectival nouns in neuter refer to abstract concepts. Although nearly every adjective in the language can be employed as an adjectival noun, only certain nouns are fully incorporated into the common language. In the plural, there is no gender distinction.

The following four nouns are just a few examples of adjectival nouns. There are scores of adjectival nouns in German. They must be memorized as the student encounters them. Keep in mind that these nouns **MUST** take endings based on the adjectival system. When referring to people, adjectival nouns never take the neuter gender.

Bekannt- (friend, acquaintance)

Verwandt- (relative, family member)

Angestellt- (employee)

Deutsch- (German person)

Adjectival nouns decline exactly as do any adjectives. They are always capitalized and take declensions as if the word *Mann*, *Frau* or *Leute* were the noun that followed them. However, the words *Mann*, *Frau* and *Leute* do not appear.

Er ist ein Bekannter [Mann] von mir.

He is a friend of mine. (*masc.*)

Ich wohne mit einer Bekanntem [Frau] zusammen.

I live with a friend. (*fem.*)

Viele Bekannte [Leute] von mir rauchen.

Many friends of mine smoke. (*pl.*)

Examples:

Am Montag hat mich ein Angestellter mit vielen Fragen belästigt. (Prinzip III, nom, masc)
On Monday, an employee (man) burdened me with a lot of questions.

Am Montag hat die neue Angestellte mit der Arbeit angefangen. (Prinzip I, nom, fem)
On Monday, the new employee (woman) started work.

Am Montag haben die neuen Angestellten mit der Arbeit angefangen. (Prinzip I, nom, plur)
On Monday, the new employees started work. (no gender distinction in plural)

Ich wohne bei einem Deutschen. (Prinzip I, dat, masc)
I live with a German (man).

Ich wohne bei einer Deutschen. (Prinzip I, dat, fem)
I live with a German (woman).

Die Angestellten bekommen bald eine Lohnerhöhung. (Prinzip I, nom, plur)
The employees will soon get a raise. (no gender distinction in plural)

Ich habe viele Bekannte zu meiner Fete eingeladen. (Prinzip II, acc, plur)
I invited many friends to my party. (no gender distinction in plural)

Ralf ist ein guter bekannter von mir. (Prinzip III, nom, masc)
Ralf is a good friend (acquaintance) of mine.

Den Deutschen schmeckt amerikanischer Kaffee nicht. (Prinzip I, dat, plur)
American coffee doesn't taste good to the Germans. (no gender distinction in plural)

Welchen Verwandten besuchst du? (Prinzip I, acc, masc)
Which relative (male) are you visiting?

Welche Verwandte besuchst du? (Prinzip I, acc, fem)
Which relative (female) are you visiting?

Welche Verwandten besuchst du? (Prinzip I, acc, plur)
Which relatives are you visiting? (no gender distinction in plural)