

How to continue practicing

There are different ways you can prepare for the “Reading” section of the ÖSD Zertifikat A1 exam outside of your German class. The Learn German team at DW has put together a few tips for you. And don't forget to check out the exam providers' websites, too! You'll also find more tips and practice exams there.

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. 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.
5. It's fine if at first you concentrate on one part of the “Reading” section while preparing for the exam, but make sure to also plan in time to go back and review each section in order. You shouldn't need more than 25 minutes for the “Reading” section.
6. Which part of this section of the exam is particularly difficult for you? Make sure to practice this section even more.
7. It's possible that numbers, prices, the time of day and the days of the week will appear in this section of the exam. Practice different ways of saying these things. For example, “halb acht” and “7 Uhr 30.”
8. Prepare for the “Reading” section of the exam by paying close attention to how it's structured.

Choosing the right ads

1. During the exam you will need to read through scenarios and find an ad that matches them. Use ads that you find, for example, in newspapers or online, or which you've created using AI. Here's an example of a prompt: "Schreib mir bitte 6 verschiedene Anzeigen, die etwa 50 Wörter lang sind und jeweils ein anderes Thema haben. Schreib die Themen aber noch nicht dazu. Es ist meine Aufgabe, diese Themen zu finden." (Write me six ads about different topics in German that are about 50 words long. But don't tell me what the topics are. It is my job to figure that out.) Read the ads. Write down why the ads were written, for example, "Information über neue Bücher", "Information über einen Sprachkurs", "freie Wohnung." If you're unsure whether you've found the correct topic, you can ask AI. Here's an example of a prompt: "Das Thema der ersten Anzeige ist 'freie Wohnung'. Ist das richtig?" "The topic in the first ad is 'freie Wohnung.' Is that correct?"
2. Think of an imaginary situation. For example, "I would like to do a cooking course." Search for a related key word online and look at the list of results. It's not necessary to open the websites. Which result best matches your imaginary situation?
3. Do you live in a German-speaking country? Look for ads – in newspapers, for example. Are you able to understand what they're about? What are the people, stores or businesses offering? You can also take pictures of ads you see in your everyday life, for example in the university cafeteria or in the supermarket.
4. Do you have a study partner? Look for ads together relating to a specific topic (such as for an apartment). Each person should choose two ads, and then think of test prompts to quiz each other with. For example, "Sie suchen eine Wohnung mit Balkon."
5. Think of an imaginary situation. For example, "I want to join a fitness course on Mondays." Write down key words you would expect to see in an ad for that.
6. Sometimes the text in an ad will be incomplete. If you have difficulty understanding it, try to add the missing words. For example, verbs.

Understanding how to read an ad

1. During the exam, you will have to read an ad and answer two questions about it with “Ja” or “Nein.” Do you live in a German-speaking country? Look at as many ads as possible – in newspapers, for example. Do you understand the ads? What do you have difficulty understanding? If you live elsewhere in the world, you can use websites with ads. Search for “Kleinanzeigen.” You can also use AI to create some ads. Here’s an example of a prompt: „Schreib mehrere kurze Anzeigentexte auf A1-Niveau. Jeder Text soll ein anderes Thema haben. Die Themen sollen z. B. „Wohnung“, „Arbeit“, „Veranstaltung“, „Verkauf“, „Kurs“ oder „Hilfe“ sein. Die Texte sollen einfach, klar und realistisch sein. Sie sollten etwa 50 Wörter lang sein.“ (Write me several short ads in A1-level German. Each text should be about something different. The topics should be, for example, “apartment,” “work”, “event,” “sale,” “course,” or “help.” The texts should be simple, clear and realistic. They should be about 50 words long.)
2. If you have a study partner, you can write your own ads and tasks and then test each other.
3. Have you found an ad you’d like to use to help you prepare? Use AI to create a task like in the exam. Here’s an example of a prompt: “Ich gebe dir mehrere kurze Anzeigentexte (z. B. Wohnungsanzeigen, Kleinanzeigen, Veranstaltungsinfos). Zu jedem Text sollst du bitte zwei einfache Ja-/Nein-Fragen formulieren, die sich direkt auf den Inhalt beziehen. Das Sprachniveau ist A1.” (I’m giving you several short ads, such as an ad for an apartment, a personal ad, info about an event). Write two simple, yes/no questions related to the contents of each ad in German. The language level is A1.) Afterwards you can check your answers with AI. Here’s an example of a prompt: „Das sind meine Lösungen. Habe ich alles richtig gemacht? (Here are my answers, did I do everything right?)

Reading and understanding instructions and informational texts

1. During the exam, you will need to be able to read instructions and short, informational texts and match them to graphics (ex. a warning sign or a symbol for a building). Think what you might read in instructions and make yourself a list of keywords, for example, „Verbot: hier darf man nicht telefonieren.“
2. Review vocabulary for warnings, rules and information. For warnings, those would be, for example “verboten”, “darf man nicht”, “nicht erlaubt.” Think about some typical words for other types of signs and write them down. Your German textbook is a good place to find suitable words.
3. Do you know the difference between “nicht dürfen,” “nicht müssen,” and “müssen”? Review these phrases once more before the exam.
4. Do you live in a German-speaking country? Take photos of signs, instructions and notices that you see in your everyday life. Then, look for matching pictures, for example, online.
5. Some instructions contain difficult words, but you can still figure out their meaning. Read different instructions and underline all the words that you know. You can also use AI to create a set of instructions. Here’s an example of a prompt: Schreibe bitte 5 verschiedene kurze Hinweistexte (z. B. Verbote, Regeln, Informationen). Die Texte sollen etwa 25 Wörter lang sein.“ (Write five different short sets of instructions (ex. Warnings, rules, notices). The texts should be about 25 words long). You can specify that the texts are written at a higher German level than your exam by including "Das Sprachniveau ist A2" (the texts should be in A2-level German) Then think about whether the text is explaining a rule, a warning or providing information. Look for a suitable graphic online.