GoalTodo

How to learn German: from your first Hallo to a B1 conversation

Learn German

52 weeks · Mon, Nov 30 → Sun, Nov 28

Week by week

Tick a box each time you do a session.

Nov 30–Dec 6
Week 1

The sounds of German

Sounds and first words

- [ ] Word cards: 10 new words: hallo, guten Tag, tschüss, auf Wiedersehen, bitte, danke, ja, nein, Entschuldigung, and Herr and Frau. Say each one aloud from the audio before you write it
  10 min
- [ ] Lesson: how German spelling maps to sound: the umlauts ä, ö and ü, the letter ß, the two ch sounds in ich and ach, and the final -e, which is always said (bitte, Name)
  15 min
- [ ] Listen: short greeting dialogues from your course. Play each line, pause, and copy it with the same rhythm
  10 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: say guten Tag, ich heiße, danke and tschüss, record yourself, and play it back next to the course audio
  15 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: record yourself again and compare with Wednesday. Pick the one sound that's furthest off and practise just that
  15 min

Done when: You can greet someone, say your name, say thank you and goodbye, and you've recorded yourself twice

Sticking point: German spelling is fairly regular, but two things catch English speakers out. The final -e is always said, so bitte has two syllables. And ü and ö have no English match: for ü, say "ee" with your lips rounded as if to whistle.

Dec 7–13
Week 2

Numbers and where you're from

Sounds and first words

- [ ] Word cards: 15 new words: numbers 0 to 20 and the country and city words you need for yourself
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: ich heiße, ich komme aus, ich wohne in, and the letters that sound different from English: w (said like v), v (often said like f), z (said ts), and ei and ie (mein, Bier)
  20 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio of people introducing themselves. Listen once without the text, then again with it
  15 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: introduce yourself in four sentences: name, where you live, where you're from, and one number (your age, or how many people are in your family)
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: count to 20 aloud, then give your introduction from memory and record it
  20 min

Done when: You can introduce yourself in four sentences without reading them, and count to 20

Dec 14–20
Week 3

To be and to have, du and Sie

Sounds and first words

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: everyday things in your home, each with der, die or das and its plural on the card (der Tisch, die Tische)
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: sein and haben in the present, when to say du and when to say Sie, and why every German noun starts with a capital letter
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio, then the same dialogues again, saying each line out loud
  15 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: walk round your home and say what things are and what you have: das ist ein Tisch, ich habe eine Lampe
  30 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: ask yourself ten questions with du and the same ten with Sie, and answer them aloud
  30 min

Done when: You can say who you are and what you have, and you know when to use du and when to use Sie

Sticking point: Learn every noun with der, die or das and its plural, from today. A noun's gender is mostly memory, and the plural often can't be guessed. A colour for each gender on your cards helps.

Dec 21–27
Week 4

Your family, and your first real conversation

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: family members, each with der or die and the plural (der Bruder, die Brüder)
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: mein and meine, dein and deine, Ihr and Ihre, and describing people with sein (groß, nett, jung, alt)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio about families. Then play it again and repeat each line
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: describe your family or the people you live with, using a photo if it helps
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: your first one. Introduce yourself to a German speaker (a teacher, an exchange partner or a conversation group) and ask them two questions
  45 min

Done when: You've said hello, your name and where you're from to a real person, and asked them a question

Sticking point: Nerves are normal. Say you're a beginner at the start: ich lerne Deutsch, bitte langsam. A few sentences is a win.

Dec 28–Jan 3
Week 5

Everyday verbs in the present

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: everyday verbs (wohnen, arbeiten, lernen, spielen, machen, kochen, trinken)
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: the present tense endings (ich lerne, du lernst, er lernt, wir lernen), and the first rule of word order: in a statement, the verb comes second
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio, then a short podcast or video made for beginners in German
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: say ten things you do every week, one sentence each
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: talk about what you do in a normal week, and ask your partner what they do
  45 min

Done when: You can say five things you do every week and ask someone else about theirs

Jan 4–10
Week 6

Der, die, das, and numbers to 100

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: numbers to 100 and food you buy every week, each with its article and plural
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: der, die, das, ein, eine and kein for the subject of a sentence (the nominative case), and how German says the ones before the tens: einundzwanzig is "one and twenty"
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio with prices and numbers. Write down each number you hear
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: read your shopping list aloud with a price for each thing
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: role-play a market stall with your partner: ask what things cost and say how many you want
  45 min

Done when: You know the article and plural for every food word on your cards, and you can understand prices up to 100

Sticking point: Numbers from 21 to 99 come out backwards at first: you hear the ones before the tens. Write the digits down in the order you hear them, ones first, until it feels normal.

Jan 11–17
Week 7

Review week

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 1 to 6, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 1 to 6 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 1 to 6 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 15-minute conversation about yourself, your family and your week
  45 min

Done when: You've tested yourself on every card and talked for 15 minutes about yourself and your family

Jan 18–24
Week 8

At the café

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: food and drink you'd order, each with its article and plural
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: ich möchte and ich hätte gern, and your first look at the accusative case: der becomes den and ein becomes einen (ich möchte einen Kaffee), while die and das stay the same
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio of people ordering, then any short video of a café or bakery scene made for learners
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: role-play ordering for two people, then asking for the bill (zahlen, bitte)
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: order a drink and something to eat from your partner, who plays the waiter, then swap
  45 min

Done when: You can order for yourself and someone else, and ask for the bill, without notes

Sticking point: Only masculine words change in the accusative: der to den, ein to einen. Die and das stay as they are. That's all of it for now.

