LEARNING GERMAN

LEKTION 3+4

CHAPTER 1

Assembling the Basic Tools

for German Sentences

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Chapter 1

Assembling the Basic Tools for German Sentences

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This Chapter

Understanding terms used in German grammar

Identifying parts of speech

Using a bilingual dictionary

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*Y*ou need some basic grammar tools to help you assemble winning sentences. In this chapter, I explain the roles of the grammar tools — such as your trusty cases, clauses, and cognates — to help you boost your confidence in German. Next, you need to find some parts to build a sentence: parts of speech such as a noun, or better yet, a couple of nouns, a verb, an adjective or two, and a maybe a preposition. These spare parts, er, words, are easy to find in a big dictionary. At the end of this chapter, I give you pointers on how to navigate your way through a bilingual dictionary.

Throughout *Intermediate German* ͺ ͺ ͺ ͺ ͺͺ, you encounter the terms I describe in this chapter. I use these terms to explain grammar, vocabulary, and the idiosyncrasies of building sentences in German. If you're not familiar with such terms, getting the hang of the exercises in later chapters will take longer. Lingering here before jumping ahead can save you time in the future. At the very least, scan the headings and tables in this chapter quickly; when you see a term that you're fuzzy about, stop there and have a look.

If English is your native language, chances are you don't need to bother with deciding whether the words you're using are verbs, nouns, or adjectives because you know how to fit words together. Along the path to success in German, it's a different story. You're prone to roadblocks caused by not knowing which word to use, how to use it, or where to place it in a sentence. This chapter removes the barriers to your progress with German.

rasping German Grammar Terms

To get a firm grasp on German grammar, you need to make sure you can keep track of the many terms you encounter. This section clears up any fuzzy ideas you may have about the names for tools of German grammar, such as *gender, case,* and *tense.* (I use terms for parts of speech in this section, but I give a fuller explanation of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and so on in a separate section of this chapter.)

Conjugating verbs and understanding tenses

Verbs are the words of action, and a verb that isn't yet part of a sentence is an *infinitive* or is *in infinitive form*. This is the verb as it's seen in a dictionary entry, as in **wohnen** (*to live*). In English, the *to* indicates that the word is in infinitive form; the German equivalent is the **-en** ending on the verb.

When you *conjugate* a verb, you change the verb form so it fits in your sentence to convey information such as which subject is doing the action and when something happens. Conjugation involves breaking the verb down into its usable parts. Look at the conjugation of the verb *to work: I work, you work, he/she/it works, we work, you work, they work.* English has only two different spellings of *work* (with and without *s*). The same conjugation in German — **ich arbeite, du arbeitest, er/sie/es arbeitet, wir arbeiten, ihr arbeitet, sie arbeiten, Sie arbeiten** — reveals four different verb endings: **-e, -est, -et,** and **-en.**

Verbs are conjugated in different *tenses,* which describe time. The three main descriptions of time are past, present, and future. Here's a briefing on the tenses I cover in this book, with the relevant verbs underlined:

- **Present tense:** This tense describes an action that's happening now, habitual actions, or general facts. Look at the following sentence, which uses the verb **wohnen** (*to live*) in the present tense: **Ich wohne in den U.S.A.** You can translate it as *I live in the U.S.A.* or *I'm living in the U.S.A.* (See Chapter 5 for details on the present.)

- **Present perfect (conversational past):** In German, the present perfect describes something that happened in the past, whether finished or unfinished. It's used in conversational German. **Ich habe in den U.S.A. gewohnt** can mean *I have lived in the U.S.A.* or *I lived in the U.S.A.* (See Chapter 16.)

- **Simple past:** The simple past is used in formal language to describe past actions. **Ich wohnte in den U.S.A.** means *I lived in the U.S.A.* (See Chapter 17.)

- **Future:** The future, obviously, describes events that haven't yet occurred. **Ich werde in den U.S.A. wohnen** means *I will live in the U.S.A.* or *I'm going to live in the U.S.A.* German makes much less use of the future tense than English, often opting for the simple present instead. (Check out Chapter 18.)

