

**A COMPENDIOUS
GRAMMAR OF
THE MODERN
GERMAN LANGUAGE**

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A Compendious Grammar of the Modern German Language by Franz C. F Demmler

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P R E F A C E.

THIS Grammar was first published eighteen years ago. Owing to its having then been stereotyped, no alterations or improvements of any import could have been introduced, although several editions of it were afterwards printed. The present will be found rather a new work than a new edition. It embodies the experience of one who, for many years sole German Master at the Royal Military College, had to teach under circumstances of particular difficulty, such as perhaps no instructor will have to meet again.

The Grammar, in the shape in which it is now offered to the public, claims to be, in as narrow a compass as the nature of the subjects allows, a popular version of the Grimm-Becker system. The arrangement, which will be found to have reduced the elementary part to the utmost simplicity; also, the treatment of the rules on the construction of the sentence; and the whole of the third section, are the Author's own. The brevity of the work is one of the points, which the Author should wish to be reckoned among its merits. It is much easier to swell a Grammar by a vain display of learning, than to limit its substance to those indispensable points, without a complete knowledge of which the student can never hope to gain a firm footing in the language.

Any teacher, who is a true scholar himself, will make it his first care quickly to lead his pupil to a point, on which, instead of being taught the language from the Grammar, the student may be taught the Grammar from the language. To make him write frivolous exercises on the elements under pretence of so much the better impressing them on his memory, ought to be considered as a wanton waste of time. Practising the elementary part verbally, gives you the advantage of being enabled to go over ten times as much ground as is possible with the same amount of labour in writing. If you teach the pupil, in a rational method, the scientific principles on which the declensions and

conjugations rest, he will never forget them; and, with the help of a few simple rules, he will have the faculty almost from the very outset, not only to find his way in reading easy German pieces, but also to form sentences himself:—that is to say, to express his thoughts in German, if not altogether correctly, at all events intelligibly. This is the meaning of the Preliminary Chapter of this Grammar. A solid elementary foundation being once laid, the rest will follow as a matter of course. The Grammar, therefore, has purposely been made short enough to be remembered in all its principal details by any tolerably diligent pupil.

The Author trusts that the better class of German teachers—unfortunately not very numerous in this country,—will find his Grammar and the Exercises which form the sequel to it, of great assistance and practical use in instructing pupils of even moderate ability. He has been anxious not to introduce any of those elementary or syntactical rules with which an English student must be supposed to be familiar from the Grammar of his own language. For similar reasons, no German alphabet is given, as any English person is able to read black letter, from which the German character differs very little. Those who are competent to form a judgment on these matters, will, he hopes, acknowledge the great care which he has taken in stating the rules with terseness, clearness, and precision. There may be among them German university-men of sterling acquirements, who have known to their own cost, that amidst the fussy clatter of a host of noisy, hollow pretenders, it is sometimes difficult for the quiet scholar to get a hearing; but in science as in life, earnest and honest truth must and will prevail in the end.

THE AUTHOR.

STAFF COLLEGE,
March, 1859.

GERMAN GRAMMAR.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

CONTAINING PART OF THE CONJUGATION OF THE VERBS **haben** and **sein**,
AND SOME RULES OF CONSTRUCTION SERVING TO FORM SIMPLE
SENTENCES.

INFINITIVE.

Present. *sein*, to be. *haben*, to have.
Past. *gewesen sein*, to have been. *gehabt haben*, to have had.

PRESENT TENSE.

Singular number.

1st. p.	Ich bin, I am.	ich habe, I have.
2nd. p.	du bist, thou art.	du hast, thou hast.
3rd. p.	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{er} \\ \text{sie} \\ \text{es} \end{array} \right\} \begin{array}{l} \text{he} \\ \text{ist, she} \\ \text{it} \end{array} \right\} \text{is.}$	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{er} \\ \text{sie} \\ \text{es} \end{array} \right\} \begin{array}{l} \text{he} \\ \text{hat, she} \\ \text{it} \end{array} \right\} \text{has.}$

Plural number.

1st. p.	Wir sind, we are.	wir haben, we have.
2nd. p.	Ihr seid, you are.	ihr habet, you have.
3rd. p.	sie sind, they are.	sie haben, they have.

