

FOUNDATIONS OF GERMAN

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Foundations of German by Carl Friedrich Kayser & Frederick Monteser

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PREFACE

THE choice of a beginners' book for the study of a modern foreign language must depend upon a number of considerations, such as the age and previous training of the pupils, the method to be pursued, and the immediate object to be attained. With the conditions under which the study of German is pursued in most schools of this country, there seems to be little doubt that, instead of a systematic grammar, a rather comprehensive lesson book, arranged in a pedagogical manner, and furnished with plenty of interesting material for reading, translation, and conversation furnishes the best preparation for the further study of the language. Acting on this conviction, the authors of the present volume have endeavored to meet this demand by publishing their *Brief German Course*, and, judging from the favorable reception which the book has met in various sections of the country, the authors feel that their views laid down in that book have been fully indorsed.

But, as Goethe says, „Eines schickt sich nicht für alle“. There is much to be said in favor of a method which tries to reduce to a minimum all preparatory work and to introduce the learner at the earliest possible moment to the literature of the language. Such a method demands a shorter book which, while presenting the essentials of grammar in a clear way, leaves many of the less important details for subsequent study. *Foundations of German* aims to meet the needs and wishes of such schools and teachers. It is, however, by no means merely a revised or abridged edition of the *Brief German Course*, although, on the whole, it follows the general plan and even uses some of the material of the former book. A superficial comparison, even, will show that the *Foundations* is in reality a new book. The desire for condensation, without sacrificing clearness, has necessitated the re-writing of nearly all of the grammatical statements. The vocabulary is practically new, the order in which the grammatical topics are presented has been considerably changed, and the illustrative sentences, as well as the reviews with their connected readings, are either wholly new or in the interest of briefness and simplicity materially re-cast. Moreover, for the interest of those teachers who prefer to have

their classes progress uninterruptedly and take up a general review at the end of the course the review lessons and readings have been collected in an appendix and placed at the end of the book.

Foundations of German ought to commend itself as well to conservative teachers as to those who are reaching out after a new method of teaching the language. Among its distinctive features, the following may be mentioned:

I. It presents only those topics, the mastery of which is absolutely essential for any progress whatsoever, and it presents them as briefly as is consistent with perfect clearness.

II. It makes large use of what has been called „*lebendige Grammatik*“. In this way it enlivens instruction in grammar, stimulates self-activity, and develops „*Sprachgefühl*“, the feeling for correctness, which is the chief thing to be looked for in all language study.

III. It lends itself excellently to conversational practice. Not only has the vocabulary been very carefully selected from the language of everyday life, but the phrases of the German exercises are all of a colloquial and strictly idiomatic character. While primarily intended to illustrate definite grammatical phenomena, their tone and language are so natural that the skillful teacher will find no difficulty in turning whole exercises into a sort of impromptu conversation, thus combining pleasantly and effectively drill in speaking and in grammar. This is, of course, still more true of the connected readings, which are very simple and well suited for the particular stages of progress indicated in the headings. They offer an unlimited amount of material for conversational practice, for free composition, and for reproduction.

IV. Last, but not least, the book aims to offer a firm foundation on which a solid superstructure can be erected. The lessons are steadily progressive; no attempt is made to minimize difficulties at the beginning only to leave the pupil stranded later on in a mass of unmanageable details. The English exercises, while subordinated to the German, will give the pupil a chance to test his knowledge and power. The exercises in word formation will stimulate his interest in the building up of the vocabulary and will create in him a certain habit for etymology which will be of the utmost use to him in future sight reading.

In conclusion, the authors wish to express their thanks to a large number of colleagues by whose criticisms and suggestions they have profited, and they wish to say that, in preparing the book, the needs, opportunities, and limitations of the class room have steadily been before their minds.

CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| German Alphabet | 9 |
| Quantity and Pronunciation | 10 |
| Division of Words into Syllables | 13 |
| German Script | 13 |
| LESSON | |
| I. Reading Exercise. Drill in Quantities and in Syllabication | 14 |
| II. Present Indicative of <i>sein</i> . Pronoun of Address: <i>du, ihr, Sie</i> . Interrogative Present of <i>sein</i> . Nouns Capitalized | 16 |
| III. Genders, Articles, Number and Case. Definite Article with Class Nouns, Days, etc. Helps for the Study of Vocabu- laries | 17 |
| IV. Present Indicative of <i>lernen</i> . Interrogative and Negative Verb Forms. Connecting Vowel <i>e</i> | 20 |
| V. Declension of Articles. Definite Article with Streets. Omission of Indefinite Article with Predicate Nouns | 22 |
| VI. General Rules of Noun Declension. Present Indicative of <i>haben</i> . Position of Noun Objects and of Adverbs | 23 |
| VII. Weak Nouns Defined. Weak Nouns in <i>e</i> and Polysyllabic Feminines. Feminine Noun Endings. Noun Suffix <i>-in</i> . Position of Noun Objects | 25 |
| VIII. Declension of <i>der</i> Words. Position of <i>nicht</i> . Noun Suffixes <i>-ei</i> , <i>-heit</i> and <i>-keit</i> . Definite Article with Abstracts | 27 |
| IX. Weak Nouns (Foreign Masculines, Feminine and Masculine Monosyllables). Translation of <i>it</i> | 29 |
| X. Possessive Adjectives or <i>ein</i> Words. Use of <i>sein, euer, Ihr</i> . Definite Article used Possessively. Noun Suffixes <i>-ung</i> and <i>-schaft</i> | 31 |
| XI. Imperfect Indicative of Weak Verbs. Weak Verbs Defined. Imperfect Indicative of <i>haben</i> and <i>sein</i> | 33 |
| XII. Strong Nouns Defined. Class 1. Noun Suffixes <i>-heit</i> and <i>-keit</i> | 35 |
| XIII. Adjectives. Strong Adjective Declension. Adjective Suffix <i>-lich</i> | 37 |
| XIV. Present Indicative of <i>werden</i> . Future Indicative of Verbs. Position of Infinitives. Imperative of <i>lernen</i> and <i>sein</i> | 40 |
| XV. Present and Imperfect Indicative of <i>trinken</i> . Strong Verbs De- fined. Inverted Word Order. Coördinating Conjunctions | 42 |
| XVI. Present Indicative and Imperative of Strong Verbs with Stem Vowels <i>u</i> and <i>e</i> . Position of Adverbs of Time | 44 |

| LESSON | | PAGE |
|---------|--|------|
| XVII. | Perfect Participles of Weak and Strong Verbs. Principal Parts. Perfect and Pluperfect. Use of Perfect. Position of Perfect Participle | 46 |
| XVIII. | Weak and Mixed Adjective Declension. Adjectives Used as Nouns | 48 |
| XIX. | Prepositions with Dative. Use of <i>schon</i> . Adjective Suffix -bar | 50 |
| XX. | Interrogative Pronouns and Adjectives. Use of <i>wo</i> for Interrogatives. Prefix -un | 52 |
| XXI. | Perfect and Pluperfect of <i>sein</i> . Compound Tenses formed by <i>sein</i> . Personal Pronouns. Position of Personal Pronouns | 54 |
| XXII. | Strong Nouns, Class II (Monosyllables). Compound Nouns Declined | 57 |
| XXIII. | Uses of Personal Pronouns. <i>Da</i> with Prepositions. Uses of <i>es</i> , <i>es gibt</i> . <i>It is I</i> , etc. | 59 |
| XXIV. | Possessive Pronouns. <i>Einiger</i> and <i>feiner</i> | 62 |
| XXV. | Strong Nouns, Class II (Polysyllables). Noun Suffixes - <i>ing</i> , - <i>nig</i> , - <i>ig</i> , - <i>ig</i> . Verbs governing a Dative or a Genitive Object | 63 |
| XXVI. | Present, Imperfect, and Future of <i>können</i> , <i>wollen</i> , <i>müssen</i> and <i>wissen</i> . Infinitive after Modal Auxiliaries. Position of Predicate Nouns and Adjectives | 66 |
| XXVII. | Prepositions with Dative or Accusative. Prepositions Contracted with Article. Perfect and Pluperfect of <i>können</i> , <i>müssen</i> , <i>wollen</i> , <i>wissen</i> . Perfect Participle changed to Infinitive. Noun Suffix - <i>e</i> | 68 |
| XXVIII. | Strong Nouns, Class III. Noun Suffix - <i>um</i> | 70 |
| XXIX. | Relative Pronouns. Relative Clauses. Omission of English Relatives. <i>Wo</i> in Place of Relatives. Transposed Word Order | 72 |
| XXX. | Prepositions with Accusative and Genitive. | 75 |
| XXXI. | Reflexive Pronouns. Reciprocal Pronoun. Reflexive Verbs. Conjugation of Reflexive Verb. Principal Reflexive Verbs | 77 |
| XXXII. | Present Participles and Perfect Infinitives. Uses of Participles. Uses of Infinitives. Infinitives with Prepositions. Future Perfect. Uses of Futures. Position of Infinitives and Participles | 79 |
| XXXIII. | Subordinate or Dependent Clauses. Subordinating Conjunctions. Inversion in Principal Clause when Subordinate Clause Precedes. Introductory <i>ja</i> | 81 |
| XXXIV. | Mixed Nouns. Irregularities of Noun Declension. Foreign Nouns in - <i>um</i> , - <i>ium</i> , - <i>al</i> , - <i>il</i> . Plural of Nouns Compounded with - <i>mann</i> | 84 |

