

GRAMMAR A2 EINHEIT 12

There are two points of grammar covered in this unit ó one is a review of material learned much earlier. The other is completely new and very important.

We will spend very little time and use up very little space with the review material ó *Wechselpräpositionen* (two-way prepositions). Remember, the key to determining if a two-way preposition is followed by the dative or the accusative is the verb. If the verb moves the subject or direct object in the direction of the object of the two-way preposition, the preposition is followed by the accusative case. If there is no change of location it is followed by the dative.

Meine Hose hängt im Schrank. This is dative-the pants were in the closet the whole time.

Ich hänge meine Hose in den Schrank. The pants are being moved into the closet.

Ich liege auf dem Bett und lese. You were nowhere other than on the bed.

Ich lege mich auf das Bett und lese. You were not on the bed before you lay down.

Meine Gitarre steht hinter der Tür. The guitar was behind the door the whole time.

Ich stelle meine Gitarre hinter die Tür. The guitar did not start out behind the door.

The two-way prepositions are: *in, an, auf, über, unter, vor, hinter, zwischen, and neben.*

In this unit you are responsible for learning only the nominative and accusative forms of the relative pronouns. All of the forms will be explained and demonstrated here.

In English, our relative pronouns are: that, which, who, whose, and whom. (In English we often leave the relative pronoun out altogether. In German you don't have this option. You must use a relative pronoun when and where it makes sense to do so). We generally use *that* even when one of the others is the correct choice. Consequently, when we need a relative pronoun in German, we automatically want to say *dass*- and most students do. Although you would generally be understood when you plug in *dass*, that is unacceptable. There are as many relative pronouns in German as there are definite articles. Fortunately, because they reflect the definite articles, they are easy to memorize, and the logic behind choosing a relative pronoun is essentially the same as the logic behind choosing a definite article.

First of all, what is a relative pronoun? A relative pronoun is a word or pronoun that refers back to or repeats a noun mentioned earlier in the sentence ó its antecedent (*Bezugswort*). If the relative pronoun is the same as its antecedent then it is only logical that it be same number and gender as its antecedent. It's not just logical; it's essential. Furthermore, because the relative pronoun is in a separate clause from its antecedent, it is equally important that the case (nominative, etc.) of the relative pronoun reflect its use or function in the clause in which it appears and not the case of its antecedent. It may be in the same case as its antecedent, but need not be.

As indicated earlier, the relative pronouns look like definite articles. Study the chart of the relative pronouns.

Nominative	<i>der</i>	<i>die</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>die</i>
Accusative	<i>den</i>	<i>die</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>die</i>
Dative	<i>dem</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>dem</i>	<i>denen</i>
Genitive	<i>dessen</i>	<i>deren</i>	<i>dessen</i>	<i>deren</i>

It is easy to see the resemblance to the definite articles. The only differences are the additional *en* in the dative plural and the *(s)en* in the genitive.

In English we might say, "The man on the corner is my father." Although many would use "that", we can also say, "The man who is standing on the corner is my father." In German, you must express it like the sentence that uses "who." So how do you decide on a relative pronoun? The "who" refers back to "man." In German that's *der Mann*. OK, so we know our relative pronoun has to be masculine singular. Now we have to consider the clause in which the relative pronoun appears, "who is standing on the corner." "Who" is the subject of the clause so our relative pronoun has to be masculine. Our result is *Der Mann, der an der Ecke steht, ist mein Vater*. Look at these other variations:

Siehst du den Mann, der an der Ecke steht? Komm, helfen wir dem Mann, der an der Ecke steht. Die Frau, die an der Ecke steht ist meine Mutter.
Siehst du die Frau, die an der Ecke steht? Komm, helfen wir der Frau, die an der Ecke steht.
Ich helfe dem Mädchen, das an der Ecke steht. Hilf doch den Kindern, die an der Ecke stehen.

In the examples above the case of the antecedent had no impact on the relative pronoun so only the gender and number (singular or plural) mattered. Did you notice that the verb come at the end of a relative clause so like with *weil* ? Below are examples in which the relative pronoun is not the subject of its clause.

Kennst du den Mann, dem ich eben geholfen habe? (Remember, helfen plus the dative)
Mein Sohn, wie heißt der Junge, den du gestern verprügelt hast?
Ist das das Kind, dem du dein neues Fahrrad geschenkt hast?

You want your relative pronoun as close to the antecedent as possible. Consequently, the relative clause may appear in the middle of the sentence:

Das Buch, das ich zum Geburtstag bekommen habe, ist leider sehr langweilig.
Die Schokolade, die wir gerade gegessen haben, hat mir meine Oma geschenkt.

When the relative pronoun is the object of a preposition, the preposition will introduce the relative clause:

Das ist der Bus, mit dem du fahren mußt. Hier kommen die Kinder, auf die wir warten.

The genitive forms mean "whose." This is not whose as a question word. It is a relative pronoun that refers back to an antecedent whose gender and number is known.

Ist das die Frau, deren Mann du nicht magst? Wo ist das Kind, dessen Spielzeuge hier liegen?

The relative pronoun of words like *alles*, *nichts*, and a few similar words like *vieles* is *was*. *Ich verstehe alles, was er sagt.*

Was is the relative pronoun if the antecedent is an entire sentence. *Er geht nie vor 24 Uhr ins Bett, was ich doof finde.* He never goes to bed before midnight which I think is stupid.

