

Make it in Germany

Working and Living in Germany

Your Individual Information Package



Language acquisition: Preparation in the home country

General information

German courses help to learn the language quicker and better. These are offered in various formats: intensive courses can last one or more week, others a whole semester, so half a year. Depending on the type of course, the participants spend several hours a day or per week in class and with homework. For employees, evening courses are recommended. Even if no German knowledge must be proven in order to take up employment, it is good for applications and the CV if a person has passed language examinations. By means of this, companies can clearly see that candidates are committed and can bring language ability to the table. In addition, your day-to-day life will also be easier to manage if you're able to speak German. On the website [Make it in Germany](#) you'll find a few tips on where and how to learn German.

Support programmes

Within the framework of financial support programmes, such as "[Your First Eures Job](#)" and "Triple-Win", a specialised programme for nursing staff, adequate language support can currently be provided.

Required knowledge of the German language

Depending on the employment plans of people who come to Germany, they need to provide proof of their German language competence prior to taking up work. Anybody who wishes to work as a nurse or medical doctor in Germany also requires proof of his or her language competence alongside with the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad by recognised institutions such as the [Goethe Institute \(worldwide\)](#) or telc-certified bodies (in over 20 countries with 3,000 examination centres). Further information and addresses of examination centres are available on the Goethe Institute website and on the [telc website](#).

Generally and regardless of the type of professional activity in Germany, companies expect their new employees to be able to make themselves understood in German. Therefore it is recommended to have acquired at least the medium language level (B1 or B2) prior to making an application.

Individual and group classes

Group classes are usually more cost effective and have the benefit that participants can interact with their classmates and maybe build initial contacts. Individual tuition, which is usually more expensive, is tailored entirely to individual requirements. The class can usually be freely scheduled and it is possible to learn German before work or during the evenings, for example.

Anybody who already lives in Germany and wishes to improve their language competence should compare services which are provided locally and discuss with their employer whether he or she will contribute to the costs or pay for the course in full.

Most language courses end with an examination. It should be clarified in advance whether any additional fees will arise for this.

Having your knowledge of the German language checked

The international German radio service “Deutsche Welle“ offers a free-of-charge [online classification test](#), which is based on the [Common European Reference Framework for Language](#). The service helps to find out the current language level and to improve prior knowledge with targeted exercises. The Goethe Institute offers an [online test in German](#) and English, which helps people determine their own level of knowledge of German.

The German certificate of the Goethe Institute

One of the most important language certificates is the B1 certificate in German of the Goethe Institute. According to the guidelines of the [Common European Reference Framework for Languages](#), it checks the capability for independent use of language in daily conversations and situations at work. As the test is recognised as an entry examination and as proof of German knowledge at work, it provides many benefits when looking for work.

The test is broken down into five sections:

- Reading: in three exercises, it is checked to what extent the participant is in the position of being able to read and understand texts of varying difficulty;



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- Foundations of language: here, the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is checked;
- Listening: here it is checked how well the participant understands normally spoken texts;
- Writing: the participant receives specific guidelines in accordance with which he or she must write a personal letter;
- Speaking: in an individual or pair exam, a discussion is carried out about various topics.

The written exam component takes about two and a half hours. The oral examination lasts for about 20 minutes. Oral examinations can be taken on the day of the written examination or at a different time.

Language course providers

The [Goethe Institute](#) is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany and is responsible for promoting knowledge of the German language and culture. For this purpose, it offers German courses at 160 locations in Germany and abroad. Alongside the Goethe Institute, there are other providers of language courses:

- The [website of "Make it in Germany"](#) provides a quick overview of the international Goethe Institute locations (rubric "local points of contact").
- The job-related German courses of the [Federal Office for Migration and Refugees \(BAMF\)](#) are intended for immigrants whose German is not yet sufficient for working in Germany. These are supported by the BAMF with funds from the European Social Fund (ESF). Participants do not just learn German for everyday working life, rather they can also undertake further professional development and find out more about a specific profession by means of an internship with a company.
- The charitable [Carl-Duisberg centres](#) offer job-related German courses at locations in Germany, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Russia.

Learning German Online

Regardless of the language level, it is possible to get an initial introduction to the German language or build on previous knowledge by means of the various services which are provided online.

- The [KURSnet database](#) of the Federal Employment Agency summarises recommended course providers.
- With the vocabulary training of the Goethe Institute, the level of vocabulary can be extended, also when a person is out and about.

