

LEARNING GERMAN

March 02, 2016

LEKTION 3

**Was ist passiert?
Es ist kalt geworden.
Wir sind gestern abend ausgegangen.
Ich bin zu Hause geblieben. 3**

conversational past: intransitive verbs

In *Kapitel Vier* you learned about transitive verbs as a necessary ingredient in understanding and learning about direct objects and the accusative case. You will remember that an intransitive verb is a verb that cannot command a direct object, i.e., there is no manipulation by the subject of a person or thing. Until now you have worked exclusively with transitive verbs, all of which use *haben* as a helping verb in the present perfect. This was a convenient way to start working with this tense since English uses *have* as its helping verb. This was not always the case, however, as you will see.

sein as helping verb

In German certain intransitive verbs use a form of *sein* instead of a form of *haben* to form the present perfect tense. This may seem odd at first glance, but this is precisely what English used to do. Note the following sentences found in the Bible:

A plague *is come* upon the enemies of Israel. (i.e., *has come*)
A Child *is born* to us this day. (i.e., *has been born*)
The Lord *is come*. (i.e., *has come*)
The Lord *is risen* from the dead. (i.e., *has risen*)

Note also sentences from the Arthurian and Elizabethan eras:

Sire, I *am returned* alive and unscathed. (i.e., *have returned*)
I *am wounded*. (i.e., *have been wounded*)
The bandits *are killed*. (i.e., *have been killed*)
The King *is gone* to do battle with his foe. (i.e., *has gone*)

Any native speaker of English understands these sentences immediately and recognizes them to be past tenses, even if they do sound a bit "strange" to our modern ears. English used to employ the verb *to be* as the helping verb for the present perfect tense with intransitive verbs that involve a change of condition or a change of position. German still uses *sein* for precisely these conditions.

The verb *sein* is used as a helping verb to form the present perfect tense for intransitive verbs that denote a *change* of condition or a *change* of position. (By change of position we mean movement from one place to another, from point A to point B.)

change of condition

The following verbs are both intransitive and denote a change of condition. They therefore require *sein* as a helping verb in the present perfect. In keeping with standard convention, when listing verbs that require *sein* as a helping verb the form *ist* will precede the past participle.

werden (wird), ist geworden to become
geschehen (ie), ist geschehen to happen
passieren, ist passiert to happen
ein-schlafen, ist eingeschlafen to fall asleep
aufwachen, ist aufgewacht to wake up
sterben, ist gestorben to die

Ich bin gestern krank geworden.
Was ist denn heute geschehen?
Warum ist das passiert?
Peter ist um elf eingeschlafen.
Ich bin um halb sechs aufgewacht.
Mein Onkel ist gestern gestorben.

frieren, ist/hat gefroren to freeze

Es hat gestern nacht gefroren.
Das Wasser ist gefroren.

The verb *frieren*, *gefroren* (to freeze) deserves a separate comment.

When a substance undergoes a change of condition when it freezes, the helping verb *sein* is used with *frieren*. Example: *Das Wasser ist gefroren*. Obviously, when water freezes it changes from a liquid to a solid.

When a substance does not change condition when it freezes, the auxiliary verb *haben* is employed with *frieren*. Example: *Es hat gestern nacht gefroren*. In this case the temperature went below freezing, but there was not change of state or condition. The air, a gas, did not change its state. It remained a gas.

change of position

The following are the more common intransitive verbs that convey a change in position, i.e., movement from one place to another. They require *sein* as the helping verb in the present perfect tense.

laufen (äu), ist gelaufen
kommen, ist gekommen
gehen, ist gegangen
bummeln, ist gebummelt
wandern, ist gewandert
fahren (ä), ist gefahren
reisen, ist gereist
fliegen, ist geflogen
segeln, ist gesegelt

