

sample pages

German Grammar

for self-study

A1 - B1

by Stefanie Weiß

German Pro

www.german-pro.com

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Why I wrote this book

German is not an easy language to learn — especially on your own.

According to the Foreign Service Institute, it takes around 800 hours of intensive classroom study to reach an intermediate level of proficiency (B2). In self-study, that time frame can become considerably shorter — or longer.

The real challenge for most learners is not finding motivation or high-quality materials. The challenge is navigating a jungle before you even know what the terrain looks like. Without a clear path, it's easy to lose orientation, circle around the same topics, and eventually give up — not for lack of intelligence, but for lack of structure and guidance.

That is why I wrote this book.

It won't make learning German easy, but it is designed to make it **accessible**, **manageable**, and far **less overwhelming**.

Many of you holding this book in your hands are not complete beginners. Perhaps you've already taken a course or two and stopped after a while — not because of laziness or lack of effort, but because you felt confused, overwhelmed, or simply inadequate, which may have led to a loss of confidence. If that sounds familiar, then this book is exactly right for you. It will help you close your gaps and rebuild your foundation, step by step, getting the essentials right from the start.

Of course, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to mastering a language. Learners with different first languages often face different challenges. Still, this book aims to be a **one-size-fits-most** solution: it is written for anyone who speaks English fluently and wants to learn German grammar independently.

What makes this book different

Many grammar books are written as reference works — systematic, complete, and useful for quick lookups, but difficult to *learn* from. They often present “everything” on one topic (for example, all verb forms) before moving on to the next block (for example, all case endings). This structure works well for review, but not for genuine learning.

This book takes a different path. It introduces grammar in a natural learning order, where each concept builds on what came before, and earlier topics reappear when it's time to deepen them. It follows a **spiral learning approach**: rather than moving in a straight line and touching each topic only once, it circles back to familiar concepts at higher levels of difficulty. Each return adds context, depth, and clarity — reflecting how language is acquired naturally, through repetition and gradual mastery, just like in a real classroom.

The content follows the progression from A1 to B1, the three basic proficiency levels of the Common European Framework. You will find that many of the concepts in this book go surprisingly deep. I have resisted the temptation to underestimate my readers by over-simplifying difficult ideas for the sake of quick results. True progress in language learning comes from genuine understanding, not from shortcuts.

And while this is not a vocabulary trainer or a conversation course, you will naturally absorb a large amount of useful words along the way — through hundreds of authentic example sentences and realistic exercises.

This approach does, however, require a certain amount of trust — trust in my process and in the path I've laid out for you. Every chapter has been written, rewritten, and refined countless times to make the learning sequence as logical and interconnected as possible. It may not be perfect, but it was created with great care, thought, and an enormous amount of passion for both teaching and learning.

So I ask for a small advance payment in trust: follow the course structure without skipping any chapters, and you'll discover that most of your questions will be answered naturally — at the moment when you're ready to understand them.

Some useful hints before we begin

Before we start, I'd like to share a few thoughts that might help you get the most out of this book. They're not rules — just gentle reminders from someone who has seen many learners succeed and struggle in different ways.

This book is *not* a communication course — it will not teach you to hold fluent conversations. But it provides the solid grammatical foundation that real communication is built on. The more structure you understand, the more confidently you can express yourself.

Most learners don't struggle because they can't speak — they struggle because they can't speak *accurately*. This book will not train your fluency, but your precision. Knowing this from the start helps you set the right expectations.

When I was a child, my mother made me learn the piano — something I am now grateful for, though I wasn't at the time. I used to rush through my pieces to memorize them as quickly as possible, hoping to reduce the amount of "thinking time" needed to read the notes and move my fingers. I repeated melodies over and over until they felt automatic — but all I really did was memorize and automate my mistakes. My piano teacher, whose hair probably turned a little grayer every week, had to fight to slow me down and make me practice properly — finger by finger, note by note, no matter how tedious it felt.

Language learning works the same way.

Many learners — and sometimes even teachers — value *fluency* over *accuracy*. The result, after months of study, is often a student who speaks with the *fluency of a B2 learner* but the *accuracy of an A2 learner*. That's not a good place to be. No matter how fluent you sound, persistent grammatical errors will hold you back. This is especially true if your goal is to work or study in a professional German-speaking environment, where correctness matters just as much as fluidity.

