

Present tense (Präsens)

what it looks like in english

This tense is the only tense used for the present. The english equivalent for this:

example

Ich sage	I say
---	i am saying
ich gehe	i go
---	i am going
ich spreche	i speak
---	i am speaking

Regular verbs

regular verbs take the stem word and replace the -en/-n with a new ending depending on the pronoun used. when a verb ends in -en/-n it is in the infinitive state. note,

- If the infinitive stem ends in -s, -ß, -x, or -z, the s of the du-ending is not needed
- if the infinitive stem ends in -d or -t the endings require an "e" before they are added -st > -est

example

infinitive	finden	gehen	sitzen	machen
infinitive stem	find	geh	sitz	mach
ich	finde	gehe	sitze	mache
du	findest	gehst	sitzt	machst
er, sie, es	findet	geht	sitzt	macht
wir	finden	gehen	sitzen	machen
ihr	findet	geht	sitzt	macht

example (cont)

Sie, sie finden gehen sitzen machen

Irregular verbs

These verbs do not follow the same pattern, and must be memorised

example

infinitive	sein	haben	werden	wissen
ich	bin	habe	werde	weiß
du	bist	hast	wirst	weißt
er,sie,es	ist	hat	wird	weiß
wir	sind	haben	werden	wissen
ihr	seid	habt	werdet	wisst
Sie,sie	sind	haben	werden	wissen

stem changing verbs

Some irregular verbs having a, au, or e in their infinitive stems.

There are four types of stem changes: a > ä, au > äu, e > i, and e > ie.

example

infinitive	fahren	laufen	sprechen	sehen
ich	fahre	laufe	spreche	sehe
du	fährst	läufst	sprichst	siehst
er,sie,es	fährt	läuft	spricht	sieht
wir	fahren	laufen	sprechen	sehen
ihr	fahrt	lauft	sprecht	seht
Sie, sie	fahren	laufen	sprechen	sehen

model verbs

Model verbs usually replace the umletted letter when conjugated. There are 6

Note

-sollen doesnt have a letter change but follows the same pattern

example

infinitive	dürfen	können	müssen	solle
ich	darf	kann	muss	soll
du	darfst	kannst	musst	sollst
er,sie,es	darf	kann	muss	soll
wir	dürfen	können	müssen	solle
ihr	dürft	könnt	müsst	sollt
Sie,sie	dürfen	können	müssen	solle

Past Perfect (Plusquamperfekt)

what and when is it used?

The past perfect tense describes events or situations that comes before another point in the past that has been established through the present perfect or the simple past tenses. It is used to make it clear that one event happened before another in the past.

This tense is the same as present perfect (besides when it is used), but in this tense:

Haben > hatte

Sein > war

use the same conjugations as present perfect.

Simple Past (Präteritum)

what and when is it used?

Simple past is a way to talk in the past tense with as few verbs as possible. The simple past is often used in writing and isn't found commonly in everyday speech.

you might hear it in speech if:

- someone is telling you a story

- it's more convenient

Regular verbs follow a pattern of endings. It is practically the same as the present tense ending, but simple past will have an extra e or te as shown below:

example

infinitive	sagen	tanzen	putzen	spielen
ich	sagte	tanzte	putzte	spielte
du	sagtest	tanztet	putztet	spieltest
er,sie,es	sagte	tanzte	putzte	spielte
wir	sagten	tanzten	putzten	spielten
ihr	sagtet	tanztet	putztet	spieletet
Sie, sie	sagten	tanzten	putzten	spielten

Irregular verbs

Irregular verbs for simple past don't have much of a pattern, you have to remember which verb is irregular (if the stem changes when conjugated) and which word you replace them with.

there is a rough pattern of changing the stem and adding either -st, -en, -t or nothing

example

infinitive	finden	sprechen	essen	fahren
ich	fand	sprache	aß	fuhr
du	fandest	sprachst	aßest	fuhrst
er,sie,es	fand	sprach	aß	fuhr
wir	fanden	sprachen	aßen	fuhren
ihr	fandet	sprachet	aßet	fuhrt
Sie,sie	fanden	sprachen	aßen	fuhren

Mixed verbs

when a mixed verb is conjugated in the simple past, it has the endings of weak verbs and has stem changes.

