

0189-1

I took the placement test for German and got::

Placement Score: 386 Suggested Placement: German sem2

So I registered for 2nd Year German. Now I'm wondering if I interpreted this correctly.

Also,

since I registered, I changed my major from English to double-major in English and International

Studies: East Asia. Would it make more sense to take Chinese or Japanese than German?

I am also

afraid of not being able to keep up with the class because I took German for 2 years in highschool, but I am afraid that I will miss a unit of learning and be behind in 2nd year.

I had [X] years of German in high school [Y] years ago. What college course should I take?

With just that information, the answer could be anything from "You'd better start over with first-year German, first quarter," to "You should consider going right into our third-year course." We can't advise you properly until we know more about what kind of courses you had in high school, how well they were taught, and how well you did in them. Here are some things to consider that may help you reach a decision.

How ambitious was the program? We encounter the whole range, from negligent or troubled teachers who did little more than babysitting to super-teachers who produced a lot of learning.

How was the program

How well did you do in the program?

These two factors may be the most important ones. Here is an example: If you had two years of German in high school, in an ambitious program, and were among the best in your class, then it is very unlikely that you will learn anything more in first-year college German. Even second-year college German may be too simple for you, so you might even consider third-year college German.

Now for some other factors.

language taught, and for what purposes? First- and second-year German at PSU emphasize Since you're thinking about continuing German, you probably did all right in your high-school program, but it is helpful to consider just how well you did and how much effort you put in. If you did very well and your language study was not particularly strenuous, as compared to your other courses, then it appears that you can succeed in a more ambitious college course. and did not have to put forth a heroic effort to accomplish that, real-world communication skill, rather than "book knowledge" of grammar rules and vocabulary lists. If your high-school program was similar, and you liked it that way,

My name is Jennifer. I have been admitted to PSU for summer term. At High School I took German for three and a half years. I would like to schedule a placement test or an interview. Please write me back to let me know what steps i need to take.

then you will fit smoothly into our program. If your high-school program was grammar-based but ambitious, and if you are a flexible learner, you will probably not find it difficult to adjust to our courses.

How long ago was your high-school study of German? This may matter less than you think, actually, although the effect of time away from German is probably more severe the shorter your high-school study of German was. If you had only a year in high school, and it was more than a year or two ago, and you did not do outstandingly well in the course, then probably you should restart in first-year college German. If you had 3 or 4 years and did very well in the program, you almost certainly don't need to restart in first-year college German, even though it was 5, 10 or even more years ago.

How do you learn, and how flexible? Whatever kind your high-school program was

What other exposure to the language have you had? Many people assume that classroom learning is all that counts in their decision about placement in college German. But other exposure can be an important factor, especially if your classroom study was some years ago. For example, if you have been around German in the meantime (co-workers, family background, serious travel), your high-school German may well be relatively fresh still., are you comfortably using language for communicative purposes, and learning language in a way that is compatible with those purposes? Our courses involve a lot of partner and small-group learning, where spoken German is used intensively and learners are encouraged to apply their new language resources, even at the risk of making mistakes. What happens in the classroom is very important. Conscientious attendance and active participation are keys to success. Our tests are not the kind where you can cram for them with the book at the last minute.

What other commitments do you have? Even if you are an outstanding learner and have a "cushion" of some high-school German, you could encounter difficulty in college German if you have an overly ambitious course load or heavy outside commitments (job, family, etc.). But note that this can be a problem no matter the level of placement.

Lastly, there is a matter of human nature to consider. If you have some previous German and place yourself too low in college German, whether out of fear or because you are looking for an easy course, you may well do no better in the lower course than you would in a more ambitious course. That is because the easier course may seem too easy at the start, and you may get into a pattern of neglecting it, a pattern that can be hard to break. After a while, your "cushion" of previous German may start to wear thin, but you may not be able to react in time, where with the tougher course you would be aware sooner that you need to keep up with the learning.

Mr. Fischer,

It is my hope that I'll be one of your students in the Fall. I've been studying German by myself for the past 3 years and with a tutor for about 6 months. I'm 38 and have found learning a second language to be extremely difficult, but it's one of my best desires.

It was suggested that I take the test offered at PSU to see where I should start. I'm looking forward to that test, however, I understand that I have many holes in my German learning, so I want to start from the beginning and I will probably test that way too.

I know you're very busy. Would you please be so kind, at your own leisure, to point me in the correct direction to start. I will only be taking your class and if it works out correctly a German Conversation class as well.

Thank you in advance for any help you would consider giving to a potential, new student.