

Partizip II (the "past participle" of German Verbs)

The *participle* of a verb is a fixed form of that verb. Participles do not take conjugational endings. The *past participle* or „Partizip II“ of a verb is a set form of a verb and is used with *perfect* verb tenses to show a completed action. The *past participle* or „Partizip II“ is also used for expressing passive voice. Partizip II can also be used as an adjective, in which case the participle may take adjective endings.

WEAK VERBS (type I verbs) *ge* + verb stem + *t*

The so called *weak* verbs in German form their Partizip II based on the following pattern:

To the verb stem, add the prefix „ge“ and the suffix „t“ or „et“.

mieten → gemietet
lieben → geliebt
machen → gemacht

arbeiten → gearbeitet
suchen → gesucht
hören → gehört

regnen → geregnet
reisen → gereist
landen → gelandet

VERBS WITH SUFFIX „-IEREN“ verb stem + *t*

Verbs that end in the suffix „-ieren“ always only take a „t“ in Partizip II. There is no „ge“ added to these verbs.

studieren → studiert
manipulieren → manipuliert

explodieren → explodiert
funktionierten → funktioniert

marschieren → marschiert
produzieren → produziert

Note: A few verbs have „-ieren“ as part of their stem where the „ieren“ is not a suffix.

These verbs follow patterns based on each their own type and different from the „ieren“ pattern described above.

schmieren → geschmiert (weak)

verlieren → verloren (strong)

STRONG VERBS (type II verbs) *ge* + verb stem with or without Ablaut + *en*

The so called *strong* verbs in German form their Partizip II based on the following pattern:

To the verb stem, add the prefix „ge“ and the suffix „en“. The stem may or may not have Ablaut.

kommen → gekommen
sehen → gesehen
fahren → gefahren

nehmen → genommen
sprechen → gesprochen
bleiben → geblieben

gehen → gegangen
essen → gegessen
trinken → getrunken

Note: Some of the strong verbs also exhibit a change of sound or spelling in Partizip II. This change is called „Ablaut“ and must be memorized from verb to verb.

VERBS WITH A STEM VOWEL CHANGE (Lautwechsel im Stammvokal)

Verbs that take a stem vowel change in present tense are strong verbs. Therefore, Partizip II of verbs with a stem vowel change ends in „en“.

sehen (sieht) → gesehen
geben (gibt) → gegeben

fahren (fährt) → gefahren
schlafen (schläft) → geschlafen

MIXED VERBS (type III verbs) *ge* + verb stem with Ablaut + *t*

Mixed, or so called *weak irregular*, verbs in German form their Partizip II based on the following pattern:

The verb stem takes Ablaut, add the prefix „ge“ and the suffix „t“ or „et“.

(„Wissen“ follows this pattern as well. wissen → gewusst)

kennen → gekannt

denken → gedacht

kennen → gekannt

HABEN OR SEIN?

In perfect tenses such as present perfect or past perfect, Partizip II must be accompanied by a conjugated auxiliary verb. The conjugated auxiliary is either „haben“ or „sein“. Most participles take „haben“. When in doubt, guess „haben“. Verbs of locomotion typically take „sein“ (*fahren, gehen, reisen*, etc.) Three copulae take „sein“ (*sein, bleiben, werden*). Any participle taking a direct object *must* use „haben“ even if it is a verb of locomotion. (Er *ist* nach Hause *gefahren*.) (Er *hat mich* nach Hause *gefahren*.) Verbs indicating a change of condition usually take „sein“. There is no relationship between the type of participle (strong or weak) and its auxiliary. There are regular verbs that take „sein“; there are irregular verbs that take „sein“. Prefixes also have no bearing on whether a participle takes „haben“ or „sein“. Most verbs with prefixes take „haben“; there are verbs with prefixes that take „sein“.

