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VERBS L10 – THE VERB "LASSEN"

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WHEN DO WE USE "LASSEN"?

We can use the verb "lassen" **as a main verb and as a modal verb** (with a second verb in the infinitive form). **The meaning of "lassen" differs** depending on the use. "Sich lassen" in the third person is also an **alternative way of expressing the passive voice**.

USE AS A MAIN VERB

We use "lassen" in the meaning "to stop" or "to quit":

- „Ich **lasse** das Rauchen."
= I am quitting smoking. I don't smoke anymore.
- „**Lass** Papa in Ruhe."
= Stop annoying Papa.

USE AS A AUXILIARY VERB

1. We use "lassen" in the meaning "not to bring, "not to change".

- „Ich **lasse** mein Auto in der Garage **stehen**."
= I am leaving my car at home in the garage.
- „Ich **lasse** mein Handy zu Hause **liegen**."
= I am not taking my mobile phone with me.

2. We use "lassen" in the meaning "to allow something":

- „Ich **lasse** meinen Sohn abends **fernsehen**."
= I allow my son to watch TV in the evening.
- „Er **lässt** seine Tochter mit dem Auto **fahren**."
= He lets his daughter use the car.

“Lassen” is used with verbs that describe a state, not an action:

- stehen, liegen, sitzen, ... (to stand, to lay, to sit, ...)



ATTENTION

We often drop the 2nd verb because it's obvious or commonly known. However, if you do so, you have to treat "lassen" like a main verb.

„Ich **lasse** mein Handy zu Hause.“

3. We use “lassen” in the meaning “something is possible/impossible”:

- „Pizza **lässt** sich ganz leicht selbst **machen**.“
= Pizza is easy to make yourself.
- „Der Fernseher **lässt** sich nicht **reparieren**.“
= It is not possible to repair the TV.

4. We use “lassen” in the meaning “to arrange for something to be done” (and not do it yourself):

- „Ich **lasse** mein Fahrrad **reparieren**.“
= I am having my bike repaired (by someone else).
- „Ich **lasse** mir eine Pizza **bringen**.“
= I will have a pizza brought to me.

5. When “lassen” is used as an auxiliary verb, it usually has a passive meaning:

- „Meine Freundin **lässt** sich die Haare **schneiden**.“
= „Die Haare (meiner Freundin) **werden geschnitten**.“
My girlfriend let her hair being cut vs. The hair of my girlfriend is being cut.

The difference is that the first sentence stresses that someone else is taking action (cutting her hair), while the second sentence refers to the action itself (the hair being cut).

More Examples – Passive Meaning:

- „Mein Vater **lässt** sich morgen **operieren**."
= My father has an operation tomorrow.
→ He has arranged it to be done.
- „Das Problem **lässt** sich einfach **lösen**."
= The problem can be easily solved.
→ It is possible to solve the problem easily.

CONJUGATION OF “LASSEN”

	Present	Simple Past	Perfect	
ich	lasse	ließ	habe	lassen / gelassen
du	lässt	ließt	hast	
er / sie / es	lässt	ließ	hat	
wir	lassen	ließen	haben	
ihr	lasst	ließt	habt	
sie / Sie	lassen	ließen	haben	

“LASSEN” OR “GELASSEN”

gelassen	lassen
“lassen” as the main verb haben + Partizip 2 of lassen „Ich habe mein Auto zu Hause gelassen.“	Passive “lassen” with a second verb haben + infinitive of 2nd Verb + “lassen” „Das Problem hat sich einfach lösen lassen.“

This is just like the standard rules for modal verbs.

WORD ORDER

Normal Sentence:

	Position 2		End
Mein Vater	lässt	sich morgen	operieren.

Question:

Position 1		End
Lässt	sich mein Vater morgen	operieren?

If "lassen" is the main verb, it is in position 1 or 2 in the main clause. However, if we use "lassen" as an auxiliary verb, we follow the rules of modal verbs.

"Lassen" is not a real modal verb because it has its own meaning and can be used without a second verb in the sentence. On the other hand, modal verbs always require a second verb and have no proper meaning by themselves!

SUMMARY

- "Lassen" has different meanings and can be used as an alternative passive form.
- It can be used as a main verb or as an auxiliary verb.
- When we use "lassen" as an auxiliary verb, we treat it like a modal verb.

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