

# Going Deutsch

Kate Sommers-Dawes explores destinations in which to learn the language of Goethe

Munich Subway



**Spreading from Germany throughout Austria, Switzerland,** and beyond to become the most widely spoken language in Europe and the second most commonly spoken language in Eastern Europe (after Russian), the German language has become prominent in business, publishing, and research. Germany, which possesses one of the world's largest economies and is among its strongest exporters, also offers a host of business opportunities through its multinational corporations such as BMW and Siemens.

Berlin and Munich are among the most popular destinations for language immersion, however, quality schools are found throughout the country. There are various recognized German qualifications of which the most-widely recognized for university entrance are the DSH — Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang ausländischer Studienbewerber (German Language Test for College Admission for Foreign Students) and the TestDaF — Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache (Test (of) German as a Foreign Language). The DZD (Das Zertifikat Deutsch) is an internationally recognized proof of a basic working knowledge of the German administered by the Goethe Institute, and the TELC certificates are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Berlin, the country's capital, is crisscrossed with *Radwege*, or bike paths, providing an eco-friendly way to tour the city and its sights. Museums are plentiful and their diverse exhibits cover topics ranging from the Ramones to Jewish history to Checkpoint Charlie, the access point between the former East and West Germanys. Modern art installations abound, such as the Badeschiff, an old cargo container transformed into a public pool as part of a city arts project on the city's River Spree.

As the capital of the federal state of Bavaria, Munich is located near the base of the Alps and is another bike-friendly city. Millions descend upon the city each year for its world-renowned Oktoberfest, but Munich is also distinguished by its historic architecture, numerous parks, and National Theater, a luminous art space that has played host to the premier productions of opera giants, including Wagner's *Das Rheingold*. Heidelberg's romantic Philosopher's Walk and its fairy tale castle and the towering spires of Hamburg's many churches add elements of diversity to Germany's landscape, making the country a unique destination for the language traveler.

## German Immersion Schools

### Alpha-Aktiv

Alpha-Aktiv is situated in the heart of Heidelberg, a culturally and historically important city with a mysterious ambience. A one-minute walk from the school is University Square, where students congregate. The institute actively cooperates with the Heidelberger University. Courses include general courses (with DSH preparation), summer courses, intercultural training, and workshops. The modern, well-equipped, and spacious classrooms provide a stimulating environment for both students and the teaching team whose passion for teaching is reflected in their attitude towards students. The institute develops communicative learning strategies in conjunction with exploring Germany's cultural elements. Accommodation is provided either with carefully selected German host families or in student apartments to facilitate meaningful contact with German culture.



Hohenschwangau Castle, Bavaria

### Berlin Language Center — Iberika Group

The German capital has recently become one of the most attractive capitals of Europe, evident in the millions of tourists that visit Berlin each year, drawn to the history of the city as well as its cultural and artistic wealth, nightlife, and extraordinary festivals. Berlin's lifestyle is perfect for learning German, because it is easy to meet new people and practice the language in its cosmopolitan atmosphere. The Iberika Group was founded in 1996 as a representative of the languages of the Iberian Peninsula. Since 1999, the center has offered a wide range of German courses designed for visitors from abroad; from intensive to semi-intensive as well as long term programs. The center is an official TELC center and DZD examiner, and provides expert preparation for the DSH. The team of instructors is composed of highly qualified native speakers with extensive experience, and classes are small so that every student receives personal attention. The school organizes guided tours of the city by boat, bike, or on foot as well as various excursions to lakes and cities nearby. The accommodations have been specifically chosen to provide students with a comfortable and pleasant stay in Berlin.

### Berlinek Language Center

Situated in the heart of the German capital, Berlinek strives to reflect Berlin's multiculturalism with people of different ages from diverse countries and cultural backgrounds crossing paths. The school offers a wide spectrum of language programs addressing individual needs and learning capabilities. For company clients, there are special courses with flexible schedules and coordinated subject matter. Adults can choose between one-on-one lessons and group courses. Children can take part in the individually tailored tutorials or in the Play & Learn language

workshops. Berlinek places special value on its open, friendly atmosphere with after-hours get-togethers, open house days, and other cultural events.