Das Mädchen ist nach Hause gelaufen.
Ist sie schon nach Hause gekommen?
Warum ist er durch den Park gegangen?
Wir sind durch Hamburg gebummelt.
Die Freunde sind durch den Wald gewandert.
Sind Ute und Petra schon nach Frankfurt gefahren?
Mein Vater ist nach Europa gereist.
Ich bin letzten Monat nach Vancouver geflogen.
Letzten Sonntag sind wir gesegelt.

spazieren•gehen, ist spazierengegangen
auf•stehen, ist aufgestanden
mit•kommen, ist mitgekommen
weg•gehen, ist weggegangen
aus•gehen, ist ausgegangen
schwimmen, ist geschwommen

Wir sind im Park spazierengegangen.
Wann sind Sie heute morgen aufgestanden?
Warum sind die Kinder nicht mitgekommen?
Sind die Jungen schon weggegangen?
Luise ist nicht zu Hause. Sie ist schon ausgegangen.
Ich bin heute 500 Meter geschwommen.

Note: When the verb *fahren* means *to travel*, it is an intransitive verb and requires *sein* as its helping verb: *Ich bin nach Düsseldorf gefahren*.

When *fahren* means *to drive*, the vehicle being driven is usually mentioned explicitly. The verb *fahren* is transitive and requires *haben*: *Ich habe mein Auto nach Hause gefahren*.

bleiben

The verb *bleiben* is an intransitive verb that takes *sein* as its helping verb. Since it does not convey a change in position or condition, its use of *sein* must be viewed as an exception.

bleiben, ist geblieben

Wir sind gestern abend zu Hause geblieben.
Warum ist sie so lange da geblieben?
Ich bin zwei Jahre in Augsburg geblieben.

Übungen:

A. Concept Check. Fill in the blanks with the correct information:

1. A verb that can govern a direct object is said to be _____.
2. In the conversational past all such verbs use _____ as the helping verb.
3. A verb that cannot accommodate a direct object is known as an _____ verb.
4. If such a verb denotes a change of position or change of condition, it uses _____ as the helping verb in the conversational past.
5. The following verbs all use *sein* when constructing the conversational past. All are intransitive.

Indicate whether the verb denotes a change of condition (write C) or position (write P):

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| a. werden ____ | h. laufen ____ | n. kommen ____ |
| b. gehen ____ | i. frieren ____ | o. bummeln ____ |
| c. wandern ____ | j. fahren ____ | p. geschehen ____ |
| d. reisen ____ | k. aufstehen ____ | q. schwimmen ____ |
| e. mitkommen ____ | l. weggehen ____ | r. passieren ____ |
| f. ausgehen ____ | m. spaziergehen ____ | s. fliegen ____ |
| g. sterben ____ | | |

6. The helping verb for *bleiben* in the conversational past is _____.

B. Practice. Fill in the blanks with the correct form of *sein*:

1. Peter _____ schon nach Hause gegangen.
2. Wann _____ Sie gekommen?
3. Es _____ wirklich kalt geworden.
4. Ich _____ von Heidelberg nach Hamburg gefahren.
5. Meine Eltern _____ nach Amerika gereist.
6. Tina und ich _____ durch den Park spaziergegangen.
7. Warum _____ wir so früh nach Hause gegangen?
8. Was _____ denn passiert?
9. Ich _____ mit Renate ausgegangen.
10. Das Wasser _____ schon gefroren.

C. Guided Communication. Write sentences as directed.

1. It was 28° Celsius today. Tell me it got pretty warm this afternoon.
2. You don't see my friends. Ask me if my friends have gone away.

