

Welcome to German class!

Please read this letter and the attached syllabus. You and a parent/guardian will need to sign and return the last page of the syllabus as your homework for the next time we have class.

We spoke a LOT of German today!

As long as you're participating, you're succeeding. Do your best and don't panic! If you act respectful, try to speak German, and participate; then you're doing everything exactly right! Don't worry about grades for the first few weeks. I understand that hearing and speaking this much German on the first day can feel overwhelming - I've been there too. Right now I'm focused on getting to know my new students and I'm not judging or grading your ability to speak German. We'll discuss proficiency grades in a few weeks.

The German department is moving toward a system of proficiency and performance-based learning and grading, which means more speaking, reading, and listening to real-world German in context (YAY!) and less rote memorization or emphasis on grammar rules (Double YAY!).

Look over these FAQ's for some hints to help ease your progression into the school year...

Q: Can Frau Besemer speak English?

A: Yes! However, I will only be speaking English during class when it is specifically English Time.

Q: Can I ask Frau Besemer a question in English?

A: Yes! If you have a question you need to ask in English, please ask it before or after school hours or via email. I love speaking English, just not during class time!

Q: I feel overwhelmed! What can I do?

A: Try these tips:

- It will be ok! Take a deep breath and follow along the best you can.
- Support your classmates!
- Don't be afraid to make a mistake!
- Don't know how to say a word in German?
 - Draw a picture on the board!
 - Act it out like charades!
 - Say the words you DO know to describe it!

Q: Why are we doing this?

A: Total immersion is how you learned your first language. Think about it, by the time you started Kindergarten you knew thousands of English words and had all of your basic grammar down. We're doing the same thing in our classroom! Yes, it may seem overwhelming at times (why do you think

toddlers cry so much), but you will leave German class with the ability to COMMUNICATE, not just conjugate verbs!

- For more information on the methodology used in class visit www.owlanguage.com/about
- For more information about levels of proficiency visit: <http://bit.do/proficiency>

Q: How will I get graded if we don't have grammar tests?

A: At the beginning of the year you will be graded mostly on participation! Later, we will add in spoken and written assessments. We'll go over grades in more detail (and in English) in a few weeks. We will experience some growing pains as we move to this new method, but I promise you that even if the grading format evolves over the year, grades will be fair, and you will be informed of any changes!

Q: Seriously, why are we doing this?

A: We have small classes and I get to see my students progress through each year of German. This means you're not just a student and I'm not just a teacher. We are a special community within this school and we have the opportunity to take chances and try new things that the other languages don't necessarily get to try!

Come to class every day with an open mind and a willingness to learn from your mistakes. I can't wait to see where this year takes us!

--Frau Besemer