

## Startup Assignment for Each Kontext: Message to Instructor

**Description:** 15-minute activity yielding a short message

**Goals:** a) encourage strong start on new Kontext; b) strengthen standard phrases used in written communication; c) encourage lengthier “text type” (=move beyond simple sentences); 4) provide practice in short-paragraph construction.

**Task:** Send your instructor an email, in German, telling that you are now starting (or have already started) the new Kontext. The first time you do this assignment, use one of the following sentences as your model:

- If you are just starting the new Kontext: “Ich beginne jetzt (heute, etc.) Kontext [X].” OR “Heute beginne ich Kontext [X].” The sentences here would be very acceptable if the message were being composed during the first few Kontexte of the course. In later Kontexte it is still acceptable, but even to receive a score of 4 (B-) it must be letter-perfect.
- If you have already begun the new unit, use: “Heute (gestern, etc.) habe ich Kontext [X] begonnen.” This sentence would have been too difficult in the first quarter. Now it is within easy reach; to get a 4 on this part of the assignment (column 3) it must be letter-perfect, and with perfect word order.

Note how the Scoring Guide (first column) rewards early starters. Your instructor may send you a message that is expected to start you up on the assignment. But you don’t have to wait for that.

To get more than a “4” on sub-part of the assignment that scores this sentence (column 3), you must vary that sentence to show that you have learned more German (...and it’s late at night.). Then to your email add, also in German, one other item of information, of your own choice, that makes the message more human. (See Scoring Guide, column 4). Use proper opening and closing phrases (greeting, farewell) – see Scoring Guide column 2.

**How good and well?** See the Scoring Guide below. Your writing will be judged on the richness and appropriateness of your list and the communicative value of your sentences. Sentences that say nothing much will not receive much credit, even if they are wordy and contain no mistakes of spelling or grammar. As you repeat the assignment with each unit, where you are supposed to learn new words and structures, the “goal-post” will move accordingly; this is reflected in the Scoring Guide.

**Basic Assignment**                      Name \_\_\_\_\_                      Kontext \_\_\_\_\_                      Score \_\_\_\_\_

	On time? (25%)	Greeting & farewell (10%)	“Beginning/ have begun Kontext [X]” sentence (15%)	Free-form sentence (50%)
<b>6</b>	Message sent before the day the Kontext is begun in class	Complex greeting and farewell, both letter-perfect	Expands the basic sentence with comprehensible language from the new Kontext or some other source.	Twice as long or structurally ambitious as the current basic sentence, and at same level of accuracy
<b>5</b>	Message sent the day the context is begun in class	As in 6, but with a few minor errors	Expands the basic sentence with essentially error-free language from a previous Kontext (or as in 6 but with significant error).	Length, complexity and accuracy like that of the current basic sentence
<b>4</b>	Message sent the day after	Simple greeting & farewell, both perfect; or more complexity, with a few minor errors	“Ich beginne jetzt Kontext [X] / Jetzt habe ich Kontext [X] begonnen,”” with perfect formulation	Somewhat inferior to the current basic sentence (ex: similar length and complexity, but serious errors)
<b>3</b>	Message sent 2 days after	Few errors in simple greeting & farewell, or more in complex g & f	One letter-level error in basic sentence	Distinctly inferior to the current basic sentence (ex: similar length, but not as complex & also with serious errors)
<b>2</b>	Message sent 3 days after	Simple greeting & farewell much distorted	Two letter-level errors in basic sentence	Much inferior to the current basic sentence
<b>1</b>	Message sent 4 days after	Minimal greeting & farewell, much distorted	Worse than 2-level	n.a.