



### learning target

You have probably noticed that I added certain endings to the adjectives in the messages I sent you. Today I want to make clear when you have to use which ending.

German	English
Sie hat eine <b>nette</b> Schwester.	She's got a <b>nice</b> sister.
Deutsches <b>Brot</b> schmeckt sehr gut.	<b>German</b> bread tastes very well.
Ich sehe den <b>neuen</b> Professor.	I see the <b>new</b> professor.

### rules

#### How do you find out which ending you have to use?

All you have to do is to answer these 4 questions and to look for the right ending in the table.

- What kind of **article** has the noun? (definite | indefinite | none)
- Which **gender** has the noun? (male | female | neutral)
- What's the **numerus** of the noun? (singular | plural)
- In which **case** is the noun? (nominative | genitive | dative | accusative)

#### example 1:

**Die große Frau trägt einen Hut.** (The tall woman is wearing a hat.)

Let's analyse the sentence. The noun we analyse is "Frau". The adjective which describes the woman is "groß".

- What kind of article has got the noun "Frau"? => **Die** => The noun has a definite article.
- What gender has the noun "Frau"? => The gender of "Frau" is female.
- Which numerus has the noun "Frau"? => It is just one woman. So, it's singular.
- In which case is the noun "Frau"? => The woman is the subject of the sentence. She is doing something. So, "Frau" is in the nominative case.

Now let's have a look at the table for definite articles. Look for singular, female, nominative.

The ending is "e". So, it must be "die große Frau".



example 2:

**Ein netter Mann sitzt im Cafe.** (A nice man is sitting in the cafe.)

- article: ein (indefinite article)
- gender: male
- numerus: singular
- case: nominative case

If you look for indefinite article, singular, male, nominative you'll find the ending "er".  
So it must be "ein **netter** Mann".

example 3:

**Ich schreibe einen langen Brief.** (I write a long letter.)

The noun we have to consider is here "Brief". The adjective which describes the letter is "lang".

- article: einen (indefinite article)
- gender: Brief is male
- numerus: singular
- case: "Ich" is the subject of the sentence. "Ich" is in the nominative case.  
"Brief" is the direct object of the sentence. "Brief" is in the accusative case.

If you look for indefinite article, singular, male, accusative you'll find the ending "en".  
So it must be "einen **langen** Brief".

**A way to cheat**

If you are unsure which gender or case is required you can often recognize it with the help of the the article which precedes the adjective.

examples:

- Er kauft das neue **Handy**. => The article "das" shows that Handy is neutral.
- Ich mag den roten **Hut** nicht. => The article "den" shows that the Hut is male and in the accusative case.  
The same trick works with "einen, keinen, meinen..." (all articles, pronouns, der-words which end with "en").
- Sie spielt mit dem kleinen **Kind**. => The article "dem" shows that the Kind is in the dative case.  
The same trick works with "einem, keinem, meinem..." (all articles, pronouns, der-words which end with "em").



**Other words which have the same function like articles**

Besides the "normal" articles there are some words which have the same function like "normal" articles. They require you to put the correct ending at the end of the adjective as well.

All words which "work" like a definite article

German	English
der, die, das, den, dem	the
dieser, diese, dieses, diesen, diesem	this / these
jener, jene, jenes, jenen, jenem	that / those
jeder, jede, jedes, jeden, jedem	every / each
solcher, solche, solches, solchen, solchem	such
welcher, welche, welches, welchen, welchem	which
mancher, manche, manches, manchen, manchem	some
alle, beide	all / both

All words which "work" like an indefinite article

German	English
ein, eine, einen, einem, einer	a / an
kein, keine, keinen, keinem, keiner	no / none
mein, dein, sein, ihr, unser, euer, Ihr	my / your / his / her / our / your / Your



tables

**declension of adjectives without article**

case	singular			plural
	male	female	neuter	-
nominative	guter Mann	gute Frau	gutes Kind	gute Familien
genitive	guten Mannes	guter Frau	guten Kindes	guter Familien
dative	gutem Mann	guter Frau	gutem Kind	guten Familien
accusative	guten Mann	gute Frau	gutes Kind	gute Familien

**declension of adjectives with definite article (der, die, das)**

case	singular			plural
	male	female	neuter	-
nominative	der gute Mann	die gute Frau	das gute Kind	die guten Familien
genitive	des guten Mannes	der guten Frau	des guten Kindes	der guten Familien
dative	dem guten Mann	der guten Frau	dem guten Kind	den guten Familien
accusative	den guten Mann	die gute Frau	das gute Kind	die guten Familien

**declension of adjectives with indefinite article (ein)**

case	Singular			Plural
	male	female	neuter	-
nominative	ein guter Mann	eine gute Frau	ein gutes Kind	keine guten Kinder *
genitive	eines guten Mannes	einer guten Frau	eines guten Kindes	keiner guten Kinder *
dative	einem guten Mann	einer guten Frau	einem guten Kind	keinen guten Kindern *
accusative	einen guten Mann	eine gute Frau	ein gutes Kind	keine guten Kinder *

\* *kein* und *ein* behave the same. A plural form of "ein" doesn't exist. That's why I replaced it here by "kein".

As you already noticed not just the article changes. Some nouns get an additional ending as well. For more details check the topic „**Deklination der Substantive**“.