3. I went to bed before you came home. Say that you came home late last night.
4. You heard a loud noise on the next street. Ask a neighbor what happened over there.
5. You weren't home when I called yesterday. Say that you went window shopping with Käthe.
6. You just walked slit-eyed into the classroom. Tell the teacher you got up late this morning.
7. I didn't see your sister at home last night. Say that she went out last evening.
8. I know that your family was in the Black Forest. Ask me if we hiked through the woods.
9. The party we were at was really boring. I left early, and you stayed. Find out why I stayed there so long.
10. Your parents have always admired the cathedral in Cologne (Köln). Find out if they drove there last weekend.
11. I'm visiting you in the Alps on your vacation, and I'd like to see your parents. Say that your family went for a hike through the mountains and around the lake.
12. I just came in the room and you and your friend have guilty looks on your faces. I'm suspicious. Say that nothing happened.
13. I put some water in the ice cube tray an hour ago. Ask me if the water has frozen.
14. You just came out of the water exhausted. Say that you swam a hundred meters.
15. I was told you left work early last Friday. Find out if I got sick.
16. I expected to see you at the park today, as usual. Say that you stayed home today.
17. I was under the impression that Professor Huebel was leaving for Europe this month. Tell me that he flew to Europe last month.

D. Free Communication. Write answers to these questions and hand them in to your teacher.

1. Wie war das Wetter gestern? Was ist passiert? Hat es gefroren?
2. Wo waren Sie gestern abend? Was ist geschehen?
3. Wann sind Sie gestern abend eingeschlafen? Wann sind Sie heute morgen aufgewacht? Wann sind Sie aufgestanden? Wann sind Sie zur Uni gekommen?
4. Wer ist neulich gestorben? Was war diese Person von Beruf? Wie alt war diese Person?
5. Wohin sind Sie gereist? Beschreiben Sie die Reise? Was haben Sie gemacht?
6. Wohin sind Sie neulich geflogen? Warum?
7. Sind Sie letztes Wochenende ausgegangen oder zu Hause geblieben? Was ist geschehen?

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Teil 7,10

Es hat gedonnert, geblitzt und geregnet.

intransitive verbs: no change of condition or position

haben

Intransitive verbs that do not involve a change of position or change of condition require *haben* as the helping verb in the present perfect tense.

wohnen, **gewohnt**
stehen, **gestanden**
sitzen, **gesessen**
warten, **gewartet**
dauern, **gedauert**
arbeiten, **gearbeitet**
schlafen, **geschlafen**
regnen, **geregnet**
schneien, **geschneit**
hageln, **gehagelt**
donnern, **gedonnert**
blitzen, **geblitzt**
frieren, **gefroren**

Ich wohne jetzt in Leer, aber ich habe in Aurich gewohnt.
Sie hat die ganze Zeit hier gestanden.
Die Studenten haben die ganze Zeit gesessen.
Ich habe schon lange hier gewartet.
Die Sendung hat eine Stunde gedauert.
Er hat gestern abend zu Hause gearbeitet.
Ich habe nicht gut geschlafen.
Es hat die ganze Nacht geregnet.
Es hat letzten Winter gar nicht geschneit.
Es hat zehn Minuten lang gehagelt.
Es hat gestern nachmittag ganz laut gedonnert.
Es hat heute abend oft ganz hell geblitzt.
Es hat gestern nacht gefroren.

Übungen:

A. Concept Check. Fill in the blanks with the correct information:

1. Intransitive verbs that involve a change of condition or position use _____ as the helping verb in the conversational past.
2. Intransitive verbs that do not involve a change of condition or position use _____ as the helping verb in the conversational past.

B. Practice. Supply the past participles for the following verbs:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. blitzen _____ | 7. donnern _____ |
| 2. hageln _____ | 8. schneien _____ |
| 3. regnen _____ | 9. schlafen _____ |
| 4. arbeiten _____ | 10. dauern _____ |
| 5. warten _____ | 11. sitzen _____ |
| 6. stehen _____ | 12. wohnen _____ |

