German articles by case

A compact chart for nominative, accusative and dative.

YOUR GOAL Choose a definite article from the noun's gender, number and role.

NOM. / ACC.

The subject uses nominative. With sehen, the person or thing seen uses accusative.

Der Hund schläft.

The dog is sleeping.

Ich sehe den Hund.

I see the dog.

Ich sehe die Katze.

I see the cat.

DATIVE

Learn the case with the verb. Helfen takes dative.

Ich helfe dem Mann.

I help the man.

Ich helfe der Frau.

I help the woman.

Ich helfe den Kindern.

I help the children.

Definite articles: three everyday cases

Case	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	der	die	das	die
Accusative	den	die	das	die
Dative	dem	der	dem	den

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Make the pattern yours.

Use the meaning and the model forms. Then check each answer.

The role can change

Der Mann sieht den Hund.
The man sees the dog.

Der Hund sieht den Mann.
The dog sees the man.

Der becomes den in masculine singular accusative.

Dative plural

die Kinder
the children (nominative)

mit den Kindern
with the children (dative)

The article is den. Many plural nouns also add -n: Kinder becomes Kindern.

Your turn: eight questions

Fill each gap using the forms in this guide. Use the meaning as your clue.

01 _____ Hund schläft. (masc.)
The dog is sleeping.

02 Ich sehe _____ Hund. (masc.)
I see the dog.

03 Ich helfe _____ Mann. (masc.)
I help the man.

04 Ich sehe _____ Katze. (fem.)
I see the cat.

05 Ich helfe _____ Frau. (fem.)
I help the woman.

06 _____ Kind spielt. (neut.)
The child is playing.

07 Ich helfe _____ Kind. (neut.)
I help the child.

08 Ich helfe _____ Kindern. (plural)
I help the children.

Check your answers

1. Der (The masculine subject uses der.)
2. den (Sehen takes accusative; masculine den.)
3. dem (Helfen takes dative; masculine dem.)
4. die (Feminine accusative stays die.)
5. der (Feminine dative uses der.)
6. Das (The neuter subject uses das.)
7. dem (Neuter dative uses dem.)
8. den (Dative plural uses den.)

MAKE IT YOURS Write two examples about your day. Read them aloud and explain your choices.

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