

Learning Strategy - Planning Your Learning

Learning a foreign language is like learning any complex skill. It is like learning to play the guitar or basketball. If you want to learn to play well, it will take time and dedication. The 30 units of this program cover levels A1, A2, and B1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference*, or about the level of *Zertifikat Deutsch*. It takes most people between 150 and 200 hours of study per level: i.e., between 450 and 600 hours to pass the *Zertifikat Deutsch* or level B1. Therefore, you should plan to invest an average of 15 hours per unit.

Some learning activities may take only a few minutes if you just go through the motions of clicking and getting things right. The important thing to remember is that these activities only provide the starting point for your learning. Actual learning takes place while you think about the activities, when you try to remember the words and sentences you used in the activities, when you listen to the same words and sentences over and over again, and when you try to pronounce these words and sentences as best you can.

Another important thing to remember is that it takes a lot of repetition. Just as you would sit down every day for 15 to 30 minutes when learning how to play the piano, practicing the same pieces day after day, you should review and redo activities, especially those that were a little harder at first and those that ask you to remember words and sentences.

When studying by yourself, it is especially important to make a study schedule, to make time every day to study, to set study goals, and to verify that you have reached these goals. Once you have got used to the set-up of the unit and the kinds of activities included in the program, make a schedule for the next seven days. Set aside at least 30 minutes each day to review the first 25 activities you have completed in the unit, to finish the remaining activities, and to start on the first activities of the next unit. If you cannot study every day, try to study as often as you can. It is better to spend 15 minutes every day than 2 hours once a week.

When making up your schedule and later checking it, do not be surprised if your plan and reality do not correlate very well. As you gain experience in planning learning schedules for yourself and checking them, you will become much more skilled at setting reasonable goals as well as in achieving them.

Make a learning schedule for the coming week. Write down when you want to learn, how long you want to learn and what you want to learn or repeat. Then write down how much you really learned every day and what activities you did.

	Plan		Reality	
	<i>Time of Day</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Time (in Minutes)</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				