

Leben in Deutschland

Der Wortschatz zum Test

The vocabulary, the history, and the ideas behind all 310 questions

Anju Mishra

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About the author



Anju Mishra came to German the way most of her readers do: as an adult, mid-career, with a life already in motion. After five years in the United States she moved to Germany, where a small daughter with German homework became the best reason imaginable to master the language properly. She did, all the way to C1, and along the way discovered that German is not a mountain of exceptions but a system of patterns. An MBA in finance taught her to look for that structure; teaching learners from around the world taught her how to share it. She lives in Germany with her husband and daughter, who remains her favourite reason to get every *der*, *die* and *das* right.

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How to use this book

The Leben in Deutschland test asks 33 questions from an official catalogue of 310. You need 17 right answers to pass. The questions are published, so the test is not a mystery. The real obstacle is language, because words like Meinungsfreiheit or verfassungswidrig are B1 words with whole ideas folded inside them. This book unfolds the ideas.

The book has two parts:

1. **The Topics** covers the catalogue field by field, from basic rights to elections to the everyday questions about work, school, and family. Every unit is a vocabulary chapter first, with a scene, a word list, and the context that makes the answers make sense.

2. **The Lessons** are five briefings in plain English, three telling German history from Bismarck to reunification and two on how the state works. Read them once and dozens of history and politics questions become guessable instead of memorised.

How to read a unit:

1. Read the German scene first, then its English mirror. The highlighted words are the unit's targets.

2. Learn the **Vocabulary** list actively. Words marked ✓ appear in the official questions or answers, so they are test-critical. Unmarked words are their natural neighbours, the words that make your German complete rather than crammed.

3. Read the Why it is so box. It carries the history that the test quietly assumes. Then open the official catalogue and read the unit's questions in German. If you can read them without the English lines, the unit is done.

Every noun comes with its article and plural. Learn the words whole, and on test day you will not be translating. You will be recognising.

The videos. The lessons of this series also live on YouTube: vocabulary drills, stories read aloud by German voices, and dialogue practice, all free. Find them on the channel **AllesKlarMitAnju**, and all books and courses at **AllesKlarMitAnju.com**.

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THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 1

Das Grundgesetz und die Grundrechte

The Basic Law and the basic rights

Nearly every third question in the test touches the constitution, and the test loves one word family above all: das Recht, the right. From it German builds das Grundrecht, der Rechtsstaat, das Wahlrecht, and the test's favourite adjective, verfassungswidrig. Meet the family in a kitchen conversation first.

THE SCENE

Amir is studying for the Life in Germany test. Lena is helping him at the kitchen table.

"First question," Lena reads out. "Why may people in Germany openly say something against the government?"

"Because **Meinungsfreiheit** *(freedom of expression)* applies here," says Amir. "It is a **Grundrecht** *(basic right)*. It is written in the **Grundgesetz** *(Basic Law)*, and no parliament can abolish it."

"Very good. And what does **Rechtsstaat** *(state under the rule of law)* mean?"

"Everyone must obey the **Gesetze** *(laws)*. The state itself too. That is why a party that wants a **Diktatur** *(dictatorship)* is **verfassungswidrig** *(unconstitutional)*."

Lena laughs. "You already know everything. Last question: what is **unantastbar** *(untouchable, inviolable)*?"

"Human dignity, **die Würde des Menschen** *(the dignity of the human being)*. Article one."

THE WORD FAMILY OF RECHT

German glues Recht to other words exactly the way English glues *law* and *right*, and the test uses every joint. Learn the family as one picture, not as six flashcards.

das Recht, -e • the right, the law

Jeder Mensch hat das **Recht** *auf freie Meinung.* Every person has the right to a free opinion.

das Grundrecht, -e • basic right (Grund = foundation)

Die **Grundrechte** *stehen am Anfang des Grundgesetzes.* The basic rights stand at the beginning of the Basic Law.

der Rechtsstaat • state under the rule of law

In einem **Rechtsstaat** *halten sich alle an die Gesetze.* In a Rechtsstaat everyone obeys the laws, the state included.

das Wahlrecht • the right to vote

Mit 18 Jahren hat man in Deutschland das **Wahlrecht.** At 18 you have the right to vote in Germany.

The same trick builds the freedoms. Die Freiheit plus a front word names each one, and the test asks for them by name: die Meinungsfreiheit (opinion), die Pressefreiheit (press), die Religionsfreiheit (religion), die Versammlungsfreiheit (assembly). One of them wears an older costume in the catalogue, so learn the long form too: die Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit, freedom of faith and conscience.

VOCABULARY

The constitution

das Grundgesetz • the Basic Law, Germany's constitution ✓

die Verfassung, -en • constitution ✓

der Artikel, - • article (of a law) ✓

die Würde • dignity ✓

unantastbar • inviolable, untouchable ✓

garantieren • to guarantee ✓

der Staat, -en • state

staatlich • state-run, of the state

The freedoms

die Meinungsfreiheit • freedom of expression ✓

die Pressefreiheit • freedom of the press ✓

die Religionsfreiheit • freedom of religion ✓

die Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit • freedom of faith and conscience ✓

die Versammlungsfreiheit • freedom of assembly ✓

die Freizügigkeit • freedom of movement (choosing where to live) ✓

das Asyl • asylum (the one right only for foreigners) ✓

die Freiheit, -en • freedom

die Meinung, -en • opinion

seine Meinung äußern • to express one's opinion

The Rechtsstaat

das Gesetz, -e • law, statute ✓

sich an die Gesetze halten (hielt, hat gehalten) • to obey the laws ✓

gelten (gilt, galt, hat gegolten) • to apply, to be in force ✓

gleich vor dem Gesetz • equal before the law ✓

die Gleichbehandlung • equal treatment ✓

einschränken • to restrict ✓

verbieten (verbot, hat verboten) • to prohibit ✓

abschaffen • to abolish ✓

erlauben • to allow

die Pflicht, -en • duty

What the constitution rejects

die Diktatur, -en • dictatorship ✓

verfassungswidrig • unconstitutional ✓

die Zwangsarbeit • forced labour (Zwang = coercion) ✓

die Todesstrafe • the death penalty ✓

die Folter • torture ✓

die Geldstrafe, -n • monetary fine (the one punishment that is allowed) ✓

die Strafe, -n • punishment

bestrafen • to punish

Words to recognise

das Faustrecht • law of the fist (a wrong answer in question 4)

die Selbstjustiz • taking the law into one's own hands

der Waffenbesitz • possession of weapons

die Prügelstrafe • corporal punishment

leugnen • to deny (den Holocaust leugnen is a crime)

die Verbreitung falscher Behauptungen • spreading false claims (the limit of free speech)

Why it is so

The Grundgesetz was written in 1948 and 1949 by the Parlamentarischer Rat, sixty-five delegates of the western Länder meeting in a natural history museum in Bonn while the ruins of the war were still being cleared. Nearly every one of them had lived the previous constitution's failure personally. Konrad Adenauer, who chaired the council, had been dismissed as mayor of Cologne by the Nazis; others returned from prisons, camps, and exile. They were not writing abstract political theory. They were writing rules against things that had happened to them personally.

Their central diagnosis was that Weimar's rights had been beautiful but breakable. The Weimar constitution granted freedoms and then, in its Article 48, let the president suspend them by decree. After the Reichstag fire of February 1933 exactly that happened overnight, and every later crime of the regime was formally legal. So the new constitution inverted the architecture. Article 1 begins with Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar, human dignity placed before the state itself, and Article 79 locks the door: the basic rights and the democratic order may not be abolished by any majority whatsoever. Constitutional lawyers call it the eternity clause. That is why question 12 answers no, and why the wrong op-

tions offering half or two-thirds majorities describe exactly the mistake Weimar made.

The founders also armed the constitution against enemies who fight democracy with democracy's own tools, as the Nazi party had done at the ballot box. A party working against the free democratic order can be banned as verfassungswidrig by the constitutional court, and only by that court. The young republic used the weapon twice, against a Nazi successor party in 1952 and the communist party in 1956, and has used it with extreme reluctance since. Germans call the doctrine *streitbare Demokratie*, militant democracy, a democracy that fights back.

Two details of this chapter follow from history rather than logic. Asylum became a basic right, the only one reserved for foreigners, because the men and women writing it remembered colleagues who had survived Hitler only because Switzerland, Sweden, or America took them in. The right to asylum was that debt, repaid in constitutional form. And free speech ends exactly where Nazi propaganda began, at the public spreading of false claims about people and at denial of the Holocaust. These limits do not weaken the lesson of 1933. They apply it.

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 2

Der Staat und seine Organe

The state and its organs

The test's largest single habit is asking who does what. Who makes laws, who governs, who represents, who judges. German names each player with a compound on Bund (federation), so the vocabulary looks formidable and is actually one prefix plus six short words.

THE SCENE

On television, the Bundestag is voting. Amir and Lena are watching the news with tea.

"So many words with **Bund** *(federation)*," sighs Amir. "**Bundestag**, **Bundesrat**, **Bundesregierung**, **Bundeskanzler**, **Bundespräsident**. Who actually does what?"

"Think of a firm," says Lena. "The **Bundestag** *(federal parliament)* is the big meeting of the owners. The people elect its **Abgeordnete** *(members of parliament)*, and they **beschließen** *(pass)* the laws."

"And the **Bundeskanzler** *(federal chancellor)* is the manager?"

"Exactly. The Bundestag elects him, he leads the **Bundesregierung** *(federal government)* and picks his ministers. The **Bundespräsident** *(federal president)* is more like the face of the firm. He **repräsentiert** *(represents)* the country, and he formally **ernennt** *(appoints)* the ministers."

"And the **Bundesrat** *(federal council)*?"

"The sixteen state governments at one table. Nothing that touches the Länder passes without them."

THE THREE POWERS

Behind all the organs stands one idea the test asks about repeatedly, the separation of powers, die Gewaltenteilung. German uses three Latin names, and each maps to organs you now know.

die Legislative • legislative power (makes the laws)

Bundestag und Bundesrat gehören zur **Legislative.** Bundestag and Bundesrat belong to the legislative.

die Exekutive • executive power (governs and administers)

Die Regierung und die Polizei gehören zur **Exekutive.** The government and the police belong to the executive.

die Judikative • judicial power (the courts)

Eine Richterin gehört zur **Judikative.** A judge belongs to the judiciary.

Watch for the trap questions. The press is not a Staatsgewalt (question 32), it is free precisely because it stands outside the state. And a Bürgerversammlung, a citizens' assembly, is not a constitutional organ (question 48).

