

How To Use A German Keyboard On Your iPhone, Android, Mac or Windows PC

André Klein · Wednesday, March 23rd, 2016



Have you ever struggled with German spelling? Even for native Germans the many rules and reforms can quickly turn correct spelling into a guessing game. But as with everything, practice makes perfect, or as we say in German: “*Übung macht den Meister.*“

And it's never too early to start! This is why, in the following article I've outlined some ways in which you can enable a German keyboard on your Android, iPhone, Mac or Windows PC so you can start writing in German today (and get some spelling help along the way).

How To Use a German Keyboard on Your iPhone or iPad

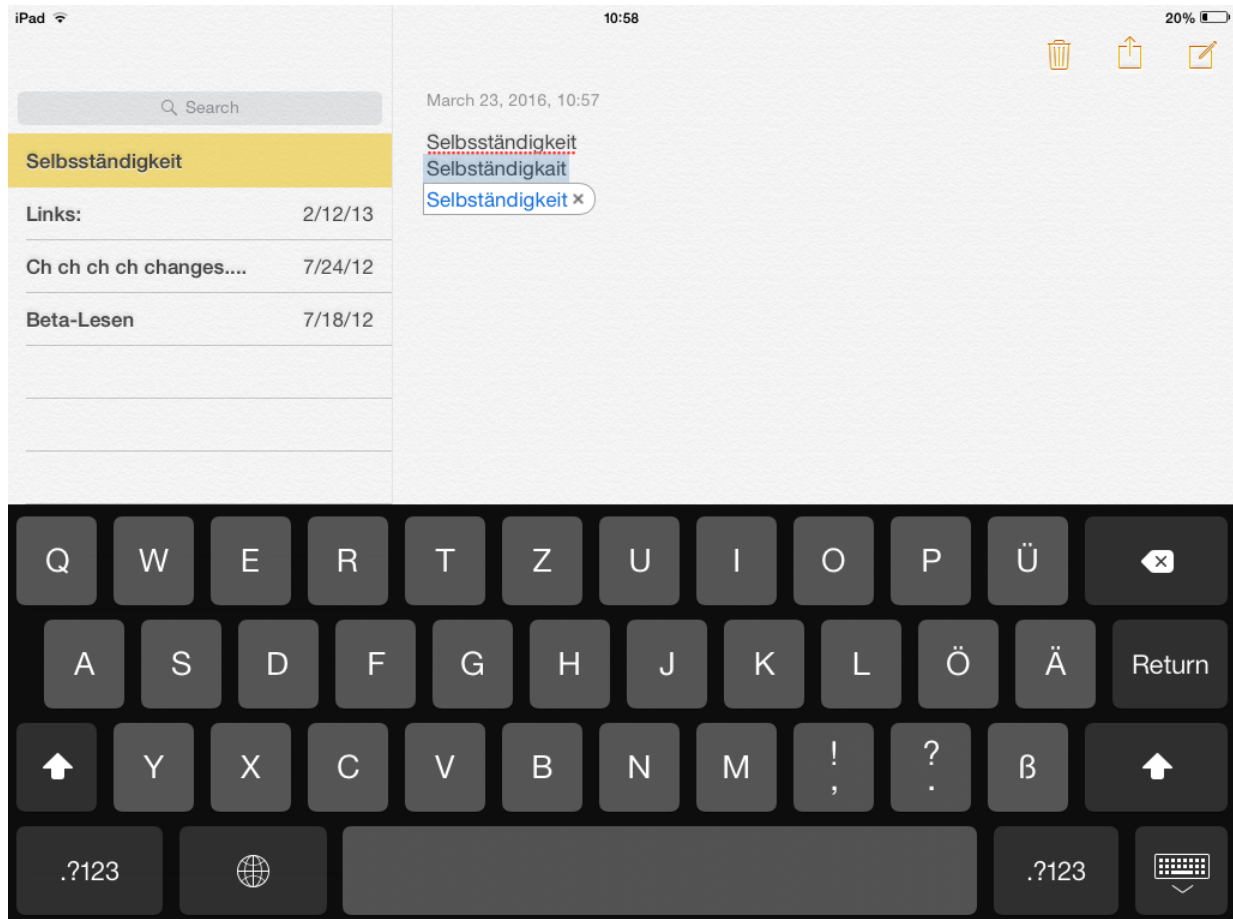


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On your iDevice, go to Settings > General >

Keyboard > Keyboards.

- Select “Add New Keyboard”
- Select “German”
- Now, whenever you’re writing something, whether in an instant message, or in your browser, you can use the globe icon to switch your installed keyboards.



Also, you’ll receive spelling help along the way. You’ll now see wrongly spelled (or unknown) words underlined in red, and iOS will also suggest correct spelling in a bubble popup.