English uses continuous (progressive) tenses — verbs with a form of *to be* and *-ing,* as in *am living* or *have been living* — to describe a temporary or ongoing action. But because German has no continuous forms, you can simply use the basic German tenses you see in the preceding list for the continuous form in English. German also uses other tenses slightly differently from English.

The subjunctive is not a tense but rather a *mood,* something that indicates *how* you describe an action — for example, as a fact, a possibility, or an uncertainty; but as with tenses, the subjunctive gets its own conjugation. (See Chapter 8 for the subjunctive.)

It's a proven fact that you don't retain vocabulary, grammar, or what-have-you the first time you're exposed to it. Or the second or third time. To combat this, use a system of recording important information that works well for you: Try making flashcards, creating an alphabetical word list, writing new expressions in meaningful sentences, and incorporating new grammar points into a short dialogue. You can also copy the questions you need to review, leaving the answers blank, so that you can redo them later.

In the following exercise, the verb is indicated in bold. Decide which verb tense it is and write your answer in the space provided (refer to the bold, underlined verbs in this section for help). Then translate the verb. The example shows the English translation of the complete sentence. You find the complete translations to the exercises like this in the Answer Key at the end of every chapter.

Q. Ich **kaufte** ein neues Auto.

A. Ich kaufte ein neues Auto. (*I bought a new car.*) **Simple past,** *bought.* The **-te** ending signals the simple past tense.

1. Ich **werde** ins Restaurant **gehen.** _____, _____.

2. Ich **habe** den Film **gesehen.** _____, _____.

3. Ich **fahre** morgen nach Chemnitz. _____, _____.

4. Ich **arbeite** dort an einem Projekt. _____, _____.

5. Ich **studierte** Mathematik an der Universität. _____, _____.

Getting gender, number, and case

The trio of gender, number, and case are closely linked to each other to help you make sense out of single words and to connect them into sentences. You need to know how to use gender, number, and case to express your ideas in understandable language. Check out the following explanations:

✓ **Gender:** People are one of two genders, masculine or feminine, right? Dogs and cats are, too. But do stones and water have a gender? In German, yes indeed! Every noun has a gender; the triumvirate **der** (*masculine*), **die** (*feminine*), **das** (*neuter*) are the choices. All three are the gender-specific versions of the English word *the*. (If this were a soccer game, the German team would've already won by a margin of two.)

When looking at German, don't confuse gender. Gender has to do with the word itself, not the meaning of the word.

✓ **Number:** Number refers to singular and plural, like *one potato, two potatoes, three potatoes.* German plurals are more intricate than English plurals. In fact, German offers five major different types of plural endings. Some plurals compare with the irregular English plurals, like *man, men* (**der Mann, die Männer**). (Check out Chapter 2 for more on making nouns plural.)

✓ **Case:** There are four cases in German: nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive. But what does that actually mean? Cases help tell you what role the word plays in the sentence. They have to do with the difference between *I* and *me* or *she* and *her*. Cases deal with the significance of the *to* in *give it to me* or the apostrophe *s* in *dog's Frisbee.*

German case endings are numerous, and they show the relationship between the words having those cases. English uses case far less often. (Chapter 2 has more info on case.)

Understanding word order

In many respects, German word order is more flexible than English word order because case plays a key role in clarifying the meaning of a sentence, something that's not nearly as powerful of a tool in English. When positioning words in a German sentence, however, there are a few major points to keep in mind.

- The simplest word order looks like English word order:

    1. Subject in first position: **Meine Wohnung** (*My apartment*)

    2. Verb in second position: **hat** (*has*)

    3. Other information follows: **einen großen Balkon** (*a large balcony*)

- Yes/no type questions have inverted word order; flip the conjugated verb with the subject: **Hat deine Wohnung einen Balkon?** (*Does your apartment have a balcony?*)

- More complex sentences — for example, a sentence with two verb parts — require more understanding of where to position the verbs in a sentence. In various sections of this book, you find out more about correct word order.

