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A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!



Lesson 1: Thank You!

Danke schön

LESSON NOTES

In Germany manners and etiquette are very important. "Please," "Thank You," and "You're Welcome" are parts of everyday interactions and should be used often. In most cases a simple danke will suffice however just like in English there are many ways to say thank you.

In Germany "Thank you." is danke schön. The first word of the phrase danke means thanks. This is followed by schön, which in German is "beautiful".

Now in German there are other ways to express one's gratitude. There are more formal and more casual ways to do this. Let's take a look at the casual way.

In German the casual way of expressing gratitude, the equivalent of "Thanks" is danke. This phrase is used among friends, in other casual situations, continue on with more examples if possible.

On the other hand, for very special occasions when someone goes above and beyond the call of being kind, when someone is extremely generous, or for any other time you're extremely grateful, we have the following phrases to express extreme gratitude:

The first one is vielen Dank or "many thanks". The first word vielen means "many" in English. Next is herzlichen Dank, or "heart felt thanks" in English.

In a formal situation it is important to address people in the formal Sie and Ihnen forms. This is especially important if you don't know the person, in business settings, or any case when more distance is required. A good example would be meeting a professor, an employer, or in a business meeting.

In these situations a simple danke is by no means rude, however using the formal Ich danke Ihnen is more common and more appropriate. Now let's go over that one once more. The first word Ich is German for "I". Then danke, and the last word Ihnen which is the formal form for the English "you". To review the formal form of "thank you" is Ich danke Ihnen.

These phrases are important and easy to use everyday. So wherever you go in Germany always remember to say danke.

VOCABULARY

German	Romanized	English
danke schön	danke schoen	Thank you, cheers
danke, Dank	danke, Dank	Thanks
herzlichen	herzlichen	Hearty, heart felt
ich	ich	I
Ihnen	Ihnen	you (formal)

QUICK TIP

It's always a good thing to say danke or danke schön after any helpful interaction. In formal situations because of the formal pronouns Sie and Ihnen the best way to say thank you is ich danke Ihnen. You can use this form anytime you are not familiar with the person you are thanking.

QUICK TIP 2

The German language has a set of vowels that we don't have in English. These vowels are topped with two points above the letter called an Umlaut. We see this in the vowel ö in schön. You may be familiar with the song Danke Schön by Wayne Newton where the word schön is mispronounced "shane" in order to rhyme with pain. The correct way to pronounce this vowel is with your lips slightly more closed like you're about to whistle. The closest sound in English would be the word "earn".