

How to continue practicing

There are several ways you can prepare for the “Speaking” section of the ÖSD Zertifikat A1 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, describe a situation in a picture and act out this situation in dialogue with your examiner. 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. During the exam, you will have 10 minutes to prepare for and make notes for the tasks. Take this preparation time into consideration while studying and preparing for the exam. You won't have enough time to write down entire sentences during the exam, so it's important to write down key words only.
9. Prepare for the “Speaking” section of the exam by paying close attention to how it's structured.

Introduce yourself

1. In this portion of the exam, you will be given a list with six topics: You must choose four of these topics. Think about which topics you find easier and which you find harder. Then, write down key words you need in order to talk about these topics. You can write these down on a separate piece of paper in German or in your native language. Look up words you don't know, for example, related to vocational training or your profession, and memorize them.
2. Do you have an unusual hobby that you'd still like to talk about? Write down phrases you can use to describe your hobby on a separate piece of paper. For example, "Das ist ein Sport mit einem Ball. Das ist ein bisschen wie Basketball.", „Das macht man mit einer Partnerin oder einem Partner.“, „Das ist sehr beliebt in meinem Land.“
3. Make notecards with words you'll need to talk about during the exam: "Beruf," "Sprachen," "Hobbys," etc. Write cards with other topics from your daily life, for example, "Wochenende", "Reisen", 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 and have them ask you more questions.
4. Review useful phrases that are necessary to talk about the topics in this section. You can use your German book to help you. Read all of the dialogues about "Beruf," "Sport," "Hobbys," "Familie," "Lieblingsessen," and "Sprachen." Are there expressions you find helpful? You can use the DW Learn German video language course "Nicos Weg A1" to help you prepare. There, too, you'll find examples of the people talking about their families, professions or hobbies.
5. Write down words or short 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.
6. In the exam, it won't be enough to say just one sentence about yourself for each topic. Prepare in the following way: Choose a topic and say as much as possible about yourself. If that is too difficult, you can also write your topics down on a separate sheet of paper and note down keywords, for example, "Familie - Wie viele Personen?," "Eltern?," "Geschwister?"
7. Do you have a study partner? Write down the names of different people. For example, the name of a family member or of your favorite singer. Take on the role of that person and talk about these topics. You don't have to be truthful!

Describing a situation in a picture

1. In this part of the exam, you will have to talk about a situation in a picture. This can be, for example, a conversation between a salesperson and a customer. Write down different situations, for example, “Gespräch in einem Sportgeschäft,” “Gespräch in einer Arztpraxis” or “Gespräch am Bahnhof.” Write down key words that can be used to answer these questions: “Was sehen Sie?”, “Wie viele Personen sehen Sie?”, “Wo sind die Personen?” and “Was machen die Personen?” If it’s a conversation in a sporting goods store, this could be:

- Was sehen Sie? – ein Sportgeschäft, Kleidung, Schuhe, Fahrräder, ...
- Wie viele Personen sehen Sie? – zwei Personen, Verkäufer und Kundin, ...
- Wo sind die Personen? – bei den Fahrrädern, zwischen zwei Regalen, an der Kasse, ...
- Was machen die Personen? – ein Fahrrad zeigen, fragen, antworten, etwas suchen, arbeiten, bezahlen, helfen, ...

If this is too difficult, you can have AI generate a list of key words for you. Here’s an example of a prompt: „Gib mir 10 Stichwörter, die zu einer Bildbeschreibung passen, auf der zwei Personen in einem Sportgeschäft sprechen. Die Wörter sollen zum A1-Niveau passen und typische Handlungen oder Dinge zeigen.“ (Give me 10 key words in German that would fit a description of a picture in which two people in talking to each other in a sporting goods store. The language level is A1 and the words should describe typical actions or objects.)

2. Select a topic (ex “Gespräch in einer Arztpraxis”) and use it for an image search online. Choose three different pictures about this topic that differ in certain aspects. Make notes about each picture and then talk about it aloud. Do you have a study partner? Are they able to identify the correct picture?
3. During the exam, you will also have to answer your examiner’s questions. Take a picture and write down all of the questions you can think of. If you have a study partner, you can both come up with questions. Then pose them to each other and respond.
4. Do you have a study partner? Search for three pictures online that depict different situations for your study partner. Your partner chooses one of these, makes notes and then talks about the picture. Ask each other questions.

Acting out a situation in a picture

1. You will have to act out the situation in the picture that you selected for Part 2 with your examiner. You must react and respond to questions. It's possible that you won't be accustomed to your examiner's accent, which might be Austrian or Swiss or another variation you're unfamiliar with. Search for videos and audio clips online to prepare for this. For example, you can use the audio clips in the "Listening" section of the ÖSD A1 Österreich mock exam. Or, you can watch videos from everyday life in Austria, which are available on the Austrian [Sprachportal](#) under "Materials focusing on Austria (A1-C1)."
2. Think about a situation, for example, a conversation in a doctor's office. Think of key words for both people, such as: Ärztin: „Wo – Schmerzen?“, „Wie lange schon?“, „viel trinken“, „kein Sport“, ... / Patient: „Bauch tut weh“, „vorgestern“, „Kopfschmerzen“, „nicht laufen können“, „Welche Medizin?“, „Im Bett bleiben?“, „Wie lange nicht arbeiten?“ Also consider which role you would like to play. What's easier for you? Which person would you have more ideas for?
3. Do you have a study partner? Think of a situation, for example, „ein Gespräch am Flughafen.“ First write down as many questions as you can for both people. For example: Person an der Information: „Wie kann ich Ihnen helfen?“, „Kann ich Ihr Ticket sehen?“, „Haben Sie eine Frage?“, „Wohin fliegen Sie heute?“... / Fluggast: „Wann fliegt mein Flugzeug?“, „Wohin muss ich gehen?“, „Gibt es hier eine Toilette?“, ...
Use the questions and act out the conversation. Please note: During the exam, it's important that you react to what your examiner says. But you can, of course, begin a new topic once you've answered a question or a topic of conversation has come to an end.
4. Read through all of the dialogues in your German book and review typical expressions and questions. You can also use audio clips from your book. For example, if you're listening to a conversation at a bus stop about departure times, you can pause the audio when a question is asked. Can you come up with a suitable answer? Continue listening to the audio clip.
5. You can find examples of conversations, for example in "[Nicos Weg A1](#)." Use the videos to review important phrases. You can find an example of a conversation in a doctor's office under the unit "Health."
6. Are you preparing for the exam by yourself? You can also practice conversations with AI. Here's an example of a prompt: "Führe mit mir ein einfaches Verkaufsgespräch auf A1-Niveau. Ich bin Kundin auf dem Markt, du bist Verkäuferin. Bitte stelle mir Fragen oder antworte auf meine Fragen. Zeig mir keine Transkripte oder Übersetzungen." (Hold a simple sales chat with me in A1-level German. I'm a customer at the market and you are the salesperson. Ask me questions or answer my questions. Do not show me transcripts or translations.) Once you're finished, ask the AI to show you the transcript and read through it.