APPENDIX V: Umlaut Changes

To improve vocabulary building skills, one must also look carefully at the use of Umlauts (ä, ö, ü, äu) in the German language. Many words already come with an Umlaut-stem, and even their derivatives do not change that particular Umlaut:

ähneln - *have a resemblance*   **ähnlich** - *like, similar*   **Änlichkeit** - *similarity, resemblance*

Häresie - *heresy*
hören - *hear; to listen; to obey*   **Hörer** - *listener*
plötzlich - *sudden(ly); abrupt; all at once*
Sünde - *sin, transgression*   **Sünden** - pl.   **Sünder** - *sinner* **sündig** - *sinful*

zwölf - *twelve*

Umlautes are often found in derivatives of many words forming entire word-families with that same Umlaut-sound.

1. In many nouns the plural form is indicated also by an Umlaut-change in the stem from **a**, **o**, **u** to an **ä**, **ö**, **ü** :

    Altar, Altäre - *altar, alters*
    Haus, Häuser - *house, houses*
    Kampf, Kämpfe - *battle, battles*

2. Umlauts are also found characteristically in conjugated forms of many irregular verbs such as the second and third person singular, as well as forms of modal auxiliaries and the subjunctive:

    fallen - **du fällst, er/sie/es fällt**   = *to fall, you fall, he/she/it falls*
    hatten - **hätte** (subjunctive)   = *had, would have*
    er mag - **wir mögen**   = *he likes, we like*

3. Umlauts are characteristic for forms of the Present, Past, and Future Subjunctive II. There, umlauts are added to past tense stem vowels of irregular or strong verbs:

    gab - gäbe
    sah - sähe
    mußte - müßte
    war - wäre
    hatte - hätte
    wurde - würde

4. Umlauts are characteristic for the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives, e.g.:

hoch	**höher**	**höchsten**	= *high, higher, highest*
jung	**jünger**	**jüngsten**	= *young, younger, youngest*
kurz	**kürzer**	**kürzesten**	**=** *short, shorter, shortest*

5. Umlauts in many other word derivatives, e.g.:

Angst **ängstlich**
fear   *fearful*

kurz **kürzer** **kürzen** **Kürze**
short   *shorter* *to shorten* *shortness*

los **lösen** **erlösen** **Erlösung** **Erlöser**
loose *to loosen* *to redeem* *redemption* *redeemer*

Mund **mündig** **mündlich**
mouth   *of age*   *oral*

Natur **natürlich**
nature *naturally*

offen **öffnen** **Öffnung**
open   *to open* *opening*

Tag **täglich**
day   *daily*