

How to Learn German

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Introduction

Hello, my name is Susi, and I'm a German teacher. I'm a native German speaker, I was born in Vienna and I live here. I want to help other people, like you, to learn German and to discover all the things that you can only discover when you speak it. I teach German online and private lessons or in live-groups for up to four people maximum. I will teach you to speak German, as well as write and read and understand it.

What can Go Wrong in German Classes

Not enough Speaking

Enough speaking is very often left out in German classes, even though this is what most people want to learn. So when you learn German with me, we will practice speaking a lot and I will help you to feel comfortable when you speak.

Few People Manage to Learn German as Well as they Want to

Then there is another strange thing about German people have lessons they learn intensively, sometimes for years in courses or even in school, and so many people start lessons and so many people are actually successful and really learn the language. So there is something that's not working in many, many German classes.

Trouble Remembering Words

Something that happens maybe it even happened to you: you're learning German and you hear a word, let's say maybe "Tisch", and then you're like, I've heard that. Yeah, but OK, I don't remember what that is. "Tisch", "Tisch", let me think - ah it's table, and maybe even you have some words like that.

So there's something wrong. People don't manage to learn a language, and that's not good. On the other hand, you have very successfully learned at least one language. Yes, of course, I'm talking about your native language.

So, why don't we use this successful pattern? Because we learn our own language very successfully, and then we tried to learn another language in a different way. And that did not work. So let's use what worked in learning our own language. That would be good, wouldn't it?

How did we Learn our Own Language

Ok, so let's look how we learn our own language. We started with words. Maybe it was a word like dog. And how did we learn that we used it over and over again until we knew it and we knew how to use it perfectly. We said, dog, dog, dog. Nobody told us to do that. We just did it because we wanted to and we wanted to be able to speak, and we did it because it worked. And as a result, you remember these words very well, and you won't forget them for the rest of your life.

And now I have a question - when you learn a foreign language, German or any other one, do you do the same with new words? No, because if you did that, you probably wouldn't be here, because you would already know that language or you would be speaking German.

So in your classes with me, when you learn a new word, you will do this similarly.

Is Grammar really important for Beginners?

One more thing, did you speak your own language fluently when you were six years old? So by the time you were starting school? Right, so how much grammar had you learned before that? None. So what, your native language is special and has no grammar? No. So how could you learn it without grammar? Was it like this - your mom said you down when you were really small and said, "OK, yesterday we learned about nouns. Today we are going to look at adjectives. By the way, what is the definition of the word noun?"

No, you never learned it like that. You would have never done it because it's way too complicated. So how did you learn the language? You learned to speak it in a natural way, and then the grammar rules, the theory, you learned later in school. So maybe grammar is not that important in the beginning? It depends on the point of view, but most importantly, it depends on what works.

Too Much Grammar for Beginners

But what happens when you learn a new language, usually? Very, very often the emphasis is on grammar right at the beginning. And how does that work? What's the result? Exactly. You have books full of notes and you're confused about grammar. You can't speak the language, right? So, I teach German in a more natural way, similar to how you learned your own native language.

How to Learn Easier

Learning new Words

When we learn new words, for example, we will start out by clearing up what each means, and then we'll work with repetition until you repeated it a couple of times and you will know how to say it correctly. And this is not enough to actually be able to use the word. So we practice the word after that. There are several ways how to do that. By the way, we also practice the "der, die, das" like that. Sometimes that gives German students a lot of troubles and they become worried about it. No way you will learn it easily.

So when we learn new words, I explain the meaning. I explain the pronunciation. We go over those things a couple of times and then we practice the word in a real communication, in a game and sentences, for example. There is a few ways how to do that. And that's similar to how we learn our own language, right?

How we Learned Sentences

And what happened in your own language when you knew enough words? Then you could say - sentences, right? So how did we do that, we understood the meaning of a sentence and then we remembered it, and then we used it again, and then we learned a new sentence and then another and then we build up the whole language like that, right?

Sentence Patterns

Ok, now we don't have enough time to learn millions of sentences here, do we? So, we use sentence patterns. And what is a Sentence Pattern? It's a sentence that has one or more empty spaces, and in those empty spaces, you can put a word. "Das ist ein _____" is a Sentence Pattern that means "This is a _____".

So it works like this. Part of the sentence stays the same and you change a word or a few words in the rest of the sentence. And by using sentence patterns, you can make many similar sentences. This way, you don't have to learn millions of sentences. You only learn about one hundred sentence patterns that make up everyday German. And of course, you practice each one of them until you can use them easily.

Balance of Theory and Practice

Importance of Practice

Now, let's talk about practice. Why do I speak so much about practicing? Well, just learning the words and sentence patterns is not enough. What you need to do in order to be able to really use them comfortably in real conversation is practicing. You have to practice every word, every Sentence Pattern.

What do you have to do if you want to be good at anything? You have to practice. This applies to everything in life if you want to be good at sports, you have to practice. If you want to be good at skiing, you have to practice. When you were a kid, you had to practice a lot to walk. And so you did when you wanted to write. It's the same with learning German. Knowing the theory is not enough, you have to practice the language.

Thinking German is so Difficult?

Although this is like it is, many people don't learn the language this way. So what do they do? They learn a lot of theory and then they don't have enough practice. Maybe don't even have time to practice because they have so much theory, they have to learn so and so little practice.



So what happens when you do it this way? You study and then you meet a German speaker, he or she asks you something you want to answer and... exactly, you can't answer. Maybe you were even surprised when this happened to you the first time because you spent some time learning the language, but then you couldn't use it. Maybe you started thinking that German is so difficult and that it couldn't be learned. That's because your knowledge is only - or was only in your notebooks and in your books.

Learning for Real

When you learn a language theory is only a really small part, and practice is the main part. So this much theory, that much practice.



So what happens when you do it this way? Well, then you go out into real life, you meet a German speaking person. He or she asks you something you want to answer, and ... you can! Why? Because your knowledge is not only in your notebooks, but it's also here. It's yours, and you can use it.

Summary

Ok, so here is a short summary. When you learn your native language, you started with words. That is the basis of our lessons. And then when you had enough words, you started using sentences - or sentence patterns. You will learn new sentence patterns in every lesson. And then when you had enough sentence patterns, you could speak or better yet, communicate. And that's the real purpose of language. It is. It was, and it always will be communication. When you say something, the other person understands you and responds and you understand them, and that's what you really want. That's the reason you're looking at this, right? And I'm going to teach you how to communicate in German. So start learning German effectively. Make an appointment with me, and I'll get you going very fast. See you soon. Bye bye.

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listen to the audio**

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