

## WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPAL PARTS OF A VERB?

The principal parts of a verb are the forms we need to create all the different tenses

PRESENT	I eat
PRESENT PERFECT	I have eaten
PAST	I ate
PAST PERFECT	I had eaten
FUTURE	I will eat
FUTURE PERFECT	I will have eaten

### IN ENGLISH

The principal parts of an English verb are the infinitive (*eat*), the past tense (*ate*), and the past participle (*eaten*). If you know these parts, you can form all the other tenses of a verb (see *What is Meant by Tense?*, p. 69, *What is the Past Tense?*, p. 81, and *What is a Participle?*, p. 89).

English verbs fall into two categories depending on how they form their principal parts:

1. **Regular verbs**—These verbs are called regular because their past tense and past participle forms follow the predictable pattern of adding *-ed*, *-d*, or *-t* to the infinitive.

INFINITIVE	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
to walk	walked	walked
to seem	seemed	seemed
to burn	burned (burnt)	burned (burnt)

Since the past tense and the past participle of regular verbs are identical, regular verbs have only two distinct principal parts, the infinitive and the past.

2. **Irregular verbs**—These verbs are called irregular because their principal parts do not follow a regular pattern:

INFINITIVE	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
to sing	sang	sung
to draw	drew	drawn
to hit	hit	hit
to lie	lay	lain
to ride	rode	ridden

### IN GERMAN

Three of the principal parts are the same as in English: the infinitive, the past tense, and the past participle. For the past tense, the principal part is given in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular. German adds a fourth principal part for irregular verbs with stem vowel change in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of the present tense. This form is also given in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular.

<i>to eat</i>	essen	INFINITIVE
<i>eats</i>	isst	PRESENT TENSE (3 <sup>rd</sup> person sing.)
<i>ate</i>	aß	PAST TENSE (3 <sup>rd</sup> person sing.)
<i>eaten</i>	gegessen	PAST PARTICIPLE

German verbs fall into two categories depending on how they form their principal parts: weak verbs and strong verbs. A few irregular verbs fall between these two categories. Your German textbook will show you how to form the principal parts of these verbs.

### WEAK VERBS

Weak verbs resemble English regular verbs in that the stem of the verb stays the same, despite other modifications to form the principal parts.

**STEM**—The stem is obtained by dropping the final *-en* from the infinitive (or with a few verbs like *tun* and *ändern* by dropping the final *-n*).

**MODIFICATIONS**—The various principal parts are formed by adding various prefixes and or suffixes to the stem.

the past tense is formed by adding a *-t-* (or if the verb stem ends in *-d* or *-t*, by adding *-et*) to the stem of the infinitive and then adding the endings for the different persons.

the past participle is formed by adding the prefix *ge-* and the suffix *-t* or *-et* to the stem of the verb. Note that a few weak verbs have past participles without the *ge-* prefix.

INFINITIVE	PAST TENSE (3 <sup>rd</sup> per. sing.)	PAST PARTICIPLE
<i>to make</i>	machen	gemacht
<i>to work</i>	arbeiten	gearbeitet
<i>to believe</i>	glauben	glaubt

**STRONG VERBS**

Strong verbs resemble English irregular verbs in that they have unpredictable principal parts. You will have to memorize these parts as you learn new verbs. The irregularity of strong verbs is shown in a variety of ways:

- the vowel of the verb stem will often change in the past tense and in the past participle.
- the past tense endings are different than those for weak verbs
- the past participle is usually formed by adding the prefix *ge-*, and it does not end in *-t* but rather in *-en* or *-n*.

	<i>to find</i>	finden	fand	gefunden
	<i>to come</i>	kommen	kam	gekommen
	<i>to lose</i>	verlieren	verlor	verloren
	<i>to sing</i>	singen	sang	gesungen
	<i>to do</i>	tun	tat	getan

- when the stem vowel changes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of the present tense, you will need to know a fourth principal part, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of the present tense.

