

A CONCISE GERMAN GRAMMAR

for Reference and Review

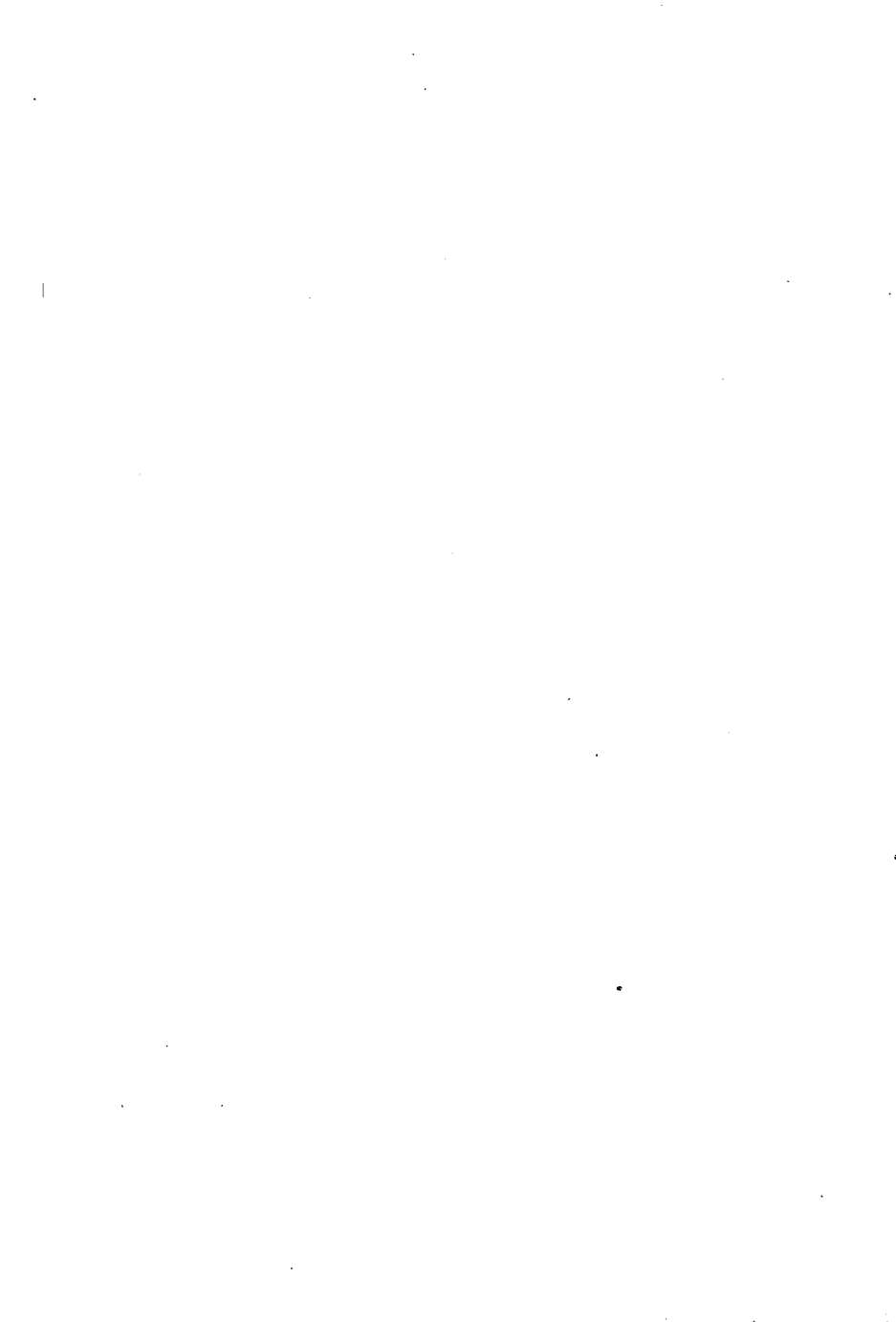
ROBERT LOHAN

Author of Modern German, Living German Literature, etc.



FREDERICK UNGAR PUBLISHING CO.