Grammar terms that describe words, parts of words, and word groupings

You need to know several terms that are used to describe words that you put together to convey meaning –– *sentence, clause, phrase,* and so on. The following list shows the most important key words I use in this book:

- **Phrase:** A group of words without a subject or a verb; most often used to describe a prepositional phrase, such as **ohne Zweifel** (*without a doubt*)

- **Clause:** A group of related words that has subject and a verb, such as **wir arbeiten . . .** (*we're working . . .*)

- **Sentence:** A group of words that represents a complete thought and has a complete sentence structure: subject, verb, and punctuation, such as **Gehen wir!** (*Let's go!*)

- **Prefix:** A "word beginning" attached to the front of a word that alters the word's meaning, such as **un** (*un-*) + freundlich (*friendly*) = **unfreundlich** (*unfriendly*)

- **Suffix:** A "word ending" attached to the back of a word that alters the word's meaning, such as (der) Kapital + **ismus** = Kapitalismus (*capital + ism = capitalism*)

- **Cognates:** Words that have the same meaning and the same (or nearly the same) spelling in two languages, such as **der Hammer** (*the hammer*) or **die Melodie** (*the melody*)

    Note: Technically, *cognates* are simply two words that come from a common ancestor.

Write the name of the term that describes the word(s) in the exercises.

Q. in der Nacht _____

A. in der Nacht (*in the night*) **phrase**

6. der Safe _____

7. Ich schwimme oft im Sommer. _____

8. die Vorarbeit _____

9. sie möchte gehen . . . _____

10. mit meiner Familie _____

11. wunder<u>bar</u> _____

Identifying Parts of Speech

In order to build a sentence, you need to figure out which words to use and how to put them together. To do this, you figure out what you want to say, identify the parts of speech you need to express your ideas, and then decide which words you want to use. Word order in a German sentence can depend on the parts of speech that you're using. In Table 1-1, I explain what these terms mean.

Table 1-1		Parts of Speech	
Name	*Definition*	*Examples*	*Notes*
Noun	A person, place, animal, thing, quality, concept, and so on	Dracula Hotel California Känguruh (*kangaroo*) Liebe (*love*)	In German, they're always capitalized. (See Chapter 2.)
Pronoun	A word that replaces, or stands in for a noun	**er** (*he*) **sie** (*she*) **uns** (*us*)	German has far more pronoun variations; the four cases influence pronoun endings. (See Chapter 2.)
Article	A word that indicates the gender of a noun	**der/die/das** (*the*) **ein/eine/ein** (*a/an*)	German has three different genders, so it uses three different articles for *the* — **der/die/das** — and *a/an* — **ein/eine/ein.** (See Chapter 2.)

Table 1-1 *(continued)*

Name	*Definition*	*Examples*	*Notes*
Verb	A word that shows action or a state of being	**denken** (*to think*) **haben** (*to have*) **reisen** (*to travel*)	Verbs are conjugated according to person (I, you, he, and so on), tense (present, past, and future), and mood (for example, the difference between *it is* and *it would be*).
Adjective	A word that modifies or describes a noun or a pronoun	**schön** (*beautiful*) **praktisch** (*practical*) **interessant** (*interesting*)	Adjectives may or may not have case endings. (See Chapters 12 and 13.)
Adverb	A word that modifies or describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb	**schnell** (*fast, quickly*) **sehr** (*very*) **schrecklich** (*terribly*)	In German, adjectives and adverbs can be the same word. (See Chapter 13.)
Conjunction	A word that connects other words or sentence parts together	**und** (*and*) **aber** (*but*) **weil** (*because*)	In German, some conjunctions affect the word order of the sentence. (See Chapter 14.)
Preposition	A word that shows a relationship between its object (a noun or pronoun) and another word in a sentence	**mit (mir)** (*with [me]*) **ohne (mich)** (*without [me]*) **während (des Tages)** (*during [the day]*)	In German, a preposition uses case (dative, accusative, or genitive) to show the relationship to its object. (See Chapter 15.)

In the sentences that follow, identify the part of speech in boldface and write it next to the sentence. Then try your hand at writing the sentence in English.

