

GRAMMAR WORKBOOKS 

# Intermediate German

A Grammar and Workbook

Anna Miell and Heiner Schenke

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# INTERMEDIATE GERMAN: A GRAMMAR AND WORKBOOK

*Intermediate German* is designed for learners who have achieved basic proficiency and wish to progress to more complex language. Its 24 units present a broad range of grammatical topics, illustrated by examples which serve as models for varied exercises that follow. These exercises enable the student to master the relevant grammar points.

Features include:

- authentic German, from a range of media, used throughout the book to reflect German culture, life and society
- illustrations of grammar points in English as well as German
- checklists at the end of each unit for consolidation
- cross-referencing to other grammar units in the book
- glossary of grammatical terminology
- full answer key to all exercises

Suitable for independent learners and students on taught courses, *Intermediate German*, together with its sister volume, *Basic German*, forms a structured course in the essentials of German.

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# PREFACE

*Intermediate German* is aimed at learners of German who have acquired the basics of the language and want to progress further. It is also ideal for intermediate to advanced learners who want to consolidate and extend their knowledge of German grammar. The book can be used on its own or in connection with any major German coursebook and is suitable for self-study, class-based learning or reference purposes.

## **Presentation of grammar**

The book explains the essentials of German grammar in clear and simple language. The format is easily accessible and grammar topics follow a progression, which move from simple aspects to more complex features. For more in-depth study, there are cross-references to related grammar items. Explanations are simple and avoid specialised terminology whenever possible while introducing key terms. The vocabulary is practical and functional.

## **Structure of units**

There are 24 units. Each unit covers one key grammar topic, which is contrasted with English structures where appropriate. Most topic starts out with an overview. This is usually followed by detailed explanation in an easy to follow step-by-step layout, breaking down complex aspects into simple segments. Examples in English and German illustrate each point and introduce relevant vocabulary.

## **Checklists and exercises**

Integrated exercises allow immediate transfer and practice to consolidate each grammar point. Exercises are varied and progress from simple recognition to more complex application of grammar points.



A checklist at the end of each unit reinforces main points and provides an opportunity to self-assess understanding of the material covered.

Answers to all exercises and the checklists are available in a key at the end of the book.

### **Using the book as a grammar reference**

Unit headings indicate which grammar point is covered and the index at the end of the book refers users to the relevant units. The glossary provides clear definitions and simple explanations of key grammatical terms. When appropriate, cross-references are provided within units.

### **Extra features**

Extra tips on how to make language learning easier and more successful are provided wherever appropriate. The book also gives the learner up-to-date information on the contemporary usage of grammatical structures in German.

The book is suitable for:

- lower intermediate to advanced students
- AS/A-level revision
- courses at university and in further education
- adult education courses
- independent learners.

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# UNIT ONE

## Nouns and gender

### What are nouns?

Nouns are words used to name living creatures, objects, abstract qualities or concepts:

<b>Mann</b>	man	<b>Rock</b>	skirt
<b>Schönheit</b>	beauty	<b>Entwicklung</b>	development

### German nouns – three genders

In German, all nouns are classed as having one of three genders: *masculine*, *feminine* or *neuter* and are written with an initial capital letter. In dictionaries, the gender is usually indicated with *m* for masculine nouns, *f* for feminine nouns and *nt* for neuter nouns.

#### *Working out the gender*

Often there seems to be no obvious relationship between a noun and its gender in German: **Rock** ‘skirt’ for instance is masculine, **Hose** ‘trousers’ is feminine and **Kleid** ‘dress’ is neuter.

However, there are two main ways that can help you to work out the gender:

- certain endings indicate the gender
- some groups of nouns, usually linked by meaning, tend to be masculine or feminine or neuter.

## Endings indicating the gender

### *Masculine endings*

The following endings usually indicate that the noun is masculine:

<b>-ant</b>	<b>der Konsonant</b>	consonant
<b>-ast</b>	<b>der Palast</b>	palace
<b>-ich</b>	<b>der Teppich</b>	carpet
<b>-ig</b>	<b>der Honig</b>	honey
<b>-ling</b>	<b>der Liebling</b>	darling
<b>-or</b>	<b>der Motor</b>	engine
<b>-us</b>	<b>der Materialismus</b>	materialism

An exception is **das Labor** 'laboratory'.