So this book is here to help you slow down — not to make you slower, but to help you get things right. Once the foundation is solid, fluency will follow naturally.

To make the most of this book:

- Work through the chapters in order, but in small steps.
- Study regularly, even if only for 15 minutes a day — short, steady sessions work better than long marathons.
- Understanding is essential, but memorization is also sometimes necessary.
- Highlight, write, and take notes — make this book your personal workspace.
- Revisit challenging chapters after a few days. Each time you do, you'll see them with clearer eyes.
- Each chapter includes explanations, examples, and exercises to help you apply what you've learned. For the best results, write your answers in a notebook — writing reinforces memory and understanding.

You can download the *answer keys* to all exercises for free at:

www.german-pro.com

On the same website, you can also share your feedback or comments about this book. I'd love to hear what worked well for you, what could be improved, and what you'd like to see in future revised editions. Your feedback is always welcome — it helps me make this book even better for the next generation of learners.

And now: have fun learning!

8. The functions of the Present tense (A1)

So far, all the verb conjugation patterns you have learned apply to one specific tense — the **Present tense**. It places an action in the here and now. However, the uses of the Present tense in German and English differ considerably.

Take this simple German sentence: **Ich sehe einen Film.**

This could be translated into three different English tenses, depending on context:

The simple present:	I watch a movie.
The present continuous:	I am watching a movie.
The simple future:	I am going to watch a movie / I will watch a movie.

German uses the Present tense not only for actions happening right now, but also for regular (habitual) actions and sometimes even for planned or near-future events. The correct interpretation depends on the context or explicit time expressions like *jetzt* (now) or *morgen* (tomorrow).

Ich arbeite heute. (*I am working today.*)

Ich arbeite morgen. (*I am going to work tomorrow.*)

Both of these sentences use the Present tense. The difference in time is expressed only through the time word — not by changing the verb tense, as in English.

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But most importantly, there is no such thing as a continuous tense in German! You cannot *be doing* something, you can only *do* something.

Here's an example of a common mistake made by English speakers trying to translate a sentence literally. What the person is trying to say in English is:

I am reading a book.

And here is what the person says in German:

Ich bin lesen ein Buch. (*Wrong!*)

But that is grammatically incorrect. What they should say instead is:

Ich lese ein Buch.

If you really want to emphasize that you are reading that book right now, you may add the word *gerade* (which roughly means right now or currently) after the verb:

Ich lese gerade ein Buch.

But here's the key point: The action (i.e. the verb) of the German sentence is either being or reading, but not both! In German, only one verb can carry the action of the sentence. You cannot use *sein* alongside another verb to express what you're doing. The verb itself — *lese*, *gehe*, *esse* — must express the action directly.

Later, when we move on to past tenses, you'll encounter more differences between English and German where the use of tenses doesn't align one-to-one. Just a quick preview (no need to remember this yet): Where English often uses the Simple Past to describe past events, German frequently uses the Present Perfect instead.

Ich habe einen Kaffee getrunken. (*I drank a coffee, instead of: I have drunk a coffee.*)

No worries, we'll get to that in time!

10. The functional elements of a sentence (A1)

You won't get very far in German grammar without a clear understanding of the essential components that make up a sentence. These are not just German-specific — they exist in almost every language. And while this might feel a bit dry or „grammatically“ at first, there's truly no better time to lay the groundwork. If you already have some experience learning languages, you may even be familiar with much of what follows.

Let's begin with the basic grammatical terminology:

- **Subject:** Describes the person or thing doing the action.

Mein Vater liest die Zeitung.

Frage: Wer oder was liest...

(My father reads the newspaper.)

(Question: Who or what reads...)

- **Verb:** (sometimes called the predicate): the action itself.

Mein Vater liest die Zeitung.

Frage: Was macht mein Vater?

(My father reads the newspaper.)

(Question: What action does my father do?)

- **Object:** Describes the person or thing receiving the action.

Mein Vater liest die Zeitung.

Frage: Was liest mein Vater?

(My father reads the newspaper.)

(Question: What does my father read?)

- **Adverbial of time:** Describes when the action is taking place.

Mein Vater liest am Morgen die Zeitung.

Frage: Wann liest mein Vater die Zeitung?

(My father reads the newspaper in the morning.)

(Question: When does my father read the newspaper?)

- **Adverbial of place:** Describes where the action is taking place.

Mein Vater liest im Garten die Zeitung.

