

Preview!

Learn German with a Story

Deutsch lernen mit einer Geschichte

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1. Introduction

This is the first in a series of books about learning German. It is different from other books, though, as you will see when you start reading.

This first book does not require any previous German knowledge. You will not be able to learn to speak German with only by reading these books, but they will certainly help you build a vocabulary – and confidence.

Please just give it a try and start reading right away and decide on your own whether you start learning German words – without effort.

The chapters are intended to be read one a day. Take your time to learn the vocabulary and the grammar, you will be tested on it in the following chapter. Each chapter contains some background information about the country to help you get a better understanding of the country.

You might want to take a look at the Podcast <http://german-podcast.blogspot.com/> as well. There are some lessons with similar contents and the words presented in this book will be spoken there so that you can learn how to pronounce those words.

2. At the Zurich Airport

(Am Flughafen Zürich)

Sunday, 15:00, Zurich Airport, Switzerland

Peter Mueller exits the plane from New York. A bus awaits the passengers to take them to customs and to fetch their luggage. The driver speaks into his microphone “Guten Tag meine Damen und Herren, willkommen in der Schweiz.” Peter does not understand more than *Guten Tag* and *Schweiz* though.

The bus arrives at the terminal building after a few minutes. All passengers disembark and wait for their luggage. A big sign says

Gepäckausgabe

livraison des bagages

baggage claim area

Peter waits patiently for his luggage. One suitcase after the other is claimed until none are left. He closes his eyes for a moment and groans silently.

“Guten Tag, kann ich Ihnen helfen?” a middle aged woman in the uniform of a stewardess addresses him. Her name plate says Maria Huber.

“Ah, Guten Tag. Do you speak English?” Peter looks at her pleadingly. “Only a little. Do you have a problem?”

“Yes, my luggage is not there.”

“Your luggage?” For a moment she looks confused.

“Ah, Ihr Gepäck! Please follow me, we need to check this at the terminal.”

She leads him to a counter where a young woman is typing at a computer. Mrs. Huber addresses her. “Hallo Petra, dieser Herr hat sein Gepäck verloren. Er spricht nur Englisch. „

„Guten Tag, my name is Petra Stutz. Can I have your ticket and your passport please?”

After Peter hands his papers over, she starts typing at the computer for several moments. Finally she looks up at him. “Mr. Mueller, I am sorry. Your luggage seems to be lost. We will try everything possible to find it and to send it after you. Can you leave an address where we can send it to?”

Peter stifles another groan and hands her a sheet of paper with the address of his hotel in Lucerne.

“Ah, you will stay in Lucerne? Eine schöne Stadt, a wonderful city!” with that she starts typing again.

“Okay, ihr Gepäck, I mean, your luggage will be send to you as soon as we can. Probably tomorrow. We are very sorry!”

“Yeah, me too”. Peter leaves for the customs. A big sign says

ZOLL

Bitte halten Sie Ihren Pass bereit.

Please have your papers ready.

The man behind the counter addresses Peter. “Guten Tag mein Herr. Ihren Pass bitte.”

Peter hands over his passport.

“Haben Sie kein Gepäck?“ and after a moment
„Sprechen Sie Deutsch? Do you speak German?“

Peter shakes his head.

„Where is your luggage?“

„Lost, they will send it after me.“

“So, are you here for holiday or on a business trip?“

“I am on vacation.“

“And where will you stay?“

“In Lucerne.“

“Well, then welcome to Switzerland!“ He returns the passport.

As Peter is about to leave the customs area, a woman of about 30 years approaches him.

“Guten Tag, hello. I was standing behind you at the customs. You lost your luggage?“

“Yes, seems it went on the wrong plane.“

“Too bad! You are travelling to Lucerne?“

“Yes?“ he raises an eyebrow and studies the woman. Brown hair, jeans, a white T-Shirt, nice figure and an open and welcoming face.

“Hi, ich heie Julia, my name is Julia.“ With that she holds out her slender hand to him. Shaking it firmly Peter introduces himself.

“I come from Lucerne, I can take you to the train and tell you about the country, if you want to?“

Peter rises both eyebrows but accepts gladly. “Are all Swiss women as friendly as you are?“ She gives a hearty

laugh. “No, but I once lost my luggage as well. I know how that feels.“

What you learned

Did you understand everything that was said?

Congratulations! You already understand 44 German words!

Now we will take a closer look at those words and do some exercises.

