

## pronouns overview

## grimm grammar

### 👤 Pronouns : Personalpronomen

Personal pronouns serve primarily a stylistic function. They allow sentences to be less repetitive and more coherent. Personal pronouns can replace nouns that are mentioned more than once in a sentence or a set of connected sentences (dialogs, narratives, etc.).

▶ <b>Rotkäppchen und seine Mutter</b> wohnen in dem Schloss.	<b>Little Red Riding hood and her mother</b> live in the castle.
<b>Sie</b> wohnen in Wohnung 1/A.	<b>They</b> live in apartment 1/A.

### ✦ Gender and number

Pronouns match the grammatical gender of the noun they replace (signify). Thus, a little girl (das Mädchen) is 'es' (it) and a wolf (der Wolf) is 'er' (he) because their grammatical gender is neutral and masculine, respectively. This is truly unfair (and changing very slowly in youth language), and Little Red Riding Hood is legitimately incensed.

▶ masculine	der Wolf/the wolf	<b>er</b> /he
feminine	die Regierung/the government	<b>sie</b> /she
neuter	das Mädchen/the little girl	<b>es</b> /it
plural	die Hauptfiguren/the main characters	<b>sie</b> /they

### ✦ Cases

In German, any noun can be replaced by a pronoun, regardless of what case it is in.

### ✦ Pronomen im Nominativ

The nominative case indicates the subject of a sentence, whether that subject is a noun (e.g., der Wolf, die Mutter) or a pronoun (**er**, **sie**).

▶ <i>Rotkäppchens Mutter</i>	Herr Wolf, lassen <b>Sie</b> Rotkäppchen in Ruhe! <b>Es</b> ist doch nur ein kleines Kind!	Mr. Wolf, leave Little Red Riding Hood alone! <b>She</b> is only a small child!
<i>Der Wolf</i>	Hey, <b>ich</b> habe doch nichts gemacht!	Hey, but <b>I</b> didn't do anything!
<i>Die Mutter</i>	Ja, natürlich! Dass <b>ich</b> nicht lache!	Yeah, right! Don't make <b>me</b> * laugh!
<i>Rotkäppchen</i>	Mutti, warum sagst <b>du</b> immer ' <b>es</b> '? <b>Ich</b> bin doch weiblich, <b>du</b> sollst das Pronomen ' <b>sie</b> ' benutzen!	Mom, why do <b>you</b> always say ' <b>it</b> '? <b>I</b> am feminine, right? <b>You</b> should use the pronoun ' <b>she</b> '!
<i>Die Mutter</i>	Liebling, leider ist da nichts zu machen. Grammatisch bist <b>du</b> Neutrum, weil dein Name Rotkäppchen ist, und das 'chen' ist leider neutral. Tut mir echt leid!	Darling, it can't be helped. Grammar-wise you are neutral because your name is Rotkäppchen, and the 'chen' is unfortunately neutral. I'm really sorry!
<i>Rotkäppchen</i>	Hmmm ... diese dummen grammatischen Regeln! <b>Sie</b> sind veraltet und total unfair!	Hmmm ... these stupid grammar rules! <b>They</b> are outdated and totally unfair!



\* Although in German the phrase **Dass ich nicht lache** uses the nominative pronoun **ich**, the English idiomatic expression requires an object pronoun (**me**). **Ich** and **me** are not really interchangeable.

<b>Pronouns in the nominative case</b>	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
1st person	<b>ich</b> (I)	<b>wir</b> (we)
2nd person	<b>du</b> (you)	<b>ihr</b> (y'all)
3rd person masculine	<b>er</b> (he)	
3rd person feminine	<b>sie</b> (she)	<b>sie</b> (they)
3rd person neuter	<b>es</b> (it)	
formal	<b>Sie</b> (you)	

#### ✦ Pronomen im Akkusativ

The accusative case indicates the **direct object** of a sentence or the object of the prepositions **durch**, **für**, **gegen**, **ohne** and **um**, whether that subject is a noun (e.g., den Wolf, die Mutter) or a pronoun (**ihn**, **sie**).