Frage: Wo liest mein Vater die Zeitung?

(My father reads the newspaper in the garden.)

(Question: Where does my father read the newspaper?)

- **Adverbial of mode:** Describes how the action is taking place.

Mein Vater liest langsam die Zeitung.

Frage: Wie liest mein Vater die Zeitung?

(My father reads the newspaper slowly.)

(Question: How does my father read the newspaper?)

- **Adverbial of cause:** Describes why the action is taking place.

Mein Vater liest aus Interesse die Zeitung.

Frage: Warum liest mein Vater die Zeitung?

(My father reads the newspaper out of interest.)

(Question: Why does my father read the newspaper?)

Some components of a sentence are essential, while others are optional. In general, adverbials are optional — they enrich the sentence but aren't needed for it to be grammatically complete. The subject, verb, and often the object, however, are usually essential and cannot be left out.

To help make this clearer, think of a German sentence like a human body. There are **bones**, there is **flesh** and there is „**decoration**“.

- The **bones** are the elements of a sentence that are
 - a) necessary for a complete and functional sentence and
 - b) have a fixed, immovable position within the sentence. (e.g. **verbs**)
- The **flesh** are sentence elements that are
 - a) also necessary, but
 - b) whose position in the sentence is more flexible. (e.g. the **subject** and **object**)
- The **decoration** is everything that
 - a) makes the sentence richer or more expressive, but
 - b) is not required for grammatical completeness (e.g. **adverbials**)

Here is a fun example: Try to figure out which of the elements in this sentence you could eliminate and still have a properly functional (although shorter and less detailed) sentence:

Das Kind isst am Morgen im Kindergarten mit schmutzigen Fingern und einem glücklichen Lächeln den Kuchen. *(The child eats the cake in the morning at the kindergarden with dirty fingers and a happy smile.)*

Now remove the decoration — all the adverbials of time, place, mode, and cause — and you're left with the structural core:

Das Kind isst am Morgen im Kindergarten mit schmutzigen Fingern und einem glücklichen Lächeln den Kuchen.
Das Kind isst den Kuchen.

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This sentence is grammatically complete and meaningful. Everything else, while informative or entertaining, is grammatically optional.

Exercise 9

Determine what sentence element the underlined words represent.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| 1. | <u>Am Wochenende</u> fahre ich mit dem Auto nach München. | adverbial of time |
| 2. | Am Wochenende fahre <u>ich</u> mit dem Auto nach München. | ..... |
| 3. | Am Wochenende fahre ich <u>mit dem Auto</u> nach München. | ..... |
| 4. | Am Wochenende fahre ich mit dem Auto <u>nach München</u>. | ..... |
| 5. | <u>Ich</u> kaufe morgen einen neuen Kühlschrank im Internet. | ..... |
| 6. | Ich kaufe <u>morgen</u> einen neuen Kühlschrank im Internet. | ..... |
| 7. | Ich kaufe morgen <u>einen neuen Kühlschrank</u> im Internet. | ..... |
| 8. | Ich kaufe morgen einen neuen Kühlschrank <u>im Internet</u>. | ..... |
| 9. | <u>Seine Kinder und seine Frau</u> liebt er sehr. | ..... |
| 10. | Seine Kinder und seine Frau liebt <u>er</u> sehr. | ..... |
| 11. | Seine Kinder und seine Frau liebt er <u>sehr</u>. | ..... |

Exercise 18

Determine the word type of the words listed below (noun, pronoun, adjective, article or verb).