### *Feminine endings*

The following endings tend to belong to feminine nouns:

<b>-a</b>	<b>die Pizza</b>	pizza
<b>-anz</b>	<b>die Toleranz</b>	tolerance
<b>-ei</b>	<b>die Wäscherei</b>	laundry
<b>-enz</b>	<b>die Intelligenz</b>	intelligence
<b>-heit</b>	<b>die Mehrheit</b>	majority
<b>-ie</b>	<b>die Astrologie</b>	astrology
<b>-ik</b>	<b>die Musik</b>	music
<b>-ion</b>	<b>die Kommunikation</b>	communication
<b>-keit</b>	<b>die Müdigkeit</b>	tiredness
<b>-tät</b>	<b>die Kreativität</b>	creativity
<b>-schaft</b>	<b>die Erbschaft</b>	inheritance
<b>-ung</b>	<b>die Bedeutung</b>	meaning, importance
<b>-ur</b>	<b>die Frisur</b>	hairstyle

Some exceptions are: **das Sofa** 'sofa', **das Genie** 'genius', **das Abitur** 'A levels'.

Note that about 90 per cent of nouns ending in **-e** are also feminine:

<b>die Anzeige</b>	advert	<b>die Karriere</b>	career
<b>die Frage</b>	question	<b>die Schokolade</b>	chocolate

Exceptions include: **das Auge** 'eye', **das Interesse** 'interest', **der Käse** 'cheese', **der Name** 'name', and all male persons and animals endings in **-e**: **der Junge** 'boy', **der Löwe** 'lion' etc.

*Neuter endings*

The following endings signal that a noun is neuter:

<b>-chen</b>	<b>das Märchen</b>	fairy tale
<b>-il</b>	<b>das Ventil</b>	valve
<b>-lein</b>	<b>das Männlein</b>	little man
<b>-ma</b>	<b>das Drama</b>	drama
<b>-ment</b>	<b>das Instrument</b>	instrument
<b>-o</b>	<b>das Auto</b>	car
<b>-um</b>	<b>das Zentrum</b>	centre

Some exceptions are: **die Firma** ‘company’, **der Reichtum** ‘wealth’.

**Groups of nouns**

There are also certain groups of nouns, usually linked by meaning, which tend to be *masculine* or *feminine* or *neuter*:

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>
<i>Male persons and male animals:</i>	<i>Female persons and female animals:</i>	<i>Young persons and young animals:</i>
<b>der Journalist, der Tiger</b>	<b>die Journalistin, die Katze</b>	<b>das Kind, das Küken</b>
<i>Days, months and seasons:</i>	<i>Motorbikes and ships:</i>	<i>Most countries, towns:</i>
<b>der Montag, der August, der Sommer</b>	<b>die BMW, die Titanic</b>	<b>Deutschland, Berlin</b> (usually used without article)
<i>Makes of cars:</i>	<i>Numerals:</i>	<i>Hotels, cafés, cinemas:</i>
<b>der BMW, der Toyota</b>	<b>die Eins, die Million</b>	<b>das Hilton, das Café Flore</b>
<i>Alcoholic drinks:</i>	<i>Names of trees and flowers:</i>	<i>Metals and chemicals:</i>
<b>der Wein, der Schnaps</b>	<b>die Eiche, die Orchidee</b>	<b>das Silber, das Helium</b>
<i>Many other drinks:</i>	<i>Names of most native rivers:</i>	<i>Infinitives used as nouns:</i>
<b>der Kaffee, der Saft</b>	<b>die Donau, die Elbe</b>	<b>das Singen, das Tanzen</b>
<i>Points of the compass:</i>		<i>Foreign words ending in</i>
<b>der Norden, der Westen</b>		<b>-ing: das Meeting, das Training</b>

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## 4 Unit 1: Nouns and gender

