

Tenses

Now that you (hopefully) have a good understanding of what verbs are, that there are different types of verbs, and that verbs are linked to the subject of the sentence, (the subject is the person or thing 'doing' the verb) it is time to look at tenses.

A tense indicates when something is done, was done, will be done, will have been done etc.

We change how we use the verbs to indicate this change in the time of the event.

In English we have many more tenses than in German. This means that you cannot always translate word for word what you say in English into German, because the tense which you are using in English may not exist in German, and if you do try to do this you may end up saying something which is incomprehensible, or which may convey the wrong meaning.

In English we may use a certain tense as the most likely tense which we use automatically to convey a certain meaning. This may not be the same tense which we use automatically in German to convey the same meaning. For example, in English you are more likely to say 'I did the work' but in German you are more likely to say 'I have done the work.'

If you learn and understand the following five tenses well, you will be able to do all you need to do in German. There are a few more than five tenses in German, but they are all combinations of the five mentioned. Do your best to learn all you can about the following five tenses. They are

1. Present Tense
2. Future Tense
3. Imperfect Tense (also called the preterite; I like to call it the simple past tense as well)
4. Perfect Tense
5. Pluperfect Tense

We will now look at these tenses

1. The Present Tense

You use this tense when you are talking about what is being done, what someone is doing **now**, or what someone does **regularly**. This is the tense we used when you learnt about verbs.

It is really important to remember that there is only one present tense in German, whereas English has several. I have mentioned this before in the section on verbs (bottom of page 4 and top of page 5) In English you can say the following and they all basically mean the same:

- a. I work on Saturdays (simple present tense)
- b. I am working on Saturdays (present continuous tense, also called present progressive tense)
- c. I do work on Saturdays (I don't even know what this tense is called in English grammar; perhaps you do)

In German you only have the first one (option a) available to you. You can only use the simple present tense and say

- a. Ich arbeite am Samstag

If you try to translate the other two options into German you end up talking rubbish!

You **cannot** translate option b. The present continuous tense (or any continuous tense) does not exist in German. If you did nevertheless try you might wonder what you do when you come to the bit where you added the letters 'ing' to the English word 'work.' (-ing is called the gerund in English grammar; it does not exist in German) I have far too often seen people just like you trying to translate from English into German and they end up saying something like 'Ich bin arbeiten am Samstag.' This is simply wrong and is likely to be misunderstood by a German.

So, remember, if ever you are trying to figure out how to say something in German and in your head you are trying to translate a sentence in English which has 'ing' on a verb, you must not fall into the trap and think it will be OK to translate each word in turn. Maybe the examples below will hammer this point home.

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I am working = ich arbeite.	(not: ich bin arbeiten)
you are working = du arbeitest.	(not: du bist arbeiten)
he is working = er arbeitet.	(not: er ist arbeiten)
we are working = wir arbeiten.	(not: wir sind arbeiten)
you-guys are working = ihr arbeitet.	(not: ihr seid arbeiten)
they are working = sie arbeiten.	(not: sie sind arbeiten)
you are working (polite form) = Sie arbeiten.	(not: Sie sind arbeiten)

Be aware that we use the gerund form often in questions in English

e.g. are you working on Saturday?

You cannot translate this straight into German, as the tense which you are trying to translate straight into German does not exist in German, and it is not in your power to start adding to and changing the German language. Instead you need to use a tense which does exist in German, and in German there is only one present tense, and that is the simple present tense.

Therefore, are you working on Saturday? = work you on Saturday? = arbeitest du am Samstag? (and **not** 'bist du arbeiten am Samstag?' as this is nonsense in German)

Option c is also not possible.

I do work on Saturdays = I work on Saturdays = Ich arbeite am Samstag (not: ich mache arbeiten am Samstag)

You can of course say that you 'you do **the** work on Saturday (ich mache die Arbeit am Samstag) but this is a slightly different meaning from 'I work on Saturdays.' 'Die Arbeit' is a noun and is 'the work' in English, and 'arbeiten' is a verb and is 'to work' in English.

Remember therefore that we have only one present tense in German and we have to use this tense and this tense only when we talk about what is being done, what someone is doing or does **regularly** in the present. Have an awareness of the present tenses which you use in English and that conveying meaning in German correctly is not simply a matter of translating words.

In the present tense you need a set of endings on the stem of the verb. You have learnt all about this in the section on verbs. Here they are again with the verb 'wohnen as an example.

wohnen

ich wohne	wir wohnen
du wohnst	ihr wohnt
er, sie, es wohnt	sie wohnen
	Sie wohnen

As you know quite a large number of verbs are irregular, mostly for the 2nd & 3rd person singular (du & er, sie, es) only. Here is an example with the verb geben.

geben

ich gebe	wir geben
du gibst	ihr gebt
er, sie, es gibt	sie geben
	Sie geben

You have plenty of information about irregular verbs in the present tense in the section on verbs. Try to remember as many as you can (e.g. ich lese, but du liest, ich nehme, but du nimmst, etc.) You can see how these change by looking at the 3rd person singular present column on an irregular verb list. See the list at the end of the notes on tenses.

