

## SLAC STUDY TIPS FOR INTRODUCTORY GERMAN

Whether you are beginning German 1410 or are planning to take it next semester, you undoubtedly feel some anxiety about learning a new language, right? Relax. Chances are you know more German than you think. See if you recognize any of these German words:

der Name die Minute das Auto der Kaffee die Bank das Bier

If you said *name, minute, auto, coffee, bank, and beer*, you are on your way to learning the German language.

There are two important aspects to successfully learning German:

**ACTIVE** participation in class and **DAILY** study and practice.

### CLASS PARTICIPATION:

As much as 20 percent of your grade can come from class participation.

### PREPARE:

- \* Preview the textbook chapter to be covered in class.
- \* Pay close attention to the vocabulary and phrases at the end of each dialogue section.
- \* Use the glossary at the back of your textbook to look up words in the dialogues if you are unsure of their meanings.

### PRONOUNCE:

- \* Do not mumble your answers in class; remember, this is an introductory course, so you will not be the only person making mistakes.
- \* When others are answering, listen and silently answer to yourself.
- \* German has some basic pronunciation rules that are easy to remember. As with English, certain letter groups create certain sounds. For example:

"ie" is pronounced "e"

"ei" is pronounced "i"

"au" is pronounced "ow" as in "owl"

"äu" is pronounced "oy" as in "oyster"

"w" is pronounced as an English "v"

"s" is pronounced as an English "z"

"ß" is pronounced as an English "s"

### PARTICIPATE:

- \* Attend every class—if you're not there you can't participate.
- \* Again, don't be afraid to make pronunciation mistakes.
- \* If you **really** don't know the answer, say so. Do it in German—"Ich weiß nicht."

### STUDYING VOCABULARY:

- \* Write vocabulary words and phrases on "3 x 5" note cards. Write German on one side and the English equivalent on the other.

*Die Kirche*

German

*The church*

English

- \* For verbs, write the conjugation on one side. Do this for all verbs at first; then, once you understand how regular verbs are conjugated, you can limit this to irregular verbs.
- \* Notice that nouns are always capitalized and begin with one of the three articles: *der* (masculine), *die* (feminine), or *das* (neuter). There is no set pattern for distinguishing the gender of a noun, so you must memorize them along with the noun itself (exceptions: nouns ending in *-e* are usually feminine; nouns ending in *-ung* are always feminine).
- \* When you study your vocabulary cards, **mix them up!** Avoid memorizing them in the order in which the cards are stacked.
- \* Rather than try to study all of the cards at one sitting, take a few with you and go over them between classes, on breaks, etc. If you have 5 minutes, you have time to practice vocabulary.

### PRACTICE:

- \* The only way to really learn a language is to hear it and speak it daily.
- \* When reviewing material in your textbook, speak aloud.
- \* In addition to using the Computer Lab (<http://www.modlang.txstate.edu/mediafacilities.shtml>), have dialogues recorded for your home use. Use them whenever you are in your car, at home, etc.
- \* Form conversation groups among your classmates. This works to improve your studying as well as your pronunciation.
- \* Take advantage of your instructor's office hours to clear up anything you are unsure about. **But don't wait until the last minute!**

SLAC has a list of various audio and visual material as well as software that are available in the SLAC Lab and at the Reserve Desk.

**Viel Glück!**