

## adjectives overview, adjective endings

## grimm grammar

## ♣ Adjectives : Adjektive

Adjectives describe nouns, and can either precede or follow the noun in German without affecting the meaning of the article. In German, just like English, adjectives can be graded to express comparisons between two (comparative) or more (comparative and superlative) things, places, people or thoughts. Unlike in English, however, adjectives that precede nouns take endings depending on the case, gender and number of that noun.

## ♣ I. Before and after

## Attributive adjectives

Adjectives that precede nouns (and most often come between an article and a noun) are called **attributive adjectives**.

▶ Es war einmal ein **reicher** Mann.  
Seine Frau rief ihre **einzige** Tochter zu sich ans Bett.

Once upon a time, there was a **rich** man.  
His wife called her **only** daughter to her bed.

## Predicate adjectives

Adjectives that follow nouns are usually separated by a verb such as sein, werden, heißen and are called **predicate adjectives**.

▶ Die Frau **war** leider sehr **krank**.  
Sie sagte ihrer Tochter: Liebes Kind, **sei fromm** und **gut**!

Unfortunately, the woman **was** very **sick**.  
She said to her daughter: Dear child, **be pious** and **good**!

## ♣ II. Comparisons

## Comparative and superlative

Adjectives can be graded to express comparative and superlative qualities.

▶ Aschenputtels Leben wurde viel **schlimmer**, als sein Vater die andere Frau heiratete.  
Das arme Mädchen wurde jeden Tag **immer trauriger**.  
Als der Vater von einer Reise zurückkam, brachte er den Stiefschwestern die **schönsten** Kleider, Perlen und Edelsteine mit.

Cinderella's life became much **worse** when her father married the other woman.  
The poor girl was **sadder and sadder** every day.  
When the father returned from a trip, he brought the **most beautiful** clothes, pearls and gems for the two stepsisters.

## ♣ III. Adjective endings

Attributive adjectives (the ones preceding the noun they describe) can take three different types of endings, depending on what precedes them:

- adjectives preceded by definite articles or der-words take weak adjective endings
- adjectives preceded by indefinite articles or ein-words take strong adjective endings
- unpreceded adjectives take a different set of strong adjective endings

## a) adjectives after definite articles or der-words

When an adjective comes between a definite article or der-word and the noun it modifies, it takes weak adjective endings (because the article already gives enough grammatical information to signal the noun's gender, case and number).

▶ Das **kleine** Aschenputtel wollte nur einen Zweig von einem Haselbusch; sie pflanzt den Zweig auf das Grab ihrer Mutter.  
Der **schöne** Baum ist der **einzige** Trost für das **arme** Mädchen.

The **little** Cinderella wanted only a twig from a hazel bush; she plants the twig on the tomb of her mother.  
The **beautiful** tree is the **only** consolation for the **poor** little girl.

## b) adjectives preceded by indefinite articles or ein-words

Adjectives that are preceded by an indefinite article (ein, eine, keine) or other ein-words (meine, deine, seine) receive strong endings because the article does not give enough grammatical information to signal the noun's gender, case and number.

- ▶ Ein **weißes** Vöglein kam jeden Tag zum Baum.  
Im Reich gab es einen **alten** König.  
Er arrangierte ein **großes** Fest für seinen Sohn,  
um für ihn eine Frau zu finden.

A **white** bird came to the tree every day.  
In the realm there was an **old** King.  
He arranged a **large** feast for his son, in  
order to find him a wife.



### c) unpreceded adjectives

Then there are some adjectives that are either not preceded by any determiners or are preceded by quantifiers such as many (**viele**), some (**einige**) or few (**wenige**). These adjectives take a different set of strong endings to compensate for the lacking grammatical information about the noun's gender, case and number.

- ▶ Viele **schöne, junge** Frauen im Lande wurden eingeladen.

Many **beautiful young** women in the kingdom were invited.

Aschenputtel durfte nicht auf das Fest gehen; sie hatte nur **schmutzige** und **staubige** Kleider.

Cinderella is not allowed to go to the feast; she only has **dirty, dusty** clothes.

Aber zwei **weiße** Täubchen kamen zu Aschenputtel und brachten ihm **goldene** und silberne Kleider, und es ging aufs Fest.

But two **white** turtle doves came to Cinderella and brought her **golden** and **silver** clothes, and Cinderella went to the feast.

Der Prinz verliebte sich in Aschenputtel, und bestrich die Treppe mit **klebrigem** Pech, um das Mädchen bei sich zu behalten.

The prince fell in love with Cinderella, and covered the stairs with **sticky** tar, to keep the girl with him.

Aschenputtel lief weg, aber verlor ihren Schuh. Nach einigen **falschen** Versuchen, findet der Prinz seine Braut, und heiratet sie.

Cinderella ran away, but lost her shoe. After a few **false** attempts, the prince finds his bride and they marry.

### ❖ IV. No declension

There are a numbers of adjectives, mostly colors and foreign loan words, that do not take adjective endings. Interestingly, they also do not exist in comparative and superlative forms.