- The "[Ankommen](#)" app is a direction provider for a speedy and comprehensive orientation during the first weeks in Germany. It also contains a free-of-charge multimedia language course, which provides everyday support during the first steps of learning German.
- On "[Deutsch für dich](#)" (German for you), an online community of the Goethe Institute, it is possible to take part in interactive games and chats with experts. Here, it is also easy to make contact with other users.
- On the "[Ich will Deutsch lernen](#)" (I want to learn German) portal, the language can be learned at levels A1 to B2. The digital learning materials contain many exercises and scenarios from several topics in the area of language and work.
- The "[Mein Weg nach Deutschland](#)" (My way to Germany) multimedia blog provides the option of practising German with photos, films, games and exercises, to chat with other people who are learning Germany and to get to know other users in the "meeting" section.
- The "[Deutsch am Arbeitsplatz](#)" (German in the workplace) platform, which is also provided by the Goethe Institute, offers lots of free-of-charge online exercises, in order to increase knowledge of the language and workplace customs in Germany.
- The technical online dictionary [ARABTERM](#) delivers important extracts from various areas of work, such as electronic engineering, renewable energy and car technology in four languages: German, English, French and Arabic.
- With the [online audio trainer of „Deutsche Welle“](#), vocabulary can be learned and pronunciation improved.
- The telenovela "[Jojo sucht das Glück](#)" (Jojo is searching for luck) by "Deutsche Welle" offers interactive exercises which improve grammar and colloquial vocabulary.
- The "[Deutsche Welle](#)" also offers information about language courses and intercultural differences.
- Anybody who already speaks English but not German, can find lots of information, tips and learning materials on the [BBC online services](#).
- Special language courses for skilled professionals in the health care sector are available on the website [Interkulturelle medizinische Kommunikation in Europa](#).
- On the webpage of the [IQ-Fachstelle Berufsbezogenes Deutsch](#) extensive training material for employees in the health sector can be found
- Additional services can be found in the app stores.

German for spouses

Knowledge of German is also important for spouses who wish to remain in Germany permanently and who do not come from the EU, Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein or Iceland. As a rule, they must provide proof concerning knowledge of the German language at the time of applying for the visa.

As a rule, it is required that they have a knowledge of the German language which is equivalent to level A1 of the European Reference Framework for Languages. At the Goethe Institute, this corresponds to the start 1 course for example. Spouses can also learn independently and take the examination at an approved institute. More detailed information is provided on the [website on spouse immigration of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees](#).

German for children and young people

In language courses for children and young people, these do not just learn German, but also make social contacts. Schools also support children with learning German. The local schools provide information concerning the support they offer.

Before children start school, usually between the ages of four and five and a half, a language test is taken to determine if their German is good enough or whether they need support from the school with learning German. In a few federal states, children who do not yet speak enough German must take part in the services offered. Further information can be obtained from the [Federal Office for Migration and Refugees](#).

A good alternative in order to prepare children and young people for a stay in Germany are German schools abroad. The [Central Office of Foreign Schooling \(ZfA\)](#) supports a network of more than 140 German foreign schools on behalf of the Office for External Affairs, both financially, in terms of personnel and educationally. Here, pupils can obtain a bilingual education and obtain both German and domestic qualifications.

German for students

Anybody who wishes to study at university in Germany needs to provide evidence of German language capability for most courses. For this purpose, the "German language exam for the admission to university of foreign applicants" (DHS) or the "Test for German as a foreign language" (TestDaf) must be taken.

For international courses of study in Germany, knowledge of English is often required. Further information can be obtained from the universities directly.

Within the framework of the preparation for a stay in Germany, students can already choose a course which they will subsequently attend in Germany. The [German Academic Exchange Service \(Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst - DAAD\)](#) provides an overview of courses which can then be selected according to academic subject.

As an alternative, [Deutsch-Uni Online \(DUO\)](#), a service provided by the Society for Academic Study Preparation and test Development e.V (g.a.s.t) in co-operation with the Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich, is also suitable. This provides helpful information about the country, as well as numerous opportunities to build on existing German language competence.



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For further questions do not hesitate to contact the Make it in Germany – Customer Center of the International and Specialized Services (ZAV) of the Federal Employment Agency.

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If you have any questions about labour market access or work permit procedures, please contact the following team:

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