

The A to Z of Learning German



By Angelika Davey

- A.** Allow time: learning a language doesn't happen overnight - don't believe those 'learn German in a week' type of books, they only work if you learn 24hrs a day.
- B.** Believe in yourself. You can do it!
- C.** Collect words, mind maps, brochures, magazines, anything German you can get hold of.
- D.** Dare to speak, don't worry if you make mistakes. During lessons or when you study, do learn the grammar and aim to get it correct, but when you are in Germany, just talk, the others will hear what they want to hear and they may not notice whether you say, (for example) *der* or *die* or *das*.
- E.** Enjoy what you've learnt! When you start reading German text, don't worry about the words you don't understand yet, instead enjoy the words you DO understand. It will get better!
- F.** Find websites where you can learn more and/or do online activities (games, magazines, news, blogs)
- G.** Grab a few minutes every day, even if you only do a quick online activity, it's so much better than nothing, or an hour a week.
- H.** Hesitate? Don't!
- I.** Imitate the Germans, their gestures, their accents - within reason, of course 😊

- J.** Jot down new words, keep a notepad handy or use an app for your mobile phone. If you don't write things down straight away, you'll forget.
- K.** Keep your cool 😊
- L.** Listen to spoken German as much as possible. If you're learning on your own, find websites and/ or podcasts you can listen to.
- M.** Mumble (If in doubt, mumble - with a bit of luck, the Germans won't have noticed) 😊
- N.** Name that thing. Label items in the house to remind you what they are called.
- O.** Open your new German text book more than once! People, who try to learn on their own, tend to open the book twice; once when they buy it and the second time when they put it in the attic 😞
- P.** Persevere. Don't give up straight away. It takes time to learn new skills.
- Q.** Questions. Don't question your ability, if you want to learn a language you can, but it may not be as quickly as you wish. Instead, do ask questions if you don't understand things. There's no such thing as a dumb question.
- R.** Read as much literature as you can in German, just don't start with Goethe, read something easier first!

- S.** Sing! You'll be amazed how much German you can learn through singing. You can retain it so much easier.
- T.** Trust yourself and also your teacher. If he/she thinks you can do something then you can!
- U.** Use every chance to hear, speak and read German. Watch German TV or DVDs or listen to German radio.
- V.** Visit Germany!
- W.** Write as much as possible. You'll retain sentences better once you have written them down.
- X.** Don't expect anything here. Even I can't find anything beginning with x 😊
- Y.** Yodel. You don't need to learn how to yodel but if you want to... 😊
- Z.** Don't lose your zest for life. Get yourself a good teacher, resources and go for it.



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Learning German can be fun!