

HOW TO LEARN GERMAN

One of the most important parts about living in Germany is the language.

by **Nirmala Devi Windgaetter**

You might think that it is not worth to learn the language when you are planning to be here for few years. The truth is, if you speak German, it opens a whole new world to you. Without German, you really limit yourself and your interactions because not everyone speaks English and you know what they say about when in Rome. Here are some ideas and suggestions on how to learn or improve your German.

German Courses

One of the most effective way for beginners is to take a German course. Usually you will have to get yourself tested before you join a German course. If you can afford the time, an intensive German course will mean that you will speak and listen to German actively at least for four hours daily, five days a week. If that sounds like torture for you, you can chose a weekly course.

Nevertheless, you should be prepared to do homework and revisions at home if you want to be successful. The positive aspect of joining a language course is that you will automatically make an effort to use the language in the classroom. This is proven to be one of the best ways to learn a language.

On the other hand it might be difficult to find a course that is suitable for you because most of the courses are customized for general certification. There are many language schools around here and the Volkshochschule is always a good place to start (check out the sidebar).

Another option is to have private lessons. These are also offered by most of the language schools. The best part of a private tutor is the flexibility. You can choose your own time, pace and have the lesson modified to your needs. On the other hand you might lack the practice in conversation because you will have to make your own effort to meet people and practice your German, not to mention that it can get very expensive.

Some people say that the best way to learn German is through online or audio CDs. This might be a very good option to help you with your vocabulary or grammar especially for written language but if you are planning to converse in German, it really helps to go out there and use the language. One also has to be very disciplined to effectively use this method because there is no external control to motivate or control you.

The 'tandem method' is also an interesting way to learn a language. You meet a native speaker who wants to

learn English, once a week and take turns communicating in English and German. Both individuals will improve their target language. This might not be a very good idea for beginners but is a great method to improve your conversation skills in German.

The most important thing is to know which method is suitable for you. What works for one might not be the right path for the other. If you are interested to know which learning method is most suitable for you, check out www.learning-styles-online.com. It offers a free online test that gives you an idea about which type of learning method is best for you. This might help you choose the right method to learn German. The test takes about ten minutes and offers a detailed result on how and why you should learn the way you should.

Here are some simple and interesting ideas from our members on how to practice and improve your German

1. Watch TV. Watching the news will definitely help you improve your vocabulary and understanding of the language because the language here is very clear and informative. Try also watching English movies with German subtitles. One member actually improved her German tremendously by watching Germany's Next Topmodel with her teenager daughter.

2. Read in German. Start with short stories or children stories. One or two headlines in the newspaper is also a good idea. Try reading a lightly themed magazine because the visuals are helpful.

3. Cook in German. Try out new recipes in German. Try using German in the whole process including when you go shopping for the ingredients

4. Hang out in German bars. This will definitely help you improve your conversation skills. The relaxed environment will also help you overcome your inhibition

5. Work in German. Try volunteering in the local community where you have a chance to use your German. This way you will be forced to use German and at the same time do some good.

6. Change your computer/mobile phone language to German. This might be frustrating at the beginning but very rewarding when you finally figure it out.

7. Have a German day. Choose a day in a week and make sure that you speak and listen only German. Get together with your friends or go to a movie or a theater but all in German.

8. Eavesdrop. Listen to the people around you talk. This will help you to get used to the intonations.

9. Get a German partner. One member claims that this is a great way to learn and improve your German. Being with a German partner automatically puts you in daily situations where you have to speak German. Maybe it also gives a different motivation to learn the language. Of course this tip is for the single girls out there and if any of the married ladies decides to try this out, just make sure that you speak enough German to get yourself out of trouble! ❄️

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