

Past Tense/Vergangenheit

Principle parts of a verb

Infinitive –	kaufen	trinken
Imperfekt –	kaufte	trank
Perfekt -	gekauft	getrunken

The Imperfekt tense can also be called simple past. (Ich ging = I went) It has basically the same meaning as Perfekt tense, but it is used mostly in writing. – stories, articles, etc.

The Perfekt tense uses a helping verb – haben or sein – and the participle. (Ich habe das Buch gekauft / Ich bin nach Hause gegangen) It is used mostly in conversation, and is also known as the conversational past.

Prasens: Ich gehe	Ich kaufe
Imperfekt: Ich ging	Ich kaufte
Perfekt: Ich bin gegangen	Ich habe gekauft

German verbs are basically divided into 3 categories with the following characteristics

STRONG (stark)

Have a vowel change in the simple past and/or the participle

Have participles that end in –en

Example: singen, sang, gesungen

WEAK (schwach)

Have no vowel change in the simple past or the participle

Have participles that end in –t

Example: hören, hörte, gehört

IRREGULAR WEAK

A hybrid between strong and weak

Have a vowel change in the simple past and/or the participle

Have participles that end in –t

Example: bringen, brachte, gebracht

The following are the conjugation ending for the IMPERFEKT tense:

	Strong Verbs		Weak Verbs	
ich	-	sang	-te	machte
du	-st	sangst	-test	machtetest
er	-	sang	-te	machte
wir	-en	sangen	-ten	machten
ihr	-t	sangt	-tet	machtet
sie	-en	sangen	-ten	machten