- ▶ beige rosa lila happy prima super

### ❖ Common adjectives

<b>blau</b>	blue (also: drunk)
-------------	--------------------

<b>rot</b>	red
<b>grün</b>	green
<b>orange</b>	orange
<b>lila</b>	purple
<b>schwarz</b>	black
<b>weiß</b>	white
<b>bunt, farbenfroh</b>	colorful
<b>schwarzweiß</b>	black and white
<b>dunkel</b>	dark
<b>stockdunkel</b>	pitch dark/pitch-black
<b>hell</b>	bright
<b>braun</b>	brown
<b>gelb</b>	yellow
<b>grau</b>	gray
<b>weit</b>	far
<b>entfernt</b>	distant
<b>weit entfernt</b>	far away
<b>nah</b>	near
<b>genau</b>	exact
<b>offen/geöffnet</b>	open
<b>zu/geschlossen</b>	closed
<b>lustig</b>	funny
<b>schön</b>	beautiful
<b>wunderschön</b>	gorgeous
<b>der/die/das allerschöneste</b>	the most beautiful
<b>hübsch</b>	pretty
<b>übrig</b>	left over/remaining
<b>einfach</b>	simple
<b>richtig</b>	right/correct
<b>falsch</b>	wrong/false
<b>echt</b>	real/true
<b>derselbe</b>	the same (one and the same)
<b>dergleiche</b>	the same (identical)
<b>weitere</b>	another
<b>anderer/andere/anderes</b>	another
<b>fremd</b>	foreign/strange/unfamiliar
<b>neu</b>	new
<b>frei</b>	free
<b>kostenlos/kostenfrei</b>	free/at no charge
<b>toll</b>	great

<b>cool</b>	cool
<b>geil</b>	cool (also: horny)
<b>schick</b>	cool/chic
<b>früh</b>	early
<b>spät</b>	late
<b>alt</b>	old
<b>jung</b>	young
<b>knapp</b> ('das war knapp!')	short ('that was close')
<b>eng</b>	narrow/tight (clothes)
<b>kurz</b>	short
<b>lang</b>	long
<b>sauber</b>	clear
<b>dreckig</b>	dirty/muddy
<b>schmutzig</b>	dirty
<b>breit</b>	wide
<b>schnell</b>	fast
<b>blitzschnell</b>	fast as lightning
<b>langsam</b>	slow
<b>schleunig</b>	speedy
<b>steif</b>	stiff
<b>schwach</b>	weak
<b>stark</b>	strong
<b>dick</b>	thick/fat
<b>fett</b>	fat
<b>fettig</b>	greasy
<b>dünn</b>	thin
<b>schlank</b>	slim
<b>offen</b> (zu)	honest (with)
<b>intelligent</b>	intelligent
<b>schlau</b>	sly/sharp
<b>klug</b>	smart
<b>vernünftig</b>	reasonable/sensible
<b>dumm</b>	stupid/dumb
<b>blöd</b>	foolish/stupid
<b>doof</b>	dumb
<b>schüchtern</b>	shy
<b>oberflächlich</b>	superficial
<b>scheu</b>	shy
<b>interessant</b>	interesting
<b>schwul</b>	gay

<b>hetero</b> (a)	straight
<b>schwül</b>	humid/stuffy
<b>feucht</b>	humid/moist
<b>warm</b>	warm
<b>heiß</b>	hot
<b>kalt</b>	cold
<b>eiskalt</b>	ice cold/freezing
<b>eisig</b>	icy/frosty
<b>frisch</b>	fresh (food)/cool (tempearture)
<b>kühl</b>	cool
<b>neblig</b>	foggy
<b>regnerisch</b>	rainy
<b>reif</b>	ripe (also: mature)
<b>ausreichend</b>	adequate/sufficient
<b>genügend</b>	adequate/sufficient
<b>mangelhaft</b>	inadequate/deficient
<b>ausgezeichnet</b>	excellent
<b>gut</b>	good
<b>besser</b>	better
der/die/das <b>beste</b>	the best
der/die/das <b>allerbeste</b>	the very best
<b>gutaussehend</b>	good-looking
<b>feuerfest</b>	fire-proof
<b>Promi-</b>	VIP
<b>tapfer/mutig</b>	brave
<b>versehentlich</b>	accidental
<b>zuverlässig</b>	reliable
<b>zuversichtlich</b>	confident
<b>ruhig</b>	calm/quiet
<b>schweigsam</b>	silent (person)
<b>respektlos</b>	disrespectful
<b>brav</b>	good (child, animal)
<b>gemein</b>	mean
<b>fies</b>	mean/nasty
<b>mies</b>	mean/nasty
<b>schlecht</b>	bad (also: sick)
<b>schlimm</b>	bad
<b>übel</b>	evil (also: sick)
<b>böse</b>	evil (also: angry, bad [child])
<b>zwanglos</b>	casual/informal