2. The Future Tense

If you want to express that something will happen in the future, you can use the future tense. This is very easy. You need to know the verb **werden**. On its own this verb means 'to become,' but in the future tense it means the same as the English verbs 'will' or 'shall.' Here is the verb **werden**.

ich werde	wir werden
du wirst	ihr werdet
er, sie, es wird	sie werden
Sie werden	Sie werden

Ich werde Deutsch lernen = I will learn German or I shall learn German or I am going to learn German.

This example will have shown you that in English we have several ways of expressing the future, e.g

I will go to Germany in the summer
I shall go to Germany in the summer
I am going to Germany in the summer
I am going to go to Germany in the summer
I will be going to Germany in the summer
In the summer I go to Germany etc.

Do not confuse any of these with the much simpler German future tense! We have one future tense only and it is really simple. Here is what you do.

Make sure that you use the correct part of the verb **werden**. This is the verb which has to agree with the subject.

Make sure that the other verb is always in the infinitive and that you place it **at the end** of the sentence, e.g.

Ich werde Deutsch lernen .	Wir werden Deutsch lernen .
Du wirst Deutsch lernen .	Ihr werdet Deutsch lernen .
Er/Sie/Es wird Deutsch lernen .	Sie werden Deutsch lernen .
Sie werden Deutsch lernen .	Sie werden Deutsch lernen .

The way you use **werden** to make the future tense is just like a modal verb in the present tense.

Do not confuse the German verb 'wollen' (to want to) with the verb 'werden.' 'Ich will Deutsch lernen' = I want to learn German and this expresses a desire to do something, whereas 'Ich werde Deutsch lernen' = I will learn German and this expresses that something will take place in the future.

Quite commonly, Germans use the present tense to say that something will happen in the future, as long as it is clear that it will take place in the future, e.g.

Im Sommer fahre ich nach Deutschland. = In the summer I go (or: I am going to go) to Germany.

The expression of time *im Sommer* makes it clear that this event will take place in the future.

Past Tenses.

You need to know 3 past tenses. Obviously we need to use these when we wish to say that something took place at some time in the past. Make sure that you understand that there are different past tenses, that you understand how they differ, and that you cannot just choose at random which one to use.

3. The Imperfect Tense (or preterite, or simple past tense)

This is the easiest past tense to learn and is very similar to the simple past tense in English, which is the past tense which we use most commonly in English. Firstly you need to understand what it is you do when you speak English to convey that something took place in the past.

In the present tense you say

I play football

In the simple past tense you say exactly the same but add a very small 'ed' sound to the verb and you say

I play**ed** football.

When we hear this small addition (a soft **d**) we immediately know that the event is not taking place now or that you are talking about something which takes place regularly, but that it is an event which has already taken place.

You use this verb 'play**ed**' for all possible subjects. You do not, for example, add an 's' sound if the subject is he, she or it. (you added an 's' in the present tense.)

Therefore in English you say 'I played football, you played football, he played football, we played football,' etc. The word 'played' never changed.

Now look what we do in German. In the **present tense** you say the following;

ich spiele Fußball	wir spielen Fußball
du spielst Fußball	ihr spielt Fußball
er, sie, es spielt Fußball	sie spielen Fußball
Sie spielen Fußball	Sie spielen Fußball

In the **imperfect tense** you add a **t** sound. You do it as follows.

ich spielte Fußball	wir spiel ten Fußball
du spiel test Fußball	ihr spiel tet Fußball
er, sie, es spiel te Fußball	sie spiel ten Fußball
Sie spiel ten Fußball	Sie spiel ten Fußball

Note that whereas in English you used **played** for all subjects, in German you still conjugate the verb. Note that for the 3rd person singular (er, sie, es) the verb ends in an **e**. You might think that it should end in **tet** and that 'er spielt should become er spieltet, but this is not so. In fact, in the imperfect we use the same verb for the first person singular (ich spielte) as we use for the third person singular (er spielte)

So, to recap. When we use the imperfect tense to say that something happened in the past, we only need to make a small change to the verb. We simply need to insert the letter **t**. Here is another example of how the verb changes slightly, with the verb 'machen' as the example.

ich machte	wir mach ten
du mach test	ihr mach tet
er, sie, es mach te	sie mach ten
Sie mach ten	Sie mach ten

The order in which the words go into a sentence does not change from what we did in the present tense.