C. Guided Communication. Write sentences as directed:

1. You just moved into my neighborhood. Say that you lived in Frankfurt for many years.
2. We had a bad storm last night. Say that there was a lot of lightning. Ask me if I saw it.
3. Say that it thundered very loudly and hailed this morning. Ask me if I heard it.
4. I was supposed to meet you at the station. Say that you stood there for a while, but then you left.
5. Tell me you waited for twenty minutes.
6. I went to a meeting that you could not attend. Ask me where I sat. Ask me if I saw Mrs. Springer. Ask me if she talked a lot, and find out what she said.
7. Klara really looks awful this morning. Ask her if she slept well last night. Find out when she got in last night.
8. I am a student at the university in Graz. You are an American exchange student. Say that it snowed a lot last winter in Ohio and ask me if it snows a lot in Austria.
9. We all work at a fast food restaurant. Ask us if we worked last Saturday. Tell us you stayed home because you were sick.
10. I wanted to go to the movies with you but couldn't. Find out how the film was and how long it lasted.
11. I have just bumped into you on the street in New York. Tell me you flew to New York yesterday.

D. Answer these questions and hand the answers in to your teacher:

1. Wo wohnen Sie jetzt? Wie lange wohnen Sie schon dort? Wo haben Sie gewohnt?
2. Wann hatten Sie das Letzte Mal Ferien? Wie lange haben die Ferien gedauert?
3. Haben Sie gestern gearbeitet? Was haben Sie gemacht und wie lange haben Sie gearbeitet?
4. Haben Sie gestern nacht gut geschlafen? Wie lange haben Sie geschlafen?
5. Hat es gestern geregnet?

Continue:

Lesestück: *Ein Brief von Chris Burrow*

A *Lesestück* is a reading passage. The following reading is the first *Lesestück* encountered in this book, and it consists of a letter from a student to his former German teacher. It is quite simple, and you should comprehend it rather quickly.

The purpose of a *Lesestück* is to give you practice in reading for general comprehension. This goal differs from the goals connected with *Dialoge* and *Geschichten*. The *Dialoge* you have been working with are primarily for aural and oral practice and familiarization, and the *Geschichten* you read are for mastery of content and practice in narrating—orally or in writing, or sustaining speech. The *Geschichten* serve additionally as a springboard to sustained personalized speech.

When reading for comprehension, your task is to read for main ideas. This is what you do when you read the newspaper. You read quickly for the gist of the paragraphs in the article you are reading. Sometimes you skim an article and make predictions as you go along, sometimes you read every word or go back to reread sections, and sometimes you do all of these things within a reading. What enables you to skim an article is complete mastery of the language and knowledge of or experience with the topic of the reading. If either is lacking or shaky, you slow down and read more carefully. If your linguistic or experiential deficiency is considerable, your comprehension of the passage may be only partial, and what you think you comprehend may be quite different from the objective/real message contained in the passage. That is, your comprehension may be faulty.

You should not expect to be able to "sail through" a reading passage in German unless virtually every word is familiar to you, the level of grammatical sophistication is commensurate with your exposure to the language at that time, and the topic under consideration is a familiar one. Most of the readings in this book will deal with familiar topics, but some will contain new information—new grammar, new vocabulary, and new idioms. This is intentional. It is important that you learn to make intelligent guesses and predictions at times, especially when a dictionary is not available. As always, if your guesses are right and your predictive hunches about how the text will continue to unfold are on target, your reading will continue to make sense.

In these reading passages the vocabulary range will be greater than what you can produce, and there will be new words and expressions to deal with. When you experience a new word that is not immediately understood, try to guess its meaning from the context that you have understood to that point. Look at the spelling of the word to see if a familiar word is "embedded" within it, and "listen" to your mind's ear—most of us subvocalize when we read—to see if the word "sounds" like one you already know. Since "dictionary thimbling" is a habit you should, ideally, not develop, many of the new words you encounter in a comprehension-based text will not be found in the German-English vocabulary in the back of the book.

There will also probably be some new grammatical structures in the readings. These will usually be constructions that will be encountered in the next chapter or two. Don't worry too much about how phrases or idiomatic expressions look, just make educated guesses at their meaning. Generally, you'll have little or no difficulty doing that.

