



Learning German

German is the native language of over 100 million people. German is an official language of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Liechtenstein, and Luxembourg. It is spoken in many European countries as a second language and is the third most taught and translated language in the world.

Language Family
Germanic

Dialect
Standard or High German

Writing System
Roman alphabet

Language Tips

- German pronunciation and spelling are regular and predictable.
- There are three categories of German nouns: masculine, feminine and neuter.
- German nouns are always capitalized, regardless of where they occur in a sentence. For example, Der Mann läuft.
- Many verbs have two parts: one part that comes after the subject and one part that comes at the end of the sentence. For example, Der Mann hat einen Apfel gegessen.
- The German alphabet contains all the letters of the Roman alphabet plus the letter ß. For example, Fußball.
- The vowels in some German words have an accent mark written above them—a pair of dots called an umlaut "¨".
This mark shows how to properly pronounce the word, and it may be the only feature that distinguishes between two otherwise identical words. For example, ein Apfel and zwei Äpfel.
- German has both formal and informal ways to address others, depending on the age of the speaker and his or her relationship to the person or persons being addressed.