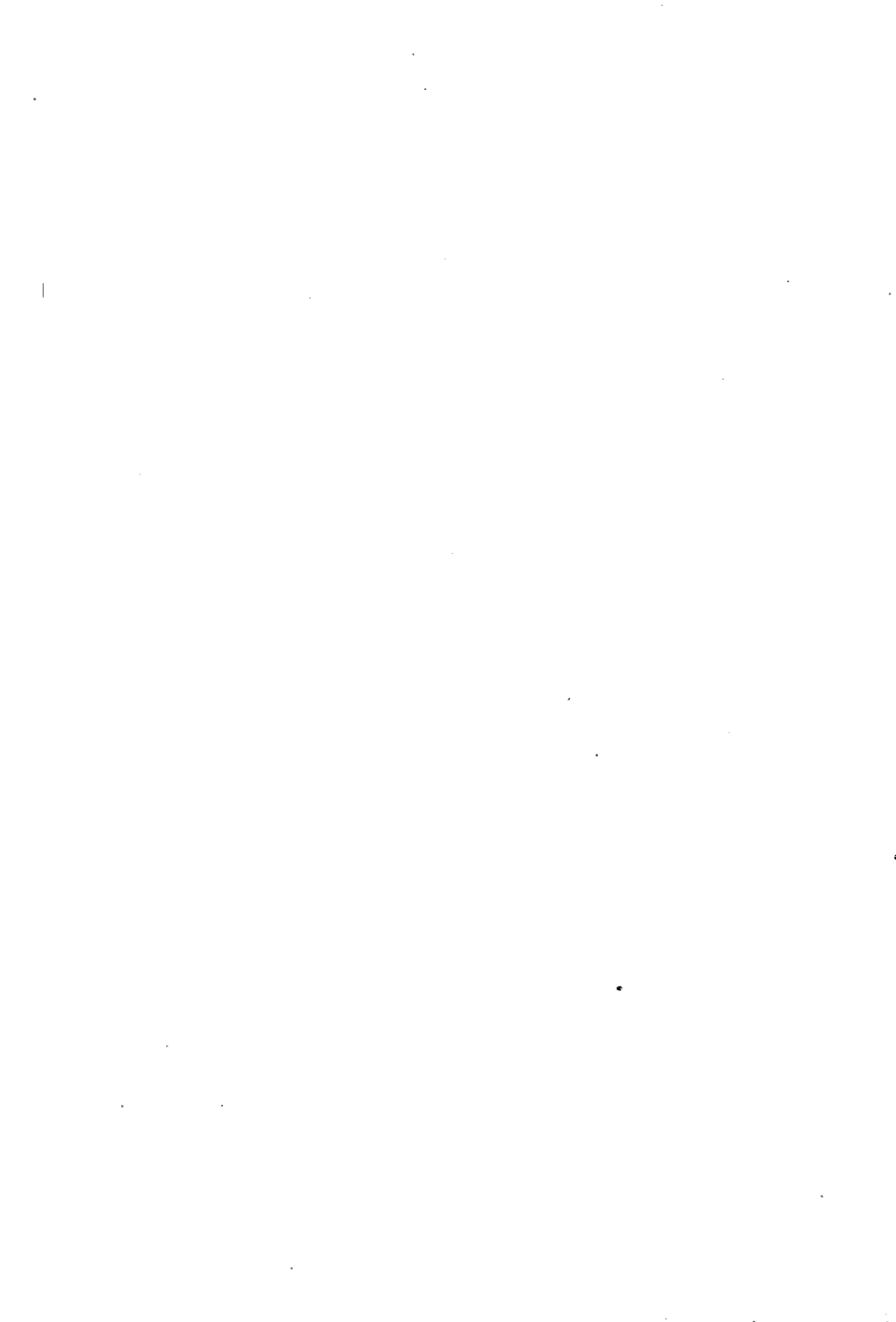
NEW YORK



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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 55-8444



PUBLISHERS' NOTE

What constitutes a *good* review grammar has long been subject to debate. The guiding principles of the present volume, intended for intermediate and advanced classes, will, it is hoped, meet with the approval of the majority of the author's colleagues.

The object of a Grammar is to teach grammar. The subject is both significant and interesting enough to carry its own appeal. It is not ugly and need not be dressed up with pictures of romantic castles or pretty folk dances; it is not bitter and need not be sugar-coated with pleasant tales or far-fetched humor.

A desire to help the student to master the essentials of German grammar must neither mislead us into reducing the subject to a moron's fare nor serve us as an excuse for the display of pragmatically useless niceties.

The presentation of grammatical rules for the learner — even the reviewing learner who has been over the field once before — does not call for revolutionary departures from tradition, either in the light of the most recent advances of linguistic theory or in pursuit of some experimental teaching technique.

The framework established by these conservative ideas permitted the author ample leeway in his endeavor to provide an efficient teaching tool adapted for use under present-day classroom conditions, with the prevailing curriculum restrictions and the inevitable unevenness of student preparation.