Jan 25–31
Week 9

Your day, and verbs that split

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: times of day and daily routine verbs, including separable ones (aufstehen, einkaufen, anrufen, fernsehen)
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: telling the time, and separable verbs: the small front part goes to the end of the sentence (ich stehe um sieben Uhr auf)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio about daily routines. Then shadow one minute of it, line by line
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: talk through your day from waking up to going to bed, with times
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: describe a normal day, then ask your partner about theirs and compare
  45 min

Done when: You can describe your day from morning to night, with times, in about two minutes

Sticking point: Halb acht means half past seven, not half past eight: German counts the half towards the next hour. Say the time as a number too (sieben Uhr dreißig) until halb feels natural.

Feb 1–7
Week 10

What you like, and saying no

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: hobbies, sports, music and films
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: gern and lieber (ich spiele gern Tennis), nicht and kein for saying no, and the verb staying second when you start with a time: am Samstag spiele ich Fußball
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a song in German with the lyrics in front of you, then your course audio
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: say ten things you like and ten you don't, and why, in one short sentence each
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: talk about your free time and find three things you and your partner both like
  45 min

Done when: You can say what you like and don't like, use nicht and kein, and start a sentence with a time

Feb 8–14
Week 11

Review week

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 8 to 10, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 8 to 10 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 8 to 10 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 15-minute conversation about your day and what you like doing
  45 min

Done when: You've tested yourself on every card and talked for 15 minutes about your day and your free time

Feb 15–21
Week 12

Getting around

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: places in town, transport, links, rechts and geradeaus
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: asking the way (wo ist, wie komme ich zum Bahnhof), and mit and zu as set phrases for now: mit dem Bus, zum Bahnhof, zur Post
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio with directions. Follow them on a map as you listen
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: describe the way from your home to a shop or station you know
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: ask your partner for directions on a map of a German town, then give them some
  45 min

Done when: You can ask the way, follow simple directions, and say how you get to work or school

Feb 22–28
Week 13

Can, want and must

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: everyday things you can, want to and have to do
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: the modal verbs können, wollen, müssen, dürfen and möchten, and the second verb going to the end: ich muss heute arbeiten
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a beginners' podcast or video, once without the text and once with it
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: say what you can do, want to do and have to do this week
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: make a plan for the weekend with your partner: what you want to do, and what you can't
  45 min

Done when: You can use the modal verbs in the present, with the second verb at the end

Sticking point: Think of a modal sentence as a frame: ich muss … arbeiten. The modal verb comes second and the other verb closes the sentence.

Mar 1–7
Week 14

Shopping and describing things

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: clothes, colours, sizes and shapes
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: adjectives after sein (der Pullover ist rot), and a few in front of a noun as whole phrases (ein roter Pullover, eine blaue Jacke). The full pattern of endings comes later
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio in shops. Note each adjective you hear
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: describe five things you own: colour, size, where you got them
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: buy something from your partner in a role-play shop: ask the price, the size and the colour
  45 min

Done when: You can describe a thing or a person in three sentences and buy something in a shop

Mar 8–14
Week 15

Review, and the A1 check

A1: everyday basics

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 1 to 14, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 1 to 14 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 1 to 14 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 15-minute conversation without notes: introduce yourself, your family, your day and what you like, and ask your partner the same
  45 min

Done when: You can do everything in the A1 check (see the guide): introduce yourself, and ask and answer simple questions with a patient speaker

Sticking point: If parts of the A1 check are still hard, repeat this week before you move on. That's what it's for.

Mar 15–21
Week 16

Plans, days and dates

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: days, months, dates and seasons
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: talking about the future with the present tense and a time word (morgen fahre ich nach Berlin), which is what German speakers usually do, and dates (am ersten Mai)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a podcast for beginners about plans or holidays. Listen once without the text first
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: say what you're doing tomorrow, this weekend and next month
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: plan a day out together: when, where, and what you're going to do
  45 min

Done when: You can say what you're doing and when, with dates

Mar 22–28
Week 17

Asking questions

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: question words (wer, was, wann, wo, wohin, woher, warum, wie viel) and phrases for asking someone to repeat or slow down
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: questions with a question word and the verb second (wo wohnst du), and yes-or-no questions with the verb first (wohnst du in Köln)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: an interview made for learners. Write down every question you hear
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: write ten questions you'd ask a new colleague, then ask them aloud
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: interview your partner with your ten questions, and answer theirs
  45 min

Done when: You can ask ten different questions without notes, and ask someone to repeat or slow down

Mar 29–Apr 4
Week 18

What you did: the past with haben

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: past participles of verbs you know (gemacht, gekauft, gearbeitet, gegessen, getrunken, gesehen)
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: the Perfekt with haben, the usual past tense in everyday speech, with the participle at the end: ich habe Pizza gegessen
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a short story or podcast told in the past. Note each past verb
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: say what you did yesterday, from morning to night
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: tell your partner what you did last weekend, and ask about theirs
  45 min

Done when: You can say five things you did yesterday, in the past

Apr 5–11
Week 19

Review week

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 16 to 18, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 16 to 18 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 16 to 18 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 15-minute conversation: your plans for next weekend and what you did last weekend
  45 min

Done when: You've tested yourself on every card and talked for 15 minutes about your plans and your past weekend

Apr 12–18
Week 20

The past with sein

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: verbs of movement and change (gehen, fahren, fliegen, kommen, bleiben, aufstehen), with their participles
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: the Perfekt with sein for movement and change (ich bin nach Hamburg gefahren), and separable verbs in the past (ich bin um sieben aufgestanden)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a story told in the past, then the same story again, shadowing a minute of it
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: tell the story of a journey you took: when you left, where you went, when you came back
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: tell your partner about a trip, and ask them about one of theirs
  45 min

Done when: You can tell a short journey in the past, choosing haben or sein correctly most of the time

Sticking point: Haben or sein trips everyone up. Learn the short list of sein verbs by heart (most are about going somewhere or changing), and treat everything else as haben.

