



GISSV German International School
of Silicon Valley

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Parent Information

German as a second language for Secondary School Level I students at GISSV

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1) What is German as a second language?

German as a second language is a course in which the language is taught. The general objective of this course is for students who do not come from a German-speaking background to acquire overall language proficiency in German. The German language is therefore primarily taught as a subject in its own right rather than used as a means to work on various educational topics or subject matters specific to other fields. However, our language courses are not taught in a vacuum either, since language is also always about something. In this regard, the courses on German as a second language complement the school's regular course offerings. (Please see, http://www.berlin.de/imperia/md/content/senbildung/foerderung/sprachfoerderung/daz_handreichung.pdf?start&ts=1234875610&file=daz_handreichung.pdf)

The approach at GISSV focuses on teaching communication skills. Students not only learn to communicate in German, but also to feel comfortable and confident using the German language.

As a German-international school that offers programs of study leading to all German school diplomas, we see it as our fundamental task to provide students with the proper preparation so they meet academic standards as well as university admissions requirements.

2) How is this special coaching course organized?

In Mountain View, students in grades 5–8 receive an extra two hours of language coaching per week and are grouped by grade (5/6 and 7/8). The language-coaching course is a fixed part of the student's schedule.

We also give students the opportunity to take the exams for the German Language Diploma in Grade 8 (German Language Diploma I) and in Grade 10 (German Language Diploma II), as well as the AATG exams in Grades 5/6 (Level III) and Grades 7/8 (Level IV).

3) Is participation in a course on German as a second language required?

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Participation in a course on German as a second language is essentially voluntary. However, by enrolling, students are required to make a commitment of at least one semester. The language-coaching course is then obligatory and requires regular attendance and participation (please also see item 4).

At the start of the new school year or new semester, parents, students and teachers decide together whether the student should from now on be classified as a native speaker.

A note is made in the student's report card that the student is classified as a learner of German as a second language.

4) What other forms of assistance does my child receive as a student who takes a course on German as a second language?

To take some of the pressure off of the students, when grades are issued in the student's regular German course and in other subjects taught in German, the teacher takes into account the fact that the student has been classified as a learner of German as a second language. For example, the teacher is more lenient when grading accuracy in language use or verbal skills.

However, this regulation only applies to students who regularly take part in the course on German as a second language (please also see item 3) and does not apply generally to all non-native German speakers.

Students do not receive a separate grade for the course on German as a second language.

Students enrolled in a course on German as a second language also receive extra help in the classroom and during tests, depending on the subject and material taught. For example, the teacher might explain words or reword tasks, etc.

For subjects taught bilingually, students in Grade 8 or below also have the option to answer test questions in English.

5) Is language coaching also offered in "regular" courses?

The teaching staff at GISSV is trained to provide students with German-language assistance in all courses, even if the course is not, strictly speaking, a language-learning course.

6) How can my child receive additional help?

We can help you find tutors, summer courses or suitable practice material.

The library also has many books in German that are suitable for children and young adults, as well as learning texts for levels A2 to C1, including audio books and exercises for self-study. You can borrow this material from the library.

To promote reading, German magazines for various age groups and interests are also on display in the library (for example, *Geolino*, *Geo Epoche*, *Dein Spiegel*, *G/Geschichte*).