<b>Rotkäppchen</b>	Mutti, lass den Wolf in Ruhe und schimpf <b>ihn</b> nicht aus! Er hat wirklich nichts gemacht. Er hat bloß Joga gemacht!	Mom, leave the wolf alone and don't scold <b>him</b> ! He really didn't do anything. He was only doing yoga!
<b>Der Wolf</b>	(zu sich selbst: to himself) Hehe, ich habe <b>sie</b> ausgetrickst!	Hehe, I fooled <b>her</b> !
<b>Die Mutter</b>	Hmmm ... Ich werde <b>Sie</b> im Auge behalten, Herr Wolf! Ich bin sicher, dass Sie keine guten Absichten haben!	Hmmm ... I am going to keep my eyes on you, Mr. Wolf! I am sure that your intentions are not good!
<b>Der Wolf</b>	Was haben Sie gegen <b>mich</b> ? Ohne <b>mich</b> gäbe es kein Rotkäppchen, kein Märchen!	What do you have against <b>me</b> ? Without <b>me</b> there would be no Little Red Riding Hood, no fairy tale!
<b>Die Mutter</b>	Tja, Sie haben Recht. Aber ohne <b>uns</b> gäbe es auch Sie nicht!	Well, you're right. But without <b>us</b> you also wouldn't be here!
<b>Rotkäppchen</b>	Ok, ok, hört doch auf! Lasst <b>uns</b> alle dreimal hochleben! Wir sind alle großartig! Und das mein ich gar nicht ironisch ... ahmmm ...	OK, OK, stop it already! Three cheers to all of <b>us</b> ! We are all wonderful! And I don't mean that ironically at all ... ahem ...

<b>Pronouns in the accusative case</b>	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
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1st person	<b>mich</b> (me)	<b>uns</b> (us)
2nd person	<b>dich</b> (you)	<b>euch</b> (y'all)
3rd person masculine	<b>ihn</b> (him)	
3rd person feminine	<b>sie</b> (her)	<b>sie</b> (them)
3rd person neuter	<b>es</b> (it)	
formal	<b>Sie</b> (you)	

### ❖ Pronomen im Dativ

The **dative case** indicates the **indirect object** of a sentence or the object of the prepositions **aus**, **außer**, **bei**, **mit**, **nach**, **seit**, **von** and **zu**, or of a dative verb (e.g., **danken**, **helfen**, **leid tun**), whether that subject is a noun (e.g., dem Wolf, der Mutter) or a pronoun (**ihm**, **ihr**).

 Rotkäppchens Mutter	Rotkäppchen, sei nicht so frech! Du sollst viel mehr Respekt vor <b>mir</b> haben!	Little Red Riding Hood, don't be so cheeky! You should have much more respect for <b>me</b> !
Der Wolf	Ja, du sollst <b>ihr</b> zuhören!	Yes, you should listen to <b>her</b> !
Die Mutter	Ich danke <b>Ihnen</b> , Herr Wolf! Das war sehr nett von <b>Ihnen</b> !	Thank <b>you</b> , Mr. Wolf! That was very nice of <b>you</b> !
Rotkäppchen	Ok, Mutti, tut <b>mir</b> leid! Jetzt gehe ich zu Schneewittchen, Aschenputtel und Dornröschen und rede mit <b>ihnen</b> . Du kannst uns vielleicht helfen. Ich will unserer Autorin einen Brief schreiben, damit ich eine 'sie' sein kann! Ich will <b>ihr</b> erklären, wie unfair es ist, uns Hauptfiguren 'es' zu nennen!	OK, Mom, <b>I'm</b> * sorry! Now I'm going to talk to Snow White, Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty. Maybe you can help <b>us</b> ? I want to write to our author, so that I can be a 'she!' I want to explain it to <b>her</b> , how unfair it is, to call us main characters 'it'!



\* Although the English expression is *I'm sorry*, the German idiomatic expression for this requires the dative case: 'Es tut **mir/dir/uns** leid.'