Q. Wo **sind** meine Schlüssel?

A. Wo sind meine Schlüssel? **verb.** A clue is that the verb is in second position, as is typical in German word order. *Where are my keys?*

12. **Sie** sind auf dem Tisch. _____

13. Im Zoo gibt es viele **exotische** Tiere. _____

14. Ich mag die Pinguine, **aber** die Elefanten sind noch interessanter. _____

15. Im Zoo sind **die** Tiere nicht glücklich. _____

16. Ich möchte **im** Park spazierengehen. _____

17. Hast du meine schwarzen **Schuhe** gesehen? _____

18. Deine Schuhe **liegen** unter dem Sofa. _____

19. Fahre bitte nicht so **schnell!** _____

Finding Meaning through Context

One essential tool for making sense of a foreign language is to consciously look for meaning through the context of the words. You probably do the same thing in your own language. Imagine you're reading a text that's not in your field of expertise. You instinctively look at any headings, scan the text rapidly, and get more clues from any illustrations, charts, or tables. When you're looking at a text in German, you can meet the challenge by employing the techniques you already use in your native language.

To understand what a whole sentence means, see how the words fit together. Identify the verb or verbs and a noun or pronoun, and that's the meat of your sentence. Check out how the other words are related to the subject and verb — for example, look for a prepositional phrase or a conjunction. (See the preceding section for the parts of speech.) In short, use all the tools at your disposal to understand German sentences.

The following exercise combines the tools and parts explained in the previous sections of this chapter. Each sentence has one word missing. Decide which word of the four choices is the correct one, and write your answer in the space.

0. Viele Leute ____, dass München "die heimliche Hauptstadt Deutschlands" ist.

a) behaupten   b) Sonne   c) der   d) vorwärts

A. Viele Leute **a) behaupten,** dass München die heimliche Hauptstadt Deutschlands ist. (*Many people claim that Munich is "the secret capital of Germany."*) The verb **behaupten** is in second position in the clause; next comes a second clause that is set apart by a comma.

20. Es gibt noch _____ Bezeichnungen für München.

a) der   b) Personen   c) zwei   d) das

21. Die Einwohner sagen, München ist "die Weltstadt mit Herz," ___ "das Millionendorf."

a) in   b) arbeiten   c) oder   d) interessant

22. In der Tat ___ die Stadt voller Überraschungen.

a) von   b) ist   c) in   d) können

23. Jedes Jahr wird das grösste Volksfest der Welt in München _____.

a) gehabt   b) Stein   c) geworden   d) gefeiert

24. Millionen Touristen kommen zum Oktoberfest, aber _____ Leute kommen zu spät. Warum?

    a) manche   b) haben   c) die   d) grün

25. Leider geht _____ Oktoberfest am ersten Sonntag im Oktober zu Ende.

    a) nur   b) in   c) das   d) von

Using a Bilingual Dictionary

Horses are only as good for riding as their training is. And dictionaries are only as useful for finding words as their owners' knowledge of how to use a dictionary. Except for the terms *breaking in a horse* and *breaking in a book,* that's about it for parallels (unless, of course, you want to speak German to your horse).

A bilingual dictionary is a challenge at first; take on the challenge and read the information at the front of the dictionary on how to use the dictionary. The symbols and abbreviations are your key to successful scouting for the right word. This section helps you sort out this handy tool.

Making the right choice (at the bookstore)

When choosing a bilingual dictionary, your first task is selecting the right dictionary. First and foremost is the size and quality. Don't scrimp here. Take your bathroom scales to a serious bookstore at the mall and weigh all the German/English bilingual dictionaries. Pick the two heaviest ones. (Okay, just kidding. You don't need to bring your scales, but do consider the obvious: that you'll be able to find more information in larger dictionaries.) Then compare three different entries. Start with a frequently used verb like **machen.** The following shortened dictionary entry for the verb **machen** shows you how a good dictionary organizes the information on the first two lines:

> **machen 1** *vt* (**a**) to do; *(herstellen, zubereiten)* to make. **was ~ Sie (beruflich)?** what do you do for a living?; **gut, wird gemacht** right, I'll get that done *or* will be done *(coll)*.

You may notice two abbreviations and a symbol in this entry:

- The abbreviation *vt* stands for *transitive verb;* that's a verb that can take a direct object. Other verbs have the abbreviation *vi,* which stands for an *intransitive verb;* that's a verb without a direct object.

- The second abbreviation *coll* stands for *colloquial;* expressions or words marked by this abbreviation are used in informal conversation.

