

FOREVERGERMAN



GERMAN A1 STARTER GUIDE

Alphabet • Numbers • Days • Months

For Complete Beginners



Your first steps in German

Learn the letters, count to 100, and read the days and months.



Alphabet

pp. 3–7



Numbers

pp. 8–11



Days

pp. 12–13



Months

pp. 14–16

How to read this guide

German comes first. Simple English explains the meaning. Sound hints are approximate: German sounds do not always match English.

Montag = Monday

Januar = January

Meet the letters: A–G

Letter • Letter name • Example • Meaning



A

ah

Apfel

apple



B

bay

Ball

ball



C

tsay

Computer

computer



D

day

Delfin

dolphin



E

ay

Elefant

elephant



F

eff

Fisch

fish



G

gay

Garten

garden

These hints name the letters. A letter can sound different inside a word.

Meet the letters: H–N

German J often sounds like English y: ja = yes.



H

Letter name

hah

German example

Haus

English meaning

house



I

Letter name

ee

German example

Igel

English meaning

hedgehog



J

Letter name

yot

German example

Jacke

English meaning

jacket



K

Letter name

kah

German example

Katze

English meaning

cat



L

Letter name

ell

German example

Lampe

English meaning

lamp



M

Letter name

emm

German example

Maus

English meaning

mouse



N

Letter name

enn

German example

Nase

English meaning

nose

Meet the letters: O–U

Pronunciation note

German U sounds like oo in food.



Letter O

Name oh

German Orange

English orange



Letter P

Name pay

German Panda

English panda



Letter Q

Name koo

German Qualle

English jellyfish



Letter R

Name err

German Rose

English rose



Letter S

Name ess

German Sonne

English sun



Letter T

Name tay

German Tiger

English tiger



Letter U

Name oo

German Uhr

English clock

Meet the letters: V–Z



V | fow (rhymes with cow)
| Vogel | bird



W | vay | Wasser | water



X | iks | Xylophon |
xylophone



Y | ÜP-see-lon | Yoga | yoga



Z | tset | Zebra | zebra

“W often sounds like English v: Wasser.”

“Z sounds like ts: Zebra.”

“V often sounds like f: Vogel. Some borrowed words use a v sound.”

The Ü in the letter name Y is explained on the next page.

Ä, Ö, Ü and ß

Two dots are called an umlaut. They change a vowel's sound.

Ä ä



Often close to e
in bed.

Äpfel = apples

Ö ö



Say e as in bed,
then round your
lips. Keep your
tongue in place.

Öl = oil

Ü ü



Say ee as in see,
then round your
lips. Keep your
tongue in place.

Tür = door

ß



Called Eszett.
Sounds like s in
see, not b.

Straße = street

Ö and Ü have no exact English match. Ä, Ö and Ü can be short or long.

ß does not normally begin a word.

Start with 0–12

NUMBER · GERMAN · ENGLISH · SOUND HINT

0 · null zero <i>nool*</i>	1 · eins one <i>ayns</i>	2 · zwei two <i>tsvy</i>
3 · drei three <i>dry</i>	4 · vier four <i>feer</i>	5 · fünf five <i>fünf*</i>
6 · sechs six <i>zeks</i>	7 · sieben seven <i>ZEE-ben</i>	8 · acht eight <i>ahkht*</i>
9 · neun nine <i>noyn</i>	10 · zehn ten <i>tsayn</i>	11 · elf eleven <i>elf</i>

12 · zwölf

twelve · tsvölf*

A little help with the sounds

- * null: short oo, as in book.
- * fünf / zwölf: use the ü / ö lip guides on page 7.
- * acht: ch is throaty, like Scottish loch.

Sound hints are approximate. CAPITAL syllables show stress.

Build the teens

13 dreizehn = thirteen	14 vierzehn = fourteen
15 fünfzehn = fifteen	16 sechzehn = sixteen
17 siebzehn = seventeen	18 achtzehn = eighteen
19 neunzehn = nineteen	

drei + zehn → dreizehn

three + ten → thirteen

16: sechs loses its final s → sechzehn.

17: sieben becomes sieb → siebzehn.

10



3



Approximate English support

- dreizehn DRY-tsayn
- sechzehn ZEKH-tsayn
- siebzehn ZEEP-tsayn

Count in tens

NUMBERS · 10–100

10 zehn ten	20 zwanzig twenty	30 dreißig thirty
40 vierzig forty	50 fünfzig fifty	60 sechzig sixty
70 siebzig seventy	80 achtzig eighty	90 neunzig ninety

100 · hundert

one hundred · You can also say einhundert.

Three spellings to notice

30 uses ß: dreißig.

60 drops the s in sechs: sechzig.

70 shortens sieben: siebzig.

10 · ForeverGerman.pro

Ones first, then tens

NUMBERS · 21–99

Say the ones, then und (and), then the tens.

21 = ein + und + zwanzig

einundzwanzig = twenty-one

24 vierundzwanzig twenty-four	35 fünfunddreißig thirty-five
48 achtundvierzig forty-eight	99 neunundneunzig ninety-nine

Two small rules

Use ein, not eins, inside these numbers.