Ich mache meine Hausaufgaben → ich mach**te** meine Hausaufgaben.
I do my homework → I did my homework

You need to watch out for verbs where the stem of the verb end in a **d** or a **t**. Here you need to add an extra **e**, otherwise we would not hear the difference between what we say in the present tense and the imperfect tense. Here is an example using the verb 'arbeiten.'

ich arbeitete	wir arbeiteten
du arbeitetest	ihr arbeitetet
er,sie, es arbeitete	sie arbeiteten
Sie arbeiteten	Sie arbeiteten

Everything in the notes above about the imperfect tense applies to **regular verbs**. (regular verbs are also called weak verbs) The vast majority of verb in any language are regular verbs, but there are also many irregular verbs (irregular verbs are also called strong verbs) and these are quite often the verbs which we use most commonly. Regular verbs change to make the imperfect tense in a regular way, and all you have to learn is how that change happens; for example, how do you change the ending of the verb. Once you have learnt in English that you add -ed- to the verb, you know to apply that change to all regular verbs. Therefore 'I play' becomes 'I played', 'I live' becomes 'I lived', 'I hug' becomes 'I hugged', 'I pay' becomes 'I paid' etc. Sometimes you add -ed-, sometimes just -d-, sometimes you double the consonant and in the example above you added -ged-, sometimes you changed a -y- to -id- , but basically you kept the addition of the -d-sound.

With **irregular verbs**, however, you did something unpredictable. For example, 'I go' changed to 'I went' (not 'I goed') 'I see' becomes 'I saw', 'I eat' becomes 'I ate', 'I drink' becomes 'I drank', 'I am' becomes 'I was' etc. How do you know that it is wrong to say 'I goed, I eated, I dranked, I ammed' etc? You simply do. During your early years your upbringing has conditioned you to do this strange irregular thing. You cannot change the way English people talk, and if you tried you would end up looking pretty stupid.

The same thing happens in German, but when you learn a foreign language we need to find a way to learn these irregular verbs more quickly. You therefore need to learn as many of the irregular verbs in the verb list as you can, and you need to keep on referring to this list and learn the verbs again and again until they are firmly stuck in your mind. If you do not do this you will be very limited in your ability to communicate effectively in German.

The part of the verb which you learn in the imperfect column of irregular verbs is the verb which you use for the 3rd person singular; the verb which you use if the subject is he, she or it. The good news is that in the imperfect tense we also use this part of the verb for the first person singular, when the subject is I. For the other possible subjects (du, wir, ihr, sie, Sie) we simply add the present tense set of endings. Here is an example using the verb 'gehen.' In the imperfect tense 'gehen' changes to 'ging', just as 'go' changes to 'went.'

ich ging	wir gingen
du gingst	ihr gingt
er, sie, es ging	sie gingen
Sie gingen	Sie gingen

So, to recap, with irregular verbs, learn how the verb changes from the verb list, use that verb if the subject is either ich or er, sie, es, and for all other possible subjects, simply add the present tense endings. Here is another example with a verb which you probably know well.

ich bin = I am ich war = I was

Therefore the imperfect tense form of the 'sein' (to be) = 'war.'

When you use this verb in the imperfect tense you say the following.

ich war (I was)	wir waren (we were)
du warst (you were)	ihr wart (you-guys were)
er, sie, es war (he, she, it was)	sie waren (they were)
Sie waren) you were (polite singular)	Sie waren) you were (polite plural)

When do we use this tense? Are there any restrictions?

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The answer is we that this tense is more often used when writing and telling of a series of events. It is more natural for Germans to use the perfect tense when they are speaking, and they are more likely to use the imperfect tense when they are writing, but there is **no** rule which states that one has to use either the perfect or imperfect tense at any given moment. Germans will use a mixture of the two tenses when they are speaking or writing, and it is likely that they will use more of the perfect tense when they are speaking and more of the imperfect tense when they are writing. They might say, for example, 'Ich ging in die Stadt (imperfect tense) und dort habe ich ein neues T-Shirt gekauft. (perfect tense)

Some words are more commonly used in the imperfect tense, irrespective whether one is speaking or writing. The following verbs are very often used in the imperfect, rather than the perfect:

all the modals (ich wollte, konnte, musste, durfte, sollte, mochte)

ich war, ich hatte, es gab, ich wusste, ich ging, ich stand, ich dachte, ich glaubte, ich brauchte, der Film lief, ich lag, ich saß.

You can of course say or write ich bin gewesen, ich habe gehabt, es hat gegeben, ich habe gewusst, ich bin gegangen, ich habe gestanden, ich habe gedacht, ich habe geglaubt, ich habe gebraucht, der Film ist gelaufen, ich habe gelegen, ich habe gesessen, etc., and very often Germans will say this, but they might use the imperfect form more commonly. It is your choice!

