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Language

Interpreting and language mediation

In Brandenburg, many areas such as nurseries, schools, health, authorities and advice centres can use a telephone and [video interpreting tool](#). Simply ask the department if you need it.

Some authorities also have their own interpreters. They can help you during conversations. Always ask whether the interpreters are free of charge.

Community interpreting service

Interpreters can be arranged for local assignments via the ISA e.V. [placement centre](#). The assignment costs money. The costs can be found on the website.

Language courses

Integration courses

If you want to live in Germany, you should learn German. This is important if you are looking for work, need to fill out applications, support your children at school or want to meet new people.

How do you find an integration course?

Once you have received your authorisation certificate, you can choose a course provider. In the BAMF-NAVI you will find an up-to-date overview of all authorised course providers. [Here you will find the contact details of the course providers in the city of Cottbus.](#)

As soon as you have found a course provider, you should go to them. You give the course provider the authorisation to participate or the obligation to participate. You register with the course organiser. The course organiser will help you choose a suitable course. They will also tell you when the next course starts.

You can also [check the BAMF-NAVI](#). It also tells you where and when integration courses are offered in Cottbus. It also tells you whether there are any places available.

What is the aim?

The integration course teaches you German language skills. You will also learn about everyday life in Germany and the legal system. You will learn about the culture and history of Germany. You will learn about democracy, equal rights and religious freedom.

At the end of the integration course, you will have sufficient knowledge of the German language (oral and written). This corresponds to level B1. The course objective of the literacy courses is different. There the minimum target is level A2.

Who issues an authorisation to participate or an obligation to participate?

The Job Centre or the Social Welfare Office or the Foreigners' Registration Office issues the entitlement or obligation to participate. You have not been authorised? But you would like to take part in a course? Then you can [apply for an integration course at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees \(BAMF\)](#). Late repatriates receive authorisation to participate

from the Federal Office of Administration.

How much does the integration course cost?

You have to pay a fee to take part in the integration course. Do you receive social benefits, for example citizen's allowance or social welfare? Then you can apply for exemption from the costs. If you are exempt from the costs, a subsidy towards the travelling costs is also possible.

How is the course organised?

The integration course consists of a basic and an advanced language course. This is followed by an orientation course.

The literacy course is structured differently. The course consists of 2 advanced courses.

Which exams have to be taken?

The integration course concludes with the "Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer" (DTZ) exam and the "Leben in Deutschland" (LiD) exam.

The website "[Integration courses in detail](#)" is provided by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Here you will find information on the content, procedure and final examinations. You will also find frequently asked questions and answers. The site is multilingual.

Vocational language courses (DeuFöV)

In this language course you can improve your German language skills. You will expand your vocabulary in the course. You will learn words that you will need in your job. The courses teach you about specific professions and sectors. There are basic courses. And there are specialised courses with different focuses. Attend this course with a language level of B1. Attend this course, for example, after you have attended an integration course.

The vocational language course concludes with a certificate examination.

You need authorisation to take part in a vocational language course. You can obtain this either from the job centre or the employment agency. Or you can apply to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) for authorisation to attend.

Ask your advisor at the job centre or employment agency. They will be able to help you. Because they know which language schools offer courses. And they know whether you should do a specialised course.

You can find more information on vocational language courses on the [website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees \(BAMF\)](#). Here you can find out how the courses are organised. You can also find out who can take part.

You can search for vocational language courses in your area on the [Federal Employment Agency's KURSNET](#).

Speech cafés and reading clubs

Speaking cafés and reading clubs

There are many volunteers in speaking cafés who can help you learn German. You can meet other people and speak German with them in the speaking cafés. This allows you to practise your German and learn new words. And maybe even make new friends along the way. In the language cafés, it doesn't matter whether you have previous knowledge or not. Everyone sits together in small groups and just talks.

Speech café at the Regenbogenkombinat Cottbus

The language café always takes place on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 17:00 to 19:00. We speak German with each other, have a good time and get to know each other. At small tables we discuss topics of our own choice. With this programme, we want to make the cultural diversity in the city visible and support it. We are supplementing the already existing cafés in Cottbus. The meeting is open to everyone and free of charge.

Further information can be [found here](#).

You can find an overview of some of the cafés and reading clubs in Cottbus on the [website of the volunteer agency](#).

The dates of the language cafés are also listed in the [event overview](#) in the app.

Dictionaries and learning materials

In the [Cottbus City and Regional Library](#) you will find many dictionaries and learning materials for learning German. You can also study there in peace and quiet and use the WLAN. Use is either free or very cheap.

Stadtverwaltung Cottbus

📍 [Berliner Straße 13/14, 03046 Cottbus - Chósebus](#)

✉ [@info@bibliothek-cottbus.de](mailto:info@bibliothek-cottbus.de)

☎ [+49355380600](tel:+49355380600)

🌐 <https://www.bibliothek-cottbus.de/>

Online language courses

You can learn German either with your mobile phone or on your computer. Here are free offers:

[Deutsche Welle Basis-Kurs](#): An online course that helps with the alphabet and professional language. There is also a test to see how well you already know German.

