

1 Glossary of grammatical terms

■ **active** (see voice)

■ **adjective**

An adjective is a word which describes a noun.

*It is a **big** house.*

*The garden is **big**, too.*

*It is **bigger** than our old one.*

In English, the form of the adjective only changes for the comparative (*bigger*) and for the superlative (*biggest*).

In German, adjectives which immediately precede a noun change to agree with the gender, number and case of the noun they describe.

■ **adverb**

An adverb is a word which adds information about a verb, an adjective or another adverb.

*She spoke **slowly**, but **very clearly**.*

*That's **rather** nice.*

■ **agreement**

In German, the form of an adjective (preceding a noun), an article or a pronoun has to 'agree' with the gender, number and (usually) case of the noun or pronoun it accompanies or replaces.

■ **article**

There are two types of article in English and German: definite (*the*) and indefinite (*a, an*). However, in German the form of both definite and indefinite articles changes to agree in gender, case and number with the noun to which they refer.

■ **auxiliary verb**

An auxiliary verb is used together with another verb when forming compound tenses.

*I **have** failed the examination. I **shall** go to Germany.*

The German auxiliary verbs are **haben, sein** and **werden**.

■ **case**

The case of a noun or pronoun indicates its function in the sentence or clause. German has four cases: nominative (for the subject), accusative and dative (for objects and after prepositions) and genitive (expressing possession, for objects and after prepositions).

*Der Zug kam **pünktlich**.* (nominative: subject)

*Wir nehmen **den Zug** um 8.15 Uhr.* (accusative: direct object)

*Im (In dem) Zug gab es **keinen Speisewagen**.* (dative: after preposition)

■ **clause**

A clause is a group of words which includes a subject and a verb. It may or may not constitute a complete sentence.

I am leaving. (one clause – one sentence)

I am leaving when I've finished. (two clauses – one sentence)

■ **comparative** (see adjective)

■ **conjugation/conjugate**

A conjugation is the pattern of a verb's forms. For example, the regular verb *to talk* is conjugated as follows: infinitive *to talk*, present tense *I talk, he/she talks*, past *I talked*, perfect *I have talked*, etc.

■ **conjunction**

A conjunction is a word which links single words, phrases or clauses, such as *and, or, but, though, because*.

■ **declension/decline**

A declension is the set of endings added to German nouns, articles, pronouns and adjectives to indicate their gender, case and number. For example, the noun *das Buch* is declined as follows: nominative/accusative singular *das Buch*, genitive singular *des Buch(es)*,