If the imperfect tense is unfamiliar to you, then try to use it as often as you can for a while and get used to it. It is probably much easier to use than the perfect tense. (there is less to remember, less to get wrong and it is quite similar to the English simple past tense) You may wonder why you have not learnt it well until now. The reason is that for GCSE you learnt how to communicate mainly orally, and when you speak German and tell of things which have happened in the past, you tend to use the perfect tense more. Which brings us to

4. The Perfect Tense

This is probably the past tense which you know best, as it is likely to be the past tense which you learnt first. We use the perfect tense to talk about things which have happened in the past. It is not the only tense we use to talk about the past, but it is used most commonly in conversation or in letters.

You should now understand that it is the perfect tense, not the 'past tense.' If you simply refer to the perfect tense as the 'past tense,' it shows that you have not yet understood that there are several past tenses.

In English the perfect tense looks like this:

I have eaten my food. I have done my work. I have played tabletennis.
He has eaten his food. She has done her work. John has played tabletennis.

You can see that in English you used a part of the verb 'have' (I have, he has, etc.). When we use the verb 'have' in the perfect tense, we call it the auxiliary verb. We also used a form of the verb 'to eat' (eaten), a form of the verb 'to do' (done) and a form of the verb 'to play' (played). The form of the verbs which you used (eaten, done, played) is called the past participle of the verb. Regular verbs in English form their past participle by adding -ed- (as they did for the simple past tense, also known as the imperfect) and irregular verbs had a form of the verb which you have learnt at some point, (eaten, done, etc.)

So, remember that there are **two parts** to the perfect tense.

- a) the auxiliary verb
- b) the past participle.

Firstly the auxiliary verb in German. We have two auxiliary verbs. In English we only use the verb 'to have.'

In German we use the present tense of either the verb **haben** or the verb **sein**.

You must therefore know the following verbs extremely well.

ich habe	ich bin	I
du hast	du bist	you (singular; friend)
er, sie, es hat	er, sie, es ist	he, she, it
wir haben	wir sind	we
ihr habt	ihr seid	you (plural; friends)
sie haben	sie sind	they
Sie haben	Sie sind	you (polite form)

Secondly the past participle. All verbs have a past participle. **Regular** or **weak** verbs make their past participle according to a set pattern. Their past participle is made as follows:

1. add **-ge-** to the verb
2. take off the **-en-** at the end
3. add a **-t-** instead.

e.g. spielen → gespielt

Irregular or **strong** verbs do not follow this pattern. You need to learn what their past participle is from the irregular verb list.

e.g. schwimmen → geschwommen
trinken → getrunken

Irregular verbs usually have a vowel change (e.g. i → o, or i → u) which you cannot predict and have to learn. Note that these irregular verbs almost always end in **en**, whereas the regular verbs end in **t**. There are only a few mixed verbs which include a vowel change, but still end in **t**, e.g. denken → gedacht.

To use the perfect tense you therefore use both the auxiliary verb and the past participle. The auxiliary verb will be placed where the verb normally goes in a sentence in the present tense. The past participle will normally be placed at the end of the sentence.

e.g. Ich **habe** gestern Tennis **gespielt**.
Ich **bin** gestern zur Schule **gekommen**.
Am Dienstag **habe** ich meine deutsche Vokabeln **gelernt**.

How do you decide whether to use **haben** or **sein** as the auxiliary verb?

Start with the thought that most verbs use **haben**.

Only use **sein** when

- it is a **verb of motion**, e.g. fahren, (p.p = gefahren) gehen, (p.p. = gegangen) kommen, (p.p. = gekommen) laufen, (p.p = gelaufen) ankommen, (p.p = angekommen) einsteigen (p.p. = eingestiegen) etc.
- it shows a **change of state**, e.g. einschlafen (to fall asleep, p.p = eingeschlafen) aufwachen (to wake up, p.p = aufgewacht), sterben (to die, p.p = gestorben)
- with **sein**, (to be, p.p = gewesen) **werden**, (to become, p.p = geworden) **bleiben**, (to remain, p.p = geblieben) **geschehen**, (to happen, p.p = geschehen) **passieren** (to happen, p.p = passiert)

Another way to look at this is to decide if a verb is used transitively or intransitively. A verb is a transitive verb if it carries out an action on an object, I eat the apple. (you are doing eating to the apple) However, a verb such as 'to go' is not usually used transitively; it is usually an intransitive verb. If you say 'I go to school' you are not 'going' the school. You cannot 'go' something; you can only go somewhere.

Therefore, in the perfect tense you use 'haben' as the auxiliary verb for transitive verbs and you say

Ich **habe** den Apfel gegessen, but you say

Ich **bin** zur Schule gegangen.

Some verbs can be used transitively or intransitively, e.g. 'fahren' can mean 'to drive' or 'to travel.'

Therefore you will say

Ich **bin** zur Schule gefahren. (I have driven/travelled to the school)

Ich **habe** das Auto gefahren. (I have driven the car)

If you look at the verbs mentioned in the three bullet-points above you will see that they are all verbs which cannot usually take an object (carry out an action on something else). You cannot do 'being' or 'becoming' or 'dieing' to something else.