VOCABULARY

The organs

der Bundestag • federal parliament, elected by the people ✓

der Bundesrat • federal council of the state governments ✓

die Bundesregierung • federal government ✓

das Bundeskabinett • the cabinet (chancellor plus ministers) ✓

die Bundeskanzlerin, -nen / der Bundeskanzler, - • federal chancellor ✓

die Bundespräsidentin, -nen / der Bundespräsident, -en • federal president ✓

die Bundesversammlung • federal convention (elects the president) ✓

das Bundesverfassungsgericht • federal constitutional court ✓

die Bundeswehr • the German army ✓

das Verfassungsorgan, -e • constitutional organ ✓

Inside parliament

die/der Abgeordnete, -n • member of parliament ✓

die Fraktion, -en • parliamentary group of one party ✓

die Opposition • all members not in the governing parties ✓

das Staatsoberhaupt • head of state ✓

die Regierungschefin, -nen / der Regierungschef, -s • head of government

die Ministerin, -nen / der Minister, - • minister

die Mehrheit, -en • majority

die Sitzung, -en • session, sitting

The three powers

die Gewaltenteilung • separation of powers ✓

die Staatsgewalt, -en • state power ✓

die Legislative • legislative (Bundestag and Bundesrat) ✓

die Exekutive • executive (government, administration, police) ✓

die Judikative • judiciary (the courts) ✓

die Volkssouveränität • popular sovereignty (all state power comes from the people) ✓

Who does what: the verbs

beschließen (beschloss, hat beschlossen) • to pass, to resolve (parliament passes laws) ✓

wählen • to elect (the Bundestag elects the chancellor) ✓

ernennen (ernannte, hat ernannt) • to appoint (the president appoints the ministers) ✓

vorschlagen (schlug vor, hat vorgeschlagen) • to propose (the president proposes the chancellor) ✓

repräsentieren • to represent (the president's main task) ✓

kontrollieren • to check, to scrutinise (the opposition checks the government) ✓

leiten • to lead, to chair (the chancellor leads the cabinet) ✓

regieren • to govern

zuständig für • responsible for

Words to recognise

die Ernennungsurkunde, -n • certificate of appointment (question 70)

das Bundeskanzleramt • the chancellery in Berlin

die Auslegung • interpretation (of the Basic Law, by the constitutional court)

die Pressezensur • press censorship (the thing a democracy does not have, question 30)

die Monarchie / die Republik • monarchy / republic (Germany is a republic, questions 22 and 34)

Why it is so

The Weimar Republic had two heads, and the wrong one was stronger. Its Reich President was elected directly by the people for seven years, commanded the army, could dissolve parliament, and under Article 48 could govern by emergency decree when he judged order threatened. The office was designed as a substitute Kaiser, and in the crisis years after 1930 it became exactly that: the last Weimar governments ruled by presidential decree with no parliamentary majority at all, so that democracy was already hollowed out before Hitler arrived. It was the aged President Hindenburg who appointed Hitler Reichskanzler on 30 January 1933, legally, with a signature. Parliament was not asked.

The Grundgesetz answered by taking the presidency apart. The Bundespräsident is elected indirectly by the Bundesversammlung (question 86), commands nothing, decrees nothing, and dissolves nothing on his own initiative. What remains is dignity: he represents the country (question 84), proposes the chancellor after an election, and signs and appoints (questions 70 and 58). This is why question 44 is so firm that citizens never elect the president directly. The direct election was not forgotten. It was deliberately removed, because the country had seen where a popularly anointed head of state above the parties can lead.

The real power went to the chancellor instead, but with one more safeguard learned from Weimar. Weimar parliaments could topple a government simply by voting no, and communists and Nazis, who agreed on nothing else, happily voted no together, so cabinets fell every few months and left a vacuum behind.

The Bundestag can bring down a chancellor only through the konstruktives Misstrauensvotum, which means it must elect a successor in the same vote. A government cannot be destroyed without building the next one at the same moment. In seventy-five years this has succeeded exactly once, in 1982, when Helmut Kohl replaced Helmut Schmidt. Stable government, the thing Weimar never had, has been the republic's quietest and proudest achievement since.

For the questions asking current names, check the year against your own catalogue. The edition of May 2025 answers Friedrich Merz for chancellor (question 72) and Frank-Walter Steinmeier for head of state (question 75), with CDU/CSU and AfD as the two largest parliamentary groups (question 73). These answers change with elections, so verify them before your test day.

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 3

Bund, Länder, Gemeinden

Federalism: three storeys of state

Germany is not one state but seventeen, one federation and sixteen Bundesländer, and below them thousands of towns and villages with real power of their own. The test wants the three storeys and the words that live on each floor.

THE SCENE

Amir has received a letter from the city of Mainz about his registration. He shows it to Lena.

"Why does the city write to me, and not Berlin?"

"Because Germany is a **Bundesstaat** *(federal state)*," says Lena. "Three floors. At the top the **Bund** *(federation)*. In the middle the sixteen **Bundesländer** *(federal states)*, each with its own **Landesregierung** *(state government)* and its own parliament, the **Landtag** *(state parliament)*. And on the ground floor the **Gemeinden** *(municipalities)*. Your letter comes from the ground floor."

"And who is the boss of a Land?"

"The **Ministerpräsidentin / der Ministerpräsident** *(minister president)*. And the boss of a town is the **Bürgermeisterin / der Bürgermeister** *(mayor)*. Schools, by the way, are the business of the Länder, not of Berlin. That is why Tom's holidays are different from his cousin's in Bavaria."

THE THREE STOREYS

der Bund • the federation, the federal level

Straßen und Außenpolitik sind Sache des **Bundes.** Roads and foreign policy are the federation's business.

das Bundesland, Bundesländer • federal state

Deutschland hat 16 **Bundesländer.** Germany has 16 federal states.

die Gemeinde, -n • municipality, the lowest level

Die **Gemeinde** *ist die unterste Stufe der Verwaltung.* The municipality is the lowest tier of administration.

Each Land is a small state in itself (question 39): it has its own government, its own parliament elected in a Landtagswahl, and its own responsibilities, above all Schulpolitik (questions 49 and 67). The Länder speak at the federal level through the Bundesrat (question 90), which is why a change of government in one Land can shift politics in Berlin (question 91).

VOCABULARY

The levels

der Bundesstaat • federal state (the form: one whole, many members) ✓

der Bund • the federation ✓

das Bundesland, Bundesländer • federal state, Land ✓

die Kommune, -n • local authority ✓

die Gemeinde, -n • municipality ✓

die Verwaltung, -en • administration ✓

die Stufe, -n • tier, level

gegliedert in • structured into

People and institutions of a Land

der Landtag, -e • state parliament ✓

die Landtagswahl, -en • state parliament election ✓

die Landesregierung, -en • state government ✓

die Ministerpräsidentin, -nen / der Ministerpräsident, -en • minister president, head of a Land government ✓

die Schulpolitik • school policy (the Länder's flagship power) ✓

die Landeshauptstadt, -städte • state capital

das Schulwesen • the school system

The municipality

die Bürgermeisterin, -nen / der Bürgermeister, - • mayor, head of a municipality ✓

das Ordnungsamt, -ämter • public order office (the classic municipal office, question 56) ✓

das Rathaus, -häuser • town hall

die Bürgerin, -nen / der Bürger, - • citizen

das Amt, Ämter • office, authority

Words to recognise

der dreistufige Verwaltungsaufbau • the three-tier administrative structure (question 69)

Elsass-Lothringen • Alsace-Lorraine, French since 1918 and the catalogue's favourite fake Bundesland (question 25)

die Gesetzgebung • legislation, law-making

mitwirken an • to participate in

Why it is so

Federalism is the oldest political fact about Germany. For a thousand years the map that now shows one country showed dozens of kingdoms, duchies, bishoprics, and proud free cities like Hamburg and Bremen, which still carry the title Freie Hansestadt today. When Bismarck unified the country in 1871 he did not abolish them; Bavaria entered the empire keeping its own king, its own army in peacetime, even its own postage stamps. Germans have been governed from nearby capitals, Munich and Dresden and Stuttgart, far longer than from Berlin, and the Länder of today inherit that instinct.

The pattern was broken exactly once. The Nazis, within months of 1933, dissolved the Land parliaments and put every school, police force, and radio station under central command, a process they called Gleichschaltung. Twelve years later the occupying powers and the Grundgesetz drew the opposite conclusion in the strongest possible form: power was scattered again, and the federal order was placed under the eternity clause you met in chapter 1, beyond the reach of any amending majority. Germany is a Bundesstaat not for administrative convenience but as a bulwark. Sixteen governments are harder to capture than one.

Education shows the design at its sharpest. After a regime that told every school in the Reich what to teach and whom to hate, the schools went to the Länder, and no federal ministry may dictate a curriculum. When question 68 asks why the state controls schooling, the answer is simply that the Grundgesetz makes it a state task. Which state, federation or Land, is the basis of the joke Germans tell about themselves: sixteen school systems, sixteen holiday calendars, one country. A family moving from Mainz to Munich changes school systems as surely as it changes dialect, and the country accepts the friction as the price of the safeguard.

The design has one more quiet consequence the test touches in question 91. Because Land governments sit in the Bundesrat, every Land election is also a small federal election, able to shift the majority through which national laws must pass. Power in Germany is never won once. It must be won sixteen times, and re-won somewhere almost every year.

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 4

Parteien und Wahlen

Parties and elections

This is the biggest cluster in the catalogue, above thirty questions, and almost all of them are built from one root. Wählen, to choose, gives die Wahl, der Wähler, das Wahlrecht, wahlberechtigt, die Wahlbenachrichtigung. Learn the family and the cluster collapses.

THE SCENE

There is an election Sunday coming. Lena finds an official letter in the postbox.

"Look," she says. "My **Wahlbenachrichtigung** *(polling notification)*. The letter from the Gemeinde that I am **wahlberechtigt** *(entitled to vote)*."

"How does it work?" asks Amir.

"I go to the **Wahllokal** *(polling station)*, or I vote by post, by **Briefwahl** *(postal vote)*. On the **Stimmzettel** *(ballot paper)* I have two votes. The **Erststimme** *(first vote)* is for a person from my district. The **Zweitstimme** *(second vote)* is for a party, and that one decides how many seats the party gets."

"And if a party is very small?"

"Then the **5%-Hürde** *(five-percent threshold)* stops it. Under five percent of the Zweitstimmen, no seats. After the election the big parties look for partners and form a **Koalition** *(coalition)*. No party governs alone."

"And nobody can force you to vote for anyone?"

"Nobody. The election is **frei, gleich, geheim** *(free, equal, secret)*. That trio is the answer to at least three questions."

THE WÄHLEN FAMILY

wählen • to vote, to elect

Ab 18 darf man in Deutschland **wählen.** From 18 you may vote in Germany.

die Wahl, -en • election, choice

Die **Bundestagswahl** *ist alle vier Jahre.* The federal election is every four years.

wahlberechtigt • entitled to vote

Alle **wahlberechtigten** *Bürger bekommen Post von der Gemeinde.* All citizens entitled to vote get a letter from the municipality.

das aktive Wahlrecht • the right to vote (passiv = to stand for election)

Aktives Wahlrecht *heißt: Man kann wählen.* Active suffrage means you can vote.

The numbers to hold onto: the Bundestag is elected for 4 years, the voting age is 18, the threshold is 5%. The people elect only the Bundestag directly (question 129), never the chancellor and never the president (question 44).

VOCABULARY

The election

die Bundestagswahl, -en • federal election ✓

die Stimme, -n • vote (literally: voice) ✓

die Erststimme / die Zweitstimme • first vote (person) / second vote (party, decides the seats) ✓

der Stimmzettel, - • ballot paper ✓

die Briefwahl • postal voting ✓

die Wahlbenachrichtigung, -en • polling notification ✓

die Wahlhelferin, -nen / der Wahlhelfer, - • volunteer election worker (counts the votes, the one civic duty that can be compulsory) ✓

frei, gleich, geheim • free, equal, secret (the three principles) ✓

die 5%-Hürde • the five-percent threshold ✓

das Wahllokal, -e • polling station

die Stimmabgabe • the casting of one's vote

gültig / ungültig • valid / invalid

The parties

die Partei, -en • political party ✓

die Koalition, -en • coalition (parties governing together) ✓

die Ampelkoalition • traffic-light coalition (SPD red, FDP yellow, Greens green) ✓

CDU / CSU • Christlich Demokratische / Christlich Soziale Union ✓

SPD • Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands ✓

FDP • Freie Demokratische Partei ✓

Bündnis 90/Die Grünen • the Green party

die Kandidatin, -nen / der Kandidat, -en • candidate

Taking part beyond voting

das Ehrenamt, -ämter • honorary post, volunteer role ✓

ehrenamtlich • voluntary and unpaid ✓

die Bürgerinitiative, -n • citizens' initiative (the answer when they cancel your bus line, question 134) ✓

das Bundesverdienstkreuz • Federal Cross of Merit ✓

der Verein, -e • club, association

sich beteiligen an • to take part in

gründen • to found

Words to recognise

das Mehrheits- und Verhältniswahlrecht • mixed majority and proportional voting system (question 120)

der Mindestanteil • minimum share (of votes)

die Regierungsbildung • the forming of a government

zwingen (zwang, hat gezwungen) • to force (nobody may be forced to vote a certain way)

beeinflussen • to influence

Why it is so

Germans learned voting the hard way, which is why the rules are so carefully engineered. Universal male suffrage came surprisingly early, with Bismarck's empire in 1871, but the parliament it elected could not dismiss the government; men voted, and the Kaiser ruled anyway. Prussia meanwhile weighted votes by tax paid, so a factory owner's ballot outweighed a hundred workers' ballots. When the test insists that elections are gleich, equal, it is rejecting exactly that Prussian system. Women first voted in January 1919, for the very assembly that wrote the Weimar constitution.

