

# TEACH YOURSELF GERMAN

A BOOK OF SELF-INSTRUCTION IN GERMAN, BASED  
ON THE WORK BY SIR JOHN ADAMS, M.A., LL.D.,  
COMPLETELY REVISED AND ENLARGED BY SYDNEY  
W. WELLS, B.A., AND FURTHER REVISED BY  
E. S. JENKINS, B.A.

*Published by*

DAVID MCKAY COMPANY, INC., NEW YORK  
for THE ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES PRESS LTD.  
LONDON



# TEACH YOURSELF GERMAN

A BOOK OF SELF-INSTRUCTION IN GERMAN, BASED  
ON THE WORK BY SIR JOHN ADAMS, M.A., LL.D.,  
COMPLETELY REVISED AND ENLARGED BY SYDNEY  
W. WELLS, B.A., AND FURTHER REVISED BY  
E. S. JENKINS, B.A.

*Published by*

DAVID MCKAY COMPANY, INC., NEW YORK  
*for* THE ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES PRESS LTD.  
LONDON





***Printed in Great Britain***



## PREFACE

WE have travelled a long way on the road since the Englishman, tall and skinny, with sandy hair and protruding teeth, was made the butt of ridicule on the Continental stage, and his attempts to speak a foreign tongue were found either irritating or excruciatingly funny.

We have progressed much, too, in our approach to the study of foreign languages. We are not so content to signal and gesticulate for our food in a foreign restaurant, and our eyes no longer flash with indignation at these "damned foreigners" who cannot speak the King's English. It used to be quite common, too, for a well-educated man to turn out a creditable essay in French or German on the fossil iguanodon, yet be distressingly inarticulate when called upon to order a second-class railway ticket or a dinner. Amusing mistakes, of course, will always be made. There is the Scot, for instance, who translated: "J'aime la langue française" by: "I love the tall French girl," or the German who said in great indignation to the waiter in a London restaurant: "I am here since ten minutes—when do I become a sausage!" He had forgotten that *bekommen* in English is *to get*, while the English *become* is in German *werden*.

Most of the difficulties of forty years ago were due to an undue importance given to grammar and Classical subject-matter: the teaching did not help the practical man who wanted to travel. It is claimed for this book that the interests of such people are studied throughout. The classified vocabularies should prove very helpful, and it is hoped that the student will find that the bugbear of German declensions loses some of its terrors as presented here.

## **PREFACE**

Anyone who follows this course conscientiously should be able to read, write and speak the German language with some measure of success. His accuracy and his fluency will depend not only on his native ability but also on his determination to keep at it regularly: a short time every day over a long period is much better than gigantic efforts every now and then.

## INTRODUCTION

To know a language properly implies the power of using it freely for three different purposes: reading, writing and speaking.

Those who learn a foreign language may desire to learn it for all three purposes, or for one or two of them only. This work has been designed to enable the student to develop his powers as quickly and as easily as possible in all three. A language is a vast field, which can never be fully explored, and learning a language means hard work, careful thought and constant practice. If the student thinks he is going to speak or write or read German in a few months by means of a lesson or two done now and then, he had better give up the idea completely, for he is wasting his time. But this work, if followed conscientiously, will enable the average student not only to read German, but also to write and speak it in a fairly simple way.

The student without exceptional facilities must get into the habit of reading aloud, asking himself questions aloud and answering them himself—always, or as often as possible, aloud. The learning of words is important. To a large extent the vocabulary has been carefully kept up-to-date and thoroughly modern, with an eye to those who wish to read modern literature, to listen in to German broadcasts, or to travel on the Continent. These words should be mastered *somehow*, even if it means learning them off in lists. You must always have the subject in your mind. When you cast your eye on a thing, if you have known the German for it and forgotten, do not fail to look it up again at the *first* opportunity.

Conversational power is what you make it yourself. Not much has been given in actual conversations in this book, but all the exercises given are conversational in



## INTRODUCTION

tone and subject matter. Make up your own conversations by rearranging the sentences given here.

A Key to the Exercises is given. This should be used sensibly. Do your exercise *before* consulting the Key, and then correct your own. Afterwards, do the exercises the other way round, testing your translation of the Key with the original exercises.

The student should revise constantly. In the scope of this little work it is impossible to give a thorough revision, but the student should, after every three lessons, go back and quickly refresh his mind on grammar and vocabulary.

As all the Exercises have their counterpart in the Key, no Vocabulary is given. But as many as possible of the words as they occur should be thoroughly committed to memory in order to render easier the task of translating subsequent exercises.

The section on Pronunciation is full and if the student follows it carefully he should have no difficulty in acquiring a fair pronunciation, if not a good one. If he can get native help so much the better.

One word of warning : we have kept all the exercises in this book within certain limits. We have attempted nothing very clever, nothing "high-falutin'," and you must also school yourselves to this. As soon as you start trying difficult constructions you will find yourselves in deep water. Keep your sentences fairly short and make sure of the matter given you here before attempting anything else.

