

How to continue practicing

When it comes to getting ready for the “Schreiben” section of the Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer (DTZ) exam, there are different ways you can prepare outside of your German class. The DW Learn German team has put together a few tips for you. Don't forget to check out the exam providers' websites for more tips and practice exams.

Allgemeine TippsGeneral Tips

1. Give yourself enough time to prepare for the exam. It makes more sense to study regularly.
2. 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.
3. You won't have much time for this part of the test, so be sure to time yourself while you practice and assess how long you needed to complete this section.
4. You will have two prompts to choose from. Don't spend too much time deciding between the two.
5. It's important for the examiner to be able to read your handwriting. Ask a friend to evaluate your handwriting. Are there letters that are illegible or that could be mistaken for a different letter?
6. Don't know anyone who speaks German well? Try having an AI correct your writing. You can find free AI programs online. For example, you can search for „KI Textkorrektur kostenlos“. Please be aware that you will not be expected to write perfectly in the exam.
7. Prepare for the “Schreiben” section of the exam by paying close attention to how it's structured.

Writing a formal or semi-formal message

1. In the exam, you will have to work on one of the two writing prompts. While making your selection, pay attention to what you'll need to include in your message. Are you able to think of something for each point?
2. Schreib nicht zu kompliziert. Schreib einfache Sätze mit den Wörtern und Strukturen, die du schon kennst.

3. Do you know the difference between a formal and a semi-informal message? Formal messages are written, for example, to people you've never met. A semi-formal message uses the formal "you" ("Sie" in German), but is addressed to someone you already know. This type of message should not sound too businesslike. Practice by writing names or professions on a separate piece of paper. For example, "meine Deutschlehrerin Frau Schneider," "mein Nachbar Herr Dittrich" or "der Vermieter einer neuen Wohnung." Next to each one, note whether you should write a formal or semi-formal message.
4. Use your textbook or the internet to review formal and semi-formal greetings and salutations.
5. Consider the reasons for composing a formal or semi-formal message. For example, for a complaint, a request or a query. Create a list with more reasons and think about which vocabulary words you'd need. Also, review important words and phrases from your textbook, for example.
6. Write down different people you could write formal or semi-formal messages to, for example, "die Klassenlehrerin meines Sohns," "ein Mitarbeiter in einem Hotel," "meine Chefin" or "die Eltern einer Freundin." Then, consider the reason for the message. If you're writing to the teacher, perhaps it's because there was an argument at school, for example. Think of four key words or short sentences you'd like to include and then write your message. If you have one, ask your conversation partner to correct your text. It's important, for example, that you use "Sie" and the appropriate greeting and salutation. Have you remembered to mention each point?
7. In the exam, it's possible you won't immediately know what to write about the given keywords. For example, if only a name is mentioned. With your study partner's help, think of a writing prompt and four key words that require a bit more creative thinking. Write several sentences for each keyword. Who has more ideas – you or your study partner?
8. You can also search for firms and organizations online that you'd like to write to. Think about questions you could ask. You can write your text on a separate sheet of paper or actually send them via e-mail.
9. Do you have a study partner? Think of a writing prompt for this section of the exam. You can write each other formal or semi-informal messages and then respond to each other's messages.