Episode 090 – Grammar

Negation with prefixes and suffixes

In German, words can be combined with other words or syllables to create new words. You've already learned how to change the meanings of words by adding prefixes and suffixes, and how to derive new words from other words.

Examples:
stehen: ***auf*stehen, *ver*stehen**
der Freund: ***freund*lich**

Certain prefixes and suffixes can be used to negate words. Negative prefixes and suffixes denote the opposite meaning of the word.

Examples:
***un*gefährlich**: *nicht gefährlich*
***miss*fallen**: *nicht gefallen*
***erfolg*los**: *ohne Erfolg, nicht erfolgreich*

The most common negative prefixes and suffixes in German are "**un**-", "**miss**-" and "**-los**". This chart shows you the kinds of words that can be used with negative prefixes and suffixes.

	Adjective	Noun	Verb
un-	**zahlungsunfähig**	**das Unglück**	—
miss-	**missverständlich**	**das Missverständnis**	**missverstehen**
-los	**rücksichtslos**	**der Arbeitslose***	—

* "-los" is a suffix that creates only adjectives. Words like "der Arbeitslose" are adjectival nouns.

Loan words with Latin origin can also be given the prefix "in-" to negate the word.

Examples:
Insolvenz: *insolvent (not solvent, unable to pay, broke, bankrupt)*
indirekt: *indirect (not direct)*