

Adverbs

— DIE ADVERBIEN

German adverbs describe a verb, an adjective or a whole sentence and never take an ending: heute, hier, schnell.

Gestern bin ich ins Kino gegangen — or is it **ins Kino bin ich gestern gegangen**? English adverbs float around freely; German has a fixed order for them, called TeKaMoLo.

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01 00:10

No ending — one word does two jobs

⚡ SHORTCUT German has **no adverb ending**. **schnell** means both “quick” and “quickly”. There is no equivalent of English *-ly*.

Same word, two different jobs. The difference is not in an ending but in **what the word is looking at**.

✓ **Das ist ein schnelles Auto.**

That’s a fast car. → ADJECTIVE: looks at the noun and takes an ending

✓ **Er fährt schnell.**

He drives fast. → ADVERB: looks at the verb and never changes

- ① Practical upshot: with an adverb **you never think about endings**. Adjective endings are the most feared table in German; with adverbs that table never opens.

Three families — the list to save

FAMILY	QUESTION	COMMON ONES
Time TEMPORAL	wann?	heute · morgen · gestern · jetzt · bald · immer · oft · manchmal · nie · früh · spät
Place LOKAL	wo? wohin?	hier · dort · da · oben · unten · links · rechts · draußen · drinnen · überall
Manner MODAL	wie?	gern · schnell · langsam · gut · leider · vielleicht · sehr · zusammen · allein

These three families cover almost every adverb you will meet at A1. Don't try to memorise them — hold on to the **question word** and it tells you which family an adverb belongs to.

Frequency adverbs — on a line

This is the most-used group, and the difference between them is a **scale**: from never to always.

GERMAN	ENGLISH	ROUGHLY
immer	always	100%
meistens	mostly	80%
oft	often	60%
manchmal	sometimes	40%
selten	rarely	15%
nie	never	0%

nie is already negative — you don't add nicht next to it. There is no such thing as Ich gehe nie nicht (English has the same rule: no “I never don't go”).

- ✓

Ich trinke oft Kaffee.

I often drink coffee.
- ✓

Ich gehe nie ins Kino.

I never go to the cinema.

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04 03:20

More than one adverb: TeKaMoLo

This is the genuinely hard part. When a sentence has two or three adverbs, **the order is not free**. Germans have their own abbreviation for it: **Te-Ka-Mo-Lo**.

ORDER	WHAT	QUESTION	EXAMPLE
Te	Time · temporal	wann?	heute
Ka	Reason · kausal	warum?	wegen der Arbeit
Mo	Manner · modal	wie?	mit dem Bus
Lo	Place · lokal	wohin? wo?	nach Berlin

All together: **Ich fahre heute wegen der Arbeit mit dem Bus nach Berlin.** — “Today I’m taking the bus to Berlin for work.” English usually puts **place before time** (“to Berlin today”); German puts time first and place last.

- ① At A1 you will rarely meet all four at once. The one thing to memorise: **time first, place last**. **Ich gehe heute ins Kino** is right; **Ich gehe ins Kino heute** sounds foreign.

05 04:30

Traps



TRAP 01

Putting an ending on an adverb

An adverb is **never inflected**. If the word that describes the verb gets an ending, the sentence breaks.

✗ Er fährt **schnelles**.

an ending on the adverb

✓ Er fährt **schnell**.

He drives fast.



TRAP 02

Place first, time last

In English “I’m going to the cinema today” is perfectly natural, with the place first. In German **time comes first, place after**.

✗ Ich gehe **ins Kino heute**.

order reversed

✓ Ich gehe **heute ins Kino**.

I’m going to the cinema today.



TRAP 03

Starting with the adverb and forgetting to flip the subject

An adverb can open the sentence — but then it **fills the first slot** and the subject drops behind the verb. The rule is on the [word order page](#).

✗ **Heute ich** gehe ins Kino.

the verb is not in second position

✓ **Heute** gehe **ich** ins Kino.

Today I’m going to the cinema.



TRAP 04

Mixing up gern and gut

gern means “gladly, with pleasure”, **gut** means “well”. **Ich spiele gut Fußball** = I play football well (skill). **Ich spiele gern Fußball** = I like playing football (pleasure). They tell you two completely different things.

06 BUILD

Build the sentence yourself

Tap the words and put them in order. This is the hardest part of German — and there are no options to pick from, **you** build it.

TAP THE WORDS

TAP THE WORDS

TAP THE WORDS

06 05 : 40

Test yourself

Tap an answer — we will look at why together.

+7

Take the full test

13 questions · timed · rule breakdown at the end



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