Apr 19–25
Week 21

Your weekend story

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: weekend activities, and linking words (zuerst, dann, danach, später, am Ende)
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: linking events in order, keeping the verb second after each linking word: danach sind wir ins Kino gegangen
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a podcast for learners about someone's weekend, without the text
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: tell the story of your last weekend for three minutes, and record it
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: tell your partner a three-minute story about your weekend without stopping, then answer their questions
  45 min

Done when: You've told a three-minute story about your weekend in the past, without notes

Apr 26–May 2
Week 22

Travel and hotels

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: booking, rooms, tickets, problems (kaputt, fehlt, Verspätung)
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: polite requests with könnten Sie and ich hätte gern, and problems: das funktioniert nicht, es gibt kein
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio at a hotel or a station, then an announcement-style recording
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: role-play booking a room and complaining about something in it
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: book a train ticket and a room from your partner, then sort out a problem with them
  45 min

Done when: You can book a room or a ticket and explain a simple problem

May 3–9
Week 23

Review week

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 20 to 22, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 20 to 22 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 20 to 22 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 15-minute conversation: a trip you took, and one you'd like to take
  45 min

Done when: You've tested yourself on every card and talked about a trip for 15 minutes

May 10–16
Week 24

Health and the doctor

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: parts of the body, symptoms and the pharmacy, each with its article
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: ich habe Kopfschmerzen and mir tut der Rücken weh (mir as a set phrase for now), and seit for how long: seit zwei Tagen
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio at a doctor's or a pharmacy
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: describe how you feel today and a time you were ill
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: role-play a visit to a pharmacist: say what's wrong and since when, and understand the advice
  45 min

Done when: You can explain what hurts and since when, and understand simple advice

May 17–23
Week 25

How things used to be

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: childhood, school and home
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: war and hatte, and konnte, musste and wollte: for these verbs, German speakers use this simple past instead of the Perfekt, even when they talk (als Kind hatte ich einen Hund)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a learner podcast or video about childhood memories
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: describe your home and your school when you were ten
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: tell your partner what your life was like as a child, and ask about theirs
  45 min

Done when: You can describe what life used to be like, with war, hatte and the modal verbs, for two minutes

May 24–30
Week 26

The dative case

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: presents, giving and helping, and people you give things to
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: the dative: dem, der, dem and den (with -n on the plural noun), after mit, nach, aus, zu, von, bei and seit, and with geben, helfen and gefallen: ich gebe meiner Mutter ein Buch
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio. Note every dem, der and den, and what made it dative
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: say what you're giving five people for their birthday, and who helps you with what
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: talk with your partner about presents you've given and got, and who you live or work with
  45 min

Done when: You can use the dative after mit, nach, aus, zu, von, bei and seit, and with geben and helfen

Sticking point: The dative feels like a lot at first. Learn the article table once, then learn the prepositions as one list. They always take the dative, so there's nothing to decide.

May 31–Jun 6
Week 27

Review week

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 24 to 26, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 24 to 26 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 24 to 26 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 15-minute conversation about your childhood, your health and the people in your life
  45 min

Done when: You've tested yourself on every card and talked for 15 minutes about how life used to be

Jun 7–13
Week 28

Work and study

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: jobs (with both forms: der Lehrer, die Lehrerin), workplaces, subjects and tasks
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: describing your job or studies (ich arbeite als, ich studiere), and how long you've done it: seit drei Jahren
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: an interview with someone about their job, made for learners
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: explain your job or studies to someone who knows nothing about them, for three minutes
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: explain what you do, and ask your partner about their work or studies
  45 min

Done when: You can explain what you do and how long you've done it for three minutes

Jun 14–20
Week 29

Comparing

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: adjectives for places, people and things
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: comparisons: größer als, so groß wie, am größten, and the irregular ones: gut, besser, am besten and gern, lieber, am liebsten
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a learner podcast or video comparing two cities or two ways of life
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: compare your town with another you know: size, weather, prices, people
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: compare two places, two jobs or two films with your partner, and say which you'd choose
  45 min

Done when: You can compare two places or things and say which you prefer and why

Jun 21–27
Week 30

Messages and emails

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: openings, endings and set phrases for messages
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: writing short messages and emails: informal (Hallo, Liebe Grüße) and formal (Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren, Mit freundlichen Grüßen), with Sie and Ihnen written with a capital
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: voicemails and short spoken messages. Write down the key details of each
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: leave three practice voicemails: change a plan, ask for information, say thank you
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: read your partner a short email you wrote this week and ask them to correct it, then talk about it
  45 min

Done when: You've written a short informal message and a short formal email, each of about 60 to 80 words

Jun 28–Jul 4
Week 31

Review, and the A2 check

A2: the past, and the cases

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 16 to 30, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 16 to 30 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 16 to 30 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 20-minute conversation without notes: your routine, your last trip, your childhood and your plans
  45 min

Done when: You can do everything in the A2 check (see the guide): simple, routine exchanges about your life, past and plans

Sticking point: If the A2 check shows gaps, repeat the weeks that cover them before you go on. B1 builds on all of it.

Jul 5–11
Week 32

Saying what you think

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: opinion phrases (ich finde, ich glaube, meiner Meinung nach) and reasons
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: weil and dass, which send the verb to the end of their part of the sentence: ich glaube, dass es morgen regnet. Ich lerne Deutsch, weil ich in Berlin arbeite
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a short news report made for learners. Listen twice, then say the main point in one sentence
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: give your opinion on five everyday topics, each with a reason that starts with weil
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: talk about a piece of news with your partner, and each give an opinion with reasons
  45 min

Done when: You can give an opinion with a reason on an everyday topic for one minute, with the verb at the end after weil and dass

Sticking point: Putting the verb at the end feels like holding your breath. Say the short version first (es regnet), then wrap it: ich glaube, dass es regnet.

