

A GUIDE TO METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS FOR GERMAN

METHODOLOGY

Finding the level of your group

Books and other teaching materials are often marked with a level, such as A1, B2, C2, etc. This refers to the language levels as described by the Common European Framework of Reference. It has a description of what you should know and be able to do in a language at each level and will help you select materials.

To help you assess your own group, there is a self-assessment grid which will enable each member to assess his/her own level, although frequently people will find that they are at different levels for reading and understanding to speaking and writing. It is probably best to take the lower level.

Phone or email Alastair Sharp who will send you copies. (01903 856397; alastair.sharp@chattan.plus.com)

Functional or step-by-step?

Many books or materials these days are based on a functional approach. This means learning to use the language to do various things, like introducing yourself or asking for information or through ideas like "booking accommodation". There is an emphasis on learning "chunks" and phrases through listening and repetition. This is known as a "Functional" approach to language learning

For those who like a more structured approach, there are some books based on a step-by-step knowledge of grammar and learning vocabulary.

Group Meetings

Beginners need to follow a course, either a functional one, or, if the teacher feels competent to use a more formal approach, a step-by-step approach similar to that used in schools. This may be too formal for U3A groups!

Above A1, up to A2 : Groups at this level will still find conversation difficult. They may understand a good speaker but find it difficult to enter into dialogue. For this reason, it is probably best to use a course aimed at this level.

Above A2, up to B2 : Groups at this level should be able to enter dialogues, so converses very appropriate. Themes could include current news material, group members' own reports of activities, learners' magazines such as Deutsch Perfekt (q.v.)

B2 and above : Any of the materials listed for these levels should provide good starting points for conversation!

Unconventional : Dick Chapman runs a Walk 'n' Talk German group which walks in the Chilterns, talking German as they walk, until they reach a pub for lunch, where they revert to English. Might be a bit much for most people, but perhaps the occasional meeting? You can contact him via me, Alastair Sharp, as above.

SOURCES

Dictionaries

A dictionary is essential!

- **Beginners** will undoubtedly require a German-English one, and Langenscheidt probably do the best. I do not recommend buying a very expensive one, for the reasons stated below! You may like to try “Basic German Vocabulary: A Learners Dictionary divided into subject categories with example sentences”, costing around £15. An excellent on-line resource is Leo - <http://dict.leo.org>; there are also apps for iPad and Android, available at the usual stores – the Android one is free. Another one, recommended by Ashton in Makerfield U3A, is www.dict.cc
- **Once past the initial stages (at least above A1)**, it is better to use a German-German dictionary. This requires more work to use, but gives a better feel for the language. I recommend Wahrig Deutsches Wörterbuch, available at around £40. Duden is the traditional one, but it is difficult to find the right product – Duden is also available on-line at <http://www.duden.de/suchen/dudenonline>; there are also apps for iPad and Android, available at the usual stores.

U3A Resource Centre

Before going off to other places to look for materials, it is worth consulting the U3A library (where I am aware of their materials, I have shown this in Sources below). A leaflet about contacting them is available, and I can supply a copy - phone or email Alastair Sharp (01903 856397; alastair.sharp@chattan.plus.com). Or you can just look them up on-line by logging in to the U3A Web site - <http://www.u3a.org.uk/home.html> - and clicking on Resource Centre. You need to register with them to borrow materials!

Useful bookshops

- The German Bookshop is a subject heading at The European Bookshop, 5 Warwick Street, London, W1B 5LU Tel: 020 7240 1634 Web : <http://www.europeanbookshop.com/languagebooks/subject/GER> Their catalogue contains details of courses with CD's, for self-study and classroom use at all levels; look under Vocational courses to find those for adults. You may be able to get inspection copies by mentioning the University of the Third Age. Speak to the marketing department on 01242 245252.
- Grant and Cutler is the department of Foyles Bookshop which deals with all languages. 113-119 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H OEB Tel: 0207437 5660 Look at <http://www.foyles.co.uk/languages/german>
- Hugendubel is an excellent bookshop in Germany, with branches in most German cities and many small towns. Also on-line at <http://www.hugendubel.de>