You might want to learn the following words. Don't worry about the others for now.

Deutsch	Englisch
Die Damen	Ladies
Deutsch	German
Englisch	English
Gepck, das	baggage
Gepckausgabe, die	baggage claim area
Guten Tag	hello (good day)
Ich heie	my name is
Helfen	help
Herr, der	Mister
Herren, die	Gentlemen
Ich	I
kann	can
Name, der	name
Schweiz, die	Switzerland
Stadt, die	city
Tag, der	day

Willkommen	welcome
Zoll, der	customs
Luzern	Lucerne
Zürich	Zurich

Questions

Please answer the following questions. The answers can be found in the text above. If you do not understand a word, you can always take a look at the words in the appendix.

In which city does Peter Mueller arrive?

What is the German word for luggage?

How would you greet somebody in Germany?

What is the German word for customs?

How do you reply when a man addresses you by saying “Guten Tag mein Herr.”

If somebody addresses you by saying “Kann ich Ihnen helfen?” What does she want?

What is the German word for passport?

How can you introduce your self?

Congratulations again! If you answered all questions, you are ready for the next chapter!

About Zurich Airport

ZRH, ICAO: LSZH) also called Kloten Airport, is located in Kloten, canton of Zürich, Switzerland and managed by Unique Airport. It is Switzerland's largest international flight gateway and hub to Swiss International Air Lines and Lufthansa. Skyguide is responsible for all Air Traffic Control for Zürich Intl.

[...]

Zürich airport railway station (Zürich Flughafen) is located underneath the terminal. There are trains to many parts of Switzerland; frequent S-Bahn services, plus direct Inter-regio and intercity services to Winterthur, Bern, Basel and Lucerne(Luzern). By changing trains at Zürich HB (Zürich main station) most other places in Switzerland can be reached in a few hours.

Zürich Airport handled 19.2 million passengers in 2006.

3. In the Train

(Im Zug)

Julia leads Peter to the station. The Zurich airport contains a station with a direct connection to Lucerne and other Swiss cities. First Peter needs to change some money, though, so they enter a *Wechselstube*. There Peter can exchange his dollar notes to *Schweizer Franken*, the Swiss currency. He does not get as many *Franken* as he expected, though. “Too bad the dollar lost so much value during the last few years”, says Peter.

“Oh, I am glad it did! I love to travel, so that is good for me!” Julia beams at him. “*Aber unsere Franken* have lost against the Euro as well, so holidays in Europe got more expensive for us as well. Currently many Swiss travel to Canada and Australia.”



At the station Julia shows Peter how to use the ticket machine. “This is really easy” she says. “You can buy tickets to any city. You only need to buy them at the

counter if you want to leave the country or if you want to make reservations. Those would be highly unusual here in Switzerland, though. Except if you want to cross the Alps on a weekend with good weather, in that case you should make a reservation.”

She points at the top of the screen “See? Here is says how much you have to pay. That is 30 Franken or 18 Euro, you can pay with Euro as well, though the exchange rate is not too good.”

Peter takes out the money he received at the *Wechselstube* and counts out the 30 Franken. The machine swallows the money and prints a ticket for him.



They have to wait for about 20 minutes for the next train to Lucerne, so Peter takes out his notebook. “I want to learn some German while I am here. I will write down the words I learn in this notebook and learn them each evening.” With that he starts writing. He does not remember all the words but Julia is there to help him.

Could you help Peter as well? If so, fill in the missing words.

Der Zoll	
	Baggage
	To help
Die Stadt	
	Please
Willkommen	
	the train

“Ah, da kommt der Zug!” Julia stands up and takes her Gepäck. Peter does not take his, as that is probably in Moscow or Paris.

“We will be in Luzern in a little more than an hour. “ Julia lets Peter take a window seat. “Next stop will be Zürich main station. You really need to visit Zürich while you are in Switzerland. The lake is beautiful and there are many very exquisite shops near the station. I love Zürich!”

Peter nods. „Do many Swiss use the ... *Zug*?“ he looks uneasy about the new word. “Yes, *Zug*, we have the best train system in Europe, maybe in the world! The Swiss trains are hardly ever late, they are quite clean and you can reach even the most remote mountain villages either by train or bus. I know a lot of Swiss who do not even have a car anymore.”

Peter raises his eyebrows “They do not have a car? How do they go shopping?”

“Oh, I just take the bus. I do not have a car either! And you can order your groceries on the Internet. That is very convenient, especially for single mothers.”