Jul 12–18
Week 33

Wishes, and what you would do

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: wishes, advice and daydreams
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: würde, hätte and wäre: ich würde gern, du solltest, wenn ich Zeit hätte, würde ich mehr reisen
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a learner podcast or interview with people talking about dreams or advice
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: say what you'd do if you won a holiday, had a free year or could live anywhere
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: give your partner advice on a problem, and ask what they'd do in your place
  45 min

Done when: You can give advice and talk about what you would do, using wenn and würde

Jul 19–25
Week 34

The news in easy German

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words from this week's news
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: past, present and future together: retell a news story with the Perfekt for what happened and the present for what's next
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a news bulletin in easy or slow German made for learners, every day this week
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: retell one news story a day in your own words
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: tell your partner about a story you heard this week and what you think about it
  45 min

Done when: You've followed the main points of five news bulletins for learners and retold three of them

Jul 26–Aug 1
Week 35

Review week

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 32 to 34, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 32 to 34 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 32 to 34 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 20-minute conversation about the news, your opinions and your wishes
  45 min

Done when: You've tested yourself on every card and talked for 20 minutes about the news and what you'd like to do

Aug 2–8
Week 36

Where things are, and where they go

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: furniture and rooms, and legen, liegen, stellen, stehen, hängen
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: the two-way prepositions (in, an, auf, unter, über, vor, hinter, neben, zwischen): accusative for movement (ich lege das Buch auf den Tisch), dative for position (das Buch liegt auf dem Tisch)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: course audio or a video tour of a flat. Note each preposition and its case
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: describe your home room by room, then say where you'd put things in a new flat
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: describe your room to your partner while they sketch it, then swap
  45 min

Done when: You can say where things are and where you're putting them, choosing the case correctly most of the time

Sticking point: Ask yourself one question: wo (where is it) or wohin (where is it going)? Wo takes the dative, wohin takes the accusative.

Aug 9–15
Week 37

Agreeing and disagreeing

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: agreeing, disagreeing and asking someone's view
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: da hast du recht, das sehe ich anders, einerseits and andererseits, trotzdem and deshalb, and the verb staying second after them
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a discussion or debate made for learners. Note how people disagree politely
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: argue both sides of a simple question for two minutes each (city or countryside, car or bike)
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: pick a topic and argue opposite sides with your partner for ten minutes, then swap
  45 min

Done when: You've defended an opinion for two minutes and answered a challenge to it

Sticking point: Disagreeing in another language feels rude at first. Learn three soft openings, such as das stimmt, aber and ich verstehe, aber.

Aug 16–22
Week 38

Telling a story properly

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: feelings and reactions
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: als and wenn for the past (als ich in Rom war, the verb at the end), and the simple past you'll meet in written stories (ging, kam, sah, sagte)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a short story for learners told in the past. Mark each verb in the simple past
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: tell the story of a day something went wrong, for three minutes, and record it
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: tell your partner a story from your life with a beginning, a middle and an end, then answer their questions
  45 min

Done when: You can tell a three-minute story that starts with als and uses the past without stopping to think

Aug 23–29
Week 39

Review week

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 36 to 38, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 36 to 38 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 36 to 38 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 20-minute conversation: your home, your opinions, and a story from your life
  45 min

Done when: You've tested yourself on every card and told your partner a story and an opinion

Aug 30–Sep 5
Week 40

Linking ideas

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words for describing people and places in detail
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: relative clauses, with the verb at the end: der Mann, der neben mir wohnt, and die Stadt, in der ich geboren bin
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a learner podcast about a place or a person. Note every der, die or das that starts a relative clause
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: describe three people you know and two places you love, in longer sentences
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: describe a person or place your partner doesn't know, and answer their questions
  45 min

Done when: You can join two ideas with a relative clause without stopping to think

Sticking point: The relative pronoun takes the gender of the noun it points back to, and its case comes from its own part of the sentence. Start with der, die and das as the subject, then add den and dem.

Sep 6–12
Week 41

On the phone and sorting out problems

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: phone phrases, appointments and complaints
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: polite phone German: ich rufe an, weil, könnten Sie mir sagen, ob, ich wollte fragen, wann, all with the verb at the end
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: recorded phone calls or role-plays for learners
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: practise three calls aloud: making an appointment, changing it, and complaining about a delivery
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: do your three calls with your partner by phone or video, without seeing each other's face if you can
  45 min

Done when: You can make an appointment and sort out a problem on the phone

Sticking point: The phone is harder than face to face, because you can't see the other person. Ask them to repeat as often as you need: wie bitte, können Sie das wiederholen?

Sep 13–19
Week 42

Your first book

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words from your book
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: start a book written for learners at your level (a graded reader) from your library, and read a chapter each lesson day
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: the audio version of your book if it has one, or a learner podcast
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: summarise each chapter you've read in a minute
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: tell your partner what happens in your book so far and what you think will happen next
  45 min

Done when: You've read the first chapters of your book and told someone what happens

Sep 20–26
Week 43

Review week

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 40 to 42, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 40 to 42 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 40 to 42 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 20-minute conversation: your book, a phone problem you've had, and people you know
  45 min

Done when: You've tested yourself on every card and talked for 20 minutes without switching to your own language

Sep 27–Oct 3
Week 44

Adjective endings

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: adjectives you'd use to describe people, places and things
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: the pattern of adjective endings after der, after ein and with no article, worked out from phrases you already know (der rote Pullover, ein roter Pullover, mit rotem Pullover)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a learner podcast or video describing people or places. Note each adjective and its ending
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: describe your dream flat, your favourite town and someone you admire, with an adjective in front of each noun
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: describe a photo to your partner in detail while they guess which one it is, then swap
  45 min

Done when: You can put the right ending on an adjective most of the time in the phrases you use often

Sticking point: Nobody gets every ending right at first, and people will still understand you. Start with -e and -en, which cover a lot of cases, and learn the rest phrase by phrase.