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*Masculine*

*Feminine*

*Neuter*

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*Most currencies:*

**der Euro, der Dollar**

*Diminutives:*

**das Händchen**  
(‘little hand’)  
**das Tischlein**  
(‘little table’)

---

*Exceptions include:*

**das Bier, das Wasser;**  
**das Britische Pfund**  
(Sterling)

*Exceptions include:*

**das Mädchen** and the  
following rivers: **der Main,**  
**der Rhein, der Neckar**

*Exceptions include:*

**der Irak, die Schweiz,**  
**die Türkei, die Ukraine,**  
**die Niederlande** (plural),  
**die USA** (plural)

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## Compound nouns

*The last noun defines the gender*

Compound nouns usually consist of two or more nouns. The gender is defined by the last noun:

**der Computer + das Spiel → das Computerspiel**  
computer game

**der Bauch + der Tanz + die Lehrerin → die Bauchtanzlehrerin**  
teacher of belly dancing

*Adding -s*

When joining *noun + noun* together an extra **-s** is often inserted to link the components and to make the pronunciation easier. This usually happens when the first noun ends in **-heit, -ing, -ion, -keit, -ling, -schaft, -tät** or **-ung**:

**der Liebling + die Band → die Lieblingsband**  
favourite band

**die Mehrheit + der Beschluss → der Mehrheitsbeschluss**  
majority decision

## Nouns in use

### *Determiners and nouns*

When used in sentences, nouns normally appear with determiners such as **der, die, das** etc. Depending on the function of the noun within the sentence the determiners can change.

For example, the definite articles **der, die, das** and **die** for plural nouns are used when the noun is the subject of a sentence (*nominative case*). These articles change to **dem, der, dem, den** if the noun is the indirect object (*dative case*).

### *Changes affecting nouns*

Note that nouns themselves normally change only (other than their plural forms) in the following instances:

- in the *genitive case*, where masculine and neuter nouns add **-(e)s** and
- in the *dative plural* where **-n** is usually added.

For more information see Units 3 and 4.

However, there are two groups of nouns whose endings do change: the so-called *weak nouns* and *adjectival nouns*.

## Weak nouns

About 10 per cent of masculine nouns, usually referring to male people or animals, add **-(e)n** to all forms apart from the *nominative singular*.

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>Nominative</i>	<b>der Junge</b>	<b>die Junge-n</b>
<i>Accusative</i>	<b>den Junge-n</b>	<b>die Junge-n</b>
<i>Dative</i>	<b>dem Junge-n</b>	<b>den Junge-n</b>
<i>Genitive</i>	<b>des Junge-n</b>	<b>der Junge-n</b>

**Der Junge** spielt mit seinem Gameboy. (*nom., sing.*)  
**Siehst du den Jungen** dort? (*acc., sing.*)  
**Er kauft dem Jungen** eine Flasche Wasser. (*dat., sing.*)

Other examples include: **Architekt** 'male architect', **Student** 'male student', **Herr** 'Mr', 'gentleman', **Tourist** 'male tourist', **Mensch** 'human being', **Name** 'name'.

Note that **Herr** adds **-n** in the singular, and **-en** in the plural: **Kennst du Herrn Becker** ‘Do you know Mr Becker?’ **Meine Damen und Herren!** ‘Ladies and gentlemen!’.

## Adjectival nouns

Adjectival nouns are derived from adjectives:

<b>krank</b>	→	<b>ein Kranker, eine Kranke</b>	ill, sick person
<b>reich</b>		<b>ein Reicher, eine Reiche</b>	rich person
<b>verwandt</b>		<b>ein Verwandter, eine Verwandte</b>	relative

Adjectives used as nouns follow the pattern of adjectival endings. As an example, here are all forms of **Verwandte/r** ‘relative’ with the indefinite article:

	<i>Singular (masc.)</i>	<i>Singular (fem.)</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>Nominative</i>	<b>ein Verwandter</b>	<b>eine Verwandte</b>	<b>-Verwandte</b>
<i>Accusative</i>	<b>einen Verwandten</b>	<b>eine Verwandte</b>	<b>-Verwandte</b>
<i>Dative</i>	<b>einem Verwandten</b>	<b>einer Verwandten</b>	<b>-Verwandten</b>
<i>Genitive</i>	<b>eines Verwandten</b>	<b>einer Verwandten</b>	<b>-Verwandter</b>

**Ein Verwandter von mir wohnt in Bonn.** (*nom., masc.*)

One of my relatives lives in Bonn.

