Episode 066 – Grammar

1.   Indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns are pronouns used for unspecified people and things. You can use them when you don't know who or what is undertaking the action - "man" (one), "jemand" (someone), "etwas" (something), "jede(r/s)" (each), "nichts" (nothing), "niemand" (no-one) - or when you can't or don't want to say exactly how many are involved - "alle" (everyone), "alles" (everything), "einige" (some), "viele" (many).

Examples:
Jemand muss den Maibaum aufstellen.
*Es ist **alles** fertig für die Feier!*

Indefinite pronouns can refer to people, other living beings, or objects. Some can only be used for people. Others can only be used for anything besides people.

Indefinite pronouns that refer to people
"niemand" (no-one) and "man" (one - which is comparable to the generic "you") are examples of indefinite pronouns that refer only to people. They are used alone and take the place of a noun. They can only be used in the singular.

Examples:
Niemand isst Würstchen und Kartoffelsalat.
*Auf der Landstraße darf **man** Fahrrad fahren.*

Indefinite pronouns that refer to things, but not people
"etwas" (something), "nichts" (nothing) and "alles" (everything) are examples of indefinite pronouns that refer to things and concepts, but not people. They are also singular pronouns. "etwas" and "nichts" can only be used in the

singular. The plural of "alles" is "alle" and can refer to people.

Examples:
*Es ist **nichts** passiert.*
*Ich kann doch nicht **alles** alleine machen.*

Indefinite pronouns that refer to people, other living beings, concepts or things
"jede/r/s" (everyone in the female, male and neuter forms respectively) and "alle" are examples of indefinite pronouns that can refer to people, living beings or things. "jede/r/s" is a singular pronoun. "alle" is a plural pronoun.

Examples:
*Das kann **jeder** sagen.*
***Alle** feiern, auch der Präsident.*

2. **Indefinite articles**

Many indefinite pronouns can also be used as indefinite articles. Like their counterparts, definite articles, they appear in connection with a noun.

Examples:
*Wir feiern **jedes** Fest.*
*Es gibt ein Fest für **alle** Menschen aus Traponia am 8. August.*

Declension pattern of indefinite pronouns/indefinite articles
"man", "nichts" and "etwas" are indefinite pronouns that do not change. The pronoun "man" can only be used in the nominative case. For the accusative case, use "einen" and for the dative, use "einem". "jeder" and "alle" follow the same pattern of declension as for definite articles.

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	**jeder Mann** der Mann	**Jede Frau** die Frau	**jedes Kind** das Kind	**alle Menschen** die Menschen
Accusative	**jeden Mann** den Mann	**jede Frau** die Waffe	**jedes Kind** das Haar	**alle Menschen** die Menschen
Dative	**jedem Mann** dem Mann	**jeder Frau** der Frau	**jedem Kind** dem Kind	**allen Menschen** den Menschen

Genitive	**jed es Mann es**	**jed er Frau**	**jed es Kind es**	**all er Mensch en**
	des Mannes	der Frau	des Kindes	der Menschen

"jeder" and "alle" are also inflected when they are used as pronouns.

Examples:
*Das kann **jeder** sagen.*
*Das kann **jedem** passieren.*

The indefinite pronouns "niemand" and "jemand" are also inflected. But in colloquial speech, the accusative and dative endings are often ignored. The genitive is very rare.

niemand

Nominative	**niemand**	***Niemand** isst Würstchen und Kartoffelsalat.*
Accusative	**niemand(en)**	*Harry hat **niemand(en)** gesehen.*
Dative	**niemand(em)**	*Harry vertraut **niemand(em).***
Genitive	**niemand es**	*Das ist **niemandes** Schuld.*