German Sentence Structure Cheat Sheet

1. Basic Word Order (SVO)

In **declarative sentences**, the structure is usually **Subject - Verb - Object**.

- Example:

  - *Der Hund beißt den Mann.* (The dog bites the man.)

2. Coordinating Conjunctions (No Change in Word Order)

When using **aber, denn, oder, und, sondern**, the word order remains **SVO**.

- Example:

  - *Ich gehe ins Kino, aber ich bin müde.* (I am going to the cinema, but I am tired.)

3. Inversion (Verb-Subject Order)

When a sentence starts with an element other than the subject (e.g., a time or place expression), the verb comes directly after it, and the subject follows.

- Example:

  - *Gestern bin ich ins Kino gegangen.* (Yesterday, I went to the cinema.)

  - *Mit dem Zug fahre ich nach Berlin.* (I am traveling to Berlin by train.)

Common expressions that trigger inversion:

- **Time:** gestern (yesterday), morgen (tomorrow), heute (today)

- **Place:** in Berlin, im Park (in the park)

- **Other:** deshalb (therefore), dann (then), seit einer Woche (for a week)

4. Subordinate Clauses (Nebensätze)

Subordinate clauses are introduced by conjunctions like **weil, dass, wenn, als, obwohl**, and the verb moves to the end of the sentence.

- Example:

- *Ich bleibe zu Hause, weil ich krank bin.* (I stay home because I am sick.)

- *Ich weiß, dass du müde bist.* (I know that you are tired.)

Common Subordinating Conjunctions:

- **dass** (that)

- **weil** (because)

- **obwohl** (although)

- **wenn** (if, when)

- **als** (when)

5. Relative Clauses (Relativsätze)

Relative clauses provide additional information about a noun. The verb moves to the end of the relative clause.

- Example:

  - *Der Mann, der in Berlin lebt, ist Lehrer.* (The man who lives in Berlin is a teacher.)

  - *Die Frau, die ich gestern gesehen habe, heißt Anna.* (The woman I saw yesterday is named Anna.)

Relative Pronouns:

- **der, die, das** (who, which, that)

6. Questions (Fragen)

Yes/No Questions:

In yes/no questions, the verb comes first, followed by the subject.

- Example:

  - *Bist du müde?* (Are you tired?)

  - *Hast du Hunger?* (Are you hungry?)

W-Questions:

In **W-questions** (who, what, when, where), the question word comes first, followed by the verb, and then the subject.

- Example:
    - *Woher kommst du?* (Where are you from?)
    - *Wann beginnt der Film?* (When does the movie start?)

7. Indirect Questions (Indirekte Fragen)

When reporting a question, the verb goes to the end, and **ob** is used for yes/no questions.

- Example:
    - *Ich möchte wissen, ob du kommst.* (I want to know if you are coming.)
    - *Ich frage mich, wo er wohnt.* (I wonder where he lives.)

8. Infinitive Clauses (Infinitivsätze)

In infinitive clauses, the verb (in its infinitive form) appears at the end of the sentence, often introduced by **zu**.

- Example:
    - *Ich habe vergessen, den Termin zu verschieben.* (I forgot to reschedule the appointment.)
    - *Es freut mich, dich zu sehen.* (I am happy to see you.)

9. Modal Verbs (Modalverben)

Modal verbs like **müssen, können, sollen, wollen** send the main verb to the end of the sentence in its infinitive form.

- Example:
    - *Ich muss morgen arbeiten.* (I have to work tomorrow.)
    - *Du kannst hier bleiben.* (You can stay here.)

10. Time, Manner, Place (TMP)

In German, the typical word order for describing time, manner, and place is **Time - Manner - Place**.

- Example:
    - *Ich gehe morgen mit dem Auto nach Berlin.* (I'm going to Berlin tomorrow by car.)

- *Er lernt jeden Tag fleißig in der Bibliothek.* (He studies diligently every day in the library.)

Additional Notes:

- **Verb Second Rule (V2):** In German main clauses, the conjugated verb is always the second element.

  - Example: *Heute*(1st element) **gehe** (2nd element) **ich** (subject) **ins Kino** (rest of sentence).*

- **Imperative Sentences:** The verb comes first in commands.

  - Example: *Komm hierher!* (Come here!)

By understanding these rules, you'll master German sentence structure in no time!