

Auf geht's! Cultural Targets

Unit 1: Smalltalk

This handout covers the pertinent cultural information present in Unit 1 of *Auf geht's!*. Complete the following exercises in order to help you prepare for an exam on this unit. All information is available in the Interactive.

A. Autokennzeichen. In the United States, each state issues its own unique license plate design, but the actual license plate number doesn't tell you where the vehicle is registered; it's simply a unique combination of seven numbers and letters. German license plates, however, are more standardized.



1. How does each German license plate begin?

2. What are the three parts of each German license plate?

3. True or false: Bigger cities have longer city vehicle codes.

B. Greetings.

1. Circle whether the following greetings/goodbyes are formal or informal.

- a. *Tschüss* formal informal
- b. *Guten Tag* formal informal
- c. *Auf Wiedersehen* formal informal
- d. *Hallo* formal informal

2. Write down an appropriate greeting for each of these people:

- a. your roommate
- c. your German instructor
- b. the mail carrier
- d. your grandmother

3. Imagine you are an exchange student in Germany, and it's your first day at the university. As you walk around, you smile and greet most people you see. How will most Germans react to your behavior? Why?

4. Explain how customer service in Germany differs from America.

C. Deutschsprachig.

1. The region in the world (outside of Europe) with the most German speakers is .

2. List five countries where German is an official language.

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3. In which two countries is German the only official language?

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4. List ten countries that have a sizeable German population.

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D. Cultural gap management. The following questions are about general cultural differences that might be present between Germans and people from the U.S. or Canada.

1. Germans tend to be more open and honest when it comes to talking about how much they weigh. Do you ever discuss your weight with your friends or family? If not, why? How would you react if a German asked you how much you weigh? Would you give an honest answer?

2. Do you consider 35°C (95°F) to be so hot that you can't go outside or function normally? Why do you think a German visiting Southern California in the summertime might complain about the unbearable heat?

3. Take a guess as to why temperatures above 35°C can sometimes result in businesses and schools being closed down in Germany.