

## German Word of the Day - "Feierabend"

by German-is-easy - Monday, January 09, 2012

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Hello everyone,

and welcome to our German Word of the Day. This time we are going to have a look at the meaning of:

*der Feierabend*

*Feierabend* is a thing that every employee around the world has been and is looking forward to with joy, and yet the term does not really exist in English. **Feierabend** consists of the 2 parts **Feier** and **Abend**. **Die Feier** has its origin in the Latin *feriae*, which meant something like a day without any business activities'. So **Feier** is actually related to the German word **die Ferien** which is the holidays for students and pupils. Adult working class citizens have something different... they have **Urlaub**, which is not as often and not as long, but I digress.

**Eine Feier** is a celebration or a party and so it comes in a number of compounds nouns such as **Weihnachtsfeier** (Christmas party), **Geburtstagsfeier** (birthday party), **Hochzeitsfeier** (wedding reception) or **Osterfeuer**.... oh wait ... the last one means easter fire. The pronunciation of **Feuer** is not so different to **Feier** so pay attention there.

- **Feier vs. Feuer**

There is also the verb **feiern**. **Feiern** originally means to celebrate but especially younger people use it also in sense of to party. If that is not intense enough for you, you may add the prefix **ab** to make it a real blast... so **abfeiern** is really partyin' it out.

- Am Samstag gehe ich **feiern**.
- On Saturday, I'm going to go **party**.
  
- Im Sommer fahre ich zu einem Festival. Ich will so richtig **abfeiern**.
- In summer I will go to a festival. I want to **party hard**.

The second part of *Feierabend* is *Abend* and it means evening. Note that the German evening lasts longer than the English one does, so it is also used in sense of night. The question "What are you doing tonight" translated literally using *Nacht* might sound a little salacious or the answer might just be "Sleep. Why?" The correct question in German is:

- Was machst du heute *Abend*?
- What are you going to do tonight?

So now lets put the 2 parts *Feier* and *Abend* together and see what that would be  
hmmmm... party-night I guess.

Niiiiiiiiice! I sure wanne have that. What was that in the beginning? Every employee has it? So it's like .. I should get a job or something to get free party-night?

Exactly... because *Feierabend* is the moment when you have finished your work and there is not really a translation for that... by the way, it is actually strange that there is all these grumpy faces in Berlin subway at 5 pm as they all have party-night... well I guess it's more inside :)

- Schönen *Feierabend*!

This is one of THE MOST used goodbye-phrases amongst colleagues. And it doesn't matter whether it actually IS evening or not. It is also used by two night nurses at 8 am to say goodbye and you can also say it when your coworker, who is only a part time, leaves the office at noon.

The duration of *Feierabend* is hard to grasp but I tend to say that it is a rather short time as there is phrasings like the following:

- I *got off work at 6*.
- Ich *hatte* um 6 *Feierabend*.

- What are you going to do *after you finish work*.
- Was machst du heute *nach Feierabend*.

The first examples also show the main usage. *Feierabend* is something you usually HAVE but if it is up to you to decide when your task is finished you can also MAKE *Feierabend*.

- Ich mache heute schon um 3 *Feierabend*.

Now before we wrap this up with a little grammar... yeah I know.... let's list some people who finish hard hard work every day and yet they don't have party-night, they just have *Schluss*:

- Schüler
- Studenten

Hah! You can't really use *Feierabend* unless it is something job-related you are finishing. So if you want it, get a job!

The grammar is going to be really quick and might actually fit in one line if only I wouldn't spend so much time to introd... ok sorry, I am about to have my *Feierabend* too, so I am a little silly right now. The plural of *Feierabend* is *Feierabende*, yet it is rarely ever used. And here is the little gender reminder... it is of course DER *Feierabend* so it is masculine because MEN work while women enjoy their *Freizeit* (free time) which is hence *die Freizeit*... what's that? Not 1950 anymore?... true true true.. but back then when the articles were forged by those wise men, those were the days I tell ya'.

Disclaimer:all the gender-related stereotypes are solely used

for joke purposes!!

There is no reason why women shouldn't do everything men do...

except for not sitting down on the toilet.

Schönen Feierabend and see you next time.

**\*\* vocab \*\***

*der Feierabend* - well.. you got the idea

*der Urlaub* - vacation for working people or vacation trip

*die Ferien* - vacation for Students and pupils

*der Abend* - the evening

*feiern* - celebrate

*feiern gehen* - go party

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