German 1 Online: Reading Guide for Pages 183-186: Two-Way Prepositions

For this reading assignment, enter page “183” in the search bar for the eText and begin your reading.

Page 183: Grammatik im Kontext: Two-Way Prepositions

Your textbook moves through this information very quickly. It is important to take your time and thoroughly understand what is happening when using these new prepositions, so please read this guide thoroughly before trying the homework exercises.

The “two-way” prepositions are a NEW group of prepositions that will take either the dative or the accusative case, depending on the meaning of the sentence you use them in. When the objects are in motion, you will use the accusative case with these prepositions. When the objects are stationary, and you are simply stating the location, you will use the dative case with these prepositions. Some examples to clarify:

- Ich gehe in das Zimmer. I walk into the room. ACCUSATIVE case for motion.
- Ich bin in dem Zimmer. I am inside the room. DATIVE case for location.
- Ich hänge das Bild an die Wand. I am hanging the picture on(to) the wall. ACCUSATIVE case for motion.
- Das Bild hängt an der Wand. The picture is hanging on the wall. DATIVE case for location.
- Ich lege die Zeitung auf den Tisch. I am putting the paper on the table. ACCUSATIVE case for motion.
- Die Zeitung liegt auf dem Tisch. The paper is lying on the table. DATIVE case for location.

The first thing to learn is what these prepositions mean. All of them have to do with placement or location of objects, often in relation to other things. (Paper on table, person in the room, etc.) But they do not always correspond one-to-one to their English meanings: these are very spatial words and you must understand the German spatial world in order to use them correctly. Below is a chart of meanings from a different textbook which is more descriptive, to help you understand the spatial meanings of these prepositions.
Sometimes you will want to describe objects of furniture, things around your house or town, and locations of cities and countries using these prepositions. In this chapter, we start with using the two-way prepositions to describe going to shops and establishments (accusative case for motion), or being inside those shops (dative case for location).

Please realize that German and English are different here: English uses the words “to” and “in” depending on motion or location, but German simply changes the CASE to indicate whether there is motion or location:

- in die Bäckerei to the bakery accusative for motion
- in der Bäckerei in the bakery dative for location
- in das Restaurant to the restaurant accusative for motion
- in dem Restaurant in the restaurant dative for location
- auf den Markt onto the town square market accusative for motion
- auf dem Markt on the town square market dative for location
- an den Bahnhof to the train station accusative for motion
- an dem Bahnhof at the train station dative for location

As you move through the exercises in this section, you should always pay attention to whether you are using a MOTION VERB like ‘go’, ‘walk’, ‘drive’, ‘travel’, ‘bring’, ‘run’ or if you are using a LOCATION VERB like ‘is/are’, ‘buy’, ‘find’, ‘stand’, ‘sit’, ‘eat’ and so on. With motion verbs, you must use the accusative case with these prepositions. With location/stationary verbs, use the dative case.

Two things to watch for:
- only the nouns after the preposition are put into the accusative or dative case. All other words in the sentence follow the rules you already know: the subjects are nominative, the direct objects are accusative, and so on. Nothing else is changing what you already know: only the nouns following the prepositions are being changed into accusative or dative cases.
- if you use one of the other prepositions that we learned in prior chapters, the rules that you learned still are true! For example: you learned that the preposition ‘ZU’ takes the dative case. That remains true! The DATIVE PREPOSITIONS that we learned in chapter 5 (aus, außer, bei, mit, nach, seit, von, zu) will always take the dative case, no matter whether the sentence has motion or not. Only these new prepositions can change case depending on the motion/location meaning of the sentence.

Please pay particular attention to ÜBUNG 5 in your textbook. You will need to be able to understand descriptions of city maps using the two-way prepositions. Remember that since buildings are not in motion, you will be using the dative case to describe their location. For example:

- Die Post ist **neben** der Bank.
  = The post office is next to the bank.
- Die Bäckerei ist **hinter** der Konditorei.
  = The bakery is behind the pastry shop.
- Der Park ist **vor** der Apotheke.
  = The park is in front of the pharmacy.
- Die Buchhandlung liegt **in** der Lutherstraße.
  = The bookstore is on Luther Street.
- Es gibt einen Kiosk **an** dem Park.
  = There is a kiosk adjoining the park.
- Der Brunnen ist **an** der Ecke **neben** der Metzgerei.
  = The fountain is on the corner next to the butcher.
- Das Museum ist **zwischen** dem Theater und der Bäckerei.
  = The museum is between the theater and the bakery.
The following graphic can help you in understanding and remembering the two-way prepositions.

**Two-Way Prepositions (Wechselpräpositionen)**

I strongly suggest that you look at the following link, which explains the two-way prepositions in greater detail with many examples and illustrations.


Page 184-186: Übung 1, 2, und 5

You will complete exercises 1, 2 and 5 as part of your Connect Aufgabe 60, so after you have read through the grammar explanation of the two-way prepositions using dative (location) and accusative (motion), you should complete those assignments online.

Now that you have learned the important information about the two-way prepositions, you should complete the Aufgabe on the Connect website. After you have completed those exercises, move on to the next reading guide (pages 186-189), where we continue the discussion of two-way prepositions with the verbs to describe placement and location.