

How to continue practicing

When it comes to getting ready for the “Writing” section of the ÖSD Zertifikat A2 exam, there are different ways you can prepare 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. 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. 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.
3. 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.
4. It’s important that the examiner can read your handwriting. Ask a friend to evaluate your handwriting. Are there letters that are illegible or that could be mistaken for a different letter?
5. Don’t know anyone who speaks German well? Try having AI correct your writing. You can find free AI programs by searching online. For example, you can search for “KI Textkorrektur kostenlos.” Please be aware that for an A2-level test, you will not be expected to write perfectly.
6. Review the structure of the “Writing” section of the exam.

Writing an e-mail

1. During the exam, you will have to write an e-mail and answer four questions. Keep it simple. Write simple sentences with the words and grammatical structures you already know.
2. Review how to write a personal, semi-formal and formal e-mail. Additionally review different phrases for a closing salutation.
3. On the day of the exam, pay attention to the form of address in the e-mail you’re reading. Is it formal or informal? Write your response in the same style. Pay attention to the opening (ex. “Liebe..” or “Lieber...”) and the closing (ex. Viele Grüße). Use “du” or “Sie” based on the e-mail you’ve read.
4. Review different w-question words. Make a list of them. If this is difficult to do, you can also use artificial intelligence (AI). Here’s an example of a prompt: “Schreib mir bitte eine

Liste mit W-Fragewörtern im Deutschen" (Write me a list of w-question words in German.) Then, think of a topic for an e-mail and phrase the question using w-question words. For example, if you've decided on the topic "Kinobesuch", you could ask "Welchen Film wollen wir sehen?" or "Wann treffen wir uns?". Then answer the questions.

5. Use AI to create short e-mails that you then respond to. You could then prompt it as follows: "Schreib eine kurze, persönliche E-Mail auf A2-Niveau. Jemand sagt ein Treffen mit einer Freundin ab. Die E-Mail soll ca. 50 Wörter lang sein und vier Fragen an die Freundin enthalten." (Write a short, personal e-mail in A2-level German. Someone is cancelling plans with their friend. The e-mail should be around 50 words long and contain four questions for the friend".) Then respond to the e-mail.
6. Do you have a study partner? Think of exercises for this section of the exam and topics for a short e-mail on notecards. This could be for a party invitation, for example, cancelling plans or making a request. Each person picks a card and writes a text with four questions for their partner. Then swap texts and respond. Keep an eye on the clock as you write your response. You shouldn't take more than 30 minutes to do this.
7. If you have a conversation partner, you can also write each other e-mails regularly. Afterward you can ask your partner to check your text and to give you tips. Remember, your text doesn't have to be error-free, just easy to understand.
8. Create a list with useful expressions found in e-mails such as "Schluss: Bis bald! Liebe Grüße ..." "Bitte um schnelle Antwort: Kannst du mir bald antworten? / Schreib mir bitte bald." You can find typical expressions, for example, in your German textbook.
9. Write a short e-mail every day. Before you start, think of a new topic each time, for example "Dank für eine Einladung" or "einen Termin ändern".
10. Are you preparing in a study group? Write key words related to e-mails on notecards, for example „Gruß am Ende“, „sich für eine E-Mail bedanken“, „eine Frage zur Gesundheit“. You can do this in German or a shared language. Place the cards facedown on a table. One person flips over the first card. Each person forms a suitable sentence either out loud or written down. Talk about your results and note down phrases you like. You can divide the notecards between yourselves. Each person writes a short e-mail on a separate sheet of paper using the information on the notecards you've gotten. Your e-mail should include four questions. Give your e-mail to the person to you left. Respond to the e-mail you've been given.
11. If you're studying in a group, you can also act out a role play. Write a notecard for each person, for example, „Paul, 35, Lehrer, Freund von Philine, Thema der E-Mail: Einladung zur Grillparty am 25.8.“, „Philine, 37, Krankenschwester, Freundin von Paul, Thema der E-Mail: Bitte im Urlaub Blumen gießen.“ Pass out the notecards and write an e-mail, either on paper or digitally, to a friend from the card. When you receive an e-mail, you can respond to the message.

12. Writing e-mails is also in the “Schreiben” section of other A2-level exams. Take a look at mock exams from other test providers and complete the corresponding tasks. You can find an overview of other A2 exams, for example, at [DW Learn German](https://www.dw.com/en/learn-german/a-2-exams/s-10000000).