MATERIALS

Level	Type	Title	Source	Comment/Advice
	German Courses			
<A1	Complete courses which groups can work through from beginning to end, covering all four language skills (Speaking, Reading, Writing and Listening) with activities for groups and pairs and give you all the materials you might need. They usually have an accompanying CD, and sometimes a separate workbook for homework and a teachers' guide. This kind of whole package can be expensive but parts can be bought separately.	Talk German, with a book and CD for each of two parts	BBC – on-line : www.bbcactivelanguages.com	On-line help for this (http://www.bbc.co.uk/1/anguages/german/), including a Tutors' Guide. Also many clips
		Living German, 7 th Edition	Hodder & Stoughton https://www.hodder.co.uk/Books/detail.page?isbn=9781444153910	- reading material consisting of passages or dialogues - vocabulary lists - clear grammar explanations - exercises recommended by East Cowton U3A, used with Willkommen, q.v.
		Willkommen German Beginner's Course	Waterstones http://www.waterstones.com/waterstonesweb/products/paul+coggle/heiner+schenke/willkommen+german+beginner27s+course3a+coursebook/8685247	German course for adult beginners recommended by East Cowton U3A, used with Living German, q.v. NB ALSO available as an app on Android for tablets and phones
		Take Off in German	Oxford University Press - www.oup.com/uk/books/hop ; currently out of print, available on loan from the U3A Resource Centre. Also try : http://www.amazon.co.uk/Oxford-Take-Off-German-Paperback/dp/019953439X http://www.languages-direct.com/take-off-in-german.html#.VFzqK2flWYM http://www.grantandcutler.com/book/56301	Book and 4 CDs; 14 units, each with multiple activities, both functional and grammar-based,, seems an excellent course covering A1 to A2

Level	Type	Title	Source	Comment/Advice
A1 to B1	Complete courses which groups can work through from beginning to end, covering all four language skills (Speaking, Reading, Writing and Listening) with activities for groups and pairs and give you all the materials you might need. They usually have an accompanying CD, and sometimes a separate workbook for homework and a teachers' guide. This kind of whole package can be expensive but parts can be bought separately.	Pluspunkt Deutsch	Cornelsen on-line : http://www.cornelsen.de/pluspunkt_deutsch/	Intended for immigrants to Germany learning German as a second language. 3 courses, each in 2 halves – A1, A2, B1.
		Deutsch – warum nicht (26 parts)	Deutsche Welle on-line : http://www.dw.de/learn-german/deutsch-warum-nicht/s-2548	You can download each audio as an MP3 file, and also download an accompanying PDF file. Possibly not as good as the BBC series, but may provide useful additional material.
A1 to B1	Complete courses which groups can work through from beginning to end, covering all four language skills (Speaking, Reading, Writing and Listening) with activities for groups and pairs and give you all the materials you might need. They usually have an accompanying CD, and sometimes a separate workbook for homework and a teachers' guide. This kind of whole package can be expensive but parts can be bought separately.	Deutsch interaktiv	Deutsche Welle on-line : http://www.dw.de/learn-german/deutsch-interaktiv/s-9572	30-part self-study course : videos, slideshows and audio texts; worksheets, exercises , tests designed for personal study. Also program. grammar chart, 7,000-word dictionary & pronunciation guide. Recommended by Ashton in Makerfield U3A
A1, A2			Goethe Institut on-line : http://www.goethe.de/lrn/duw/auf/sta/enindex.htm	
	Graded Readers			
	These are books in which the vocabulary used has been limited to a certain level, erg. 600 words, 1200 words, 2000 words etc. Some are specially written and some are short versions of classics.		Bookshops	Some have accompanying CD, activities and exercises. There are also books where the German text is on the left and the English translation on the right.
	Grammar			
A2+	Grammar Books	Schwachen Verben and Starken Verben	Hueber – best to buy from a German bookshop	I use the older version - ABC der schwachen Verben, & ABC der starken Verben. Very useful verb references, possibly out of print

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A2+	Grammar Books	Schaum's Outline of German Grammar	Foyle's Bookshop - http://www.foyles.co.uk Also available on Amazon	includes more than 400 exercises with answers to sharpen your German grammar skills. This book features helpful tables and illustrations that increase your understanding of the subject at hand. Recommended by Farnborough U3A
	Magazines			
A2 to B1	German monthly magazine for language students, with CD	Deutsch Perfekt	Look at the Web site, http://www.deutsch-perfekt.com , then contact by e-mail	Far more material than most groups need for a single weekly session. We only subscribe for 1 year at a time!
A2+	Newspapers/magazines in German, also available on-line	Die Welt Stern Spiegel Wort	http://www.welt.de/ http://www.stern.de/ http://www.spiegel.de/ http://www.wort.lu/de	Themed, current material.
	Other on-line			
A1 up	Podcast	Slow German	http://www.slowgerman.com	Store of podcasts with texts intended for advanced speakers but has a beginners' section
A1	More on-line resources		http://www.hueber.de/seite/downloads_spiel_e_daf http://www.land-der-woerter.de/lernen/	offers several free simple games for use in learning grammar – these may make it less of a chore! simple crosswords to help vocabulary fixing
B1+	TV on-line (unless you can arrange a satellite receiver!)	It can be well worth having these switched on while you do other work around the house – it lets you become more accustomed to the sound of the language, even without listening with full attention.	http://www.zdf.de/ZDFmediathek/#/hauptnavigation/startseite http://www.ardmediathek.de/	an abundance of documents, fiction, news, sport etc. for advanced learners