<b>formell</b>	formal
<b>sauer</b>	sour (also: angry/bitter)
<b>stocksauer</b>	furious
<b>wütend</b>	angry
<b>süß</b>	sweet (food)/cute (person)
<b>lieb</b>	dear/sweet (person)
<b>teuer</b>	expensive
<b>sauteuer</b>	expensive as heck
<b>billig</b>	cheap
<b>preiswert</b>	inexpensive
<b>zäh</b>	tough
<b>salzig</b>	salty
<b>scharf</b>	spicy
<b>lecker</b>	tasty
<b>köstlich</b>	delicious
<b>satt</b>	full (having eaten enough)
<b>krank</b>	sick
<b>grippig</b> - 'Ich fühle mich grippig'	flu - 'I feel like I have the flu'
<b>antseckend</b>	contagious
<b>schwindlig</b>	dizzy
<b>wacklig</b>	wobbly/(also: groggy)
<b>schmerzhaft</b>	painful
<b>wund</b>	sore
<b>blind</b>	blind
<b>taub</b>	deaf
<b>behindert</b>	disabled
<b>gelähmt</b>	paralyzed
<b>stumm</b>	mute
<b>einfallsreich</b>	imaginative/resourceful
<b>freundlich</b>	friendly
<b>komisch</b>	strange
<b>witzig</b>	funny
<b>wettbewerbsfähig</b>	competitive
<b>kindisch</b>	childish
<b>empfindlich</b>	sensitive (also: picky)
<b>überempfindlich</b>	hypersensitive
<b>rücksichtsvoll</b>	considerate
<b>selbstbewusst</b>	self-confident
<b>selbstsicher</b>	self-confident
<b>aufmerksam</b>	attentive/observant

<b>bekannt</b>	well known
<b>berühmt</b>	famous
<b>beliebt</b>	popular
<b>populär</b>	popular
<b>hochnäsig</b>	snobby/snotty
<b>gebildet</b>	educated
<b>verbildet</b>	spoiled
<b>eingebildet</b>	conceited
<b>unverschämt</b>	imprudent/rude
<b>beeindruckend</b>	impressive
<b>beeindruckt</b>	impressed
<b>besonders</b>	special
<b>groß</b>	big
<b>riesig</b>	huge
<b>klein</b>	small
<b>winzig</b>	tiny
<b>fabelhaft</b>	wonderful
<b>großartig</b>	great/wonderful
<b>stur</b>	stubborn
<b>eigensinnig</b>	opinionated/obstinate
<b>spießig</b>	narrow-minded
<b>aufgeschlossen</b>	open-minded
<b>frankiert</b>	stamped (envelope)
<b>gültig</b>	valid
<b>endgültig</b>	final/definite
<b>neugierig</b>	curious
<b>tief</b>	deep
<b>hoch</b>	high
<b>niedrig</b>	low
<b>laut</b>	loud
<b>leise</b>	quiet
<b>blass</b>	pale
<b>bleich</b>	pale
<b>besoffen</b>	trashed/inebriated
<b>betrunken</b>	drunk
<b>normal</b>	normal
<b>beschwipst</b>	tipsy
<b>nüchtern</b>	sober
<b>akzeptabel</b>	acceptable
<b>unangebracht</b>	inappropriate

<b>angenehm</b>	pleasant
<b>unangenehm</b>	unpleasant
<b>unaufgefordert</b>	uninvited
<b>fassungslos</b>	stunned
<b>kräftig</b>	strong/hearty (meal)
<b>schwervorstellbar</b>	hard to imagine
<b>hinter</b>	back
<b>leer</b>	empty
<b>voll</b>	full (also: drunk)
<b>fertig</b>	finished/ready
<b>bereit</b>	ready
<b>erfinderisch</b>	inventive/innovative
<b>originell</b>	original/creative
<b>original</b>	original (the first one)
<b>hart</b>	hard/tough
<b>schwer</b>	heavy/difficult
<b>schwierig</b>	difficult
<b>leicht</b>	light/easy
<b>einfach</b>	simple
<b>trocken</b>	dry
<b>nass</b>	wet
<b>tropfnass</b>	dripping wet
<b>pitschnass</b>	soaking wet
<b>klebrig</b>	sticky
<b>eklig</b>	gross
<b>ekelhaft</b>	disgusting
<b>glatt</b>	smooth, slippery
<b>rutschig</b>	slippery
<b>fließend</b>	fluent
<b>irre</b>	crazy (slang)
<b>verrückt</b>	crazy
<b>wach</b>	awake
<b>hellwach</b>	wide awake
<b>müde</b>	tired
<b>erschöpft</b>	exhausted
<b>glücklich</b>	happy
<b>froh</b>	glad
<b>traurig</b>	sad
<b>deprimiert</b>	depressed
<b>gespannt</b>	anxious



<b>angespannt</b>	tense
<b>besonder</b>	special/exceptional
<b>üblich</b>	common
<b>herzlich</b>	sincere/cordial/hearty
<b>seriös</b>	serious
<b>ernst/ernsthaft</b>	serious
<b>religiös</b>	religious
<b>weiter</b>	further, another
<b>nächster, nächste, nächstes</b>	next, closest
<b>sonstig</b>	other/sundry
<b>seltsam</b>	strange
<b>täglich</b>	daily
<b>heutig</b>	today's
<b>morgig</b>	tomorrow's
<b>gestrig</b>	yesterday's
<b>jetzig</b>	current
<b>örtlich</b>	local
<b>regional</b>	regional