Weimar then showed the opposite failure: voting that was perfectly fair and perfectly destructive. Pure proportional representation with no threshold meant a party with half a percent of the vote got its half percent of seats, and the Reichstag shattered into more than a dozen quarrelling factions. Stable majorities became impossible, governments fell every few months, and by 1932 the two openly anti-democratic parties, Nazis and Communists, together held more than half the chamber, a parliament that could no longer produce any majority willing to defend it. The splintering did not merely weaken Weimar democracy. It made the republic ungovernable, and an ungovernable republic is what voters gave up on.

The Federal Republic kept proportional justice but installed a filter: five percent of the Zweitstimmen or no seats (questions 117 and 123, and question 127 asks for exactly this reasoning). The two-vote design balances the same scales, a local face for every district through the Erststimme, a proportional parliament through the Zweitstimme, which is why the second vote is the one that counts for power (question 93). The system worked so quietly that for decades the Bundestag held only three or four parties.

Its arithmetic has one built-in consequence: since no party normally clears fifty percent alone, every German government is a negotiated Koalition, and the country names them by party colours like paint boxes, the Ampel of red, yellow, and green, black-red, black-green. Voters know on election night not who will govern but who will now have to talk to whom. The weeks of negotiation that follow are not a malfunction. They are how the system was designed to work.

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 5

Der Sozialstaat

The welfare state

Germany calls itself a demokratischer und sozialer Bundesstaat, and the test takes the word sozial seriously. The vocabulary here is a single compound family built on die Versicherung, the insurance, plus the pay-slip words every employee meets in the first month.

THE SCENE

Amir has his first German pay slip and is frowning at it.

"Where has a third of my salary gone?"

"Into the **Sozialversicherung** *(social insurance)*," says Lena. "Five insurances, automatically, for everyone who is **fest angestellt** *(permanently employed)*. The **Krankenversicherung** *(health insurance)* pays when you are ill. The **Rentenversicherung** *(pension insurance)* pays your pension when you are old. The **Arbeitslosenversicherung** *(unemployment insurance)* pays if you lose your job, the **Pflegeversicherung** *(care insurance)* if you need care, and the **Unfallversicherung** *(accident insurance)* if you have an accident at work."

"And who pays for all this?"

"You and your **Arbeitgeber** *(employer)* together, roughly half and half. That is the German deal. The market is free, but nobody falls without a net. They call it **soziale Marktwirtschaft** *(social market economy)*."

THE FIVE PILLARS

One word builds the whole system. Versichern is to insure, so die Versicherung is the insurance, and each pillar just bolts a need onto the front of it. Only one imposter appears

in the test: the Lebensversicherung, life insurance, is private and does not belong to the statutory five (question 100).

die Krankenversicherung • health insurance (krank = ill)

Die* Krankenversicherung *bezahlt Arzt und Medikamente. Health insurance pays for doctor and medicines.

die Rentenversicherung • pension insurance (die Rente = pension)

Die* Rentenversicherung *zahlt im Alter eine Rente. Pension insurance pays a pension in old age.

die Arbeitslosenversicherung • unemployment insurance

Die* Arbeitslosenversicherung *hilft nach dem Jobverlust. Unemployment insurance helps after losing a job.

die Pflegeversicherung • long-term care insurance (die Pflege = care)

Die* Pflegeversicherung *gehört zur Sozialversicherung. Care insurance is part of social insurance.

die Unfallversicherung • accident insurance (der Unfall = accident)

Die* Unfallversicherung *zahlt nach einem Arbeitsunfall. Accident insurance pays after a workplace accident.

VOCABULARY

The system

der Sozialstaat • welfare state ✓

die Sozialversicherung, -en • statutory social insurance ✓

die Sozialabgaben (Pl.) • social contributions (how the state finances it, question 35) ✓

gesetzlich • statutory, required by law ✓

die soziale Sicherheit • social security ✓

die soziale Marktwirtschaft • social market economy ✓

das Netz, -e • net, safety net

der Beitrag, Beiträge • contribution

Work and pay

die Erwerbstätigen (Pl.) • the working population ✓

beschäftigt bei • employed at (a company or public authority, question 23) ✓

fest angestellt • permanently employed ✓

die Arbeitgeberin, -nen / der Arbeitgeber, - • employer (the one who gives work) ✓

die Arbeitnehmerin, -nen / der Arbeitnehmer, - • employee (the one who takes it) ✓

das Gehalt, Gehälter • salary

der Lohn, Löhne • wage

brutto / netto • before / after deductions

The market with a conscience

die Wirtschaft • economy ✓

Angebot und Nachfrage • supply and demand ✓

der soziale Ausgleich • social balancing (the state's corrective role, question 171) ✓

die Steuer, -n • tax

die Behörde, -n • public authority

Words to recognise

die Lebensversicherung • life insurance (private, the odd one out in question 100)

die Maßnahme, -n • measure, provision

finanzieren • to finance

die Urlaubsreise, -n • holiday trip (the state task that is not one, question 47)

Why it is so

The German welfare state is older than German democracy, and it was invented by a conservative to defeat the socialists. In the 1880s Bismarck's empire was industrialising brutally, workers were flooding into city slums, and the socialist movement was growing despite his ban on it. Bismarck's answer was to steal its best argument: the state itself would insure the workers. Health insurance came in 1883, accident insurance in 1884, old-age pensions in 1889, the first system of its kind anywhere in the world. The design principle has never changed since, insurance rather than charity, funded by contributions from wage and employer rather than by taxes, so that the benefit arrives as a right earned, not as alms. The Sozialabgaben on your pay slip (question 35) are that same 1880s system, still running.

The system survived every regime because every regime needed it. The Kaiser fell, Weimar added unemployment insurance in 1927, and even the Nazis dared not abolish the pension system. After 1945 the open question was what kind of economy should surround it, and the answer became West Germany's founding bargain. Ludwig Erhard, economics minister and the face of the Wirtschaftswunder, lifted price controls in 1948 against Allied advice, bet on the market, and paired it with the old insurance net under a new name, die soziale Marktwirtschaft.

The name rejects two rival systems at once. Unlike the Nazi command economy of the recent past and the DDR's Planwirtschaft next door, markets and Angebot und Nachfrage would rule. Unlike raw capitalism, whose crash of 1929 had helped deliver voters to Hitler, the state would guarantee social balance. That is why question 171 defines the term with two clauses, supply and demand decide and the state balances socially, and why the test's wrong answers reliably offer only one half. Both halves together are also what the Grundgesetz means when it calls Germany a demokratischer und sozialer Bundesstaat (question 38).

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 6

Die Arbeitswelt

The world of work

The work questions in the catalogue are practical ones: who defends you, how you resign properly, what an employer may never ask. The key family is built on kündigen, to give notice, a verb you want to know long before you ever need it.

THE SCENE

Amir's colleague Murat has trouble at work. Amir reports it to Lena over dinner.

"His boss wants to dismiss him. What can he do?"

"First, the **Betriebsrat** *(works council)*," says Lena. "It sits inside the firm and exists to help the **Arbeitnehmer** *(employee)* in trouble with the **Arbeitgeber** *(employer)*. Then there is his **Gewerkschaft** *(trade union)*, they have lawyers."

"And if the **Kündigung** *(dismissal)* still comes and it is unfair?"

"Then he goes to the **Arbeitsgericht** *(labour court)* and files a **Kündigungsschutzklage** *(protection-against-dismissal lawsuit)*. That word looks like a monster, but it is three words glued together."

"And if Murat wants to leave himself?"

"Then he must mind the **Kündigungsfrist** *(notice period)*. You do not just walk out on a German contract."

THE KÜNDIGEN FAMILY

kündigen • to give notice, to terminate

Die Firma hat ihm **gekündigt.** The firm gave him notice.

die Kündigung, -en • dismissal, termination

Eine **Kündigung** *wegen Schwangerschaft ist verboten.* Dismissal because of pregnancy is prohibited.

die Kündigungsfrist, -en • notice period

Beim Jobwechsel muss man die **Kündigungsfrist** *beachten.* When changing jobs you must observe the notice period.

die Kündigungsschutzklage, -n • lawsuit against unfair dismissal

Gegen eine ungerechte Kündigung erhebt man **Kündigungsschutzklage.** Against an unjust dismissal you file a protection suit.

VOCABULARY

Who defends you

die Gewerkschaft, -en • trade union (the interest group of employees, questions 101 and 135) ✓

der Betriebsrat, -räte • works council (helps with problems inside the firm, question 286) ✓

das Arbeitsgericht, -e • labour court (for all workplace conflicts, questions 136 and 137) ✓

der Interessenverband, -verbände • interest group

vertreten (vertrat, hat vertreten) • to represent

Fair and unfair

die Entlassung, -en • dismissal ✓

ungerechtfertigt • unjustified ✓

benachteiligen • to disadvantage, to discriminate against ✓

die Diskriminierung, -en • discrimination (pregnancy, a wheelchair, or skin colour are never valid grounds, questions 104, 277, 278, 289) ✓

schwanger • pregnant

die Behinderung, -en • disability

sich bewerben um (bewarb, hat beworben) • to apply for

die Stelle, -n • position, job

Getting ahead

die Ausbildung, -en • vocational training ✓

gut ausgebildet • well qualified (the best route to good pay, question 250) ✓

die Weiterbildung • further training (lifelong, question 284) ✓

die Lehrstelle, -n • apprenticeship place (the BIZ helps find one, question 259) ✓

der Beruf, -e • profession

die Erfahrung, -en • experience

The pay slip

die Lohnsteuer • income tax on wages ✓

die Umsatzsteuer • VAT, sales tax (paid by businesses, not deducted from a salary, question 285) ✓

abziehen (zog ab, hat abgezogen) • to deduct

Words to recognise

das Berufsinformationszentrum (BIZ) • careers information centre at the Bundesagentur für Arbeit

die Bundesagentur für Arbeit • federal employment agency

das Arbeitsverhältnis, -se • employment relationship

der Buchhalter, - • accountant (the wheelchair applicant of question 278 wants this job)

Why it is so

Two ideas carry every work question, and both have long histories. The first is that employment in Germany is a protected relationship, not an arrangement at will. Dismissal needs grounds, pregnancy and disability and origin are never grounds, and a separate court system, the Arbeitsgerichte, exists only for these fights. The protection is a Weimar inheritance: the republic of 1919 wrote the

eight-hour day, works councils, and labour courts into law in its very first years. The Nazis abolished all of it and ran factories on a Führer principle, one leader per plant whom the workforce owed obedience; the Federal Republic rebuilt the Weimar protections and extended them.

The second idea is Mitbestimmung, co-determination: worker representation is built into the structure of German firms, not added on top. The unions had earned rare moral standing by 1945, because the Nazis had crushed them in 1933 and jailed their leaders, and the postwar settlement rewarded that standing with permanent institutions. The Betriebsrat sits inside every firm whose employees choose to elect one, with legal rights the employer cannot refuse. In the big coal and steel companies, and later in all large firms, worker representatives even took seats on the supervisory boards. The reasoning was simple: workers who help steer a company will rarely want to wreck it, and by international standards Germany has had unusually few strikes ever since. The unions themselves grew into industry-wide giants like IG Metall, negotiating wages for whole sectors at once. For everyday problems the result is a ladder of help, and the test climbs it in almost every work question. Trouble with the boss: first the Betriebsrat inside the firm, then the Gewerkschaft with its lawyers, then the Arbeitsgericht with the Kündigungsschutzklage. When a question asks who helps an employee, the answer is almost never the police and almost always one of these three, from nearest to farthest. The discrimination questions (277, 278, 289) add the newest rung: the general equal treatment law of 2006, by which the old social protections finally cover origin, disability, and family status by name.