- The ~ symbol represents the *headword* (the first word) **machen.** The complete expression is **Was machen Sie (beruflich)?**

Start your dictionary comparison task by following these steps:

1. **Look at how comprehensive the entries are.**

   Check for commonly used phrases, such as **was machst du denn da?** (*what in the world are you doing here?*), **mach schneller!** (*hurry up!*), or **mach's gut** (*take*

care), and compare their translations for detail and content. You should be able to find complete sentences and phrases using **machen.** Comprehensive dictionaries should offer alternative words in German (at least for frequently used verbs such as **machen**), along with possible translations. For example, after **machen,** you may find **herstellen** (*to produce, manufacture*) or **zubereiten** (*to prepare*), as in the example entry.

2. **Ask yourself which dictionary is more user-friendly.**

In other words, does the dictionary provide plenty of helpful abbreviations to help you understand the entries? Do you see clearly marked sections under the headword **machen?** They should be marked by numbers and letters in bold; in the example entry, you find **1** and (**a**). Some quality dictionaries indent the numbered sections to make them even easier to locate. You can compare whether there's a phonetic pronunciation for tricky words. Also, check that the dictionary makes ample use of symbols like *coll* to indicate usage of the word.

Apart from the abbreviations that show part of speech, gender, number, case, and so on, you find many more details in any large, quality dictionary. A (very) short list of such abbreviated terms should include *fig* (figurative), *lit* (literal), *esp* (especially), *sl* (slang), *Tech* (technology), *Psych* (psychology), *Prov* (proverb), *Jur* (law), *spec* (specialist term), *Aus* (Austrian usage), *Sw* (Swiss usage), and many more.

Make your choice wisely, and start enjoying your new **Wörterbuch** (*dictionary*). Oh, and don't forget to take the scales home with you, too.

If you prefer an online dictionary and you're not sure about how to make a good selection, follow the same criteria. Select a couple of reputable dictionary publishers, go to their online dictionaries, and find out how extensive and (hopefully accurate) they are. If you're not familiar with dictionary publishers, go to www.google.de and check out the dictionaries listed under "deutsch-englisches wörterbuch." Do a thorough Web search to find what's available and compare the sources you find.

Performing a word search

Maybe you didn't buy a paper dictionary because you found a nifty online alternative. That's all right. Online dictionaries are a good backup for finding out about words if you're on a limited budget. No matter whether you're using a hard copy or an online dictionary, you still have to know how to find the right word.

Familiarize yourself with the symbols and abbreviations used by looking up a few nouns, verbs, adjectives, and so on. See whether you understand them in the context of the dictionary entry. Instead of trying to memorize the meaning of all the abbreviations, make a photocopy of the list and keep it as a bookmark in your dictionary. Better yet, laminate it. That way you can use it as a mouse pad, a table mat, or whatever. You can then cross-check definitions to get more information on words you're looking up.

When you look up a word that has several definitions, read beyond the first or second entry line and try to decide which one suits your needs. Think about context, and decide which word fits best into the rest of the sentence. Besides meaning, here are some other factors that may affect your word choice:

✔ **Nouns:** Think of gender and number as the vital statistics of a noun.

- Gender is indicated by *m, f,* and *nt* (for masculine, feminine, and neuter) in some dictionaries.

- Number is indicated with the plural ending form for that noun. There are five main groups of noun endings. A common ending is **-en;** other nouns add **-s.** With some nouns, you see the genitive case ending indicated for that noun in addition to the plural ending.

✔ **Verbs:** Verbs also have vital statistics you need to know.

- A verb is transitive or intransitive (symbols like *vt* and *vi*). A *transitive verb* takes a direct object; an *intransitive verb* doesn't.

- A transitive verb may have a separable prefix (*vt sep*) or an inseparable prefix (*vt insep*). If the prefix is separable, it usually gets booted to the end of the sentence when the verb is conjugated.

- Some verbs are reflexive (*vr*), meaning they require a reflexive pronoun.

- The simple past form and the past participle are also indicated (in some dictionaries with *pret* and *ptp,* respectively).

✔ **Prepositions:** Prepositions in German dictionary entries show which case they have: accusative (*prep + acc*), dative (*prep + dat*), or genitive (*prep + gen*). Some prepositions have more than one case, and most prepositions have more than one meaning.

