Mastering

German

Conversation

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

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. Review this document as you are progressing through the guided imitation 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, which are introduced in Set 2. 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 unit will cover the corresponding gender, definite and indefinite article, and adjective endings for the respective case.

By isolating the concepts, learning becomes manageable.

German Cases, Articles and Adjective Endings

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 gebe dem Mann einen Brief.	I am giving 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 word 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: 'groß' and 'lang'. Pay attention to the changes in 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 gebe dem großen Mann einen langen Brief.	I am giving the big man a long letter.
5)	Ich sehe den langen Brief des großen Mannes.	I see the long letter of the big man.

German Cases, Articles and Adjective Endings

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 gebe der Frau eine Blume.	I am giving the woman a flower.	'Frau' is in the dative case. 'Blume' is in the accusative case.
5)	Ich sehe die Blume der Frau.	I see the flower of the woman.	'Blume' is in the accusative case. 'Frau' is in the genitive case.

And now for the adjectives: 'schön' and 'rot'.

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 gebe der schönen Frau eine rote Blume.	I am giving the beautiful woman a red flower.
5)	Ich sehe die rote Blume der schönen Frau.	I see the red flower of the beautiful woman.

German Cases, Articles and Adjective Endings

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 gebe dem Kind ein Spielzeug.	I am giving the child a toy.	'Kind' is in the dative case.
			'Spielzeug' is in the accusative case.
5)	Ich sehe das Spielzeug des Kindes.	I see the toy of the child.	'Spielzeug' is in the accusative case.
			'Kind' is in the genitive case.

Let us add adjectives: 'verwöhnt' and 'teuer'.

1)	Das verwöhnte Kind ist da.	The spoiled child is there.
2)	Ein teueres Spielzeug ist da.	An expensive toy is there.
3)	Ich sehe das verwöhnte Kind.	I see the spoiled child.
4)	Ich gebe dem verwöhnten Kind ein teueres Spielzeug.	I am giving the spoiled child an expensive toy.
5)	Ich sehe das teuere Spielzeug des Kindes.	I see the expensive toy of the spoiled child.

Mastering German Conversation Set 1

German Cases, Articles and Adjective Endings

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.

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

Gender	Nominative	Accusative	Dative	Genitive
masculine	ein	einen	einem	eines + 'es' or 's'
feminine	eine	eine	einer	einer
neuter	ein	ein	einem	eines + 'es' or 's'

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

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German Cases, Articles and Adjective Endings

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:

Gender	Nominative	Accusative	Dative	Genitive
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:

Gender	Nominative	Accusative	Dative	Genitive
masculine	+ 'er'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'
feminine	+ 'e'	+ 'e'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'
neuter	+ 'es'	+ 'es'	+ 'en'	+ 'en'

Adjective Endings following no article (hardly used):

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