

Mastering German Conversation Set 1  
*German Cases, Articles and Adjective Endings*



Mastering  
German  
Conversation

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The prerequisite to speaking proficient German is understanding how gender, case, articles and adjective endings interrelate. The only way to learn the concepts, and then utilize them in free-flow speech, is to practice speaking. Our guided imitation drills in Set 1 do this.

In this document, we provide an overview of the concepts associated with this grammar, grammar presented learned in Set 01. Review this document as you are progressing through the drills. You should *not* try to memorize these concepts by studying the tables below. The drills do this for you.

The basic concepts are:

- Every noun is associated with a gender: masculine, feminine, neuter
- Every noun is used in a case: nominative, accusative, dative, genitive
- The case is determined by sentence elements: the verb, the preposition and the context
- Every noun is preceded by either a definite article (such as 'the'), an indefinite article (such as 'a') or no article
- Adjectives associated with nouns have endings; the endings are determined by all the above

Important: trying to learn all of these concepts at one time is information overload. Therefore, we have separated them into categories in different sets and units. For Set 1, we have excluded prepositions. The individual units in Set 1 are categorized by case.

- Unit 01: nominative case
- Unit 02: accusative case
- Unit 03: dative case
- Unit 04: genitive case
- Unit 05: review and basic travel vocabulary

Each case specific unit will cover the corresponding gender, definite and indefinite article, and adjective endings.

By isolating the concepts, learning becomes manageable.

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Examples of using a masculine gender noun in the different cases is shown below. Pay attention to the changing of the articles in the following sentences.

1) Der Mann ist da.	The man is there.	'Mann' is in the nominative case.
2) Ein Brief ist da.	A letter is there.	'Brief' is in the nominative case.
3) Ich sehe den Mann.	I see the man.	'Mann' is in the accusative case.
4) Ich gab dem Mann einen Brief.	I gave the man a letter.	'Mann' is in the dative case. 'Brief' is in the accusative case.
5) Ich sehe den Brief des Mannes.	I see the letter of the man.	'Brief' is in the accusative case. 'Mann' is in the genitive case.

Note for example (4): 'I gave the man a letter' is a translation in keeping with the words order in German. An English speaker might rather say 'I gave a letter to the man'.

Note for example (5): 'I see the letter of the man' is the literal translation. An English speaker would more readily say 'I see the man's letter'.

Let us add adjectives. Pay attention to the adjective endings.

1) Der grosse Mann ist da.	The big man is there.
2) Ein langer Brief ist da.	A long letter is there.
3) Ich sehe den grossen Mann.	I see the big man.
4) Ich gab dem grossen Mann einen langen Brief.	I gave the big man a long letter.
5) Ich sehe den langen Brief des grossen Mannes.	I see the long letter of the big man.

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Examples using a feminine gender noun.

- |                                 |                                |   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1) Die Frau ist da.             | The woman is there.            | 'Frau' is in the nominative case.                                     |
| 2) Eine Blume ist da.           | A flower is there.             | 'Blume' is in the nominative case.                                    |
| 3) Ich sehe die Frau.           | I see the woman.               | 'Frau' is in the accusative case.                                     |
| 4) Ich gab der Frau eine Blume. | I gave the woman a flower.     | 'Frau' is in the dative case.   |
| 5) Ich sehe die Blume der Frau. | I see the flower of the woman. | 'Blume' is in the accusative case.<br>'Frau' is in the genitive case. |

And now for the adjectives:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) Die schöne Frau ist da.                   | The beautiful woman is there.                |
| 2) Eine rote Blume ist da.                   | A red flower is there.                       |
| 3) Ich sehe die schöne Frau.                 | I see the beautiful woman.                   |
| 4) Ich gab der schönen Frau eine rote Blume. | I gave the beautiful woman a red flower.     |
| 5) Ich sehe die rote Blume der schönen Frau. | I see the red flower of the beautiful woman. |

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Examples using a neuter gender noun.

- |                                       |                             |   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1) Das Kind ist da.                   | The child is there.         | 'Kind' is in the nominative case.   |
| 2) Ein Spielzeug ist da.              | A toy is there.             | 'Spielzeug' is in the nominative case.                                    |
| 3) Ich sehe das Kind.                 | I see the child.            | 'Kind' is in the accusative case.   |
| 4) Ich gab dem Kind ein Spielzeug.    | I gave the child a toy.     | 'Kind' is in the dative case.   |
| 5) Ich sehe das Spielzeug des Kindes. | I see the toy of the child. | 'Spielzeug' is in the accusative case.<br>'Kind' is in the genitive case. |

Let us add adjectives:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) Das verwöhnte Kind ist da.                        | The spoiled child is there.                   |
| 2) Ein teures Spielzeug ist da.                      | An expensive toy is there.                    |
| 3) Ich sehe das verwöhnte Kind.                      | I see the spoiled child.                      |
| 4) Ich gab dem verwöhnten Kind ein teures Spielzeug. | I gave the spoiled child an expensive toy.    |
| 5) Ich sehe das teure Spielzeug des Kindes.          | I see the expensive toy of the spoiled child. |

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See the tables below showing the forms of the articles and adjective endings according to gender and case.

This table defines the definite article ('the' in English) as used for the three genders in the four cases.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Accusative</b>	<b>Dative</b>	<b>Genitive</b>
masculine	der	den	dem	des + 'es' or 's'
feminine	die	die	der	der
neuter	das	das	dem	des + 'es'
plural	die	die	der	der

Note that the plural form is the same regardless of the gender of the singular form.

This table defines the indefinite article ('a' in English) as used for the three genders in the four cases.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Accusative</b>	<b>Dative</b>	<b>Genitive</b>
masculine	ein	einen	einem	eines + 'es' or 's'
feminine	eine	eine	einer	der
neuter	ein	ein	einem	eines + 'es'

Note that there is no plural form of the indefinite article.

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The following three tables define the adjective endings depending upon gender, case and type of article preceding the associated noun.

Adjective Endings following the definite Article

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Accusative</b>	<b>Dative</b>	<b>Genitive</b>
masculine	+ 'e'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'
feminine	+ 'e'	+ 'e'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'
neuter	+ 'e'	+ 'e'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'
plural	+ 'en'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'

Adjective Endings following the indefinite Article

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Accusative</b>	<b>Dative</b>	<b>Genitive</b>
masculine	+ 'er'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'
feminine	+ 'e'	+ 'e'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'
neuter	+ 'es'	+ 'es'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'

Adjective Endings following no Article

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Accusative</b>	<b>Dative</b>	<b>Genitive</b>
masculine	+ 'er'	+ 'en'	+ 'em'	+ 'en'
feminine	+ 'e'	+ 'e'	+ 'er'	+ 'er'
neuter	+ 'es'	+ 'es'	+ 'em'	+ 'en'
plural	+ 'e'	+ 'e'	+ 'en'	+ 'er'