



Introduction

Target group

This textbook is aimed at seven to ten-year old children who are learning German *ab initio* in or outside Germany.

Structure of the textbook

A three-volume textbook is available for pupils.

The following are available for the teacher and for use in the classroom:

- teacher's handbook with lesson plan summary, teaching tips and transcription of the listening and repetition texts
- two audio cassettes/CDs:
 - one cassette/CD with all dialogues and further texts for language practice, listening texts and exercises, including repetition exercises to teach pronunciation and the texts of the reading stories;
 - one further cassette/CD with all the songs. All songs are available on the cassette/CD with the lyrics being sung as well as with backing tracks only.

Formal structure of the textbook

The textbook is divided into eight lessons. The first six lessons are each split into small, easy-to-read units, giving the pupils a rapid learning experience in recognisable steps.

The seventh lesson provides a repetition and summary of the learning material in the form of a singing game, which the children are encouraged to work out themselves.

The eighth lesson is a consolidating lesson, involving no language progression. Here, the pupils are provided with cultural information on German festivals in the form of songs, photos and instructions for craft activities. The teacher can select sections of this lesson to be integrated into classes as needed.

Contents of the textbook

The contents are intended to reflect the experiences and needs of the children. Children of this age group want to talk about themselves, their family, their school, their friends and the games they play. All these subject areas are covered using authentic situations and texts relevant to the various age groups.

Knowledge about the country

Knowledge about Germany is specifically presented in the eighth lesson with the title "Seasons and Festivals". In this consolidating lesson the pupils learn about the festivals that German children celebrate, what they make for them and the songs connected with them. In addition, knowledge about the country is provided in a more general manner by means of the situations, dialogues and illustrations used.



Intercultural approach

In modern society it is essential that we awaken curiosity in and interest for other customs and ways of life than our own. Clearly, the better we know "the Other", the less able it is to generate fear in us and the better we are able to develop an understanding of it.

The subject areas provide comparisons with other countries on an ongoing basis, for example children's games here and elsewhere; family structures and characters from traditional puppet theatre that can be found in many countries of a variety of forms; festivals and celebrations throughout the year, etc.

It is equally important to teach the children that "being different" is completely normal, meaning that the Other, whether defined by appearance or other ways of doing things, should be something to take for granted. This is achieved in the illustrations to the book, where a Chinese and black child are part of a German school class.

Understanding other nationalities and cultures also helps people to practise tolerance towards groups on the margins of our own society who live outside the normal rules. One example of living life differently is given in the book by a circus child who moves around the country with his parents and thus experiences completely different conditions from those normally experienced. The teacher can talk with the class about this. The main thing here is to involve the children actively, for example by asking questions such as "How would you imagine life in a caravan? What do you think would be interesting or hard about moving to a different town every week?" Initially, such conversations would normally take place in the children's mother tongue.

Interdisciplinary aspects

Teaching content should not be confined to one discipline, but should include a variety of subjects. Due to their holistic approach, the themes developed in the book are suitable in many different ways for integrating several subject areas.

General themes such as "illness", "family", "finding your way around the classroom" involve their own subject-specific aspects.

After children have learned the numbers up to 20, simple counting tasks during mathematics lessons can be carried out in German.

Many action games can be incorporated into sports lessons.

Painting and construction work such as making backdrops for the stage, puppet figures, animal masks etc. can be carried out during art lessons or lessons involving textiles and other material.

During music lessons pupils can accompany the songs – especially the singing game in lesson seven – with simple instruments.

Methodological emphasis

The method of this textbook is oriented towards the psychological temperament of children in this age group.

1. Children learn with all their senses.



- a) Unity of speaking and action. Many different situations are presented in which the children learn by doing.
- b) *Listening*: Right from the beginning, the cassette contains listening exercises. The pupils follow instructions, act out statements made to them, react to keywords in an action game, give answers to questions, set guidelines correctly and put pictures belonging to more complex listening stories into the correct sequence.
- c) *Reading*: After lesson 2 there are regular stories to practise reading comprehension – at first in the form of dialogues, then in narrative form – in which the known language material is presented in new, more complex contexts. As the practice of reading skills is still very important for this age group, all reading stories are also offered on the cassette.
- d) *Writing*: Preparing materials for games is the main means of encouraging the pupils to write. Word recognition is consolidated by means of spelling games (letter webs, letter card games).
- e) *Seeing*: Pupils' power of observation is developed by playing appropriate games such as Spot the Difference, What's Missing? etc.
- f) *Feeling and touching*: Games that include the sense of touch are also included.
- g) *Art and Craft activities*: All games are made by the pupils themselves, e.g. picture cards for Memory, stage props for short drama performances, material for games and finger puppets to be used in dialogue scenes. The teacher should not be concerned that this is "wasting time" during lessons, because the personal relationship the pupils develop with the teaching material encourages them to remember the lesson.

2. *Children learn by imitating and show great willingness to speak*

- a) The most communicatively prepared language material is integrated into discrete, authentic situations. These are presented on the cassette and explained through illustrations in the book, encouraging the children to play them again.
- b) Repetition exercises to help pronunciation are included on the cassette.
- c) The language material is practised by means of continual use and constant repetition.

3. *Children like to play*

- a) The language material is practised through a variety of exercises based on games.
- b) All of the situations in the texts are suitable for being acted out.
- c) The use of hand puppets and finger puppets they have made themselves, also provides shy children with an opportunity to act out parts in scenes, as they can "hide" behind their puppets.
- d) The language material is repeated in short theatre scenes with simple costumes and props made by the pupils themselves.

4. *Children are keen to show enthusiasm, but frequently have short attention spans*

- a) A variety of situations and the rapid change of exercise type hold the pupils' attention.



b) Short lesson sequences ensure that the pupils quickly show measurable success.

5. *Children need to keep moving*

- a) Games involving movement, which are used to practise vocabulary referring to parts of the body, numbers etc. not only acknowledge children's need to move but also help them remember what they have learned, while making lessons more relaxed.
- b) During games such as finding or interviewing a partner, children can leave their places and move around freely in the classroom. These kinds of games also give children reasons to speak with one another in a whole class activity.

6. *Children are creative and full of imagination*

- a) Songs, rhymes, tongue twisters and rhythmic texts encourage creative use of newly acquired language. It is above all the songs which form a solid foundation for the acquisition of language. Using them, the language material is introduced, practised and consolidated, with the pupils singing set lyrics, but also continuing lyrics themselves and making up new verses.
- b) Set "nonsense texts" not only encourage the pupils to correct them, but also to have a laugh. Apart from the fact that texts like this are fun to work with, it's also a sign of linguistic competence when pupils understand nonsense in another language. In addition, pupils are repeatedly encouraged to make up their own nonsense texts.

Organisation of lessons

Right from the word go, the pupils' own contributions are key. The teacher assumes the role of a facilitator, by introducing new language material or exercise techniques then stepping back and allowing the pupils themselves to carry out the activity. A corrective hand should only be provided when necessary.

The exercises and games are designed so the pupils can carry them out with a partner or in group work, and check their own progress at times. In addition, help is usually built-in, so that most mistakes can be avoided. If there are nevertheless mistakes, then that's no problem, because making mistakes is part of the learning process. The teacher should pass on this attitude to the pupils and thereby take away the fear of mistakes from them. Clearly, a classroom atmosphere free of fear of mistakes encourages successful learning.

The materials for games, such as pictures and word cards, memory games etc. are made by the pupils themselves. The resulting personal relationship with the material increases both motivation and retention. There is also a double practice effect: once while making the materials and once while playing the games.

The games should be collected over the years and always made available to the pupils during free choice activity periods.

Differentiation is possible in connection with group work. While stronger groups can carry out the exercises on their own, the teacher can work directly with the weaker ones. Alternatively, within a mixed group it would be possible for the stronger pupils to help the weaker ones.



Differentiation is also built into the language material itself and the associated exercises. Weaker pupils can begin with language free sections or take over the simpler language patterns.

Language during lessons

Right from the beginning, pupils are provided with language patterns which enable them:

- to communicate with one another during the lesson in a basic form in German, e.g. "Gib mir ...", "Komm, wir ...", "Möchtest du ...?", "Ich kann nicht ..."
- to direct the sequence of games in German, eg "Du bist dran ..." etc.

The language of instruction should as much as possible be German. The teacher should give simple instructions in German, backing up the instructions initially with gestures to make them more easily understood. Here are a few instructions which occur frequently in day-to-day teaching situations:

Organising: *Mach/Macht die Tafel sauber! Teil/Teilt die Hefte/Bücher aus! Sammle/Sammelt ...ein!*

Organising exercises: *Ihr seid Gruppe 1/2. Du bist Tassilo. Ihr spielt zusammen. Fang/Fangt an! Wir singen/ schreiben/ ... Lies/Schreib bitte! Wiederhole bitte! Noch einmal bitte! Alle zusammen! Zeig bitte ...! Hör (genau) zu! Sprich (genau) nach! Schau das Bild an!*

During the lesson: *Nimm bitte den Bleistift/das Buch (heraus)! Mach das Heft/Buch auf/zu! Leg/Legt ...unter den Tisch! Alles weg! Bist du fertig? Komm bitte an die Tafel! Geh auf deinen Platz! Setz dich! Setzt euch! Steh/Steht auf! Seid bitte leise! Nicht so laut bitte! Schreibt bitte die Hausaufgabe auf! Und jetzt die Hausaufgabe! Bitte einpacken! Die Deutschstunde ist zu Ende. Stellt euch in die Reihe/Stellt euch an! Wir gehen (raus).*