



learning target

Aim of this section is to learn the correct use of ob and wenn.

German	English
Weißt du, ob er uns bald besucht? Wenn du Lust hast, kannst du raus gehen. Du wirst Arbeit finden, wenn du gut Deutsch sprichst.	Do you know if he is going to visit us soon? If you feel like doing you can go outside. You will find a job if you speak German well.

rules

There are 2 words in German to express the English word **if**.

wenn

- **Wenn** is used in **conditional sentences**.

The translation which describes "wenn" best is: **if / in case**.

examples

- **Wenn** er nicht bald kommt, gehen wir ohne ihn aus. (If he won't come soon will we go out without him.)
- **Wenn** es morgen regnet, bleiben wir zu Hause. (If it's raining tomorrow we will stay at home.)
- Du kannst deine Freunde mitbringen, **wenn** du möchtest. (You can bring along your friends if you want.)
- Ich mache eine große Reise, **wenn** ich im Lotto gewinne. (I'm going to do a long journey if I hit the lottery jackpot.)

ob

- **Ob** is also used in **conditional sentences**.
- **Ob** is only used in questions / indirect "questions" with **yes/no answer**.
- **Ob** usually occurs only in the **2nd sentence**.

The translation which describes "ob" best is: **whether**.



examples:

- Weißt du, **ob** Julia krank ist? (Do you know if / whether Julia is ill?)
- Kannst du mir sagen, **ob** wir Hausaufgaben haben? (Can you tell me if / whether we have homework?)
- Er ist nicht sicher, **ob** er die Prüfung bestehen wird. (He is not sure if / whether he will pass the exam.)
- Ich möchte wissen, **ob** Sie das Auto schon repariert haben. (I'd like to know if / whether you've repaired the car already.)
- Ich weiß nicht, **ob** meine Eltern kommen. (I don't know if / whether my parents are coming.)

As you can see indirect "questions" are in fact statements!

Actually, they are the answer to a question with a yes/no answer.

- *question*: Weißt du, **ob** deine Eltern kommen? (Do you know if / whether your parents are coming?)
- *answer*: Ich weiß nicht, **ob** meine Eltern kommen. (I don't know if / whether my parents are coming.)

Besides the meaning of "if" **wenn** has a second meaning (=when).

For further information check the topic "*als, wann und wenn*".