✔ **Pronouns:** Pronouns include personal pronouns (*pers pron*), such as **ich** (*I*); demonstrative pronouns (*dem pron*), such as **denen** (*them*); relative pronouns (*rel pron*), such as **das** (*that*); and reflexive pronouns (*reflexive pron*), such as **mich** (*myself*). See Chapter 2 for details on pronoun types.

Adjectives and adverbs may be the same word in German. Memorize both, and you have two words for the effort of looking up one.

Look at the dictionary entries and answer the questions about the words and abbreviations.

Reise-: ~**paß** *m* passport: ~**scheck** *m* traveller's cheque *(Brit),* traveler's check *(US)*; ~**spesen** *pl:* travelling *(Brit)* or traveling *(US)* expenses *pl;* ~**versicherung** *f* travel insurance: ~**ziel** *nt* destination.

Key for abbreviations: *m* = masculine, *(Brit)* = British usage, *(US)* = North American usage, *pl* = plural, *f* = feminine, *nt* = neuter

O. In the entry for **Reise-,** which word is feminine? Is it one word or two words in German?

A. **Reiseversicherung** is feminine, and it's **one word** in German.

26. The headword (first one) has a hyphen at the end of the word like this: **Reise-:** What does the hyphen mean?

_____

27. What's the word for *destination,* and which gender is it?

_____

14. Ich schreibe _____ Firma (f., dat.) einen Brief.

15. _____ Leute (pl., nom.) sind sehr freundlich.

16. _____ Film (m., acc.) finde ich sehr lustig.

Putting Pronouns in Place

What's the big deal about pronouns like *you, me, it, them, this, that*, and more? First of all, these plentiful, useful, and essential critters are lurking in various corners of many sentences. Second, they're great for replacing or referring to nouns elsewhere in a sentence. Third, like articles, they also need to change spelling/endings according to the role they're playing in a sentence (case) and the noun for which they may be doing the pinch hitting.

This section discusses the three types of pronouns: personal, demonstrative, and relative pronouns. (See Chapter 11 for reflexive pronouns.) In German, they're all more affected by the gender/case patterns than in English, so I put them into tables for your reference. These case tables help you to do the corresponding exercises in the chapter, and you can also go to Appendix B for reference. I arrange such tables in order of frequency of use: nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive.

Note: One more group of pronouns, called the possessive pronouns — such as **mein** (*my*), **dein** (*your*), **unser** (*our*), and so on — are, technically speaking, classified as adjectives; they have endings that resemble those of descriptive adjectives such as *interesting, tiny,* or *pink*. (See Chapter 12 for more details on possessive adjectives/pronouns.)

Personal pronouns

The personal pronoun family comes in very handy in all kinds of situations when you want to talk (or write) about people, including yourself, without repeating names all the time. You use the nominative case very frequently in most any language (every sentence, after all, needs a subject), and German is no exception. (See the earlier "Identifying the four cases" section for more on cases.)

Try to memorize the personal pronouns as soon as possible, and be sure you know all three cases (no genitive here). With German personal pronouns, the biggest difference is that you have to distinguish among three ways to formulate how to say *you* to your counterpart: **du, ihr,** and **Sie.** Other personal pronouns, like **ich** and **mich** (*I* and *me*) or **wir** and **uns** (*we* and *us*), bear a closer resemblance to English. *Note:* The genitive case isn't represented among the personal pronouns because it indicates possession; the personal pronoun **mich** (*me*) can represent only a person, not something he or she possesses.

Check out Table 2-6 for the personal pronouns. Notice that *you* and *it* don't change, and the accusative (for direct objects) and dative (for indirect objects) pronouns are identical in English. I've added the distinguishing factors for the three forms **du, ihr,** and **Sie** in abbreviated form: singular = s., plural = pl., informal = inf., formal = form.