 Pronouns in the dative case	Singular	Plural
1st person	<b>mir</b> (me)	<b>uns</b> (us)
2nd person	<b>dir</b> (you)	<b>euch</b> (y'all)
3rd person masculine	<b>ihm</b> (him)	

3rd person feminine	<b>ihr</b> (her)	<b>ihnen</b> (them)
3rd person neuter	<b>ihm</b> (it)	
formal	<b>Ihnen</b> (you)	

### ✦ Pronomen im Genitiv


The **genitive case** indicates the **owner** of something or the object of the genitive prepositions **anstatt**, **trotz**, **während** and **wegen**, when that subject is a noun (e.g., des Wolfs, der Mutter).

However, genitive pronouns are a thing of the past, and if you need to use pronouns with the genitive prepositions, feel free to use the dative pronouns, since the genitive ones no longer exist (except in very, very formal writing, and even there it sounds stilted, even for German academic writing).


 <i>Rotkäppchens Mutter</i>	Liebling, ich weiß nicht, was die Autorin für dich tun kann, aber wegen <b>mir</b> kannst du deinen Brief schreiben!	Darling, I don't know what the author can do for you, but as far <b>as I am concerned*</b> , you can write your letter!
<i>Rotkäppchen</i>	Mutti, warum könnte statt <b>mir</b> nicht der Wolf neutral sein?	Mom, why couldn't the wolf be neutral instead of <b>me</b> ?
<i>Der Wolf</i>	Hey, Moment mal!	Hey now, wait just a minute!

\* Although the German phrase is **wegen mir**, English requires an entire idiomatic expression to say *as far as I am concerned* - you could also use the German word **meinetwegen** but that sounds a bit more like teenage rebellion ...

For students who want to sound archaic ...

 Pronouns in the genitive case	Singular	Plural
1st person	<b>meiner</b> (my)	<b>unser</b> (our)
2nd person	<b>deiner</b> (your)	<b>eurer</b> (y'all's)
3rd person masculine	<b>seiner</b> (his)	
3rd person feminine	<b>ihrer</b> (her)	<b>ihrer</b> (their)
3rd person neuter	<b>ihm</b> (it)	
formal	<b>Ihrer</b> (you)	

Primarily for teenagers who want to sound confrontational ...

 Pronouns in the genitive case	Singular	Plural
1st person	<b>meinetwegen</b> (for/because of me)	<b>unsretwegen</b> (for/because of us)
2nd person	<b>deinetwegen</b> (for/because of you)	<b>euretwegen</b> (for/because of y'all)
3rd person masculine	<b>seinetwegen</b> (for/because of him)	
3rd person feminine	<b>ihretwegen</b> (for/because of her)	<b>ihretwegen</b> (for/because of them)
3rd person neuter	<b>seinetwegen</b> (for/because of it)	
formal	<b>Ihretwegen</b> (for/because of you)	

**meinetwegen** literally means *because of me* - e.g., 'Seid ihr nur **meinetwegen** hier gekommen' (*did you come here only because of me?*), but in everyday speech has the meaning *see if I care, as far as I'm concerned, or I couldn't care less*. It's a 'perfect' response when you are a teenager and want to frustrate your parents - otherwise, you should avoid this term. *Whatever!*

### ✦ Relativpronomen

Relative pronouns are used generally for stylistic purposes; they help eliminate redundancy (of **nouns**) and connect ideas more smoothly.

- ▶ **Rotkäppchen** Mutti, du kannst mich gerne auslachen, wenn du willst, aber **ein neues grammatisches Geschlecht, mit dem** ich mich endlich als Frau fühlen könnte, ist mir sehr wichtig!
- Mom you can laugh at me all you want, but **a new grammatical gender, with which** I could finally feel like a woman, is very important to me!

▶

	nominative	accusative	dative	genitive
<i>masculine</i>	<b>der</b>	<b>den</b>	<b>dem</b>	<b>dessen</b>
<i>feminine</i>	<b>die</b>	<b>die</b>	<b>der</b>	<b>deren</b>
<i>neutral</i>	<b>das</b>	<b>das</b>	<b>dem</b>	<b>dessen</b>
<i>plural</i>	<b>die</b>	<b>die</b>	<b>denen</b>	<b>deren</b>