

Intermediate German: Understanding spoken German



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Introduction

This free course, *Intermediate German: Understanding spoken German*, is aimed at intermediate learners of German with an interest in language and culture. The six-hour course is designed to develop your understanding of spoken German through video portraits of people in the German cities of Hamburg and Passau. It introduces you to naturally spoken language, and gives clear advice on how to use video resources as a useful and enjoyable learning tool. By completing varied activities you will improve your understanding and active use of the language, and develop the confidence to access further resources and take your studies to a higher level.

In this course you will meet people living and working in Germany, by hearing them speak and watching video clips in which they talk about themselves and their lives. Hearing and watching people describe what they do and who they are can offer you an enjoyable and interesting insight into a way of life in a different culture. You will find that the more you watch and listen, the more you understand. Exposure to spoken language is invaluable when you are learning to speak and understand a new language. You may not understand everything you hear, but even so, the act of listening can help you in many different ways: you will understand more vocabulary, you can learn useful phrases, and listening to the intonation and sound of language can improve your pronunciation of your spoken German.

The video recordings you view were recorded for your learning. These video clips are all authentic; they all show people from Germany or Austria talking about themselves at normal speed. This may be different from the sort of material you have come across in the classroom. Listening to spoken language presented at natural speed helps to prepare you for spoken language you may encounter in real life, whether on the street in a German-speaking country, watching material on the internet, or listening to German radio.

Authentic sources, especially authentic audio-visual resources typically include language, grammar and expressions that you may not have come across in your language learning before. In this way they provide you with an extremely useful learning resource. They prepare you for the world beyond the classroom.

You will focus on different ways you can use authentic audio and visual materials to help you learn German. The language level of the course is for intermediate level learners of German at B1.

Before you start, watch the following video which gives useful hints and tips when trying to improve your understanding of spoken German.

Video content is not available in this format.



If you enjoy this OpenLearn course, you might be interested in the Open University course [L113 German Studies 1: language and culture of the German-speaking world](#).

Learning Outcomes

After studying this course, you should be able to:

- develop strategies for understanding video resources in German
- understand German spoken at natural speed
- understand and give personal information in German
- use knowledge of other languages and cultures to decode and recognise spoken German.

1 Learning from authentic audio-visual materials

In this section, you will learn how to extract useful expressions that you can use in your own speech, by listening closely to what other people say. You will also learn about the life of Henning Haarhaus, a man who lives and works in Hamburg.



Figure 1 The central railway station in Hamburg.

1.1 Spoken introductions

In this first activity, you will start by listening to some spoken German.

Activity 1

Listen to these people introducing themselves, then list the speakers in order of introduction.

Audio content is not available in this format.

Henning Haarhaus

Wolf Schmidt

Stefanie Korte
die Familie von der Osten
Yvonne Zehner
Antje Schollweck

Match each of the items above to an item below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Answer

1. Henning Haarhaus



Figure 2 Photograph of Henning Haarhaus.

2. Wolf Schmidt



Figure 3 Photograph of Wolf Schmidt.

3. Stefanie Korte



Figure 4 Photograph of Stefanie Korte.

4. die Familie von der Osten mit drei Kindern



Figure 5 Photograph of the von der Ostens.

5. Yvonne Zehner



Figure 6 Photograph of Yvonne Zehner.

6. Antje Schollweck



Figure 7 Photograph of Antje Schollweck.

1.2 Introductory expressions

You probably found it quite easy to work out who was who from listening to the short introductory sentences during the previous activity. Audio clips like these are a good way to learn several different ways of communicating a piece of information. This can help you to extend your range of language so you can vary your sentence structures.

Activity 2

You will now listen to the audio again. Note down the various expressions these people used to say who they are. This will help you to build up your own bank of phrases.

Audio content is not available in this format.

Provide your answer...

Answer

Mein Name ist... was used three times.

The verb *sein* was used twice: *ich bin* and *wir sind*.

The verb *heißen* was used once: *ich heiße*.

1.3 Answering questions

In a moment you are going to watch a video clip about one of the people who you just heard introducing himself. Before you watch the clip, take the time to read the questions he was asked, which are listed below. This will help you to understand what he is talking about.

- *Können Sie sich bitte vorstellen?*
- *Wo wohnen Sie?*
- *Was machen Sie beruflich?*
- *Was macht Sie glücklich?*
- *Was sagen Ihre Freunde über Sie?*

Box 1 Preparing for real experiences: Learning from authentic video resources

The video clips in this course are not scripted, they include language which the people we interviewed used naturally. The materials include vocabulary and grammar you may not fully understand. Even this, however, is an important part of the process of learning a new language. It is likely that you understand some of what you are seeing and hearing to begin with, and that you can build on this one step at a time. Some language courses script audio visual materials and focus on the vocabulary and grammar being taught at that moment. This is useful for learning to reinforce expressions and phrases, but authentic materials prepare the learner for hearing German in real life.