The first part of the book consists of chapters dealing with specific grammatical topics. These chapters need not — and actually should not — be taken as lessons in the conventional sense. They treat their topics comprehensively and are not chopped up into parcels of equal length. The second part of the book runs parallel to the first and consists of drill exercises which cover all the essential points explained in the individual

grammatical chapters. Finally, there is an apparatus of (1) a list of strong and irregular verbs, (2) a German-English and an English-German word list, and (3) an index for reference purposes.

The basically bipartite plan of the book will be found convenient in day-to-day classroom routine. It has the added advantage that because of it the book can serve the alert student as a reference work throughout his subsequent German studies and also in later life when he is to apply his knowledge of the language to practical problems. This consideration was uppermost in the author's mind and explains several of the distinctive features of his work. One of these is the fact that all the grammatical rules are richly illustrated by sample sentences reflecting actual usage. Most of these were adapted from published texts and many are verbatim quotations. Equally important, though possibly less striking at first sight, is the presentation in pertinent contexts of very comprehensive reference surveys, as the lists of German and English prepositions with their varied equivalents in English and German usage.

The *Concise German Grammar* is the final work in this field contributed by Dr. Robert Lohan, who passed away soon after completing the manuscript. Of his fine qualities as a teacher and his enthusiasm for imparting a sound knowledge of his native language, the publishers have had intimate knowledge. It is their hope, as it was that of the author, that this book will serve a large number of teachers and a much larger number of students, and that it will serve them well. The publishers will be grateful for any constructive criticism that may enable them to prepare for progressively improved reprintings and revisions.

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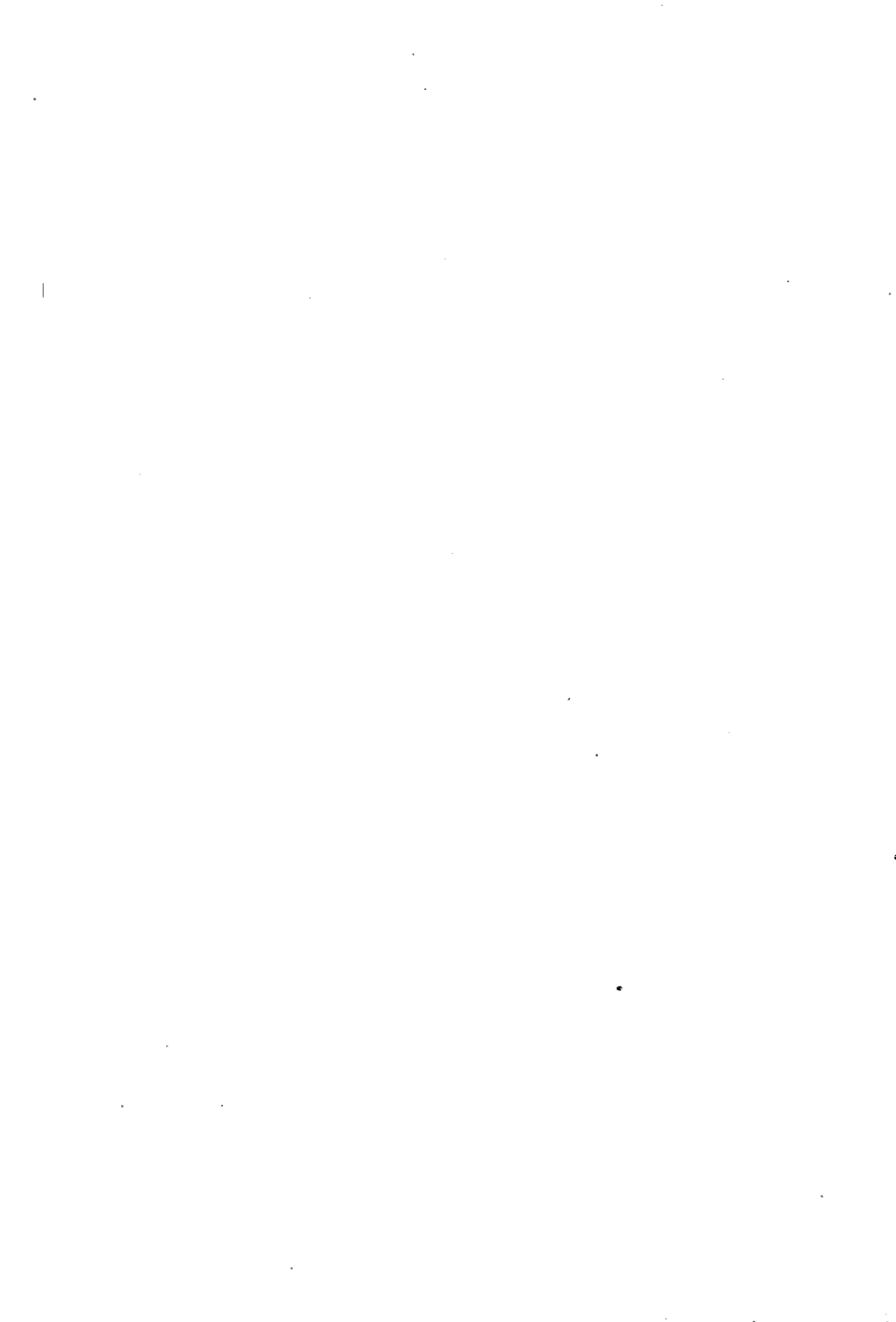
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GRAMMAR



