

## A1 EINHEIT 8 GRAMMAR

There are several new points of grammar introduced in this unit. The first deals with word order (*Wortstellung*). Remember, the most fundamental rule of German word order is that the verb is the second element. This does not necessarily mean second word. The first element might be a noun (generally, but not necessarily, the subject) and its modifiers, e.g., "the cranky old man." That's a noun with three modifiers. You don't break them up; they are one element. For example, *Der schrullenhafte alte Mann bleibt den ganzen Tag im Haus.* – The cranky old man stays in the house all day. If there is a time element in the sentence, e.g., tomorrow morning, Germans will often begin their sentence with the time element. That, in and of itself, is no problem. We do that in English often. What we don't do in English is follow that up with the verb as in English, the subject comes next. For example, "Tomorrow evening we're going to the movies." This results in lots of mistakes in German. Because at this level you think in English, after you say *morgen abend* (tomorrow evening) you want to say *wir*. That would be a mistake. The verb must be the second element. The correct way to say that in German is *Morgen Abend gehen wir ins Kino.*

The next point of grammar introduced in this unit is irregular verbs (*unregelmäßige Verben*). You have already learned a few irregular verbs, but they are all in a special category called modal verbs. *Mögen, müssen, and können* are in this category. There are only six of them. Unlike a modal verb, a typical irregular verb is used like any regular verb except there is a stem vowel change in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular forms (*du* and *er, sie, es*). There are quite a few of these verbs and they are often very commonly used verbs. The table below shows only the singular form of some irregular verbs because the plural forms of all verbs except *sein* are regular.

INFINITIVE	<i>ich</i>	<i>du</i>	<i>er, sie, es</i>
<i>laufen</i>	<i>laufe</i>	<i>läufst</i>	<i>läuft</i>
<i>essen</i>	<i>esse</i>	<i>isst</i>	<i>isst</i>
<i>fahren</i>	<i>fahre</i>	<i>fährst</i>	<i>fährt</i>
<i>lesen</i>	<i>lese</i>	<i>liest</i>	<i>liest</i>
<i>treffen</i>	<i>treffe</i>	<i>triffst</i>	<i>trifft</i>

You also learn the comparative and superlative forms of *gern* and *gut*. As you know, *gern* means gladly or to like to verb. *Gut*, of course, means good. The comparative form of *gern* is *lieber*. It means "prefer." The comparative forms are generally used in conjunction with *als* (than). That's how you compare two different things. *Ich spiele Tennis lieber als Fußball.* *Ich esse Erbsen lieber als Karotten.* (I prefer (eating) peas to carrots.) The comparative form of *gut* is *besser* (better). *Ich spiele Tennis besser als Fußball.* The superlative forms are *am liebsten* (favorite) and *am besten* (the best). *Ich spiele Fußball gut, aber ich spiele Tennis besser.* *Am besten spiele ich Basketball.* In the above sentences one can easily substitute *gern, lieber, and am liebsten* for *gut, besser, am besten*.

The final point of grammar you learn in this unit is how to use *welch* – which. It gets used more than *which* in English because we usually say *what* where *which* makes more grammatical sense. What movie are we going to see this evening? Grammatically it would make more sense to say *Which movie*. You will never see *welch* without an ending. The ending depends on the gender (*der, die, das*) and the case (nominative or accusative (for now)) of the noun it modifies. When you look at the examples below note the similarity between the definite article and the ending on *welch*.

NOMINATIVE

*der Mann*    *welcher Mann*  
*die Frau*    *welche Frau*  
*das Haus*   *welches Haus*

ACCUSATIVE

*den Mann*   *welchen Mann*  
*die Frau*    *welche Frau*  
*das Haus*   *welches Haus*

*Welcher Mann hat einen Hund?*

*Welchen Film willst du sehen?*

For the test you will be given answers to questions. You must write the question. Be sure to pay attention to the subject of the answer; it will give you the subject of the question, e.g., the answer is *Nein, wir gehen nicht*. The question must be *Geht ihr?*

You must know not just the comparative and superlative forms of *gut* and *gern*, but also which one makes more sense in context.

You will be given information and you will have to use that information to create sentences. Make sure your verb is the second element.