ADJECTIVE ENDINGS

The rules for picking the correct adjective ending are straightforward. Either the case, number, and gender of the noun are already indicated by the article/similar word, or they are not. You pick the adjective ending based on two simple questions.

1. DO YOU KNOW THE CORRECT FORMS OF THE DEFINITE ARTICLE? IF YES, GO ON. IF NO, LEARN NOW.

DEFINITE ARTICLE

	Maskulinum	Femininum	Neutrum	Plural
Nominativ	der	die	das	die
Akkusativ	den	die	das	die
Dativ	dem	der	dem	den
Genitiv	des	der	des	der

The der-words are equivalent to the definite article and follow the same patern: dieser, jeder, jener, mancher, solcher, welcher.

2. ARE THE CASE, NUMBER, AND GENDER OF THE NOUN INDICATED BY THE ARTICLE/SIMILAR WORD?

   A. IF YES, THEN ADD ONE OF THESE TWO THROWAWAY ENDINGS (WEAK ENDINGS):
      –e after der/die/das (or equivalent): "The Big Three Take an –e."
      –en after all others (all plural, all dative, all genitive, and masculine accusative)

WEAK ENDINGS

	Maskulinum	Femininum	Neutrum	Plural
Nominativ	-e	-e	-e	-en
Akkusativ	-en	-e	-e	-en
Dativ	-en	-en	-en	-en
Genitiv	-en	-en	-en	-en

Examples:
   die schöne Prinzessin (clearly fem. nom. or, theoretically, acc.)
   dieses kleine Häuschen (clearly neut. nom. or, theoretically, acc.)
   der sprechende Elch (clearly masc. nom.)
   im (in dem) großen Schloss (clearly neut. dat.; it could be masc., but the forms are the same)
   die besten Freunde (clearly plur. nom. or, theoretically, acc.)
   Welchen neuen Film hast du gesehen? (clearly masc. acc.)

The ein-words (mein, dein, sein, kein, unser, euer, ihr, Ihr) are identical to the definite article in nom./acc. fem., plural, dative, genitive, and masculine accusative. In those cases, they take the same adjective endings. Notice where the background colors are identical to the DEFINITE ARTICLES and WEAK ENDINGS charts.

	Maskulinum	Femininum	Neutrum	Plural
Nominativ	ein	eine	ein	keine
Akkusativ	einen	eine	ein	keine
Dativ	einem	einer	einem	keinen
Genitiv	eines	einer	eines	keiner

Why keine in the plural column? It's not possible to have "a books," but it is possible to have "no books."

Examples:
eine schöne Prinzessin (same as „die schöne Prinzessin")
in einem großen Schloss (same as „im großen Schloss")
meine besten Freunde (same as „die besten Freunde")
Hast du einen neuen Film gesehen? (same as „welchen neuen Film")

B. IF NO, USE THE ARTICLE ENDING **AS** THE ADJECTIVE ENDING.

Exceptions:
das becomes –<u>es</u>
masc./neut. gen. sing. use –<u>en</u> instead of the ending from the article des

STRONG ENDINGS

	Maskulinum	Femininum	Neutrum	Plural
Nominativ	-er	-e	-<u>es</u>	-e
Akkusativ	-en	-e	-<u>es</u>	-e
Dativ	-em	-er	-em	-en
Genitiv	-<u>en</u>	-er	-<u>en</u>	-er

Examples:
ein kleines Häuschen (ein is not clearly neuter, but –es is)
ein sprechender Elch (ein is not clearly masculine, but –er is)
unser neues Auto (unser is not clearly neuter, but –es is)

Besides cleaning up after the form ein or exact equivalent (such as mein, unser), this last chart of STRONG ENDINGS typically occurs with plurals and foods, places where it is also common to omit an article in Engish:
Auf gute Freunde kann man sich immer verlassen.
("You can always count on good friends.")
Heute: holländisch<u>er</u> Käse zu einem gut<u>en</u> Preis (–<u>er</u> shows masc. nom., but –<u>en</u> after clear dative)
(Today: Dutch Cheese for a Good Price)
Italienisches Eis (–es shows neut. nom.)
(Italian Ice Cream)
Heiße deutsche Suppe (–e shows fem. nom., adjectives in a series take the same ending)
(Hot German Soup)
Frisch gebacken<u>es</u> Brot nach alt<u>em</u> Rezept (–<u>es</u> shows neut. nom.; –<u>em</u> shows neut. dat. after nach)
(Freshly Baked Bread according to Old Recipe)

Notes:
1. City names as adjectives remain capitalized and always take –er: eine gute Berliner Zeitung.
2. Adjectives in –el and –er drop the –e– when an ending follows: eine dunkle Nacht, ein teures Auto.