Oct 4–10
Week 45

Hopes and plans

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words: dreams, ambitions, hopes
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: ich hoffe, dass, ich habe vor, … zu, and um … zu for saying why (ich lerne Deutsch, um in Wien zu arbeiten)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: interviews where people talk about their dreams and plans
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: talk about a dream or an ambition for three minutes, and why it matters to you
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: talk with your partner about your hopes for the next few years, and give reasons
  45 min

Done when: You can describe a hope or an ambition and briefly explain why

Oct 11–17
Week 46

A film or a book

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words for talking about stories (die Geschichte, die Figur, das Ende)
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: describing a plot in the present (es geht um, am Anfang, am Ende), and giving your view of it
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a review or trailer of a German-language film, or a podcast episode about a book
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: summarise a film you love in three minutes, without giving away the end
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: recommend a film or book to your partner and answer their questions about it
  45 min

Done when: You can tell someone what a film or book is about and what you thought of it

Oct 18–24
Week 47

Review week

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: no new words this week. Go through every card you have, oldest first, and put the ones you miss back in this week's pile
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: redo the exercises you got wrong in weeks 44 to 46, and reread your notes on anything that still feels shaky
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: replay audio from weeks 44 to 46 without the text, and note any line you can't follow yet
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: pick three topics from weeks 44 to 46 and talk about each for three minutes. Record the last one
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 20-minute conversation about your hopes, a film and your week
  45 min

Done when: You've tested yourself on every card and talked for 20 minutes with only a few pauses

Oct 25–31
Week 48

Shows in German

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words from your show
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: keep going with your book, a chapter each lesson day, and learn to recognise the genitive you'll meet in writing (wegen des Wetters, das Auto meines Bruders)
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a series for German speakers with German subtitles on. One episode across the week is fine
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: describe what happened in the episode and what you think will happen next
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: talk about the show with your partner, or about one they recommend
  45 min

Done when: You've followed an episode of a show for German speakers with German subtitles

Nov 1–7
Week 49

Writing a connected text

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words you needed while writing
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: write about 150 words on a trip you took: what happened, how you felt, what you'd do differently. Check each weil, dass and als clause for the verb at the end
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: a learner podcast about travel. Note phrases you could borrow
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: read your text aloud, then tell the same story without it
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: ask your partner to correct your text, then talk about the trip for ten minutes
  45 min

Done when: You've written a connected text of about 150 words about something that happened to you

Nov 8–14
Week 50

Finish your book

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: 20 new words from the end of your book
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: finish your book, then write five sentences about it
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: the news in easy German, every lesson day
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: explain the whole story of your book in five minutes
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: tell your partner the whole story of your book and what you thought of it
  45 min

Done when: You've finished a book in German and can tell someone the story

Nov 15–21
Week 51

Your B1 practice check

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: no new words: test yourself on all your cards, oldest first
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: a practice check you set yourself: on Monday, read a news article for learners and write down the main points. On Tuesday, write about 150 words about your plans for next year. On Thursday and Friday, go back over what you got wrong
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: on Monday, a five-minute recording at B1 level, played twice, then write down the main points. Then catch up on shows and news the rest of the week
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: talk for five minutes without stopping about an experience, a hope, and an opinion with reasons
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a 20-minute conversation: your partner picks the topics without telling you in advance
  45 min

Done when: You've done each part of your practice check and know what to polish in the last week

Sticking point: If the check shows a big gap, give it two more weeks before your real conversation, rather than skipping it.

Nov 22–28
Week 52

A real conversation at B1

Towards B1

- [ ] Word cards: no new words: test yourself on your shakiest cards
  15 min
- [ ] Lesson: read the B1 check in the guide and practise what you're least sure of
  25 min
- [ ] Listen: anything you enjoy: a show, a podcast, the news
  20 min
- [ ] Speak on your own: prepare three stories, three opinions and three plans you could talk about
  45 min
- [ ] Conversation: a conversation of 30 minutes or more with a German speaker about your experiences, your plans and your opinions, without switching to your own language
  45 min

Done when: You've held a conversation of 30 minutes or more in German, about your life, your plans and your views

How the plan works

About an hour a day, every day. The first two levels take you to B1, the level where you can handle everyday life in German. Each week has five parts:

▪ Word cards (15 minutes a day). About 20 new words a week, every noun with der, die or das and its plural. Say the word before you turn the card over, and test yourself on older cards first, not just this week's. UC San Diego's psychology department explains that several practice sessions spread over time give better long-term memory than one long session of the same length, which is why the plan asks for a little every day.

▪ A lesson (25 minutes, five days a week). Use one beginners' course with audio and follow it in order: a class, a course book with audio from your library, or a free online course such as Deutsche Welle's. Each week names the grammar and topic to work on. Your course gives you the detail.

▪ Listening (20 minutes, five days a week). Course audio first, then podcasts and videos made for learners, then news in easy German, then shows for German speakers.

▪ Speaking on your own (Wednesday). Out loud, and recorded now and then so you can hear yourself improve.

▪ A conversation (Saturday, from week 4). With a teacher, an exchange partner or a conversation group. Before week 4, Saturday is a second session on your own.

Every fourth week from week 7 is a review week: no new words or grammar, just going back over what you've done. If your date is closer than the full plan, the plan leaves some of those out. The A1 and A2 checks and the last weeks always stay.

Each week has a "done when". Tick it, then move on. If you can't yet, repeat the week.

The A1 exam level follows the first 15 weeks of the zero level, then spends 7 weeks on the four parts of the Goethe-Zertifikat A1: Start Deutsch 1 (listening, reading, writing and speaking), with two full timed mocks. Your exam date is the finish line.

How long it really takes

From zero to B1, this plan is about 360 hours (an hour a day for 52 weeks, a little less in the first three weeks). Here's how that compares.