Now that you know a little about what you are going to hear, you will see how Henning Haarhaus answered the questions.

Activity 3

Watch the video, then decide which statements are correct, based on what Henning says.

More than one option may be correct for some of the questions.

Video content is not available in this format.



Wo wohnen Sie?

- ☐ Ich wohne zur Zeit in Bremen.
- ☐ Ich bin in Hamburg geboren.
- ☐ Hamburg liegt nördlich von Bremen.
- ☐ Ich habe eine Freundin.
- ☐ Ich wohne allein.

Was machen Sie beruflich?

- ☐ Ich segle mit meinem Kutter hier.
- ☐ Ich bin Angler.
- ☐ Ich verkaufe Boote.

Was macht Sie glücklich? Ich bin glücklich ...

- ☐ wenn ich auf dem Wasser bin.
- ☐ wenn ich mit meiner Freundin segeln gehe.
- ☐ wenn meine Freunde und ich schöne Sachen zusammen machen.

Was sagen Ihre Freunde über Sie?

- ☐ Dass ich das Positive sehe.
- ☐ Dass ich nie gut zuhöre.
- ☐ Dass sie mit mir gern ins Kabarett gehen.

1.4 Writing about yourself

Here you will use some of the things Henning Haarhaus said about himself, to talk and write about yourself.

Activity 4

Here is a small section of the transcript, with gaps for you to write your own answers, describing yourself and your own life. You can adapt the style as you like, but this shows how listening to what someone else says, can offer you a structure for your own answers.

Mein Name ist _____, ich bin _____ Jahre alt und lebe in _____.
 Ursprünglich komme ich aus _____. Ich bin in _____ aufgewachsen. Und
 meine _____ leben dort immer noch. Und ich lebe seit _____ mit _____.
 Glücklicherweise macht mich, _____. Und ansonsten macht mich noch glücklich,
 _____.
 Meine Freunde sagen, dass ich _____ bin, dass ich _____ habe, und die
 meisten sagen, dass ich _____.

Answer

What you wrote will depend entirely on your own life. Below is a sample answer, which you can compare to what you wrote:

Mein Name ist Chris Butcher, ich bin 24 Jahre alt und lebe in Potsdam in der Nähe von Berlin in Ostdeutschland. Ursprünglich komme ich aus England. Ich bin in Birmingham aufgewachsen. Und meine Mutter und mein Stiefvater leben dort immer noch. Und ich lebe seit ungefähr drei Jahren mit meiner Freundin und ihrer kleinen Tochter zusammen.

Glücklich macht mich Badminton spielen. Ich spiele jeden Dienstagabend mit drei Freunden zusammen. Und ansonsten macht mich noch glücklich, wenn ich mit meiner Freundin und ihrer Tochter in Urlaub fahren. Wir zelten gern, denn das kostet nicht zu viel und macht uns sehr viel Spaß.

Meine Freunde sagen, dass ich aktiv und dynamisch bin, dass ich immer zu wenig Zeit habe, und die meisten sagen, dass ich mich ab und zu ausruhen sollte.

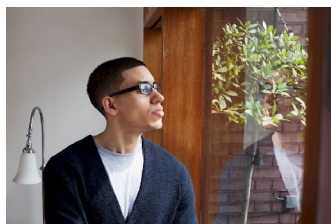


Figure 8

1.5 An example answer

Now listen to a spoken answer, similar to the written answer that was provided in Section 1.4.

Activity 5

This is a clip of someone talking about themselves, answering the same kinds of questions that Henning Haarhaus did earlier.

Audio content is not available in this format.

2 Understanding what you hear without subtitles

As you will have already seen, the video clips shown here come with subtitles. There are times when this is very helpful for your learning, as they can support your understanding if you haven't heard a word or phrase clearly, or if the speaker mumbles. However, there are also times when subtitles can be a distraction, as it can be tempting to read the words shown on the screen, rather than listen carefully to the speakers. To test this, you will now complete some activities without using the subtitles.

Here you meet the von der Osten family. They were asked a similar set of questions to Henning Haarhaus and all the other people you are meeting on this course.



Figure 9 The von der Osten family.

2.1 Watching without subtitles

You will try watching a clip without subtitles, featuring the von der Osten family introducing themselves.

Activity 6

In previous activities you watched the video clips with subtitles. Here you will watch the video with the subtitles turned off. To do this, click this 'cc' symbol in the bottom right of the video player:



This button will turn the subtitles on and off.

When you've turned the subtitles off, watch the von der Ostens talking about their lives. You will probably find that the content of this clip varies considerably in terms of what you can easily understand. Listen once all the way through and note what you do understand in the box beneath the video. This may be complete pieces of information, any short phrases or individual words you have understood. This helps you to focus on what you do understand first, before working with sections that are initially more complex. You will focus on more complex vocabulary later.