	<i>to run</i>	laufen	läuft	las	gelaufen
	<i>to read</i>	lesen	liest	las	gelesen
	<i>to sleep</i>	schlafen	schläft	schlief	geschlafen
	<i>to take</i>	nehmen	nimmt	nahm	genommen

Only by memorizing the principal parts of the strong verbs can you conjugate them properly in all their tenses.

**REVIEW**

Indicate whether the following German verbs are weak (w: end with *-(e)t*) or strong (s: end with *-(e)n*).

1. kaufen	kaufte-	gekauft	w	s
2. beginnen	begann-	begonnen	w	s
3. liegen	lag-	gelegen	w	s
4. fragen	fragte-	gefragt	w	s
5. sitzen	satz-	gesessen	w	s

**WHAT IS MEANT BY TENSE?**

The TENSE of a verb indicates when the action of the verb takes place: at the present time, in the past, or in the future.

I am studying	PRESENT
I studied	PAST
I will study	FUTURE

As you can see in the above examples, just by putting the verb in a different tense and without giving any additional information (such as "I am studying *now*," "I studied *yesterday*," "I will study *tomorrow*"), you can indicate when the action of the verb takes place.

Tenses may be classified according to the way they are formed. A SIMPLE TENSE consists of only one verb form (I *studied*), while a COMPOUND TENSE consists of one or more auxiliaries plus the main verb (I *am studying*).

In this section we will only consider tenses of the indicative mood (see *What is Meant by Mood?*, p. 71).

**IN ENGLISH**

Listed below are the main tenses of the indicative mood whose equivalents you will encounter in German:

<b>PRESENT</b>	
I study	PRESENT EMPHATIC
I do study	PRESENT PROGRESSIVE
I am studying	
<b>PAST</b>	
I studied	SIMPLE PAST
I did study	PAST EMPHATIC
I have studied	PRESENT PERFECT
I was studying	PAST PROGRESSIVE
I had studied	PAST PERFECT
<b>FUTURE</b>	
I will study	FUTURE
I will have studied	FUTURE PERFECT

As you can see, there are only two simple tenses (present and simple past). All the other tenses are compound tenses.

**IN GERMAN**

Listed below are the main tenses of the indicative mood that you will encounter in German.

PRESENT	<i>I study, I do study</i>	PRESENT
ich studiere	<i>I am studying</i>	
PAST		SIMPLE PAST/ IMPERFECT
ich studierte	<i>I studied,</i>	
ich habe studiert	<i>I was studying</i>	PRESENT PERFECT
ich hatte studiert	<i>I have studied</i>	PAST PERFECT
	<i>I had studied</i>	
FUTURE		FUTURE FUTURE PERFECT
ich werde studieren	<i>I will study</i>	
ich werde studiert haben	<i>I will have studied</i>	

As you can see, there are fewer present tense forms in German than in English. The compound tenses in German are formed with the auxiliary verbs **haben** (*to have*) or **sein** (*to be*) and **werden** (*to become*) + the main verb (see *What are Auxiliary Verbs?*, p. 76).

This handbook discusses the various tenses and their usage in separate chapters: *What is the Present Tense?*, p. 79; *What is the Past Tense?*, p. 81; *What is the Future Tense?*, p. 87; and *What are the Perfect Tenses?*, p. 83. Verb tenses can be grouped according to the mood in which they are used.

**CAREFUL**—Do not assume that tenses with the same name are used the same way in English and in German.

**WHAT IS MEANT BY MOOD?**

The word **MOOD** is a variation of the word *mode*, meaning manner or way. The mood is expressed by a form of the verb that indicates the attitude of the speaker toward what he or she is saying.

As a beginning student of German, you need to know the names of the moods so that you will understand what your German textbook is referring to when it uses these terms.

Verb forms are divided into moods, which, in turn, are then subdivided into one or more tenses. You will learn when to use the various moods as you learn verbs and their tenses.