- The Goethe-Institut, Germany's cultural institute, says that depending on what you already know and how you learn, you need 80 to 200 lessons of 45 minutes to reach A1 (about 60 to 150 hours) and 350 to 650 lessons of 45 minutes to reach B1 (about 260 to 490 hours). This plan's 360 hours sits inside that range.
- The US Foreign Service Institute, which trains diplomats full time, puts German in its second category of languages for English speakers: about 36 weeks, or 900 class hours. That's full-time classes to reach "General Professional Proficiency", well beyond B1, and FSI says the real time depends on your ability, the languages you already know and your time in class.

The "I learned some at school" level is about 280 hours over 40 weeks, because it assumes you still have something like A1. The A1 exam level is about 140 hours over 22 weeks, inside the Goethe-Institut's range for A1.

An hour a day is the plan's own choice. More time a day gets you there sooner; less time is fine too, with a later date.

Which level to pick

- I'm starting from zero: you've never studied German, or only know a few words. 52 weeks to B1.
- I learned some at school: you studied German for a year or more, you can still read simple German and some words come back when you hear them, but you can't hold a conversation. 40 weeks to B1.
- I need an A1 exam for a visa: you need a German certificate at A1, for example to join a husband or wife in Germany, and you're starting from zero or close to it. 22 weeks, with your exam date as the finish line.

If you're between the first two, start with "I learned some at school". Its first week shows you what's still there, and if it's very little, switch. If you can already talk for ten minutes about your day, your past and your plans, start the first level at week 32 or the second at week 21.

If you need B1 for a settlement permit or citizenship, follow either of the first two levels. They end at B1, and the guide below explains the Goethe-Zertifikat B1.

Level checks

The CEFR (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) runs from A1 (beginner) to C2. Here's what the first three levels mean, based on the Council of Europe's descriptions as the University of Amsterdam sets them out, and where they fall in the plan.

- A1, week 15 (or week 6 if you learned some at school): you can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases, introduce yourself and others, and ask and answer questions about where you live, people you know and things you have. You can talk in a simple way if the other person speaks slowly and clearly and is ready to help.
- A2, week 31 (or week 20): you can understand sentences and common expressions about your family, shopping, your area and work. You can communicate in simple and routine tasks needing a simple, direct exchange of information, and describe your background and surroundings.
- B1, week 52 (or week 40): you can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar things at work, school or leisure, and deal with most situations when travelling where German is spoken. You can write simple connected text on familiar topics, describe experiences, events, dreams, hopes and ambitions, and briefly give reasons for your opinions and plans.

The check weeks ask you to compare yourself with these descriptions, honestly, in a conversation with someone else. They aren't official tests. The Goethe-Institut also has a free placement test, "Test your German", that gives you a first idea of your level.

German sounds to get right early

German spelling is fairly regular: once you know the rules, you can usually say a word you've only seen written. The first three weeks start with sounds, and these are the ones worth practising until they feel normal:

▪ The umlauts ä, ö and ü. They change the word: schon (already) and schön (beautiful) are different words. For ö, say "e" with your lips rounded. For ü, say "ee" with your lips rounded as if to whistle. Ä is close to the e in "bed".

▪ The two ch sounds. After a, o, u and au it's at the back of the throat, as in Scottish "loch" (ach, Buch). After other vowels and consonants it's softer, at the front, like a whispered "h" in "huge" (ich, Milch).

▪ The final -e is always said. Bitte, Name and danke each have two syllables. Leaving it off changes the word or makes it sound wrong.

▪ Letters that sound different from English. W sounds like English v, v often sounds like f, z sounds like ts, and ß is a double s. In ei say "eye" (mein), and in ie say "ee" (Bier).

▪ Word endings. At the end of a word, b, d and g sound like p, t and k: Hund sounds like "hoont".

Shadowing helps here: play a line, pause, and copy it with the same rhythm. Record yourself every couple of weeks and compare with an older recording.

Genders, cases and word order

These are the parts of German that work differently from English. The plan brings them in one at a time, so you never have to learn all of it at once. The week numbers here are for the zero level. If you learned some at school, your first six weeks go over everything up to week 15, and the rest comes in the same order.

Genders and plurals: from week 3. Every noun is der, die or das, and the plural often can't be guessed. Learn both with the noun, on the same card, from the start: der Tisch, die Tische. A colour for each gender helps.

The four cases, one at a time:

▪ Nominative (the subject), week 6: der, die, das, ein, eine, kein.

▪ Accusative (the object), week 8: only masculine words change, der to den and ein to einen.

▪ Dative, set phrases in weeks 12 and 24, then properly in week 26: dem, der, dem, den, after mit, nach, aus, zu, von, bei and seit.

▪ Accusative or dative after in, an and auf, week 36: movement or position.

▪ Adjective endings, week 44, once the articles feel natural.

▪ Genitive, week 48: you'll mostly meet it in writing, so the plan teaches you to recognise it.

Word order:

▪ The verb comes second, week 5. Even when you start with a time: am Samstag spiele ich Fußball.

▪ Separable verbs, week 9. The small front part goes to the end: ich stehe um sieben auf.

▪ A second verb at the end, week 13 (modal verbs) and week 18 (the past): ich muss heute arbeiten, ich habe Pizza gegessen.

▪ The verb at the end after weil, dass and other joining words, week 32: ich glaube, dass es morgen regnet.

The order of all this is the plan's own design. If your course teaches it in a different order, follow your course and use the week titles as a checklist.

German exams, visas and citizenship

This isn't legal advice. Rules change and depend on your situation, so check with the German embassy or consulate for your country, or your local authority in Germany, before you book an exam.