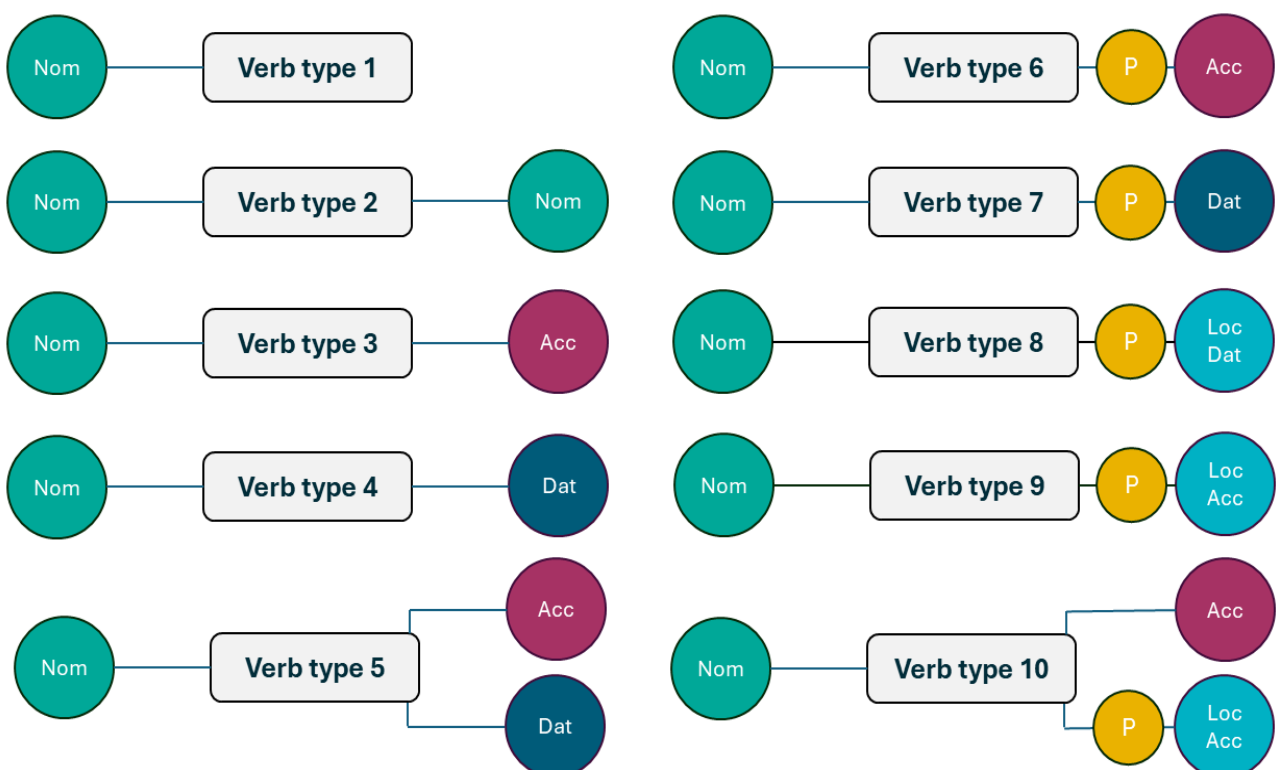
- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. er | 9. dir |
| 2. teuer | 10. Tasche |
| 3. trinken | 11. den |
| 4. Lehrer | 12. welches |
| 5. einen | 13. vergessen |
| 6. schnell | 14. sehen |
| 7. mich | 15. unsere |
| 8. kein | 16. lecker |

26. Verbs and their additions (A1)

Think of a German sentence as a kind of complex **molecule**. At the heart of this molecule lies the **verb**, which acts as the nucleus — carrying the “genetic code” of the sentence. Each verb has the capacity to connect with different kinds of **additions** (or attachments), which shape the final structure of the sentence.

To stay with the metaphor: every verb comes with a set number of “docking stations” or receptors, and only certain kinds of sentence elements can bind to each one.

Some sentence „molecules” are short and simple, while others grow more complex. German allows for an astonishing variety of such structures — but in this course (levels A1 to B1), we’ll focus on the ten most common and useful types. You can see a visual preview of them in the chart below.



It may seem a bit overwhelming at first glance. But as we go through each type one by one, there will be nothing intimidating left — and by the end, you might even be able to draw the whole diagram from memory.

Each sentence's structure is defined by the verb it uses. In the chart, we distinguish ten verb types, each of which brings with it a specific set of additions.

All verbs require at least one: the **Nominative addition** (short: Nom), which you already know as the subject and which needs to be present in all sentence types.

More complex verb types can take two or even three additions — like **Accusative objects** (short: Acc) or **Dative objects** (short: Dat), or sometimes both.

Sometimes, a verb connects to its object only via a **preposition** (short: P). In that case, the preposition acts like a binding joint between the verb and the object. This structure is called a prepositional object.

And last but not least, some verbs require a **local adverbial** (short: Loc Dat or Loc Acc) — typically introduced by a preposition — to express movement or location. Depending on the preposition, local adverbials may take Accusative or Dative case. However, they are not objects in terms of function, so they are marked with their own color in the visual.

