



GR 201 GERMAN LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT: NOVICE ABROAD III

IES Abroad Vienna

DESCRIPTION:

This course is intended for students who already have a basic foundation in German and are continuing their progression through the final phase of the beginner level. It supports students in developing greater confidence and independence in everyday communication while expanding their ability to engage with a wider range of topics and texts.

The goal of this course is to guide students toward more flexible and spontaneous use of the language in familiar situations and predictable social settings. To support this, the course reviews key grammatical concepts from the introductory level and introduces new structures and vocabulary that enable students to express themselves with more nuance and accuracy. Students will work with short texts, audio and video materials, and classroom discussions that go beyond basic survival language to include personal interests, routines, opinions, and current topics relevant to life in German-speaking environments - particularly Vienna.

By the end of the course, students will be able to handle a variety of everyday tasks and interactions, describe experiences, express preferences and plans, and understand the main ideas of clear, standard German on familiar topics. This course aligns with the A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and supports students in achieving the competencies outlined at the Novice Abroad III level of the IES Abroad Language MAP, preparing them to transition into the intermediate-level German study such as the Emerging Independent Abroad level outlined in the MAP.

CREDITS: 4 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 60 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: German

INSTRUCTOR: Ingrid Kapsamer

PREREQUISITES: At least one semester of college/university level German or equivalent. Proficiency at a level equivalent to A1 level of CEFR, as determined by placement test.

ADDITIONAL COST: €30

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

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- Oral and written assignments, including short in-class presentations and creative writing tasks
- Collaborative classroom activities, such as dialogues, role plays, 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)

Course Participation

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 or more tests 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 three oral exams during the semester: one after the Intensive Period, and two at the end of each main semester phase. Each exam involves a structured, real-life task such as a paired dialogue, guided role-play, or short personal presentation.

Assessment will follow the ÖSD exam criteria: 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 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:

- Carry on simple but extended conversations on familiar topics - such as daily routines, personal interests, and current events in predictable settings
- Ask for and follow simple instructions, explanations, or directions, and check their own understanding when necessary
- Understand the main points of short, clear, standard spoken and written German on everyday matters
- Produce short, connected texts - such as emails, informal essays, or journal entries on topics of personal relevance
- Describe past events, future plans, and personal experiences with appropriate use of basic past and future forms

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

I. Intercultural Communication

- Employ simple strategies (e.g., paraphrasing, clarification requests, non-verbal cues) to bridge gaps when vocabulary is insufficient
- Recognize and use appropriate levels of formality in familiar social and academic contexts
- Make basic, informed comparisons between cultural norms, practices, and values of the host culture and one's own

II. Listening

- Understand the gist and key details of clear, standard speech on familiar subjects - such as announcements, short lectures, or peer conversations—when delivered at a moderate pace
- Use contextual and visual clues to infer meaning in real-life listening situations (e.g., directions, simple news items, everyday conversations)

III. Speaking

- Initiate and sustain brief exchanges on familiar topics, asking and answering questions about personal background, experiences, and preferences
- Describe events, experiences, and hopes using basic past and future constructions, with understandable pronunciation and growing fluency

IV. Reading

- Comprehend short texts that consist mainly of high-frequency, everyday or academic vocabulary (e.g., advertisements, emails, blog posts)
- Identify main ideas and some supporting details in straightforward descriptive or narrative passages
- Apply reading strategies—such as skimming for gist and scanning for specific information—to aid comprehension

V. Writing

- Write simple, connected texts—such as personal communications, summaries, or reflections—on familiar topics, using basic cohesive devices
- Accurately employ A2-level grammar and vocabulary to convey personal experiences, plans, and opinions
- Revise and edit brief drafts for clarity, coherence, and correctness, incorporating feedback to improve overall communicative effectiveness

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 under their name.

CONTENT:

Week	Topics & Vocabulary	Content	Assignments & Readings regular homework and quizzes required readings, in addition to the coursebook, will be handed out in class
INTENSIVE (Chapters 1, 2)			
Week 1	Travelling Reisen Cities Städte	Functional: - understand other travel reports and information about a city - report about a journey, events in the past Grammatical, Phonetic: - past form (Perfekt): review & participles with inseparable verbs - conjunctions: und, oder, aber - pronunciation: challenging phonemes, word accent Culture: - Travelling in Austria – Germany – Switzerland - Linguistic differences	Quiz 1 Culture Reflection: My Impressions of Vienna during the first few days
Week 2	Cities Städte Going abroad Ins Ausland gehen	Functional: - report about a one's home town / city - describes ways in a town / city Grammatical: - past form (Perfekt) & participles - conjunctions: und, oder, aber, deshalb - local prepositions: durch, an ... vorbei, gegen Culture - Quality of living in Vienna: crucial aspects	Quiz 2, 3 & 4 Writing Project: My favorite trip Test (chapter 1) Culture Reflection: Individual Dictionary
Week 3	Going abroad - plans, wishes, goals Ins Ausland gehen – Pläne, Wünsche, Ziele	Functional: - understand short texts about motivations for going abroad - speaking and writing about one's plans, wishes and goals abroad - polite requests, formal communication situations in Austria / Vienna (in restaurants, in public transport, on the IES campus) Grammatical: - subjunctive: könnte, würde, hätte Culture: - The Viennese Coffeehouse Culture	Quiz 5 & Quiz 6 <i>Field trip</i> to a Viennese Coffeehouse Oral (in pairs), Topic: Travel experiences Written Final exam (chapters 1 + 2)