Use a German Keyboard on your Android Device

Also on Android, you can easily add and switch between custom keyboards. The exact instructions for changing your keyboard may vary depending on the device and Android version, but the process is generally very similar. Here’s how to do it on “stock” Android, Lollipop:



- Go to Settings > Language & Input

- At the bottom you can find a list of all keyboards currently installed on your device.
- Select the keyboard to add languages

The standard Google keyboard app is not bad. It will help you with spelling and suggest words as you type. Alternatively, you can also install a custom keyboard app such as SwiftKey to help with prediction and spelling. One thing I personally like about SwiftKey is that you can use German and English keyboards simultaneously, without having to manually switch between them (see example below).



How to Type German Letters on Windows 7 & 10

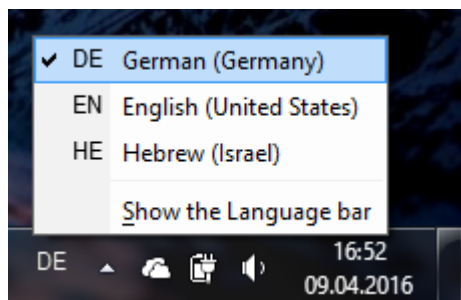
On Windows 7:



- Click on “Start” and type “Change keyboards”. Hit Enter.
- Click “Change Keyboards”
- Now click “Add” and select a new German keyboard



- Cycle between keyboards by pressing Left Alt + Shift or use the language bar as shown below:



On Windows 10:



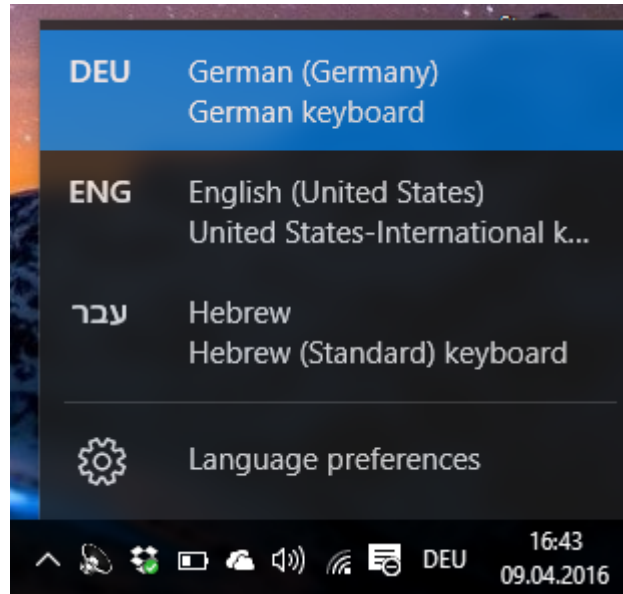
- Click on “Start” and type “edit language”. Hit Enter.
- Click on “Add a language”

Languages

Add a language to read and type in that language



- Click “Deutsch”, then “Deutsch (Deutschland)”
- Cycle between keyboards by pressing Left Alt + Shift or use the language



bar as shown below:

How to use a German Keyboard on Mac



- Click the Apple menu and go to “System Preferences”
- Click on “Keyboard”
- Click the “Input Sources” tab



via superuser

- Check the box next to “German”
- Now you can switch between keyboards by pressing “Command + Space”

A Quick comparison of German & English Keyboard Layouts

Once you’ve installed a German keyboard, you can start typing. If you’re using a touch screen, the keys themselves will change to reflect the new German layout. But what if you’re using an English hardware keyboard to type German? You will notice some slight changes in the way your keyboard works now.







The English keyboard layout is called QWERTY, after the first letters in the top row, the German is called QWERTZ, so there you already have one key difference: **Z and Y are interchanged**

Another big difference is that on a German keyboard you have dedicated keys

for the Umlauts: ä, ö, ü and the “scharfes S” ß (in place of the English dash “-” key)

Also, on an English keyboard you do the @ sign by pressing Shift + 2, in German you press Alt Gr + Q.

There are many other small differences, such as the positions of the question mark, ampersand, asterisk, brackets, etc. Below you can find a side by side comparison. The best way to learn this new layout is by just starting to use it. And don’t worry if it’s frustrating sometimes. While typing this article, I’ve stumbled multiple times over the Z/Y issue myself, even after using German and English keyboard layouts in tandem for almost two decades.

~ 1	! 2	@ 3	# 4	\$ 5	% 6	^ 7	& 8	* 9	(0) -	+ =	 Backspace	
Tab 	Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	{ [}]	 \ _
Caps Lock 	A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	: ;	" '	Enter 	
Shift 	Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	< ,	> .	? /	Shift 		
Ctrl	Win Key	Alt								Alt	Win Key	Menu	Ctrl

US QWERTY keyboard layout via Wikipedia, CC

° ^	! 1	" 2	§ 3	\$ 4	% 5	& 6	/ 7	{ 8	(9) 0	= }	? ~	←
↔	Q @	W	E €	R	T	Z	U	I	O	P	Ü	* +	↵
↓	A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	Ö	Ä	' #	
↑	> <	Y 	X	C	V	B	N	M μ	;	:	- _	↵	
Strg	(Win)	Alt							Alt Gr	(Win)	(Menu)	Strg	

German QWERTZ keyboard layout via Wikipedia, CC

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