If, despite your best efforts, you still can't figure something out, keep going. One hundred percent comprehension is, after all, not always realistic, even in one's own native language. The purpose of these readings is to "stretch" your linguistic knowledge a bit beyond what you have been exposed to. Read the story over again a second or third time. Your comprehension of the story will usually grow with each re-reading.

Lesen Sie jetzt bitte:

Ein Brief von Chris Burrow

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München, 2. Oktober

Lieber Professor Burkhardt!

Wir sind vergangenen Freitag gut in München angekommen, aber die letzte Woche war so aufregend°, daß ich wenig°° Zeit und Ruhe für Briefschreiben hatte. Meine Gasteltern sind unglaublich nett und haben mir schon viel gezeigt. Voriges Wochenende sind wir in die Berge gefahren. An meinem zweiten Tag in Deutschland sind wir schon gewandert!

°hektisch

Ich habe natürlich die ersten paar Tage nicht so viel gesprochen, weil ich ein bißchen unsicher war. Herr und Frau Winkler sagen immer: "Ach, Sie haben so gut Deutsch gelernt," aber ich habe wirklich mehr zugehört als selbst gesagt.

Letzte Woche haben wir zusammen die Universität in München gesehen. Ich habe mit einigen Leute über Seminare usw.° gesprochen und viele gute Tips bekommen. Nächste Woche wird's ernst! Das Wintersemester beginnt am 5. November.

°und so weiter, =etc.

Meine Eltern haben mir mehr warme Kleider geschickt, aber ich habe trotzdem schon viele Dinge gekauft. Wir haben noch Herbst, aber es ist schon ziemlich kalt geworden.

Also, Herr Burkhardt, ich glaube, ich habe genug für heute geschrieben. Hoffentlich höre ich bald von Ihnen!

Viele Grüße,
Ihr Chris Burrow

It's important that you get some kind of feedback on how much you comprehended, and there are many ways to demonstrate comprehension. You can draw pictures of what you think you understood; you can answer multiple-choice or true-false questions; you can chronologically rearrange randomly presented sentences from the story; you can act out the story through skits or games; or you can go through a series of exercises that check your processing skills. Your instructor or another person skilled in the language can then evaluate your responses and provide feedback. Sometimes, however, these verification procedures leave something--sometimes a lot--to be desired. Not everyone can draw well enough to demonstrate comprehension. Some people are very uncomfortable with skits or games that are artificial or appear childish or embarrassing. In some cases you will not comprehend a multiple choice or true-false question and miss it, even though you did comprehend the story! Lastly, information processing strategies are essentially remedial in nature and most useful *when* it becomes clear there are serious gaps in comprehension.

There are other ways to verify you understanding

If someone asked you about a book or article you read or a film you saw, you would probably tell the person about it in your own words, hitting the main points and embellishing some of them in detail. This is the most natural way for most of us to verify or communicate comprehension, and it can be done orally or in writing. Generally speaking, when you read something, challenge yourself to recall the main points as they were presented in the text, much as you do in the *Nacherzählung* of a *Geschichte*. Since mastery of content is not the goal of the *Lesestücke*, you won't normally feel as confident about what you have read as in the case of a more carefully controlled *Geschichte*. Don't be overly concerned about that, however. It's to be expected.

Übung:

Write a brief synopsis of this letter in English (not a translation!!!) in your own words that conveys the thrust of this letter. Five to seven sentences should suffice. Assume that you were telling someone else about what Chris Burrow had written to his old German teacher. After you've done that, see if you can't do the same thing in German with simple sentences! Make sure you're German version is not a translation of your English one, however. Hand these two synopses in to your teacher.

1. Schreiben Sie bitte eine kurze Nacherzählung auf englisch! (5-7 Sätze)
2. Schreiben Sie jetzt eine kurze Nacherzählung auf deutsch! (5-7 Sätze)

Chris Burrows' letter also appears in the textbook for work in class.