If this explanation about transitive and intransitive verbs is a bit confusing to you, you can just stick to the rules in the bullet-points. This will enable you to use the correct auxiliary verb (haben or sein) most times.

Notes about making past participles:

1. Sometimes you need to add -et- to the stem of the verb, rather than just -t-. This is when the stem ends on -d- or -t- or when you simply couldn't say the word unless you add an extra -e-.

For example:

arbeiten	→	gearbeitet	(to work)
reden	→	geredet	(to talk)
atmen	→	geatmet	to breathe)
trocknen	→	getrocknet	(to dry)

2. When using separable verbs, the **ge** is inserted between the prefix and the verb.

e.g.. ankommen → **angekommen**
umsteigen → **umgestiegen**
einkaufen → **eingekauft**

3. There are also inseparable verbs in German. These are verbs which are formed by adding a prefix to a verb, just as is the case with separable verbs, but where the prefix is never separated from the verb.

e.g. kommen = to come
add **be** and you have the verb **bekommen**, which means 'to receive.'

Whereas **an + kommen** = **ankommen** (a separable verb, e.g. ich komme morgen an) **be + kommen** are never separated (ich bekomme £10.00 Taschengeld die Woche)

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As far as the perfect tense is considered, you need to remember that inseparable verbs **never** have a **-ge-** added to them

e.g. : ich bekomme → ich habe ein Geschenk bekommen (not: ich habe ein Geschenk gebekommen.)
 ich verliere → ich habe das Spiel verloren (not: geverloren)

be and **ver** are inseparable prefixes. Other common inseparable prefixes are:

emp **ent-** **er-** **zer-** **miß**

So, remember: If you come across a verb which begins with **be, ver, emp, ent, er, zer & miß**, then that verb is likely to be an inseparable verb and you have to follow the rules above, i.e., no **ge** for the past participle.

e.g. decken = to cover, to lay the table → ich habe den Tisch gedeckt
 ent + decken = to discover → Columbus hat Amerika entdeckt. (not geentdeckt!!)

Be aware that some other prefixes are used to make separable verbs, but can also make inseparable verbs, e.g. unter + gehen (untergehen = to go under, to go down [sun]) is a separable verb and in the perfect tense you say 'Die Sonne ist untergegangen,' but unter + schreiben (to sign) is an inseparable verb, e.g. 'Meine Mutter hat den Brief unterschrieben.'

Other prefixes which make both separable and inseparable verbs are

über, durch, um, voll

You will become aware of these different verbs as you learn more German; there are no rules to give you clear guidance!

4. Verbs which end in **ieren also do not add a **ge**.**

e.g. telefonieren → telefoniert
 passieren → passiert
 reparieren → repariert

e.g. Die Werkstatt hat mein Auto innerhalb von 3 Tagen repariert.

5. The Pluperfect Tense.

The pluperfect tense is used if you tell of two events which have taken place in the past and you wish to make it clear that one of these happened before the other. In English you use 'had' as the auxiliary verb. e.g.

'I had eaten my dinner.' You would only say this if you wish to make it clear that you had eaten your dinner **before** something else happened, e.g

'After I had eaten my dinner I watched T.V.' You would not say 'After I have eaten my dinner I watched T.V.'

You used the pluperfect tense to indicate that one event took place before the other; that it is further back in the past. The only thing which changed when we used the pluperfect was that we used 'had' rather than 'I have eaten, she has eaten etc.

'had' is the simple past tense (imperfect tense) of the auxiliary verb 'to have'

In German we do exactly the same, except of course that we have two auxiliary verbs (haben **and** sein) Therefore you need to know the imperfect forms of the verbs 'haben' and 'sein.'

sein (present tense)	sein (imperfect tense)	haben (present tense)	haben (imperfect)
ich bin	ich war	ich habe	ich hatte
du bist	du warst	du hast	du hattest
er, sie, es ist	er, sie, es war	er, sie, es hat	er, sie, es hatte
Sie sind	Sie waren	Sie haben	Sie hatten
wir sind	wir waren	wir haben	wir hatten
ihr seid	ihr wart	ihr habt	ihr hattet
sie sind	sie waren	sie haben	sie hatten
Sie sind	Sie waren	Sie haben	Sie hatten

e.g. Ich war in die Stadt gegangen = I had gone to town
Wir hatten den Film schon gesehen = We had already seen the film.

One occasion when we often use the pluperfect tense is when we use the linking word 'after,' e.g.

'After we had visited her, we drove home.

In German the word for 'after' which you use to link to clauses is 'nachdem' e.g.