This surely all sounds very cryptic and abstract to you, so let us look at it from a more practical angle and examine one example sentence for each of the ten verb types:

Verb type 1:	Das Baby <u>schläft</u> .	(The Baby is sleeping.)
Verb type 2:	Sie <u>ist</u> eine gute Schülerin. 123XYZ	(She is a good student.)
Verb type 3:	Die Katze <u>trinkt</u> die Milch.	(The cat is drinking the milk.)
Verb type 4:	Das Kind <u>antwortet</u> dem Lehrer.	(The child is answering the teacher.)
Verb type 5:	Der Mann <u>gibt</u> der Frau die Blumen.	(The man gives the woman the flowers.)
Verb type 6:	Ich <u>warte</u> auf den Bus.	(I am waiting for the bus.)
Verb type 7:	Er <u>träumt</u> von einem neuen Auto.	(He is dreaming of a new car.)
Verb type 8:	Wir <u>wohnen</u> in einer Stadt.	(We live in a city.)
Verb type 9:	Wir <u>fahren</u> in eine Stadt.	(We drive into a city.)
Verb type 10:	Ich <u>stelle</u> die Tasse auf den Tisch.	(I place the cup onto the table.)

You can use the terms verb type and sentence type interchangeably. In more technical grammar, these are known as valency patterns — a term that simply refers to the number and type of elements a verb can or must combine with.

Of course, it's not always this black and white. Some verbs can function in more than one category and appear in multiple sentence types. But we'll leave those nuances for later — what matters now is understanding the basic structures.

In the **A1** part of this course, we will cover **sentence types 1-4**, which introduce the most essential building blocks. At level A2, we will add types 5-7, keeping types 8-10 for the more advanced B1 level.

We've now seen that verbs take different kinds of additions, and that these additions appear in different cases. In order to start building your own sentences, you'll now need to learn how to form the cases themselves.

That's where we're headed next: how to apply Nominative, Accusative, and Dative case — and after that, which verbs create sentence types 1-4.

12. The German tenses - overview (A2)

A **tense** is a specific conjugation pattern applied to the verb to show the **time** in which the action of a sentence takes place. So far, we've only covered the Present tense. In this A2 course, we will now begin to explore the other tenses — step by step.

German grammar includes a total of **6 different tenses**. One **present** tense, two **future** tenses and three **past** tenses:

tense	example
Simple Present	Er ist glücklich. (He is happy.)
Present Perfect	Er ist glücklich gewesen. (He has been happy.)
Simple Past / Preterit	Er war glücklich. (He was happy.)
Pluperfect	Er war glücklich gewesen. (He had been happy.)
Future I	Er wird glücklich sein. (He will be happy.)
Future II	Er wird glücklich gewesen sein. (He will have been happy.)

Interestingly, German tenses are often used quite differently from their English equivalents — so they're not truly equivalent after all. For example, we typically use the Present tense to talk about the future, and the Future tenses to make guesses about the present — which sounds quite hilarious.

Also, as you've already learned, there is no continuous form in German. That means: *"I read a book"* and *"I am reading a book"* both simply become *„Ich lese ein Buch“*. That's it - No need for creative work-arounds.

In this A2 course, we'll focus on adding the Present Perfect and Simple Past to your knowledge of the Present tense. The Future tenses and the Pluperfect will follow later at B1 level.

For now, let's begin with a quick look at the structural mechanisms behind the tenses in general.

13. Simple tenses versus compound tenses

When comparing the different tenses listed in the previous table and analyzing how they are constructed, one major difference becomes immediately clear: the number of verb parts required for each tense.

Generally speaking, we can differentiate between:

- simple tenses:** those that consist of only one verb
- compound tenses:** those that consist of two or more verbs, usually a construction of helping verb and past participle and / or infinitive

Part of that terminology is probably new to you, so let us begin there and work our way forward:

a) Helping verb

In German, the verbs **haben**, **sein** and **werden** can be used as helping verbs, also known as **auxiliary verbs**. This means that they „help“ to construct the tense grammatically, but they don't actually carry any meaning themselves. The meaning is still contained in the **main verb**. You can think of it like the wooden stick that holds your sandwich together: the stick holds the structure, but it doesn't hold any of the flavor.

Ich habe gegessen. (*I have eaten.*)

The meaning of the activity is contained in the word **gegessen**. **Haben** only supports it by showing that the activity took place in the past.

b) Past participle

The past participle is a special verb form that's used to build many German tenses — especially the Present Perfect, the Pluperfect, and the Passive voice. It carries the main meaning of the sentence when used with a helping verb.