There are no right or wrong answers here about how much you should be able to understand. The main thing to be aware of is that each time you listen and watch a clip, you are likely to understand more.

Video content is not available in this format.



Provide your answer...

Box 2 Understanding more each time you listen

It can be a good idea to focus on what you do understand first. Don't expect to understand everything to begin with. You will find that this will give you a confidence boost, and also that even while you are doing this, you will be understanding a little more each time you watch the video clip, and that you can build on your understanding as you go along.

Activity 7

Now rewatch the video, and determine whether the statements below are true, false or not mentioned in the clip.

1. Die von der Ostens haben drei Kinder.

- ☐ Richtig
- ☐ Falsch
- ☐ Keine Antwort

2. Die Eltern haben schon immer in Hamburg gewohnt.

- ☐ Richtig
- ☐ Falsch
- ☐ Keine Antwort

3. Die Eltern möchten immer in Hamburg wohnen bleiben.

- ☐ Richtig
- ☐ Falsch

- ☐ Keine Antwort
- 4. Frau von der Osten hilft anderen Familien.**
- ☐ Richtig
- ☐ Falsch
- ☐ Keine Antwort
- 5. Die von der Ostens machen viel zusammen.**
- ☐ Richtig
- ☐ Falsch
- ☐ Keine Antwort
- 6. Herr von der Osten geht oft mit Kollegen essen.**
- ☐ Richtig
- ☐ Falsch
- ☐ Keine Antwort

2.2 Discussing hobbies

Watch the video again, focusing on the sections where Peter and Katja von der Osten are talking about the things they like to do.

Video content is not available in this format.



Activity 8

Which of these things did they mention?

- ☐ Sie machen viel am Wochenende.
- ☐ Sie gehen gern schwimmen.
- ☐ Sie gehen zum Fluss.

- ☐ Sie haben Zeit für Freunde.
- ☐ Sie besuchen die Großeltern.
- ☐ Sie spielen gern draußen.
- ☐ Sie fahren Rad.
- ☐ Sie fahren mit der Straßenbahn in die Stadt.
- ☐ Sie genießen das Familienleben.
- ☐ Sie essen zusammen.



Figure 10 The von der Osten family outside.

Activity 9

Some of the things they say are a little more complex. This is simply because when people talk about the detail of their lives, it can be quite specialised. You may need to concentrate on some new vocabulary before you fully understand what the von der Ostens are saying. To prepare for this, match these German words and phrases to English ones, some of these are similar in both languages, and these can offer you a good starting point.

- für einen Verein ehrenamtlich arbeiten
- Menschen mit Downsyndrom unterstützen
- die Säuglingsgruppe betreuen
- Eltern beraten
- einen Muttertreff haben
- jemanden gewissermaßen als konservativ bezeichnen
- einen Klingelton auf ein Telefon laden
- ein Plakat hing an einer Litfasssäule
- ein Kumpel besorgt Karten
- die Frauen in der Nachbarschaft helfen sich untereinander
- sie passen auf Kinder auf

sie machen Besorgungen

Match each of the items above to an item below.

To do voluntary work for a group or organisation

To support people with Down syndrome

To support a baby group

To advise parents

To meet with a group of mothers

To categorise someone as fairly conservative

To upload a ringtone

A poster hung on an advertising pillar

A mate gets the tickets

The women in the neighbourhood support each other

They look after the children

They run errands



Figure 11 This is *eine Litfasssäule*

2.3 Answering questions

You will now watch the video again and consider some further questions.

Activity 10

Watch the video again and then answer these questions (in English).

- 1 Who does Katja von der Osten work for?
- 2 What is her role?
- 3 Which music does Peter von der Osten have on his phone?
- 4 What made him want to go and see the band?
- 5 What do Katja von der Osten and her friends do to help each other out?

Video content is not available in this format.



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Answer

- 1 She does voluntary work for an organisation that supports people with Down syndrome.
- 2 She supports families who have a baby with Down Syndrome.
- 3 He downloaded a ring tone by the Prodigy.
- 4 He saw an advertisement which told him they were coming to Hamburg.
- 5 They look after each other's children and run errands for each other.

3 Using subtitles for your learning

You will be working with the subtitles turned on for these videos, to demonstrate how they can be used to support your learning. In this section you will be watching a clip of Wolf Schmidt, who is very keen on sport.



Figure 12 Wolf Schmidt.

3.1 Subtitles on

You will now watch a clip, focusing on how the presence of subtitles personally affects your viewing.

Activity 11

Watch the video clip once through, making sure the subtitles are turned on. This was the button that turns them on and off:



While you are watching, ask yourself these two questions.

