

Grammatical Terms

You have already learnt a large number of grammatical rules since you started learning German, and there are more to come. To understand these rules, we need words to describe whatever grammatical phenomenon we are dealing with. Don't worry if some of these words are unfamiliar, all will be explained in lessons in due course. However, it would be helpful if you could familiarise yourself with as many of these words as possible.

Read the definition or explanation for each of the terms listed below, and the example given in German.

Then write your **own** example for each term listed with a number below, and marked (a) or (b), if applicable. You can choose an English example if this is possible for a particular term but this doesn't work for all of them.

A. Parts of Speech

1. Adjective An adjective describes a characteristic of something.

e.g. **alt, teuer, intelligent**

2. Adverb An adverb is a word which describes when, where, how, etc. something is happening,

e.g. **morgen, draußen, leider, allein**

In German, adjectives can be used as adverbs to describe how the action of a verb is done, e.g. Er geht **schnell**. (= He walks **fast**.)

3. Article There are (a) definite articles, e.g. **die, den**, and (b) indefinite articles, e.g. **ein, einem**

4. Conjunction Conjunctions are words which connect clauses.

(a) After coordinating conjunctions, e.g. **und, denn**, word order does not change.

(b) After subordinating conjunctions, e.g. **wenn, dass, als**, the conjugated verb moves to the end of the clause.

5. Noun Words for people, things, or concepts,

e.g. **Bruder, Anna, Buch, Freundschaft**

6. Possessive Words indicating possession,

e.g. **mein, unser**

7. Preposition Words which show the relationship between nouns or pronouns,

e.g. **von, unter, bis, während**

Prepositions are followed by specific cases,

e.g. **ohne** and **für** are followed by the accusative case,

mit and **zu** are followed by the dative case,

in and **auf** (dual-case prepositions) are followed by the accusative, if there is movement from A to B involved, and the dative, if there isn't,

trotz and **wegen** are followed by the genitive case.

8. Pronoun A word used instead of a noun,

e.g. **er** (instead of 'Peter'), **wir** (instead of 'meine Klasse')

Pronouns appear in different cases, e.g. the accusative for **er** is **ihn**, and for **wir** is **uns**.

9. Verb This is the most important word in a clause. It describes an action or state,

e.g. **lesen**, **sein**, **arbeiten**

Verbs need to be conjugated, i.e. their ending needs to match the subject of a clause,

and they can appear in different tenses, e.g. ich **schlafe** (= I sleep/ I am sleeping) as opposed to ich

hatte geschlafen (= I had slept/ I had been sleeping).

B. Different Types of Verb

10. Auxiliary Verb A verb used to form a different tense of the passive voice,

e.g. **werden** to form the future tense, as in 'Ich **werde** Pizza essen.'

There are three auxiliary verbs in German.

11. Modal Verb These are almost always used together with another verb of which they

describe the manner or mode,

e.g. Sie **möchte** einen Film sehen, aber sie **muss** Hausaufgaben machen.

German has six modal verbs.

12. Separable Verb A basic verb with a separable prefix which is used as follows:

(a) present tense: Sie **sieht** oft **fern**.

(b) imperfect tense: Sie **sah** oft **fern**.

(c) perfect tense: Sie hat oft **ferngesehen**.

(d) future tense: Sie wird oft **fernsehen**.

(e) as an infinitive: Sie hofft, am Wochenende **fernzusehen**.

13. Inseparable Verb A basic verb with an inseparable prefix, e.g. **be-**, **ver-**, which is used like a 'normal' verb, except that the past participle does not contain the usual **ge**, e.g. Ich habe meine Freundin **besucht**.

14. Regular Verb A verb which can be used in all tenses by applying common rules, e.g. **spielen**:

present: er spielt (rule: verb stem + **t**)

imperfect: er spielte (rule: verb stem + imperfect **t** + imperfect tense ending)

perfect: er hat gespielt (rule: auxiliary verb + past participle: **ge** + stem + **t**)

15. Irregular Verb A verb for which you need to know, or look up in your textbook, how it is used, e.g. **nehmen**:

present: er nimmt

imperfect: er nahm

perfect: er hat genommen

C. Verb Forms (and other verb-related matters)

16. Verb Stem The part of the verb which carries the meaning, e.g. **spiel-**, **hör-**

17. Verb Ending The end of a verb, as determined by grammatical rules, e.g. **spielst** → the ending for 'du', or **hören** → the infinitive ending, and the present tense ending for **wir** and **sie** (= they)

18. Finite Verb Also called a conjugated verb. This is a verb which has an ending to match the subject, e.g. ich **mache**, ihr **macht**

Nos. 18 and 19 are non-finite verb forms.

