



GR 101 GERMAN LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT: NOVICE ABROAD I

IES Abroad Vienna

DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed for students with no prior experience in German and provides a comprehensive introduction to the language and culture. It aims to develop foundational skills that allow students to function in basic, everyday situations in German-speaking environments - both in and outside the classroom.

Through a communicative, task-based approach, students build competence across the five skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and intercultural communication. They will learn to engage in simple interactions, such as greeting others, asking for information, ordering food, talking about themselves and their immediate surroundings, discussing plans, and reflecting on their semester abroad. Students also gain insight into everyday life, customs, and communicative norms in German-speaking cultures, with a particular focus on Vienna, Austria, as the immediate cultural context.

To support effective communication, students will acquire essential grammatical structures in context. These include regular and irregular verb conjugation to describe actions, the correct use of articles and noun cases to identify subjects and objects, modal verbs to express preferences, obligations, and intentions, and an introduction to the Perfekt tense for talking about personal experiences and past events. Grammar is taught as a tool to accomplish communicative goals in meaningful, real-life contexts.

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to perform a variety of simple communicative tasks with memorized phrases and basic structures, consistent with beginning-level outcomes on the IES Abroad Language Map (Novice Abroad) and/or CEFR A1 proficiency standards. Coursework includes interactive class sessions, vocabulary development, structured grammar practice, short writing assignments, and real-world tasks designed to build both linguistic ability and cultural awareness.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 36 hours (24 hours in class & 12 hours guided independent studies and projects)

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: German

INSTRUCTOR:

PREREQUISITES: Students who enter this course need to have no prior knowledge of the language.

ADDITIONAL COST: no additional costs

METHOD OF PRESENTATION

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This course uses a communicative, student-centered approach that emphasizes active engagement with the language and culture. Learning is facilitated through a variety of interactive and immersive methods, including:

- Integrated skill-building exercises in reading, writing, listening, and speaking
- Oral and written assignments, including short in-class presentations and creative writing tasks
- Collaborative classroom activities, such as role plays, dialogues, interviews, and games
- Course-related excursions that connect language learning to authentic cultural experiences, including visits to a Viennese coffee house, a local food market, or a guided museum tour

This blended approach allows students to apply language in real-world contexts, deepen their intercultural understanding, and develop communicative competence in a meaningful and enjoyable way.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

10 % Active Participation in Class

20 % Skill-Focused and Culturally Reflective Learning

10 % Homework

25 % Regular Quizzes & Tests

10 % Oral Exams

25 % Written Exams

Active Participation in Class

Participation is more than mere attendance; it means coming to class well-prepared, engaging actively in discussions, and supporting one another as collaborative members of our learning community. Students should listen attentively, ask and answer thoughtful questions, and offer constructive feedback to peers. They are encouraged to take initiative in pair and group work - sharing ideas, volunteering for tasks, and taking detailed notes. At the same time, each student is responsible for monitoring their own understanding and seeking additional assistance or tutoring whenever challenges arise. Throughout all activities, learners should strive to use German as much as possible, fostering both their own progress and a positive, encouraging classroom environment.

Skill-Focused and Culturally Reflective Learning

Students will engage in tasks designed to develop the IES MAP's five skill areas - Intercultural Communication, Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Creative assignments, such as journaling, field-based projects, analysis of authentic materials, and peer collaborations, are graded under this category; however, ongoing language learning progress also plays a central role. Assessment considers both the quality of each submission and the consistency with which new vocabulary, grammatical structures, and cultural insights are integrated across all work, thereby reflecting overall growth as language learners.

Homework:

After each class, students will complete assigned exercises in the "Übungsbuch" (workbook), along with supplementary worksheets or digital practice on Moodle. Homework reinforces grammar and vocabulary introduced in class. Students are expected to correct their work independently; only areas of difficulty or misunderstanding will be reviewed in class.

Quizzes & Tests



To promote steady progress, students will take regular written quizzes and one midterm test to assess their grasp of grammar and vocabulary. These quizzes will be administered daily or weekly, focusing on vocabulary, grammar, and structures recently introduced in class. The goal is to encourage students to study new content regularly and in manageable portions.

Oral Exams

Students' speaking skills will be assessed through two oral exams during the semester: Each exam involves a structured, real-life task such as a paired dialogue or short personal presentation.

Assessment follows CEFR A1-aligned criteria, adapted from the ÖSD exam model: 1. Task Fulfillment and Communicative Effectiveness, 2. Vocabulary and Expression, 3. Pronunciation, Fluency, and intonation 4. Grammatical Accuracy

Written Exams

One comprehensive written exam will take place at the end of the course. The Exam assesses listening and reading comprehension, writing ability, and understanding of key grammar and vocabulary topics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will have achieved many of the learning goals described for the Novice Abroad level in the *IES Abroad MAP for Language and Intercultural Communication*. Specifically, they will be able to:

- Participate in basic small talk by asking and answering questions about themselves and others
- Describe everyday objects, routines, and places in the city
- Interact in predictable situations at restaurants, cafés, shops, and (super)markets, using appropriate formulas
- Talk about their family, friends, interests, daily habits, and recent trips
- Discuss future plans and make simple appointments
- Reflect on and describe their experiences during the semester abroad using the past tense

These communicative goals are underpinned by the following skill-specific outcomes:

Intercultural Communication

- Use verbal and non-verbal strategies (e.g., repetition, gestures, paraphrasing) to meet basic everyday needs
- Recognize and begin to apply appropriate levels of formality in speech
- Begin making simple, informed comparisons between elements of the host and home cultures