'Nachdem wir sie besucht hatten, fuhren wir nach Hause. (you could also say ..., sind wir nach Hause gefahren)

So, remember; the pluperfect tense is a perfect tense and therefore needs a past participle. The only difference between the perfect tense and the pluperfect tense is that you use the imperfect form of the auxiliary verbs 'haben' and 'sein', instead of their present tense forms.

This is all the information on tenses which you need for now. You will learn many other things which require you to understand how these basic five tenses work, and you may learn a few other tenses which are combinations of these tenses, but you should find that easy if you understand these notes well.

It is now very important that you learn as many of the irregular verbs as you can, and that you can say them to yourself, e.g.

'gehen, ging, gegangen' = go, went, gone.' If you know this you will know that when you use this verb is is regular in the present tense (ich gehe, du gehst, er,sie,es geht) and irregular in the imperfect (ich ging = I went, du gingst = you went, etc.) and that its p.p. is gegangen (ich bin gegangen = I have gone, ich war gegangen = I had gone)

As you learn these irregular verbs make sure that you also remember to learn that some of the verbs are irregular in the present tense, e.g. 'lesen, liest, las, gelesen. Ich lese = I read, er liest = he reads, ich las = I read (pronounced I red!) ich habe gelesen = I have read (pronounced I have red!)

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Perhaps the last example shows you that there is plenty to learn if you learn English as a foreign language. If all these German grammar rules are getting you down, just think how lucky you are that you don't have to learn English from scratch!

Strong and irregular verbs (a selection)

Infinitive	Meaning	3 rd person singular present tense (only shown if it is irregular in the present tense)	3 rd person singular imperfect tense	Past Participle + usual auxiliary verb
befehlen	<i>to order</i>	befiehlt	befahl	hat befohlen
beginnen	<i>to begin</i>	-	begann	hat begonnen
bekommen	<i>to receive</i>	-	bekam	hat bekommen
beschließen	<i>to decide</i>	-	beschloss	hat beschlossen
beschreiben	<i>to describe</i>	-	beschrieb	hat beschrieben
besitzen	<i>to own</i>	-	besaß	hat besessen
bieten	<i>to offer</i>	-	bot	hat geboten
binden	<i>to tie</i>	-	band	hat gebunden
bitten	<i>to ask for</i>	-	bat	hat gebeten
bleiben	<i>to remain</i>	-	blieb	ist geblieben
brechen	<i>to break</i>	bricht	brach	hat gebrochen
brennen	<i>to burn</i>	-	brannte	hat gebrannt
bringen	<i>to bring</i>	-	brachte	hat gebracht
denken	<i>to think</i>	-	dachte	hat gedacht
dürfen	<i>to be allowed to</i>	darf	durfte	hat gedurft
empfehlen	<i>to recommend</i>	empfiehlt	empfohl	hat empfohlen
essen	<i>to eat</i>	isst	aß	hat gegessen
fahren	<i>to go (by vehicle)/drive</i>	fährt	fuhr	ist/hat gefahren
fallen	<i>to fall</i>	fällt	fiel	ist gefallen
fangen	<i>to catch</i>	fängt	fang	hat gefangen
finden	<i>to find</i>	-	fand	hat gefunden
fliegen	<i>to fly</i>	-	flog	ist/hat geflogen
fliehen	<i>to flee</i>	-	floh	ist geflohen
fließen	<i>to flow</i>	-	floss	ist geflossen
geben	<i>to give</i>	gibt	gab	hat gegeben
gefallen	<i>to please</i>	gefällt	gefiel	hat gefallen
gehen	<i>to go</i>	-	ging	ist gegangen
gelingen	<i>to succeed</i>	-	gelang	ist gelungen
fliegen	<i>to fly</i>	-	flog	ist/hat geflogen
fliehen	<i>to flee</i>	-	floh	ist geflohen
fließen	<i>to flow</i>	-	floss	ist geflossen
geben	<i>to give</i>	gibt	gab	hat gegeben
gefallen	<i>to please</i>	gefällt	gefiel	hat gefallen
gehen	<i>to go</i>	-	ging	ist gegangen
gelten	<i>to be valid, count</i>	gilt	galt	hat gegolten
genießen	<i>to enjoy</i>	=	genoss	hat genossen
geschehen	<i>to happen</i>	geschieht	geschah	ist geschehen
gewinnen	<i>to win</i>	-	gewann	hat gewonnen
gleiten	<i>to glide</i>	-	glitt	ist geglitten
greifen	<i>to grasp</i>	-	griff	hat gegriffen
halten	<i>to hold/stop</i>	hält	hielt	hat gehalten
hängen	<i>to hang</i>	-	hing	hat gehangen
heißen	<i>to be called</i>	-	hieß	hat geheiß
helfen	<i>to help</i>	hilft	half	hat geholfen
kennen	<i>to know</i>	-	kannte	hat gekannt
kommen	<i>to come</i>	-	kam	ist gekommen
können	<i>to be able to</i>	kann	konnte	hat gekonnt
laden	<i>to load</i>	lädt	lud	hat geladen
lassen	<i>to let/leave</i>	lässt	ließ	hat gelassen
laufen	<i>to run, walk</i>	läuft	lief	ist gelaufen
leiden	<i>to suffer</i>	-	litt	hat gelitten
lesen	<i>to read</i>	liest	las	hat gelesen
liegen	<i>to lie</i>	-	lag	hat gelegen
lügen	<i>to tell a lie</i>	-	log	hat gelogen
messen	<i>to measure</i>	misst	maß	hat gemessen
mögen	<i>to like</i>	mag	mochte	hat gemocht
müssen	<i>to have to</i>	muss	musste	hat gemusst
nehmen	<i>to take</i>	nimmt	nahm	hat genommen
nennen	<i>to name, call</i>	-	nannte	hat genannt
raten	<i>to advise, guess</i>	rät	riet	hat geraten