19. Infinitive The basic form of the verb you will find in a dictionary. Most German verbs use **-en** as the infinitive ending, but a small minority only use **-n**, e.g. **ändern** (= to change), **bügeln** (= to iron).

20. Past Participle Combined with an auxiliary verb, past participles are needed to form the perfect and

Often, indirect objects can be translated using **to** in English (= Stefan gives a present **to Anna**.)

Indirect objects use the dative case.

26. Adverbial

A grammatically non-necessary part of a clause describing when, how long for, how, with whom, where etc. something is happening.

Adverbials can consist of a single adverb, e.g. **bald** (= soon) or can be a longer phrase, e.g. **am zweiten Sonntag jedes Monats um 8 Uhr abends** (= on the second Sunday of each month at 8 o'clock in the evening). The single word as well as the longer phrase give an answer to the question **when** something happens.

27. Clause

A grammatical unit consisting of at least a **subject** and a **conjugated verb**.

A clause can be very short, e.g. **Sie schläft**. (= She is sleeping.)

or it can contain a number of additional features,

e.g. Leider **schläft sie** am Wochenende immer auf dem Sofa im Wohnzimmer.

(= Unfortunately, she always sleeps on the sofa in the living room at the weekend.)

28. Main Clause

A clause which makes sense on its own and can stand by itself,

e.g. **Ich mag meine Schwester**. (= I like my sister.)

29. Subordinate Clause

A clause which doesn't make sense on its own and which, for that reason, needs to attach itself to a *main clause*,

e.g. **weil sie lustig ist** (= because she is funny) doesn't make sense on its own, but you can use it together with a *main clause*, e.g. *Ich mag meine Schwester, weil sie lustig ist*.

E. Case-related issues

30. Cases

Different cases are used to highlight the relationship between different parts of the sentence.

Prepositions are also always followed by particular cases, as are verbs.

Case (and gender) is shown in the form of articles and pronouns, the endings of adjectives, possessives, and sometimes the endings of nouns.

(a) The nominative case is used for

- The subject of a clause

e.g. **Der Mann** gibt dem Jungen den Kuli.

- after the verbs **sein**, **werden**, **bleiben** and **scheinen**

e.g. Der Mann ist **der beste Lehrer**.

(b) The accusative case is used

- for the (direct) object of a clause,

e.g. Der Mann gibt dem Jungen **den Kuli**.

- always after prepositions like **ohne**,

e.g. Ich sehe den Film ohne **den Mann**.

- after dual-case prepositions if there is movement involved,

e.g. Wir gehen in **den Park**.

(c) The dative case is used

- for the indirect object of a clause,

e.g. Der Mann gibt **dem Jungen** den Kuli.

- always after prepositions like **von**,

e.g. Das ist der Kuli von **dem Mann**.

- after dual-case prepositions if there is no movement involved,

e.g. Wir sind in **dem** (or: im) **Park**.

- after some verbs like **helfen** and **danken**,

e.g. Sie hilft **dem Mann**.

(d) The genitive case is used

- to indicate possession,

e.g. Das ist der Kuli **des Mannes**.

- after prepositions like **statt** and **trotz**,

e.g. Ich habe statt **des Mannes** die Frau gesehen.