Joining a spouse in Germany. The Federal Foreign Office's family reunion page (here, the German Embassy in Dublin's) says that people applying for a visa to join a husband or wife in Germany must prove basic German, for example with an A1 certificate from a course or test centre that tests to ALTE standards (the

Association of Language Testers in Europe). The Goethe-Institut lists its A1 exam as proof of language skills for the visa for spousal reunification. Some applicants don't need it. German embassies list exemptions such as when the spouse already living in Germany is a citizen of another EU or EEA country or Switzerland, or of Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, the UK or the US, or holds an EU Blue Card or certain other work or research permits. Spouses of German citizens usually do need it. The embassy points to a leaflet from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) that lists all the exemptions, so ask your embassy whether one applies to you.

Citizenship. BAMF says that to be naturalised you must have sufficient knowledge of German, at level B1, along with other conditions, and that exceptions are possible in some cases. A B1 result in the German test for immigrants (DTZ), taken at the end of an integration course, also counts. The Goethe-Institut lists its B1 exam as proof of language skills for a settlement permit or naturalisation.

The Goethe-Zertifikat A1: Start Deutsch 1 is for adults (the Goethe-Institut recommends 16 and over), and is run and marked the same way worldwide. It has four parts:

- Listening, 20 minutes: short everyday conversations, phone messages or public announcements.
- Reading, 25 minutes: short notes, adverts, signs or notices.
- Writing, 20 minutes: simple forms, and a short personal text about an everyday situation.
- Speaking, 15 minutes, in a group: you introduce yourself to the group, ask and answer questions about everyday life, and ask someone in the group for something.

The Goethe-Zertifikat B1 has four modules you can take together or one at a time: listening (40 minutes), reading (65 minutes), writing (60 minutes) and speaking (15 minutes, with one other candidate).

Booking and results. Book with a Goethe-Institut or one of its exam centres. Centres set their own dates and fees. If you take the exam at a Goethe-Institut, results come within 2 weeks; at other exam centres, it's 6 weeks. Allow for that before your visa appointment. The Goethe-Institut publishes free practice materials for each exam, which the A1 exam level uses.

Before you start

- Find a course with audio: a class, a beginners' book from the library, or a free online course from Deutsche Welle or a university. One course, followed in order, is enough.
- Make word cards. Paper works well: the German word with der, die or das and its plural on one side, your own language and a short example sentence on the other. A free flashcard program that spaces out your reviews works too.
- Find someone to talk to by week 4: a teacher, a language exchange partner (you help with your language, they help with German), or a conversation group.
- For the A1 exam, find a group to practise speaking with. The speaking part is in a group, so two or more people are better than one. A teacher or a fluent speaker can also look over your writing.
- Pick your times. An hour a day can be split: cards on the bus, the lesson at lunch, listening while you cook.

Free help

You don't need to pay for anything to follow the first two levels.

- Deutsche Welle, Germany's public international broadcaster, offers free German courses online from beginner level up, along with learner videos, podcasts and news in easy German.
- The Goethe-Institut publishes free practice materials for its exams and a free placement test, and many Goethe-Institut centres run cultural events where you can hear German spoken.
- Your public library. Many lend course books with audio, books written for learners (graded readers) and children's books in German, and some run conversation groups.
- Free courses from universities and governments. Look for a university or government web address.
- Conversation groups and exchanges. Cultural centres, community centres, libraries and universities often run free meetups.

Common mistakes

▪ Learning nouns without der, die or das, or without the plural. You'll need both every time you use the word. Put them on every card from week 3.

▪ Trying to learn all four cases at once. The plan brings them in one by one. A mistake with a case rarely stops anyone understanding you.

▪ Waiting until you feel ready to speak. You won't feel ready. Speak from week 1, and talk to a real person by week 4.

▪ Dropping the final -e or flattening the umlauts. Say bitte with two syllables, and keep schon and schön apart.

▪ Forgetting the end of the sentence. Separable verbs, modal verbs, the past and weil all send something to the end. Finish the sentence before you start the next one.

▪ Rereading your cards instead of testing yourself. Say the answer first, then check.

▪ Cramming at the weekend. An hour a day beats six hours on Sunday.

▪ For the A1 exam: booking too late. Results can take up to 6 weeks at some centres, so leave room before your visa appointment.

Your B1 conversation, your exam day, and after

For the B1 conversation, choose someone patient and tell them you'd like to stay in German. Bring three stories, three opinions and three plans to talk about. Don't switch to your own language when you get stuck: ask them to repeat, or say it another way. Afterwards, write down three things you wished you could say, and add them to your cards.

For the A1 exam, check your centre's instructions a week before: what ID to bring, when to arrive and where to go. On the day, read each question before the recording starts, answer every point in the writing tasks, and in the speaking part, speak to the other candidates as well as the examiner.

After the plan, keep your hour a day going. From B1, the next step is B2: shows and podcasts for German speakers, longer books, and conversations about anything. If you passed A1 for a visa, carry on with the zero level from week 16: it's the same course, and B1 is what you'll need later for citizenship. For more about learning any language, see the Learn a new language plan.

If you fall behind

Missed 1 week: Carry on with the current week. Start with your word cards, oldest first, as those are the ones that fade.

Missed 2 weeks: Repeat the last week you finished in full, then carry on. If that runs past your date, the plan leaves out a review or catch-up week, never the last weeks.

Missed 3 weeks: Go back two weeks from where you stopped, and test yourself on all your cards before you add new ones. If there are no longer enough weeks, enter a new date on the plan page. If your date is an exam, ask your centre whether you can move it.

Missed 6 or more weeks: Read the level checks in the guide and find the week that matches what you can do today (a five-minute conversation will tell you). For the A1 exam level, do the free practice exam untimed instead. Then enter a new date on the plan page.

Sources

Goethe-Institut USA (archived copy, Internet Archive)
`https://web.archive.org/web/20260511052450/https://www.goethe.de/ins/us/en/spr/prf/gzsd1.cfm`

"To reach this level you need – depending on previous knowledge and learning requirements – 80 to 200 lessons of 45 minutes each."