SEMESTER PART 1 / 2 (Chapters 3, 5, 6)			
Week 1	Free Time Freizeit	Functional: - describe hobbies and assess them - understand a newspaper article - compare something (hobbies, cities, landmarks ...) Grammatical: - conjunction: dass - comparative, superlative Culture: - Common free time activities in Austria	First Feedback Culture Reflection: (topic: First field trip)
Week 2	Free Time Freizeit Media in daily life Medien im Alltag	Functional: - review: compare something - talk about media in daily life, express one's opinion Grammatical: - prepositions "ab", "bis", "zwischen" - reflexive Verbs: introduction - rev.: German word order Culture: - traditional fall events, current events in Vienna - public transport in Vienna	Quiz 1 (Tuesday) Writing Project: blog entry on reporting about one's favorite hobby(s); commenting on other blog entries
Week 3	Media in daily life Medien im Alltag	Functional: - understand an advertising text, key points of original city information - shopping dialogues Grammatical: - review: reflexive Verbs - adjectives after indefinite and negative article Culture: - Apps to discover Vienna with your smartphone	Quiz 2 (Thursday) Culture Reflection: Individual Dictionary

Week 4	Useful and fun Products Nützliche Produkte und Spaßartikel	Functional: - talk about online shopping - describe products detailed, complaining about something Grammatical: - review adjectives after indef. and neg. article - adjectives after definite article Culture: - Popular Austrian Products	Quiz 3
Week 5		Functional: - talking about things you want to shop for, give reasons - express one's opinion about a product (and compare products) - review: vocabs, phrases week 1-4 Grammatical: - review: grammar structures week 1-4 - Q & A session	Quiz 4 Oral Exam: (in pairs, role play) Plan a common Shopping tour in Vienna Written Midterm Exam
SEMESTER PART 2/2 (chapters 7, 11)			
Week 6	Living in Vienna – then and now Wohnen in Wien – früher und heute	Functional: - understanding housing advertisements - talking about the housing situation Grammatical: - review: local prepositions - introduction: changing prepositions Culture: - the cityscape of “Old Vienna”, living conditions - the great innovation in the 20th century: municipal social housing in Vienna	Audio project: audio recording on one's semester in Europe / Austria (incl. one site in Vienna); commenting on other recordings Field trip: Wien – Museum Culture Reflection: on the field trip
Week 7	Living in Vienna – then and now Wohnen in Wien – früher und heute	Functional: - talk about advantages of life in the city and /or in the outskirts / countryside - understand short texts about life in Austria Grammatical: - changing prepositions - rev.: word order Culture: - Options for a week-end trip in Austria / Europe - Public transport in Vienna	Quiz 1 Culture Reflection: Individual dictionary short assignment on a city in Austria / Europe

Week 8	Interesting Biographies Interessante Biographien	Functional: • talking about one's childhood and schooldays • understanding a biographical newspaper article • writing a text about a well-known person Grammatical: • modal verbs in the past form • nouns with the ending "-heit", "-keit", "-ung" • Culture: • Interesting personalities in Austria / Germany / Switzerland	Quiz 2
Week 9	Friends Freunde	Functional: • talking about friendship, describe a person • understanding stories about friendships • expressing one's opinion Grammatical: • conjunction: als • past forms of: kommen, geben, mögen Culture: • Gustav Klimt and Emilie Flöge: prominent friendship in Austrian cultural history	Quiz 3 Assignment: write a short text about two befriended persons (descriptions, preferred activities)
Week 10	Synopsis	<i>Reflecting your semester abroad</i> - using the acquired grammar structures, phrases and vocabulary	Quiz 4 Oral exam: individual presentation (topic: a well known European person; the requirements will be announced / handed out in class)
Week 11			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:

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- *Panorama A2: Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Cornelsen), *Kursbuch* and *Übungsbuch*
- Additional handouts and materials provided by the instructor

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