

TRAVEL WORDS IN PICTURES



German

Visual Dictionary



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German

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German Visual Dictionary For Dummies®

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Introduction

This *Visual Dictionary For Dummies* is your ideal travel companion. It can be carried conveniently and consulted quickly; all you have to do is show the picture of the thing you're talking about or of the situation you wish to describe, and presto! And since the pictures are accompanied by the corresponding English words and their German translations, you will also be able to learn a lot of new vocabulary!

Sounds, rhythm and intonation

German and English have a lot in common, including a common history. Both are *Indo-European* languages, meaning both made their way from the Indian subcontinent to Central Europe and beyond. (If you've ever wondered where the Saxon part of *Anglo-Saxon* came from, the Saxons were a Germanic tribe that made the move from Central Europe to the British Isles around the 5th Century A.D.) This common history means we share some vocabulary in common, and it also means that pronouncing German (for the most part) should be a breeze for English speakers.

The sounds: the vowels

Simple vowels

The vowels are divided into two groups: the so-called long or tense vowels and the so-called short or lax vowels.

- **kann (short a):** The German sound in **kann** is the sound you get if you go midway between **can** and **con**. If you are ever lucky enough to go to the Cannes Film Festival in France, you'll soon discover that the

short “a” in **Cannes** sounds just like the German short “a.”

- **Vater (long a):** The long “a” in German matches the short “a” in English, so **Vater** and **father** rhyme.
- **denn (short e):** To get the short German “e” sound, just think of the “e” sound in **when**.
- **eben (long e):** The German “e” sound in **eben** matches the sound we have for the “a” in **gate**.
- **im (short i):** The German sound **im** sounds exactly like the English sound in **sit**.
- **Igel (long i):** Think **eagle** when you want to say a long German “i” sound.
- **oft (short o):** The German sound **oft** is a good match for the short “o” sound in the English word **dog**.
- **Opa (long o):** Think **open** when you want to get the long German “o” sound. (Or just imagine you are in a Greek restaurant when they bring out the flaming cheese and you yell out **Opa!**)
- **um (short u):** The short “u” sound in German matches the vowel sound we have in the English word **wood**.
- **gut (long u):** The long “u” sound in German matches the vowel sound we have in the English word **boot**.

The “far from silent” e

Vase: Just keep in mind that there is no such thing as a silent “e” in German. If the “e” is there, you have to say it. That means **Vase** is a two-syllable word, with a long “a” in the first syllable and an *unaccented schwa* sound in the second syllable. (“Unaccented” here just means that you don’t emphasize that syllable at all; the “schwa” sound is, believe it or not, the most common vowel sound in the English language.) For the second syllable (the schwa

syllable), think of the sound in the word **uh** — that word we say when we are trying to think of a word — or the last syllable in a word like **banana**.

Umlauts

Here's where we venture into what might seem like strange territory: those two dots — known officially as umlauts — you see on vowels in the names of heavy metal bands and potent German alcoholic drinks. First and foremost, not all vowels can get the two dots — it's reserved for just “a's,” “o's,” and “u's.” (That means if someone is putting the dots over an “i” and telling you it's a German word, they are pulling your leg.)

- **nächste (long ä):** The long “ä” in German has the sound of the “a” in the English word **hay**.
- **fällen (short ä):** The short “ä” in German has the sound of the “e” in the English word **bet**. Keep the sound short and clipped.
- **schön:** The “o” umlaut is close to the “er” sound in the English word **her**. Just don't stress the “r” sound. (So “schön” sounds very much like the made-up English word **shern** if you don't call too much attention to the “r.”)
- **Tür:** The “u” umlaut sounds very much like the “u” in the English word **lure**. In fact, **Tür** and **lure** are a very good rhyme.

Diphthongs

As their name suggests, diphthongs are composed of two vowel sounds. German, like English, has a number of diphthongs — the words **Stein** and **Augen** come immediately to mind. As in English, the first vowel in German is strongly accented and slides into the second vowel. If you pay attention to how your mouth moves, you'll

notice that it starts in one position and ends up in another when pronouncing a diphthong.

- **Stein/Mais/Bayern:** All three spellings sound like the “y” in the English word **cry**.
- **Laut:** The German “au” diphthong sounds like the “ou” in the English word **loud**.
- **Häuser/Leute:** Both spellings here sound like the “oy” sound in the English word **boy**.

In American English, there's no hard and fast rule about how to pronounce “ei” versus “ie.” Just think of the famous American composer Leonard Bernstein. Half his audience called him “Leonard Bernsteen” and the other half call him “Leonard Bernstine.” In German, the “ie” sound is always the “e” sound in **see** and the “ei” sound is always the sound of **aye**, as in **aye, aye, captain**. Just remember that “ie” ends with an “e,” so you have to say “e,” whereas “ei” ends with an “i,” so you have to say “i.”

The sounds: the consonants

Most German consonants match the sound of English consonants exactly, but you'll need to pay particular attention to some that are tricky for English speakers to pronounce.

- **“th”:** Most of the time, Germans don't like the idea of silent letters. There's no such thing as a silent “e,” for example, and they are completely thrown off by English words like **weight** and **doubt**. The rule is usually “if you see it, say it.” The one exception is the “th” sound. Here, the “h” is silent. That means a word like **Theater** starts with the same “t” sound you would hear in the English word **table**.

- **“kn”**: Continuing with the theme of “if you see it, say it,” Germans always pronounce the “k” sound in the combination “kn.” That means that although the English word **knee** is pronounced “nee,” the German word **Knie** is pronounced “kuh-nee,” said very quickly.
- **“ps”**: One final “if you see it, say it” example is the “ps” sound. Germans insist that you sneak in a “p” sound before the “s.” That means the English word **psychology** (pronounced “sigh-cology”) is quite different from the German word **Psychologie**, which is more like “psssuuu-cology.” (The English word “psssst!!” is the closest we have to this German sound.)
- **“b”**: When a German “b” is at the beginning or middle of the word, it matches the English “b” sound. When it ends a word or comes before an “s,” however, it has the English “p” sound. That means **Dieb** sounds exactly like **deep** and **lebst** rhymes with the English word **cape** with an “st” added at the end.
- **“d”**: When a German “d” is at the beginning or middle of a word, it matches the English “d” sound. When it ends a word or is used in combination with an “s” (**Bands**) or “t” (**Stadt**), it has the “t” sound. That means the German word **Tod** sounds like the English word **tote**, as in a **tote bag**.
- **“g”**: When a German “g” is used at the beginning or middle of a word, it always has the soft “g” sound of the English word **gone** and never the hard “g” sound of the word “giraffe.” When used at the end of the word, it has a “k” sound. That means **Tag** sounds more like the **tock** in **tick tock**.
- **“ch”**: When used at the beginning of a word, the German “ch” matches the “ch” used in an English word like **character** — in other words, it sounds like a

“k.” When used in the middle of a word and preceded by a, o, u, or au (**Bücher**), it sounds more like the “sh” heard in the English word “cashier.” Finally, when used at the end of a word, it has the sound the Scots would use to speak of the **Loch Ness Monster**.

- **“r”**: When used at the beginning of a word, Germans “roll their r’s,” which is something English speakers rarely do. The closest we come is when we try to imitate a dog by saying **rrrrruuuufff rrrrrruuuufff!** That means the “r” in the German word “rot” is more like the “r” in **rrrrrrrrro rrrrrrrro rrrrrrrrosey, goodbye.**
- **“v”**: The German “v,” when used at the beginning of a word, sounds exactly like the English “f.” That means **viel** sounds like the English word **feel**. When “v” is in the middle or at the end of a word, it sounds like what you’d expect a “v” to sound like. That means **privat** sounds like **private** as far as the “v” is concerned.
- **“w”**: The German “w” sounds exactly like the English “v” no matter where the “w” shows up. That means a phrase like **wie viel** (which means “how much?”) sounds like “vee feel” in English.
- **“z”**: The German “z” sounds more like a “ts,” which is a rare sound in English at the beginning of a word — except for exotic creatures like **tsetse flies**. It is a common sound in the middle of English words, however. In fact, if you can say **pizza**, you can say the German “z.”

Unterwegs!

Let's go!



Das Flugzeug

The airplane



der Flughafen
the airport



das Flugzeug
the airplane



die Fluggesellschaft
the airline



der Schalter
the ticket counter



das Gepäck
the baggage



das Handgepäck
the carry-on luggage



die Reisetasche
the travel bag



der Koffer
the suitcase



der Gepäckwagen
the luggage cart



die Flüssigkeiten
the liquids



das Sicherheitsportal
the security gate



der Personalausweis
the identification card



**der Reisepass/
der Pass**
the passport



die Reiseabfertigung
the check-in



der Zoll
customs



das Flugticket
the plane ticket



das Rückflugticket
the return flight ticket



der Flugsteig
the airport gate



die Bordkarte
the boarding pass



das Einchecken
the boarding



der Notausgang
the emergency exit



der Flugkapitän
the flight captain



der Flug
the flight



am Fenster
at the window