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 7

Gerichte und Recht im Alltag

Courts and the law in daily life

Chapter 1 gave you the Rechtsstaat as an idea. This unit staffs it: the judge, the lawyer, the lay judge, the trial, and the two magic words, Einspruch and Widerspruch, that let you fight a piece of paper without going to court at all.

THE SCENE

Lena's neighbour Frau Weber has been called to serve at the local court, and Amir wants to know what that means.

"She will be a **Schöffin** *(lay judge)*," Lena explains. "An ordinary citizen who sits next to the professional **Richter** *(judge)* and decides with them about **Schuld** *(guilt)* and **Strafe** *(punishment)*. An honorary judge, no law degree needed."

"And if I ever have a problem before a court?"

"Then you take a **Rechtsanwältin / einen Rechtsanwalt** *(lawyer)*, who advises you and represents you in the **Prozess** *(trial)*."

"And if the problem is just a wrong bill from a Behörde? A wrong tax letter?"

"Then no court at all. Against a wrong **Steuerbescheid** *(tax assessment)* you lodge an **Einspruch** *(objection)*, against a wrong bill from an authority a **Widerspruch** *(formal objection)*. One written objection, and the office must check its own work."

THE PEOPLE OF THE COURT

die Richterin, -nen / der Richter, - • judge

Ein* Richter *arbeitet an einem Gericht und spricht Urteile. A judge works at a court and hands down judgments.

die Schöffin, -nen / der Schöffe, -n • lay judge

Eine **Schöffin** *ist eine ehrenamtliche Richterin.* A lay judge is an honorary judge.

die Rechtsanwältin, -nen / der Rechtsanwalt, -anwälte • lawyer

Ein **Rechtsanwalt** *berät bei Rechtsfragen und vertritt vor Gericht.* A lawyer advises on legal questions and represents you in court.

The judge belongs to the Judikative, the rechtsprechende Gewalt, and the test asks this same fact in four different costumes (questions 143 to 145). The phrase to recognise every time: Recht sprechen, literally to speak the law.

VOCABULARY

At the court

das Gericht, -e • court ✓

der Prozess, -e • trial, court proceedings ✓

das Verfahren, - • proceedings (the formal word for question 146) ✓

das Urteil, -e • judgment, verdict ✓

Urteile sprechen / Recht sprechen • to hand down judgments ✓

die Schuld • guilt ✓

die Straftat, -en • criminal offence ✓

anklagen • to charge, to indict ✓

die Zeugin, -nen / der Zeuge, -n • witness

verurteilen • to convict

freisprechen (sprach frei, hat freigesprochen) • to acquit

The police

die Polizei • police (its task: to watch over the keeping of the laws, question 148) ✓

die Einhaltung • observance, compliance

überwachen • to monitor, to supervise

Age and responsibility

strafmündig • criminally responsible (from 14, question 263) ✓

das Briefgeheimnis • secrecy of correspondence (violated by opening another person's letter, question 274) ✓

die Freiheitsstrafe, -n • prison sentence

die Geldstrafe, -n • fine

Fighting a piece of paper

der Einspruch, Einsprüche • objection (against a tax assessment, question 280) ✓

der Widerspruch, Widersprüche • formal objection (against a wrong bill from an authority, question 283) ✓

einlegen • to lodge (an objection) ✓

der Bescheid, -e • official notice, assessment

sich wehren gegen • to defend oneself against

sich beschweren bei • to complain to

Words to recognise

der Steuerbescheid, -e • tax assessment letter

die Rechtsfrage, -n • legal question

begehen (beging, hat begangen) • to commit (an offence)

zuständig • competent, responsible (which court is zuständig is a standard question pattern)

Why it is so

An independent judiciary is the part of the Rechtsstaat that Germany's twentieth century tested hardest. The Nazi years produced the counter-image every German law student still studies: the Volksgerichtshof, the People's Court, where judge Roland Freisler screamed at the accused of the Stauffenberg plot before sentencing them to death, in trials whose verdicts were decided before they began. It looked like justice and was not. When the Grundgesetz says judges are independent and subject only to the law, and when questions 143 to 145 keep asking to which power a judge belongs, the insistence comes straight from that

experience: a court that belongs to the government is what the Volksgerichtshof was.

The republic's answer went beyond restoring independence: it put a court above the state itself. The Bundesverfassungsgericht in Karlsruhe, founded 1951, can strike down any law and halt any government act that violates the constitution, a power the Weimar judiciary never had against Article 48 decrees. Deliberately seated in Karlsruhe, far from the government in Bonn and later Berlin, it became the most trusted public institution in the country, and any citizen who has exhausted the ordinary courts can complain to it that the state has violated their basic rights.

The Schöffen system protects justice at the everyday level. Two ordinary citizens sit on the bench in serious criminal cases with full voting rights, able together to outvote the professional judge, a nineteenth-century liberal idea that survived every regime since. It follows the same principle as the Wahlhelfer of chapter 4: the state's most solemn acts, counting votes and pronouncing guilt, are carried out with ordinary citizens in the room.

The humblest tool in the chapter follows from the same logic. If the Rechtsstaat binds the administration (remember question 3), then every citizen needs a cheap, formal way to say the administration got it wrong: the Widerspruch, one letter, no lawyer, no fee, and the office must review its own decision. The test rewards knowing which tool fits which fight, Einspruch for the tax office, Widerspruch for other authorities, Klage for the courts.

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 8

Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus

The National Socialist era

Every German institution you have met so far was built against this chapter. The test asks direct factual questions about the years 1933 to 1945, and the vocabulary is dark but small: one dictatorship, one war, one crime, and the words Germany uses to remember them.

THE SCENE

Walking through Mainz, Amir stops at four small brass squares set into the pavement in front of a house.

"**Stolpersteine** *(stumbling stones)*," says Lena quietly. "Each one carries the name of a person who lived in this house before the **Nationalsozialisten** *(National Socialists)* deported them. You stumble with your eyes, and you remember."

"How did it begin?"

"In 1933 Hitler became **Reichskanzler** *(Reich Chancellor)*. Within months the Nazis built a **Diktatur** *(dictatorship)*. They set up a **Politik des staatlichen Rassismus** *(policy of state racism)*. No **freie Wahlen** *(free elections)* anymore, parties were **verboten** *(banned)*, the press was censored. In 1938 they burned the **Synagogen** *(synagogues)*, in 1939 they started the **Zweiten Weltkrieg** *(Second World War)*, and they murdered the Jews of Europe. The word for that crime is the **Holocaust**."

"And it ended in 1945."

"On the 8th of May 1945, with Germany's **Kapitulation** *(surrender)*. Germans now call it the day of liberation."

THE DATES THE TEST ASKS

Five numbers cover nearly every question in this unit. Hold them as a single line: 1933 Hitler comes to power, 1938 the pogrom night of 9 November, 1939 the war begins, 1945 the war ends on 8 May, and 1933–1945 as the whole span of the dictatorship.

die Machtübernahme • the takeover of power

1933 ***wurde Hitler Reichskanzler.*** In 1933 Hitler became Reich Chancellor.

die Reichspogromnacht • the pogrom night of 9 November 1938

1938 ***zerstörten die Nationalsozialisten Synagogen und jüdische Geschäfte.*** In 1938 the National Socialists destroyed synagogues and Jewish shops.

das Kriegsende • the end of the war

Am* 8. Mai 1945** ***endete der Zweite Weltkrieg in Europa. On 8 May 1945 the Second World War ended in Europe.

VOCABULARY

The dictatorship

der Nationalsozialismus • National Socialism ✓

die Nationalsozialisten (Pl.) • the National Socialists, Nazis ✓

der Reichskanzler • Reich Chancellor (Hitler's office in 1933) ✓

die Diktatur, -en • dictatorship (what the "Dritte Reich" was) ✓

der staatliche Rassismus • state racism (the defining policy, question 161) ✓

das Verbot von Parteien • the banning of parties (what existed then, question 170) ✓

keine freien Wahlen • no free elections (what did not exist, question 159) ✓

die Gleichschaltung • forced conformity of all institutions

verfolgen • to persecute

War and crime

der Zweite Weltkrieg • the Second World War, 1939 to 1945 ✓

die bedingungslose Kapitulation • unconditional surrender (how the war officially ended, question 179) ✓

der Holocaust • the Holocaust ✓

den Holocaust leugnen • to deny the Holocaust (a crime, punishable by up to five years, question 96) ✓

die Synagoge, -n • synagogue ✓

das Vernichtungslager, - • extermination camp

deportieren • to deport

ermorden • to murder

Resistance and remembrance

das Attentat, -e • assassination attempt (Stauffenberg, 20 July 1944, question 162) ✓

der Widerstand • resistance ✓

die Stolpersteine (Pl.) • stumbling stones for the victims of National Socialism (question 206) ✓

der Gedenktag, -e • day of remembrance (27 January, for the victims, the day Auschwitz was liberated, question 220) ✓

die Opfer (Pl.) • the victims ✓

das Denkmal, -mäler • memorial

sich erinnern an • to remember

die Befreiung • liberation

Words to recognise

das "Dritte Reich" • the Nazi state's name for itself, always in quotation marks today

an der Macht sein • to be in power

errichten • to erect, to establish (a dictatorship)

kennzeichnen • to characterise

Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg • officer who led the 20 July 1944 plot against Hitler

Why it is so

The most important thing to understand about 1933 is how fast it happened. Hitler was appointed chancellor on 30 January 1933 at the head of a coalition in which his party held a minority of seats, and respectable conservatives assured each other they had hired him and could fire him. Four weeks later the Reichstag burned, and an emergency decree suspended the basic rights overnight. In March an intimidated parliament, its communist deputies already arrested, passed the Enabling Act, a law by which parliament gave up its own power. By July all other parties were banned. Germany went from constitutional republic to one-party dictatorship in under six months, without a coup, and every step had the outward form of law. That sequence is exactly what the Grundgesetz was written to prevent, and it explains nearly every safeguard described in chapters 1 to 4.

The persecution moved with the same escalating logic, from words to laws to stones to murder. First the boycotts and the book burnings of 1933, then the Nuremberg laws of 1935 that sorted citizens by ancestry, then the November pogrom of 1938 with its burning synagogues, and from 1941 the deportations east and the machinery of the Holocaust, six million European Jews murdered, alongside Sinti and Roma, the disabled, Slavs, political prisoners, homosexuals. None of this happened in secret. Neighbours watched the deported families' belongings being auctioned in the street. This is why the catalogue's example of antisemitic behaviour today (question 149) is denial of the Holocaust: lying about the crime was part of the crime from the beginning.

Resistance was real, scattered, and mostly fatal, and the test names its most famous face. The students of the Weiße Rose were beheaded in 1943 for leaflets; the officers around Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg very nearly killed Hitler with a briefcase bomb on 20 July 1944 (a heavy table leg shielded him from the blast) and were shot the same night. Today's Bundeswehr holds its annual recruits' oath ceremony on that date, deliberately honouring officers who disobeyed.

Remembrance, finally, is treated here as civic infrastructure, like roads. The Stolpersteine, now the largest decentralised memorial on earth, put the victims' names literally under the country's feet; the 27th of January, the day Soviet troops reached Auschwitz, is the official memorial day; and a chancellor's silence, Brandt on his knees in Warsaw in 1970, could say what no speech managed. For the test, one rule follows: the correct answer is reliably the darkest sober fact on offer, never the softened one. The regime was a dictatorship, the elections were not free, the crime was murder, and the 8th of May was a liberation.