there aren't many and make up a lot of common words, you will remember them through repeated use.

example

infinitive	haben	wissen	denken	bringen
ich	hatte	wusste	dachte	brachte
du	hattest	wusstest	dachtest	brachtest
er,sie,es	hatte	wusste	dachte	brachte
wir	hatten	wussten	dachten	brachten
ihr	hattet	wusstet	dachtet	brachtet
Sie,sie	hatten	wussten	dachten	brachten

Future tense (Futur 1)

how it works

When forming something that is future tense, you use the same rules as present perfect, instead of using haben or sein, you always use Werden

There are no new conjugations, use the Present tense conjugations.

how it works (cont)

this tense is used to express future intentions, although, in spoken German, it is more common to use the present tense for this.

Present Perfect (Perfekt)

what and when is it used?

This is also called the perfect tense. The tense is used to speak about actions completed in the recent past.

to use this tense you must use an auxiliary verb and a past participle verb

for the auxiliary verb it'll be haben or sein

to turn a regular verb in a past participle verb, you must add ge- to the start, and -t to the end

(with the exception of any regular verb that ends in -ieren)

example

infinitive	arbeiten	machen	fragen
ich	gearbeitet	gemacht	gefragt
du	gearbeitet	gemacht	gefragt
er,sie,es	gearbeitet	gemacht	gefragt
wir	gearbeitet	gemacht	gefragt
ihr	gearbeitet	gemacht	gefragt
Sie,sie	gearbeitet	gemacht	gefragt

Irregular verbs

Irregular verbs follow the same pattern as regular verbs, but instead of adding -t, -en is added. The stem may also change

example

infinitive	helfen	nehmen	laufen
ich	geholfen	genommen	gelaufen
du	geholfen	genommen	gelaufen
er,sie,es	geholfen	genommen	gelaufen
wir	geholfen	genommen	gelaufen
ihr	geholfen	genommen	gelaufen
Sie, sie	geholfen	genommen	gelaufen

Mixed verbs

mixed verbs use ge- prefix and -t suffix like regular verbs, but the stem may change like irregular verbs.

example

infinitive	brennen	bringen	kennen
ich	gebrannt	gebracht	gekant
du	gebrannt	gebracht	gekant
er,sie,es	gebrannt	gebracht	gekant
wir	gebrannt	gebracht	gekant
ihr	gebrannt	gebracht	gekant
Sie,sie	gebrannt	gebracht	gekant

Haben or Sein?

As was stated before, along with a verb you must also use a auxiliary verb. In this case, haben or sein.

When to use Sein:

- The verb "sein" in perfect tense (Ich bin gewesen – I have been)

- Verbs which describe that somebody or something physically moves to another place (fahren, schwimmen, fliegen, gehen, laufen etc.)

- Verbs which describe a change of state or a verb which normally cannot be performed in "passive" (bleiben, aufwachen, sterben, werden etc.)

When to use Haben:

- The verb "haben" in perfect tense (Ich habe gehabt – I have had)

- All the verbs which do not fulfill the requirements to be used with "sein"

Future Perfect (Futur 2)

how it works

The future perfect is uncommon in German. To form the future perfect in German, you take the past participle of the verb being conjugated and use the correct conjugation of werden. Then use the appropriate verb(haben or sein) which is placed at then end of the sentence

The future perfect expresses the assumption that an action will have been completed by the time of speaking, or by a particular point in the future.

Resources

dictionary

auxiliary verb

a verb such as have, be, may, do, shall, will, can, or must

passive and active verbs

When the verb is passive, the subject undergoes the action rather than doing it
Brazil was beaten in the final.

When the verb is active, the subject of the verb is doing the action

France beats Brazil in the final.

test your conjugation

A good website to test your conjugation skills is German.net, it has 100 plus verbs that you can quiz yourself on and memorise. Its good because you can just chip away at it over time, i found myself doing about 10 verbs a day, making my way through the list, retesting the tenses over and over.

It is possible you need to make an account, its quick, and free and you can stay logged in.

the website also have other stuff you can quiz yourself on, overall i found it very helpful, i hope you do too, reader.

The Conjugation page for German.net



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