

## Dallas Goethe Center German Language Curriculum (July 19, 2016)

The Dallas Goethe Center recognizes the close relationship between culture and language learning and this is reflected in how we design and facilitate our courses. We follow an immersion approach. Our goal is to provide at least 90% of the instruction in the target language German. Many of our teachers are native speakers, while others have lived in a German-speaking country for an extended period of time or fallen in love with German language and culture, which supports the immersion approach.

Classes are specifically designed to accommodate the individual student's language skills, interests and needs. Our curriculum focuses equally on speaking, reading and writing, and the materials used in our classrooms adhere to standards set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) and the Council of Europe (COE). We model our learning and teaching environment after approaches recommended by the Goethe-Institut, Germany's official worldwide operating cultural institute.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Self-assessment grid

		A1 Basic User	A2 Basic User	B1 Independent user	B2 Independent user	C1 Proficient user	C2 Proficient user
Understanding	 Listening	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	 Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structural or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
Speaking	 Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	 Spoken production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
Writing	 Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) © Council of Europe

### Proficiency Level Descriptors based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

Our **children's classes** offer a fun, yet academically challenging learning environment that stimulates conversation and social interactions with their peers and adults. Most of our students learn German as their second or third language; only a few speak German at home and can be considered “Heritage Learners”. Therefore, our curriculum emphasizes the teaching of German as a foreign or second language.

Our younger students start by learning basic phrases and sentence structures. They are introduced to beloved German children's games and books. They learn about German traditions and participate in German holidays, such as St. Martin's. For example, this

summer our children went on a “Deutschlandreise” to learn more about “Land und Leute. During the regular semester, our youngest children learn “Deutsch mit Hans Hase” (<http://shop.goethe.de/shop/20081010001/p-13366.htm>) and use “Spielerisch Deutsch Lernen” (<https://shop.hueber.de/de/reihen-und-lehrwerke/spielerisch-deutsch-lernen.html>). Kindergarteners start developing their German reading and writing skills with “Tamtam” (<https://shop.hueber.de/de/reihen-und-lehrwerke/tamtam.html>) and then move on to Planetino ([http://www.hueber.de/seite/pg\\_info\\_pli](http://www.hueber.de/seite/pg_info_pli)) and Planet (<https://shop.hueber.de/de/reihen-und-lehrwerke/planet.html>).

The chosen teaching and learning materials provide our students with an opportunity to age-appropriately progress from one CEFR level to the next and the teachers with a guideline. Of course, there will always be times when the teacher brings in other materials to address a current topic or to answer a specific question. In addition, the higher-level classes work towards and participate in the AATG National German Exam and in German contests.

Our **adult students** build and improve their vocabulary and grammar and learn how to comfortably converse in German. Using recommended and approved textbooks, workbooks and online exercises as a guideline, instruction is tailored to the students' language proficiency level. Common expressions are taught that would come in handy at business meetings, at restaurants, or in a philosophical discussion. We have been using the series/curriculum “Schritte International” (<https://www.hueber.de/schritte-international/>) successfully and will continue to do so. The series was chosen because it not only allows the adult learner to easily progress from one level to another, but also makes the progression transparent and transitioning to other German language programs around the world seamless. In addition, the series comes with multiple teaching manuals, learning CD sets and online resources that support the instructors in their striving to enhance the learning environment for their students.

**Assessment** is an important part of teaching. At the Dallas Goethe Center we believe that for assessment to be meaningful it must be done thoughtfully, systematically and in cooperation with the students and the parents of our younger students. Where do we want students to be at the end of a course or a program? How will we know if they get there? These are two important questions that our teachers ask themselves while preparing their lessons. They are constantly collecting information about student learning and performance to help students reach their language learning goals. Curriculum-based assessments, i.e. tests at the end of a unit or chapter, are used to monitor progression during and at the end of a semester. Additionally, we are offering students to prepare for standardized examinations facilitated by the Goethe-Institut.

We became a **Goethe-Institut Examination Center (Imp)** in 2015 and – now that we have had an opportunity to get more of our instructors trained and certified – will offer their exams starting September 11, 2016. The Goethe-Institut's exams are designed to demonstrate language skills relating to German as a foreign language and German as a second language and are administered around the world in accordance with uniform regulations to children (ages 10 and up) and adults. One need not have attended a language course or acquired a certificate in order to participate in an exam, meaning the exams are not only open to our students but can be taken by students who have studied

German at middle or high schools, community colleges, universities or other German language instituts as well (<https://www.goethe.de/de/spr/kup/prf.html>). Companies, businesses and universities all over the world acknowledge the Goethe-Institut exams as proof of German language proficiency. There is a fee attached for the students though and most of the money needs to be sent to the Goethe-Institut in Washington to cover their costs. Still, we felt adding the exams to our portfolio worthwhile as it is a service valuable to our students. And, of course, nobody is required to take the exams. It is just an opportunity to show what one has learned and is able to do.

We feel that studying German at the Dallas Goethe Center offers students much more than an ordinary language program. Students are engaged in an interactive experience and will become members of the Dallas area German-American community.



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