If you would like to add a little reading of continuous German prose you could not do better than buy Guerber's *Märchen und Erzählungen*, Part I (Harrap), after the fourth or fifth lesson of this work. These Märchen, or tales, may strike you as childish, but if you can overcome this, you will find that the easy style and constant repetition will give you a confidence which is very important.

# CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	PAGE vii
------------------------	-------------

## PART I

	The German Alphabet . . . . .	11
	German Pronunciation . . . . .	15
LESSON		
I.	The Simple Sentence. Masculine, Feminine and Neuter Nouns . . . . .	23
II.	The Weak Verb . . . . .	28
III.	The Cases . . . . .	32
IV.	Haben, Sein and the Imperfect . . . . .	36
V.	Demonstrative Adjectives. Some Prepositions . . . . .	39
VI.	Declension of German Nouns . . . . .	43
VII.	Indefinite Article and Possessive Adjectives. Declension of Proper Nouns . . . . .	47
VIII.	Rules for Gender . . . . .	51
IX.	Non-personal Element in Verbs . . . . .	53
X.	Personal Pronouns . . . . .	57
XI.	Strong Verbs . . . . .	60
XII.	Prepositions and Werden . . . . .	65
XIII.	Declension of Adjectives . . . . .	72
XIV.	Relative Pronouns . . . . .	76
XV.	Order of Words . . . . .	81
XVI.	Other Pronouns . . . . .	84
XVII.	Auxiliaries of Mood. The Imperative . . . . .	88
XVIII.	Separable and Inseparable Verbs . . . . .	94

## CONTENTS

LESSON		PAGE
<b>XIX.</b>	Numbers, Dates, Letters . . . . .	100
<b>XX.</b>	Comparison . . . . .	106
<b>XXI.</b>	Possessive and Correlative Pronouns . . . . .	112
<b>XXII.</b>	Order of Words. . . . .	115
<b>XXIII.</b>	Passive Voice . . . . .	120
<b>XXIV.</b>	Government of Verbs . . . . .	123
<b>XXV.</b>	The English Present Participle . . . . .	126
<b>XXVI.</b>	Verbs with Sein. The Infinitive . . . . .	129
<b>XXVII.</b>	The Subjunctive. Indirect Speech . . . . .	133
<b>XXVIII.</b>	The Conditional Sentence . . . . .	137
<b>XXIX.</b>	Reflexive Verbs . . . . .	140
<b>XXX.</b>	Impersonal Verbs . . . . .	146
	A Note on Overgrown Adjectives . . . . .	149

## PART II

Key to Exercises . . . . .	151
Conclusion . . . . .	185
Appendix A: Table of German Declensions; Special Lists of Nouns . . . . .	187
Appendix B: Alphabetical List of Strong and Irregular Verbs . . . . .	190

## PART I

### § 1. THE GERMAN ALPHABET

Some Germans still adhere to their old Gothic letters although many books and newspapers are printed in Roman type, and most German typewriters are fitted with Roman letters. It is well, therefore, the student should familiarize himself with the German alphabet (see pages 12 and 13).

*Note 1.*—There are five vowels : a, e, i, o, u, and there are the further combinations ai (ai), au (au), ei (ai), eu (oi), ie (i).

Of the above a, o, u and au may *modify*, i.e. change their sound. They are then written and pronounced : ä (ε), ö (ø or œ), ü (y), äu (oi). The two dots are referred to as the Umlaut, meaning a change of sound.

*Note 2.* There are several *digraphs* or *trigraphs*, i.e. groups of two or three consonants with a single sound :

ch	pronounced	ç or x
ck	„	k
ph	„	f
ss	„	s
sch	„	ʃ
th	„	t












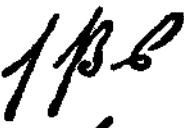














N.B.—The following notes in this section refer to the Gothic letters only.

*Note 3.*—The small round s is used only at the end of a word, even if this word is the first part of a compound word :

Glas (glass), but Glases (of a glass)  
bis (until) and bisher (until now)  
Staatsmann (statesman)

English	German Characters		Pronunciation <sup>1</sup>
	Printed	Written	
A a (ä)	A a (ä)	A a	'a: ('ε)
B b	B b	B b	be:
C c	C c	C c	tse:
D d	D d	D d	de:
E e	E e	E e	'e:
F f	F f	F f	'ef
G g	G g	G g	ge:
H h	H h	H h	ha:
I i	I i	I i	'i:
J j	J j	J j	jot
K k	K k	K k	ka:
L l	L l	L l	'el
M m	M m	M m	'em

<sup>1</sup> For the Pronunciation, see § 2, Preliminary Note.