Table 2-6	German Personal Pronouns	
Nominative (nom.)	*Accusative (acc.)*	*Dative (dat.)*
ich (*I*)	mich (*me*)	mir (*me*)
du (*you*) (s., inf.) *onuae*	dich (*you*)	dir (*you*)
er (*he*)	ihn (*him*)	ihm (*him*)
sie (*she*)	sie (*her*)	ihr (*her*)
es (*it*)	es (*it*)	ihm (*it*)
wir (*we*)	uns (*us*)	uns (*us*)
ihr (*you*) (pl., inf.)	euch (*you*)	euch (*you*)
sie (*they*)	sie (*them*)	ihnen (*them*)
Sie (*you*) (s. or pl., form.)	Sie (*you*)	Ihnen (*you*)

PRACTICE

You have this exercise with the personal pronoun left out, followed by what you need to insert in parentheses (the pronoun in English/the case/directives for *you* if that's the word needed). Go ahead and refer (liberally!) to Table 2-6.

Q. Wohnen _____ in der Nähe? (*you*/nom./s., form.)

A. Wohnen **Sie** in der Nähe? (*Do you live nearby?*)

17. Ich glaube, _____ arbeitet zu viel. (*you*/nom./pl., inf.)

18. Nein, _____ arbeiten nicht genug. (*we*/nom.)

19. Spielst _____ gern Karten? (*you*/nom. /s., inf.)

20. Ja, _____ spiele gern Poker. (*I*/nom.)

21. Kennst du _____? (*him*/acc.)

22. Ich gehe ohne _____ in die Stadt. (*you*/acc./pl., inf.)

23. Wirklich? Ich dachte, du gehst mit _____. (*us*/dat.)

24. Wie gefällt _____ der neue Bürgermeister? (*you*/dat./s., form.)

Relating to relative pronouns

You use relative pronouns (*who, whom, whose, that,* and *which*) to include extra information about a noun or pronoun expressed beforehand. You typically see relative pronouns at the front of a relative clause where they refer back to the noun in the main clause. And what is a *main clause?* It's a sentence fragment that can stand on its own and still make sense. A *relative clause* is a type of *subordinate clause,* which, as

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you can probably guess, is the type of sentence fragment that can't stand alone. (If you find the terminology here — main clause and subordinate clause — confusing, then refer to Chapter 1 for clarification.)

Look at the three key points for understanding what relative pronouns are all about:

- **In German, you must use a relative pronoun to connect the two clauses.** In English, you don't always have to. For example: **Ist das der Mann, den du liebst?** (*Is that the man [whom, that] you love?*). In this sentence, the main clause is followed by the relative clause, **den du liebst.** The second **den** is the relative pronoun connecting the two parts of the sentence.

- **You place a comma between the main clause and the relative clause.** In English, people usually include this comma only before the relative pronoun *which*. Remember that the relative clause begins with the relative pronoun. For example: **Bestellen wir die Pizza, die wir meistens essen** (*Let's order the pizza that we usually eat*). No comma needed in English, but you do have a comma separating the main clause **Bestellen wir die Pizza** from the relative clause **die wir meistens essen,** which begins with the relative pronoun **die.**

- **Word order comes into play in relative clauses.** You push the conjugated verb to the end of the clause. For example: **Gestern habe ich eine gute Freundin getroffen, die ich seit Jahren nicht gesehen habe** (*Yesterday I met a good [female] friend whom I haven't seen for years*). In the relative clause **die ich seit Jahren nicht gesehen habe,** the verb has two parts, **gesehen,** the past participle, and **habe,** which is the conjugated part of the verb. **Habe** is the last word in the sentence. (For in-depth information on the present perfect verb tense, go to Chapter 16.)

Table 2-7 shows the breakdown of the relative pronouns (*who, whom, whose, that*) by gender and case.

Table 2-7	Relative Pronouns			
Gender/Number of the Noun Being Replaced	*Nominative Case*	*Accusative Case*	*Dative Case*	*Genitive Case*
Masculine (m.)	der	den	dem	dessen
Feminine (f.)	die	die	der	deren
Neuter (n.)	das	das	dem	dessen
Plural (pl.)	die	die	denen	deren

For this relative pronoun exercise, correct the mistakes in the sentences. You have only one mistake in each sentence. Here are three types of errors to look for:

- The wrong relative pronoun — think about gender and case

- No comma or a comma in the wrong place

- Wrong word order for verb(s) in the relative clause

Take your time as you hunt for the mistake. Check out Table 2-7. If you lose patience, just guess. You find an explanation for the mistakes in the Answer Key.

