

Noun + verb combinations

— DIE NOMEN-VERB-VERBINDUNGEN

Nomen-Verb-Verbindungen are fixed pairs of a noun and a verb that together express a single action (eine Entscheidung treffen = to make a decision).

Sometimes German prefers a noun + verb phrase (**eine Entscheidung treffen**) over a simple verb. You meet it constantly in business German and formal writing.

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01 00:15

The idea: actions built with a noun

 **SHORTCUT** Instead of a plain verb, German often uses a more formal “noun + function verb (*Funktionsverb*)” combination. The meaning sits in the **noun**, not in the verb.

- ✓ **Ich muss **entscheiden**.**
I have to decide. (plain)
- ✓ **Ich muss eine **Entscheidung treffen**.**
I have to make a decision. (more formal)

These phrases (Nomen-Verb-Verbindungen) score points in the news, in business meetings and in exams (the B1/B2 *Schreibteil*).

02 01:30

You already do this in English

English does the same thing: instead of “to ask” we say “to *put* a question”, instead of “to decide” we “*make* a decision”, and instead of “to say goodbye” we “*take* our leave”. German has the same kind of set phrases — but the verb is fixed and you cannot swap it freely. German “takes” a farewell: **Abschied nehmen**.

PLAIN VERB	NOMEN-VERB-VERBINDUNG	BUILT WITH
fragen	eine Frage stellen	stellen (to put)
antworten	eine Antwort geben	geben (to give)
beantragen	einen Antrag stellen	stellen (to put)
helfen	Hilfe leisten	leisten (to provide)

Building the verbs in this table with “machen” is the most common mistake.

03 02:45

Table: the five most common ones

You do not have to memorise the whole list. These five are more than enough for the B1 exam and everyday office life.

PHRASE	MEANING	EXAMPLE
eine Entscheidung treffen	to make a decision	Wir treffen eine Entscheidung .
Abschied nehmen	to say goodbye	Ich nehme Abschied von dir .
zur Verfügung stehen	to be available	Das Dokument steht zur Verfügung .
eine Rede halten	to give a speech	Der Chef hält eine Rede .
in Kauf nehmen	to accept - to put up with	Ich nehme das in Kauf .

Some of these always go with a particular preposition (e.g. Abschied nehmen **von** + Dativ).

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Word-order trap: the noun splits from the verb



TRAP

Gluing the noun phrase to the conjugated verb

In a simple main clause with a single conjugated verb, the noun part usually does not stick to the verb. Like the prefix of a separable verb, it tends to go to the end of the sentence, and time and place words slot in between. This is a strong tendency rather than a strict rule: with the noun near the end, the sentence sounds natural. With a modal verb, in the Perfekt or in a subordinate clause, the main verb stays at the end as usual.

✗ **Wir treffen eine wichtige Entscheidung heute.**

Unnatural order. The time word (heute) belongs in the middle, the noun phrase goes to the end.

✓ **Wir treffen heute eine wichtige Entscheidung.**

Correct order.

The part nobody tells you: machen does not work everywhere

Because English says “make a decision”, everyone learning German wants to say “eine Entscheidung machen”. But in German, **machen** combines with very few nouns. Most of the time you need a specific verb such as **stellen**, **treffen** or **leisten**. Putting “machen” everywhere makes your sentences sound artificial.

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

TIPS

Know this before the test

The core of the topic in three lines, then the mistakes people make most often.

01

Learn the phrases as a whole

A noun always pairs with one particular verb. It is “Frage stellen”, not “Frage machen”.

einen Antrag stellen

✗ ~~Er macht eine Entscheidung.~~

✓ Er trifft eine Entscheidung.

You do not “make” (machen) a decision in German — you “meet” it: treffen.

06 05 : 00

Test yourself

Tap an answer — we will look at why together.

+4

Finish the topic: take the full test

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GENAU — NOT RULES, THE MOMENT IT CLICKS.