**IN ENGLISH**

Verbs can be in one of three moods:  
**INDICATIVE MOOD**—The indicative mood is used to indicate an action of the verb that really happens or is likely to happen. This is the most common mood, and most of the verb forms that you use in everyday conversation belong to the indicative mood.

Robert *studies* German.  
Mary *is* here.

The indicative mood occurs in the present tense (see p. 79), the past tense (see p. 81), and the future tense (see p. 87).

**IMPERATIVE MOOD**—The imperative mood is used to express a command. The imperative mood does not have different tenses (see p. 73).

Robert, *study* German now!  
Mary, *be* here on time!

**SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD**—The subjunctive mood is used to express an attitude or feeling about the action of the verb. The subjunctive mood has different tense forms (see p. 147).

I wish she *were* here.  
If only we *knew* where they are.  
The teacher recommended that they *do* the exercise.

## — REVIEW —

Circle the words that correspond to the German present tense.

1. So John and Vera really do play tennis.
2. Yes, John plays often.
3. In fact, Vera is playing right now too.
4. Our friends are playing with them.
5. Do you play too?

## WHAT IS THE PAST TENSE?

The PAST TENSE is used to express an action that occurred in the past.

I saw you yesterday.

## IN ENGLISH

There are several verb forms that indicate the past tense

I worked	SIMPLE PAST
I was working	PAST PROGRESSIVE
I used to work	WITH HELPING VERB USED TO
I did work	PAST EMPHATIC
I have worked	PRESENT PERFECT
I had worked	PAST PERFECT

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The simple past is a simple tense; that is, it consists of one word (*worked* in the example above). The other past tenses are compound tenses; that is, they consist of more than one word, an auxiliary plus a main verb (*was working*, *did work*). The present and past perfect tenses are discussed in a separate section (see *What are the Perfect Tenses?*, p. 83).

## IN GERMAN

There are two tenses most commonly used for expressing an action in the past: the simple past and the present perfect.

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**SIMPLE PAST**—The simple past, also called the **IMPERFECT** (*Imperfekt*), or the **PRÆTERITE** (*Präteritum*), consists of only one word.

Ich arbeitete	<i>I worked</i>
Ich schwamm	<i>I swam</i>

**PRESENT PERFECT**—The present perfect tense (*Perfekt*) is a compound tense, consisting of two parts: the auxiliary verbs **haben** (*to have*) or **sein** (*to be*) conjugated in the present tense + the past participle of the main verb (see *What are Auxiliary Verbs?*, p. 76 and *What is a Participle?*, p. 89).

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Ich habe gearbeitet	<i>I worked</i> , <i>I have worked</i>
Ich bin geschwommen	<i>I swam</i> ; <i>I have swum</i>

The formation of both the simple past and the present perfect depends on whether the verb is categorized as a

strong verb or a weak verb (see p. 67). Your German textbook will explain in detail the formation of these two tenses for both groups of verbs.

**CAREFUL**—It is important to remember that the simple past and the present perfect have equivalent meanings in German. Their difference is one of style and usage: generally, the simple past is used in written German and the perfect in spoken German.

— REVIEW —

Underline the verb form(s) in the following sentences.

- Indicate whether the verb is in the simple past (SP) or the present perfect (PP).

- |   |    |    |
|---|----|----|
| 1. Last summer I went to Germany<br>with my family.       | SP | PP |
| 2. My mother has visited Germany many times.              | SP | PP |
| 3. Our trip was fun and interesting.                      | SP | PP |
| 4. We travelled around for two weeks.                     | SP | PP |
| 5. I have shown my vacation<br>photos to my German class. | SP | PP |

### WHAT ARE THE PERFECT TENSES?

The PERFECT TENSES are compound verbs made up of the auxiliary verb *to have* + the past participle of the main verb (see *What is a Participle?*, p. 89).