English	German Characters		Pronunciation
	Printed	Written	
N n	Ń n	 	'en
O o (ö)	Ō ō (ö)	 	'oi: ('ø)
P p	Ɔ Ɔ	 	pe:
Q q	Œ œ	 	ku:
R r	Ŕ ŕ	 	'er
S s	Š š	 	'es
T t	Ţ ţ	 	te:
U u (ü)	Ů ů (ü)	 	'u: (y)
V v	Ʊ Ʊ	 	fau
W w	Ʊ Ʊ	 	ve:
X x	Ʊ Ʊ	 	'iks
Y y	Ʊ Ʊ	 	'ypsilon
Z z	Ʊ Ʊ	 	tset

*Note 4.*—The double s is written **ß** (sz) at the end of a word or a syllable (when this syllable is not an integral part of the whole word but merely a prefix), and also after a long vowel and before a consonant :

muß, must	ißt, eats
eßbar, eatable, but	essen, to eat
fuß, foot	kuß, kiss

Although the e in eßbar is short, the double s is written **ß** because at the end of a syllable, bar not being an integral part of the word, but an adjectival or adverbial suffix (-able).

In fuß and kuß, the u in the former is long and in the latter short, but both have **ß** because this is, as the above rule said, at the end of the word—*but* in the plural we have :

Füße (the double s not at the end but following a long vowel),

Rüsse (not **ß** because the vowel ü is short in this word, and the double s is not now at the end).

*Observations.*—In writing German with Roman characters the student may write Füße, or Füße (as many Germans do), but if he keeps to the former, it will help to keep his pronunciation correct, *i.e.* to remember that the preceding vowel is long. There is no rule we can give for helping the student to know whether the vowel before a final **ß** in nouns is long or short. He must learn this by experience.

Note carefully these printed capital letters, which beginners are apt to confuse :

ß (B) and ß (V)
Ĉ (C), Ğ (G) and Š (S)
Ŕ (R) and Ŗ (K)
Ŏ (O) and Ű (Q)

Also **f** (f) and **ɸ** (s) (the **f** has the stroke right across, whereas the **ɸ** has not).

Note carefully : **b** (b), **ɓ** (d) and **h** (h).

Note also the difference in German written letters between :

**ç** (c) and **ʃ** (t, with dot)

**œ** (e, joining near top) and **œ̃** (n, joining at bottom)

**œ̃** (n) and **œ̂** (u, distinguished from n by stroke over it)

## § 2. GERMAN PRONUNCIATION

### Preliminary Note

Before we go any further we must explain that the *symbols* we are using here to indicate the pronunciation are *symbols only and not ordinary German letters*. These symbols have been devised by the International Phonetic Association so that the pronunciation of all languages can be clearly explained by this International *Pronouncing* Alphabet. If you take the trouble to learn the sound-values of these symbols now you will be able to follow the phonetic transcription of any other language you undertake.

Practise your sounds aloud, clearly and continuously, and use a mirror to get your lip positions as indicated here.

A good pronunciation is well worth acquiring, and there is no reason why the average student who follows these notes conscientiously and continuously should not achieve this, although if he can obtain the help of a native or a good gramophone record on German pronunciation so much the better.



## A Table of the Vowel-Sounds in German

Letter and Symbol	Nearest English Equivalent	Remarks
a { a (long) <sup>1</sup> a (short)	a as in <i>father</i> a as in <i>cast</i> said quickly : not as in <i>cat</i>	Almost like u in <i>must</i> .
e e (long)	ai as in <i>fair</i>	There is no <i>er</i> sound at the end : it is one pure vowel-sound.
e e (short)	e as in <i>bed, net, sent</i>	
e e (long)	ee as in <i>deep</i>	The teeth are not so close together as in the English <i>deep</i> . It is between the <i>ee</i> in <i>deep</i> and the <i>e</i> in <i>bed</i> . As the preceding sound, but shorter.
e e (short)		
i i (always short)	i as in <i>bit</i>	
i i (long)	ee as in <i>deep</i>	The teeth are much closer together than in the English sound. The sound must almost be forced through.
o o (always short)	o as in <i>not</i>	Morgen ( <i>morgen</i> )—not as in English <i>Morgan</i> .
o o (always long)	aw as in <i>lawn</i>	With lips <i>well rounded</i> . There is not the o-oo sound as in <i>bone</i> .
u { u (long) u (short)	oo as in <i>ooze</i> oo as in <i>good</i>	Lips <i>well rounded</i> ! Lips <i>well rounded</i> !
ö œ (always short)	ur as in <i>fur</i> ( <i>r</i> not being pronounced).	Lips <i>must be well rounded</i> , as for o.
ö e (always long)	No equivalent in English. It is the same as the French <i>eu</i> in <i>feu</i>	Pronounce the preceding sound, closing the mouth somewhat and keeping the lips rounded as for o.

<sup>1</sup> A long vowel is indicated in the pronunciation by a colon (:).