Am I **predominantly** reading the subtitles **or** listening to what Herr Schmidt is saying?

If I'm reading the subtitles, is this because they make it easier for me to understand what Herr Schmidt is saying?

Video content is not available in this format.



Discussion

There is no right or wrong answer to this. It is good to make sure you are listening as well as reading the subtitles – it can be tempting just to read what it is on the screen, if you find it easier to read material than listen or watch.

Box 3 Remember to listen



Figure 13

Be aware that it is good to focus on what you are listening to, rather than reading the subtitles, if you are wanting to improve your understanding of spoken German. People

speak in different ways, use different expressions and have different regional accents. The more you listen to different people speaking, the more prepared you will become for the great variety of spoken German you will encounter.

You can try listening to what is said both with and without the subtitles turned off. You can then see which you find more helpful. The main thing to remember is that every time you listen closely you are likely to understand more each time. You can find out which you find most helpful for your own learning, listening with or without having the subtitles on.

3.2 Turning subtitles off

Now you will rewatch the video with and without subtitles, extracting details in order to answer questions.

Activity 12

Leaving the subtitles turned on, watch the clip, and answer the following questions in English.

Video content is not available in this format.



- 1 Who is in Wolf Schmidt's family?
- 2 Where did he go to school first?
- 3 In what sort of industry did he have his first job?
- 4 In what industry does he work now?
- 5 What is his job?

- 1.
- 2.

- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Answer

- 1 His wife and his daughter.
- 2 In New York, to a public school in the Bronx.
- 3 In the film industry.
- 4 In sport, he works in football.
- 5 He is a football trainer.

Activity 13

Now rewatch with the subtitles off, and see if you can find out a little more detail about Wolf Schmidt's life. Which answer is correct?

1.
 - ☐ Wolf Schmidt wohnt seit 16 Jahren in Hamburg.
 - ☐ Wolf Schmidt ist 16 Jahre lang verheiratet.
 - ☐ Wolf Schmidts Tochter ist 16 Jahre alt.
2.
 - ☐ Wolf Schmidt hatte positive Erlebnisse in seiner ersten Schule.
 - ☐ Wolf Schmidt hat seine erste Schule ganz schrecklich gefunden.
 - ☐ Wolf Schmidt hatte viele Freunde in seiner ersten Schule.
3.
 - ☐ In seinem jetzigen Job verdient Wolf Schmidt mehr als früher.
 - ☐ In seinem jetzigen Job verdient Wolf Schmidt weniger als früher.
 - ☐ In seinem jetzigen Job verdient Wolf Schmidt ungefähr gleich viel wie früher.

3.3 Your experience so far

Before moving on to the next set of activities, take a moment to reflect on your experience of working with the materials so far.

Activity 14

The last few activities required you to listen for specific details. With these tasks in mind, read the list of points below, and think about whether you personally agree or disagree with the statements. Note down any thoughts you have in the box below.

- *Having the subtitles turned off made this harder for me.*
- *Having the subtitles turned off didn't make any difference to me.*
- *Having the subtitles turned off made it easier for me to concentrate on what was actually being said.*

- *I missed having the subtitles to read while I was listening.*
- *I found the subtitles distracted me from listening closely.*
- *The subtitles didn't include all the content, so I missed some information.*

Provide your answer...

Discussion

There are no right or wrong responses here, just your own preferences, but being aware of what you find harder or easier can help you focus on developing your skills further.

4 Using the images to support understanding

One of the significant advantages that watching a video clip offers you, is visual support. In the next section, you will watch a video in which Stefanie Korte introduces herself, and like the other clips you have been watching, she tells you about her home, her work, what her friends would say about her, and something unexpected.



Figure 14 Stefanie Korte.

4.1 Watching without sound

You will start this activity with a bit of an unorthodox viewing method, to test how you absorb information from a video.

Activity 15

Before you start to watch the video, make sure the subtitles are turned off, and turn the sound off too. You can do this by muting your computer, or using the volume slider in the bottom of the video player, which looks like this:



Watch the video with the sound and subtitles switched off, and while you are watching it, see which of these questions you can answer about Stefanie Korte. It doesn't matter if you can't answer them all - at best, the video will probably give you clues to two of the answers.

- 1 Where does Frau Korte live?
- 2 What does she do for a job?

- 3 What would her friends say about her?
- 4 What is the unexpected thing you find out about Stefanie Korte?

Video content is not available in this format.



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Activity 16

You may have worked out some of the answers in the previous activity. Now watch again with the sound turned on. Can you now answer any of the questions more easily?

Video content is not available in this format.



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Answer

Without the sound, you may have worked out the answers to the first and fourth questions (that she lives on a farm and that she has a pet snake). Understanding some details in advance can help you to pick out these pieces of German vocabulary when you come to listen to the clip with the sound on.

