

Learning German

Options for Learning and Placement

- Which level of Princeton German should I take if I already have some knowledge of the language?
- Can I get credit at Princeton for German courses taken elsewhere?
- How can I improve my German?
- What resources are recommended for starting German on my own?

Many students inquire about alternate pathways through the language sequence to upper-level courses in the Department of German that do not begin with GER 101 at Princeton. Perhaps you have learned some German in an academic setting prior to matriculating, perhaps you have familial connections to the language, or perhaps you are interested in self-study in order to enter the program at a level higher than the beginner course. In all circumstances you will need to take the placement examination offered on Canvas just before the start of each semester (i.e., in August and January every academic year).

If you are interested in self-study or study outside of Princeton, whether as a reinforcement of learned language or the acquisition of new, please consult the following recommendations from the departmental language program coordinators. If questions remain after reading this document, contact [Adam Oberlin](#) for more information.

After any amount of self-study, if you have taken the placement test and passed all four levels, you will be invited for an additional oral interview for final placement at the 200+ level and, if necessary, satisfaction of university language requirements. This process includes the submission of a writing sample.

COURSES

While we strongly recommend taking German language courses at Princeton for the best possible exposure to the language pedagogy, vocabulary, and approaches to German-language curricular materials employed in subsequent courses, some students for various reasons of scheduling and changing goals and circumstances choose to study outside of the

university during the summer – which can now earn Princeton credit! Check with your advisor for details. Two courses of study recommended by the department are the [Goethe Institut](#) for course options, locations, fees, and other information and the [Middlebury summer German Language School](#). We recommend that you contact the department for planning purposes and more information if you choose this path.

VOCABULARY

Core frequency vocabulary flashcards on Quizlet from GER 101-GER 107 are available to everyone (see <https://quizlet.com/ddd-german> for 101-102 and https://quizlet.com/benj_for_105-107). It is imperative that you master the core vocabulary up to the level you seek to enter, or all of them if you wish to fulfill the language requirement and attend 200+ level courses; not only will this help you keep up with coursework at the appropriate level, but also with your peers who took courses earlier in the sequence in the department.

OTHER RESOURCES

Resources such as DuoLingo or Rosetta Stone (the former is free for everyone on the iOS appstore and Google Play, as well as online, and the latter is available through the [Princeton University Library](#) website) are useful for practice, exposure to basic core vocabulary, and to hear spoken German for beginners. Obviously, these types of applications are not a substitute for deeper engagement with a language. In order to advance with German beyond the conversational, first-person, travel-oriented basics, we recommend the following:

- 1) continue to practice with the Quizlet vocabulary flashcards for the German sequence at Princeton;
- 2) continue to review the grammar exercises on the first-year textbook, if you have access (<http://dddgerman.org>), and otherwise make use of the abundant and free grammar exercises available online - a simple Google search for 'German adjective ending exercises,' for example, will result in hundreds of opportunities for practice;
- 3) listen to German music, watch the news online, find Youtube videos for language learners - *Deutsche Welle* is recommended for news and other programming geared toward learners (<https://www.dw.com/de/deutsch-lernen/nachrichten/s-8030>) and web series such as [EasyGerman](#) offer hours of video learning at various levels;
- 4) in addition to departmental and other resources, utilize Dartmouth's review website, which gives explanations in English as well as German and walks students step-by-

step through various structures

(<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~deutsch/Grammatik/Grammatik.html>), or, if you would prefer a similar printed book, the textbook *English Grammar for Students of German* is a helpful, inexpensive resource (<https://www.amazon.com/English-Grammar-Students-German-Learning/dp/0934034435>; please note that Adam Oberlin does not profit from the purchase of this book!);

- 5) and finally, a conversation partner is always helpful for practicing speaking and listening. If you have any classmates or acquaintances at Princeton or another school learning German who may wish to chat, or if you know a native speaker who would not mind occasionally working with you, this is a good standard practice to develop. Various websites, such as [Tandem](#).