

How to continue practicing

There are several ways you can prepare for the “Sprechen” section of the Start Deutsch 1 exam outside of your German class. The DW Learn German team has put together a few tips for you. And don't forget to check out the websites of the exam providers, too! There you'll also find more tips and practice exams.

General tips

1. During the exam, you will have to talk about yourself, ask someone in your group a question and also answer a question. Even though you can use certain phrases, it doesn't make sense to memorize entire texts. If you get nervous, you will easily forget them.
2. Give yourself enough time to prepare for the exam. It makes more sense to study regularly than to cram for hours at the last minute.
3. Even if you're practicing alone for the oral exam, it's useful to speak out loud. You can also record yourself, for example, on your smartphone.
4. How do you personally study best? Alone or with friends? In the morning or in the evening? On the couch or at a desk? Figure out what works best for you.
5. Look for a conversation partner - ideally a native German speaker learning your native language. That way you both practice both languages together. This is also something you can do online.
6. Try to speak as much German as possible in your everyday life.
7. Don't be afraid of making mistakes.
8. Prepare for the “Sprechen” section of the exam by paying close attention to how it's structured.

Introducing yourself

1. Make notecards with words you'll need to say during the exam: “Name,” “Alter,” “Land,” etc. Place them face down on a table. Turn over one card and say one or two sentences about the word you see. You can also practice this with a study partner.
2. Write down words or phrases you'll need to introduce yourself. Practice them regularly, for example, while you're cooking, on a walk or shortly before going to bed. Make sure to speak out loud – like you would during the exam.
3. During the exam, you will only need to say a few sentences about yourself. But you can practice by talking about yourself as much as possible.

4. Do you have a study partner? Write down the names of (famous) people on a sheet of paper. For example, you could choose the name of a family member or of a famous person, like that of your favorite singer. Pretend you're that person and introduce yourself: "Ich heiße..." Don't worry about your answers being truthful.

Spelling a word

1. Do you have difficulty pronouncing certain letters? Search for videos online that show you how to pronounce them. Practice difficult letters often.
2. Do you get bored spelling names for practice? Try to keep doing this regularly anyway. If you're nervous during the test, it will be harder than you think.
3. During the test you'll often be asked to spell your first or last name. You might also need to spell other words – for example the city you're from or your home country. It's generally best to review the entire alphabet. Write down 10 different words every day and spell them out loud.
4. Do you have a study partner? Quiz each other. One person spells a word out loud and the other writes it down. Are your answers correct?
5. You're in town and see a word on a sign: spell it out loud.
6. Do you live in a German-speaking country? Call a restaurant and reserve a table. Give your name and spell it. You will probably also need to give your telephone number. This is something you can also practice for the test.
7. If you live in a German-speaking country, you could also practice spelling your name and address by ordering food from a delivery service.

Saying numbers

1. Write down different telephone numbers, for example those of friends. Say them out loud. If you have a study partner, you can take turns saying and writing down the numbers.
2. Make sure to practice numbers that are pronounced similarly but not the same as in English or another language you speak.
3. Some numbers sound similar in German. For example, "zwei" and "drei." Make sure to practice these.
4. You can also practice numbers outside of your home. For example, when you're walking through the city and see different house numbers, say them out loud.
5. Use an online translation program or something similar on your phone. Say a number. Does it give you the number you said?

Asking for and giving information

1. If you have difficulty with this portion of the exam, you could first write out questions and their answers before improvising your response.
2. Think about different answers to the W-questions: “was,” “wann,” “wo,” ...
3. Write a list with different topics and their corresponding vocabulary, then ask questions about them using a variety of W-words. You can also make notecards that look like ones you'll have during the exam. Try to work on a set number of cards each day.
4. Do you live in a German-speaking country? Ask someone for information, for example, at the supermarket, in a department store, at the train station or on the street.
5. Search online for an image using the term “Wimmelbild.” A “Wimmelbild” shows different scenes, for example at a train station or in a department store. Think about the different types of information people might ask for and possible answers to their questions.
6. Learn phrases you can use if there is something you didn't understand. For example, “Können Sie das wiederholen, bitte?”
7. If you don't have a study partner, you can still ask friends who don't speak German to help you. They can ask you for information in their language and you respond in German. It's important for the answer to match the question.

Making and responding to requests

1. Take three minutes and write as many nouns onto a sheet of paper as possible. Can you formulate a request for each one?
2. Look at the photos in a newspaper. Can you formulate a request related to each of them? For example, if you see an ad for clothing, can you ask “Können Sie mir bitte diese Hose geben?”
3. Are you in a German-speaking country? Talk to people and ask them something – on the street, on the train, in a restaurant...
4. It's possible you will be given a picture during the exam, and you won't be able to think of a request to go with it. You can prepare for this scenario by taking different types of pictures during an outing or on your way to class. Try to be spontaneous. It's important to capture a wide array of pictures. Think about different questions and reactions to those questions that pertain to your photos. Try not to think too long.