You can recognize it by its typical form: it usually starts with **ge-** and ends in **-t** or **-en**, like **gemacht**, **gelernt**, or **gegessen**. You can think of the past participle as the main ingredient in your sandwich — it's where the real flavor is. The helping verb helps create the structure, but the participle is what gives your verb meaning.

c) Infinitive

As you already know, this is the base form of a verb as you find it in a dictionary, usually ending in **-en**. Examples: **machen**, **kaufen**, **sein**, **essen**,...

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With the above three components we are now able to build any of the six German tenses. Which does not mean that you need to be able to do that just yet. It only means that you know what a tense can be made of and that you recognize those components when you see them.

Our focus is still on pattern recognition, not on active production. That will take much longer and needs to be done step by step. So for now, let us take a relaxed and bird's-eye look at the following table and allow ourselves to look at it through the analytical lens only. You will learn to actually do all of this yourself later.

tense	type	components	example
Simple Present	simple	single main verb	Er ist glücklich. (<i>He is happy.</i>)
Present Perfect	compound	helping verb + past participle	Er ist glücklich gewesen . (<i>He has been happy.</i>)
Simple Past / Preterit	simple	single main verb	Er war glücklich. (<i>He was happy.</i>)
Pluperfect	compound	helping verb + past participle	Er war glücklich gewesen . (<i>He had been happy.</i>)
Future I	compound	helping verb + infinitive	Er wird glücklich sein . (<i>He will be happy.</i>)
Future II	compound	helping verb + past participle + infinitive	Er wird glücklich gewesen sein . (<i>He will have been happy.</i>)

Don't panic over the complexity of the tenses. We will learn each of those step by step, starting with the two most important past tenses: the **Present Perfect** and the **Preterit** tense.

31. Causal and concessive connectors (A2)

Do you remember that when we learned about prepositions, there were two distinct ways to classify them: either by the case that they take (Accusative, Dative, two-way) or by the context that they appear in (temporal, causal, modal, local).

It is very much the same with sentence connectors. We can group them in two ways:

1. By **grammatical structure** — this tells us how a connector behaves in the sentence, and how it influences word order (conjunctions, subjunctions, conjunctive adverbs)
2. By **function** — this tells us what kind of relationship the connector expresses between the two ideas (causal, concessive, conditional, temporal, declarative,...)

These two ways of classifying connectors are not in conflict — they complement each other. For example, *weil* is both a causal connector and a subjunction. *Trotzdem* is both concessive in meaning and a conjunctive adverb in form. So whenever you encounter a connector, it's useful to ask:

- What kind of structure does it create? (**grammar**)
- What type of information does it express? (**function**)

For the A2 level, we'll concentrate on two key types of sentence connectors by function: **causal** (expressing reasons) and **concessive** (expressing contrast or contradiction). These two types already give you the tools to form complex and nuanced statements in everyday conversation.

Having decided what functional relationship both clauses have, we now have three grammatical options how to express it — depending on which type of connector you choose:

function	conjunction	subjunction	conjunctive adverb
causal (reason)	denn	weil	deshalb
concessive (contrast)	aber	obwohl	trotzdem

For example:

Heute ist das Wetter schön. Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad zur Arbeit. (**causal** relationship)

- Conjunction: Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad zur Arbeit, **denn** das Wetter ist schön.
- Subjunction: Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad zur Arbeit, **weil** das Wetter schön ist.
- Conjunctive adverb: Das Wetter ist schön. **Deshalb** fahre ich mit dem Fahrrad zur Arbeit.

Heute ist das Wetter schlecht. Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad zur Arbeit. (**concessive** relationship)

- Conjunction: Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad zur Arbeit, **aber** das Wetter ist schlecht.
- Subjunction: Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad zur Arbeit, **obwohl** das Wetter schlecht ist.
- Conjunctive adverb: Das Wetter ist schlecht. **Trotzdem** fahre ich mit dem Fahrrad zur Arbeit.

The meaning stays the same in each case — only the grammatical structure changes. This gives you a lot of creative flexibility: depending on your level of confidence or the flow of your sentence, you can choose whichever form works best for you.

Exercise 24

Determine whether the relationship between each sentence pair is causal or concessive. Then connect them in all three possible ways: using *denn*, *weil* and *deshalb* for causal relationships and *aber*, *obwohl* and *trotzdem* for concessive relationships.

