



# *Alternativen*

**A GERMAN  
REVIEW AND  
REFERENCE  
GRAMMAR**

Dirk Hoffmann

Agnes D. Langdon



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## **A REVIEW AND REFERENCE GRAMMAR**

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# Preface

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ALTERNATIVEN is a set of three integrated books for the study of intermediate German: a REVIEW AND REFERENCE GRAMMAR, a READER of culture and literature texts, and a WORKBOOK-LAB MANUAL. When used together, these three components make up a year's course (two semesters or four quarters with four class hours a week).

The ALTERNATIVEN principle gives instructors a great deal of choice in how to use the books. Each component of the package may be used by itself. The GRAMMAR volume alone serves as a one-semester review course of German grammar, or as a reference work. When it is used with the WORKBOOK-LAB MANUAL, it offers extensive study of grammatical phenomena in the classroom and the language laboratory plus vocabulary building, chapter by chapter. The GRAMMAR can also be used with the READER because the additional exercises in the grammar are coordinated with the READER vocabulary.

The READER volume alone serves as a third or fourth semester introduction to German literature and culture. It could be used with the WORKBOOK-LAB MANUAL if the students know their grammar although they may need a little work in certain areas. It is also possible to use only parts of the READER in conjunction with the GRAMMAR and/or WORKBOOK-LAB MANUAL since individual sections in each volume are coordinated.

As evident from the above, the integration of the three component volumes is achieved by way of vocabulary. The exercises in each GRAMMAR chapter feature the active vocabulary from the respective READER chapter. The WORKBOOK exercises not only work up the active vocabulary from the coordinated READER chapter but reflect much of the chapter texts' subject matter. The LAB MANUAL lessons work up the active vocabulary from the respective READER chapter and feature dictations, dialogues, and comprehension exercises based directly on READER texts.

The grammar has been designed to facilitate learning:

- Individual grammar points are immediately practiced by CHECK AND PRACTICE sections which are distinctly marked. In these CHECK AND PRACTICE sections the exercises are often very simple structural exercises which drill a grammar point independently from a semantic context — the students are asked to focus on a structural point. Because many students need to approach language acquisition in a step-by-step manner, these simple exercises are active paradigms (additional examples which the students have to do themselves).
- Relevant cross-references have been added for quick checking. The index in back gives more detailed information.
- Each chapter concludes with the section ADDITIONAL EXERCISES which reviews the major grammar points of that chapter and puts the grammar points in a context. The section ADDITIONAL EXERCISES is subdivided into two parts to give the teacher real flexibility. These parts begin with few new thematic words from the reader (A, B, C text,



as specified in the headings) to help with vocabulary building. Instructors can use all exercises or just one or the other group, because the grammar points covered are identical.

The ALTERNATIVE principle also allows different methods of language teaching. For example, instructors who wish to stress grammar review may start with the active vocabulary and assign a grammar chapter, or part thereof, for review. Then they can simultaneously practice the grammar points and the new vocabulary by doing the ADDITIONAL EXERCISES in class and by assigning WORKBOOK drills as homework. Students should then find the texts fairly easy because they have already learned the active vocabulary. The laboratory work could be assigned before or during classroom discussions of themes, and doing the activities.

Instructors who wish to further their students' communicative and reading skills may wish to start with the READER texts, the questions, themes and activities including the laboratory lessons. Then they could move to the grammar review. The students would be able to concentrate on grammatical phenomena, and do the ADDITIONAL EXERCISES in the GRAMMAR and the drills in the WORKBOOK with some ease because they are familiar with the vocabulary and the link with READER topics the drills offer.

Finally, an instructor may vary the approach chapter by chapter, emphasizing or deemphasizing individual sections in the GRAMMAR, the READER or the WORKBOOK-LAB MANUAL.

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Every grammar is indebted to numerous grammars and textbooks written before. Although it is impossible to list all of them which influenced the present volume, special acknowledgment should be given to G. Helbig and J. Buscha, *Deutsche Grammatik*; C. Pollard's contribution "The Weak Verb — How to Recognize it in the Infinitive" in *The Teaching of German — Problems and Methods*; W.F.W. Lohnes, F.W. Strothmann, and W.E. Petig, *German — A Structural Approach*.

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# 1

## VERBS (Part One)





## PRINCIPLES OF TENSE FORMATION

### General Survey

- 1 German utilizes *two simple tenses*
  - PRESENT TENSE
  - SIMPLE PAST TENSE

and *four compound tenses,* which are formed with the addition of auxiliaries.

