

First-year German • Individual Project #2 (K 07) “Meine Traumreise” • “My Dream Trip”

Description: Plan your ideal trip to a German-speaking country, create messages to get in touch with the people there, and seek financial support here for the trip.

Level: Kontext 07

Time: 4-5 hours over 14 days

Due: 2 weeks from the day the assignment is officially activated; if that period extends past the last day of classes, the project is due at the final exam.

Note: Some of you love to attempt language at a very high level. That's OK in general, but be aware that what you write may be strong on vocabulary but very weak in its resemblance to actual German. Be sure you use the resources that have been presented in the current Kontexte: the vocabulary, the sentence patterns, the specific structures. The projects do not ask you to do anything that requires language beyond the current resources and the special resources you are asked to develop for the project. Be especially careful of writing (or just thinking) your messages in English and then attempting to translate them.

Objectives

- 1) learn how travel and vacation resources are described and obtained using German;
- 2) find relevant German-language resources on the internet;
- 3) solidify and expand question-making skills;
- 4) improve skills of acquiring vocabulary and checking for appropriate choice of terms;
- 5) acquire skill of “stealing:” plugging own terms into framework provided by others;
- 6) soften up source of funds for your trip.

Summary of activity

- 1) plan your “dream trip” to a German-speaking country;
- 2) generate specialized vocabulary and make sure it is accurate
- 3) write two messages in German;
- 4) prepare materials and a one-page letter in English that will convince the person who holds the pursestrings (parents, grandparents, spouse) that you will make good educational use of the trip, despite its fun features, and that you have the language skills to avoid having to go to more expensive places, where “everyone speaks English,” to get food, accommodations, and entertainment.

Results

- 1) specialized vocabulary list (15+ items) with checks for correct choice of words;
- 2) specialized list of web sites (10+ items) useful for planning the trip;
- 3) 50-word email in German requesting accommodations;
- 4) 25-word email in German announcing your impending arrival and discussing details of transportation so that you and your accommodations will get together without a hitch;
- 5) one-page letter in English (or equivalent in German, adjusted to your current level) asking for travel money and telling how you used German to plan your trip;
- 6) kit of support materials (juicy website printouts, picture of Swiss chocolate bar with German label, etc.) that you can use to help make your case to your source of funds;
- 7) approval and money for trip.

Resources (other than basic textbook materials and all-purpose dictionary)

German-language WWW sites (or equivalent in print, if you can find them). In reality, anyone planning such a trip would almost certainly use the internet to find information and carry out transactions, so that's an essential part of this project. To help you develop your language, look for sites that offer rich descriptive information rather than just brief headings and lists. Sites with good visual materials will help you understand the language. Yes, you can consult the English-language versions of the websites, where they exist, but your German messages (and your knowledge of German) will be much better if you pay constant attention to the German-language versions.

Warning: Use dictionaries cautiously or, better, not at all. German-to-English is usually effective. English-to-German can produce gross errors.

Procedure (Overview)

- 1) Use the internet to find and briefly survey German-language websites about: a) transportation after arrival at first destination airport; b) money matters; c) accommodations; d) fun and educational activities. Prepare specialized vocabulary and list of websites (see worksheet on separate page below). Making notes for yourself, plunder the websites for words, phrases and sentences that you can "borrow" for your German messages.
- 2) Plan your trip to fit the trip specifications (see below).
- 3) Compose your German messages (see specifications below). If you want to get a feel for the experience, you might start an exchange of emails with actual hotels, etc. If you really aren't going to use their services, that is between you and your conscience. You might consider the free service that many local tourist offices offer, where you fill at a website form with your specifications and they send you a list of possibilities (search under "Verkehrsbüro," "Verkehrsamt" [plus name of location] for the tourist offices themselves, or under "Zimmervermittlung," "Zimmernachweis" [plus name of location] for all kinds of room-finding services).
- 4) Compose your English message that tells your source of funds what you want, how you researched your plan, and why you should get to make the trip. If you are feeling frisky, try a simpler version in German (sure to wow the moneybags; not necessary for the 6).

