

How to continue practicing

When it comes to getting ready for the “Listening” section of the ÖSD Zertifikat A1 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 websites of the exam providers, too! There you’ll also find more tips and practice exams.

General tips

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. In this part of the exam, you will often need to understand numbers, prices, the time of day and the days of the week. Practice different ways of saying these things. For example, “halb acht” and “7 Uhr 30.”
5. During the exam, there will be recordings featuring speakers from Austria, Germany and Switzerland. This means the pronunciation will vary. There will also be terms and words that are only used in one of these countries. Practice listening as much as possible. It’s important that you accustom yourself to different voices, intonations and accents.
6. Practice listening with the audio clips and videos available on the Austrian [Sprachportal](#). Please note: These include recordings and videos for advanced students, so be sure to pay attention to the language level provided. You can listen for free to more audio clips about everyday life in Austrian German on this [website](#).
7. You can also listen to recordings from the “Listening” section of the ÖSD Zertifikat A1 Österreich mock exam. This exam is aimed at students that live in Austria and is focused on everyday life in Austria.
8. Prepare for the “Listening” section of the exam by paying close attention to how it’s structured.

Listening to and understanding short conversations

1. In this section of the exam, you will hear short conversations and will need to match the recording to a photo. Background noises may provide clues as to where the recording is taking place.
2. Try to listen to as much German as possible in your day-to-day life. For example, you can listen to podcasts or search for films and series (for example, for children). You don't need to understand every word, so concentrate on what you do understand. Try not to get “stuck” on unknown words. This is also important in the exam.
3. Have you been studying with a textbook? Then listen back through all of the conversations. Write the question words “wer?,” “wann?” and “wo?” on a separate piece of paper and fill in the information as you listen along. Do you know anyone with a different textbook? Try to borrow it and do the same exercise.
4. Do you live in a German-speaking country? Try to overhear, for example, conversations on the subway, the bus or at the train station. Are you able to understand what they're talking about?
5. Write your own dialogue. For example, a dialogue between two people who are making plans to meet. This is a good way to review vocabulary.
6. You can also practice basic vocabulary and simple phrases with Deutsche Welle's “[Deutschtrainer](#),” for example. There, you'll find translations for the words listed. The “Deutschtrainer” is available in several languages.

Listening to and understanding a voice message

1. In this section of the exam, you will hear recordings from an answering machine. You will need to take notes. To prepare, you can review, for example, the days of the week, time expressions, times of the day (ex. Vormittag, Nachmittag, etc.) and telephone numbers. If you have a study partner, you can read telephone numbers out loud to each other and practice writing them down. If you would like to review the pronunciation of the numbers 0 to 9, you use the [practice exercise page of DW Learn German](#).
2. You might have to write down words that are spelled out loud. You can review the German alphabet on the [practice exercise page of DW Learn German](#). If you have a study partner, you can spell words out loud to each other. It doesn't matter if you know the words or not.
3. Try to think of situations in which you would leave a voice message, for example if you needed to reschedule an appointment. You can do this alone or with a partner. Write down a suitable text.

4. Do you live in a German-speaking country? Try calling a doctor's office outside of working hours. Do you understand the most important information from the answering machine?
5. Do you have a conversation partner? Ask your partner to leave you a voice message. Do you understand the most important information?
6. Do you have a study partner? Each of you can record a voice message, for example using a recording app on your cell phone. Your message should include a day of the week, a date, the time of day, a telephone number and an address. Spell out one word. Exchange messages. Listen to the recording. Do you understand all the information? Take notes and compare your results.

Listening to and understanding a survey

1. During this part of the exam, you will hear a survey with five people. You must select one correct answer for each person. Do you have a study partner? Together, first think of a topic, for example, "Hobbys." Then, each of you writes down five short texts in which people talk about their hobbies. You can use acquaintances, fictional characters or well-known people (ex. an athlete, a singer, etc.). On a separate sheet of paper, write down words for these texts (ex. The names of different hobbies) that could be used as answers. Read your texts aloud and test each other. Can you match the possible answers with the correct people?
2. Do you have a study partner? Use AI to help you prepare. Each of you searches for another topic, for example "Frühstück" and "Wochenende." Here's an example of a prompt for the topic "Frühstück": „Schreib fünf kurze Texte auf A1-Niveau zum Thema „Frühstück“. Jeder Text soll von einer anderen Person sein und sich inhaltlich unterscheiden (z. B. was sie frühstückt, ob sie frühstückt, wo, wann, mit wem usw.). Erstell zu jedem Text ein Stichwort, das den Inhalt zusammenfasst, z. B. „Brötchen“, „kein Frühstück“, „Kaffee“, „Familie“, „Hotel“. (Write five short texts in A1-level German on the topic of "Breakfast." Each text should be by a different person and the contents should differ (for example, what they eat for breakfast, whether they eat breakfast, where, with whom, etc.). Create a key word to summarize each text, for example, "Brötchen," "kein Frühstück," "Kaffee," "Familie," "Hotel."
3. Do you have a study partner? Carry out a survey and use it to prepare for the exam. Choose a topic (ex. "Urlaub"), four pictures (ex. the ocean, mountains, a city, a lawn chair). Then show these pictures to people in your language class and ask where they'd like to take a vacation. Record their answers with a recording device. Together, think of a practice task and test each other.

4. Are you studying in a group? Then, each person can write a short text on one topic (ex. “Einkauf im Supermarkt”) and record the texts with a recording device. Alternatively, your group could also say your answers out loud without writing the text down beforehand. Instead, write a matching key word on an index card. Put the cards on a table face up and listen to the different recordings. Can you match the texts with the right words? Compare your results. Afterwards, talk in German or a shared language about the words that helped you find the correct answer. If you want to avoid doubling up, have someone from your group assign a topic to each person – ex. “Du kaufst nicht gerne im Supermarkt ein.” / “Du kaufst am liebsten abends im Supermarkt ein.” Switch roles with the next topic.
5. During the exam, you will time to read the directions. Consider the information you expect to hear in the recording. To practice, think of a topic, for example “Geburtstagsparty,” and then write down words that might serve as possible answers during the exam. For example, “Familie“, „Freunde“, „Gartenparty“, „kein Fest“, „nur ein Fest beim 20., 30., 40., ... Geburtstag“, „kein Geld“, etc.