

Travel Report - by Maria

Background

I have participated in a level B2 Standard Course at the ActiLingua Academy in Vienna. My course was 5 weeks in total and I also did an ÖSD exam at the end of my stay. I really improved my German and during my last week I got to participate in the C1 Standard Course.

Why the ActiLingua Academy

I chose the ActiLingua Academy because it is in Vienna, it is very competitively priced, and they are flexible with the starting dates.

Me and my husband wanted to study German during the summer and we had about five weeks available in July and August. We also wanted to take an official language exam and found out that ActiLingua provided a test in the end of August, which suited our schedule very well. Other courses that I considered did not start every week and their starting dates did not fit with our schedule. At the ActiLingua Academy you can start every course type every week, and that is a great advantage.

Before arriving to the school, you do an online placement test. When you arrive, you do an oral placement test. This way, they ensure that you end up in the right group for your level of proficiency. You can always do a re-evaluation test to see if your language skills have improved. I chose to do this for my last week of lectures and ended up in the next higher level of proficiency.

If you choose to do the ÖSD test, the ActiLingua Academy provides a preparation course (for a small fee) to help you do well on the test. I would really recommend doing this course if you want to do the test. It was not too much work for me to prepare for the test, but if you chose a difficult level for the test, you will have to work a little harder.

What can you expect

I have not participated in any language school before, so I did not really know what to expect. During my whole stay the groups were very small, 8-12 students per class. Many students come and go, and not so many stay more than three weeks in a course in summer. That was a bit sad since I met new friends that left soon. On the other hand, I got to know more people. If you do your course during the summer, there will be a lot of people to meet and hang out with. There are less people during winter, spring and autumn.

My experience from all my classes, was that we had a lot of fun. Almost every lesson we laughed at cultural differences, games that we played and fun experiences that my classmates shared.

The teachers are very good at making the learning process fun and interesting. They possess a great knowledge about German and speak very clearly with the students. I felt that all teachers I had were very passionate about teaching.

My experience is that the students are mainly under the age of 25, but there are also some students that are older than that.

I did not choose to stay in one of their apartments, but many of the younger students staying for a shorter time did that and they hung out a lot during the weekends and before or after the lectures.

Why Vienna

If you choose a Standard Course as I did, you have 3 hours of teaching per day. That means that there is plenty of time to explore Vienna as well. There are a lot of activities provided by ActiLingua, almost every day and weekend. You can learn more about different topics such as Mozart, the city's history etc. and do weekend excursions to nearby areas and cities. Some activities are for free, and some have an additional cost.

If you stay for longer, or get bored of Vienna and Austria, it is very convenient to travel to nearby countries by train. München, Bratislava, Budapest etc. are very close for a weekend-trip. I did several of those myself.

