

First-year German Project: “Einkaufen – Geschenke” • “Shopping & Gifts”

Description: Learn how to shop on German-language internet site, and then find a gift for that “special person.”

Level: Context 11

Time: 4-5 hours over 2 weeks; additional 30 minutes to 1 hour for revisions. Some of this is web-surfing, NOT work!!

Due: Two weeks from start of assignment (earlier is better, so you will have more help on stage 2, and also because you will score higher on the “on-time” factor). Any revisions are due one week after your instructor returns your project to you.

Objectives

- 1) learn shopping terminology above the minimal survival level (“gift ideas,” “toys,” instead of just “How much?” and “pay”);
- 2) develop skills and vocabulary for describing everyday objects using language closely specific to a given object;
- 3) recall the conventions of writing about gift-giving (“It’s just perfect for you”) and consciously employ them when using the target language;
- 4) acquire skill of “stealing:” plugging own terms into framework provided by others, or plugging someone else’s terms into your framework
- 5) begin to internalize (feel, not consciously convert) currency (Euro) and other “foreign” quantities (clothing sizes);
- 6) soften up source of funds for your dream trip.

Summary of activities

- 1) explore on-line major German department store and a range of specialized shopping sites;
- 2) find and explore a shopping site that fits own special interests;
- 3) select a gift to give that “special someone”, even if only “let’s pretend;”
- 3) compile two vocabulary lists: a) useful on-line shopping terms; b) “juicy” words for describing that special gift;
- 5) in German, write a friendly note accompanying the gift you are sending to that special person (see details below under “Procedure”).
- 6) in English, write a message to that “special person” or another special person (your source of dream trip money?), telling how internet shopping can be done with German-language sites (see details below under “Procedure”).

Procedure

On steps 1-3 above (“Summary of Activities”), as you go along take notes about the specialized vocabulary of shopping in general, and the precise terms that are useful for describing something you particularly care about. You may also run into other useful resources, such as e-greeting-card facilities (internet search term: “Grußkarte”) that can serve as models for the messages you will be writing.

- 1) On the internet, go to the home page of “Quelle,” the big German department store chain. The link is on the web page for this assignment, along with others for it. Spend about an hour exploring the Quelle site. This can easily be the main source of your specialized shopping vocabulary list. It may also provide the special gift from which you draw your list of specific terms that can be used to describe the gift. See worksheet for specific words and general kinds of words to look for. Try to learn what words mean by relating them to nearby words, rather than using a dictionary, an on-line translator or the site’s English version. That way you will learn the words more deeply. And besides, many modern words, especially those for popular commercial items, may not yet be in dictionaries.
- 2) Go to 3 of the specialized German-language shopping sites whose links are on the web page for this assignment. Note: Some of the sites include content (leather goods, hunting items, lingerie) that may be objectionable to some web-surfers. You will be able to tell that from the name and description of the site. If you think you might be offended, use other sites in the list. All the sites offer valuable cultural insights into the German-speaking world.
- 3) On your own now, find at least one German-language shopping site that carries gifts that you are particularly interested in. Try combining “Geschenk” (gift) or “Geschenkartikel” (gift articles) with the German word for some special interest (examples: “Schach” [chess], “Krawatten” [neckties], “Motorrad” [motorcycle], “Kochen” or “Küche” [cooking, kitchen], or with some international word like “mp3” or

“Mozart” or “Hip-Hop.” You can also search on the generic names of specific items, such as, “Daunendecke,” the word for those cozy soft down quilts they have.

- 4) Use the worksheet to construct your specialized vocabulary lists and to list the websites which you visited and found useful, other than the “Quelle” site.
- 5) Draft the German message that will go along with your gift (see advice below, “What to put in your gift note”).
- 6) Compose your English message that tells about shopping on the internet in German. A reader who knows no German should be able, from the message, to repeat the major features of your experience.
- 7) Turn in your German and English messages and support materials.

Results, including things to hand in

- 1) 2 specialized vocabulary lists (10+ items each);
- 2) specialized list of web sites, consisting of those you visited from the list of suggestions we provided, and those you found on your own (see worksheet)
- 3) letter in German about the gift you are presenting (1/2 to 1 page);
- 4) one-page note in English that can serve as a basic “manual” for someone who knows no German but wants to explore on-line German-language shopping facilities;
- 5) kit of support materials (probably website printouts) that: a) help give a picture of the special gift, and b) help someone explore on-line German-language shopping facilities;
- 6) (the project as a whole: more support for your hoped-for trip to a German-speaking country).

What to put in your gift note

A special gift deserves a special note to accompany it. Aside from the obvious (“Here is a gift for you...”), we include many or all of the following kinds of content, and perhaps some other things as well:

- 1) a reason for making the gift (“You’re 21 now, so...”);
- 2) a detailed description of the gift, even if it’s obvious what it is, so that it will be clear how appropriate the gift is (“It’s so delicate, and just the right color for your kitchen!”);
- 3) something special about the people involved, to show how appropriate the gift is (“I remembered how much you hate chopping onions by hand!”);
- 4) something to show that coming up with the idea took some special thought, or that shopping for the gift involved something more than a fast trip to the supermarket (“I knew you were taking a language course, so I wondered whether I could find spice containers with the words for the contents in various languages”);
- 5) reference to how much, and maybe just how, the recipient will use and treasure the gift (“Now you can really enjoy baking those special holiday cookies.”);

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. Also, although you are encouraged to “steal” language from your shopping resources, you may not use an on-line translator to convert your message from English to German. The same goes for having German speakers you know “help” you write a high-level message in German. The language you write must be what you can produce yourself.

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

German-language WWW sites (or equivalent in print, if you can find them, for example from ads in a German-language newspaper or magazine). In reality, anyone shopping for specialized German-oriented gifts 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.

Need help with a gift idea?

Think Christmas stuff (toys, cookies); special foods and beverages; goose-down comforters; lederhosen and alpine hats; folk-music and classical music; heritage items (pictures of the ancestral town, etc.)

Name _____

Worksheet for Project K11 “Einkaufen u. Geschenke • Shopping & Gifts”

Note about searching for vocabulary: Expect to find most of your words right on the websites, and in some cases to have to understand them by context rather than looking them up in a dictionary or using the English version of a website. There are two reasons: 1) some of the words that are most useful may well not be in your dictionary; 2) words can have multiple meanings, and meanings change over time and space – your dictionary may not give the right word.

List here 10 or more words that can help someone around in a variety of German-language shopping websites. Don't use core words from the course, such as “sehen” or “Deutschland.” Aim for a balance of nouns (“catalog”), verbs (“click”) and other words (“top left”). For the three words listed in English, find their German equivalents on the German-language websites.

| German | English | German | English |
|--------|---|--------|---------|
| | shopping basket (on a website) | | |
| | bargain basement | | |
| | to shop / shopping (NOT “shop/ store/ business” [building]) | | |
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After you find your dream gift, list here 10 or more words that can be useful in describing it so precisely that the gift would not fail to fit that special someone, and that the note related to it would have the appropriate pizzazz.

| German | English | German | English |
|--------|---------|--------|---------|
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Worksheet for Project K11 “Einkaufen u. Geschenke • Shopping & Gifts”

List here 2 of the suggested websites that you visited, other than “Quelle”. Add the indicated information.

| www-address (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) | short description | what they sell / example of product |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |

List here 3 other German-language shopping websites that you found on your own. Add the indicated information.

| www-address (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) | short description | what they sell / example of product |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
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