Q. Sie sind die Kinder, den so viel Lärm machen.

A. Sie sind die Kinder, **die** so viel Lärm machen. (*They're the children who are making so much noise.*) The correct relative pronoun is **die** because you need the plural nominative form; it refers to the plural **die Kinder,** and it functions as the subject (nominative case) of the relative clause.

25. Hast du eine Hose, die passt besser? _____

26. Ich kenne den Supermarkt, der du meinst. _____

27. Ist das die Frau, die arbeitet bei der Polizei? _____

28. Wie gefällt dir das Hemd, die ich anhabe? _____

29. Du hast die CDs die mir gehören. _____

30. Italien ist das Land das ich besuchen möchte. _____

Demonstrating demonstrative pronouns

REMEMBER

You use a *demonstrative pronoun* when you want to emphasize or point out the pronoun that's replacing a noun. Besides the demonstrative pronouns *he, it, they,* and so on, which are the translations (in parentheses) that you see in Table 2-8, you can also translate these pronouns with the demonstratives *this, that, these,* or *those.* Similar to English, the demonstrative pronoun generally comes at the beginning of a phrase. You use demonstrative pronouns in the nominative case to emphasize the subject or in the accusative case to emphasize the object.

There's only a single difference between the nominative case and the accusative case, and that's with the masculine pronouns. **Der** is the nominative, and **den** is the accusative case. With the exception of the accusative **den,** you need to know only the gender of the noun that you're replacing — or whether it's plural — and then use that form of the demonstrative pronoun.

Table 2-8	Demonstrative Pronouns	
Gender/Number of the Noun Being Replaced	*Case (for Subjects and Predicate Nouns)*	*Accusative Case (for Direct Objects)*
Masculine (m.)	**der** (*he/it*)	**den** (*him/it*)
Feminine (f.)	**die** (*she/it*)	**die** (*her/it*)
Neuter (n.)	**das** (*it*)	**das** (*it*)
Plural (pl.)	**die** (*they*)	**die** (*them*)

words in bold are the nouns and the demonstrative pronouns that are standing in for the noun to show emphasis:

✔ Ist **der Flug** ausgebucht? (*Is the flight completely booked?*) **Der Flug** is a masculine singular noun.

Ja, **der** ist voll. (*Yes, it's full.*) **Der** is the subject of the sentence, so it's in the nominative case, and it replaces **der Flug,** which is masculine singular. **Der** is the masculine singular demonstrative pronoun in the nominative case.

✔ Wie findest du **die Trauben?** (*How do you like the grapes?*) **Die Trauben** is plural.

Die finde ich herrlich! (*I think they're terrific!*) **Die** is the direct object of the sentence, so it's accusative. **Die** pinch hits for **die Trauben,** which is plural, so you use the plural accusative demonstrative pronoun, **die.**

In the following exercise, decide which demonstrative pronoun is missing and write it in the space provided. You need to determine whether the pronoun is replacing the subject or the object in the sentence and which gender it takes.

Q. Ist die Straße relativ ruhig? Ja, _____*die*_____ ist absolut ruhig.

A. Ist die Straße relativ ruhig? Ja, **die** ist absolut ruhig. (*Is the street relatively quiet? Yes, it's absolutely quiet.*) **Die Straße** is a feminine singular noun. In the second sentence, **die** is the subject (nominative case) that replaces **die Straße,** a feminine singular noun, so you use **die,** the feminine singular nominative case demonstrative pronoun.

Kaufst du den Kuchen für das Geburtstagsfest? Nein, _____*den*_____ backe ich heute Nachmittag.

Ist das Fahrrad da drüben kaputt? Nein, _____*das*_____ ist in Ordnung.

33. Kennen Sie diese Frauen? Ja, _____ kenne ich sehr gut.

34. Wie findest du den Film? _____*Den*_____ finde ich ganz schlecht.

35. Sind die Pferde freundlich? Ja, _____*die*_____ sind freundlich.

36. Ist Frau Lachner im Büro? Nein, _____*die*_____ ist im Urlaub.