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 9

Teilung, DDR und Wiedervereinigung

Division, the GDR, and reunification

Nearly fifty questions, the catalogue's biggest block, and all of them hang on one story with four acts: occupation, two states, the Wall, and the peaceful revolution. Learn the story once and the questions answer themselves.

THE SCENE

Lena spreads an old map of divided Germany on the table.

"After 1945 the **Alliierten** *(Allies)* split Germany into four **Besatzungszonen** *(occupation zones)*. USA, **Sowjetunion** *(Soviet Union)*, Großbritannien, Frankreich. Berlin, inside the Soviet zone, was itself cut into four **Sektoren** *(sectors)*."

"And then there were two Germanies?"

"From 1949. The western zones became the **Bundesrepublik** *(Federal Republic)*, the Soviet zone became the **DDR** *(GDR)*. One market economy, one **Planwirtschaft** *(planned economy)*. One NATO, one **Warschauer Pakt** *(Warsaw Pact)*. And between them, from 1961, the **Mauer** *(Wall)*."

"Who built it?"

"The DDR. To stop its own people from leaving. Its secret police, the **Stasi**, watched everyone. Until the autumn of 1989, when the people marched every Monday shouting **Wir sind das Volk** *(we are the people)*, and on the 9th of November the Wall opened. A year later, on the 3rd of October 1990, came the **Wiedervereinigung** *(reunification)*. That is why the national holiday is the **Tag der Deutschen Einheit** *(Day of German Unity)*."

THE DATES THAT CARRY FIFTY QUESTIONS

1945 four occupation zones. 1948/49 the Berlin blockade and airlift. 1949 two states founded. 17 June 1953 the workers' uprising in the DDR. 1961 the Wall goes up. 9 November 1989 the Wall opens. 3 October 1990 reunification. The span of the DDR, 1949 to 1990, and the five eastern Länder that joined: Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen. The catalogue asks for these five one at a time, in five separate questions, so they repay ten seconds of memorising.

die Besatzungszone, -n • occupation zone

Nach 1945 gab es vier **Besatzungszonen.** After 1945 there were four occupation zones.

die Luftbrücke • the airlift

1948 versorgte die **Luftbrücke** *West-Berlin aus der Luft.* In 1948 the airlift supplied West Berlin from the air.

die Wende • the turning point of 1989

Die **Wende** *führte von der Diktatur zur Demokratie.* The Wende led from dictatorship to democracy.

VOCABULARY

Occupation, 1945 to 1949

die Alliierten (Pl.) • the Allies ✓

die Besatzungsmacht, -mächte • occupying power (USA, Soviet Union, Great Britain, France; Japan is the classic wrong answer) ✓

die Sowjetunion • the Soviet Union ✓

der Sektor, -en • sector (Berlin's four parts) ✓

besetzen • to occupy

versorgen • to supply

Two states, 1949 to 1989

die DDR (Deutsche Demokratische Republik) • the GDR, founded 1949 in the Soviet zone ✓

die Planwirtschaft • planned economy (the DDR's system) ✓

der Warschauer Pakt • the Warsaw Pact (the DDR's alliance) ✓

der Kalte Krieg • the Cold War ✓

der Eiserne Vorhang • the Iron Curtain ✓

die Stasi (das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit) • the DDR's secret police and intelligence service ✓

der Volksaufstand • popular uprising (17 June 1953) ✓

die Grenze, -n • border

fliehen (floh, ist geflohen) • to flee

The Wall

die Mauer • the Wall, built by the DDR in 1961 ✓

geteilt • divided (Berlin 1961 to 1989) ✓

der Grenzübergang, -übergänge • border crossing

1989 and unity

die Montagsdemonstrationen (Pl.) • the Monday demonstrations of 1989 ("Wir sind das Volk") ✓

die Wende • the peaceful turn of 1989 ✓

die Wiedervereinigung • reunification, 3 October 1990 ✓

der Beitritt • accession (how the DDR joined the Federal Republic) ✓

der Tag der Deutschen Einheit • Day of German Unity, 3 October ✓

die neuen Bundesländer (Pl.) • the five eastern Länder ✓

friedlich • peaceful

die Freiheit • freedom

Names of the west's story

Konrad Adenauer • first federal chancellor, from 1949 ✓

das Wirtschaftswunder • the economic miracle of the 1950s ✓

Willy Brandt • chancellor of the Ostverträge and the Warsaw kneefall of 1970 ✓

Helmut Kohl • the chancellor of German unity ✓

die Ostverträge (Pl.) • the eastern treaties of the early 1970s

der Kniefall • the kneefall, Brandt's silent plea for forgiveness

Words to recognise

Hammer, Zirkel und Ährenkranz • hammer, compasses and wreath of grain, the DDR emblem on its flag

unterbrechen (unterbrach, hat unterbrochen) • to cut off (the Soviets cut off West Berlin's land routes in 1948)

der Geheimdienst, -e • secret service

beitreten (trat bei, ist beigetreten) • to accede, to join

Vietnam, Polen, Mosambik • where the DDR's migrant workers came from (question 298)

Why it is so

Keep the two Novembers apart, because the test loves the echo. The 9th of November 1938 is the pogrom night; the 9th of November 1989 is the night the Wall opened. German historians call the date the Schicksalstag, the day of fate, and it earned the name twice more: on 9 November 1918 the republic was proclaimed from a Berlin window, and on 9 November 1923 Hitler's first coup attempt failed in Munich. The same calendar date holds the country's darkest and brightest hours, and precisely because of 1938 the reunified country chose the 3rd of October, not the 9th of November, as its national holiday. A festival on the anniversary of the pogrom was unthinkable.

Notice the gap between the DDR's name and its reality. It called itself a democratic republic, but the catalogue's answers describe a one-party state under the SED, a planned economy of chronic shortage, a secret police whose informers reached into workplaces, schools, and marriages, and a wall built in 1961 to stop the emigration that was draining the state, roughly three million people had gone westward before the concrete went up. Border guards shot at citizens whose only crime was trying to leave. After 1990 the Stasi's files, kilometres of shelving, were opened, and every citizen could read who had informed on them, an act of transparency with few historical parallels.

The demonstrators' cry of 1989, Wir sind das Volk, was aimed exactly at that gap: a state that called itself the people's was being told by the people, in the street, that it was not. What made the autumn a miracle was what did not happen. There was no massacre like Tiananmen, though the SED had publicly praised the Chinese crackdown that June, and no shot was fired on the night the Wall

opened, partly because the crowds were too vast to disperse and partly because Gorbachev's Moscow refused to rescue the regime with tanks as it had in 1953. One legal detail completes the story, and the test includes it. The Grundgesetz of 1949 had been written as a provisional document, with an article explicitly allowing the parts of Germany that could not join in 1949 to accede later. In 1990 the five re-founded eastern Länder used exactly that article (question 204's word is beigetreten, acceded). That is why the reunified country still lives under the 1949 constitution, and why the neuen Bundesländer were inside the European Union from the day of accession (question 205). The "provisional" constitution had simply waited forty-one years for the rest of the country.

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 10

Deutschland in Europa

Germany in Europe

Twenty questions look outward: the European Union, the shared money, the open borders, and the nine neighbours. The vocabulary is friendly, and half the answers are geography you may already know.

THE SCENE

Amir and Lena are planning a weekend trip to Strasbourg.

"Do I need my passport?" asks Amir.

"No control at the border," says Lena. "Germany is in the **Schengener Abkommen** *(Schengen agreement)*, so you drive to France like driving to the next town. And you pay in **Euro** on both sides. In cash since 2002."

"How many countries are in the **EU** now?"

"Twenty-seven **Mitgliedstaaten** *(member states)*. Germany was there from the very beginning, a **Gründungsmitglied** *(founding member)*. It started in 1957 with the **Römischen Verträgen** *(Treaties of Rome)*, six countries founding an economic community. Out of that grew the **europäische Integration** *(European integration)*."

"And Strasbourg?"

"Seat of the **Europäischen Parlaments** *(European Parliament)*, which we elect every five years. Choose it if a question asks where the parliament sits, the full list is Straßburg, Luxemburg und Brüssel."

THE NINE NEIGHBOURS

Germany borders nine countries, and the catalogue asks for them one at a time. Clockwise from the sea: Dänemark, Polen, Tschechien, Österreich, die Schweiz, Frankreich,

Luxemburg, Belgien, die Niederlande. Every neighbour question in the catalogue answers with one of these, so cross out any country in the options that does not touch Germany.

das Nachbarland, -länder • neighbouring country

Polen ist ein **Nachbarland** *von Deutschland.* Poland is a neighbour of Germany.

deutschsprachig • German-speaking

In Österreich lebt eine große **deutschsprachige** *Bevölkerung.* A large German-speaking population lives in Austria.

VOCABULARY

The Union

die Europäische Union (EU) • the European Union ✓

der Mitgliedstaat, -en • member state (27 today) ✓

das Gründungsmitglied, -er • founding member (Germany is one) ✓

die europäische Integration • European integration, the joining together of European states ✓

die Römischen Verträge (Pl.) • the Treaties of Rome, 1957, founding the EWG ✓

die EWG (Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft) • the European Economic Community ✓

der Zusammenschluss • union, merger

der Vertrag, Verträge • treaty

What the Union gives

das Schengener Abkommen • the Schengen agreement (travel without passport checks) ✓

der Euro • the euro (cash since 2002) ✓

Frieden und Sicherheit • peace and security (the founders' goal, question 235) ✓

die Passkontrolle, -n • passport check

die Währung, -en • currency

reisen (ist gereist) • to travel

The parliament

das Europäische Parlament • the European Parliament ✓

die Europawahl, -en • the European election (every 5 years) ✓

Straßburg, Luxemburg, Brüssel • the three working seats ✓

die Abgeordneten (Pl.) • the members elected at the Europawahl

Words to recognise

das Jubiläum, Jubiläen • anniversary (the treaties turned 50 in 2007, question 237)

François Mitterrand / Helmut Kohl • the French and German pair of question 235, hand in hand at Verdun

die Bevölkerung • population

die Flagge der EU • blue with a circle of twelve golden stars

Why it is so

France and Germany went to war three times in seventy years, 1870, 1914, 1939, and the EU was invented to make a fourth war impossible. The first step was almost comically specific: in 1950 the French foreign minister Robert Schuman proposed pooling exactly the two industries a country needs to wage war, coal and steel, under a shared authority. Six countries joined, France, Germany, Italy, and the Benelux three, and once the arrangement held, the same six widened it into a whole common market with the Treaties of Rome in 1957, the EWG of question 237. The theory was simple and has held for seven decades: countries that share one economy cannot afford to shoot at each other. That is why question 235 answers with Frieden und Sicherheit rather than anything about money, and why Mitterrand and Kohl holding hands over the graves of Verdun in 1984 became the Union's defining photograph.

For Germany the project was also the road back into the family of nations. Five years after Auschwitz, no neighbour would accept a strong Germany standing alone, but inside a community, German recovery became Europe's recovery. Adenauer grasped the bargain immediately: by sharing its sovereignty, Germany got

its sovereignty back. Gründungsmitglied, founding member, became a central word in the republic's identity, which is why the catalogue insists on it (question 173).

The community grew in rings, six members to nine to twelve to today's 27 (question 236), and deepened as it grew. The border checks came down with Schengen, signed 1985 in a village on the Mosel a few kilometres from Rheinland-Pfalz, so that Amir's trip to Strasbourg needs no passport (question 221). The shared money arrived in cash in 2002 (question 240). Giving up the D-Mark, the beloved symbol of the Wirtschaftswunder, was Germany's hardest European sacrifice, made partly as the price of French support for reunification. And the citizens vote: since 1979 the Europäische Parlament is directly elected every five years (questions 230 and 232), the only parliament in history elected across a whole continent.