I have not seen him.

auxiliary past participle  
verb of to see

They had already gone.

auxiliary past participle  
verb of to go

### IN ENGLISH

There are three perfect tenses formed with the auxiliary verb *to have* + the past participle of the main verb. The name of each perfect tense is based on the tense used for the auxiliary verb *to have*.

1. **PRESENT PERFECT**—*to have* in the present tense + the past participle of the main verb (see *What is the Present Tense?*, p. 79).

I have eaten.  
present past participle  
of to eat

The boys have washed the car.

present past participle  
of to wash

2. **PAST PERFECT (PLUPERFECT)**—*to have* in the simple past + the past participle of the main verb (see *What is the Past Tense?*, p. 81). The past perfect is used to express an action completed in the past before some other past action or event.

I had eaten before six.

simple past participle  
past of to eat

The boys had washed the car before the storm.

simple past participle  
past of to wash

3. **FUTURE PERFECT**—*to have* in the future tense + past participle of the main verb (see *What is the Future Tense?*, p. 87). The future perfect expresses an action which will be completed in the future before some other action or event occurs in the future.

I will have eaten.  
 future past participle  
 of to eat

The boys will have washed the car by Thursday.  
 future past participle  
 of to wash

### IN GERMAN

As in English, there are three perfect tenses in the indicative mood (see *What is Meant by Mood?*, p. 71). The perfect tenses use a form of the auxiliary verb **haben** (*to have*) or **sein** (*to be*) + the past participle of the main verb. You must memorize which verbs require **sein** and which require **haben** as the auxiliary. As in English, the name of the tense reflects the tense of the auxiliary verb.

We are listing the various perfect tenses here so that you can see the pattern they follow. The perfect tenses are not always used in the same way in German as in English. Consult your German textbook in order to learn how to use them properly.

1. **PERFECT** (PERFEKT)—**haben** (*to have*) or **sein** (*to be*) in the present tense + past participle of the main verb.

Wir sind ins Kino gegangen.  
 present perfect  
 We have gone to the movies.

Wir waren schon ins Kino gegangen.  
 simple past

Wir haben den Film gesehen.  
 present perfect  
 We have seen the film.

Wir sahen den Film.  
 simple past

Note that although the perfect in German has a similar structure to the English present perfect, using the simple past in English results in a better translation.

2. **PAST PERFECT OR PLUPERFECT** (PLUSQUAMPERFEKT)—**haben** (*to have*) or **sein** (*to be*) in the simple past tense + past participle of the main verb.

Wir wären schon ins Kino gegangen.  
 simple past of sein (*to be*) past participle of gehen (*to go*)  
 We had already gone to the movies.

Wir hätten den Film schon gesehen.  
 simple past of haben (*to have*) past participle of sehen (*to see*)  
 We had already seen the film.

Generally, the German past perfect is used the same way as the past perfect in English: to express an action or condition that ended before some other past action or condition which may or may not be stated. Notice how we can express the sequence of events by using different tenses.

Verb tense:	Pluperfect -2	Perfect or Simple past -1	Present 0
Time action takes place:	before -1	before 0	now

*They had already left when I arrived.*  
*Sie waren schon abgefahren, als ich ankam.*  
 pluperfect -2 simple past -1

3. **FUTURE PERFECT TENSE**—**haben** (*to have*) or **sein** (*to be*) in the future tense + past participle of the main verb.

Wir werden den Film gesehen haben.  
 future tense of haben (*to have*)  
 We will have seen the film.

Generally, the German future perfect is used the same way as the future perfect in English: to express an action which will be completed in the future before some other future action or event, which may or may not be stated. Notice how we can express the sequence of events by using different tenses.

Verb tense:	Present 0	Future perfect 1	Future 2
Time action takes place:	now	after 0 before 2	after 0 and after 1

*They will have left before I arrive.*

Sie werden abgefahren sein, bevor ich ankomme.

future perfect (1)      event in the future (2)

Both action (1) and event (2) will occur at some future time, but action (1) will be completed before event (2) takes place. Therefore, action (1) is in the future perfect tense.

