

How to continue practicing

When it comes to getting ready for the “Hören” section of the ÖSD Zertifikat A2 exam, there are different ways you can prepare outside of your German class. The Learn German team at DW has come up with a few tips just for you. Don’t forget to check out the exam providers’ websites, 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. In each section of the exam, focus on what you understand and not what you don’t.
6. You can also use A2-level listening exercises from other test providers, even if they differ from the used for the ÖSD Zertifikat A2 exam. It’s important to listen to as many examples at your level as possible. You can find an overview of other A2 exams at [DW Learn German](#).
7. Prepare for the “Hören” section of the exam by paying close attention to how it’s structured.

Listening to and understanding short reports

1. In this section of the exam, you will hear two reports. You will then select information that you heard in the reports. First, consider what you would typically hear in a short radio report. What do listeners need to be informed about? Tip: This can either relate to the current situation or the general programming. If you're unsure, you can use AI by prompting, "Welche Informationen hört man im Radio?" If the results are too difficult for you, you can add the word "einfacher." This will produce a simpler text. Make a list of the information and write down different words that could be used on the radio. For example, "Information über den Verkehr: Auto, Unfall, Baustelle, ..." You can use A2 vocabulary lists from textbooks to help.
2. Write your own radio announcements, for example for traffic information, weather forecasts or event announcements. Use A2-level vocabulary.
3. Are you studying with someone else? First, write two short reports or use AI to create one. You could prompt it, for example, with: "Erstelle zwei kurze Texte auf Niveau A2. Thema: Stadtfest in Linz. Beide Texte sollen dieselben Informationen enthalten: Datum, Uhrzeit, Veranstaltungsort, Programmpunkte (z.B. Musik, Kinderprogramm, Essen), Eintrittspreis. Die Texte sollen unterschiedlich formuliert und die Informationen in jeweils anderer Reihenfolge präsentiert sein." ("Create two short texts at A2 level. Topic: City festival in Linz. Both texts should contain the same information: date, time of day, event location, itinerary (ex. music, kids' events, food), price of entry. The texts should be phrased differently and the information should be presented in a different order.") Remember, AI texts don't always match the language level entered in the prompt. Nevertheless, you should read all of the sentences and phrases and think about which vocabulary words you'd like to review. Don't choose too many words. Look in your textbook to see what words you need to know at the A2 level. Think of questions for your partner and vice versa. Read your texts aloud. Your partner should listen and then answer the questions.
4. Listen to German radio broadcasts regularly, for example using a live stream online. It's a good idea to look for a channel with a variety of programming. It should offer more than commentary on current affairs or interviews, but a station that only plays music isn't suitable either. Depending on what kind of music you like, you can choose one of German-language public radio stations, for example Ö3 (ÖRF), SWR 3, WDR 2, NDR 1 or Bayern 1. Announcements are often read quickly. Don't let that intimidate you.
5. On some websites, it's also possible to read, for example, the traffic announcements. The latest ones tend to include audio. For example, you can enter "Verkehrsmeldungen" or "Wetter" and the name of the radio broadcaster into a search engine. If there's no audio available, you can read the online text. What are you able to understand? Remember,

these texts are written for native speakers. If audio is available, you can first listen to it several times. If you feel more confident, you can listen to it just once like in the exam.

6. Weather reports are also included in this section of the exam. To prepare, first gather typical vocabulary words and phrases. You could use your textbook to do this, for example. There you'll also find the topics "weather" and "weather reports".
7. Find a map of Germany, Austria or Switzerland online, for example. Write down sentences that could be used in the weather report. For example, "Heute ist es in Wien sonnig. Die Temperatur liegt bei 22 Grad." Then, listen to an example of weather reports and check your sentences to see if they are similar to what the weather forecaster said. One place to find this is on the website of a German-language radio broadcaster. Weather reports can usually be heard at the end of the news bulletin at the top or the bottom of the hour. You can also find current weather reports on YouTube, which, of course, always include video.
8. Are you having difficulty understanding certain types of information on the radio? Make a point of practicing these frequently occurring vocabulary words.
9. There are different ways to phrase weather reports. For example, if the weather is good, you could say, "Es ist sonnig", "Die Sonne scheint", or "Es wird schön". Create a list of different phrases that describe the same weather conditions. You can use vocabulary lists from your German textbook to help. If you have a study partner, you could look online for pictures that show, for example, a sunny, rainy, stormy or foggy day. Then, read some of the sentences from your list aloud. Can your partner find the correct picture? Compare your lists. Are there phrases that only one of you wrote? Or can you think of more phrases together?

Listening to and understanding voice messages

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 may include, for example, a day of the week, a date, the time of day, a telephone number, a price or an address. Spell out one word. Exchange messages. Listen to the recording. Do you understand all the information? Take notes and compare your results.
7. In the exam, you will also hear words you don't understand. You can still answer the questions as long as you've practiced your A2-level vocabulary. If you've been learning German with a textbook, then you can try taking another look at the A1 and A2-level vocabulary.
8. Are you studying with someone else? Create tasks for each other. You can use AI if you want. First, each of you should think of a scenario, such as: The kindergarten is closing early tomorrow and you need to pick up your child at 2:00 p.m. An example prompt would be, "Kindergarten schließt morgen um zwei, Mailbox-Nachricht, A2." Then create a note for your partner to write information on. Read your messages aloud twice and take notes when it's your partner's turn.
9. In this section of the exam, you will have to write your answers on the answer sheet. For this reason, it's important to write clearly. Ask a friend to read your writing and give you feedback. Are there letters your friend is unable read easily?

Listening to and understanding an interview

1. During this part of the exam, you will hear an interview with five people. You must select one or more correct answers 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 A2-Niveau zum Thema ‚Frühstück‘. Jeder Text soll von einer anderen Person sein und maximal 250 Zeichen lang sein. Die Texte sollen keine Überschriften enthalten. Die Inhalte sollen so gestaltet sein, dass mehrere Stichwörter zu einem Text passen können – z. B. ‚Brötchen‘ und ‚Kaffee‘ oder ‚kein Frühstück‘ und ‚Büro‘.“ (“Write five short texts in A2-level German on the topic of “breakfast.” Each text should be by a different person and have a maximum of 250 characters. The texts should not have a headline. The content should be written in such a way that several key words could match the text, for example “Brötchen” and “Kaffee” or “kein Frühstück”, and “Büro”.) Then, use AI to create keywords that match the text. For example, you could use the prompt, “Erstelle fünf Stichwörter zum Thema ‚Frühstück‘, die inhaltlich zu einem der Texte oder zu mehreren der Texte passen. Die Stichwörter sollen so gewählt sein, dass sie unterschiedlich häufig vorkommen – z. B. in einem Text nur ein Stichwort, in einem anderen zwei oder drei. Die Stichwörter sollen dann von einer Person angekreuzt werden können, wenn die entsprechende Information im Text vorkommt. (Create five keywords on the topic of “breakfast” that would match one or several of the texts. The keywords should be chosen such that they appear a different number of times in each text. For example, in one text only one keyword, in another text, two or three. One person should be able to check off the keywords as the corresponding information appears in the text.) Read each other the texts and test each other. Can you find the right key words for each text?
3. Do you have a study partner? Conduct the interview yourself and use it to prepare for the exam. Choose a topic (ex. “Urlaub”). Then, ask other students in your class where and how they’d like to go on vacation. Record their answers using a recording device. Then, create questions using key words like in the exam and test each other.