Example: Sarah liebt die Sonne. Sie fährt jeden Sommer ans Mittelmeer.

(Sarah loves the sun. She drives to the Mediterranean Sea every summer.)

Solution: Sarah fährt jeden Sommer ans Mittelmeer, denn sie liebt die Sonne.

Sarah fährt jeden Sommer ans Mittelmeer, weil sie die Sonne liebt.

Sarah liebt die Sonne. Deshalb fährt sie jeden Sommer ans Mittelmeer.

1. Ich bin neu in Berlin. Ich kenne hier nur wenige Leute. *(I am new to Berlin. I only know a few people here.)*

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2. Er hat kein Geld. Er geht jedes Wochenende ins Kino. *(He has no money. He goes to the cinema every weekend.)*

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3. Meine Eltern interessieren sich sehr für Politik. Sie sehen jeden Abend Politiksendungen. *(My parents are very interested in politics. They watch political news every evening.)*

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4. Meine beste Freundin arbeitet viel. Sie hat immer Zeit für mich. *(My best friend works a lot. She always has time for me.)*

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5. Er war nicht nett zu dir. Du darfst nicht so schlecht über ihn reden. *(He was not nice to you. You must not talk so badly about him.)*

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6. Es hat viel geregnet. Die Pflanzen sind heute saftig grün. *(It rained a lot. The plants are juicy green today.)*

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21. Prepositions with Genitive (B1)

Until now, we've only worked with prepositions that take the Accusative or Dative case, and sometimes both. At this point, you'll get to know a small group of prepositions that are followed by the Genitive case. Just like all other prepositions and also sentence connectors, these **Genitive prepositions** can be grouped by meaning into **categories** such as temporal, causal, concessive or local. This helps you understand their function more easily and choose the right preposition for what you want to say.

To use these prepositions, place them before a **noun group**, put that noun group into the Genitive case, and use the entire phrase as an **adverbial** — either at the beginning of the sentence (pre-field) or after the verb (middle field).

The most common Genitive prepositions are listed below, grouped by meaning and illustrated with simple examples.

preposition	category	example
während (during)	temporal (time-related)	<i>Während des Unterrichts</i> darf man nicht telefonieren. (You're not allowed to make phone calls during class.) Ich höre <i>während der Fahrt</i> Musik. (I listen to music during the ride.)
wegen, aufgrund (due to, because of)	causal (reason or cause)	<i>Wegen des Unfalls</i> ist die Straße gesperrt. 123XYZ (Because of the accident, the road is closed.) Ich kann <i>aufgrund meiner Krankheit</i> nicht Auto fahren. (I can't drive due to my illness.) <i>Wegen dir</i> habe ich meinen Bus verpasst. (Because of you I have missed my bus.)
trotz (despite)	concessive (contrasting information)	<i>Trotz seiner Probleme</i> hat er immer gute Laune. (Despite his problems, he is always in a good mood.) Wir fahren <i>trotz des schlechten Wetters</i> ans Meer. (We're going to the sea despite the bad weather.)
innerhalb (within, inside of)	temporal / local (time or space-related)	<i>Innerhalb der Stadt</i> muss man langsam fahren. (Within the city, you have to drive slowly.) Bitte kommen Sie <i>innerhalb der Öffnungszeiten</i> in die Praxis. (Please come to the practice within opening hours.)
außerhalb (outside of)	temporal / local (time or space-related)	Leider rufen Sie <i>außerhalb der Sprechzeiten</i> an. (Unfortunately, you're calling outside of consultation hours.) Man darf nur <i>außerhalb des Gebäudes</i> rauchen. (Smoking is only allowed outside the building.)

Even though these prepositions officially require the Genitive case, many native speakers use the **Dative** instead in everyday conversation. This is especially common in spoken German. For example, instead of the standard form „wegen des Wetters“, you'll often hear „wegen dem Wetter“. Both are understood, but the Genitive is still preferred in formal or written language.

Only when used with a **personal pronoun** does the Dative case become the norm, like in the example sentence above: „Wegen dir habe ich meinen Bus verpasst.“ That is because personal pronouns are nowadays no longer used in Genitive.

Exercise 18

Complete the sentences by inserting the given noun group in brackets in the Genitive case.