“Alle Billete ab Zürich, bitte. Nächster Halt Zürich!” The conductor arrives and checks the tickets. Peter notices that most of the other passengers do not have a ticket, they just show a little blue plastic card. “What are those cards?”

“Those are called GA, that means *General Abbonement*. Many Swiss have those. They are a kind of, well, you can drive in all trains, ships and busses for free if you have one of those. See? Here is mine. They are very expensive, but worth the money if you travel a lot. “



Peter regards the GA. It contains a photo of Julia and the date on which the GA expires. “Nice photo. You look much younger on it, though.”

Julia turns a little red „*Danke*. I can reuse the photo, this one is more than four years old by now.” She looks away for a moment. “So, Peter, what is the German word for train?”

Peter answers ...

“Great, you are learning very fast! Here is another one. What is the name of the office where you exchanged your money?”

Peter needs a moment to remember the difficult word. Then he says: . . .

“Now I am really impressed! Okay, here is a new one. We are sitting on a *Sitzz?*” She points at their seats.

“*Sitzz?*” Peter stumbles over the sharp ending.

“Yes, *S i t z?* And we look out at the landscape through a *Fenster*. Window.”

“*Fenster.*“

„Good! *Das Fenster* and the floor is *der Fussboden* and”

Peter raises both hands “Ho ho, stop it, you are going too fast for me Mrs. teacher!” But he smiles at her enthusiasm. Then he takes out his notebook again “I will need to write them down at once. *Der Fussboden, das Fenster*, and what was seat again?”

What you learned

This chapter did not contain too many words, but you learned a lot about the Swiss and live in Switzerland. By now you can read a text that contains more than 50 words!

Here are the new words:

Deutsch	Englisch
aber	but
Wechselstube, die	exchange office

Sitz, der	seat
General Abbonement, das	special kind of train ticket
danke	thanks
Zug, der	train
Fenster, das	window
Schweizer Franken, der	Swiss Frank
Fussboden, der	floor

Questions

Please answer the following questions. The answers can be found in the text above. If you do not understand a word, you can always take a look at the words in the appendix.

What is the name of the Swiss currency?

What is a GA?

Where is the station at which Julia and Peter board the train?

Why is Julia happy that Peter did not get as many Schweizer Franken as he wished for?

What is the German word for window?

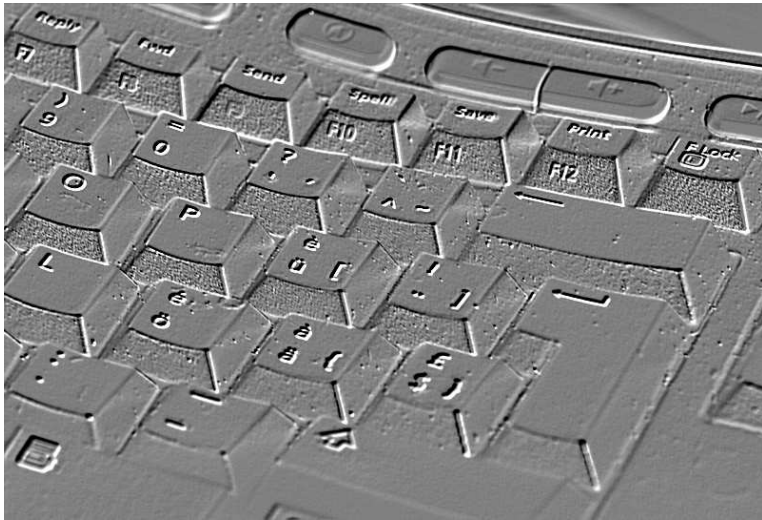
Some Grammar: Umlaut and Vowel

While Peter and Julia drive to Lucerne we have some time to talk about grammar.

German consists of 26 letters (*Buchstaben*) with the addition of the Umlaute ä, ö, ü, and finally the ß.

Vowels are a, e, i, o, u, ä, ö, ü, ß.

ä can be written as ae, ö as oe, ü as ue and ß as ss. With the *Rechtschreibreform* (spelling reform) of the last years many of the Umlaute have changes *Stengel* became *Stängel* (stem) because it comes from *Stange* (pole, staff) and *naß* (wet) became *nass*. Note that Switzerland does not have a ß, there is no such symbol on my (Swiss) keyboard. E.g.: Straße and Strasse (street) are both correct.