Specifications for the trip

- 1) length of stay: 10-14 days in addition to travel to and from America;
- 2) must plan for accommodations in two different places (example: 3 days in downtown Innsbruck, then a week at an inn in Saalbach); the written inquiry is just for one of the two;
- 3) must include two major kinds of activity, one of which must have a definite educational purpose and involve considerable use of German, so that you can make a serious case for your funding (example: kayaking in Austria and a workshop about playing and singing Austrian folk music, with one hour of music credit toward your degree);

Specifications for documents

- 1) vocabulary list (see worksheet): 15+ specialized terms. Eight of them are chosen for you, because they involve problems with choosing the right word among several. The others are yours to choose, and should fit your own interests. Don't go for the totally obscure words, but rather for specialized words that will be useful often when you pursue your special interest.
- 2) list of websites (see worksheet): 10+ items. Pick sites that cover the range of information you need (accommodations, transportation, etc.). Look for rich language resources, visual helps, etc. Balance specific sites (this or that youth hostel) with general reference sources (comprehensive list of youth hostels for an entire region or country). ON-LINE DICTIONARY SITES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR THIS LIST. Since you might be showing this list to your funding source, consider making at least some of the descriptions using German words.

- Web search advice:** Choose keywords that are likely to be non-international; "Imbiß" will get you more German sites and fewer non-German sites than "Restaurant." Here are some words that will be helpful: "Reise" (trip); "Verkehrsamt" (Tourist Office & Chamber of Commerce – also "Verkehrsbüro"; "Zimmervermittlung" (accommodation-finding service); "Urlaub" (travel vacation). You can combine these with names of cities or regions. The last page of the project assignment has three sites to help get you started.
- 3) Inquiry, in GERMAN, about accommodations: tell who you are, what you want, when you want it, and maybe what your backup wishes are. This can be done in the German presented so far, if you think about it and then keep it simple.
 - 4) Notice of arrival, in GERMAN: remind them who you are and what arrangements you've made; tell them about your arrival; make sure you and your host will find each other.
 - 5) ENGLISH letter to your source of funds: Don't write more than one page. Show how much you've worked on this travel idea, show how much German you've learned, show how the idea fits into your longer-term interests and education.
 - 6) Supporting documents (no more than 5 pages): printouts of websites or equivalent that show how seriously you are planning your trip and how much you used your new German to do that.

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Vocabulary (15+ items).

A. The words in the chart below have multiple meanings. Choosing the wrong German equivalent can easily lead to miscomprehension and even embarrassment.¹ For the English words find the German word that relates to travel. Then contrast it to one or more other German equivalents of the same word that mean very different things.

	travel word	other word #1	other word #2
Example: “customs”	at the border Zoll	ways of doing things in an entire culture Sitte, Tradition	personal ways or habits of doing things Gewohnheiten
reservation	of hotel, etc.	limitation, requirement	where some Indians live
advance	ahead of time (in advance)	money received ahead of time	to go forward
deposit	a partial pre-payment	to make a partial pre-payment	a substance left on something
cancel	to decide not to do something	to place a mark on something	
pick up	to fetch someone	to lift up	to clean up

B. The following words are ambiguous in English with regard to part of speech. Each can be either a noun or a verb. (Example of verb-noun ambiguity: “You can file [verb] this file [noun].”) Choosing the wrong German equivalent will not likely cause embarrassment or downright miscomprehension, but your language will come across as very distorted. For each word list both of its *travel-related* equivalents in German (ex: “drive” (noun) – word for a “drive” in the country, NOT the word for a “driveway”).

	stay	delay	drive
verb (action)			
noun (thing)			

C. Your special vocabulary – add 7 or more words that are specific to travel or your special interest for making the trip. Indicate the source where you found the word, so we can correct errors.

word (English)	word (German)	source (dictionary, WWW, etc.)

¹ A true-life example going from German to English: A German travel website has a link labeled “sofort buchen.” An automatic translator converts this to “instant beeches” (the tree, not the seaside). The verb “buchen” means “to book, reserve.” The noun “Buche,” whose plural is “Buchen,” means “beech tree.”