Example: Wegen ist der Flug verspätet. (das starke Gewitter)

Solution: Wegen des starken Gewitters ist der Flug verspätet. (*Due to the strong thunderstorm, the flight is delayed.*)

1. Trotz hat sie die Prüfung bestanden. (die schwierige Aufgabe)
(*Despite the difficult task, she passed the exam.*)
2. Während darf man nicht sprechen. (der Vortrag)
(*You're not allowed to speak during the lecture.*)
3. Aufgrund konnte er nicht teilnehmen. (sein Unfall)
(*Due to his accident, he couldn't participate.*)
4. Innerhalb haben wir sehr viel gelernt. (die erste Woche)
(*Within the first week, we learned a lot.*)
5. Außerhalb findet man oft günstigere Wohnungen. (das Stadtzentrum)
(*Outside the city center, you often find cheaper apartments.*)
6. Trotz war die Veranstaltung ein Erfolg. (der Regen)
(*Despite the rain, the event was a success.*)
7. Wegen konnte ich nicht schlafen. (der Lärm)
(*Because of the noise, I couldn't sleep.*)
8. Aufgrund wurde die Präsentation verschoben. (ein technisches Problem)
(*Due to a technical problem, the presentation was postponed.*)

Exercise 19

Form adverbials with the prepositions and noun groups in brackets and use them in the pre-field.

Example: Es war laut im Restaurant. (während; das Abendessen)

Solution: Während des Abendessens war es laut im Restaurant.

1. Wir bleiben zu Hause. (wegen; der starke Verkehr)
(*Because of the heavy traffic, we're staying at home.*)
.....
2. Er ist heute zur Arbeit gegangen. (trotz; seine Krankheit)
(*Despite his illness, he went to work today.*)
.....
3. Ich habe die Hausaufgabe erledigt. (innerhalb; eine Stunde)
(*Within an hour, I finished the homework.*)
.....
4. Es gibt einen Parkplatz. (außerhalb; das Gebäude)
(*Outside the building, there is a parking space.*)
.....
5. Der Unterricht muss ausfallen. (wegen; ein Stromausfall)
(*Because of a power outage, the class has to be cancelled.*)
.....

22. Subordinate clauses by function (B1)

As your German becomes more advanced, it's no longer just about building correct sentences — it's about connecting ideas in meaningful ways. **Subordinate clauses** are a particular type of adverbial (See chapter 2: „*Types of adverbials (advanced)*“), that allow you to express time, cause, contrast, intention, and other relationships between actions or events.

In the A2 module of this course, you were already introduced to some key **subjunctions**: **dass**, **weil**, **wenn**, and **obwohl**. You also learned how word order changes in subordinate clauses — with the verb moving to the end — and how to combine main and subordinate clauses by placing the subordinate clause either in the pre-field or the middle field of the main clause. For a quick refresher, see the sections “*Word order in subordinate clauses*” and “*Connecting subordinate clauses to main clauses*” in the A2 module.

In this section, we'll build on that foundation. The table below gives you a clear overview of the most important types of subordinate clauses, grouped by their **function**. For each type, you'll find the most common **subjunctions** along with a simple example sentence to help you understand both their meaning and sentence structure.

clause type	subjunction	function
temporal	als, wenn, bevor, nachdem, während, seitdem	time, sequence
Als ich ein Kind war, hatte ich einen Hund. (When I was a child, I had a dog.)		
causal	weil, da	cause, reason
Ich bin gestresst, weil ich zu viel Arbeit habe. (I am stressed, because I have too much work.)		
concessive	obwohl	contradiction, contrast
Obwohl er sehr beschäftigt ist, hat er mir beim Umzug geholfen. (Although he is very busy, he helped me move house.)		
conditional	wenn, falls	condition
Wenn du kein Geld hast, dann lade ich dich ein. (If you don't have money, then I'll invite you.)		
final	damit	goal, intention
Sie studierte Medizin, damit sie eine berühmte Ärztin werden konnte. (She studied medicine, so that she could become a famous doctor.)		
modal	indem	method, manner
Sie besteht die Prüfung, indem sie jeden Tag lernt. (She passes the exam by studying every day.)		
object	dass, ob, W-question words	reported speech
Er fragt mich, ob es hier eine Apotheke gibt. (He asks me whether there is a pharmacy around here.)		

We'll explore each clause type in more detail in the chapters that follow. By the end, you'll be able not only to recognize these structures in written and spoken texts, but also to use them confidently in your own communication.