

PRESENT PERFECT TENSE OVERVIEW

Formation

haben / sein

+

past
participle
(Partizip II)

In English, the PRESENT PERFECT tense is formed using the "helping" (auxiliary) verb "to have" plus the past participle of the main verb:

He **has learned** a lot.
They **have gone** to the movies.

In German, The PRESENT PERFECT tense ("PERFEKT" auf Deutsch) is formed using the "helping" verbs *haben* or *sein* plus the past participle ("PARTIZIP II") of the main verb. The past participle goes at the very end of the sentence:

Er **hat** im letzten Semester viel **gelernt**.
Sie **sind** gestern Abend ins Kino **gegangen**.

Usage

Note that **English** only uses the PRESENT PERFECT TENSE in certain situations. If you want to express what you did last night, you would say:

"I went to the movies" (SIMPLE PAST TENSE), not
"I have gone to the movies." (PRESENT PERFECT TENSE)

German, however, often uses PRESENT PERFECT TENSE in conversation to express something that happened in the past. In German, if you wanted to express what you did last night, you would most likely say:

"Ich bin ins Kino gegangen" (PRESENT PERFECT TENSE), not
"Ich ging ins Kino" (SIMPLE PAST TENSE)

German uses the SIMPLE PAST TENSE most often when narrating a sequence of events (usually in written form, such as short stories or newspaper articles).

In normal conversation, German also uses SIMPLE PAST for the verbs sein, haben, werden, and the modal verbs. With most all other verbs, the PRESENT PERFECT TENSE is preferred.

Past Participles (Partizipien)

I. WEAK VERBS

In English and in German, some verbs are regular (these are called WEAK VERBS).

In English, the past participle of weak verbs is formed simply by adding the suffix **-ed** to the infinitive:

<u>Infinitive</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
to learn	(has) learned
to play	(has) played
to ask	(has) asked

In German, the past participle of weak verbs is formed by adding the prefix **ge-*** and the suffix **-t** (or **-et****) to the stem of the infinitive:

<u>Infinitive</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
lernen	(hat) gelernt
spielen	(hat) gespielt
fragen	(hat) gefragt
verhören	(hat) verhört
studieren	(hat) studiert
arbeiten	(hat) gearbeitet

* unless infinitive already has an unstressed prefix or ends in **-ieren**

** if stem of infinitive ends in **t** or **d**

II. IRREGULAR WEAK VERBS

In German, some verbs whose past participles end in "t" (as in all weak verbs) contain a change in their stem or stem vowel:

<u>Infinitive</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
denken	(hat) gedacht
bringen	(hat) gebracht
kennen	(hat) gekannt
brennen	(hat) gebrannt
nennen	(hat) genannt
senden	(hat) gesandt

Modal verbs are also irregular weak verbs. They lose their umlaut in the past participle:

<u>Infinitive</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
müssen	(hat) gemusst
können	(hat) gekonnt
dürfen	(hat) gedurft
mögen	(hat) gemocht
sollen	(hat) gesollt
wollen	(hat) gewollt

III. STRONG VERBS:

In English and in German, some verbs are irregular (these are called **STRONG VERBS**).

In English, the past participle of strong verbs is different from the infinitive: There is usually a vowel change, and there is no -ed ending.

<u>Infinitive</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
to drink	(has) drunk
to drive	(has) driven
to go	(has) gone
to leave	(has) left
to sing	(has) sung

In German, the past participle of strong verbs is formed by adding the prefix **ge-*** and the suffix **-en** to the stem of the infinitive. In addition, there is often a vowel change.

<u>Infinitive</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
trinken	(hat) getrunken
fahren	(ist) gefahren
gehen	(ist) gegangen
lassen	(hat) gelassen
verlassen	(hat) verlassen
singen	(hat) gesungen

* unless infinitive already has an unstressed prefix

Remember, there is no way to tell which verbs are weak and which are strong. You also cannot necessarily tell from the English, since some weak verbs in English are strong in German, and vice versa. You might do well to study lists of strong verbs (provided for you in this package), but remember: practice makes perfect!

Auxiliary Verbs Haben / Sein

1. All verbs which have a direct object will take **haben**. (These are called "**transitive**" verbs.)

<i>Transitive Verbs</i>
Ich habe <u>den Mann</u> gesehen .
Er hat <u>sich</u> amüsiert .
Sie hat <u>den Ball</u> getroffen .
Sie hat <u>ihren Freund</u> zum Bahnhof gefahren .
Er hat <u>das Flugzeug</u> selbst geflogen .

2. Verbs which do not take a direct object (these are called "**intransitive**" verbs) will also take **haben**, unless they show a change in position or condition. If they indicate a change in position or condition, these intransitive verbs will take **sein**.

<i>Intransitive Verbs showing no change in position or condition</i>
Das Auto hat an der Ecke gestanden .
Ich habe gut geschlafen .
Er hat stark geblutet .
Der Baum hat geblüht .
Du hast zu lange in der Sonne gelegen .

<i>Intransitive Verbs showing change in position or condition</i>
Ich bin nach San Francisco gefahren .
Er ist nach Hause gegangen .
Ich bin in der Klasse ingeschlafen .
Er ist fast verblutet .
Sie ist in die Armee eingetreten .
Wann bist du nach Hause gekommen ?
Er ist an Krebs gestorben .
Er ist vom Baum gefallen .
Sie ist sehr krank geworden .

3. The only two exceptions to the above rule are the intransitive verbs "**sein**" and "**bleiben**", which show no change in position or condition, but nevertheless take **sein**:

Sie ist in Afrika gewesen .
Ich bin zu Hause geblieben .