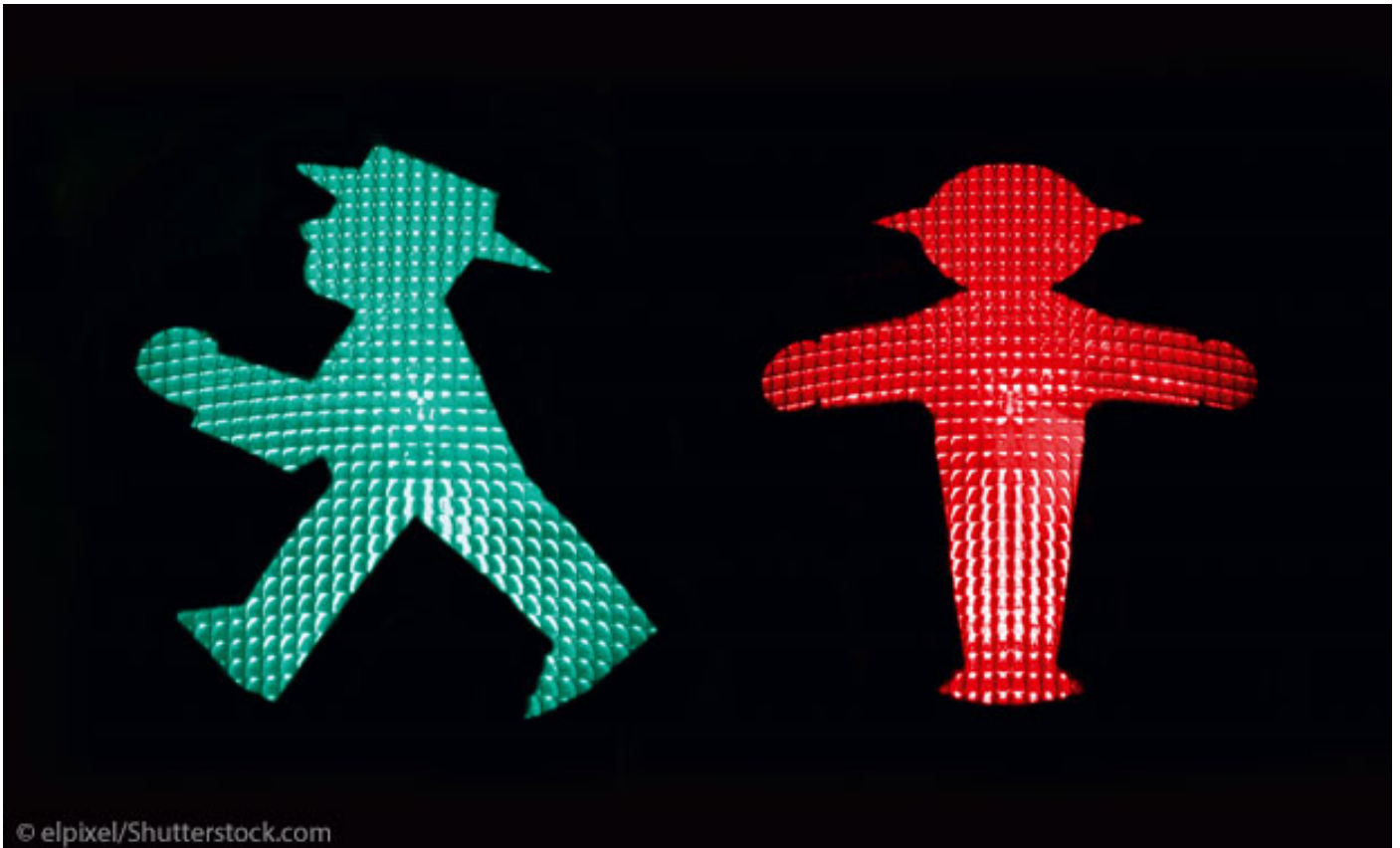
Remember that you need to write your **own** example for each term listed above, and subsections (a) or (b), if applicable.

English examples are also welcome if it is possible to illustrate a particular term in the context of the English language, but this doesn't work for all of the grammatical terms.

Read the text below. On the next page, you can find a detailed vocab list, with words appearing in the same order as they do in the text. You do not have to understand every single word, just enough to be able to answer the 12 questions, which are at the end of this document.

Kleines grünes Männchen

Lieben Deutsche ihre Ampeln? Irgendwie: ja. Besonders im Osten haben die Menschen sehr spezielle Gefühle für ihr Ampelmännchen.



In anderen Ländern gibt es bis heute das Klischee: Deutsche warten auch um drei Uhr morgens in einer komplett leeren Straße an einer roten Ampel. Auch dann, wenn sie zu Fuß gehen. Das Klischee stimmt: Deutsche Fußgänger und Autofahrer halten sich an Ampeln – von den Alpen bis zur Nordsee und von Nordrhein-Westfalen bis nach Sachsen. Dort im Osten hat man sowieso eine sehr spezielle (und emotionale!) Beziehung zu ihnen.

Denn im Medizinischen Dienst des Verkehrswesens der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (DDR) hat mehr als 30 Jahre lang ein Verkehrspsychologe mit dem Namen Karl Peglau gearbeitet. Am 13. Oktober 1961 hat er in Ostberlin seine Vorschläge für neue Ampelsymbole vorgestellt. Eines davon war ein sehr spezifisches Piktogramm für Fußgänger: das Ost-Ampelmännchen. Es ist ein bisschen dick, hat eine lustige Nase und trägt einen Hut. Die meisten assoziieren sofort das Wort niedlich mit dem kleinen Mann. Peglau weiß als Psychologe genau, warum er dieses Design gewählt hat: Wir vertrauen Menschen schneller, die uns sympathisch sind.