You will have to learn to recognize these tenses because they indicate the sequence in which events take place.

— REVIEW —

Circle the tense of the verb in *italics>: perfect (P), pluperfect (PP), or future perfect (FP).*

1. We *had* already gone when Katie arrived.      P      PP      FP
2. Barbara *hasn't left* yet.      P      PP      FP
3. I *will have graduated* by next summer.      P      PP      FP
4. *Have you seen* my new car?      P      PP      FP

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## WHAT IS THE FUTURE TENSE?

The FUTURE TENSE indicates that an action will take place some time in the future.

I *will return* the book as soon as I've read it.  
future

### IN ENGLISH

The future tense is formed with the auxiliary *will* or *shall* + the dictionary form of the main verb. In conversation *shall* and *will* are often shortened to *'ll*.

Paul and Mary *will do* their homework tomorrow.  
*I'll leave* tonight.

An action that will take place in the future can also be expressed in the present tense with an adverb of future time or an expression of future time.

Maria is *meeting* Paul tomorrow.  
present progressive      adverb

Paul goes to Berlin *next week*.  
present      expression of future time

### IN GERMAN

The future tense is formed with the auxiliary verb *werden* (*to become*) + the infinitive of the main verb. The verb *werden* is conjugated to agree with the subject and the infinitive remains unchanged. The infinitive is placed at the end of the sentence.

Maria und Paul werden ihre Hausaufgabe schreiben.  
3<sup>rd</sup> per. pl.      infinitive

Maria and Paul will write their homework.

Ich werde heute abend *ausgehen*.

1<sup>st</sup> per. sing.      infinitive  
I shall go out tonight.

As in English, an action that will take place in the future can also be expressed in the present tense with an adverb or an expression of future time.

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17. Manch\_\_\_\_\_ Eltern sind streng.  
 18. Kennen Sie dies\_\_\_\_\_ Herr\_\_\_\_\_?  
 19. Welch\_\_\_\_\_ Kleider kauft jen\_\_\_\_\_ Mädchen?  
 20. München, d\_\_\_\_\_ 6.5.1982.

### Dative Case

#### *Singular and Plural*

The dative case of the definite and indefinite article and of the "der" and "ein" words are as follows.

	SINGULAR			PLURAL
	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>All Genders</i>
Definite article: "der" words	dem diesem jenem	der dieser jener	dem diesem jenem	den diesen jenen
Indefinite article: "ein" words	einem meinem ihrem	einer meiner ihrer	einem meinem ihrem	(no plural) meinen ihren
Negative article	keinem	keiner	keinem	keinen

The dative case is used in the following ways:

#### *As the Indirect Object of the Verb*

In English this is expressed by the prepositions *to* or *for*. The person or animal to whom something is given, shown, told, etc., is in the dative case.

<b>Ich hole dem Hund das Futter.</b>	<i>I am getting the food for the dog.</i>
<b>Er kauft der Frau die Karte.</b>	<i>He is buying the ticket for the woman.</i>
<b>Wir zeigen dem Kind das Boot.</b>	<i>We are showing the boat to the child.</i>
<b>Wir geben einem Mann Geld.</b>	<i>We are giving money to a man.</i>
<b>Ich schicke meiner Freundin nichts.</b>	<i>I am sending nothing to my girl friend.</i>
<b>Sie kauft unsrem Kind Schokolade.</b>	<i>She is buying chocolate for our child.</i>

The following verbs are frequently used with the dative case:

<b>antworten</b> <i>to answer</i>	<b>Ich antworte dem Herrn.</b> <i>I answer the gentleman.</i>
<b>bringen</b> <i>to bring, take</i>	<b>Er bringt seiner Freundin Blumen.</b> <i>He brings flowers to his girl friend.</i>
<b>geben</b> <i>to give</i>	<b>Wir geben der Katze Milch.</b> <i>We are giving milk to the cat.</i>
<b>holen</b> <i>to get</i>	<b>Ich hole meinem Bruder den Schlüssel.</b> <i>I am getting the key for my brother.</i>
<b>kaufen</b> <i>to buy</i>	<b>Sie kauft ihrer Mutter ein Auto.</b> <i>She is buying a car for her mother.</i>
<b>schicken</b> <i>to send</i>	<b>Sonja schickt ihrer Tante ein Geschenk.</b> <i>Sonja is sending a gift to her aunt.</i>
<b>sagen</b> <i>to say, to tell</i>	<b>Sie sagt ihrem Mann die Wahrheit.</b> <i>She is telling her husband the truth.</i>
<b>zeigen</b> <i>to show</i>	<b>Er zeigt dem Mädchen das Museum.</b> <i>He is showing the museum to the girl.</i>



46. Complete the following with the dative form of the indicated word.

1. Ich zeige \_\_\_\_\_ Lehrer dieses Buch. *kein*
2. Wir geben \_\_\_\_\_ Vater ein Geschenk. *unser*
3. Es gehört \_\_\_\_\_ Studentin. *dies*\_\_
4. Sie gefällt \_\_\_\_\_ Bruder. *mein*
5. Ich kaufe \_\_\_\_\_ Mutter etwas. *euer*
6. Wir schreiben \_\_\_\_\_ Tante eine Karte. *unser*
7. Er sagt \_\_\_\_\_ Mann die Neuigkeit. *jen*\_\_
8. Ich bringe \_\_\_\_\_ Kind ein Bonbon. *jed*\_\_
9. Er holt \_\_\_\_\_ Freundin Limonade. *sein*
10. Helfen Sie \_\_\_\_\_ Frau? *Ihr*

### Noun Endings in the Dative Case

#### Singular

The dative singular noun form of most German nouns is identical with the nominative singular. The same nouns that add **-e(n)** in the accusative singular add **-e(n)** in the dative singular. (See section on accusative case.)

**Ich gebe dem Herrn die Zeitung.** *I am giving the newspaper to the gentleman.*  
**Wir bringen dem Studenten ein Buch.** *We are bringing a book to the student.*

47. Complete the following with the appropriate endings.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Wir danken d_____ Held_____.         | 5. Er zeigt es sein_____ Junge_____.        |
| 2. Es gehört jen_____ Student_____.     | 6. Ich gebe ein_____ Hase_____ die Karotte. |
| 3. Sie glaubt unsr_____ Präsident_____. | 7. Wir helfen kein_____ Mensch_____.        |
| 4. Es gefällt dies_____ Herr_____.      | 8. Welch_____ Junge_____ gehört das Auto?   |

#### Plural

The dative plural noun always adds **-n**, unless the nominative plural form already ends in **-n**.

**Ich schicke den Kindern Geschenke.** *I am sending presents to the children.*  
**Wir geben den Mädchen nichts.** *We are giving nothing to the girls.*

Nouns ending in **-s** in the nominative plural retain the **-s** in the dative plural and do not add **-n**.

**Er zeigt den Babys das Tier.** *He is showing the animal to the babies.*

48. Rewrite the following sentences, changing the dative nouns to the plural. Make all necessary changes.

- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Schreibst du deiner Freundin? | 6. Ich hole dem Baby Milch.    |
| 2. Er hilft jenem Kind.          | 7. Es gehört diesem Jungen.    |
| 3. Es gefällt seinem Lehrer.     | 8. Wir glauben der Frau.       |
| 4. Sie zeigt es ihrem Bruder.    | 9. Sie dankt ihrem Freund.     |
| 5. Er antwortet dem Mann.        | 10. Es gehört eurem Studenten. |

49. Complete the following with the appropriate form of the dative of the indicated word.

1. Ich helfe \_\_\_\_\_ Frauen. *jen*\_\_
2. Ich danke \_\_\_\_\_ Vater. *mein*