

A1 EINHEIT 7 GRAMMAR

In this unit you are introduced to several new points of grammar. The first is the preposition *in*. *In* is *ein Wechselpräposition*. In English we call it a two-way preposition. This means it can be followed by the accusative or dative case depending on the verb. If the verb shows motion in the direction of the prepositional phrase the two-way preposition is followed by the accusative case. If not, it is followed by the dative. Consider the following example: I am putting the calculator in(to) my pocket. If that sentence were in German, *in(to)* would be followed by the accusative case because the calculator ends up somewhere other than where it started, namely your pocket. Whereas if you were to say: The calculator is in my pocket, *in* would be followed by the dative because the calculator started and ended the sentence in your pocket.

Germans determine the case of the noun following a *Wechselpräposition* by asking, "Does the verb answer the question *wo* (where) or *wohin* (where to)?" This works really well for Germans. The reason it doesn't work quite as well for us is because we never say "where to."

In this unit you only have to deal with situations in which *in* is used in conjunction with verbs that answer the question *wohin*. In other words, it will always be followed by the accusative case. This works out well since you haven't learned the dative case yet.

As was the case in the example above, when *in* is used with a verb of motion it more appropriately translates as "into." You will find that in this unit that *in* + the accusative often translates as simply "to." *Wir gehen in den Park.* Could mean "We're going to (or possibly into) the park." (Notice *den Park*. It's accusative because *gehen* answers the question *wohin* and not *wo*.) The same is true for *Ich gehe in die Schule*. Watch what happens when *in* is followed by *das*. *Gehst du ins Museum?* *Ins* is a contraction for *in das* and is always used.

The next point of grammar for which you are responsible is verbs with separable prefixes (*trennbare Verben*). You have already learned a few – *abholen*, *vorlesen*, *aussehen* and others. However, the overwhelming majority of verbs introduced in this unit are *trennbare Verben*. Basically, when the prefix of a verb can stand alone as a word – usually a preposition – it is separable. This means the prefix is removed from the verb in its second element position and is placed at the end of the sentence. It will look like a preposition at the end of the sentence in need of an object. That is not the case, however. It is part of the verb. Sometimes the prefix can radically change the meaning of the verb. For example, one of the verbs you learn this unit is *anfangen*. *Fangen* means to catch. *Fang den Ball!* – Catch the ball. Adding the prefix *an* changes the meaning of the verb to "to begin" or "to start." *Wir fangen morgen an.* – We'll start tomorrow. The prefix also goes at the end in verb first questions. *Ó Fängt der Film um 20.00 Uhr an?* – Does the film start at 8 p.m.? When you have a situation which requires the verb with a separable prefix to be placed at the end of the sentence – such as when you have a modal verb (like *müssen*) – the prefix does not get separated from the stem, e.g., *Wir müssen morgen anfangen.* – We have to start tomorrow.

The last new point of grammar for which you are responsible is the use of *nicht*. You've already learned how to negate an element using *kein*. *Kein* is used to negate nouns. *Ich habe keine Zeit.* - I have no time. *Nicht* negates the verb. The distinction can sometimes be murky but you will get used to it. *Wir gehen morgen nicht ins Kino.* - We're not going to the movies tomorrow. Sometimes the positioning of *nicht* can be tricky, but generally it follows the subject, verb, objects, and specific time expressions (as in the example above). You never want to use *nicht* in conjunction with *ein*. Always substitute *kein*. – *Ich habe keinen Ball.*

The test will require that you know when and how to use *nicht* and *kein/e/en*. You will also have to create questions using *trennbare Verben*. Finally, you will also have to use other verbs in combination with *gehen*. Probably the most common use of this combination is *einkaufen gehen*. *Wir gehen heute nicht einkaufen.* - We're not going shopping today. However, *gehen* can be combined with countless verbs. ó *Ich gehe (Fisch) essen, Gehst du jetzt schlafen?, Wir gehen später schwimmen,* etc. Just remember to put the correct form of *gehen* in the second element position and the infinitive form of the other verb at the end of the sentence.