

the preposition für

— DIE PRÄPOSITION FÜR

für is a preposition that always takes the accusative: für dich (for you), für zwei Wochen (for two weeks).

für always takes the accusative and covers what English does with “for”: for someone, for a price, for a length of time, and “in favour of”. Learners usually mix it up with **seit** (English says “for two years” for both!) or slip in a nominative pronoun like **ich**.

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01 00:00

für always takes the accusative

für is a preposition, and it puts the word after it in the **accusative**. No exceptions: **für den Mann, für die Frau, für das Kind**. The article, the adjective and the pronoun all take accusative forms.

Pronouns are the most common case, so learn them by heart. **für** never fuses with a pronoun — you say **für dich**, never one word. It does merge with an article, though: **für das → fürs (fürs Wochenende)**.

PRONOUN (NOMINATIVE)	ACCUSATIVE (AFTER FÜR)	ENGLISH
ich	mich	me
du	dich	you
er	ihn	him
sie	sie	her
es	es	it

The middle column is the form you use after **für**. English does the same thing: “for *I*” sounds wrong, “for *me*” is right.

PRONOUN (NOMINATIVE)	ACCUSATIVE (AFTER FÜR)	ENGLISH
wir	uns	us
ihr	euch	you (plural)
sie	sie	them
Sie	Sie	you (formal)

The middle column is the form you use after **für**.

02 01:10

The four jobs of für

für takes on several jobs that English also mostly writes as “for”. You work out which one is meant from the sentence. The table sums up the four main uses.

JOB	GERMAN EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
(a) Benefit / purpose — “for”	Das Geschenk ist für dich .	The present is for you .
(b) Price — “for” a sum of money	Ich kaufe das Auto für 5000 Euro .	I’m buying the car for 5 , 000 euros .
(c) Planned length of time — “for”	Wir fahren für zwei Wochen nach Italien .	We’re going to Italy for two weeks .
(d) Taking a side — “in favour of”	Er ist für die Idee .	He’s for the idea .

For a price, **für** + amount; for a length of time, **für** + time expression. Both are accusative.

03 02:20

für vs. seit

English uses the same little word for both: “I’m staying *for* three days” and “I’ve been here *for* three days”. German splits them, and that is the trap. The rule is simple: **für** = a **set length of time** (usually a plan), **seit** = a **period that started in the past and is still going**.

seit takes the dative, **für** takes the accusative. With **seit** the verb is usually in the **Gegenwart** (present tense); with **für** it is usually a future or a plan.

PREPOSITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE	ENGLISH	WHY?
für	Ich bleibe für drei Tage in Berlin .	I'm staying in Berlin for three days .	A plan ; it hasn't started yet .
seit	Ich bin seit drei Tagen in Berlin .	I have been in Berlin for three days .	It started in the past and is still going .

The question “How many days has it been?” is answered with **seit**; “How many days are you staying?” is answered with **für**.

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04 03:30

Verbs that require für

Some verbs are used **only** with **für**. In these verbs **für** carries no meaning of its own; it is part of the verb (a verb + preposition combination). So don't translate it word for word — learn it as part of the verb. English uses other prepositions here: “interested *in*”, “thank *for*”, “care *for*”.

The three most important: **sich interessieren für** (to be interested in), **danken für** (to thank for), **sorgen für** (to take care of, to be responsible for). All of them take the accusative.

VERB (WITH PREPOSITION)	EXAMPLE SENTENCE	ENGLISH
sich interessieren für	Ich interessiere mich für Geschichte .	I'm interested in history .
danken für	Wir danken dir für deine Hilfe .	We thank you for your help .
sorgen für	Wer sorgt für das Essen?	Who is taking care of the food?

If you drop **für** in these verbs, the sentence falls apart; “Ich interessiere mich Geschichte” is wrong.

Traps



TRAP 01

Trap 1: Using the dative

für takes the accusative, full stop. Because “for the father” feels like “to the father”, learners reach for the dative and pull out **dem/der**.

✗ **Ich kaufe ein Geschenk für dem Vater.**

dem is dative. **für** takes the accusative: **den**.

✓ **Ich kaufe ein Geschenk für den Vater.**

I’m buying a present for my father. (accusative: den Vater)



TRAP 02

Trap 2: Using “für” for a period that runs up to now

In “I’ve lived here for two years” the period began in the past and is still going. English says “for”, but German needs **seit** + dative. **für** describes a set length of time (usually a plan).

✗ **Ich wohne für zwei Jahre in Hamburg.**

This means “I’ll be living in Hamburg for two years” (a plan). If you mean “I’ve been living here for two years”, you need **seit**.

✓ **Ich wohne seit zwei Jahren in Hamburg.**

I’ve been living in Hamburg for two years. (dative: zwei Jahren)



TRAP 03

Trap 3: A nominative pronoun (für ich / für du)

At speaking speed, people forget to change the pronoun. **ich, du, er, wir, ihr** are nominative; they cannot follow **für**. (**sie, es, Sie** look the same in both cases.) You wouldn't say "for I" in English either.

✗ **Das ist nicht gut für ich.**

ich is the subject form (nominative). After a preposition you need the object form (accusative): **mich**.

✓ **Das ist nicht gut für mich.**

That's not good for me. (accusative pronoun: mich)

06 07:00

The other accusative prepositions

07 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

TIPS

Know this before the test

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

01

für + accusative, no exceptions

02

Price and planned time
take für

03

für = for, gegen
= against

For whom, for what — always accusative: **für**
meine Mutter · **für dich** · **für**
das Kind.

Das Geschenk ist **für**
meine Mutter.

für 3000 Euro kaufen (price)
· **für drei Tage nach**
München (planned time).
Something running since
the past is **seit**.

Wir fahren **für drei Tage**
nach München.

Bist du **für** oder **gegen** den
Plan? — the language of
voting and debate.

Ich bin **für** diesen Plan.

04

Thanks and interest patterns

Danke **für** ... but watch out:
sich interessieren für for
interest, **warten auf** for
waiting — the verb picks its
own preposition.

Danke **für** deine Hilfe!

✗ ~~Das Geschenk ist **für**
meiner Mutter.~~

✓ Das Geschenk ist **für** meine Mutter.

für never takes the dative — always
the accusative.

✗ ~~Ich bin **seit drei Tagen in München.**
(for a planned trip)~~

✓ Wir fahren **für drei Tage**
nach München.

seit describes a period running since the
past, **für** a planned period.

✗ ~~Er wartet **für** den Bus.~~

✓ Er wartet **auf** den Bus.

The preposition of **warten** is **auf**; English
“wait for” tempts you into **für**, but it doesn’t
fit here.

✗ ~~Ich interessiere mich **für** dem Buch.~~

✓ Ich interessiere mich **für** das Buch.

After **für** the dative never appears.

Test yourself

Tap an answer — we will look at why together.

+7

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