  - PRESENT PERFECT TENSE
  - PAST PERFECT TENSE
  - FUTURE TENSE
  - FUTURE PERFECT TENSE
- 2 German and English tense forms resemble each other, yet they are used differently. [For usage, see § 38ff.]

#### SIMPLE TENSES

<b>Present Tense</b>	ich	lerne	<i>I learn</i>
<b>Simple Past Tense</b>	ich	lernte	<i>I learned</i>

#### COMPOUND TENSES

<b>Present Perfect Tense</b>	ich	habe gelernt	<i>I have learned</i>
<b>Past Perfect Tense</b>	ich	hatte gelernt	<i>I had learned</i>
<b>Future Tense</b>	ich	werde lernen	<i>I will learn</i>
<b>Future Perfect Tense</b>	ich	werde gelernt haben	<i>I will have learned</i>

- 3 In addition to these tense forms, English also uses:
  1. the progressive (I am waiting; I was waiting; I have been waiting; I had been waiting);
  2. the emphatic (I do wait; I did wait).

*German does not have these tense forms.*

### Basic Verb Forms

- 4 1. All German verbs have three basic forms, which are called the *principal parts* of the verb. From these all verb forms can be derived.

<b>Basic Verb Forms</b>	<b>INFINITIVE</b>	<b>SIMPLE PAST</b>	<b>PAST PARTICIPLE</b>
	lernen	lernte	ge lernt
	STEM    ENDING	STEM    ENDING	PREFIX    STEM    ENDING



2. In addition, the auxiliaries **werden**, **haben**, and **sein** are used to create compound tenses.

## CHECK AND PRACTICE

Identify the tense.

- Future  
present  
prespart  
pres.  
Fut part  
prespart  
pres  
past  
fut
1. Ich **werde** erst 1995 nach München **kommen**.
  2. Ich **fahre** gern mit dem Zug.
  3. Ich **habe** gestern viel **gekocht**.
  4. Früher **reiste** ich oft ins Ausland.
  5. Ich **hatte** gerade eine Fahrkarte am Bahnhof **gekauft**, als das Unglück **passierte**.
  6. Ich **glaube**, ich **werde** ihm den Blödsinn wohl **gesagt haben**.
  7. Peter, gestern **habe** ich ein Kleid **genäht**.
  8. Ich **hole** dir gleich noch ein Glas Bier.
  9. Paul **lachte** und **lachte**.
  10. Morgen **werde** ich meinen alten Wagen **verkaufen**.

You don't need to know the meaning of the words. Just look at the forms and compare them with those in table § 2.



## Verb Classification: Weak or Strong

- 5** German verbs are classified as either *weak* or *strong*, based on their forms only, not their function.

For weak verbs, see § 10ff.

For strong verbs, see § 17ff.

- 6** Weak verbs
1. form the *past tense* with the suffix **-t-** following the stem;
  2. form the *past participle* with the prefix **ge-** and the suffix **-t** following the stem.

### BASIC VERB FORMS

Infinitive	Past Tense	Past Participle
zeigen	zeigte	gezeigt



**7** Strong verbs change the stem vowel in the past tense and the past participle. They

1. have no suffix in the *past tense*;
2. form the *past participle* with the prefix **ge-** and the suffix **-en**.

fliegen	flog	geflogen
---------	------	----------

**8** EXCEPTION: Some verbs, both weak and strong, omit the **ge-** prefix in the past participle. These are verbs which are not stressed on the first syllable. There are two classes:

1. verbs ending in **-ieren**.

<b>Infinitive</b>	reservieren
<b>Past Participle</b>	reserviert

2. verbs which have an inseparable prefix. [See § 68ff.]

<b>Infinitive</b>	besuchen	beginnen
<b>Past Participle</b>	besucht	begonnen

*You don't need to know  
the meanings of the  
words.*

## CHECK AND PRACTICE

Look at the basic forms, then identify each verb as weak or strong.

