

Episode 078 – Grammar

"lassen" as a main verb and as a helping verb

"lassen" is a verb that can serve different functions and have different meanings.

"lassen" as a main verb

As a main verb, "lassen" can often be used on its own and usually means to stop or to have stopped doing something. It can also be defined as "to let be" or "to leave be".

Example:

Helmut: *Alle mal herhören! Anna hat heute Geburtstag!*

Anna: *Helmut, **lass es!***

(= Anna doesn't want everyone to find out that it's her birthday. She wants Helmut to stop teasing her.)

"lassen" as a helping verb

As a helping verb, "lassen" is used in conjunction with another verb in the infinitive. This is similar to constructions with modal verbs. In this case, "lassen" can have different meanings, such as

1. *lassen* = to let, to allow something

Example:

Helmut: *Anna, bitte **lass mich gehen!***

(= Helmut wants Anna to let him go.)

Harry – gefangen in der Zeit

Begleitmaterialien

2. *lassen* = to cause, bring about something, to get something to happen

In this sense, "lassen" means to cause something to happen or to get something done.

Example:

Anna: *Wenn ich aus der Zeitschleife rauskomme, dann **lasse** ich Helmut **verhaften**.*
 (= Anna will see to it that Helmut gets arrested.)

3. The imperative of "lassen" as a command for the 1st person plural

In German, there is no imperative form for "wir". To construct it you use either the formal imperative together with the personal pronoun or "lassen" as a helping verb. For example, you'd say "Lass uns etwas tun!" when referring to yourself and another person, and "Lasst uns etwas tun!" when you mean a group of people.

Declarative sentence

Du gehst.

Sie gehen.

Wir gehen.

Imperative

Geh!

Gehen Sie!

*Gehen wir! Oder: **Lass uns gehen!***

4. *sich ... lassen* = man kann

The phrase "sich ... lassen" is similar in meaning to the modal verb "können". It indicates a possibility and can be used as a substitute for a passive sentence with "können". Whatever it is that can be done is described by the verb in the infinitive.

Active

*Die Werkstatt **kann** das Auto **reparieren**.*

Passive

*Das Auto **kann repariert werden**.*

Passive substitute

*Das Auto **lässt sich reparieren**.*