

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES

Possessive adjectives are the possessive forms of the personal pronouns. Grammatically, these words operate similarly to *the, this, that*, etc.

The English forms are:

personal pronoun *possessive adjective*

I **my**
 you **your**
 he **his**
 she **her**
 it **its**
 we **our**
 (you guys) **(your)**
 they **their**
 (YOU) **(your)**

In German the forms appear as follows:

personal pronoun *possessive adjective* *English meaning*

ich **mein_** my
 du **dein_** your (familiar singular)
 er **sein_** his (its)
 sie **ihr_** her (its)
 es **sein_** its (his, her)
 wir **unser_** our
 ihr **euer_** your (familiar plural)
 sie **ihr_** thier
 Sie **Ihr_** your - formal (singular and plural)

Please Note !!!

not *mine*
 not *yours*
 not *hers*
 not *ours*
 not *yours*
 not *theirs*
 not *yours*

The German possessive adjectives take endings based on the noun that follows.

Note there is also a zero ending (no ending) in masculine & neuter nominative as well as neuter accusative. The zero ending is not written in German, however for demonstration purposes it is marked here with ∅.

case & gender markers for possessive adjective (based on the accompanying noun)

	masculine	feminine	neuter	plural
nominative	∅	-e	∅	-e
accusative	-en	-e	∅	-e
dative	-em	-er	-em	-en
genitive	-es	-er	-es	-er

traits of possessive adjectives

- never stand alone, must always be followed by a noun
- always form a syntactic unit with the following noun (may include other adjectives - *my beautiful daughter*)
- take the case and gender markers based on the case and gender of the following noun (see and memorize chart above)
- belong to the series of so-called *ein-words*, that is, they behave exactly like *ein-* and *kein-* (all of which are *determiners*)

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES (CONTINUED)

examples of possessive adjectives

My pen is broken.

Mein \emptyset Kugelschreiber ist kaputt.

syntactic unit = *my pen* - pen = nom/masc

mein + \emptyset (nom/masc = \emptyset) Kugelschreiber

I have her pen.

Ich habe ihren Kugelschreiber.

syntactic unit = *her pen* - pen = acc/masc

ihr + en (acc/masc = en) Kugelschreiber

Do you have his book?

Hast du sein \emptyset Buch?

syntactic unit = *his book* - book = acc/neut

sein + \emptyset (acc/neut = \emptyset) Buch

Their children are nice.

Ihre Kinder sind nett.

syntactic unit = *their children* - children = nom/plur

ihr + e (nom/plur = e) Kinder

Our family is large.

Unsere Familie ist groß.

syntactic unit = *our family* - family = nom/fem

unser + e (nom/fem = e) Familie

It is important to remember that possessive adjectives take grammar endings based on the noun that they precede. Remember to add the appropriate case and gender endings when using possessive adjectives. Study the following examples and notice all the various endings. Please note that the \emptyset is not written. It is used here as a reminder indicating a zero ending.

NOMINATIVE

masc.	<u>Sein</u> \emptyset Vater ist alt. (Sein Vater ist alt.) <i>zero ending</i>
fem.	<u>Seine</u> Frau ist schön.
neut.	<u>Sein</u> \emptyset Kind ist nett. (Sein Kind ist nett.) <i>zero ending</i>
plur.	<u>Seine</u> Eltern wohnen in Stuttgart.

ACCUSATIVE

masc.	Der Vater liebt <u>seinen</u> Sohn.
fem.	Der Junge macht eine Fete für <u>seine</u> Freundin.
neut.	Peter wäscht <u>sein</u> \emptyset Auto. (Peter wäscht sein Auto.) <i>zero ending</i>
plur.	Der Student schreibt <u>seine</u> Hausaufgaben.

DATIVE

masc.	Heinrich geht mit <u>seinem</u> Vater in den Park.
fem.	Der Professor fährt mit <u>seiner</u> Frau nach Berlin.
neut.	Hans macht mit <u>seinem</u> Kind einen Spaziergang.
plur.	Der Nachbar wohnt bei <u>seinen</u> Kindern.

GENITIVE

masc.	Das Buch <u>seines</u> Vaters ist sehr groß.
fem.	Das Auto <u>seiner</u> Mutter ist nicht teuer.
neut.	Das Spielzeug <u>seines</u> Kindes ist kaputt.
plur.	Das Haus <u>seiner</u> Eltern ist sehr schön.