

Episode 026 – Grammar

Negation words

You've already learned how to negate using the words "kein" and "nicht". In German, there are other words to express negation:

Examples:

*Ich verstehe **nichts**.*

*Ich bin **nicht mehr** deine Freundin.*

*Das hast du **noch nie** gemacht.*

***Nein**, ich habe keine Bahncard.*

Definition	Negation word	Positive word
nothing	nichts	<i>alles</i>
no-one, nobody	niemand	<i>jemand, alle</i>
never, at no time	nie	<i>immer</i>
nowhere	nirgendwo	<i>überall</i>

"Nein" can be used to answer a question about decision. Its positive opposite is "ja".

"Nein" can stand on its own as an answer, but it is frequently followed by a comma and an explanation:

Example:

Haben Sie eine Bahncard? – Nein. Oder: Nein, ich habe keine Bahncard.

Harry – gefangen in der Zeit

Begleitmaterialien

Qualifying the negation

Words like "noch" and "mehr" can be used to frame the time of a negation:

"noch nie" means that something has never happened up to this point in time.

Example:

*Du bringst mir Blumen mit? Das hast du **noch nie** gemacht.*

= Harry has never previously brought flowers for Julia, but now he has brought her flowers.

"nicht mehr" means that something was the case previously, but now is no longer true.

Example:

*Ich bin **nicht mehr** deine Freundin.*

= Julia was Harry's girlfriend but now they are no longer a couple.

Intensifying negation

The word "gar" can be used to intensify the negation.

It directly precedes the negation word.

Example:

*Ich habe **gar nichts** gemacht. (I didn't do anything at all!)*

*Du willst mich **gar nicht** heiraten! (You don't really want to marry me!)*