

How to continue practicing

When it comes to getting ready for the “Sprechen” 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 come up with a few tips just for you. Don’t forget to check out the exam providers' websites for more tips and practice exams.

General tips

1. During the exam, you will have to introduce yourself and answer questions posed by the examiner. You will have to describe a picture and talk about your experiences with the situation depicted. Finally, you and another test taker will have to plan something together. Even though you can use certain phrases, it doesn’t make sense to memorize entire texts. If you get nervous, they might not come to mind when you need 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 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 to make mistakes.
8. Prepare for the “Sprechen” section of the exam by paying close attention to how it’s structured.

Introducing and talking about yourself

1. Write flashcards of topics you might have to talk about in the exam. For example, “Name,” “Geburtsort,” “Wohnort,” etc. Lay them face down. Turn one over and say several sentences about it. 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 the way you would during the exam.
3. During the exam, you will only need to say a few sentences about yourself. After that, the examiner will ask you additional questions. To prepare, you can practice by talking about yourself as much as possible. For example, in response to the word “Wohnort?” can you say more than the name of your city? Can you talk about where it is, which other cities are close by or how to get there?
4. Do you have a study partner? Write down the names of famous or other 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.
5. Think about which questions the examiner could ask. Write down keywords that could come up. For example, if the topic of “Sprachen,” you can write, “Sprachen - Englisch, Deutsch...” Think of possible questions, for example: “Wie lange haben Sie Englisch gelernt? Wo haben Sie Englisch gelernt? Haben Sie Englisch in der Schule gelernt? Brauchen Sie Englisch für Ihre Arbeit? ...” Can you answer these types of questions?

Describing a picture

1. Put together a list of vocabulary words you’ll need to describe a picture. For example, “Vorne im Bild sieht man,” “In der Mitte kann man ... sehen,” “Weiter hinten ist/sind,” “Das Bild zeigt ...” ... You can find these types of words and phrases in your textbook.
2. Use the picture search online to find photos or use one of your own pictures. You can also use a photo from your textbook. First, write down everything you see in the picture. For example, „Mann“, „Parkbank“, „Zeitung“, ... Describe the picture using the words you’ve written down. Improvise your answer.
3. It’s not only important to describe what you see in the picture. You should also talk about the emotions people are expressing in the picture. Make a list of adjectives you’ll need for this. If you find this difficult, you can also look for suitable adjectives in your textbook or with the help of AI. For example, use the prompt “Adjektive Gefühle” and your language level. Look at the suggestions and study the words you consider helpful.

4. Look at different pictures and think about what you could describe. Write your list in your native language. For example, “people’s clothing,” “nature,” “sky,” “colors,” ... Then, write the corresponding German terms, such as “die Jacke,” “die Hose,” “das Kleid,” “der Berg,” “der Strand,” “blau,” ...
5. In this part of the exam, it’s also possible you will need to speculate about the pictures. Review the vocabulary for this. For example, „Ich glaube, das Bild wurde in einer Schule gemacht.“ / „Ich bin mir nicht sicher, aber ich denke, die Person ist nicht glücklich, weil ...“
6. Do you have a study partner? Search for several pictures that depict the same situations, but which differ in detail. One of you describes the photo. Can the other guess which picture it is?
7. Do you have a conversation partner? Ask your partner for feedback after describing a picture. Did you forget anything? Would describing things in a different order make more sense? Consider which suggestions to incorporate the next time you describe a picture. This can help you improve.

Making plans with someone

1. Your conversation partner needs to be able to understand you well. So, it’s better to keep your sentences simple.
2. Repeat words and sentences you can use to make suggestions, or that you can use to react to a suggestion. You will often find phrases for this in your textbook. You can also use AI to find suitable phrases by entering “Sätze für Vorschläge” and your language level. It is possible answers generated by AI will be too difficult for you. Use only the phrases you’ve already learned in class.
3. Write down different situations that require planning. For example, a party or a trip together. Think of the different tasks you'd have to do. Try creating a mindmap.
4. Write the word “Party” on a separate sheet of paper and think of different tasks that are necessary for throwing a party. Which would you like to do, which would you not? What would say if someone asked you to take on one of these tasks? You can write different phrases down first.
5. Do you have a study partner? Take five minutes to write down different situations that require making plans. Then, choose a topic and write a to-do list to go with it. Next, each of you should think about which of the tasks you’d like to take care of, and which you wouldn’t. But don’t reveal your answers before your conversation! Finally, work out the details of the plan together and talk about your preferences for the to do list.

6. Are you studying by yourself? Write a dialogue about plans for a day trip, for example. Before you start, do you need examples of what a dialogue could look like? Try using AI with the prompt “4 Dialoge, Ausflug planen” and your language level. You can, of course, change the number in your prompt. There are also chatbots and language assistants you can converse with.
7. Are you preparing for the exam in a larger group? You can start by writing descriptions of people on cards. For example, "mag keine großen Gruppen," "hat nicht viel Geld," "isst nicht gern Kuchen," "hat erst abends Zeit. Then pass out the cards and choose an event to plan together, such as a birthday party. Write a to do list and discuss. It's important to keep the descriptions written on the cards in mind. For example, if a card says “isst nicht gern Kuchen,” then you will need to make another suggestion for the topic of “Essen.”