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GERMAN LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 · Chapter 3 · Numbers, Age & Contact Details

German Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 3 · Numbers, Age & Contact Details

123 Numbers, Age & Contact Details — Zahlen, Alter und Kontaktdaten

This chapter has three short parts so the numbers stay manageable: **Part 1** counts from 0 to 20; **Part 2** builds the tens and lets you say your age; **Part 3** uses them to give a phone number and an email address. Take Part 1 first and only move on once it feels comfortable — you can stop after any part and come back.

Part 1 · Numbers 0–20 — Die Zahlen von null bis zwanzig

Say each one aloud as you read it. The grey line under each number shows how to say it.

0 null
nool

1 eins
ines

2 zwei
tsvy

3 drei
dry

4 vier
feer

5 fünf
fünf (ü as in Ch. 1)

6 sechs
zeks

7 sieben
ZEE-ben

8 acht
akht

9 neun
noyn

10 zehn
tsayn

11 elf
elf

12 zwölf
tsvurlf

13 dreizehn
DRY-tsayn

14 vierzehn
FEER-tsayn

15 fünfzehn
FÜNF-tsayn

16 sechzehn
ZEKH-tsayn

17 siebzehn
ZEEP-tsayn

18 achtzehn
AKHT-tsayn

19 neunzehn
NOYN-tsayn

20 zwanzig
TSVAHN-tsikh

Number Patterns to Notice

From 13 to 19 the pattern is *number + zehn* ("-teen"): *dreizehn*, *vierzehn*. Two spellings change slightly: *sechs* becomes *sechzehn* (the *s* drops) and *sieben* becomes *siebzehn* (the *-en* drops). *Eins*

also loses its s when it joins another number, as you'll see in Part 2. Finally, *zwei* and *drei* sound alike on a bad phone line, so on the phone Germans often say **zwo** (tsvoh) for 2. You'll hear it and can use it too.

① Counting Together — Zählen wir!

A:

Zählen wir bis zehn!

TSAY-len veer biss TSAYN

Let's count to ten!

B:

Eins, zwei, drei, vier, fünf, sechs,
sieben, acht, neun, zehn!

*ines, tsvy, dry, feer, fünf, zeks, ZEE-ben, akht,
noyn, tsayn*

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight,
nine, ten!

A:

Super!

ZOO-per

Great!

② Which Number? — Welche Nummer?

A:

Welche Nummer ist das?

VEL-khuh NOO-mer ist DAHS

Which number is that?

B:

Das ist die Nummer zwölf.

dahs ist dee NOO-mer TSVURLF

That's number twelve.

A:

Wie bitte? Noch einmal, bitte.

vee BIT-tuh? nokh INE-mahl, BIT-tuh

Pardon? Once more, please.

B:

Zwölf. Eins, zwei — zwölf.

TSVURLF. ines, tsvy — TSVURLF

Twelve. One, two — twelve.

Part 2 · The Tens & Your Age — Die Zehner und das Alter

Now go beyond 20 and say how old you are.

20 zwanzig
TSVAHN-tsikh

30 dreißig
DRY-sikh

40 vierzig
FEER-tsikh

50 fünfzig
FÜNF-tsikh

60 sechzig
ZEKH-tsikh

70 siebzig
ZEEP-tsikh

80 achtzig
AKHT-tsikh

90 neunzig
NOYN-tsikh

100 hundert

Numbers 21–99 — the "backwards" system

In German you say the ones first, then und ("and"), then the tens — all as one word. So 25 is literally "five-and-twenty".

NUMBER	GERMAN	SAY IT	HOW IT'S BUILT
21	einundzwanzig	INE-oont-tsvahn-tsikh	ein + und + zwanzig (eins loses its s)
25	fünfundzwanzig	FÜNF-oont-tsvahn-tsikh	five-and-twenty
32	zweiunddreißig	TSVY-oont-dry-sikh	two-and-thirty
47	siebenundvierzig	ZEE-ben-oont-feer-tsikh	seven-and-forty
68	achtundsechzig	AKHT-oont-zekh-tsikh	eight-and-sixty
99	neunundneunzig	NOYN-oont-noyn-tsikh	nine-and-ninety

TALKING ABOUT AGE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
Wie alt bist du?	vee AHLT bist DOO	How old are you? (informal)
Wie alt sind Sie?	vee AHLT zint ZEE	How old are you? (formal)
Ich bin fünfundzwanzig Jahre alt.	ikh bin FÜNF-oont-tsvahn-tsikh YAH-ruh AHLT	I am 25 years old.
Ich bin dreißig.	ikh bin DRY-sikh	I'm 30. (Jahre alt can be dropped)

③ Asking a Friend's Age — Wie alt bist du?