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B1+	Radio on-line		http://www1.wdr.de/radio/index.html http://www.ndr.de/ndr1niedersachsen/radiobox117-radioboxpopup.html http://mediathek-audio.br.de/index.html?playeronly=true&channelId=b1 http://srv.deutschlandradio.de/themes/dradioscript/aod/index.html?audioMode=2&audioID=3	Loads of programmes!
	Music			
B1+	A small selection available on-line! Many more can be found starting with these)	Music videos by Die Prinzenperforming	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-w0-IZldWA	Be cool speak Deutsch – quite amusing
			http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVp4DgN_Itw&list=RD3-w0-IZldWA	Frauen sind die neuen Männer
			http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0s2I04d1rs&list=RD3-w0-IZldWA	Ich schenk' dir die Welt
		Music videos by Wir Sind Helden	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVkc47zKQWc	Gekommen Um Zu Bleiben
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt8qY5KY9dQ	Guten Tag			
	Books			
A2+	Books - fiction	Hummeldumm, by Tommy Jaud	Bookshops, also as an audio book, available as 5 CDs,. Two selections are available on YouTube - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQcVBkpWoc0&feature=related	Quite current and very funny.

Level	Type	Title	Source	Comment/Advice
A2+	Books - fiction	Für Eile fehlt mir die Zeit, by Horst Evers		Quite current and very funny
		Tschick, by Wolfgang Herrndorf		A strange but compelling book
B1+	Books - fiction	Hurra, wir leben noch, by Johannes Mario Simmel	Bookshops	not exactly current, but an excellent read
		Doch mit den Clowns kamen die Tränen, by Johannes Mario Simmel		not exactly current, but quite exciting
		Drei Männer im Schnee, by Erich Kästner		Rather elderly, but the BBC based "Der arme Millionär" on it – helpful at A1 level, and there are still a couple of used copies available via Amazon; CDs from me
B1 – C1	Book with CD, non-fiction	Erinnerungsorte	Cornelsen Verlag - http://www.cornelsen.de/erw/reihe/r-4081/ra/titel/9783060204762?back_link=search	Stories of places from German history – recommended by Elmbridge U3A
Films				
B1+, B2+	Your group needs to be at least level B1, preferably B2, for the viewing of films to make much sense. Generally, few groups will have members at this level, so I do not recommend it. However, if there are a couple of members at C1 or above, it may be good to have an occasional viewing, alternatively, people may wish to borrow DVDs to watch at home	Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum	U3A Resources Library	A complex, sobering film based on the book by Heinrich Böll
		Goodbye, Lenin	U3A Resources Library	odd and quite funny
		Die Welle		sobering, with strong language and some violence
		Lola rennt		an odd film, set in Berlin – the same short scenario (20 minutes) played out 3 different ways; plot twists and suspense
		Nirgendwo in Afrika		an interesting story
		Die Luftbrücke		about the air bridge organised by the US & UK air forces when Berlin was cut off by the Russians. This is a good story.

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		Unsere Mütter Unsere Väter	Was shown on BBC2 in 2014, may be available	about a group of friends entering the war and how they fare during it. Again, sobering
		Das Leben der Anderen	U3A Resources Library	about the monitoring of East Berlin by agents of the Stasi, the GDR's secret police, Widely applauded, but a bit bleak
		Der Untergang	Copy available from me, charge for postage and blank DVD	about the last days of the Third Reich, seen largely through the eyes of Hitler's last secretary. Very specialist
		Sein letztes Rennen		tragic comedy about an ex-marathon champion (Dieter Hallervorden), who tries to re-capture his life from the monotony of a home for the elderly. Reminiscent of "Quartet" – worth watching
		Barbara		All of these are recommended by the Warwick District U3A German group leader. She says "Nikolaikirche seems particularly relevant after Pastor Führer's death in July 2014"
		Der Turm		
		Jenseits der Mauer		
		Das Wunder von Leipzig		
		Nikolaikirche		