Write the complete number as one word.

Exact tens keep their names: 40 = vierzig.

Numbers in daily life

Ich bin 21 Jahre alt.

I am 21 years old.

Das kostet 5 Euro.

That costs 5 euros.

3 Äpfel = 3 apples

Phone digits: 2-0-7 → zwei – null – sieben

11 · ForeverGerman.pro

Die Wochentage

THE DAYS OF THE WEEK · MONDAY–THURSDAY

Montag Monday · MOHN–tahk  Heute ist Montag. <i>Today is Monday.</i>	Dienstag Tuesday · DEENS–tahk  Am Dienstag lese ich. <i>I read on Tuesday.</i>
Mittwoch Wednesday · MIT–vokh  Am Mittwoch lerne ich. <i>I learn on Wednesday.</i>	Donnerstag Thursday · DON–ers–tahk  Am Donnerstag male ich. <i>I paint on Thursday.</i>

A week starts here

German calendars usually begin with Montag.
Day names always begin with a capital letter.

Montag → Dienstag → Mittwoch → Donnerstag
Friday, Saturday and Sunday are on the next page.

Sound hints are approximate. In Mittwoch, ch is a throaty sound, like Scottish loch.

Friday & the weekend

DAYS · FREITAG–SONNTAG

Freitag

Friday · FRY–tahk 🎧

Am Freitag höre ich Musik.

I listen to music on Friday.

Samstag

Saturday · ZAMS–tahk ⚽

Am Samstag spiele ich.

I play on Saturday.

Sonntag

Sunday · ZON–tahk ☕

Am Sonntag ruhe ich mich aus.

I rest on Sunday.

One useful pattern

am + day = on that day

am Montag = on Monday

das Wochenende = the weekend

Samstag + Sonntag

Your week in order

Montag → Dienstag → Mittwoch → Donnerstag → Freitag → Samstag → Sonntag

13 · ForeverGerman.pro

Januar → April

DIE MONATE · THE MONTHS · 01–04

01 · Januar January · YAH-noo-ahr  Im Januar ist es kalt. <i>It is cold in January.</i>	02 · Februar February · FAY-broo-ahr  Der Februar hat 28 oder 29 Tage. <i>February has 28 or 29 days.</i>
03 · März March · merts  Im März beginnt der Frühling. <i>Spring begins in March.</i>	04 · April April · ah-PRIL  Im April regnet es oft. <i>It often rains in April.</i>

A small word for months

im + month = in that month

im Januar = in January

Month names begin with a capital letter.

Seasonal examples describe Germany; weather can vary.

Sound hints are approximate. CAPITAL syllables show stress.

14 · ForeverGerman.pro

Mai → August

DIE MONATE · THE MONTHS · 05–08

05 · Mai May · my  Im Mai blühen Blumen. <i>Flowers bloom in May.</i>	06 · Juni June · YOO–nee  Im Juni beginnt der Sommer. <i>Summer begins in June.</i>
07 · Juli July · YOO–lee  Im Juli ist es oft warm. <i>It is often warm in July.</i>	08 · August August · ow–GOOST  Im August esse ich Eis. <i>I eat ice cream in August.</i>

Two names that sound similar

Juni has an n.

Juli has an l.

im Mai = in May

im August = in August

In August, “ow” sounds like the ow in cow.

Seasonal examples describe Germany; weather can vary.

15 · ForeverGerman.pro

September → Dezember

DIE MONATE · THE MONTHS · 09–12

09 · September September · zep-TEM-ber  Im September beginnt der Herbst. <i>Autumn begins in September.</i>	10 · Oktober October · ok-TOH-ber  Im Oktober fallen Blätter. <i>Leaves fall in October.</i>
11 · November November · no-VEM-ber  Im November ist es oft grau. <i>It is often grey in November.</i>	12 · Dezember December · day-TSEM-ber  Im Dezember beginnt der Winter. <i>Winter begins in December.</i>

Same idea, different spelling

October → Oktober

December → Dezember

im Dezember = in December

German Z sounds like ts.

Seasonal examples describe Germany; weather can vary.

16 · ForeverGerman.pro

German at a glance

YOUR QUICK REFERENCE

The alphabet

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
Special letters: Ä Ö Ü ß

Number building blocks

0 null · 1 eins · 2 zwei 3 drei · 4 vier · 5 fünf 6 sechs · 7 sieben 8 acht · 9 neun	10 zehn · 11 elf · 12 zwölf 20 zwanzig · 30 dreißig 40 vierzig · 50 fünfzig 60 sechzig · 70 siebzig 80 achtzig · 90 neunzig 100 hundert
---	--

42 = zwei + und + vierzig
zweiundvierzig = forty-two

The seven days

Montag · Dienstag · Mittwoch · Donnerstag
Freitag · Samstag · Sonntag

The twelve months

Januar · Februar · März · April
Mai · Juni · Juli · August
September · Oktober · November · Dezember

Two useful patterns

am Montag = on Monday
im Januar = in January