Außerdem bekommt das Signal durch den Hut und den etwas dickeren Körper mehr Fläche. Es ist also besser zu sehen. Und das Design ist dynamisch: Das rote Ost-Ampelmännchen hat seine Arme oben. So zeigt es klar: Stopp, nicht weitergehen! Und das grüne Ost-Ampelmännchen geht mit ziemlich viel Schwung über die Straße. Auch Experten sagen: Peglaus Design ist sehr effektiv.

Trotzdem: Nach dem Ende der DDR sollte es weg. Die Politik war der Meinung, dass sein statischer Kollege aus dem Westen den Job in ganz Deutschland machen soll. Das aber war für viele Ostdeutsche ein Affront. Sie wollten ihr niedliches Ampelmännchen behalten. Karl Peglau und ein „Komitee zur Rettung der Ampelmännchen“ haben protestiert. Mit Erfolg: Das Ost-Ampelmännchen durfte bleiben. Es hat dann auch offiziell seinen Platz in den Richtlinien für Signalanlagen (Rilsa) bekommen. Und nicht nur dort: Das Ost-Ampelmännchen ist bei Deutschen aus Ost und West und auch bei vielen ausländischen Touristen Kult. Besucher fotografieren die Ampelmännchen gern. Und als Souvenir reisen die Männchen auf Postkarten, T-Shirts oder Tassen um die ganze Welt.

Kleines grünes Männchen - Vokabeln

das Männchen (-)	little man	die meisten	most people
die Ampel(n)	traffic light	assoziiieren	to associate
irgendwie	somehow	sofort	immediately
besonders	especially	niedlich	cute
der Mensch(en)	person	wissen (weiß)	to know
das Gefühl(e)	feeling	genau	exactly
andere	other	wählen	to choose
das Land(“er)	country	vertrauen	to trust
bis heute	until now	sympathisch	likeable
das Klischee(s)	cliche	etwas	<i>here:</i> slightly
warten	to wait	der Körper(-)	body
morgens	in the morning	die Fläche(n)	surface area
leer	empty	also	so/ thus
zu Fuß	on foot	der Arm(e)	arm
stimmen	to be correct	oben	up/ above
sich halten	to keep to/ observe	zeigen	to show
die Alpen	the Alps	klar	clearly
die Nordsee	the North Sea	weiter/gehen	to walk on
Nordrhein-Westfalen	<i>name of German region</i>	der Schwung	momentum
Sachsen	<i>name of German region</i>	trotzdem	nevertheless
der Osten	the East	weg sollen	to be done away with
sowieso	anyway	ganz	al/ whole
die Beziehung(en)	relationship	behalten	to keep
der Medizinische Dienst	medical service	die Rettung	rescue
das Verkehr	traffic	der Erfolg(e)	success
die Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR)		der Platz(“e)	space
	GDR/ East Germany	die Richtlinie(n)	guideline
der Vorschlag (‘e)	suggestion	die Signalanlage(n)	traffic signals
vor/stellen	to introduce	ausländisch	foreign
davon	of it	der Kult	cult
der Fußgänger (-)	pedestrian	der Besucher(-)	visitor
dick	fat	reisen	to travel
lustig	funny	die Tasse(n)	cup (mug)
der Hut(‘e)	hat	die Welt	world

Kleines grünes Männchen – Fragen (Antworten auf Englisch, bitte)

1. What kind of relationship do East Germans have with their traffic lights?
2. What cliché do other nations have of the Germans?
3. Is this cliché based on facts?
4. What was the job of Karl Peglau?
5. How is the little Eastern traffic light man's look described?
6. Why was this design chosen?
7. Other reasons for the choice?
8. What was the plan after the collapse of the East German state?
9. How did the East Germans react?
10. What is the status of the little traffic light man now?
11. How do visitors respond?
12. How has the little traffic light man become known outside Germany?

Verb Tenses

At the heart of each clause is the verb. This means that verbs deserve to be treated with respect. Verbs do of course need to be conjugated to match the subject of the clause, but they can also change or they can combine with other verbs to form different tenses. Students sometimes struggle with verb tenses in a foreign language, simply because they do not quite understand the tenses in English. Your grasp of German grammar will be enhanced if you have a good understanding of your own language.

A. Match the tenses below to the English verb forms:

a. present	1. I will go
b. imperfect	2. I had gone
c. perfect	3. I went
d. pluperfect	4. I will have gone
e. future	5. I go
f. future perfect	g. I have gone

B. For each verb form in German, e.g. **ich gehe**, there are two possible translations in English: the simple form of the verb, e.g. **I go**, and the continuous form of the verb, e.g. **I am going**.

In task A, there is a list of simple verb forms in different tenses. Write the continuous form of these verb tenses.

C. How many of the verb tenses in task A can you translate into German without looking them up?