Goethe-Institut USA (archived copy, Internet Archive)
`https://web.archive.org/web/20260511052450/https://www.goethe.de/ins/us/en/spr/prf/gzsd1.cfm`
"The Goethe-Zertifikat A1: Start Deutsch 1 consists of the exam sections listening, reading, writing and speaking (oral group examination). The exam is conducted and assessed uniformly worldwide."

Goethe-Institut USA (archived copy, Internet Archive)
`https://web.archive.org/web/20260511052450/https://www.goethe.de/ins/us/en/spr/prf/gzsd1.cfm`
"The results and certificates will be available within 2 weeks of the exam date if you took the exam at a Goethe-Institut. For examinations taken at external examination locations, the processing time is 6 weeks."

Goethe-Institut USA (archived copy, Internet Archive)
`https://web.archive.org/web/20260720201114/https://www.goethe.de/ins/us/en/spr/prf/gzb1.cfm`
"To reach this level you need - depending on previous knowledge and learning requirements - 350 to 650 lessons of 45 minutes each."

Goethe-Institut USA (archived copy, Internet Archive)
`https://web.archive.org/web/20260720201114/https://www.goethe.de/ins/us/en/spr/prf/gzb1.cfm`
"This offers full flexibility as the four modules can be taken individually or in combination."

Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State (archived copy, Internet Archive)
`https://web.archive.org/web/20241229203515/https://www.state.gov/foreign-language-training/`
"The following language learning timelines reflect 76 years of experience in teaching languages to U.S. diplomats, and illustrate the time usually required for a student to reach "General Professional Proficiency" in the language, or a score of "Speaking-3/Reading-3" on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale."

Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State (archived copy, Internet Archive)
`https://web.archive.org/web/20241229203515/https://www.state.gov/foreign-language-training/`
"These timelines are based on what FSI has observed as the average length of time for a student to achieve proficiency, though the actual time can vary based on several factors, including the language learner's natural ability, prior linguistic experience, and time spent in the classroom."

Institute for Dutch Language Education, University of Amsterdam (Council of Europe CEFR global scale)
`https://intt.uva.nl/dutch-language-courses-nt2/common-european-framework-of-reference.html`
"Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type."

Institute for Dutch Language Education, University of Amsterdam (Council of Europe CEFR global scale)
`https://intt.uva.nl/dutch-language-courses-nt2/common-european-framework-of-reference.html`
"Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters."

Institute for Dutch Language Education, University of Amsterdam (Council of Europe CEFR global scale)
`https://intt.uva.nl/dutch-language-courses-nt2/common-european-framework-of-reference.html`
"Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans."

German Embassy Dublin, Federal Foreign Office
`https://dublin.diplo.de/ie-de/-/2674650`
"In order to facilitate integration, applicants must prove basic German skills when applying for a visa."

German Embassy Dublin, Federal Foreign Office
`https://dublin.diplo.de/ie-de/-/2674650`
"This means that the applicant has the ability to communicate in German on at least a basic level, e.g. holds a certificate of successful completion of a German language course level A1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages."

German Embassy Dublin, Federal Foreign Office
https://dublin.diplo.de/ie-de/-/2674650
“The information leaflet provided by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees gives more detailed information on the topic of basic knowledge of the German language and all exemptions to this requirement.”

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)
https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/Integration/ZugewanderteTeilnehmende/Einbuergerung/einbuergerung.html
“In specific cases, exceptions and simplifications of the naturalisation requirements are possible.”

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)
https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/Integration/ZugewanderteTeilnehmende/Einbuergerung/einbuergerung.html
“You can obtain individual information and consultation from your competent naturalisation authority.”

Deutsche Welle
https://learngerman.dw.com/en/learn-german/s-9528
“With Deutsche Welle's mobile courses, you can learn German easily and free of charge.”

Department of Psychology, UC San Diego
https://psychology.ucsd.edu/undergraduate-program/undergraduate-resources/academic-writing-resources/effective-studying/spaced-practice.html
“Generally speaking, multiple practice sessions over time results in better long-term memory than a single practice session of equivalent duration or an equivalent number of repetitions.”

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)
https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/Integration/ZugewanderteTeilnehmende/Einbuergerung/einbuergerung.html
“You must have sufficient knowledge of German (level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)”

German Embassy Copenhagen, Federal Foreign Office (information sheet, January 2023)
https://kopenhagen.diplo.de/resource/blob/2409730/3fd8872f1cc1d11cc5c629f5bddb0770/exemption-language-skills-data.pdf
“if the spouse living in Germany is a national of one of the states listed in section 41 of the Ordinance Governing Residence, or enjoys freedom of movement in Germany, that is, nationals of an EU member state (other than Germany) or the EEA states Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein or Switzerland”

German Embassy Copenhagen, Federal Foreign Office (information sheet, January 2023)
https://kopenhagen.diplo.de/resource/blob/2409730/3fd8872f1cc1d11cc5c629f5bddb0770/exemption-language-skills-data.pdf
“if the spouse is in possession of an EU Blue Card, an ICT card, a mobile ICT card or a residence permit according to sections 18a Residence Act, 18b (1) Residence Act”

Federal Ministry of Justice, Residence Ordinance (official English translation)
https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthv/englisch_aufenthv.html
“Nationals of Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as referred to in section 1 (2) no. 6 of the Freedom of Movement Act/EU and nationals of the United States of America may also enter and stay in the federal territory without requiring a visa for a period which does not constitute a short stay.”

German Embassy London, Federal Foreign Office
https://uk.diplo.de/uk-en/02/visa/-/2448194
“Please note that spouses of German nationals are only exempt from language requirements if the German national has exercised their right of free movement within the European Union”

This plan online	`https://goaltodo.com/learn-german`
Reach it with others on Welang	`https://welang.com/goals`
Reach it on your own in HourLife	`https://www.hourlife.com`