

Nominal style and verbal style

— NOMINALISIERUNG VON NEBENSÄTZEN

Nominalstil means turning a subordinate clause (conjunction + verb) into a noun phrase (preposition + noun), so that two clauses become one main clause.

A classic B2 exam task: take a two-clause sentence built with a conjunction like weil or obwohl and squeeze it into one sentence with a preposition like wegen or trotz (Nominalstil).

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01 00:15

Right now: squeezing a clause into a noun

⚡ SHORTCUT In everyday life we use verbs and build long sentences (Verbalstil). In academic language and in the news, the conjunctions are dropped and the core of the sentence is squeezed into a **preposition + noun** structure (Nominalstil).

- ✓ **Weil** es stark regnet, bleiben wir hier. (Verbal)
Because it's raining hard, we're staying here.
- ✓ **Wegen** des starken Regens bleiben wir hier. (Nominal)
Because of the heavy rain, we're staying here.

The two sentences mean exactly the same, but the second one is a single clause and sounds far more professional.

02 01:30

You already do this in English

English does the same thing. "He was tired because he worked" (verb) can be shortened to "He was tired from work" or "He was tired because of the job" (nominalised).

WITH A CONJUNCTION (VERBALSTIL)	WITH A PREPOSITION (NOMINALSTIL)	ENGLISH LOGIC
Weil er krank ist . . .	Wegen seiner Krankheit . . .	Because he is ill -> Because of his illness
Obwohl es kalt ist . . .	Trotz der Kälte . . .	Although it is cold -> Despite the cold
Nachdem er angekommen ist . . .	Nach seiner Ankunft . . .	After he had arrived -> After his arrival

The verb (krank sein) turns into a noun (Krankheit) and a suitable preposition (wegen) is chosen.

✓ **Wegen** des starken Regens...
Because of the heavy rain...

03 02:45

Table: which conjunction becomes which preposition?

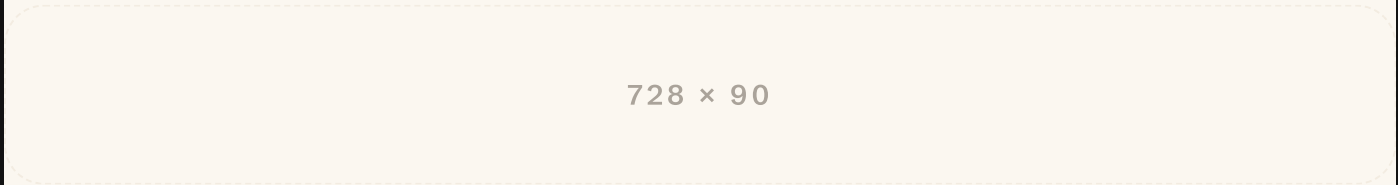
To solve conversion tasks you need to know these pairings by heart. When you delete the conjunction and put in the preposition, you also have to put the noun into the case the preposition demands (mostly Genitiv or Dativ).

CONJUNCTION (SUBORDINATE CLAUSE)	PREPOSITION (NOMINALSTIL)	CASE IT TAKES
weil / da (because)	wegen / aufgrund	Genitiv
obwohl (although)	trotz	Genitiv
nachdem (after)	nach	Dativ
während (while)	während (same word!)	Genitiv
um . . . zu / damit (in order to)	zu / für	Dativ / Akkusativ
wenn / als (when , if)	bei	Dativ

Notice that subordinating conjunctions throw the verb to the end, while prepositions come directly in front of the noun.

✓ **Wenn** die Sonne untergeht... -> **Bei** Sonnenuntergang...
When the sun sets -> At sunset...

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04 03:45

The trap: don't forget the adjective

- ✓ Weil der Wind **stark** weht...

Because the wind is blowing hard...



TRAP

Forgetting to turn the adverb into an adjective

When you turn the clause into a noun, you convert the verb (wehen -> der Wind), but you must also put **the adverb (stark) in front of the noun as an adjective**. Otherwise part of the meaning is lost.

- ✗ Wegen ~~des Windes~~...

Wrong/incomplete. (Because of the wind — “strong” has disappeared.)

- ✓ Wegen des **starken** Windes...

Correct. (Because of the strong wind.)

You also have to remember the adjective endings (starken). When the preposition takes the Genitiv, the adjective mostly gets the ending “-en”.

05 04:30

What nobody tells you: why do we do this at all?

Why complicate things and say “aufgrund der Tatsache” (because of the fact) when a simple weil clause is available? Because in German, official bodies and newspapers **hate verbs and love nouns**. Nouns are clearer, measurable and permanent.

- ✓ Weil die Preise steigen, gibt es Proteste.

Spoken, everyday language.

- ✓ Aufgrund steigender Preise kommt es zu Protesten.

Newspaper headline language.

In university exams (DSH, TestDaF), the biggest skill they ask of you is to show you understood a nominal text by putting it into your own words (Verbalstil).

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 05:00

Test yourself

Tap an answer — we will look at why together.

+4

Take the full test

10 questions · timed · rule breakdown at the end



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