As for the other two questions, her friends would describe her as a fun-loving person, and say that she's always funny and friendly. And you will have noticed that she works with animals in some way - you will find out a bit more about this in the next activity.

4.2 Listening for details

You will now watch the clip again, and try to pick out a few further details about Stefanie.

Activity 17

Keep the sound on now, and watch the video clip again. As you watch, listen particularly for any animals that you hear Stefanie Korte mention, and note them below.

Video content is not available in this format.



Provide your answer...

Answer

These are the animals that Stefanie mentioned:

Hund
Katze
Maus
Hamster
Fische
Pferd (these are **Großtiere**)
Kuh (these are **Großtiere**)
Schlange

Activity 18

Stefanie Korte mentions her work in the video. See if you can understand when she describes her job and where she works. Watch again and write down anything you can hear that sounds relevant. If you note down words you haven't come across before, try to work out what they could mean.

Provide your answer...

Answer

Stefanie Korte is an apprentice, an *Azubi* (short for *Auszubildende*). She works in a veterinary practice, a *Tierarztpraxis*.

She says *„Ich bin Azubi, arbeite in einer Tierarztpraxis.“*



Figure 15 The symbol for veterinary practices in Germany.

Activity 19

Stefanie Korte talks a little about her attitude towards animals. Note down in English what she says about why she likes them.

Provide your answer...

Answer

Animals are important to her and they make her feel happy. She feels free when she is with them.

Stefanie Korte says: *„Wichtig sind mir auf jeden Fall meine Tiere und Freude und die machen mich gleichzeitig auch glücklich. Einfach weil ich mich bei Ihnen sehr frei fühlen kann.“*

Activity 20

Note down in German what you personally think about animals and pets. What do you think in particular about Stefanie Korte's choice of pet?

Provide your answer...

Answer

Compare your answer with these two alternative views. Please note that both of them use some of the expressions spoken by Frau Korte.

„Meine Tiere sind mir wichtig, denn sie machen mich glücklich. Ich kann mich bei ihnen wohl fühlen. Ich würde gern eine Schlange haben, ich finde sie etwas ganz Besonderes.“

or

„Tiere sind mir gar nicht wichtig, ich mag sie gar nicht. Bei Tieren kann ich mich nicht wohl fühlen. Eine Schlange als Haustier? Nein, das kommt nicht in Frage.“

5 Using video to extend your language

What people say, and how they say it, can be useful to you as you learn to speak and write with some accuracy. It can be a good idea to focus not only on the meaning of what people say, but also on how they say it. You can use video and audio material to help you understand and practise using grammar. Here you meet the Austrian musician, Yvonne Zehner, who lives in Passau in Southern Bavaria. You will use some of what she says to help you extend your German.



Figure 16 Yvonne Zehner.

5.1 An introduction

To begin these activities, you will watch a clip of Yvonne Zehner introducing herself.

Activity 21

Watch the video clip, and focus here first on finding out some information about her. You can leave the subtitles on if you like. Then complete the summary below, by choosing the correct option to complete each sentence.

Video content is not available in this format.



Hier ist Yvonne Zehner, sie ist klassische _____ .

- ☐ Geigerin
- ☐ Gitarristin
- ☐ Glockenspielerin

Zu Hause in ihrer Wohnung hat sie _____ .

- ☐ einen Computer
- ☐ Musikinstrumente
- ☐ ihre Katze

Sie beschreibt sich als _____ ...

- ☐ aktiv
- ☐ ruhig
- ☐ lustig

... aber ihre _____ ist ihr auch sehr wichtig.

- ☐ Familie
- ☐ Freunde
- ☐ Arbeit

Sie kann auch _____ spielen.

- ☐ Geige und Klavier
- ☐ Querflöte und Klavier
- ☐ Blockflöte und Klavier

Sie war in _____ als sie entschieden hat, dass sie Gitarristin werden möchte.

- ☐ einer Band
- ☐ einem Chor
- ☐ einem Orchester

Es ist überraschend, dass sie chinesische _____ mag ...

- ☐ Krimis

○ Liebesfilme

○ Actionfilme

... **sie findet sie** _____.

○ spannend

○ absurd

○ abenteuerreich

Discussion

Here is the complete text:

Hier ist Yvonne Zehner, sie ist klassische **Gitaristin**. Zu Hause in ihrer Wohnung hat sie **Musikinstrumente**. Sie beschreibt sich als **ruhig**, aber ihre **Arbeit** ist ihr auch sehr wichtig.

Sie kann auch **Blockflöte und Klavier** spielen. Sie war in **einem Chor** als sie entschieden hat, dass sie Gitarristin werden möchte.

Es ist überraschend, dass sie chinesische **Actionfilme** mag. Sie findet sie **absurd**.

