



GR 101 GERMAN LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT: NOVICE ABROAD I

IES Abroad Vienna

DESCRIPTION:

This course is intended for students with no prior experience in German and serves as a comprehensive introduction to the language and culture. It supports students in developing a foundational ability to communicate in simple, everyday situations and to begin navigating life in German-speaking environments—especially in Vienna.

Through a communicative, task-based approach, the course guides students in building competence across the five skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and intercultural communication. Emphasis is placed on acquiring high-frequency vocabulary and key grammatical structures that allow for practical communication in predictable contexts. Students learn to greet others, ask for information, order food, describe themselves and their surroundings, discuss their daily routines, and reflect on their time abroad. Materials and tasks are designed to reflect real-life situations and cultural practices relevant to Vienna and the German-speaking world.

To support meaningful interaction, students will learn and practice essential grammar in context. This includes regular and irregular verb conjugation in the present tense, the use of articles and noun cases, personal pronouns, possessive articles, local prepositions for talking about places in the city, modal verbs to express preferences and obligations, and an introduction to the Perfekt tense for describing past experiences. Grammar is treated as a tool to achieve communicative goals rather than as an abstract system.

By the end of the course, students will be able to engage in simple conversations and perform basic communicative tasks using memorized and practiced language. They will understand and produce short, formulaic texts and begin to demonstrate awareness of cultural norms in German-speaking societies.

This course aligns with the A1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and supports students in achieving some of the outcomes described at the Novice Abroad level of the IES Abroad Language MAP.

CREDITS: 4 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 60 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: German

INSTRUCTOR:

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

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ADDITIONAL COST: € 30 for books and copies

METHOD OF PRESENTATION

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 (3 total)
- 25 % Written Exams (3 total)

Active Participation in Class

Participation is more than just being present in class. Students are expected to arrive well-prepared, actively contribute to class discussions, and collaborate constructively with peers. Successful participation includes attentive listening, thoughtful engagement with the material, asking relevant questions, and seeking help when needed. Students should also take detailed notes, initiate contributions, and demonstrate consistent effort during individual, pair, and group activities—all while using the target language as much as possible.

Skill-Focused and Culturally Reflective Learning

Students will complete tasks that target key language skills: writing, speaking, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, visual interpretation, and intercultural communication. These assignments are designed not only to develop linguistic competence but also to encourage students to engage critically and creatively with their new cultural environment. Activities may include journaling, field-based tasks, analysis of authentic materials, and peer interaction. Assessment in this category is based on how thoughtfully and effectively students apply what they have learned in class to real-world or creative tasks—demonstrating their ability to integrate new vocabulary, structures, and cultural insights into meaningful use.

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.

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Quizzes & Tests

To promote steady progress, students will take regular quizzes and occasional short tests throughout both the Intensive Period and the semester. These assessments focus on vocabulary, grammar, and structures recently introduced in class. They are designed to encourage regular review and minimize last-minute cramming.

Oral Exams

Students' speaking skills will be assessed through three 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. Intonation, Pronunciation, Fluency, and Intelligibility 4. Grammatical Accuracy.

Written Exams

Three comprehensive written exams will take place during the course: at the end of the Intensive Period, mid-semester, and at the end of the semester. Exams assess listening and reading comprehension, writing ability, and the ability to apply key grammar and vocabulary.

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)

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- Ask and answer simple questions to express basic needs and preferences in uncomplicated, routine situations

Reading

- 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.

Unexcused absences may 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.

CONTENT:

Week	Topics & Vocabulary	Function, Grammar & Culture	Assignments regular homework & quizzes
<u>Intensive</u>			
Week 1 & 2	Greetings Personal details Things one likes Professions	Functional: • saying hello and goodbye, saying how you are • introducing oneself and others • saying where you are from and what you like • spelling, basics of phonetics • counting until 20 • asking for phone numbers and addresses • filling in forms • ordering (café, ice cream, bakery, Würstelstand) Grammatical: • regular verb conjugation in singular • conjugation of the semi regular verbs <i>heißen</i> & <i>arbeiten</i> • irregular verb conjugation: <i>sein</i> and <i>mögen</i> • prepositions: <i>in, aus</i> (<i>wohnen in, kommen aus</i>) • open questions (<i>wie, woher, wo, was</i>) • prepositions: <i>als, bei</i> (<i>arbeiten als, arbeiten bei</i>) • yes/no- questions • male & female professions Culture: • formal and informal addressing of people (Sie/Du) • famous personalities from German speaking countries • filling in forms (e.g. gym membership)	Culture Project: German signs & posters in the city Field Trip: Ordering in a bakery / ice cream shop / Würstelstand Test (unit 1, 2)
Week 3	Objects in the Classroom Items in the supermarket & drugstore Adjectives to describe objects	Functional: • buying groceries (supermarket, drugstore) • classroom language (asking for the name of objects, asking how to spell words, asking for the article of a noun and answering all of that) • talking about objects in the supermarket & drugstore • describing objects Grammatical: • definite, indefinite and negative articles (<i>Nominativ</i>) • personal pronouns (<i>Nominativ</i>) • singular and plural of nouns Culture:	Writing Project: Writing a paragraph about one's favorite object Oral Exam: Dialogue Smalltalk - ask & answer questions to introduce yourself Final Exam (Unit 1,2,3)

