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German Language Exams — DTZ, TestDaF, Goethe-Zertifikat

Which German language exam do you need? Overview of the most important language certificates and their costs.

Deutsche Begriffe: DTZ | TestDaF | Goethe-Zertifikat | telc | Sprachzertifikat

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Why a German Language Certificate?

You need an official **language certificate** for:

- **Residence permits** (e.g., permanent residence: B1)
- **Citizenship** (B1 or higher)
- **University studies** (B2–C1, depending on the university)
- **Employment** (many employers require B2)
- **Family reunification** (A1 before entry)

The Most Important Exams

DTZ — Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer

- **Level:** A2–B1
- **For whom:** Final exam of the integration course
- **Cost:** Included in the integration course
- **Content:** Listening, reading, writing, speaking
- **Result:** DTZ Certificate A2 or B1

Goethe-Zertifikat

Exam	Level	Cost (approx.)	For whom?
Start Deutsch 1	A1	€130	Family reunification
Goethe-Zertifikat A2	A2	€150	Residence
Goethe-Zertifikat B1	B1	€260	Permanent residence, citizenship
Goethe-Zertifikat B2	B2	€270	Employment, studies
Goethe-Zertifikat C1	C1	€310	University
Goethe-Zertifikat C2	C2	€330	Highest level

telc Deutsch

- Alternative to Goethe-Zertifikat, **recognized for residence permits and citizenship**
- Cost: approx. **€130–180** (depending on level)
- Often cheaper than Goethe and offered more frequently

TestDaF (Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache)

- **Level:** B2–C1
- **For whom:** University admission at German universities
- **Cost: €195**
- **Special feature:** Digital test, 4 components (reading, listening, writing, speaking)

DSH (Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang)

- Alternative to TestDaF for university studies
- Only available at universities
- Cost: approx. **€60–160**

Which Exam Do I Need?

Purpose	Minimum Level	Recommended Exam
Family reunification (visa)	A1	Goethe A1 / telc A1
Permanent residence permit	B1	DTZ / Goethe B1 / telc B1

Purpose	Minimum Level	Recommended Exam
Citizenship	B1	DTZ / Goethe B1 / telc B1
Employment (general)	B2	Goethe B2 / telc B2
University studies	B2–C1	TestDaF / DSH / Goethe C1

Tips

- **DTZ** is the most affordable option (included in the integration course)
- Book exam dates in advance — they often fill up quickly
- Practice tests online: goethe.de, telc.net, testdaf.de

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