**Eine Verwandte von Petra arbeitet bei Sony.** (*nom., fem.*)

One of Petra’s relatives works for Sony.

Other nouns belonging to this group include:

<b>Angestellte/r</b>	employee	<b>Arbeitslose/r</b>	unemployed person
<b>Erwachsene/r</b>	adult	<b>Deutsche/r</b>	German person
<b>Jugendliche/r</b>	young person		

- For the plural forms of nouns, see Unit 2.
- For more detailed information on determiners and cases, see Units 3 and 4.
- For more details on adjectival endings, see Unit 15.

### Exercise 1.1

Here is a list of nouns with different endings. Can you identify their gender and enter the nouns with the definite article in the table below? The first one has been done for you.

**Frühling, König, Universität, Exil, Mädchen, Fabrik,  
Pfennig, Tischlein, Ewigkeit, Museum, Freiheit, Religion, Reise,  
Humanismus, Video, Schwächling, Motor, Thema, Zyklus,  
Tortur, Rechnung, Element, Eleganz, Honig, Diamant, Büro,  
Bedeutung, Instrument, Konsonant, Auto.**

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>
<b>der Frühling</b>		

### Exercise 1.2

Now write out the endings from Exercise 1.1. that are typical for masculine, feminine and neuter nouns.

### Exercise 1.3

Each of the following lines contains one noun that does not share its gender with those next to it. Indicate the odd one out and note the gender for all other nouns at the beginning of each line:

Example:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Wein, Jaguar, April, Bier, Samstag, Euro, Norden** →  
*masculine* **Wein, Jaguar, April, Bier, Samstag, Euro, Norden**

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Frau, Billion, Themse, Katze, Ingenieurin, Rhein
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Iran, Labor, Motor, Rhein, Winter, Pfennig, Nissan
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Essen, Baby, Silber, Ritz, Marketing, Schweiz, Lamm
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Katze, Milliarde, Tochter, Mädchen, Harley-Davidson
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Sommer, Wasser, Dienstag, Tee, September, Dollar



### Exercise 1.4

Translate the following sentences into German.

- 1 The Mercedes is very fast.
- 2 What does the car cost?
- 3 The newspaper costs 1 Euro.
- 4 Here is the mother but where is the girl?
- 5 When does the meeting begin?
- 6 Here is the tea without milk.
- 7 The water comes from France.
- 8 The computer game was interesting.
- 9 Do you know Mr Schmidt? (*Use the **Sie** form.*)
- 10 Ladies and gentlemen!

Checklist	✓
1 What are the two main ways that can help you recognise the gender of nouns?	
2 Can you name at least four typical masculine endings, four neuter ones and six feminine ones?	
3 What is a compound noun and how do you spot its gender?	
4 Do you know what makes weak nouns different from other masculine nouns?	

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# UNIT TWO

## Plural of nouns

### Plural forms in German

In English most nouns form their plural by adding ‘-s’ to the singular form. In German, there are several ways of forming the plural.

However, there are patterns and clues that might help you to predict the plural endings:

- there are five main types of plural endings (listed below)
- nouns tend to take certain endings according to their gender.

### The five main plural forms – overview

Here is an overview of the five main and three related types of plural endings in German:

1 - <i>e</i>	2 - <i>er</i>	3 -( <i>e</i> ) <i>n</i>	4 -	5 - <i>s</i>
<b>der Tag</b> <b>die Tag-e</b>	<b>das Bild</b> <b>die Bild-er</b>	<b>die Frau</b> <b>die Frau-en</b>	<b>der Wagen</b> <b>die Wagen</b>	<b>der Park</b> <b>die Park-s</b>
<i>umlaut</i> + - <i>e</i>	<i>umlaut</i> + - <i>er</i>		<i>umlaut</i>	
<b>die Hand</b> <b>die Händ-e</b>	<b>der Wald</b> <b>die Wäld-er</b>		<b>die Mutter</b> <b>die Mütter</b>	