Box 4 Adapting what you hear for your own use

There are many ways of learning new language, but one way that can be helpful is to learn phrases you come across. While grammar explanations can be useful, it can be just as helpful to learn some phrases that you can adapt.

For example, when describing yourself, you could say

ich bin ein ruhiger Mensch.

This may not be true of you but this sentence can be adapted in many different ways, you might be *sportlich*, *dynamisch* or *abenteuerlustig*. Any of these adjectives could be used in the place of *ruhig*, but if you keep the ending it will remain accurate:

ich bin ein sportlicher/dynamischer/abenteuerlustiger Mensch...

In this way you have learned a useful and adaptable phrase, but have also learned to use grammatically accurate language.

5.2 Increasing linguistic accuracy

When someone talks clearly, like Yvonne Zehner, you have the opportunity to concentrate on how they are saying things as well as the meaning of the words. It can be a good idea to focus on some of the phrases and grammar you are learning as well as the content for what they are saying. One of the ways you can improve the accuracy of your own language is by listening carefully to the way people express things.

Activity 22

Watch and listen to Frau Zehner again and this time listen to some of the things she says, and how she says them. Listen out for Yvonne using the phrases from the previous activity - click back and reread these if you need a reminder.

Video content is not available in this format.



Discussion

Noticing the way language works may lead you to further investigation. There are many resources available, whether in the form of published grammar books, or information on the internet. If you wish to find out more about grammatical explanations then you can do so, but reading about explanations is not the only way to learn new language. Language being used in context, such as here, is also an invaluable resource.



Figure 17 Yvonne Zehner playing the guitar.

Box 5 Learning from things you hear people say

Here are some of the things Yvonne Zehner said. They could all be useful to you as they are the sort of phrases and expressions you could easily use or adapt as appropriate.

Talking about jobs

... *ich bin klassische Gitarristin*. Note how you describe your job in German - she does not say '*eine klassische Gitarristin*' as you would say 'I am a classical guitar player' in English.

sofort wusste ich schon, ich möchte Gitarristin werden...

Word order in subordinate clauses, using *wenn*

... *ich bin sehr froh, wenn ich nach Hause komme...*

ich hab' den größten Spass, wenn ich die anschau'...

Here you can see a *wenn* clause, with the verb being sent to the end of the clause.

Using adjectives to describe yourself

Ich bin eigentlich ein sehr ruhiger Mensch ... Yvonne Zehner is describing herself here. You can replace '*ruhig*' with any adjective which you would use to describe yourself.

Using the imperfect when giving opinions

Und das fand ich so wunderschön...

Das war ziemlich klar

Here you can see the imperfect of the verbs *finden* and *sein*. *Finden* is a weak verb, when you come across verbs like this it can be really useful to learn them in a simple phrase to help you remember their imperfect form.

Activity 23

Using the expressions in Box 5, write five sentences about yourself, or say them aloud if you prefer. Make sure you adapt what Yvonne Zehner said, when describing yourself.

Provide your answer...

Compare your sentences with this spoken version. You can see that it uses some of the language you have just been working with, but it has been adapted to describe a completely different person. You can look at the transcript of it, if you want to see a written version.

Audio content is not available in this format.

6 Using a transcript

There are many useful ways to use a transcript as well as audio-visual materials, and in this section you will find out about some of them. Antje Schollweck tells you a little about her life, and you will find out where she comes from and where she lives now.



Figure 18 The chalkboard outside Antje Schollweck's pub.

6.1 An introduction

Before learning how transcripts can be helpful in improving your understanding video material, you will be introduced to Antje Schollweck.

Activity 24

Watch the video of Antje Schollweck and then write one sentence describing her.

Video content is not available in this format.



Write your sentence here.

Answer

Compare your answer with these suggestions.

Antje Schollweck ist ein sehr dynamischer Mensch.

Antje Schollweck macht den Eindruck, ein sehr freundlicher und weltoffener Mensch zu sein.

Ich kenne sie natürlich nicht, aber Antje Schollweck wirkt, lustig und lebendig zu sein.

Activity 25

In which order does she mention the following places?

die Lausitz

Brandenburg

Ostdeutschland

Bayern

Match each of the items above to an item below.