A:

Wie alt bist du?

vee AHLT bist DOO

How old are you?

B:

④ A Registration Form (formal) — Wie alt sind Sie?

A:

Wie alt sind Sie, bitte?

vee AHLT zint ZEE, BIT-tuh

How old are you, please?

Ich bin zwanzig. Und du?

ikh bin TSVAHN-tsikh. oont DOO

I'm twenty. And you?

A:

Ich bin einundzwanzig.

ikh bin INE-oont-tsvahn-tsikh

I'm twenty-one.

B:

Ich bin dreiundvierzig Jahre alt.

ikh bin DRY-oont-feer-tsikh YAH-ruh AHLT

I am forty-three years old.

A:

Danke schön.

DAH-kuh SHURN

Thank you very much.

Real German Tip — Asking Someone's Age

Among young people and on forms, asking "Wie alt bist du?" is completely normal. With an adult you've just met, however, Germans usually don't ask — as in many countries, it can feel a bit personal. Use the question with friends, children and on official forms, and let people volunteer their age otherwise.

Part 3 · Phone Numbers & Email — Telefonnummer und E-Mail-Adresse

Now put the numbers and the spelling from Chapter 2 to work: exchanging contact details.

GERMAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH
Wie ist deine Telefonnummer?	<i>vee ist DY-nuh tay-lay-FOHN-noo-mer</i>	What's your phone number? (informal)
Wie ist Ihre Telefonnummer?	<i>vee ist EE-ruh tay-lay-FOHN-noo-mer</i>	What's your phone number? (formal)
Meine Nummer ist ...	<i>MY-nuh NOO-mer ist</i>	My number is ...
Wie ist Ihre E-Mail-Adresse?	<i>vee ist EE-ruh EE-mayl-ah-DRES-uh</i>	What's your email address? (formal)

How Germans Read Out a Phone Number

Phone numbers are read digit by digit, usually in small groups, with a pause between groups. A German landline or mobile starts with a 0 (*null*), and the international code is *plus vier neun* (+49). Example: 0123 4567 890 is *null eins zwei drei — vier fünf sechs sieben — acht neun null*. You'll also hear **zwo** for 2, to avoid confusion with *drei*. A mobile phone is a *Handy* (HEN-dee) — a German word that looks English but isn't used in English!

Saying an email address — die E-Mail-Adresse

Symbols have their own names. Read the address left to right and say each symbol out loud.

SYMBOL	GERMAN	SAY IT
@	at	<i>ett</i> (short, like English "at")
.	Punkt	<i>poonkt</i>
-	Bindestrich	<i>BIN-duh-shtrikh</i>
_	Unterstrich	<i>OON-ter-shtrikh</i>
.de	Punkt D-E	<i>poonkt day-ay</i>

*Example: **anna.weber@example.de** is said "anna Punkt weber at example Punkt D-E" — words you can pronounce are said as words, and anything odd is spelled out with the letters from Chapter 2.*

⑤ Swapping Numbers — Telefonnummer

A:

Wie ist deine Telefonnummer?

vee ist DY-nuh tay-lay-FOHN-noo-mer

What's your phone number?

B:

Meine Nummer ist null eins zwei
drei, vier fünf sechs sieben.

*MY-nuh NOO-mer ist nool ines tsvy dry, feer
fünf zeks ZEE-ben*

My number is 0123, 4567.

A:

Langsamer, bitte!

⑥ Giving an Email (formal) — E-Mail-Adresse

A:

Wie ist Ihre E-Mail-Adresse?

vee ist EE-ruh EE-mayl-ah-DRES-uh

What's your email address?

B:

anna Punkt weber at example
Punkt D-E.

*AH-nah poonkt VAY-ber ett ex-AM-pel poonkt
day-ay*

anna.weber@example.de

A:

LAHNG-zah-mer, BIT-tuh

Slower, please!

B:

Null. Eins. Zwo. Drei ...

nool. ines. tsvoh. dry

Zero. One. Two. Three ...

Können Sie das buchstabieren?

KUR-nen zee dahs bookh-shtah-BEE-ren

Can you spell that?

B:

A-N-N-A, Punkt, W-E-B-E-R.

ah-enn-enn-ah, poonkt, vay-ay-bay-ay-err

A-N-N-A, dot, W-E-B-E-R.