4. Arrival in Lucerne

(Ankunft in Luzern)

Confused? Don't worry, so are we. Hardly anybody (besides the poor teachers who have to relearn it) knows for sure what changed by the *Rechtschreibreform* and most people do not care and continue to write the way they did.

About the SBB

Swiss Federal Railways (German: SBB, Schweizerische Bundesbahnen; French: CFF, Chemins de fer fédéraux suisses; Italian: FFS, Ferrovie federali svizzere; Romansh: Viafiers federalas svizras; The abbreviations VFS (Romansh) or SFR (English) are not used officially) is the national railway company of Switzerland headquartered in Berne. Formerly a state-owned enterprise, it is since 1999 a special stock corporation with all its shares held by the Swiss Confederation or Swiss Cantons.

[<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SBB-CFF-FFS>, visited 02.08.2007]

The Swiss are quite fond of “their SBB” and if you are visiting Switzerland you absolutely have to take a trip in one of the famous *Postautos* (post bus).

5. At the Hotel

(Im Hotel)

Vocabulary

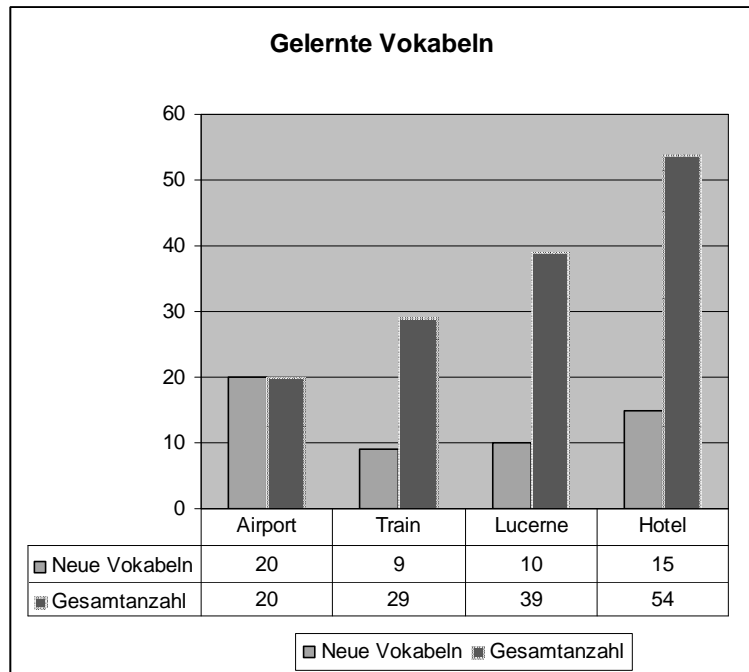
A list of all German words encountered in the text.

Once sorted by the German and once by the English word.

<i>Deutsch</i>	<i>Englisch</i>
aber	but
danke	thanks
Deutsch	German
die Damen	Ladies
Englisch	English
Fenster, das	window
Fussboden, der	floor
General Abbonement, das	special kind of train ticket
Gepäck, das	baggage
Gepäckausgabe, die	baggage claim area
Guten Tag	hello (good day)
Helfen	help
Herr, der	Mister
Herren, die	Gentlemen
ich	I
ich heisse	my name is
kann	can
Luzern	Lucerne
Name, der	name
Schweiz, die	Switzerland
Schweizer Franken, der	Swiss Frank
Sitz, der	seat
Stadt, die	city
Tag, der	day
Wechselstube, die	exchange office

Willkommen	welcome
Zoll, der	customs
Zug, der	train
Zürich	Zurich

The following chart shows the number of new words for each chapter, visualising the progress you make.



<i>Deutsch</i>	<i>Englisch</i>
Gepäck, das	baggage
Gepäckausgabe, die	baggage claim area
aber	but
kann	can
Stadt, die	city
Zoll, der	customs
Tag, der	day
Englisch	English
Wechselstube, die	exchange office
Fussboden, der	floor
Herrn, die	Gentlemen
Deutsch	German
Guten Tag	hello (good day)
Helfen	help
ich	I
die Damen	Ladies
Luzern	Lucerne
Herr, der	Mister
ich heisse	my name is
Name, der	name
Sitz, der	seat
General Abbonement, das	special kind of train ticket
Schweizer Franken, der	Swiss Frank
Schweiz, die	Switzerland
danke	thanks
Zug, der	train
Willkommen	welcome
Fenster, das	window
Zürich	Zurich