In polite address, the third person plural is used instead of the second singular or plural, e.g., *Sie sind. Sie haben*, instead of *du bist*, or *du hast*, or also instead of *ihr habt, ihr seid*. *Sie* is then always spelt with a capital S.

RELATIVE PAST, OR, IMPERFECT TENSE.

Singular.

1st p.	Ich war, I was.	ich hatte, I had.
2nd p.	du warst, thou wast.	du hattest, thou hadst.
3rd p.	er war, he was.	er hatte, he had.

Plural.

1st p.	Wir waren, we were.	wir hatten, we had.
2nd p.	ihr waret, you were.	ihr hattet, you had.
3rd p.	sie waren, they were.	sie hatten, they had.

ABSOLUTE PAST, OR, PERFECT TENSE.

Singular.

1st p.	Ich bin } gewesen. I have	} been.	ich habe } I have	} had.
2nd p.	du bist } thou hast		du hast } thou hast	
3rd p.	er ist } he has		er hat } he has	

Plural.

1st p.	Wir sind } gewesen. we have	} been.	wir haben } we have	} had.
2nd p.	ihr seid } you have		ihr habet } you have	
3rd p.	sie sind } they have		sie haben } they have	

FUTURE TENSE OF SEYN.

*Singular.**Plural.*

1st p.	Ich werde } I shall	} be.	wir werden } we shall	} be.
2nd p.	du wirst } thou wilt		ihr werdet } you will	
3rd p.	er wird } he will		sie werden } they will	

The future tense of all verbs is conjugated in the same way, being formed of the conjugated present tense of the auxiliary verb *werden*, and of their own infinitive. Having, therefore, once learned the conjugation of the future tense of *seyn*, you likewise know the same tense of *haben*, and of every other verb in the language:—*Ich werde haben, Ich werde fragen, Ich werde finden, etc.*

IMPERATIVE.

Singular.

2nd p.	sey (du), be (thou).	habe (du), have (thou).
3rd p.	sey er, let him be.	habe er, let him have.

Plural.

1st p.	seyn wir, let us be.	haben wir, let us have.
2nd p.	seyd (ihr), be (you).	habet (ihr), have (you).
3rd p.	seyn sie, let them be.	haben sie, let them have, or have you, or be you, (see mem. after the present tense).

Remark 1. The present tense of all regular verbs is conjugated—with but a few modifications to be mentioned in the sequel—like that of *haben*. This will be seen from the following examples, in which the present tenses of the verbs, *fragen*, to ask, and of *finden*, to find, are put side by side with that of *haben*.

Singular.

1st p.	ich habe.	ich frage.	ich finde.
2nd p.	du hast.	du fragest (fragst).	du findest.
3rd p.	er hat	er fragt (fragt).	er findet.

Plural.

1st p.	wir haben.	wir fragen.	wir finden.
2nd p.	ihr habet.	ihr fragt.	ihr findet.
3rd p.	sie haben.	sie fragen.	sie finden.

Hast is contracted from *habeſt*, or *habſt*, and *hat* from *habet*, or *habt*, as in English, “thou hast,” is from “thou haveſt,” and “he has,” from “he haveſ.” The ſame contraction is not allowed in other verbs. You are not, therefore, to conjugate: *Ich lobe*, (I praise), *du loſt*, *er loſt*; but, *Ich lobe*, *du lobſt* (*lobeſt*), *er loſt* (*lobet*). The plural of the present tense is regular in all conjugations.

Remark 2. The imperfect tense of all the verbs of what is called the modern form, is conjugated like that of *haben*; it being understood that *hätte* is contracted from *habte* (*habete*), as the English, “I had” is instead of “I haveſ.” Thus, *ſagen*, (to say), makes *ſagte*; *antworten*, (to answer), *antwortete*. The imperfect of these verbs is, therefore, conjugated as follows:—

Singular.

1st p.	ich hatte, I had.	ich sagte, I said.	ich antwortete, I answered.
2nd p.	du hatteſt.	du ſagteſt.	du antworteteſt.
3rd p.	er hatte.	er ſagte.	er antwortete.

Plural.

1st p.	wir hatten.	wir ſagten.	wir antworteten.
2nd p.	ihr hattet.	ihr ſagtet.	ihr antwortetet.
3rd p.	ſie hatten.	ſie ſagten.	ſie antworteten.

