

The Present Perfect Tense in German
aka, das Perfekt, the conversational past

The primary manner in which German-speakers relate events that occurred in the past, when speaking with one another.

das Perfekt is a **compound tense**, meaning, there are two parts to the **predicate**:

1. das Hilfsverb – haben OR sein, conjugated with the subject in the present tense.
2. das Partizip Perfekt (the past participle) – always goes at the **end of the German sentence**.

Two Classes of Verbs in German:

Regular / Weak verbs in German

form their past participles simply:

ge + stem
of the verb + **t**

Of course, there are exceptions:

All verbs with **inseparable prefixes** NEVER have the

the ge- prefix. We know only one inseparable prefix, be-. There are others, like ent-, er-, ver-.

Beispiel:

besuchen – Ich habe gestern meine Oma **besucht**.

Verbs ending with -ieren NEVER have the ge- prefix in their past participles:

Beispiele:

Hast du am Wochenende im Park **fotografiert**?

Ihr habt gegen den Krieg in Irak **demonstriert**.

ALMOST ALL German verbs have **haben** as their helping verb. Exceptions in the **weak/regular verb class**:

I. wandern – *to wander, to hike*

Ich **bin** in die Alpen **gewandert**.

II. reisen – *to travel*

Er **ist** letzten Sommer in die Schweiz **gereist**.

Here are some regular verbs you have learned/seen thus far:

basteln - to do crafts
brauchen - to need
dauern - to last, take
decken - to set (table)
glauben - to believe

hoffen - to hope
holen - to get, fetch
hören - to hear
jubeln - to cheer
kaufen - to buy

kosten - to cost
lächeln - to smile
lernen - to learn
machen - to do, make
mähen - to mow

meinen - to mean
passen - to fit
regnen - to rain
reisen - to travel
sagen - to say
sammeln - to collect
schaffen - to manage, make (it)
schenken - to give (a gift)

schicken - to send
schmecken - to taste
schneien - to snow
schwenken - to swing
spielen - to play
spülen - to wash, rinse
staunen - to be astonished
stimmen - to be correct

üben - to practice
wandern - to hike
warten - to wait
wohnen - to live
wünschen - to wish

Irregular / Strong Verbs

Don't form their past participles in the same manner as the weak verbs. These participles

1. almost always end in an -en
2. follow no regular pattern – must be memorized.

Here are some familiar verbs and their past participles:

essen – Ich habe Pizza **gegessen**.

beginnen - Das Konzert hat um 6 Uhr **begonnen**.

gehen – Du **bist** zu Monika **gegangen**.

geben – Ich habe ihr eine CD **gegeben**.

bleiben – Er **ist** zu Hause **geblieben**.

finden - Ich habe den Film schlecht **gefunden**.

einladen – Wir haben unsre Freunde **eingeladen**.

helfen – Sie hat der Lehrerin **geholfen**.

lesen – Ich habe gestern ein Buch **gelesen**.