Episode 015 – Grammar

1. Ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers can be used to determine a sequence. The ordinal number represents the position of an element in the sequence. For example, the days of the month are a series of numbers in which one day ranks in a certain position:

Example:
der **siebzehnte** *März* = the 17th day in the month of March
der **dreißigste** *April* = the 30th day in the month of April

In German, ordinal numbers are written as digits followed by a period:

Examples:
der **17.** *März = March 17th*
der **30.** *April = April 30th*

When spoken or written out as a word, they are formed as follows:

For the numbers 1 to 19, the ending **-te** is added to the cardinal number in the singular.
Exceptions for ordinal numbers are "eins", "drei", "sieben" and "acht".

eins	**der erste** *(irregular)*
zwei	**der zweite**
drei	**der dritte** *(irregular)*
vier	**der vierte**
fünf	**der fünfte**

sechs	**der sechste**
sieb**en**	**der siebte** *(en is omitted)*
ach**t**	**der achte** *(only one t)*
neun	**der neunte**
zehn	**der zehnte**
elf	**der elfte**
zwölf	**der zwölfte**
dreizehn	**der dreizehnte**
... *etcetera*	
zwanzig	**der zwanzigste**
dreißig	**der dreißigste**
vierzig	**der vierzigste**
... *etcetera*	

Combined ordinal numbers greater than 13 are formed the same way as cardinal numbers:
First you say the hundreds, then the ones, then the tens. Only the last part is given the ending for ordinal numbers.

	14.	= **der vierzehnte**
	21.	= **der einundzwanzigste**
	155.	= **der hundertfünfundfünfzigste**
Note:	101.	= **der hunderterste**

More:

Ordinal numbers usually precede the noun they describe. They can be used with definite or indefinite articles - or no article at all. Ordinal numbers have different endings according to gender, case and number and the accompanying article.

Example:
*Das **erste** Problem: Heute ist der 31. April.*

But:
*Ich sehe Sie heute zum **ersten** Mal.*

2. Expressing dates

Use ordinal numbers to express the date. First you name the day, then the month, then the year. Days are always masculine, meaning they are preceded by a masculine definite article. In written German, the day and year are always given in numerals.

Examples:
*Heute ist **der 31. April**.* = spoken as: ***der einunddreißigste April***
*Mein Geburtstag ist **der 17. März 1950**.* = spoken as: ***der siebzehnte März neunzehnhundertfünfzig***

If you want to mention the day of the week, it precedes the date and is separated by a comma.

Example:
*Heute ist **Mittwoch, der 31. April*** = spoken as: ***Mittwoch, der einunddreißigste April***

More:

The months can be referred to by their names or as ordinal numbers in written and spoken German. January is the first month of the year, February is the 2nd, and so on. Since this is much shorter to write, you'll see it often in business correspondence and e-mails.

Example:
der 31.4. = spoken as: ***der einunddreißigste Vierte***

3.   **The pronoun "es"**

The pronoun "es" (it) is usually used for a neuter noun.

Example:
Ist das Bett zu hart? - Nein, **es** *ist nicht zu hart.* (**es** = das Bett)

But:
Es gibt *Pinguine.*

In this sentence, "es" has a different function. Here it doesn't stand for a particular noun. It functions as the subject, without having any actual meaning. This construction is used frequently for impersonal phrases which have no other subject.

Fixed phrases:	**Es** *gibt …* **Es** *geht mir gut.* **Es** *tut mir leid.*
Time expressions:	*Wie spät ist* **es**?
Weather:	**Es** *regnet.* **Es** *ist heiß.*