



learning target

Aim of this section is to learn the meaning and use of wo- / da compounds.

German	English
Ich freue mich darauf .	I'm looking forward to it.
Er träumt davon .	He dreams about it.
Worüber denkst du nach?	What are you thinking about?

rules

Wo- / da compounds require some explanation because they don't exist in English. In German, however, they play quite an important role and are often used.

Da compounds

Several months ago we spoke about pronouns (ich, du, er, sie, es...). Pronouns can be used to avoid repetitions and make sentences shorter:

example:

1. **Cathy, Joy and Kristine** sind Freunde. **Cathy, Joy and Kristine** gehen oft zusammen ins Kino.
 (Cathy, Joy and Kristine are friends. Cathy, Joy and Kristine often go together to the cinema.)
2. **Cathy, Joy and Kristine** sind Freunde. **Sie** gehen oft zusammen ins Kino.
 (Cathy, Joy and Kristine are friends. They often go together to the cinema.)

In the first example I used twice "Cathy, Joy and Kristine". It sounds strange and makes the sentence unnecessary long. In the second example I replaced the name of the three girls by "sie" (they). You know who I mean with "sie" because I used the names in the sentence before already.

Da compounds have exactly the same purpose but they don't replace a person. They replace a "dead thing". To be exact: da compounds replace the object which follows a preposition.

example 1:

1. Ich kann **den Schlüssel** nicht finden. Ich suche *nach* **dem Schlüssel**.
 (I can't find the key. I'm looking for the key.)
2. Ich kann **den Schlüssel** nicht finden. Ich suche **danach**.
 (I can't find the key. I'm looking for it.)

Because I don't want to write again "Schlüssel" I replace it by "danach". "Danach" consists of the word "da" and the preposition "nach" which belongs to the verb "suchen" (to look for = suchen nach).



example 2:

1. Ich vermisse **unsere gemeinsame Zeit**. Ich träume oft *von* **unserer gemeinsamen Zeit**.
(I miss our common time. I often dream about our common time.)
2. Ich vermisse **unsere gemeinsame Zeit**. Ich träume oft **davon**.
(I miss our common time. I often dream about it.)

Because I don't want to write again "unsere gemeinsame Zeit" I replace it by "davon".

"Davon" consists of the word "da" and the preposition "vor" which belongs to the verb "träumen" (to dream about = träumen von).

We can summarize so far:

- "Da compounds" have the same function as pronouns but they just replace "dead things" if the "dead thing" follows a preposition.
- They always consists of "da" and "preposition" which belongs to the verb.
- If you want to translate a "da compound" into English split up the preposition and translate the "da" into "it". It's not completely correct but helps to understand the meaning for now.

example 3:

1. **Liebe** ist ein schönes Thema. Wir sprechen oft *über* **Liebe**.
(Love is a nice topic. We often speak about love.)
2. **Liebe** ist ein schönes Thema. Wir sprechen oft **darüber**.
(Love is a nice topic. We often speak about it.)

In this example the "da compound" consists of "da" + "r" + "preposition".

There is one additional rule we have to consider:

If the preposition starts with a vowel (a,e,u,o,) or an umlaut (ä,ü,ö) you have to put a "r" between "da" and the "preposition": **da + r + preposition**



Wo compounds

"Wo compounds" have the same function as "da compounds". They also replace the "dead thing" following the preposition.

The difference is: "da compounds" are used in statements and "wo compounds" are used in questions.

example 1:

- question: **Wonach** suchst du? answer: Ich suche *nach* **dem Schlüssel**.
 (What are you looking for? -> I'm looking for the key.)

As you can see the example the "wo compound" is a kind of question word which consists of "wo" and "preposition" which belongs to the verb (to look for = suchen nach).

If you try to translate a "wo compound" don't translate the "wo" into "where" because here it has actually the meaning of "what".

example 2:

- question: **Wovon** träumst du? answer: Ich träume *von* **unserer gemeinsamen Zeit**.
 (What are you dreaming about? -> I'm dreaming about our common time.)

If the preposition starts with a vowel or an umlaut put a "r" between the "wo" and the "preposition".

example 3:

- question: **Woüber** sprechen sie? answer: Sie sprechen *über* **Liebe**.
 (What are they talking about? -> They are talking about love.)

Wo - Da compounds vs. personal pronouns

I noticed that you still struggle to decide whether you have to use a wo - da compound or a personal pronoun. The following overview might help you:

	dead things	alive things (people)
statements	da compound da + (r) + preposition	preposition + pronoun
questions	wo compound wo + (r) + preposition	preposition + question word



statements

example 1:

- Ich freue mich **auf** das Wochenende (=dead thing).
(I'm looking forward to the weekend.)

↳ Ich freue mich **darauf**.

- Ich freue mich **auf** meine Frau (=alive thing).
(I'm looking forward to my wife.)

↳ Ich freue mich **auf sie**.

example 2:

- Ich denke **an** den Urlaub (=dead thing).
(I'm thinking about the holiday.)

↳ Ich denke **daran**.

- Ich denke **an** meinen Vater (=alive thing).
(I'm thinking about my father.)

↳ Ich denke **an ihn**.

questions

example 1:

- Ich ärgere mich **über** die Arbeit (=dead thing).
(I'm angry about the work.)

↳ **Worüber** ärgerst du dich?

- Ich ärgere mich **über** meinen Chef (=alive thing).
(I'm angry about my boss.)

↳ **Über wen** ärgerst du dich?

example 2:

- Ich träume oft **von** einem eigenen Haus (=dead thing).
(I often dream about an own house.)

↳ **Wovon** träumst du?

- Ich träume **von** meinem Bruder (=alive thing).
(I often dream about my brother.)

↳ **Von wem** träumst du?