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reißen	<i>to tear</i>	-	riss	hat gerissen
rufen	<i>to call</i>	-	rief	hat gerufen
schaffen	<i>to create</i>	-	schuf	hat geschaffen
scheiden	<i>to separate</i>	-	schied	hat geschieden
scheinen	<i>to seem</i>	-	schien	hat geschienen
schießen	<i>to shoot</i>	-	schoss	hat geschossen
schlafen	<i>to sleep</i>	schläft	schief	hat geschlafen
schlagen	<i>to hit</i>	schlägt	schlug	hat geschlagen
schließen	<i>to close</i>	-	schloss	hat geschlossen
schmelzen	<i>to melt</i>	schmilzt	schmalz	hat/ist geschmolzen
schneiden	<i>to cut</i>	-	schnitt	hat geschnitten
schreiben	<i>to write</i>	-	schrieb	hat geschrieben
schweigen	<i>to be silent</i>	-	schwieg	hat geschwiegen
schwimmen	<i>to swim</i>	-	schwamm	ist geschwommen
sehen	<i>to see</i>	sieht	sah	hat gesehen
sein	<i>to be</i>	ist	war	ist gewesen
sinken	<i>to sink</i>	-	sank	ist gesunken
sitzen	<i>to sit</i>	-	saß	hat gesessen
sollen	<i>to ought to</i>	soll	sollte	hat gesollt
sprechen	<i>to speak</i>	spricht	sprach	hat gesprochen
springen	<i>to jump</i>	-	sprang	ist/hat gesprungen
stehen	<i>to stand</i>	-	stand	hat gestanden
steigen	<i>to climb</i>	-	stieg	ist gestiegen
sterben	<i>to die</i>	stirbt	starb	ist gestorben
tragen	<i>to carry</i>	trägt	trug	hat getragen
treffen	<i>to meet</i>	trifft	traf	hat getroffen
treiben	<i>to push, move</i>	-	trieb	hat getrieben
treten	<i>to step, tread, kick</i>	tritt	trat	hat getreten
trinken	<i>to drink</i>	-	trank	hat getrunken
tun	<i>to do</i>	-	tat	hat getan
verbringen	<i>to spend (time)</i>	-	verbrachte	hat verbracht
vergessen	<i>to forget</i>	vergisst	vergaß	hat vergessen
verlieren	<i>to lose</i>	-	verlor	hat verloren
vermeiden	<i>to avoid</i>	-	vermied	hat vermieden
versprechen	<i>to promise</i>	verspricht	versprach	hat versprochen
verstehen	<i>to understand</i>	-	verstand	hat verstanden
wachsen	<i>to grow</i>	wächst	wuchs	ist gewachsen
waschen	<i>to wash</i>	wäscht	wusch	hat gewaschen
wenden	<i>to turn</i>	-	wand	hat gewandt
werben	<i>to advertise</i>	wirbt	warb	hat geworben
werden	<i>to become</i>	wird	wurde	ist geworden
werfen	<i>to throw</i>	wirft	warf	hat geworfen
wiegen	<i>to weigh</i>	-	wog	hat gewogen
wissen	<i>to know</i>	weiß	wusste	hat gewusst
wollen	<i>to want to</i>	will	wollte	hat gewollt
ziehen	<i>to pull, move</i>	=	zog	hat/ist gezogen
zwingen	<i>to force</i>	-	zwang	hat gezwungen

Exercises

A. Present tense.

Michaela has moved to Munich from Leipzig. Life is very different to what she has been used to. Complete the sentences with verbs from the box below the sentences