The story's eastern half completes it. When the DDR acceded in 1990, its citizens entered the Union the same day (question 205), and in 2004 the countries beyond the old Iron Curtain, Poland and Czechia among Germany's neighbours, joined the same project. A border where guards once shot at people trying to leave is now a Schengen line you cross without noticing. That single change sums up the whole idea.

Religion, Feste und jüdisches Leben

Religion, festivals, and Jewish life

Three threads run through this cluster: how the state treats religion (separately and tolerantly), which festivals shape the German year, and a newer set of questions on Jewish life in Germany, seventeen centuries of it.

THE SCENE

December. Lena's family is decorating a fir tree, and the town is full of lights.

"The four weeks before Christmas are the **Adventszeit** *(Advent)*," Lena explains. "At Easter we **bemalen Eier** *(paint eggs)*. At **Karneval** *(carnival)*, on **Rosenmontag** *(carnival Monday)*, people wear **Kostüme** *(costumes)* and masks. And **Pfingsten** *(Whitsun)*, fifty days after Easter, is a **christlicher Feiertag** *(Christian holiday)* that nobody can explain to me either, but we get the Monday off."

Amir laughs. "And the state pays for none of it?"

"**Staat und Religionsgemeinschaften sind getrennt** *(state and religious communities are separate)*. But there is a **Kirchensteuer** *(church tax)*. If you belong to a church, the tax office collects it with your income tax. That is why the tax form asks about religion."

"And everyone can believe what they want?"

"That is **religiöse Toleranz** *(religious tolerance)*, and it is the law of the land."

JEWISH LIFE, SEVENTEEN HUNDRED YEARS

The catalogue's newest questions concern Jewish life, and they reach much further back than the twelve Nazi years. The first Jewish community on today's German territory is about 1700 years old, documented in Cologne in the year 321 (question 59). The largest communities today are in Berlin and München (question 66). The Jewish house of

prayer is the Synagoge (question 182), and the roughly forty Jewish Makkabi sports clubs are open to everyone (question 118). The state of Israel was founded on a resolution of the United Nations (question 184), and Germany's special responsibility for it grows out of the National Socialist crimes against the Jews (question 288).

VOCABULARY

State and faith

die Religionsgemeinschaft, -en • religious community (separate from the state, question 33) ✓

die religiöse Toleranz • religious tolerance (everyone may believe what they wish) ✓

die Kirchensteuer • church tax (attached to income tax, question 291) ✓

der Religionsunterricht • religious education (parents decide until the child is 14, question 2) ✓

die Kirche, -n • church

der Glaube • faith, belief

die Steuererklärung, -en • tax declaration

The festival year

die Adventszeit • Advent, the four weeks before Christmas ✓

Weihnachten • Christmas (custom: decorating the Tannenbaum) ✓

Ostern • Easter (custom: painting eggs) ✓

Pfingsten • Whitsun, a Christian holiday ✓

der Rosenmontag • carnival Monday (costumes and masks) ✓

das Christentum • Christianity (the religion that shaped German and European culture, question 295) ✓

der Feiertag, -e • public holiday

der Brauch, Bräuche • custom

der Tannenbaum, -bäume • fir tree, Christmas tree

schmücken • to decorate

Jewish life in Germany

die jüdische Gemeinde, -n • Jewish community (about 1700 years on German soil) ✓

die Synagoge, -n • synagogue ✓

der Antisemitismus • antisemitism ✓

antisemitisch • antisemitic (denying the Holocaust is the catalogue's example, question 149) ✓

Israel • Israel (calling publicly for its destruction is a crime, question 111) ✓

jüdisch • Jewish

die Verantwortung • responsibility

Words to recognise

die Makkabi-Sportvereine (Pl.) • Jewish sports clubs, open to all

die Resolution der Vereinten Nationen • UN resolution (legal basis for Israel's founding)

geprägt von • shaped by

die Vernichtung • destruction, annihilation

Why it is so

Religious tolerance is the oldest lesson in this book, older than every other chapter's history. Germany is where the Reformation began, Luther at Wittenberg in 1517, and where Catholic and Protestant princes then fought the Thirty Years War, 1618 to 1648, which killed a third of the population in some regions and taught Germany permanently what religious war means. The peace that ended it produced the first, grudging version of tolerance, and the map still shows the outcome: a mostly Catholic south and west, a mostly Protestant north and east, and in Rheinland-Pfalz both in adjacent villages. Question 292's plain definition of religiöse Toleranz, everyone may believe what they wish, is the hard-won result of that history.

The arrangement that grew out of it is a friendly kind of separation, unlike the strict French one. There is no state church, and the state is neutral, but it cooperates: it collects the Kirchensteuer through the tax system (question 291 is ex-

actly that mechanism, the form asks about religion **because** the church tax rides on the income tax), religious education sits in the school timetable with parents deciding until the child turns 14 (question 2), and church holidays structure everyone's calendar, which is why Pfingsten gives Amir a free Monday he cannot explain. The Weimar constitution of 1919 wrote these compromises down, and the Grundgesetz simply carried its church articles forward, word for word.

The Jewish-life questions were added to the catalogue deliberately, and their dates are chosen to reframe the story. A community 1700 years old, documented in Cologne in the year 321 under the Roman empire (question 59), is older than Christianity's cathedrals here, older than Germany itself, and the medieval Jewish communities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz, all three in or beside Rheinland-Pfalz, are UNESCO world heritage today. Against that depth, the twelve Nazi years appear as what they were, the near-destruction of something ancient. The present is a fragile restoration: the communities have grown again since 1990, mainly through immigration from the former Soviet Union, with Berlin and München the largest (question 66). One boundary is drawn sharply, and the catalogue tests it. Tolerance protects belief, but antisemitism is protected by nothing: Holocaust denial (question 149) and public calls against Israel's existence (question 111) are crimes, and Germany's special responsibility for Israel (question 288) is treated not as an opinion but as an inherited obligation.

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 12

Familie, Bildung und Alltag

Family, education, and everyday life

The everyday questions are the most scenario-like in the catalogue: someone wants to marry, move, divorce, open a restaurant, or complain about a broken television. Each scenario hides one word, usually an office or a legal term, and this unit collects them all.

THE SCENE

Amir's cousin is moving to Germany with her family, and Amir has become the family expert.

"When she arrives, first stop the **Einwohnermeldeamt** *(residents' registration office)*," he tells Lena proudly. "Register the flat. If she wants to marry, the **Standesamt** *(registry office)*. Problems raising the kids, the **Jugendamt** *(youth welfare office)* helps."

"Very good. And the children?"

"From three years old, a right to a **Kindergartenplatz** *(kindergarten place)*. From six, **Schulpflicht** *(compulsory schooling)*. If they want to study later, they need the **Abitur** *(university entrance qualification)*. And an adult can catch it up at an **Abendgymnasium** *(evening grammar school)* or learn at the **Volkshochschule** *(adult education centre)*."

"And the rules of the house?"

"**Volljährig** *(of age)* at 18. Only one spouse at a time. Parents raise the children, the state steps in only when a child is beaten, because hitting a child is **strafbar** *(punishable)*. Quiet hours, **Nachtruhe** *(night rest)*, from ten. Germany runs on these words."

ONE SCENARIO, ONE OFFICE

The pattern that solves most questions here: identify which Amt owns the scenario.

das Einwohnermeldeamt • residents' registration office

Nach dem Umzug meldet man sich beim **Einwohnermeldeamt** *an.* After moving you register at the residents' office.

das Standesamt • registry office

Wer heiraten will, geht zuerst zum **Standesamt.** Whoever wants to marry goes first to the registry office.

das Jugendamt • youth welfare office

Bei Erziehungsproblemen hilft das **Jugendamt.** With parenting problems the youth office helps.

die Elterngeldstelle • parental benefit office

Elterngeld bekommt man auf Antrag bei der **Elterngeldstelle.** Parental benefit comes on application to the benefit office.

VOCABULARY

Family law

volljährig • of age (18; parents must respect an adult daughter's choices, question 267) ✓

heiraten • to marry ✓

die Scheidung, -en • divorce (needs a lawyer and usually the Trennungsjahr) ✓

das Trennungsjahr • the year of separation before divorce ✓

der Mutterschutz • legal protection of mothers around birth ✓

das Elterngeld • parental benefit (apply at the Elterngeldstelle, question 241) ✓

die Erziehung • upbringing (above all the parents' task) ✓

strafbar • punishable (hitting a child is, question 251) ✓

die Ehe, -n • marriage (one partner at a time, questions 252 and 272)

die Erziehungsberechtigten (Pl.) • legal guardians

schwanger • pregnant

School and learning

die Schulpflicht • compulsory schooling (question 95) ✓

die Anwesenheitspflicht • duty of attendance ✓

das Abitur • the university entrance qualification ✓

das Abendgymnasium, -gymnasien • evening grammar school (catch up the Abitur as an adult) ✓

die Volkshochschule, -n • adult education centre (Weiterbildung for everyone) ✓

der Kindergartenplatz, -plätze • kindergarten place (a right from age three) ✓

die Ersteinschulung • first enrolment at school

der Schulabschluss, -abschlüsse • school-leaving qualification

Everyday rights

anmelden • to register (a flat, a demonstration) ✓

die Hausordnung, -en • house rules in a block of flats ✓

die Nachtruhe • statutory quiet hours (from 22:00) ✓

reklamieren • to complain about faulty goods (the broken television, question 290) ✓

die Gaststättenerlaubnis • licence to run a restaurant ✓

die Gleichbehandlung • equal treatment (the swimming-pool scenario, question 281) ✓

der Führerschein, -e • driving licence (theory test available in many languages, question 268)

der Anspruch auf • legal entitlement to

die Beschwerde, -n • complaint (to a Behördenleiter, question 276)

Who came to Germany

die Migrantin, -nen / der Migrant, -en • migrant (the largest group came from Turkey) ✓

die Gastarbeiterin, -nen / der Gastarbeiter, - • guest worker of the 50s and 60s (the first came from Italy) ✓

anwerben (warb an, hat angeworben) • to recruit (workers from abroad)

einwandern • to immigrate

Words to recognise

der Rosenmontag • carnival Monday (already met in chapter 11)

die Bewohnerin, -nen / der Bewohner, - • resident

respektieren • to respect

benachteiligen • to disadvantage

Why it is so

Two principles decide every scenario question. First, adults are free and children are protected. At 18 a person is volljährig, and nobody, not even parents, can override their choices; below that line the state protects, with Schulpflicht, with Mutterschutz, with a Jugendamt that may in the extreme take a beaten child out of its family. Second, freedom is exercised through paperwork. You may demonstrate, but you register the demonstration. You may marry, move, or open a restaurant, but each act has its Amt. The test's wrong answers usually break one of the two principles, offering either a parent who can forbid an adult daughter her boyfriend, or a right you may somehow use without the form.

Both principles are younger than they look, and the family law here is the story of the Grundgesetz slowly winning against older law. The civil code Germany kept from 1900 made the husband the legal head of the household; a wife needed his permission to take a job into the 1970s, and the Gleichberechtigung article of 1949 spent decades grinding such rules away, with the constitutional court of chapter 7 doing much of the grinding. Volljährigkeit fell from 21 to 18 in 1975, corporal punishment in schools ended state by state, and in 2000 parliament wrote into law that children have a right to an upbringing free of violence, the rule behind question 251. The scenario answers you are memorising are the end results of that long correction.

Schulpflicht is the old layer beneath, and older than the republic by centuries. Prussia ordered parents to school their children in 1717, and the German states built the modern public school long before they built democracy, which is why school attendance here is a duty enforced by the state rather than a parental choice, and why homeschooling, normal in some countries, is simply not avail-

able. Question 260's word Anwesenheitspflicht carries three hundred years of that tradition.

The migration questions carry the country's other founding story. The Federal Republic, short of hands in the Wirtschaftswunder, recruited its Gastarbeiter from 1955, Italy first, Greece and Spain next, Turkey most and most lastingly, while the DDR brought contract workers from Vietnam, Poland, and Mosambik (question 298). The guests were expected to leave, stayed, brought families, and became the immigration society whose citizenship you are preparing for. That the test itself exists, in German, with a Rheinland-Pfalz chapter, asked of people born elsewhere, is the last paragraph of that story, and you are writing it.