1

2

3

4

Discussion

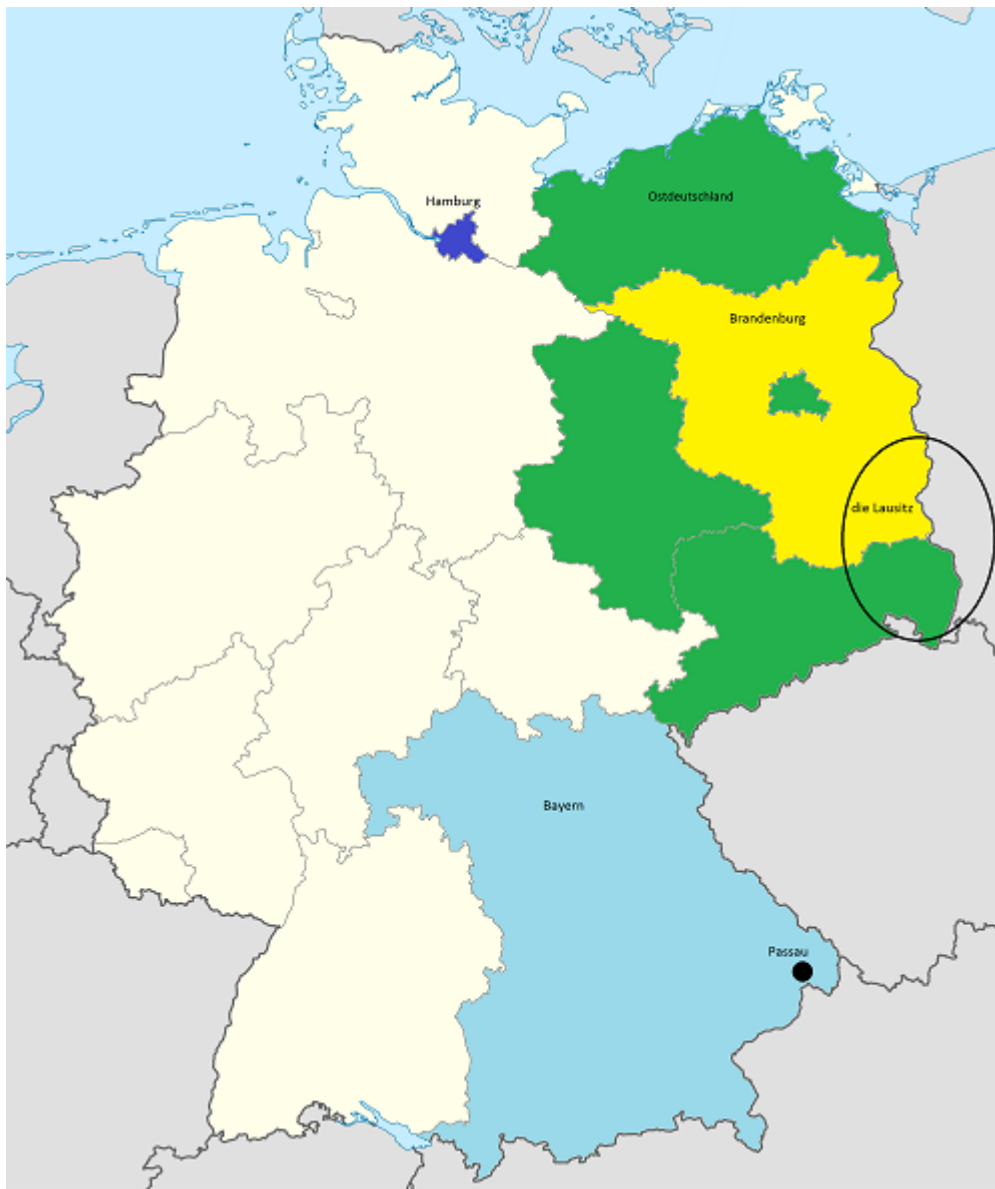


Figure 19 This is a map of Germany with the relevant locations from this activity marked on it. Bayern (Bavaria) is coloured in blue, with Passau marked within this region with a black dot. Ostdeutschland is marked in green and would have included the area of Brandenburg, shown here in yellow. The smaller green section with Brandenburg is Berlin, which is not part of the state of Brandenburg. Antje mentioned die Lausitz - this region is roughly marked with an oval on the map. Hamburg is also shown in purple, in the north of Germany.

Antje Schollweck talks about her Trabbi, which she has called Schorschi. Trabant cars, known affectionately as Trabis were very common in the former East Germany. They have achieved iconic status. Schorschi comes from the name of a Trabi called Schorsch in the cult film *Go Trabi Go*.



Figure 20 The poster for the film *Go Trabi Go*.

6.2 Using the transcript

In this activity, you will see how the video transcript can be useful in bolstering your understanding of video material.

Activity 26

The video transcript can be useful in furthering your understanding. Read it through before watching the video again. Don't look up every word you don't understand, but if there are some sentences you find tricky, take a few minutes to try to work out some of the information you are going to hear.

Now watch the video, and try to form some complete answers to the following questions. You may find it is easier to understand, having worked out some of the key ideas in advance.

- 1 Who does Antje Schollweck live with, and where do they live?
- 2 What makes her happy?
- 3 What does she like?
- 4 Why did she call her car Schorschi?
- 5 What happens to people if they leave where they grew up?

Video content is not available in this format.