["The City of Words"](#): An app and website from the GOETHE Institute. It helps you learn new words in a fun way. It is for beginners and in several languages, e.g. English and French.

[VHS learning portal](#): There are free German courses here. You can also learn writing, reading and maths. There is also help for school-leaving exams in German, maths and English.

Foreign languages

Foreign language courses are held here in Cottbus:

[Adult Education Centre Cottbus](#)

[Urania Cottbus](#) (English only)

[Sorbian-Wendish language school](#) (only Sorbian/Wendish and Polish)

Fees are payable for these courses.

A tip for people who are learning a language:

Foreign languages can be tried out at speak-dating. Here, native speakers meet native speakers and teach each other the other language. Speak-Dating takes place every Tuesday from 16.30-18.00 in the Cottbus City Museum on the third floor. Access is barrier-free.

Basic education

Basic education courses

What are basic education courses?

Basic education courses are aimed at people who want to improve their reading, writing and maths skills. These courses are free of charge. In the courses, you learn in small groups and at your own pace. There is plenty of time for questions and repetition.

Prerequisites for the courses

Participants must have a good understanding of the German language and be able to speak it fluently. Participants must also be at least 16 years old and live in the state of Brandenburg. A counselling interview is required before the course.

The course topics for basic education courses are: Maths; Computers and digital media and communication; Learning to learn; Family, health and social issues; Career, working life and finance; Orientation knowledge of politics, society, environment, sustainable development and law; and Basic English.

New courses start in Cottbus in September:

- Work and Finance
- Career, family and social affairs
- Reading, writing and talking to each other
- Learning to learn

Personal registration until 22.08.2025.

Counselling hours

Monday: 08:00 - 12:00

Visitor address: Berliner Straße 6, 03046 Cottbus

Contact person:

Daisy Gutsche

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Email: Daisy.Gutsche@cottbus.de

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Learn the language yourself in everyday life

Here are a few tips on how you can learn German for free in everyday life.

Websites:

- <https://www.goethe.de/de/spr/ueb.html>
- <https://www.vhs-lernportal.de/wws/9.php#/wws/home...>
- <https://learngerman.dw.com/de/deutsch-lernen/s-90...>
- <https://www.deutschakademie.de/online-deutschkurs/>
- <https://sprachekulturkommunikation.com/>
- <https://www.deutsch-perfekt.com/#feature-16015382...>
- <https://deutschtraining.org/deutschkurs-online/de...>

Courses for pupils (from 6 years) from A1 to B1 (online on Zoom)

<https://www.lern-fair.de/schueler/deutsch-kurse?g...>

Learn language in chat with AI

You can use AI (e.g. Chat GPT) to work out a detailed plan of exercises for yourself, develop communication skills in dialogues, do written exercises with a focus on grammar, expand your vocabulary.

Films and series in German, e.g:

A1 "Nicos Weg", as well as children's films or simple animated films such as "Der kleine Drache Kokosnuss" or "Biene Maja"
A2 "Nico's Way", "Heidi", "The Little Ghost", "Vicky the Viking"

B1- "Run Lola Run", "Good Bye, Lenin" (2003), "The Miracle of Bern"
B2 - "Turkish for Beginners", "Tschick", "Sun and Concrete" (2023)
C1 - "Downfall", "Inglourious Basterds" (with German sound and subtitles)

Free APPS:

- Duolingo
- Hello German
- Memrise
- Babbel
- FluentU

Library:

- City and Regional Library (Berliner Str. 13/14, 03046)
- IKMZ - BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg (Platz der Deutschen Einheit 2, 03044)

Test language level

There are six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. In your mother tongue you have C2. The six levels mean in detail:

A1: Beginner

You can understand and use simple words and sentences.

You can introduce yourself and others.

You can ask questions about yourself.

You can answer questions.

A person speaks slowly and clearly. You can converse with them.

A2: Basic knowledge

You can understand sentences and frequently used words.

You can communicate in simple, everyday situations. You can describe your background, education and environment.

B1: Advanced use of language

You can understand a lot. You can say something about familiar topics and personal interests.

You can talk about experiences and events, dreams, hopes and goals. You can give brief reasons or explanations for plans and opinions.

B2: Independent use of language

You can understand the most important content of complex texts on concrete and abstract topics. You can also understand specialised discussions in your field of specialisation.

You can communicate fluently and spontaneously. You can justify a point of view on a topical issue with advantages and disadvantages.

C1: Specialised language skills

You can understand a lot of demanding, longer texts. You can also grasp implicit meanings.

You can express yourself clearly, in a structured and detailed manner on complex issues.

C2: (Almost) native speaker level

You can understand practically everything you read or hear with ease.

You can summarise information from different written and oral sources. You can give reasons and explanations in a coherent presentation. You can express yourself spontaneously, very fluently, precisely and with nuance.

You can test your level in German, English, French, Spanish and Italian free of charge here:

www.sprachtest.de