Land, Leute und Symbole

Country, people, and symbols

The shortest unit in the book: the republic's identity card. A name, a flag, a bird, an anthem, and one number. The catalogue asks each of them straight, sometimes with pictures.

THE SCENE

A quiz evening at Lena's kitchen table, and this round is easy.

"Full name of the country?"

"**Bundesrepublik Deutschland**," says Amir. "Flag: **schwarz-rot-gold** *(black, red, gold)*, in stripes from top to bottom. The **Wappentier** *(heraldic animal)* is the **Adler** *(eagle)*, and a giant one hangs in the **Plenarsaal** *(plenary chamber)* of the Bundestag. They call it the fat hen, but that is not in the test."

"Inhabitants?"

"About **84 Millionen** *(84 million)*. And the **Nationalhymne** *(national anthem)* begins with **Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit** *(unity and law and freedom)*."

"Where does parliament sit?"

"In the **Reichstagsgebäude** *(Reichstag building)* in Berlin, the building with the glass dome. That is the photograph in question 55."

VOCABULARY

The identity card

die Bundesrepublik Deutschland • the country's full name ✓

schwarz-rot-gold • black, red, gold (the flag's colours, in that order) ✓

das Wappen, - • coat of arms ✓

der Adler, - • eagle (the heraldic animal, der Bundesadler) ✓

die Nationalhymne • national anthem ("Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit") ✓

84 Millionen • about 84 million inhabitants ✓

der Plenarsaal • the plenary chamber (the Bundesadler hangs there) ✓

die Einwohnerin, -nen / der Einwohner, - • inhabitant

das Symbol, -e • symbol

Around the pictures

der Bundestagssitz in Berlin • the seat of the Bundestag (the Reichstag building, question 55) ✓

das Reichstagsgebäude • the Reichstag building

die Kuppel, -n • dome

Words to recognise

Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit • unity and law and freedom, the anthem's first words

das Wappentier, -e • heraldic animal

die Fahne, -n / die Flagge, -n • flag

Why it is so

Every symbol in this short chapter took sides, over two centuries, in the argument between democratic and authoritarian Germany. Schwarz-rot-gold first flew among the students and gymnasts who wanted a united, free Germany when no such country existed, and it became the banner of the 1848 revolution, whose parliament met in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt and tried, and failed, to found a liberal German nation. Bismarck's empire of 1871 pointedly chose black-white-red instead; Weimar took the democrats' colours back in 1919; the Nazis abolished them again for the swastika. When both German states of 1949 raised schwarz-

rot-gold, each was claiming the 1848 inheritance, and the DDR had to add Hammer, Zirkel und Ährenkranz in 1959 to tell its flag apart (chapter 9).

The anthem carries the same argument in music. Haydn wrote the melody for an Austrian emperor; Hoffmann von Fallersleben wrote the Deutschlandlied's words in 1841 as a liberal's dream of unity over the small states' borders. The Nazis sang the first verse, with its über alles, next to their party hymn, and poisoned it. The Federal Republic therefore keeps only the third verse, and the words the test asks for, Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit, unity and law and freedom, are as exact a three-word summary of this whole book as German offers.

The eagle is the oldest of the symbols, descending from Charlemagne and the medieval empire, reused by every German state since; the republic's version, redrawn plump and unwarlike for the Bundestag, is affectionately called the fette Henne, the fat hen. The building it hangs in has lived through the whole century itself. The Reichstag of 1894 burned in 1933, in the fire the Nazis used to bury the republic; it was stormed in 1945 and covered in Red Army graffiti, which the later renovation deliberately preserved; the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude wrapped it in silver fabric in 1995 before five million visitors; and it reopened in 1999 with a glass dome the public can climb to look down on its own parliament, transparency built as architecture. Every symbol question in the catalogue has one respectable answer, and it is always the democratic one, because in Germany even the flag, the song, and the bird had to be won back from the authoritarian side of the story.

THE TOPICS • CHAPTER 14

Rheinland-Pfalz

Rhineland-Palatinate

Three of your 33 test questions come from this pool of ten, and they are the easiest points on the paper. Everything transfers from the earlier chapters: a Landtag like chapter 3 said, a Ministerpräsident like every other Land, and a flag in the colours you met in chapter 13.

THE SCENE

Amir is doing a last revision walk through Mainz with Lena.

"This is the easy part," says Lena. "The **Landeshauptstadt** *(state capital)* of Rheinland-Pfalz is **Mainz**, and you are standing in it. The **Landesflagge** *(state flag)* is **schwarz-rot-gold** *(black, red, gold)* with the **Wappen** *(coat of arms)* in the corner. The head of government is the **Ministerpräsidentin / der Ministerpräsident** *(minister president)*, exactly as in most Länder."

"And the **Landtag** *(state parliament)*?"

"Elected for **fünf** *(five)* years, one more than the Bundestag, and at **Kommunalwahlen** *(local elections)* here you vote from 18. If you want to read up on politics, the **Landeszentrale für politische Bildung** *(state agency for civic education)* exists exactly for that."

"Any traps?"

"Two. A **Landkreis** *(rural district)* of Rheinland-Pfalz in the catalogue is the **Westerwaldkreis**. And which minister does the Land not have? No Land has its own **Außenminister** *(foreign minister)*. Foreign policy belongs to the Bund, remember chapter 3."

VOCABULARY

The Land in facts

Mainz • the Landeshauptstadt ✓

die Landesflagge • black, red, gold with the state arms ✓

der Landtag (5 Jahre) • the state parliament, elected for five years ✓

die Kommunalwahl, -en (ab 18) • local elections, voting age 18 ✓

die Ministerpräsidentin / der Ministerpräsident • the head of the Land government ✓

der Westerwaldkreis • the catalogue's Landkreis of Rheinland-Pfalz ✓

die Landeszentrale für politische Bildung • the state agency for civic education ✓

der Landkreis, -e • rural district

das Weinland • wine country (the Rhine and Mosel vineyards)

What the Land does not have

keine Außenministerin / kein Außenminister • no foreign minister (foreign policy is federal, question 310) ✓

Words to recognise

das Bundesland im Südwesten • the Land in the south-west, on the map picture of question 308

sich informieren über • to inform oneself about

Why it is so

Rheinland-Pfalz is itself a child of the history in this book, stitched together by French military decree in 1946 from pieces that had never formed one Land: the Prussian Rhineland's southern half, the Bavarian Palatinate, and slices of Hessen west of the river. The new Land was widely expected to fail, its own inhabitants voted only narrowly for its constitution, and its nickname was the Land aus der Retorte, the test-tube state. It confounded everyone by working, and its capital Mainz, chosen while still half rubble, got the state chancellery into former barracks and kept it there for decades. The seams still show in friendly ways, in four regional identities, in the joke that Mainz looks across the river at a different

Land entirely, and in the coat of arms of question 301, which simply stacks the founders: the red cross of Trier, the wheel of Mainz, the golden lion of the Pfalz. The region's deeper history connects to almost every earlier chapter. Mainz was a Roman city; the medieval Jewish communities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz appeared in chapter 11; Gutenberg printed Europe's first books a few streets from today's Landtag; and at the Hambach Festival of 1832, thirty thousand people marched to a Palatine castle ruin under schwarz-rot-gold for unity and freedom, one of the first mass demonstrations for the democratic colours of chapter 13. The Land also touched both ends of the republic's story: Konrad Adenauer's Rhineland lies partly here, and Helmut Kohl, the chancellor of unity from chapter 9, governed Rheinland-Pfalz from Mainz for years before he moved to Bonn.

For the test itself, the ten questions reward map sense over memory. The outline question (308) wants the Land in the south-west on the French and Luxembourg border; the Landtag serves five years rather than the Bundestag's four (question 303); and question 310 is chapter 3's federalism in one line, no Land has an Außenminister because foreign policy belongs to the Bund. Three of your 33 questions come from this pool, and after this book they should be the three fastest.

THE LESSONS • CHAPTER 15

Von Bismarck bis Weimar

From Bismarck to Weimar

The catalogue's questions start in 1933, but their answers start earlier. The insurance on Amir's pay slip, the colours on the flag, the federal map, and the voting rules all have birthdays before the First World War. This briefing supplies the missing first act.

A NATION BEFORE A STATE

Into the nineteenth century there was no Germany, only a loose patchwork of kingdoms, duchies, and free cities sharing a language. The idea of uniting them belonged to liberals and students, and it came wrapped in three colours, schwarz-rot-gold, worn at the Hambach Festival of 1832 in the Palatinate and carried through the revolution of 1848, when the first freely elected German parliament met in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt to write a constitution for a united, free Germany. The revolution failed; the princes refused the crown it offered and the parliament was dispersed. But everything in it kept returning: its colours in 1919 and again in 1949, its catalogue of basic rights as the ancestor of the Grundrechte in chapter 1, and its dream of unity with freedom as the standard by which the next century of German states would be measured, mostly unfavourably.

BISMARCK'S EMPIRE, UNITY WITHOUT FREEDOM

Unification finally came from above, through the Prussian minister president Otto von Bismarck, by three short wars, the last against France in 1870/71. The German Empire proclaimed in 1871 was federal, its member kingdoms keeping courts and governments, the ancestor of today's Bundesländer. It had a parliament, the Reichstag, elected by universal male suffrage, remarkably early. But the government answered to the Kaiser alone, and Prussia's own voting weighed ballots by wealth. Of the 1848 movement's two goals, unity and freedom, only unity had arrived.

Bismarck then built, of all things, the welfare state. To cut the ground from under the growing socialist movement, which he simultaneously banned, he made the state insure the industrial worker: health insurance 1883, accident insurance 1884, old-age pensions 1889, the first such system in the world and the direct ancestor of the five pillars in chapter 5. The pattern, social protection granted early while political freedom came late, marked Germany for a century, and its machinery, contributions from wage and employer creating benefits held as rights, still runs unchanged on every German pay slip.

WAR AND THE FIRST REPUBLIC

The empire ended in the catastrophe it helped start. The First World War, 1914 to 1918, killed two million Germans, and defeat brought revolution: on 9 November 1918 the republic was proclaimed in Berlin and the Kaiser fled. (Chapter 9 explains why this date, the Schicksalstag, keeps returning in German history.) The constitution written in Weimar in 1919 was among the most democratic anywhere, women voting for the first time, proportional representation, full basic rights, and the black-red-gold of 1848 as the flag at last.

Weimar's tragedy, told across chapters 1 to 4, was that its enemies used its own freedoms against it while its design offered them doors: an over-mighty president with emergency powers, a parliament splintered by thresholdless voting, a judiciary and army never loyal to the republic they served. It survived a decade of coups, political murder, and the hyperinflation of 1923, when money was carted in wheelbarrows and a loaf of bread cost billions, found five good years, and then met the world crash of 1929 with six million unemployed. The rest is the next lesson, but hold the summary the whole book depends on: Weimar did not prove Germans unfit for democracy. It proved democracy needs engineering, and the Grundgesetz is that engineering, clause by clause.

Von Weimar bis 1945

From Weimar to 1945

This briefing tells the story every history question assumes. Read it once for the shape, once for the dates.

THE REPUBLIC UNDER SIEGE, 1919 TO 1929

The first German republic was blamed from birth for a defeat it had not caused. Its representatives had to sign the Versailles treaty of 1919, with its territorial losses and reparations, and the nationalist right promptly spread the stab-in-the-back lie: that the army had been undefeated and the democrats had betrayed it. The lie poisoned public opinion against the republic from its first day. The early years were chaos on both flanks: a right-wing putsch in Berlin in 1920, political murders of ministers, Hitler's beer-hall putsch in Munich on 9 November 1923, and in the same year the hyperinflation that vaporised the middle class's savings and taught a generation that the republic could not protect even the money in their pockets. Yet Weimar steadied. The mid-twenties brought currency reform, Nobel-prize diplomacy, unemployment insurance in 1927, and a culture, Bauhaus, cinema, cabaret, that still defines modern Germany's self-image. Democracy was working, until the ground moved.