NOTE

1. **Nouns** which follow the "**General Rules**" (p. 35) are given in the nominative singular. Exceptions are indicated.
2. **Two dots** over a hyphen (¨) after a noun indicate **umlaut** in the plural; after an adjective, **umlaut** in comparison: **der Zug**, ¨e means: plural is **Züge**; **stark**, ¨er indicates that the comparative is **stärker**.
3. **Regular verbs** are listed in the infinitive.
4. **Separable compound verbs** will be recognized by the **hyphen** between the prefix and the verb: **an-nehmen**. Obviously this hyphen is an expedient; the word is spelled, **annehmen**.
5. An **asterisk** after a verb indicates that it is irregular; the principal parts may be looked up in the **List of Strong and Irregular Verbs**, pp. 99-108.
6. German words are stressed on the root syllable, which generally is the first. **Words not stressed on the first syllable appear with an accent mark on the stressed vowel**. Actually there are no such signs in German and **indēm** is spelled **indem**.

The prefixes **be-**, **ent-**, **er-**, **ge-**, **ver-**, and **zer-**, are always unstressed. Therefore such words as **beginnen**, **entscheiden**, **erstaunt**, **geduldig**, **Verkehr**, **zerstören**, are stressed on the second syllable.

Adverbial compounds of **her-** and **hin-** are stressed on the second syllable, **heráuskommen**, **hinéingehen**.

Prefixes forming inseparable compound verbs are unstressed, and the accent is on the first syllable of the root verb, **übergében**, **unterríchten**.

I. GERMAN TYPE

German has a special script of its own, but every German is able to read and write Roman characters as well. Both scripts are taught at school, often as early as in the first grade. Type-writers, many of them of American make, have Roman or Latin type. Handwriting in German script and printing in German type are becoming outmoded. Still, the majority of books found on the shelves of German libraries are printed in German characters, called *Fraktur*. Notice that German type has two characters for the s-sound, initial and medial *ſ* and final *ß*. Be sure to keep apart *f* and *ſ*, which almost look alike.

THE GERMAN ALPHABET

German	Roman	Approximate Pronunciation	German	Roman	Approximate Pronunciation
A a	A a	ah	N n	N n	enn
B b	B b	bay	O o	O o	oh
C c	C c	tsay	P p	P p	pay
D d	D d	day	Q q	Q q	koo or kvay
E e	E e	ay	R r	R r	airr
F f	F f	eff	S s	S s	ess
G g	G g	gay	T t	T t	tay
H h	H h	hah	U u	U u	ooh
I i	I i	ee	V v	V v	fow
J j	J j	yay or yot	W w	W w	vay
K k	K k	kah	X x	X x	iks
L l	L l	ell	Y y	Y y	tip-sillon
M m	M m	emm	Z z	Z z	tsett

COMPOUND CONSONANTS

ch tsay-hah; ck tsay-kah; sch ess-tsay-hah;
ß ess-tsett or scharfes ess; tsay-tsett

II. PRONUNCIATION

1. There can be no argument about correct German pronunciation, and there is no "choice." Standard German, called "*Hochsprache*," codified more than forty years ago in a vocabulary aiming at uniform pronunciation in the entire German-speaking area, has gradually conquered the stage, the radio, and the boards of education. Now it is taught at colleges and universities in all German-speaking countries. Special courses in "*Hochsprache*" are required of the student-teacher. Foreigners who study German should learn only this pronunciation.

2. It is very difficult—if not hopeless—to study pronunciation from a book. Imitation of the teacher is the best way. Phonograph records are helpful.

SOME STRIKING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND GERMAN SPEECH

1. German is spoken from the chewing position. *Push your chin back!*

2. *Articulation is more distinct.* The sounds are pronounced with greater precision. You cannot speak German without powerful and expressive movements of tongue, lips, and jaws.