## Plural endings for masculine nouns

### Most take -e or ðe endings

Most masculine nouns take **-e** or **ðe** in their plural forms:

**-e or ðe** → **der Arm** – **die Arme**   **der Schuh** – **die Schuhe**  
**der Ball** – **die Balle**   **der Fu** – **die Fue**

In addition, there are two more main plural endings for masculine nouns:

*no ending* → **der Onkel** – **die Onkel**   **der Spiegel** – **die Spiegel**  
*or*  
*+ umlaut*     **der Apfel** – **die pfel**   **der Vater** – **die Vater**

**-(e)n** → This ending applies to so-called *weak nouns* usually referring to male people or animals:

**der Junge** → **die Jungen**   **der Elefant** → **die Elefanten**

### Other endings

A few masculine nouns add **-er** and an **umlaut** wherever possible. They include:

**der Mann** → **die Manner**                      **der Wald** → **die Walder**

## Plural endings for feminine nouns

### Most take -(e)n

Most feminine nouns take the plural ending **-(e)n**. This applies to all nouns ending in **-e**, **-ei**, **-heit**, **-ion**, **-keit**, **-schaft**, **-tat**, **-ung** or **-ur**:

**-(e)n** → **die Blume** – **die Blumen**  
**die Backerei** – **die Backereien**  
**die Tasche** – **die Taschen**  
**die Zeitung** – **die Zeitungen**

In addition, there are two more commonly used endings with feminine nouns:

**-e + umlaut** → This ending applies to many feminine nouns consisting of one syllable:

**die Frucht – die Früchte    die Hand – die Hände**  
**die Nacht – die Nächte    die Stadt – die Städte**

**-nen** → Female nouns with the ending **-in** add **-nen**:

**die Freundin → die Freundinnen**

### *Other endings*

A few feminine nouns only add an umlaut to their plural forms. The most important are: **die Mutter → die Mütter** and **die Tochter → die Töchter**.

## Plural endings for neuter nouns

### *Most take -e*

Here are the three main plural endings for neuter nouns:

**-e** → This ending is the most common with neuter nouns:

**das Bein – die Beine    das Jahr – die Jahre**  
**das Regal – die Regale    das Stück – die Stücke**

**-er or -er** (when possible) → **das Kind – die Kinder    das Kleid – die Kleider**  
**das Gehalt – die Gehälter    das Glas – die Gläser**

**no change** → There is no change for most neuter nouns ending in **-el**, **-er**, **-chen** and **-lein**:

**das Segel – die Segel    das Mädchen – die Mädchen**  
**das Messer – die Messer    das Männlein – die Männlein**

### *Other endings*

A few neuter nouns have **-(e)n** in the plural. They include: **das Auge → die Augen**, **das Bett → die Betten**, **das Interesse → die Interessen**.

## Plural endings with -s

All three genders have some plural endings with **-s**. However, this type of ending is mainly used for words imported from foreign languages, in abbreviations and names:

<b>das Hotel</b>	→	<b>die Hotels</b>
<b>der PC</b>	→	<b>die PCs</b>
<b>Herr und Frau Schmidt</b>	→	<b>die Schmidts</b>

Foreign nouns which don't add an -s in the plural include: **der Manager** → **die Manager**, **der Computer** → **die Computer**.

Also note that words from the English which end in '-y' have the German plural form -ys: **die Party** → **die Partys**.

## Points to watch out for

### *Nouns from Greek and Latin*

A number of words imported from Greek or Latin have the following plural patterns:

- nouns ending in **-us** or **-um** change its ending to **-en** in the plural:

**der Organismus** → **die Organismen**  
**das Museum** → **die Museen**

- most nouns which end in **-ma** replace this form with **-men**:

**die Firma** → **die Firmen**  
**das Thema** → **die Themen**

### *Plural endings in the dative*

Plurals in the dative case normally add the letter **-n** wherever this is possible.

