

German Phrases FOR **DUMMIES®**

**by Paulina Christensen, PhD,
and Anne Fox**



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

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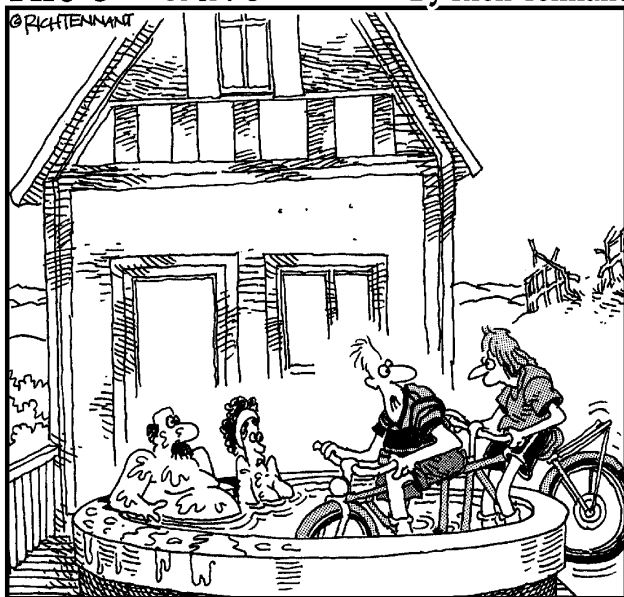
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The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"I'd ask for directions in German, but I don't know how to form a question into the shape of an apology."

Introduction

As society becomes more and more international in nature, knowing how to say at least a few words in other languages becomes more and more useful. Inexpensive airfares make travel abroad a more realistic option. Global business environments necessitate overseas travel. You may even have a few friends and neighbors who speak other languages. Or you may want to get in touch with your heritage by studying a little bit of the language that your ancestors spoke.

Whatever your reason for wanting to master some German, this book can help. We're not promising fluency, but if you need to greet someone, purchase a ticket, or order off a menu in German, you need look no further than *German Phrases For Dummies*.

About This Book

This book isn't a class that you have to drag yourself to twice a week for a specified period of time. You can use *German Phrases For Dummies* however you want to, whether your goal is to master some words and phrases to help you get around when you visit Germany (or any other German-speaking country), or you just want to be able to say "Hello, how are you?" to your German-speaking neighbor. Go through this book at your own pace, reading as much or as little at a time as you like. You don't have to trudge through the chapters in order, either; just read the sections that interest you.

Note: If you've never taken German before, you may want to read Chapters 1 and 2 before you tackle the later chapters. They give you some of the basics that you need to know about the language, such as how to pronounce the various sounds.

Conventions Used in This Book

To make this book easy for you to navigate, we've set up a couple of conventions:

- ✓ German terms are set in **boldface** to make them stand out.
- ✓ Pronunciations set in *italics* follow the German terms.
- ✓ Stressed syllables are underlined in the pronunciation.
- ✓ Memorizing key words and phrases is important in language learning, so we collect the important words in a chapter or section in a chalkboard with the heading "Words to Know." German nouns have genders, which determine which article it takes. In the Words to Know blackboards, we include the article for each noun so that you can memorize it at the same time as the noun.
- ✓ Verb conjugations (lists that show you the forms of a verb) are given in tables in this order: the "I" form, the "you" (singular, informal) form, the "you" (singular, formal) form, the "he/she/it" form, the "we" form, the "you" (plural, informal) form, the "you" (plural, formal) form, and the "they" form. Pronunciations follow in the second column. Here's an example:

Conjugation	Pronunciation
ich werde	îH <u>vehr</u> -de
du wirst	dû vîrst
Sie werden	zee <u>vehr</u> -dn
er, sie, es wird	ehr/zee/ês vîrt
wir werden	veer <u>vehr</u> -dn
ihr werdet	eer <u>vehr</u> -det
Sie werden	zee <u>vehr</u> -dn
sie werden	zee <u>vehr</u> -dn

Also note that, because each language has its own ways of expressing ideas, the English translations that we provide for the German terms may not be exactly literal. We want you to know the gist of what's being said, not just the words that are being said. For example, the phrase **Es geht** (*ês geht*) can be translated literally as "It goes," but the phrase really means "So, so." This book gives the "So, so" translation.

Foolish Assumptions

To write this book, we make some assumptions about who you are and what you want from a book called *German Phrases For Dummies*. Here are the assumptions that we make about you:

- ✓ You know no German — or if you took German back in school, you don't remember a word of it.
- ✓ You're not looking for a book that will make you fluent in German; you just want to know some words, phrases, and sentence constructions so that you can communicate basic information in German.
- ✓ You don't want to have to memorize long lists of vocabulary words or a bunch of boring grammar rules.
- ✓ You want to have fun and learn a little bit of German at the same time.

Icons Used in This Book

You may be looking for particular information while reading this book. To make certain types of information easier for you to find, we've placed the following icons in the left-hand margins throughout the book:



This icon highlights tips that can make learning German easier.



This icon points out interesting information that you don't want to forget.



Languages are full of quirks that may trip you up if you're not prepared for them. This icon points to discussions of these weird grammar rules.



If you're looking for information about German culture or travel, look for these icons. They draw your attention to interesting tidbits about the countries in which German is spoken.

Where to Go from Here

Learning a language is all about jumping in and giving it a try (no matter how bad your pronunciation is at first). So make the leap! Start at the beginning or pick a chapter that interests you. Before long, you'll be able to respond, "Ja!" when people ask, "Sprechen Sie Deutsch?"

Chapter 1

I Say It How? Speaking German

In This Chapter

- ▶ Recognizing the German you already know
 - ▶ Pronouncing the basics
 - ▶ Using popular expressions
-

The best way to learn a new language is total immersion — so in this chapter, you jump right into the German language. This chapter shows you the German you may already know, explains how to pronounce German, and introduces you to some popular German expressions.

The German You Know

Because both German and English belong to the group of Germanic languages, they have quite a few identical or similar words. These words are called *cognates*.

Friendly allies (perfect cognates)

The following words are spelled the same way and have the same meaning in German and English. The only differences are the pronunciation and the fact that in German, nouns are always capitalized:

- ✓ **der Arm** (*dehr ârm*)
- ✓ **der Bandit** (*dehr bân-deet*)
- ✓ **die Bank** (*dee bânk*)
- ✓ **die Basis** (*dee bah-zîs*)
- ✓ **blind** (*blînt*)
- ✓ **die Butter** (*dee bû-ter*)
- ✓ **elegant** (*êle-gânt*)
- ✓ **die Emotion** (*dee êmoh-tsîohn*)
- ✓ **emotional** (*êmoh-tsîoh-nahl*)
- ✓ **der Finger** (*dehr fîn-ger*)
- ✓ **die Garage** (*dee gâ-rah-je*)
- ✓ **die Hand** (*dee hânt*)
- ✓ **das Hotel** (*dâs hoh-têl*)
- ✓ **die Inspiration** (*dee înspee-râ-tsîohn*)
- ✓ **international** (*în-ter-nâtsîo-nahl*)
- ✓ **irrational** (*îrâ-tsîoh-nahl*)
- ✓ **der Kitsch** (*dehr kîtsch*)
- ✓ **modern** (*moh-dêrn*)
- ✓ **der Moment** (*dehr moh-mênt*)
- ✓ **das Museum** (*dâs mû-zeh-ûm*)
- ✓ **der Name** (*dehr nah-me*)
- ✓ **die Nation** (*dee nâts-îohn*)
- ✓ **die Olive** (*dee oh-lee-ve*)
- ✓ **die Orange** (*dee oh-rong-je*)
- ✓ **parallel** (*pârâ-lehl*)
- ✓ **das Photo** (*dâs foh-toh*)
- ✓ **das Problem** (*dâs prô-blehm*)
- ✓ **die Religion** (*dee rêlî-gîohn*)
- ✓ **das Restaurant** (*dâs rês-toh-rong*)
- ✓ **die Rose** (*dee roh-ze*)
- ✓ **der Service** (*dehr ser-vîs*)

- ✓ **das Signal** (*dās zīg-nahl*)
- ✓ **der Sport** (*dehr shpōrt*)
- ✓ **die Statue** (*dee shtah-tooe*)
- ✓ **das System** (*dās zuus-tehm*)
- ✓ **das Taxi** (*dās tā-xee*)
- ✓ **der Tiger** (*dehr tee-ger*)
- ✓ **der Tunnel** (*dehr tū-nel*)
- ✓ **wild** (*vîlt*)
- ✓ **der Wind** (*dehr vînt*)

Kissing cousins (near cognates)

Many words, like the ones in Table 1-1, are spelled almost the same in German as in English and have the same meaning.



Notice that the English “c” is a “k” in most German words.

**Table 1-1 Words Similar in Meaning,
Slightly Different in Spelling**

<i>German</i>	<i>English</i>
die Adresse (<i>dee ah-<u>drê</u>-sse</i>)	address
der Aspekt (<i>dehr âs-<u>pêkt</u></i>)	aspect
blond (<i>blônt</i>)	blond/blonde
die Bluse (<i>dee <u>bloo</u>-ze</i>)	blouse
die Demokratie (<i>dee dêmô-krah-<u>tee</u></i>)	democracy
direkt (<i>dî-<u>rêkt</u></i>)	direct
der Doktor (<i>dehr <u>dôk</u>-tohr</i>)	doctor
exzellent (<i>êxtse-<u>lênt</u></i>)	excellent

(continued)

Table 1-1 (continued)

<i>German</i>	<i>English</i>
fantastisch (<i>fân-tâs-tish</i>)	fantastic
das Glas (<i>dâs glahs</i>)	glass
der Kaffee (<i>dehr kâ-feh</i>)	coffee
die Komödie (<i>dee kô-muo-dee-e</i>)	comedy
die Kondition (<i>dee kôn-dî-tsiohn</i>)	condition
das Konzert (<i>dâs kôn-tsêrt</i>)	concert
die Kultur (<i>dee kûl-toor</i>)	culture
lang (<i>lâng</i>)	long
die Maschine (<i>dee mâ-shee-ne</i>)	machine
die Maus (<i>dee mows</i>)	mouse
die Methode (<i>dee mê-toh-de</i>)	method
die Musik (<i>dee mû-zeek</i>)	music
die Nationalität (<i>dee nât-sîo-nahl-î-tait</i>)	nationality
die Natur (<i>dee nâ-toor</i>)	nature
der Ozean (<i>dehr oh-tseh-ahn</i>)	ocean
das Papier (<i>dâs pâ-peer</i>)	paper
perfekt (<i>pêr-fêkt</i>)	perfect
potenziell (<i>pô-tên-tsiel</i>)	potential (adjective)
das Programm (<i>dâs proh-grâm</i>)	program
das Salz (<i>dâs zâlts</i>)	salt
der Scheck (<i>dehr shêk</i>)	check
der Supermarkt (<i>dehr zoo-pêr-mârt</i>)	supermarket
das Telefon (<i>dâs tê-le-fohn</i>)	telephone

German	English
die Theorie (dee teh-oh-ree)	theory
die Tragödie (dee trâ-guo-dee-e)	tragedy
die Walnuss (dee vahl-nûs)	walnut

False friends

As in every language, German contains some false friends — those words that look very similar to English words but often have a completely different meaning:

- ✓ **After** (*âf-ter*): If you want to avoid embarrassment, remember the meaning of this word. It means “anus” and not “after.” The German word for “after” is **nach** (*nahH*) or **nachdem** (*nahH-dehm*).
- ✓ **aktuell** (*âk-too-êl*): This word means “up-to-date” and “current,” not “actually.” The German translation for “actually” is **tatsächlich** (*taht-sêH-lîH*).
- ✓ **also** (*âl-zoh*): This one means “so, therefore” and not “also.” The German word for “also” is **auch** (*owH*).
- ✓ **bekommen** (*be-kô-men*): This verb is an important one to remember. It means “to get” and not “to become.” The German word for “to become” is **werden** (*veh-den*).
- ✓ **Bowle** (*boh-le*): This noun is a mixed drink of fruits and alcohol and not a “bowl,” which in German, is **Schüssel** (*shuu-sel*) (the one you put food into) or **Kugel** (*koo-gel*) (sports-type ball).
- ✓ **brav** (*brahf*): This word means “well behaved” and not “brave.” The German word for “brave” is **tapfer** (*tâp-fer*).
- ✓ **Brief** (*breef*): This word is a noun and means “letter” and not “brief.” The German translation for the adjective “brief” is **kurz** (*kûrts*), and, for

the noun, **Auftrag** (*owf-traHgk*) or **Unterlagen** (*ûn-ter-lah-gen*).

- ✓ **Chef** (*shêf*): This one is the guy you take orders from, your boss or principal, and not the guy who's in charge of the cooking. The German word for "chef" is **Küchenchef** (*kuu-Hên-shêf*) or **Chefkoch** (*shêf-kôH*).
- ✓ **eventuell** (*eh-vên-too-êl*): This one means "possibly" and not "eventually," which would be **schließlich** (*shlees-lîH*) in German.
- ✓ **genial** (*gê-nee-ahl*): This adjective describes an idea or person "of genius" and has nothing to do with "genial." The German word for "genial" is **heiter** (*hy-ter*).
- ✓ **Kind** (*kînt*): This one is the German word for "child" and has nothing to do with the English "kind," which would be **nett** (*nêt*) or **liebenswürdig** (*lee-bens-vuur-digk*) in German.
- ✓ **Komfort** (*kôm-fohr*): This word means "amenity" — describing something that is comfortable — and not "comfort." The German word for "comfort" is **Trost** (*trohst*).
- ✓ **Most** (*môst*): This German word means a young wine (or juice). The German word for the English "most" is **das meiste** (*dâs my-ste*). For example, you would say **die meisten Leute** (*die my-sten loy-te*) (most people).
- ✓ **ordinär** (*ôr-dî-nêr*): This word means "vulgar" rather than "ordinary." The German word for "ordinary" is **normal** (*nôr-mahl*) or **gewöhnlich** (*ge-vuohn-lîH*).
- ✓ **pathetisch** (*pâ-teh-tîsh*): This one means "overly emotional" and not "pathetic," which, in German, is **jämmerlich** (*yê-mer-lîH*) or **armselig** (*ârm-zeh-ligk*).
- ✓ **Provision** (*prô-vî-zîohn*): The meaning of this word is "commission" and not "provision." The German word for "provision" is **Vorsorge** (*fohr-zôr-ge*) or **Versorgung** (*fêr-zôr-gungk*).