### BWS Germanlingua

BWS Germanlingua was founded in 1984 and has schools in Munich and Berlin. Both are situated on quiet but central streets, easily reachable by public transport. The school offers a range of courses and levels for all students. There is a library for students who want to continue their studies after class, and the faculty is always available for individual support and advice. The kitchen and the free internet room are popular places to recreate during breaks. Joint activities in the evenings and at weekends are organized.

### did deutsch-institut

This school carries the company's philosophy in its name, with DID standing for *deutsch* in *deutschland* (German in Germany), which has been the motto since the company was established in 1970. Studying *deutsch* in *deutschland* means learning the language and getting to know the German culture at the same time. did deutsch-institut welcomes more than 5000 students per year, is officially acknowledged by the German Language Society (GfdS), and is an accredited member of the European Association for Quality Language Services. It is one of the largest providers of German as a Foreign Language worldwide. Germany's Metropolitan Language School, an affiliate of the institut, offers its students the opportunity to explore the four major cities of the country and thereby familiarize themselves with the different regions in Germany. From Hamburg in the north to Munich in the south; Frankfurt

in the west, and Berlin in the east, students can combine study at any of the four locations at no extra cost. Courses can be personalized from 20 to 28 lessons per week. Individual Tuition, TestDaF-preparation courses, Business German Courses, Internship Programs, Teacher Training, and a special Junior Program complement the service.

### GLS Campus Berlin

GLS prides itself as the only language school in Germany with its own campus, which is located in a trendy district in central Berlin, and consists of a garden, two student residences, a restaurant, and book store. In October 2008, GLS Berlin was voted "best language school in Germany" by educational travel professionals in more than 60 countries. GLS offers German language courses all year round and is an official testing center for the DZD.

### Goethe-Instituts

Whether students want to learn German for everyday life, their job, to simply study at a German university, or out of pure interest, the Goethe-Instituts provide successful German study through qualified instruction in 13 German cities (including Berlin and Munich). Students can select the programs that most closely match their goals as most are designed for all levels from beginners to advanced learners. There are intensive and small group courses as well as programs for professionals, children, and teens. The centers bring together students from all over the

world who have an interest in the German language, are captivated by their international surroundings, and want to enjoy the exciting leisure-time programs. All courses include a varied and exciting cultural and leisure program, free access to the media resource centers, accommodation search services, and the opportunity to take examinations. The Goethe-Institut's fifty years of experience and continual development of teaching methods, teacher qualifications, the regular assessment of programs, and the entire institute ensure unrivaled quality and the greatest possible success for all learners.

### Herman-Hesse Kolleg

Intensive courses are offered year round and the length of each course is up to the student. The school also offers an "Internship in a German company following German language course" program, which provides useful experience in a German company, service, or institution for career enhancement. The host families affiliated with the school are involved, experienced, and offer a warm and friendly home stay. Horb am Neckar, where the school is located, is a quaint town surrounded by the famous Black Forest and is an idyllic place for intensive language learning.

### Humboldt-Institut

In its 22 program centers all over Germany, the Humboldt-Institut tailors its classes to the needs of its target groups (juniors 8-14, teenagers 15-18, adults 18+, and executives 30+). The centers (summer schools and a few year-round schools) provide intensive, summer, one-to-one, small group, or TestDaF preparation courses, covering nearly every type of learner. Most of the schools of the Humboldt-Institut are boarding schools, which adds the valuable element of the common experience as students study and live together. At the Humboldt-Institut, students are taught by skilled and motivated teachers who are native speakers, in small classes of five to ten students. The Humboldt-Institut goes beyond the six internationally standardized language levels of the Common European Framework of Reference, as it offers a proficiency level of 12 weeks duration on top of the nine months of language instruction at the A1-C2 levels. **X**

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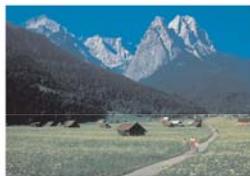
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