<b>Die Bäume sind grün.</b>	→	<b>Sie liegen unter den Bäumen.</b>
<i>(nom. pl.)</i>		<i>(dat. pl.)</i>
The trees are green.		They lie under the trees.

The plural endings in **-s** stay the same: **Mit so vielen Autos hatte niemand gerechnet** 'Nobody had reckoned with that many cars'.

### *Nouns used in the plural only*

Note that some German nouns are used only in their plural form. They include: **Eltern** 'parents', **Ferien** 'holidays', **Geschwister** 'brother(s) and sister(s)', **Lebensmittel** 'food', **Leute** 'people', **Möbel** 'furniture'.

## Looking up plural forms

Note that dictionaries also give information on plural nouns. You can usually find the plural ending or form of a noun after its gender and genitive case ending:

<b>Vater</b> <i>m -s, -</i> father	→	<b>die Väter</b>
<b>Baby</b> <i>nt -s, -s</i> baby		<b>die Babys</b>
<b>Telefon</b> <i>nt -s, -e</i> telephone		<b>die Telefone</b>

- For more detail on gender of nouns, see Unit 1.

## Exercise 2.1

Here are five groups of nouns in the singular. Look at the plural endings in the box and match them to each column. The first one has been done for you.

•e	•er	-e	-(e)n	-
----	-----	----	-------	---

1 •e	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Ball	Blume	Wagen	Tag	Wald
Fuß	Frau	Onkel	Arm	Mann
Hand	Bäckerei	Mädchen	Beruf	Dorf
Ton	Tasche	Messer	Schuh	Glas

## Exercise 2.2

Give the plural of the following nouns.

Example: **der Mann** → **die Männer**

- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 der Beruf die _____     | 11 das Radio die _____   |
| 2 der Fuß die _____       | 12 das Hotel die _____   |
| 3 der Spiegel die _____   | 13 der PC die _____      |
| 4 die Stadt die _____     | 14 der Manager die _____ |
| 5 die Kultur die _____    | 15 das Zentrum die _____ |
| 6 die Friseurin die _____ | 16 das Thema die _____   |

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- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 7 das Gehalt die _____  | 17 der Park die _____  |
| 8 das Telefon die _____ | 18 die Firma die _____ |
| 9 das Bild die _____    | 19 das Regal die _____ |
| 10 das Jahr die _____   | 20 der Wald die _____  |

### Exercise 2.3

Translate the sentences below into German.

- 1 I work three days per week.
- 2 He likes flowers.
- 3 The parties are on Friday and Saturday.
- 4 The two companies are in Frankfurt.
- 5 The people come from Paris.
- 6 We visit the churches and then the museums.
- 7 The hotels are modern.
- 8 We need two computers.
- 9 The children read together.
- 10 She plays with the children.

Checklist	✓
1 Do you know the most common plural endings for masculine nouns?	
2 How do nearly all feminine nouns form their plural?	
3 How do most foreign words in German form their plural?	
4 Can you list the five main forms of plural endings?	
5 What is special about plural endings in the dative?	

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# UNIT THREE

## Articles and other determiners

### The two articles and other determiners

Determiners usually precede nouns. The most important ones are the *definite article*, such as **der, die** etc. corresponding to 'the', and the *indefinite article*, such as **ein, eine** etc. corresponding to 'a'.

Other determiners include:

- *possessives* such as **mein** 'my', **dein** 'your', etc.
- *demonstratives* such as **dieser** 'this'
- *indefinites* such as **alle** 'all'/'everybody'.

### Importance of determiners in German

*Determiners signal various aspects of the noun*

Determiners play an important role in German as they indicate whether a noun is *masculine, feminine* or *neuter* and if the noun is in the *singular* or *plural* form. Furthermore, determiners signal the *grammatical function* of a noun in a sentence (if it is the *subject, direct object* etc.).

*How determiners can change*

Look at the following examples with the *definite article*:

**Der Manager hat in Washington studiert.**

(*masc., sing., subject = nominative*)

**Kennst du den Manager?**

(*masc., sing., direct object = accusative*)

**Was gibt er dem Manager?**

(*masc., sing., indirect object = dative*)



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