1. Im September ____ man Michaela plötzlich eine Stelle in der Münchener Zweigstelle ihrer Firma ____
2. Zuerst ____ sie ein bisschen, denn so ein Ortswechsel _____ viel Stress mit sich bringen.
3. Dann aber _____ sie darüber _____ .
4. Nun _____ sie das Angebot für eine der großen Chancen ihres Lebens.
5. Anfang Januar _____ sie dann _____.
6. Zuerst _____ sie sehr unter Einsamkeit.
7. Sie _____ sehr verwirrt.
8. Das Schlimmste für sie: sie _____ einfach den dortigen Dialekt nicht!
9. Doch langsam _____ sie _____ in München _____
10. Sie _____ sich sogar richtig wohl zu fühlen.
11. Jetzt _____ ihr das Leben in Bayern sehr.
12. Michaela _____ die alte Heimat gar nicht mehr.

versteht	kann	bietet an	fängt an	vermisst	fühlt sich
zieht um	erschrickt	gefällt	leidet	hält	
lebt sich ein		denkt nach			

B. Future tense.

Rewrite these sentences and put them into the future tense.

1. Nach der Zeugnisverteilung gehe ich erst einmal in Urlaub.
2. Nach unserer vielen Arbeit erholen wir uns zuerst.
3. Wir entspannen uns zwei Wochen lang auf einer Insel im Mittelmeer.
4. Nach der Rückkehr beginne ich dann mit einem Nebenjob.
5. Ich arbeite in einer Pizzeria bei uns in der Nähe.
6. So verdiene ich genug Geld für die Oberprima.
7. Dann erlauben mir meine Eltern nicht mehr zu arbeiten.
8. Es ist wichtiger, einen tollen Notendurchschnitt zu bekommen.
9. Am Ende der Ferien schreibe ich allerdings meine Seminararbeit.
10. Auf diese Weise ist das nächste Jahr hoffentlich nicht zu stressig.
11. Nächstes Jahr bewerbe ich mich dann bei den Universitäten.
12. Ich bereite mich gründlich auf mein Abitur vor.

C. Imperfect tense

Read the passage and fill the gaps by putting the verbs in brackets into the imperfect tense.

Georg _____ total abgearbeitet (1 *sein*). Er _____ im Geschäft nichts als Sorgen und Stress (2 *haben*) und auch _____ sein Privatleben unter seinen langen Arbeitsstunden (3 *leiden*). Seine Frau _____ alles allein erledigen: Haushalt, Kinder, ihre eigene Teilzeitarbeit (4 *müssen*). So _____ es nicht weitergehen (5 *dürfen*). Sie _____ ihn zunächst einmal zu ihrem Hausarzt (6 *schicken*), der die Familie schon lange _____ (7 *kennen*). Er _____ Georg über seine Lebensweise _____ (8 *ausfragen*) und _____ ihm, in Kur zu gehen (9 *raten*). Er _____ von einem Sanatorium im Schwarzwald (10 *wissen*), das _____ auf Anti-Stress- Therapie _____ (11 *sich spezialisieren*). Georg _____ für zwei Wochen in den Luftkurort (12 *fahren*). Jeden Tag _____ er mindestens zwei Stunden _____ (13 *spazieren gehen*), er _____ gesund (14 *sich ernähren*), _____ vie! frisches Obst und Gemüse (15 *essen*) und _____ überhaupt keinen Alkohol (16 *trinken*). Nachts _____ er mindestens acht Stunden (17 *schlafen*) und zusätzlich _____ man ihm einen Nachmittagsschlaf (18 *empfehlen*). Langsam _____ er _____ (19 *sich erholen*) und nach zwei Wochen _____ er _____ wie ein neugeborener Mensch. (20 *sich fühlen*).

D. Perfect tense

Fill the gaps with the appropriate perfect tense form of the verbs in the brackets.

1. Deutschland _____ mehrere Hubschrauber in das überflutete Land _____. (schicken)
2. Die Behörden _____ die Menschen in Notlagern _____. (unterbringen)
3. Die Luftwaffe _____ die Hubschrauber mit Gütern _____. (beladen)
4. Die Piloten _____ Säcke mit Notverpflegung und Medikamenten _____. (abwerfen)
5. Reporter vom ZDF _____ die Rettungsaktion von der Luft aus _____. (fotografieren)
6. Bis zur Ankunft der Hubschrauber _____ die Flüchtlinge elend _____. (sich fühlen)
7. Durch die Aktion _____ die Menschen zum ersten Mal wieder Nahrung _____. (erhalten).
8. Danach _____ immer mehr europäische Länder bei der Hilfsaktion _____. (mithelfen)
9. Die Mosambikaner _____ bei den Helfern mit einem Lied _____. (sich bedanken).
10. Die Politiker _____, wie man in Zukunft solche Katastrophen vermeiden kann. (sich überlegen)

E. Pluperfect tense

Translate the following sentences into German, using the pluperfect tense.

1. I had already seen the film.
2. Had you done your work?
3. He had not been there before.
4. She had not eaten for a week.
5. It hadn't rained.
6. One had not thought of it before.
7. We had visited her last week.
8. Had you-two gone there?
9. They had not yet woken up.