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**by Wendy Foster with
Paulina Christensen, PhD, and
Anne Fox**

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all those who enjoy speaking German and appreciate the rich cultural heritage of German-speaking people. I also dedicate this work to Phil Kehoe, whose unflagging support of my endeavors serves as a constant inspiration to me. — Wendy Foster

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Introduction



Starting out on the journey of speaking another language and discovering a foreign culture is like opening a window to the world. By learning to speak German, you're preparing yourself to communicate in the most widely spoken language of the European Union. Perhaps you're getting ready for a business or pleasure trip to Europe, perhaps you're studying German in school, or maybe you're simply curious about exploring Germany and its culture, including its language.

As you consider the plethora of language learning options out there, you'll find methods that promise you'll succeed in just a few easy steps, or better yet, while you're sleeping. Other programs take a significant chunk out of your budget and your spare time yet still don't deliver on their promises. This book lets you delve into the language at your own pace, and you can study the chapters in any order you want. Ample cross-referencing allows you to easily find any supporting information you need. Whatever your reasons for wanting to acquire some German, choosing *German All-in-One For Dummies* offers you a great opportunity to reach your goals.

About This Book

With *German All-in-One For Dummies*, you find a wealth of resources in one volume. You get straightforward information on the nuts and bolts of understanding and using the language as it's spoken today in German-speaking countries.

You can go through the chapters in this book in any order you choose, zeroing in on your priorities. You can skim or, better yet, skip over the lessons you don't need. Use the book to find answers to specific questions you may have on a topic that comes up while you're learning to use the language. Without even realizing it, your German vocabulary expands as you cruise through the book.

This book is chock-full of everyday phrases and words with pronunciation guidelines so you can practice the language right away. You find in-depth grammar explanations that answer your questions about how to build sentences in German. Throughout the book, you also get plenty of words, dialogues, and phrases related to specific situations you may come across in different settings. The appendixes offer more support in understanding grammar points, and the mini-dictionaries give you the translations of important words that appear in the book. The audio CD inside the back cover

provides audio tracks of the German alphabet and listening practice for various dialogues in the book. (If you're reading a digital version of this book, go to <http://booksupport.wiley.com> for the audio tracks.) Most importantly, as you go through this book, **Viel Spaß!** (feel shpahs!) (*Have a lot of fun!*)

Conventions Used in This Book

To make your progress go as smoothly as possible, we use the following conventions in this book. They can help you spot essential elements in the text.

- ✓ We use **boldface** to highlight German words, example sentences, and the essential elements in verb tables, which may be information like verb endings or irregular conjugations.
- ✓ We *italicize* English translations that accompany German words and sentences. You'll find them set in parentheses following the pronunciation of German terms or sentences. Within the German pronunciations, we italicize the syllables that are stressed in words with two or more syllables. Finally, we italicize English terms that we define.
- ✓ In some cases, German speakers use the same pronunciation as English speakers for words, many of which are borrowed from English or other languages. When such words are pronounced the same way in German as in English, you see the English word in the pronunciation followed by the notation "as in English" rather than the usual phonetic pronunciation. Of course, if the pronunciation differs between the English and the German, we include the German pronunciation as usual.
- ✓ Verb *conjugations* (lists that show you the forms of a verb) are given in tables in this order:
 - The "I" form
 - The "you" (singular, informal [or sing. inf.]) form
 - The "you" (singular, formal [or sing. form.]) form
 - The "he, she, it" form
 - The "we" form
 - The "you" (plural, informal [or pl. inf.]) form
 - The "you" (plural, formal [or pl. form.]) form
 - The "they" form

For example, here's what the present-tense conjugation of the verb **sein** (*to be*) looks like:

sein (to be)	
ich bin	wir sind
du bist	ihr seid
er/sie/es ist	sie sind
Sie sind	
Sind Sie Herr Schumpich? (<i>Are you Mr. Schumpich?</i>)	

To help you make fast progress in German, this book includes a few elements to help you along:

- ✔ **Talkin' the Talk dialogues:** The best way to learn a language is to see and hear how it's used in conversation, so we include dialogues throughout Books I and II. The dialogues come under the heading "Talkin' the Talk" and show you the German words, their pronunciations, and the English translations. For your listening and learning pleasure, we also include a number of these dialogues on the CD tucked into the back cover of your book. If you're reading a digital version of this book, you can find the audio tracks at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>.
- ✔ **Words to Know blackboards:** Acquiring key words and phrases is also important in language learning, so we collect these important words in sections that resemble chalkboards, with the heading "Words to Know."
Note: In the pronunciations given in these sections, the stressed syllables are underlined rather than italicized.
- ✔ **Fun & Games activities:** If you want to flex your new language muscles, you can use the Fun & Games activities in Appendix D to reinforce what you learn. These activities are fun ways to check your progress.

Also note that, because each language has its own ways of expressing ideas, the English translations that we provide for the German terms may not be exactly literal. We want you to know the essence of what's being said, not just the meanings of single words. For example, the phrase **Es geht** (ês geyt) can be translated literally as *It goes*, but the phrase is actually the equivalent of *So*, *so*, or *Okay*, which is what you see as the translation.