1. bauen	baute	gebaut
2. kaufen	kaufte	gekauft
3. beginnen	begann	begonnen
4. lassen	ließ	gelassen
5. brauchen	brauchte	gebraucht
6. liegen	lag	gelegen
7. studieren	studierte	studiert
8. rufen	rief	gerufen
9. hören	hörte	gehört
10. versuchen	versuchte	versucht





- 9 It is not always possible to tell from the infinitive if a verb is weak or strong. However, there are some general rules:

1. The following suffixes signal that a verb is weak:

lächeln

beteuern

kündigen

verniedlichen

marschieren



2. The following table of stem vowels shows which verbs tend to be weak and which verbs tend to be strong:

## VERBS WHICH TEND TO BE

Weak		Strong
äu ö ä	i	e ei ie
eu au ü	a	in + consonant
o		im + consonant
u		

- a. There are over 200 verbs with an unlauded vowel in the stem. With very few exceptions they are all weak (e.g., **lösen** to solve, **hüten** to guard, **säugen** to nurse, **vergäl-len** to embitter). Important exceptions are **schwören** to swear, **lügen** to lie, **betrügen** to deceive.
- b. Almost all verbs with the diphthong **eu** or **au** in the stem are weak (e.g., **beugen** to bend, **bauen** to build). The only common exception is **laufen** to walk.
- c. There are about 45 verbs with the stem vowel **o** (e.g., **holen** to get, **wohnen** to reside) and 45 verbs with the stem vowel **u**. All are weak except **kommen** to come, **stoßen** to push, **rufen** to call and **tun** to do.
- d. The majority of the verbs with the stem **i** are weak (e.g., **schicken** to send). Important exceptions are **wissen** to know, **bitten** to ask a favor, **sitzen** to sit.  
**BUT** verbs with **m** or **n** plus a consonant are strong (e.g., **schwimmen** to swim, **singen** to sing).
- e. Out of 145 verbs with the stem vowel **a** (e.g., **sagen** to say, **danken** to thank) only about 20 are strong [see § 20].
- f. Verbs with the stem vowels **e**, **ei**, or **ie** tend to be strong (e.g., **lesen** to read, **reiten** to ride, **fliegen** to fly). An important exception is **zeigen** to show.



Basic Verb Forms of Weak Verbs

10 Most weak verbs form the past tense with the suffix **-t** [see also § 6]. For reasons of pronunciation, some add the suffix **-et** instead of **-t**. **-et** is found in verbs:

1. whose stems end in **-t** or **-d**;

INFINITIVE	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE	
arbeit-en	arbeit-et-e	gearbeit-et	to work
wart-en	wart-et-e	gewart-et	to wait
red-en	red-et-e	gered-et	to talk

2. whose stems end in **-m** or **-n** preceded by a consonant other than **h**, **l**, and **r**.

öffn-en to open	öffn-et-e	geöffn-et	wohn-en to reside	wohn-te	gewohn-t
rechn-en to calculate	rechn-et-e	gerechn-et	BUT film-en to film	film-te	gefilm-t
regn-en to rain	regn-et-e	geregn-et	turn-en to do gymnastics	turn-te	geturn-t

CHECK AND PRACTICE

Give the past tense and past participle of the following verbs:

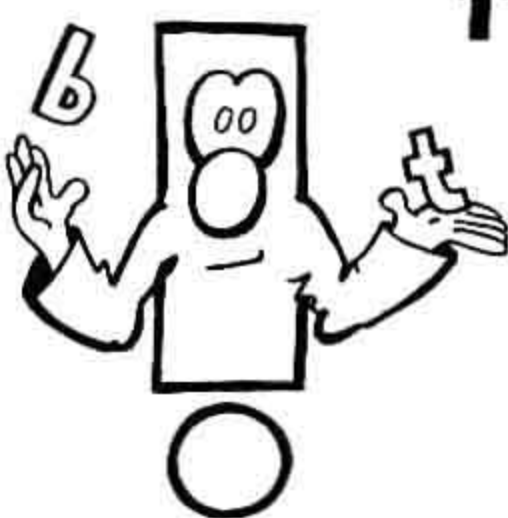
1. arbeiten
2. weinen
3. fühlen
4. kaufen
5. bauen
6. blühen
7. führen
8. lachen
9. zählen
10. drücken
11. wählen
12. legen
13. wünschen
14. wechseln
15. glauben
16. lernen
17. wohnen
18. warten
19. melden
20. pflanzen

Note the irregular change in stem consonant.

BASIC VERB FORMS OF SPECIAL WEAK VERBS

haben

11 The special weak verb **haben** is used most of the time as an auxiliary.



INFINITIVE	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
haben	hatte	gehabt