

3. PRESENT TENSE OF COMPOUND VERBS

SEPARABLE PREFIXES

Many German prepositions are also used as parts of verbs, in which case they become *separable prefixes*. The basic meaning of the preposition usually determines the meaning of the prefix. The most common separable prefixes include:

PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLE
ab	away from	abfahren , to drive away, leave
an	to, up to	ankommen , to come to, arrive
auf	up, on	aufstehen , to stand up, arise
aus	out	ausgehen , to go out, leave
bei	at, to	beitragen , to carry to, contribute
ein	into	einsteigen , to step into, board
her	toward speaker	herkommen , to come here (toward speaker from somewhere else)
hin	away from speaker	hingehen , to go away (to some other place)
mit	with	mitkommen , to come with, accompany
nach	after, according to	nachsehen , to see according to, look up (in a book)
vor	before, ahead	vorschlagen , to set before (someone), suggest
zu	together	zumachen , to make together, close

Note

1. The prefixes just listed are called separable because they may be separated from the rest of the verb. They always appear at the end of the clause, even when the verb root does not:

zumachen—Er macht das Fenster *zu*.

2. If the infinitive is used or if the verb comes at the end of the clause, the prefix is written as part of the verb:

Er kann das Fenster *zumachen*.

Er sagt, daß er das Fenster *zumachte*.

3. The accent of the verb usually falls on the separable prefix.
4. If the root verb is irregular, it will remain irregular when it is part of a compound:

die Arbeit, die er heute *anfängt* the work that he begins today

SOME COMMON SEPARABLE VERBS

abfahren , to depart	aufpassen , to be careful, look out, pay attention	kennenlernen , to get acquainted with
abholen , to call for, pick up (a person)	ausgehen , to go out	mitbringen , to bring along
ablegen , to take off (clothing)	aussehen , to look (a certain way), appear	mitkommen , to accompany
absetzen , to set down, let out (of a car)	ausziehen , to undress, move out	mitnehmen , to take along
anfangen , to begin	einkaufen , to buy, shop	nachschlagen , to look up (in a book)
ankommen , to arrive	einladen , to invite	nachsehen , to check on, look up (in a book)
annehmen , to accept, receive	einsteigen , to get aboard, get into	vorbeikommen , to pass by, stop in (for a quick visit)
anrufen , to call (to someone), call up (on the telephone)	fertigmachen , to prepare, get ready	vorbereiten , to prepare
anzeigen , to report, advertise, denounce	herkommen , to come here	vorhaben , to intend, have in mind
aufhalten , to hold up, detain	hinausfahren , to go out of	vorschlagen , to suggest
aufhören , to stop (doing something)	hingehen , to go there	zumachen , to close
		zuschauen , to watch, look at

Note

1. The compounds of **halten** and **laden** do not add an **e** in the second and third person singular:

er <i>hält</i> auf	du <i>lädst</i> ein
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2. **Zuschauen** has its object in the dative case:

Ich <i>schaue dem Spiel zu</i> .	I'm watching the game.
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3. **Kennenlernen** is not a true separable-prefix verb, but it follows the same rules as other verbs in this list. Notice that **kennen** is always at the end of the clause:

Ich <i>lerne ihn kennen</i> .	I'm getting acquainted with him.
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