Vocabulary — Wortschatz

20 key words and phrases from this chapter (the numbers themselves are in the grids above). Nouns come with their article: *der* (masculine), *die* (feminine), *das* (neuter).

#	GERMAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	zählen	TSAY-len	to count	verb	Zählen wir! = Let's count!
2	die Zahl	tsahl	number (quantity)	noun	a figure, like "7" — see tip
3	die Nummer	NOO-mer	number (identifier)	noun	phone, house or bus number
4	null	nool	zero	number	
5	hundert	HOON-dert	hundred	number	
6	zwo	tsvoh	two (spoken)	number	mainly on the phone
7	alt	ahlt	old	adj	Wie alt bist du?
8	das Jahr / die Jahre	yahr / YAH-ruh	year / years	noun	plural: die Jahre
9	wie viele?	vee FEE-luh	how many?	phrase	for things you can count
10	die Telefonnummer	tay-lay-FOHN-noo-mer	phone number	noun	

#	GERMAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
11	das Handy	<i>HEN-dee</i>	mobile phone	noun	not "Handy" in English!
12	die Handynummer	<i>HEN-dee-noo-mer</i>	mobile number	noun	
13	die Vorwahl	<i>FOR-vahl</i>	area / dialling code	noun	<i>vor</i> = before, <i>Wahl</i> = dialling
14	die E-Mail-Adresse	<i>EE-mayl-ah-DRES-uh</i>	email address	noun	also just "die E-Mail"
15	at	<i>ett</i>	@ symbol	noun	said as in English
16	der Punkt	<i>poonkt</i>	dot / full stop	noun	"Punkt" is also used for a period
17	der Bindestrich	<i>BIN-duh-shtrikh</i>	hyphen / dash	noun	-
18	der Unterstrich	<i>OON-ter-shtrikh</i>	underscore	noun	_
19	meine / deine / Ihre	<i>MY-nuh / DY-nuh / EE-ruh</i>	my / your (inf.) / your (formal)	word	before die-words: <i>meine Nummer</i>
20	Langsamer, bitte.	<i>LAHNG-zah-mer, BIT-tuh</i>	Slower, please.	phrase	from Chapter 1

Zahl vs. Nummer — Two Words for "Number"

Die Zahl is a number as a quantity or figure — "the number seven", "what number is bigger?". *Die Nummer* is a number that *identifies* something: a phone number, a house number, a bus number. In everyday conversation you'll mostly say *Nummer*, as in *Telefonnummer* and *Hausnummer*.

Quick Grammar Note — meine, deine, Ihre

"My" is *mein* before der- and das-words (*mein Name*) but *meine* before die-words (*meine Nummer*, *meine E-Mail-Adresse*). The same pattern applies to *dein / deine* and *Ihr / Ihre*. You don't need to learn the rule yet — just copy the phrases as they appear.



Try It Yourself — Übungen

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Count from 0 to 10 in German, then from 11 to 20.

▼ Show answer

null, eins, zwei, drei, vier, fünf, sechs, sieben, acht, neun, zehn; elf, zwölf, dreizehn, vierzehn, fünfzehn, sechzehn, siebzehn, achtzehn, neunzehn, zwanzig.

2. How do you say 16 and 60 — and what's the difference in spelling?

▼ Show answer

16 = sechzehn (ZEKH-tsayn); 60 = sechzig (ZEKH-tsikh). Both drop the s of "sechs"; the ending is -zehn for 16 and -zig for 60.

3. Say your own age in German. (Try 47 if you'd like an example.)

▼ Show answer

Ich bin [number] Jahre alt. — 47: Ich bin siebenundvierzig Jahre alt. (Ones first, then "und", then the tens.)

4. Ask a friend their age, then ask a stranger on a form the same question formally.

▼ Show answer

Friend: Wie alt bist du? · Formal: Wie alt sind Sie?

5. Read this phone number aloud in German: 0151 2345 678.

▼ Show answer

null eins fünf eins — zwei drei vier fünf — sechs sieben acht. (You can say *zwo* instead of *zwei* if the number contained a 2 on a phone call.)

6. Say this email address out loud: max.klein@example.de

▼ Show answer

max Punkt klein at example Punkt D-E. If they ask, spell it: M-A-X, Punkt, K-L-E-I-N.

Coming Up in Chapter 4

You can now count, give your age and share contact details. Next: **where you're from** — countries, nationalities and saying where you live.