FOUNDATIONS OF GERMAN

7

| LESSON | | PAGE |
|----------|--|------|
| XXXV. | Declension of Names of Persons, Cities and Countries. Declension of Names with Titles. Definite Article with Proper Nouns. Composition of Nouns . . . | 86 |
| XXXVI. | Imperfect of <i>würden</i> . Irregularities of Weak Verbs. Noun Expressions of Time 'When' and 'How Long.' Position of Adverbs | 88 |
| XXXVII. | Inseparable Compound Verbs. Perfect Participles without <i>ge-</i> . Meaning of Prefixes <i>be-</i> , <i>ent-</i> , <i>er-</i> , <i>ge-</i> , <i>ver-</i> , <i>zer-</i> . | 91 |
| XXXVIII. | Comparison of Adjectives. Irregular Adjective Comparison. Defective Comparison. Declension of Comparatives and Superlatives. Adjective Suffixes <i>-ig</i> , <i>-er</i> , <i>-haft</i> | 93 |
| XXXIX. | Adverbs. Comparison of Adverbs. Adverb Superlative for Adjective Superlative. Irregular Adverb Comparison. Adverb Suffix <i>-ens</i> | 96 |
| XL. | Conjugation of Modal Auxiliaries <i>dürfen</i> , <i>mögen</i> , <i>sollen</i> . Relatives <i>wer</i> , <i>was</i> . Uses of Relatives <i>wer</i> , <i>was</i> . . | 98 |
| XLI. | Passive Voice. Passive Equivalents. Active Infinitive with Passive Force | 100 |
| XLII. | Passive Voice Continued. False Passive. Impersonal Passive. Passive of Intransitive Verbs | 102 |
| XLIII. | Cardinal Numerals. Declension of Cardinals. Numeral Compounds. Time of Day. Nouns Expressing Measure and Weight | 104 |
| XLIV. | Ordinal Numerals. Declension of Ordinals. Numeral Derivatives. Date of Month and Year | 107 |
| XLV. | Subjunctive Mood. Subjunctive of Wish, of Exhortation, of Possibility | 110 |
| XLVI. | Demonstratives. <i>hier</i> and <i>da</i> for Demonstratives. <i>das</i> , <i>bies</i> , <i>dieſes</i> , <i>jenes</i> , <i>eſ</i> , <i>welcheſ</i> used as Absolute Subjects | 112 |
| XLVII. | Subjunctive Continued. Indirect Discourse. Subjunctive of Purpose | 114 |
| XLVIII. | Indefinite Pronouns and Adjectives. Adverbial Genitive. Genitive as Secondary Object. Adjectives with Genitive | 117 |
| XLIX. | Conditional Mood. Unreal Conditions. Dative for Possessive. Dative of Privation | 119 |
| L. | Strong Verbs, Class I (<i>e</i> and <i>i</i> Class). Double Accusative. Verbs of Making, Choosing, etc. with <i>zu</i> | 121 |
| LI. | Strong Verbs, Class II (<i>a</i> Class). Irregularities of Classes I and II. Strong Verbs, Class III (<i>ei</i> Class) | 123 |
| LII. | Strong Verbs not Grouped. Mixed Verbs. Monosyllabic Nouns from Verbs. Noun Suffixes <i>-e</i> and <i>-t</i> . Verbs of Considering, etc. with <i>ſitt</i> . Adjectives with Accusative | 125 |
| LIII. | Compound Verbs with Separable Prefixes. Position of Separable Prefix. List of Separable Prefixes | 128 |