		• products of Austrian origin • small talk topics	
Semester 1/2			
Week 1	Shopping Café House	Functional: • talking about shopping: needs, preferences, prices, useful phrases • ordering, items & useful phrases in a café Grammatical: • introduction of the accusative case with definite, indefinite and negative articles (verbs: (e.g.: <i>suchen, brauchen, haben, möchten, kaufen</i>) • accusative pronouns • the use of the adverb “gern”/”gerne” Culture: • the Austrian coffeehouse culture	First Feedback
Week 2	Adjectives for describing places and cities Seasons	Functional: • understanding basic information about a city • describing locations in a city • talking about preferences in a city • understanding blog entries about cities Grammatical: • important irregular verbs for shopping dialogues (<i>haben</i> and <i>möchten</i>) • syntax: repetition of the 2nd position and the variability of the first position in a sentence. Cultural: • places to visit in Vienna	Writing Project: blog entry on giving recommendations for visiting Vienna; commenting on other blog entries
Week 3	Hobbies	Functional: • understanding persons talking about their free time activities and preferences • talking about activities and preferences Grammatical: • irregular verbs with vowel changes in their stem • temporal prepositions “im” and “am” Cultural: • free time activities in and around Vienna	

Week 4	Weekly Routine, Free Time and Everyday Life Life during different seasons	Functional: • understanding longer texts on a persons free time activities, preferences and work • describing one's week (using season and days of the week) Grammatical: • split verbs • possessive articles 1. & 2. Person Singular Culture: • your new daily routine abroad	Culture Project: Reflection on German words and phrases heard in the city
Week 5	Family Relations Party Smalltalk Languages & Nationalities	Functional: • describing a family tree, • party small talk, talking about countries and languages Grammatical: • possessive articles 3. Person Singular (male&female) Culture: • small talk habits	Oral Exam: Monologue Describing pictures on familiar topics & your personal experiences Midterm Exam (focus: unit 4,5,6 & food)
<u>Semester 2/2</u>			
Week 6	Travelling Shopping Lists	Functional: • talking about past trips to European countries and cities and the languages that are spoken there • telling what you like to eat, writing a shopping list, making shoppings at the market • discussing free time plans Grammatical: • <i>Präteritum</i> of "to be" & "to have" Culture: • Viennese farmer's markets	interviewing classmates on their food preferences go shopping at the market
Week 7	Planning your Freetime & Arrange Meetings	Functional: • talking about what you want to and have to do • planning your freetime and making appointments Grammatical: • modal verbs "wollen" & "müssen" • temporal prepositions (<i>am, um, im, von, bis</i>) Culture: • planning free time activities in and around Vienna	Text about one's last trip

Week 8	Telling about former trips and experiences	Functional: - giving details about a past trip/journey - writing a friend about a trip Grammatical: <i>Perfekt</i> (past tense) with the auxiliary verbs <i>sein</i> & <i>haben</i> Culture: - how do people like to spend their holidays	
Week 9	Times of the day Months Times of the Clock (formal)	Functional: - asking for the time - describing your daily routine & preferences - making appointments Grammatical: - modal verbs “<i>können</i>” Culture: - describing your semester abroad	Presenting your daily routine
Week 10	Synopsis	<i>Reflecting your semester abroad using the acquired grammar structures, phrases and vocabulary.</i>	Culture Project: Reflecting words & phrases you used abroad Oral Exam: Dialogue discussing & reflecting your semester abroad
Week 11			Final Exam (unit 7, 8 & past tense)

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Bakery / Ice Cream / Street Food – practicing how to order food
- Farmer’s market (*Naschmarkt/Brunnenmarkt/Karmelitermarkt*) – ordering, discussing favorite foods, and tasting local specialties
- Viennese Coffee House – ordering drinks and desserts, learning about local coffeehouse culture
- Optional: Museum visit with a guided tour for German learners

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Panorama A1.1: Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Cornelsen), *Kursbuch* and *Übungsbuch* (Chapters 1–8)
- Additional handouts and materials provided by the instructors