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Answer

- 1 She lives with her husband, his parents, his siblings and a stepchild.
- 2 Relationships between people make her happy.
- 3 She loves all sorts of people. She likes talking to them. She likes learning new things.
- 4 She gives all of her cars a name.
- 5 They change. She is no longer the person she used to be. When you move away from home you are influenced by new experiences, and you have to learn the way other people think. This can change the way you behave.

Box 6 Improving your pronunciation

Using the transcript can help you to improve your pronunciation. For good pronunciation it is very important to listen closely to what someone is saying, and to concentrate on how it sounds. It is also important that you learn to make the link between what spoken and written language.

There are different ways of using the transcript. You can listen/watch the video while reading the transcript to yourself at the same time.

Reading aloud is also a valuable way of working with the transcript. You can read it aloud while watching the video with the sound off. Reading aloud is a valuable thing to do.

Through doing this, you focus on the sound the words make, and doing it while the video images are running means you speak at natural speed. You can also read the transcript

aloud while watching the video with the sound on. This too encourages you to read at natural speaking speed, but it also lets you hear how a German speaker says the word while you are reading.

6.3 Focusing on pronunciation

You will now look more carefully at a small section of what Antje Schollweck said, focusing on any words you are not confident in saying accurately.

Activity 27

When learning a language it can be good if you focus on spoken vowel sounds, as they often sound different in the new language. Listen to this section and focus on the words you were less confident in saying.

Glücklich machen mich Zwischenmenschlichebeziehungen, ich liebe Menschen, jeglicher Art. Ich mag gerne mich unterhalten mit Leuten, ich mag gern neue Sachen lernen, das lieb ich. Meine Freunde würden mich als etwas verrückt beschreiben, unangepasst, ehrrm fleißig.

Then read this section out loud, thinking about how Antje Schollweck had pronounced the words and sentences. See what you could learn from paying close attention to the way Frau Schollweck speaks aloud.

Audio content is not available in this format.

Activity 28

Have the transcript open, and read it out loud at the same time as watching the video. This is useful because it helps to link spoken and written sounds again. It also helps you to develop natural sounding intonation while you speak at more length.

Video content is not available in this format.



7 Consolidation

You have watched people talking about themselves. In this concluding section you will find out about a man who lives in Hamburg, and once you have learned some details about him, you will then describe him.



Figure 21 A game of football.

7.1 One more introduction

This final activity will introduce a man, and then you will use some of the skills you've been practicing throughout the course so far.

Activity 29

Read the following information about this man and look at the photo of him. Make a note of the information that you could include if you were asked questions like those from all of the previous activities.



Figure 22 Serdal Celebi.

Name: Serdal Celebi

Geboren: 1984

Wohnort: Hamburg

Was er gern macht: Fußball spielen, er ist Fan von Fenerbahce, Istanbul und St. Pauli, Hamburg

Etwas anderes: seit dem 12. Lebensjahr ist er sehbehindert

Seine Mannschaft ist eine Blindenfußballmannschaft, nur der Torwart ist nicht sehbehindert.

Er ist Nationalspieler im Blindenfußball.

„Ich bin ein zielorientierter Mensch und möchte Erfolg haben“, sagt Serdal Celebi. Irgendwie ist er doch ein ganz gewöhnlicher Fußballer.

!Warning! Source Sans Pro not supportedInformation sourced from dfb.de

Now you will hear some questions about Serdal Celebi. Based on the information you have just read, see if you can answer the questions below, writing your answers in the boxes.

Question 1

Audio content is not available in this format.

Provide your answer...

Question 2

Audio content is not available in this format.

Provide your answer...

Question 3

Audio content is not available in this format.

Provide your answer...

Question 4

Audio content is not available in this format.

Provide your answer...

Question 5

Audio content is not available in this format.

Provide your answer...

Answer

You can hear a full conversation with model answers below.

Audio content is not available in this format.

If you'd like, you can find out more about Serdal Celebi by following this link:

[RTL Regional clip](#)

Did you happen to notice that Wolf Schmidt from section 3 is Serdal Celebi's trainer?

Conclusion

This free course, *Intermediate German: Understanding spoken German*, has offered you some support and advice on working with audio-visual materials in German. Do not see this as the end, but rather as a step on the way to working independently with materials to develop your German further. There is so much material that is readily accessible online. Take every opportunity to watch, read and listen. You can listen to German radio, watch soaps and look up things on youtube that interest you. If you are interested in a topic in English, then follow it up with finding more about it in German.

Weiterhin viel Spaß und viel Erfolg beim Deutsch lernen!

If you enjoyed this OpenLearn course, you might be interested in the Open University course [L113 German Studies 1: language and culture of the German-speaking world](#).

Take the next step



If you enjoyed this course, why not explore the subject further with our paid-for short course, *Beginners German 3: richtig so!?*

[Find out more about *Beginners German 3: richtig so!*](#)

Acknowledgements

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