Listening

- Understand common statements, descriptions, requests, and questions in contexts relevant to student life (e.g., classroom, public transportation, dining, shopping, and social interactions)
- Use contextual clues to grasp the general idea of overheard conversations, simple announcements, and basic media content

Speaking

- Use memorized and rehearsed phrases in everyday interactions across familiar settings (e.g., at home, at the IES Abroad center, with peers and the local community)
- Ask and answer simple questions to express basic needs and preferences in uncomplicated, routine situations

Reading

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- Recognize and understand frequently used words and short phrases in signs, schedules, and familiar printed materials
- Identify main ideas in short, simple texts such as menus, advertisements, and social media posts
- Apply basic reading strategies like identifying cognates, scanning for key information, and recognizing text types

Writing

- Produce short texts such as personal introductions, messages, or brief reflections using simple sentence structures
- Communicate basic information related to everyday life (e.g., describing daily routines, making plans, recounting recent experiences)
- Apply learned vocabulary and grammar to express ideas with increasing accuracy and clarity, using writing as a tool for structured language practice

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

IES Abroad Vienna requires attendance at all class sessions. Attendance will be taken every class. Students must attend at least 60% of their class sessions to qualify for a passing grade, regardless of whether their absences have been excused or not. Attendance is required in-person unless otherwise noted in the syllabus. Excused absences due to the reasons outlined in the IES Abroad Vienna Attendance Policy can only be approved by the academic department. Each unexcused absences will carry a penalty to the final grade and only excused absences entitle students to make up assignments, tests, quizzes, and exams. Students are highly encouraged to communicate absences as soon as possible to their professors. Please refer to the IES Abroad Vienna Attendance Policy for a more precise overview of all attendance policies at IES Abroad Vienna and of grade penalties.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

At IES Abroad Vienna, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty undermines the principles of trust and fairness essential to a thriving learning community. As such, plagiarism and cheating are considered serious violations of our code of conduct, and students found engaging in such activities will face swift and severe consequences, ranging from a failing grade on an assignment, to an academic review and possible expulsion from the program.

USE OF AI:

The instructor will clarify if and how AI tools may be used, which may vary by assignment. In all cases, use of AI must be clearly acknowledged, and students remain fully responsible for the content they submit under their name.

CONTENT:

Week	Topics & Vocabulary	Function, Grammar & Culture	Assignments regular homework& quizzes
Intensive Course Week		Functional: - Information about persons. Greetings and introduce yourself. - Useful phrases to start a conversation - profession - personal details on the form; Grammatical: - Interrogativs W-Fragen/ Ja- Nein Fragen) - Word order - Personal pronouns (nominative) - Definite and indefinite articles “Sie” and “du” - Prepositions: aus, aus der, in, - substitute names; er, sie - regular verbs - plural; verbs sein, Culture: - Learn about Austria and Europe (general information about German speaking countries)	- Interviewing classmates in order to get to know each other and asking what languages you have learned - Writing dialogues introducing people - Worksheets on conjugation - Filling in missing verbs Pronouncing names in - German Memorizing frequently used questions and answers (Woher kommst du? Wie ist die Adresse?...)

Week 1-2		Functional: - ask for words; answer a question - numbers, asking for the price - talking about things (adjectives + colors) - Things in the classroom and office with special regards to their internships; - talking about shopping; - what you (don't) like to buy; - writing dialog/blog - understanding and being able to have simple dialogues in supermarkets, restaurants, cafés, bars Grammatical: - definite, indefinite and negative articles - - Nominative; nouns - singular and plural; personal pronouns - Nominative case - Verbs have, would like; definite, indefinite - negative article - doch Culture: - Culture: Vienna's Coffeehouse tradition, shopping, and tipping	- Visit to a Coffeehouse - Ordering food and drinks - Going to a supermarket and finding as well as describing products
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Week 3	Hobbies	Functional: • Say what you (don't) like doing • Describe weekly routine • Give simple time information • Make and respond to appointments Grammatical: • Verb + <i>gern</i> / <i>nicht gern</i> • Present tense verbs • Time expressions and prepositions (<i>um, am, von ... bis ..., seit, in</i>) Cultural: • Daily routines in Austria • Common leisure activities	1st Oral Exam Written Test
Week 4-5		Functional: • Daily routine and time (Wie spät ist es?) • Talking about activities in different seasons and months Grammatical: • Question; "Wann"? (um) „Wie spät ist es? (Es ist.....Uhr) Culture: • Time expressions in German, working and leisure time • Seasons and months in German • What are typical activities in different seasons in Austria / Europe	• Pairwork: Daily routine

Week 6		Functional: - Talk about family and relationships Grammatical: - Possessive pronouns (<i>mein, dein, ihr</i>) - Basic word order review (with time/place) Culture: - Family structures	create a family tree of a known family
Week 7			2 nd Oral Exam Written Final Exam

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

During the semester, there will be two or three excursions to explore different aspects of Vienna. Students will be placed in authentic situations such as ordering pastries at a local bakery, choosing ice cream at a street stand, ordering Sachertorte and coffee at a traditional Viennese coffee house, or selecting produce and conversing with vendors at the Naschmarkt. Alternatively, they may join a German-language guided museum tour or attend a German-language performance, complementing class material and providing further insight into Vienna's rich artistic and cultural heritage.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Panorama A1.1: Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Cornelsen), *Kursbuch* and *Übungsbuch*
- Additional handouts and materials provided by the instructors