

**EXERCISES IN GERMAN
SYNTAX AND
COMPOSITION FOR
ADVANCED STUDENTS**

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Exercises in German Syntax and Composition for Advanced Students by Marian P. Whitney & Lillian L. Stroebe

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INTRODUCTION

A WORD of excuse may seem needed for adding another book on German composition to the large number already in existence. But we feel that the many such books issued during the last few years have all neglected to provide for one large class of students and one real need of language work. There are many excellent books dealing with what the Germans call *Realien*, or the facts and words of every-day life, but there are very few which give an advanced student the vocabulary necessary for the study of literature and literary criticism; there are various books for giving practice in the elementary rules and forms of German, there are practically none which deal systematically with more advanced German syntax. Now composition work based on *Realien* finds its proper place in the work of the first and second years, when the main object of instruction is to familiarize the pupil with the simple vocabulary of every-day conversation and the elementary forms of the language, but as soon as the study of the literature is begun, a different and wider vocabulary is needed. As all students of German, except in purely business courses, look forward to some study of the literature as one of the chief reasons for learning the language, there should be room for a book especially adapted to their needs.

The most valuable feature of this book is probably the series of exercises on German syntax which form the first part. These exercises are the result of an unsuccessful effort to find something to meet the needs of the authors' own classes at Vassar College. After the elementary study of the grammar, and of the simple exercises which accompany it, has been followed by some translation of simple English into German, and perhaps by some practice in *freie Reproduktion*, the student needs a thorough review of the principles of grammar and syntax and an opportunity for acquiring proficiency in more difficult constructions. Most of the larger grammars are provided with exercises intended to afford such opportunity, but these exercises consist generally of disconnected sentences, each illustrating one rule or construction, but without any effort to connect these sentences into a whole, or to build up vocabulary systematically — an aim of which the teacher of languages should never lose sight. Being unable to find what we wanted for such work with our own classes, we wrote this series of exercises, which have borne the test of two years' use in the class-room, and have proved to be thoroughly satisfactory. Each group of rules is taken up separately, and for each a specially prepared German model text is given, which illustrates the rules to be studied. On this text the English exercise is based. Each part of the exercise, German and English, forms in itself a consecutive whole, treating a subject of interest and value to the student. In each exercise the vocabulary is carefully planned to introduce new and valuable

words and expressions, while fixing in the memory, by frequent repetition, those which have been given in the preceding lessons.

A student having worked through these exercises carefully should find himself prepared to meet any grammatical difficulty which may arise in writing German, and, at the same time, should be master of a vocabulary which will put him in a position to read, write or talk on literary subjects.

The exercises may be used in connection with any grammar. References have been given to several of those most commonly used in our schools and colleges; teachers may easily supply others, if needed.

The second part consists of selections for translations from English into German, which are graded in difficulty. The subject-matter is also for the most part literary, and gives opportunity to use and enlarge the vocabulary already acquired. In some of the passages selected an occasional word or phrase has been altered (with the permission of the author), for the purpose of facilitating translation into German.

The abstracts of ballads, plays, etc., may serve as models for other such abstracts to be written directly in German by the student from the poems or plays he is reading.

The third part contains suggestions for simple themes or papers in German based on such dramas and poems as are usually read in our schools and colleges. The first series consists of questions which may be answered in short themes of two or three pages; the second series gives suggestions for longer essays.

Many teachers feel that, after the difficulties of the syntax are mastered and a fair vocabulary is acquired, the student should be ready to write in German on any subject connected with his work, and should not continue to translate from one language into the other. Such teachers are advised to omit the second part, or to use only the first few selections as models for the student's own work before taking up the third part.

There are few notes, but the vocabularies are full and give all the information needed to make it possible for the student to translate the selections into really good German. We have tried to remove one of the greatest stumbling-blocks in the way of such translation by indicating in the English-German vocabulary the proper preposition to be used after each noun, adjective or verb. The tables of declensions, of prepositions, and of Old (or Strong) and irregular verbs at the end of the book will be found useful for reference.

M. P. W.

JULY, 1909.

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