Foolish Assumptions

In writing *German All-in-One For Dummies*, we made the following assumptions about you, dear reader:

- ✓ You're a German student looking for an in-depth, easy-to-use reference.
- ✓ You know very little or no German — or if you took German back in school, you remember very little of it.
- ✓ Your goal is to expand your knowledge of German. You don't want to be burdened by long-winded explanations of unnecessary grammatical terms, nor do you care to hold a scholarly discussion in German about Goethe's *Faust*. You just want to express yourself in clear and reasonably accurate German.
- ✓ You're enthusiastic about having some fun while honing your German skills.

If any or all of these statements describe you, then you're ready to get started using this book. **Willkommen!** (vil-kom-en!) (*Welcome!*)

How This Book Is Organized

This book is actually five books in one, each of which tackles a different aspect of German language acquisition. The following sections provide a brief description of what types of information you can find in each book.

Book I: Getting Started with German

In this book, you acquaint yourself with the world of popular German phrases and pronunciations. You get a broad base in the language of meeting and greeting people and talking about yourself and others. One chapter deals with everyday topics such as talking about the weather. Another contains practical vocabulary and expressions you need for speaking in business situations and using telecommunications. In Book I, you also gain insight into the world of German news media. You get practice in the language you need for buying clothes and food, as well as the ins and outs of having a pleasant dining experience.

Book II: Speaking German on the Go

Book II gets you up to speed on finding your way around in a German-speaking environment. You get practice in asking how to get somewhere and in understanding directions. You find useful input on the language you need for making reservations at a hotel, booking a trip, and going through airports. Book II also offers essential language for dealing with money matters like exchanging money

and going to an ATM. And just in case, this book rounds out with a primer on going to the doctor and handling emergencies.

Book III: Assembling the Grammatical Foundations for Communication

In this book, you move onto the basics of grammar. You see the mysteries of gender and case unveiled, and you get an up-close look at the intricacies of combining nouns and pronouns with verbs. Here, you also find out how to construct sentences in the present tense, how to ask and answer questions, and how to agree and disagree. Book III delves into the finer points of expressing yourself using adjectives and adverbs. It shows you the six modal verbs that help you be polite, ask for help, and talk about what you can do, want to do, should do, or must do. Finally, you get the lowdown on how to make commands and how to use tricky two-part verbs.

Book IV: Building Detail and Precision in Your Communication

This book helps you become acquainted with past and future verb tenses. You get a handle on the difference between the conversational past and the simple (narrative) past, and you see how to choose the correct verb form to express yourself in the future. Here, you find out how to express yourself using reflexive verbs and how to connect shorter ideas with conjunctions to build more complex sentences. You find out the intricacies of using prepositions in German. Finally, you discover how to express certainty and uncertainty and how to make wishes and requests using subjunctive verbs.

Book V: The Appendixes

The five appendixes in this book provide an assortment of references to help you in expressing yourself confidently in German. The first appendix includes verb tables for conjugating verbs, as well as case-ending tables to help you use nouns, pronouns, and adjectives correctly. Appendixes B and C are two mini-dictionaries that allow you to find the meaning of a German word you don't understand or the German equivalent of an English word. Appendix D is the Fun & Games activities section. The last appendix, E, is devoted to the CD element of this book. It contains the listing of audio tracks that appear as dialogues throughout the book.

Icons Used in This Book

The following icons help you make the most of your journey through this book. You find them in the left-hand margin next to key points you don't want to miss. Here's what each icon means:



The Tip icon highlights helpful hints that'll make it a whole lot easier for you to feel comfortable using German, whether you're traveling abroad or just using it at home or in the workplace.



This icon alerts you to key information that's worth revisiting. You want to stash this info in your mind because you'll end up using it again and again.



If you're looking for information and advice about culture and travel, look for this icon. It draws your attention to interesting tidbits about the countries in which German is spoken.



The audio CD that comes with this book gives you the opportunity to listen to real German speakers so you can get a better understanding of what German sounds like. This icon marks the Talkin' the Talk dialogues in Books I and II that you can listen to on the CD. If you're using a digital version of this book, go to <http://booksupport.wiley.com> to download the audio tracks. You can also access the audio tracks at www.dummies.com/go/germanaio.

Where to Go from Here

For starters, try scanning the table of contents. Select a chapter that piques your interest and take it from there. Read the section in the chapter that presents a conversation in an everyday situation, a point of grammar, or some other information you want to know more about. Study the example dialogues and the details on forming useful language. You'll soon discover what you know or don't know, and when your curiosity is satisfied, flip back to the table of contents and find another chapter you're ready to tackle.

Whenever you feel like you're losing steam, **mach eine Pause** (mâH ayn-e pou-ze) (*take a break*), close your eyes, and dream about **die Romantische Straße** (dee ro-mân-tish-e shtrah-se) (*the Romantic Road* — an enchanting route through some of the most picturesque parts of southern Germany). Before you know it, you'll be dreaming of storybook castles and court jesters **auf Deutsch** (ouf doych) (*in German*)!