

German Subject Pronouns – German for beginners

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LEKTION 1A Strukturen

1A.3 Subject pronouns, *sein*, and the nominative



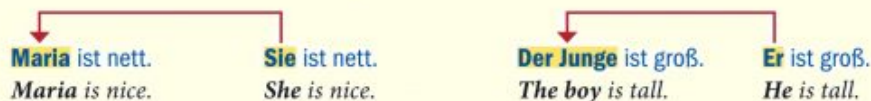
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Subject pronouns

- In German, as in English, any noun can be replaced with an equivalent pronoun. A subject pronoun replaces a noun that functions as the subject of a sentence.



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subject pronouns		
	singular	plural
1 st person	ich <i>I</i>	wir <i>we</i>
2 nd person	du <i>you (inf.)</i> Sie <i>you (form.)</i>	ihr <i>you (inf.)</i> Sie <i>you (form.)</i>
3 rd person	er <i>he/it</i> sie <i>she/it</i> es <i>it</i>	sie <i>they</i>

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- The gender of a noun determines the gender of the pronoun that replaces it. German uses **er** for all masculine nouns, **sie** for all feminine nouns, and **es** for all neuter nouns.

Der Tisch ist klein. Er ist klein.
The table is small. *It's small.*

Das Buch ist neu. Es ist neu.
The book is new. *It's new.*

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- The pronoun **Sie/sie** can mean *you, she, it, or they*, depending on context. Write **Sie** with a capital **S** to mean *you* in a formal context, and **sie** with a lowercase **s** to mean *she, it, or they*.

Sie ist Professorin und **sie** sind Studenten.
She is a professor, and they are students.

Woher kommen **Sie**?
Where are you from?



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1A.3-5

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1A.3 Subject pronouns, *sein*, and the nominativeThe verb *sein*

- Sein** (*To be*) is an irregular verb: its conjugation does not follow a predictable pattern.

sein (to be)			
singular		plural	
ich bin	<i>I am</i>	wir sind	<i>we are</i>
du bist	<i>you are (inf.)</i>	ihr seid	<i>you are (inf.)</i>
Sie sind	<i>you are (form.)</i>	Sie sind	<i>you are (form.)</i>
er/sie/es ist	<i>he/she/it is</i>	sie sind	<i>they are</i>

Ich bin Amerikaner.
I'm American.

Sie ist Deutsche.
She's German.

Wir sind Freunde.
We are friends.

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The nominative case

- German has four *cases* that indicate the function of each noun in a sentence. The case of a noun determines the form of the definite or indefinite article that precedes the noun, the form of any adjectives that modify the noun, and the form of the pronoun that can replace the noun.

German cases		
Nominativ	Der Professor ist alt.	<i>The professor is old.</i>
Akkusativ	Ich verstehe den Professor.	<i>I understand the professor.</i>
Dativ	Der Assistent zeigt dem Professor den neuen Computer.	<i>The assistant is showing the professor the new computer.</i>
Genitiv	Das ist der Assistent des Professors.	<i>This is the professor's assistant.</i>

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- The grammatical subject of a sentence is always in the nominative case (**der Nominativ**). Subject pronouns are, by definition, nominative pronouns. The nominative case is also used for nouns that follow a form of **sein**, **werden** (*to become*), or **bleiben** (*to stay, to remain*).

Das ist **eine gute Idee**. Wir bleiben **Freunde**.
*That's a **good idea**.* *We're still **friends**.*

LEKTION 1A **Strukturen****1A.3 Subject pronouns, *sein*, and the nominative**

- The definite and indefinite articles you learned in **1A.1** are the forms used with nouns in the nominative case.

nominative articles				
	masculine	feminine	neuter	plural
definite	der Junge	die Frau	das Mädchen	die Jungen
indefinite	ein Junge	eine Frau	ein Mädchen	- Jungen



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