

# **For your everyday life, free time, job or studies – Learn German!**

German has 100 million native speakers, making it the most-spoken language in Europe. German makes a lot of things easier at work and in your private life.

Knowledge of German is important to discover Hessen and its people and to understand the language and culture. By learning German, you'll find it easier to make yourself understood, meet new people, visit new places, go shopping, look for and find a flat and job, help your children with their school work, and fill out forms. So, speak or learn German! You should ideally start in your home country. You can learn in lots of different ways, including online learning and local language courses. It's worthwhile, fun and helpful!

## **Learning German abroad**

You'll be well prepared if you start learning German in your home country and pick up at least some basics. The German government supports a range of German education programmes abroad. These programmes are mainly aimed at adult education centres, universities and German schools abroad. Some cooperation partners include the Goethe-Institut, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and Deutsche Welle.

## **Learning German in Hessen**

If you're already in Germany, there are lots of ways to learn German. When the German government passed its Immigration Law a few years ago, it also launched integration courses. Integration courses don't just let you learn the language; they also teach you quite a bit about Germany (e.g. about its history, culture and legal system). You can find more details about integration courses (e.g. content, process, forms, applications, special types of course, participation, costs, rights and obligations, final exam) and the course providers in your area on the BAMF website.

The courses offered at the Volkshochschule (VHS) are another very popular way of learning German. The VHS is a public institution for adult education offering relatively affordable language courses. The Volkshochschule can be found at many different

locations across Hessen.

One of the best places to learn German is undoubtedly the Goethe-Institut, which has 135 institutes in 91 countries worldwide. Hessen's Goethe-Institut is based in Frankfurt am Main, offering a vast amount of different courses for every language level.

## **German is fun – tips for learning German**

Don't get the wrong idea: Learning a language is a lengthy process. Many people would agree that German is more difficult to learn than English or Spanish, and perhaps just as difficult as French. Anyone who's already stumbled over its complicated grammar, unusual sentence structure and compound nouns will agree. Many adults who learn German are confronted with psychological stumbling blocks. To make sure this doesn't happen to you, we've put together some tips that should help you actively use your newly-acquired language skills and achieve learning results as quickly as possible.

- Don't panic: You should be aware of the fact that you'll keep going through frustrating periods when learning a new language. This will particularly be the case if German is the first foreign language you've ever learned. Don't let this get you down. Just concentrate on learning and accept that you'll find it difficult to express yourself without making mistakes at first. Speak to your teacher or other language students about how you feel.
- Look for a tandem partner to practise with: You'll be able to practise your German, and your tandem partner can practise your native language in return (language exchange). Agree to speak 50% in German and 50% in your native language. You can make a pleasant learning experience out of it by going to the cinema or a café, for example, or cooking your favourite food together.
- Ask questions: Adults learning a foreign language are often scared of making mistakes. Trust yourself! Ask questions if you don't understand something that's been said or written. That might sound easy enough, but it's often anything but easy to ask questions like, "What does this word mean? Please can you repeat the last sentence? Do you understand what I've just said?"
- Let people correct you: Encourage your German friends to correct you. There's no reason to be embarrassed. The best way to learn is through your own mistakes. The trick is to take corrections on board without losing your train of thought!
- Don't miss opportunities: Lots of language students hesitate when it comes to actively using what they've learned. Set yourself a target that forces you to try out your German: Go to the bakery, butcher's or pharmacy, make a phone call, buy a train/bus ticket, etc. You'll find opportunities to practise everywhere.

- Learn German around the clock: Listen to German radio, watch German television programmes and films, etc. Make use of German media and immerse yourself in the German language.
- Take the initiative: Invite some of your German friends over for tea. Show them food and customs from your country.
- Go out into the world: If you want to quickly get used to life in a new country, it's important to use the opportunities available in your region and discover the new culture. Go to the weekly market or find out about upcoming events and festivals in the newspaper.
- Become a member of a sports club: Joining a sports club is the ideal way to meet new people and have fun. There's nothing nicer than going to the pub with your team mates after a good training session and enjoying the end of the day in a comfortable and sociable atmosphere.
- Make sure you're well prepared: Acquiring some basic knowledge of the new language in your home country can make a lot of things easier.
- Immerse yourself in your new environment: If you want to improve your German, you should dive head-first into your new environment and culture. Be firm with friends who want to practise English with you.
- "Ei guuude, wiie?": It can be pretty frustrating to find out you still don't understand a word despite your newly-acquired German skills. People speak different dialects in almost all German regions, and Hessen is no exception. Although "Frankforderisch" and "Hessisch" might not be as difficult as other dialects, you should familiarise yourself with their peculiarities.

## **Links**

[Federal Office for Migration and Refugees \(BAMF\)](#)

[Information on integration courses \(BAMF\)](#)

[Federal Foreign Office \(in German\)](#)

[Volkshochschule \(VHS\) \(in German\)](#)

[Goethe-Institut](#)

## **Further information**

["Integrationskompass": language development – German-language offers \(in German\)](#)

[Hessian Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration: "Löwen im Herz" integration campaign \(in German\)](#)

[Hessian Ministry of Economics, Energy, Transport and Regional Development:](#)

["Wirtschaft integriert": industrial integration project](#)

[Hessian Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs Help for newcomers with no sufficient knowledge of German – intensive classes and courses \(in German\)](#)

[Hessian Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs Hessen's concept for overall language development – language development for pupils from a migration background \(in German\)](#)

[Hessian Ministry of Higher Education, Research and the Arts: Foreign students in Hessen \(in German\)](#)