

# Word Order in Statements and Questions

# Word order in statements

In English, the word order in a statement is usually:  
subject – verb – complement

subject	verb	complement
Lee	studies	chemistry.

When you add another word or expression to the beginning of the sentence, the word order does not change.

	subject	verb	complement
This term,	Lee	studies	chemistry.

**In German, in contrast, the verb is always in second position.**

I	II	III
subject	verb	complement
<i>Lee</i>	<i>studiert</i>	<i>Chemie.</i>

If you start the sentence with something other than the subject, **the subject follows the verb and moves into position III**. We also call this an “inverted word order”.

I	II	III	IV
	verb	subject	complement
<i>Dieses Semester</i>	<i>studiert</i>	<i>Lee</i>	<i>Chemie.</i>

## Word order in questions

In questions that begins with a **question word** (*wie, was, wo, woher, wann, wer*), the verb follows the question word and is in second position. The subject follows in third position (unless the question word is the subject, as in *wer*). Anything else follows in position four.

I	II	III	IV
question word	verb	subject	complement
<i>Wie</i>	<i>heißt</i>	<i>du?</i>	
<i>Was</i>	<i>machst</i>	<i>du</i>	<i>morgen?</i>
<i>Wo</i>	<i>wohnst</i>	<i>du?</i>	
<i>Woher</i>	<i>kommst</i>	<i>du?</i>	
<i>Wann</i>	<i>kommst</i>	<i>du</i>	<i>nach Hause?</i>

In questions that ask for a **yes/no answer**, the verb is in first position, followed by the subject in second position, and anything else follows that.

I	II	III	IV
verb	subject	complement	complement
<i>Kommst</i>	<i>du</i>	<i>aus Deutschland?</i>	
<i>Machst</i>	<i>du</i>	<i>heute Abend</i>	<i>Hausaufgaben?</i>