VERBS WITH AN INSEPARABLE PREFIX (be, ge, ver, ent, zer, etc.) verb stem + *t/en* (no „ge“ prefix)
Verbs that begin with an unstressed prefix never take „ge“ in the participle. To the stem, add either „t“ or „en“. These verbs can be either strong or weak, so the ending „t“ or „n“ must be memorized. However, if the base form of the verb without a prefix is weak, then all prefixed forms of that verb are also weak. Strong verbs remain strong, as well, even if they are prefixed. Some of these strong verbs take “Ablaut” in Partizip II.

besuchen – besucht
beleidigen – beleidigt
verdienen – verdient

versuchen – versucht
bekommen – bekommen
beschreiben – beschrieben

versprechen – versprochen
verstehen – verstanden
zerstören – zerstört

VERBS WITH A SEPARABLE PREFIX (auf, an, ein, zu, etc.) prefix + *ge* + verb stem + *t/en*
Verbs that begin with a stressed prefix always take „ge“ in the participle. However, the „ge“ is inserted between the prefix and the stem of the verb. To the stem, add either „t“ or „en“. These verbs can be either strong or weak, so the ending „t“ or „n“ must be memorized. The same rules about weak and strong apply to these verbs as to the ones with inseparable prefixes.

aufsuchen – aufgesucht
ankommen – angekommen
anmachen – angemacht

einschreiben – eingeschrieben
aufhören – aufgehört
zumachen – zugemacht

ansprechen – angesprochen
mitkommen – mitgekommen
vorbeischaun – vorbeigeschaut

TERMS

Ablaut:

An unpredictable change of sound in a word is called Ablaut. Ablaut can be found in any kind of word. Frequently Ablaut is found in the various forms of irregular verbs. Many participles in German take Ablaut.

English: see – saw / drive – drove – driven / think – thought / etc.

German: können – kann, kannst, kann (present modal) / nehmen – genommen / helfen – geholfen

Stem Vowel Change: (Lautwechsel bei Präsens)

This term applies only to the present tense conjugation of verbs. Stem vowel change is the vowel shift in 2nd & 3rd singular conjugations. If a verb exhibits an irregularity in 1st singular, this is NOT stem vowel change. It is Ablaut. Sound changes in the participle are called Ablaut. (werden – geworden)

sehen – sieht / nehmen – nimmt / laufen – läuft / etc.

Weak Verb: (Schwachtes Verb)

When a verb has predictable forms, it is known as „weak“ or „regular“. If a verb is „weak“ it follows all the expected patterns. Weak verbs have no stem vowel change and no Ablaut in the participle. Weak verbs always end in „t“ in Partizip II. If the participle of a verb is not listed in your dictionary or word list, then that verb is „weak“.

machen / glauben / reisen / lieben / wohnen / etc.

Mixed Verb: (Gemischetes Verb) (These are also known as weak irregular verbs.)

There is a very small group of verbs that take a mix of traits from both weak and strong verbs. These verbs all have Ablaut in the participle, as with strong verbs and take a „t“ in the participle, as with weak verbs.

kennen / denken / etc.

Strong Verb: (Starkes Verb)

Any verb that takes „n“ in the participle is „strong“. All of the verbs with a stem vowel change in present tense are strong, but not all strong verbs have stem vowel change. Many, but not all, strong verbs take Ablaut in the participle. The participles for „strong“ verbs must be memorized. Most of the common actions in everyday life appear (come, go, eat, drink, die, etc.) as strong verbs.

kommen / gehen / lesen / essen / trinken / fahren / etc.

Perfect Verb Tense:

Perfect tense indicates that the action is complete (in the past). There are several tense names using the term *perfect*. Any verb tense classified as *perfect* indicates that Partizip II must be a component of the conjugation.

Er hat mich gestern angerufen. (present perfect - completed action – He called me yesterday.)

Sie wird den Bericht bis Montag geschrieben haben. (future perfect =

expectation of completion of action in future – She will have written the report by Monday.)