3. *A German vowel has only one sound value.* Webster lists eight different values for English "a." German "a" is always *ah*, with slight nuances. It may be longer or shorter, it may resemble a in *father* or a in *artistic*, but never can it be pronounced like a in *fate* or *am*. German "i" is *ee*. It may be pronounced like the vowel in *see* or like i in *sin*, never has it the sound of i in *mine*. Even unstressed vowels retain their sound value.

4. *There are no silent vowels, except e in ie, and no silent consonants, except silent h (see p. 20) in German.* The German adjective *weise*, the equivalent of English *wise*, has two syllables: *vī—ze*. In *Psychologie* the initial p must be sounded.

5. Under certain circumstances, German back vowels (so called because, in pronouncing them, the back part of the tongue

is raised) ah, oh, oo are changed into front vowels ay, ee. This is called *Umlaut*. This word has found entrance into the English dictionary. There are some traces of umlaut in English: *man—men; brother—brethren; foot—feet; mouse—mice*. The differences between English and German are:

- a) Umlaut in English is a rare exception, in German it is frequent.
- b) English spells the umlaut with an ordinary letter symbol; German uses the original letter with a double dot: ä—ö—ü. Note that ä and ö are ay-sounds, ü is an ee-sound.

6. Accented syllables are more stressed in German than in English. German words are accented on the root syllable (*vergessen*), compound words on the root syllable of the first component (*Kinder*garten). Foreign words generally are accented on the last syllable (*Student*, *Psychologie*).

GENERAL RULES ABOUT VOWELS

1. *German vowels are either long or short.* A, i, u may be long or short, without change of sound. Long e, o is closed (as in *leben*, *Not*), short o, e is open (as in *voll*, *Bett*).

2. Generally a vowel is *long*:

- a) when followed by another vowel: **See, Boot, die**
- b) when followed by silent h: **Fehler, Bahn, Drohne, Kuh**
- c) when followed by one consonant sign: **kam, er, Ton, nun**
- d) in open syllables, i.e., in syllables ending in a vowel: **Name, geben, Rose, Ruder.**

3. Generally a vowel is *short*:

- a) when followed by a double consonant: **Mann, rennen, zittern, Löffel, Futter**
- b) when followed by two or more consonants: **List, Ernte, Kunst.**

4. *German vowels are pure vowels.* You may continue a German *e* as long as you wish—it must always be an *e* at the end: *le-e-e-ben*, not *le-e-e-iben*. Therefore, our phonetic transcription *ay* for the German *e* is merely a compromise, as the *y* in that transcription, the so-called *vanish*, characteristic of the English *a* in *may*, is never sounded at the end of the German *e* as in *leben*. The same is true of the German long *o* as in *Not*. However long it may be continued, it always sounds like *No-o-ot*, never, *za* in English *note*, like *No-o-o-oot*, with a *vanish* gliding toward *oo* (as in *foot*).

5. *A vowel beginning a word* is not contracted with the last consonant of the preceding word. *Not: inamerica, but: in—Amerika.* Stop the breath before pronouncing the initial vowel.

6. German vowels are pronounced from *three different positions of the lips*:

- a) From the *yawning mouth* (wide open) speak: *a* (ah)
- b) From the *smiling mouth* (lips stretched and slightly open) speak: *e* (ay) and *i* (ee)
- c) From the *whistling mouth* (lips rounded and protruded) speak: *o* (oh) and *u* (oo).

THE INDIVIDUAL VOWELS

All comparisons with English sounds are approximate.

Value	Spelling	English Equivalents	German Examples
ah long	<i>a, aa, eh</i>	<i>a</i> in <i>far</i>	<i>Vater, Glas, Haar, Paar, lahm</i>
ah short	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i> in <i>artistic</i>	<i>Mann, Fall, alt</i>
ay long	<i>e, ee, eh</i>	<i>a</i> in <i>may</i>	<i>Leben, Beere, sehr</i>
ay short	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i> in <i>bed</i>	<i>Bett, wenn, Rest, Nest</i>
ee long	<i>i, ih, ie, ieh</i>	<i>e</i> in <i>me</i>	<i>mir, ihr, tief, sieht</i>
ee short	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i> in <i>sit</i>	<i>sitzen, bitten, Drill</i>
oh long	<i>o, oo, oh</i>	<i>o</i> in <i>note</i>	<i>Note, Boot, Lohn</i>
oh short	<i>o</i>	<i>o</i> in <i>obey</i>	<i>kosten, Tochter</i>
oo long	<i>u, uh</i>	<i>oo</i> in <i>school</i>	<i>Schule, Schuh</i>
oo short	<i>u</i>	<i>oo</i> in <i>good</i>	<i>Butter, und</i>