

Introduction to the German Language

- German is spoken in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein by about 120 million people
- German is a member of the Germanic language family, along with English, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic and a few others. Also Yiddish is derived from German.
- You can see its relation to English in German words like *Hand, Glas, Land, dumm, neun, Hunger, blau*, and many others...
- Remember that German has some letters and sounds we don't find in English.

Ä - sounds like “e” in “get.” The word *Mädchen* means girl.

Ü - purse your lips like you are going to kiss someone, and then with your lips held in that position say, “eeee.”
Müller is a common German last name.

Ö - round your lips like you are going to say the “o” sound in “rope” and with your lips held like that say the “ey” sound in “they.” The word *Öl* means oil.

ß - this symbol is the same as “ss.” We saw this letter in the word *weiß*, meaning white.

Some letters look like English but sound different in German:

w	-	sounds like “v”
z	-	sounds like “ts”
r	-	sounds like you are gargling
ch	-	sounds like you are clearing your throat
j	-	sounds like “y”

- Here are the colors we learned:

blau	-	blue
rot	-	red

grün	-	green
weiß	-	white
schwarz	-	black
gelb	-	yellow

Here are a few other words and expressions we practiced:

Hallo!	-	Hi!
Wie geht's?	-	How's it going?
ja	-	yes
nein	-	no
danke	-	thank you
Guten Morgen!	-	Good morning!
Guten Tag!	-	Good afternoon!
Guten Abend!	-	Good evening!
Auf wiedersehen!	-	Good-bye!
Deutsch	-	German
Deutschland	-	Germany

German is known for having some very long words. Here's a common example: *Geschwindigkeitsbegrenzung* meaning “speed limit.”