The classification of the verbs into verbs of the ancient, and of the modern form will be fully explained in the sequel. Some short hints will suffice here. Verbs, like *ſinden*, (to find), *ſprechen*, (to speak), *ſchreiben*, (to write), which belong to the conjugation of the ancient form, make in the Imperfect *not*: *Ich ſandete*, *ich ſprachte*, *ich ſchreibte*; but, *Ich ſand*, *ich ſprach*, *ich ſchrieb*; just as in English—where the same distinction is to be recognized—you do not say, “I finded,” “I ſpeaked,” “I wrote;” but, “I found,” “I ſpoke,” “I wrote.” On the other hand, the verbs of the modern form—as shown in the examples given above—are conjugated in the Imperfect by adding to the radical portion of the verb the termination *-te* or *-ete*, which corresponds to the termination *-ed*, added in the same tense to the English verb, as *e.g.*, I ask-ed, I prais-ed.

Remark 3. The Imperfect of the verbs of the ancient form is conjugated after the example of that of *ſeyn*.

Singular.

1st p.	ich war, I was.	ich ſprach, I ſpoke.	ich fand, I found.	ich ſchrieb, I wrote.
2nd p.	du warſt,	du ſprachſt.	du fandest.	du ſchriebſt.
3rd p.	er war.	er ſprach.	er fand.	er ſchrieb.

Plural.

1st p.	wir waren.	wir ſprachen.	wir fanden.	wir ſchrieben.
2nd p.	ihr waret.	ihr ſprachet.	ihr fandet.	ihr ſchriebet.
3rd p.	ſie waren.	ſie ſprachen.	ſie fanden.	ſie ſchrieben.

Remark 4. Some verbs have the same monosyllabic conjugation, not in the imperfect, but in the present tense. Their plural, however, according to the general rule (see Remark 1.), is formed regularly from their infinitive. These verbs are, *können*, *dürfen*, *mögen*, *wollen*, *ſollen*, *müſſen*, *wiſſen*. Their present tense is conjugated as follows:—

Singular.

1st p.	ich kann,	ich darf,	ich will,	ich soll,	ich muß,	ich weiß,
	(I can).	(I dare).	(I will).	(I shall).	(I must).	(I know).
2nd p.	du kannst.	du darfst.	du willst.	du sollst.	du mußt.	du weißt.
3rd p.	er kann.	er darf.	er will.	er soll.	er muß.	er weiß.

Plural.

1st p.	wir können.	wir dürfen.	wir wollen.	wir sollen.	wir müssen.	wir wissen.
2nd p.	ihr könnt.	ihr dürft.	ihr wollt.	ihr sollt.	ihr müßt.	ihr wißt.
3rd p.	sie können.	sie dürfen.	sie wollen.	sie sollen.	sie müssen.	sie wissen.

Remark 5. The perfect tense of all verbs is conjugated, in one respect, like that of the verbs *seyn* and *haben*, the neuter verbs forming it by the conjugated present tense of the verb *seyn* and their own participle past; the transitive verbs by the conjugated present tense of the verb *haben*, and, likewise, their own participle past.

1. Neuter verbs are those signifying a condition, like *seyn*; or a state of movement or transition, like *gehen*, to go, *reisen*, to travel; or also a condition which is the contrary of movement or change, as, *stehen*, to stand, *bleiben*, to remain. Transitive verbs are those signifying action, like *machen*, to make; *schicken*, to send; *holen*, to fetch. More will be said about this distinction hereafter. Neuter as well as transitive verbs may belong to either form, ancient or modern.

2. The participle past of all the verbs of modern form is like that of *haben*. As, *haben* makes *gehabt* (*ge-hab-t*); thus, *machen* makes *gemacht* (*ge-mach-t*); *schicken*, *geschickt* (*ge-schick-t*); *holen*, *geholt* (*ge-hol-t*); *reisen*, *gereist* (*ge-reis-t*).

3. The rules concerning the different classes of the verbs of the ancient form will be given in a subsequent chapter. For the present purpose it is sufficient to state, that *stehen* makes *gestanden*; *bleiben*, *geblieben*; *gehen*, *gegangen*.

4. The conjugation of the perfect tense of these verbs, which may serve as an example of all others of respectively the same class and division, is, therefore, as follows: