



GR 301 GERMAN LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT: EMERGING COMPETENT ABROAD I

IES Abroad Vienna

DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed for students who have successfully completed the beginner level of German and are ready to move into the intermediate range. It supports students in becoming more independent and confident language users, able to participate actively in a wider variety of everyday, academic, and cultural contexts.

The course aims to help students move beyond predictable, rehearsed language use and toward more spontaneous, fluent communication. To that end, it reinforces foundational structures while introducing new language elements that support greater precision, depth, and flexibility in both spoken and written expression. Students engage with a range of authentic materials as well as classroom discussions that encourage deeper interaction with current topics, personal interests, and life in Vienna.

In addition to everyday topics, the course also explores broader cultural and social themes in Austria, including both contemporary and historical dimensions. This enables students to engage more meaningfully with their host environment, to reflect on cultural norms and perspectives, and to develop greater intercultural awareness.

By the end of the course, students will be able to handle more complex and less scripted interactions, express and support opinions, describe events and experiences in detail, and comprehend the main ideas and relevant details of spoken and written texts on familiar subjects. They will also be able to produce structured, coherent texts with increasing accuracy and appropriateness for a range of communicative purposes.

This course aligns with the B1.1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and supports students in achieving the outcomes described at the Emerging Independent Abroad level of the IES Abroad Language MAP, preparing them for continued advancement in intermediate German study.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 36 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: German

INSTRUCTOR:

PREREQUISITES: Students entering this course have completed the Novice Abroad III level of the IES Abroad MAP and reached CEFR A2 proficiency. They are typically expected to have completed at least two semesters of college-level German or the equivalent. These students are able to manage routine everyday interactions, understand basic information in familiar contexts, and express simple ideas related to personal experiences, interests, and plans. They are ready to begin developing more independent and flexible language use.

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ADDITIONAL COST: 20 €

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 & 1 Test
10 % Oral Exams (2 total)
25 % Final Written Exam

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. 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 written quizzes and one 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 will involve 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

One comprehensive written exam will take place during 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 the course, students will meet the outcomes described at the Emerging Independent Abroad level of the IES Language MAP and CEFR B1.1.

I. Intercultural Communication

- Students participate in everyday and social interactions, even in less familiar situations.
- They begin to recognize and adjust to differences in politeness, formality, and cultural expectations.

II. Listening

- Students understand the main points of clear, standard speech on familiar topics.
- They can follow short talks, everyday conversations, and interviews when delivered at a moderate pace.

III. Speaking

- Students express personal experiences, opinions, and plans in connected speech.
- They can initiate, maintain, and close conversations in a range of familiar settings.

IV. Reading

- Students understand the main ideas and relevant details in everyday texts, articles, and blogs.
- They apply basic reading strategies to identify structure, tone, and purpose.

V. Writing

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- Students produce structured, coherent texts on familiar topics (e.g., emails, reflections, reports).
- They connect ideas with appropriate linking devices and use key grammar points with growing accuracy.

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	Function, Grammar & Culture	Assignments -> in addition to regular homework
Mini-Intensive Day 1	Wiener Gemütlichkeit & Kaffeehauskultur	Functional: - Erstes Kennenlernen, Erste Eindrücke beschreiben Grammatical: - Bestandsaufnahme Culture: - die Wiener Mentalität Material: - Gedicht von Peter Altenberg "Kaffeehaus"	Tagebuch 1: Wien mit allen Sinnen kennenlernen
Mini-Intensive Day 2	Wiener Grant & Wien in Zahlen	Functional: - Soziodemographische Zahlen schätzen und vergleichen Grammatical: - Komparativ und Superlativ Culture: - Aktuelle Soziodemographische Statistiken zu Wien Material: - Satire aus „Wien in leiwanden Grafiken" „Wien in Zahlen 2024" (Stadt Wien – Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Statistik) - Posts und Kommentare der „Zeit im Bild" auf Instagram	Quiz 1 Präsentation 1: Meine ersten Tage im Praktikum
Mini-Intensive Day 3	Wien um die Jahrhundertwende	Functional: - Eine Geschichtsreportage verstehen Grammatical: - Irreguläre Vergangenheitsformen: Perfekt und Präteritum Culture: - Wien als kulturelle Metropole Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts Material: - Lied „Die poetischen Verben" - Kurzreportage „Wien um die Jahrhundertwende"	Quiz 2 Straßenwörterbuch 1

Week 2	Arbeitskultur	Functional: • Erfahrungen aus dem Praktikum reflektieren und vergleichen • Ratschläge geben • Fragen und Aussagen höflich formulieren • Hypothetische Wünsche und Vorschläge diskutieren • Routinen beschreiben Grammatical: • Konjunktiv II Culture: • Arbeitskultur und Büroalltag in verschiedenen Ländern Material: • Arte Karambolage: „Feierabend“ • Heinrich Böll: Anekdote zur Senkung der Arbeitsmoral	Quiz 3 Straßenwörterbuch 2 Tagebuch 2: Rituale im Büroalltag
Week 3	Kunst & Malerei	Functional: • Ein Gemälde beschreiben Grammatical: • Präpositionen Culture: • Besuch im Leopold Museum, Wien Material: • Kunstwerke in Wiener Museum (Schiele und Klimt)	1st Oral Exam Written Test Field Trip: Museum Straßenwörterbuch 3 Präsentation 2: Gemälde in den Museen Wiens
Week 4	Kontroverse Künstler:innen	Functional: • Meinungen kritisch diskutieren • ein Radiointerview verstehen Grammatical: • Verben mit Präpositionen Culture: • Kontroverse österreichische Künstler:innen Material: Kunst von, Interviews mit und Zeitungsartikel über Egon Schiele, Valie Export, Hermann Nitsch, Erwin Wurm und Elfriede Jelinek	Quiz 4 Straßenwörterbuch 4 Tagebuch 3: Mein Lieblingsort in Wien

Week 5	Mehrsprachigkeit, Dialekt, Slang und Denglisch	Functional: • verschiedene Sprachregister erkennen und anwenden Grammatical: • Passiv Präsens Culture: • Dialekt und Jugendsprache in Österreich Material: • Jugendwörter des Jahres 2024 • Comedian Phil Laude "Süchtig nach Denglisch"	Quiz 5 Straßenwörterbuch 5 (Top & Flop) Tagebuch 4: Mein Deutschlernprozess in den letzten Wochen
Week 6	Final Exams (Written & Oral)	Culture: • Besuch in einem Wiener Kaffeehaus oder Beisl	2 nd Oral Exam Written Final Exam Field Trip: Coffee House

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:

- Handouts and materials provided by the instructor