THE COLLAPSE, 1929 TO 1933

The New York crash of October 1929 reached Germany faster than any other country, because German recovery ran on short-term American credit that was now called home. By 1932 six million were unemployed, a third of the workforce, and the splintered Reichstag of chapter 4 could assemble no majority to act. Government passed to chancellors ruling by presidential emergency decree, democracy already suspended in practice while the constitution formally stood. In the elections of 1932 the Nazis became the largest party, and the two declared enemies of the republic, Nazis and Communists, together

held more than half the seats. The republic's last governments were intrigues around the senile President Hindenburg, and the conservatives who finally handed Hitler the chancellorship on 30 January 1933 believed they had hired a drummer they could control. Within six months, by the sequence detailed in chapter 8, Reichstag fire, emergency decree, Enabling Act, party bans, the republic was a one-party dictatorship, every step dressed in legal form.

THE DICTATORSHIP AT PEACE, 1933 TO 1939

The regime's first years bought consent and built terror in parallel. Unemployment fell through rearmament and public works, and propaganda sold the Volksgemeinschaft, the racial community, while the first concentration camp opened at Dachau within weeks of the takeover, initially for communists, social democrats, and unionists. The Länder were dissolved, unions crushed, press and radio gleichgeschaltet, judges and professors sworn to the Führer. The persecution of the Jews escalated in public steps: boycott 1933, Nuremberg race laws 1935, and on 9 November 1938 the state-organised pogrom in which synagogues burned across the whole country, shops were smashed, and tens of thousands of Jewish men went to the camps, while the fire brigades stood by to protect only the neighbouring buildings. Emigration became flight; the world's doors, conference after conference, stayed mostly shut, the fact behind the asylum right of chapter 1.

WAR AND HOLOCAUST, 1939 TO 1945

On 1 September 1939 Germany invaded Poland; Britain and France declared war; the Second World War had begun. Behind each front the regime's race war followed: ghettos, mass shootings by the Einsatzgruppen in the occupied east, and from 1941/42 the industrial murder of the Holocaust, planned across ministries at the Wannsee conference, executed in extermination camps whose names, Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibor, the catalogue expects you to recognise. Six million European Jews were murdered, alongside Sinti and Roma, the disabled, Soviet prisoners, political enemies, homosexuals. Resistance existed at every scale and mostly died for it, the students of the Weiße Rose beheaded for leaflets in 1943, the officers around Stauffenberg after the failed bomb of 20 July 1944. From 1943 the war turned: invasions gave way to retreats, the German cities burned under Allied bombing, Hitler killed himself in his bunker, and on 8 May 1945 Germany surrendered unconditionally, occupied and in ruins. The 8th of May is remembered as liberation, and the 27th of January, the day Soviet troops reached Auschwitz, is the republic's memorial day for the victims.

WHAT THE TEST TAKES FROM THIS

Weimar explains the Federal Republic's design: the 5%-Hürde because splinters strangled Weimar, the ceremonial president because the strong one handed power to Hitler, the constructive no-confidence vote because destructive ones left vacuums, unabolishable rights because abolishable ones were abolished. The Nazi years explain the moral answers: the "Dritte Reich" was a dictatorship, nothing about it legitimate, denial of the Holocaust a crime, remembrance a public duty. Whenever a question offers a softened version of these years, the softened version is wrong.

THE LESSONS • CHAPTER 17

Von der Teilung zur Einheit

From division to unity

The second half of the story, 1945 to 1990. Almost fifty catalogue questions live inside this one narrative.

YEAR ZERO AND FOUR ZONES, 1945 TO 1948

Germany in May 1945 was a country of ruins and ration cards, its cities half flattened, twelve million German refugees and expellees streaming west from the lost eastern provinces into what remained. The victors, the USA, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France, took a zone each and split Berlin, inside the Soviet zone, into four sectors. At Nuremberg the surviving leadership stood trial, and the occupation began with de-nazification questionnaires and re-licensed newspapers. The wartime allies' plans for a joint administration died within two years as the Cold War hardened; the western zones fused their economies, and in June 1948 they replaced the worthless Reichsmark with the D-Mark. Stalin answered with the Berlin blockade, cutting every road, rail, and canal to West Berlin. The western answer, the Luftbrücke, supplied a city of two million entirely by air for eleven months, a plane landing every minute at Tempelhof, and the pilots dropping sweets on little parachutes, Rosinenbomber, turned yesterday's bombers into the city's guardians. The blockade failed in May 1949, and the division it was meant to prevent became fact.

TWO STATES, 1949

In May 1949 the western zones became the Bundesrepublik Deutschland, its Grundgesetz signed in Bonn, deliberately called Basic Law rather than constitution and deliberately provisional, one article holding the door open for the missing east. Konrad Adenauer, 73 years old, became the first chancellor and anchored the young state westward, into the Europe of chapter 10's coal-and-steel community and later into NATO. In October

the Soviet zone answered with the Deutsche Demokratische Republik under the SED, the forced-merger party of communists and social democrats, with its capital in East Berlin. Two currencies, two armies eventually, two alliances, social market economy against Planwirtschaft, and between them, in Churchill's phrase, the Iron Curtain.

THE DDR BEHIND THE WALL, 1949 TO 1989

The DDR called itself the workers' state and was ruled over the workers' heads. When the regime raised work quotas in June 1953, builders on East Berlin's showcase boulevard downed tools, and within a day strikes and demonstrations swept hundreds of towns; on 17 June Soviet tanks put the rising down, with dozens dead. The West kept the date as its national holiday for the next 37 years. What tanks could not stop was leaving: through the open sectors of Berlin, roughly three million people, disproportionately young and skilled, went west by 1961, until on 13 August the state built its Wall, calling it an antifascist protection rampart with the border guns pointing inward. The Stasi, the Ministry for State Security, grew into the densest surveillance apparatus in history, with an informer network reaching into workplaces, congregations, and families; its files, opened after 1990, ran to kilometres of shelving and let citizens read their friends' betrayals. West Germany, meanwhile, lived its Wirtschaftswunder, and from 1970 Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik, the Ostverträge, and his kneefall in Warsaw traded recognition for human easing, more visits, more contacts, without pretending the DDR was less of a dictatorship.

THE PEACEFUL REVOLUTION, 1989 TO 1990

The end came from Moscow and from below at once. Gorbachev's reforms withdrew the Soviet guarantee that tanks would always come; Hungary cut its border fence in May 1989, and DDR citizens poured through it, or camped in the Prague embassy until sealed trains carried them west past jeering and weeping crowds. Those who stayed marched: Leipzig's Montagsdemonstrationen grew from hundreds to seventy thousand by 9 October, the night a Tiananmen was feared and did not come, the crowd's candles and its cry Wir sind das Volk disarming a state that had run out of answers. On 9 November 1989 a botched press-conference sentence about new travel rules sent all Berlin to the crossings, and the Wall opened without a shot. The autumn is die Wende. Chancellor Helmut Kohl seized the year that followed, currency union in July 1990, the two-plus-four treaty with the wartime powers settling the external questions, and on 3 October 1990 the five refounded eastern Länder acceded to the Federal Republic under the Grundgesetz's open door. The costs were real and lasted decades, the Treuhand wound up the east's economy at the price of mass unemployment, and the solidarity surcharge on western pay slips financed the rebuilding, but the fact remained: Germany was one state, inside the EU,

by consent of all its neighbours, and the 3rd of October became the Tag der Deutschen Einheit.

WHAT THE TEST TAKES FROM THIS

Hold the skeleton of dates: 1945 four zones, 1948 Luftbrücke, 1949 two states, 1953 the 17th of June, 1961 the Wall, 1989 the Wall falls, 1990 unity. Attach one word to each actor: the DDR built the Wall, the Stasi watched, the people said Wir sind das Volk, Adenauer founded, Brandt knelt, Kohl unified. And remember the asymmetry the questions quietly test: the DDR joined the Bundesrepublik, not the other way round, which is why today's constitution is still the Grundgesetz of 1949 and why the five neuen Bundesländer entered the European Union on the day of accession.

Wie der Staat funktioniert

How the state works

Chapters 1 to 3 gave you the words. This briefing runs the machine once, end to end, so the who-does-what questions stop being facts and start being consequences.

ONE PRINCIPLE, THREE POWERS

Everything starts from Volkssouveränität: all state power comes from the people. The idea is older than any German state, argued by Enlightenment philosophers against the divine right of kings, raised as a flag in 1848, written into Weimar's first article, emptied into a slogan by two dictatorships, and reclaimed on the streets of Leipzig in 1989 by the sentence Wir sind das Volk. The people cannot govern daily, so the power is split three ways, and each branch checks the others. The Legislative makes laws, the Exekutive carries them out, the Judikative judges by them. The separation follows Montesquieu's old insight that only power can stop power, and German history shows what happens without it: the Nazi state fused all three branches into one will within months. The deep rule of the Rechtsstaat is that all three, including the government itself, stand under the law. That is why the press belongs to none of them: it watches all three from outside, and a democracy with Pressezensur has stopped being one.

THE LIFE OF A LAW

Follow one law and you meet every organ in the right order. A ministry drafts it, the Bundesregierung agrees on it, and it goes to the Bundestag, the parliament the people elected. The Abgeordneten debate it in their Fraktionen, the Opposition attacks it, committees amend it, and the Bundestag beschließt, it passes the law. Because Germany is a Bundesstaat, the Länder now speak: the Bundesrat, where the sixteen state governments sit, must at least be heard, and where Länder interests are touched it can block. Then the Bundespräsident signs, the law appears in the gazette, and from that moment the Ex-

ekutive, from federal ministries down to the Ordnungsamt in your town, must enforce it. If anyone believes the law violates the constitution, the Bundesverfassungsgericht in Karlsruhe has the final word, and it can strike the law down. No other organ can overrule that court, and only the constitution itself binds it. Weimar had no such referee above its emergency decrees, and the lack proved fatal; Karlsruhe is the institutional memory of that failure, seated far from the capital on purpose, and its red-robed senates have struck down laws of every chancellor without exception since 1951.

THE TWO HEADS

Germany separates power from dignity. The Bundeskanzler holds the power: elected by the Bundestag, he leads the Bundeskabinett, sets policy, and chooses the ministers. The Bundespräsident holds the dignity: elected by the Bundesversammlung, he represents the country, signs the laws, formally proposes the chancellor and appoints the ministers, and stays above party politics. The design is Weimar reversed, a weak head of state and a chancellor who can only be toppled by a majority that has already agreed on a successor. When a question asks who elects or who appoints, sort it by dignity and power: the people elect only the Bundestag, the Bundestag elects the chancellor, the Bundesversammlung elects the president, the president appoints and represents but never governs.

THE THREE FLOORS

Finally the vertical cut. The Bund makes foreign policy, defends the country with the Bundeswehr, and runs the big frameworks. The sixteen Länder run what is close to daily life, above all the schools, each with its Landtag, its Landesregierung, and its Ministerpräsident. The Gemeinden at the bottom run the town: registration, local roads, kindergartens, the Ordnungsamt, under a Bürgermeister. Each floor is elected separately, which is why you meet Bundestagswahl, Landtagswahl, and Kommunalwahl as three different words, and why a government can change colour on one floor while staying put on the others.

Wer wählt wen

Who elects whom

The catalogue's single most tested skill is keeping the elections apart. This briefing is the whole map, then one Sunday in the life of a voter.

THE MAP

Four elections reach the ordinary voter. The **Bundestagswahl**, every four years from age 18, elects the national parliament, and it is the only federal organ the people elect directly. The **Landtagswahl** elects the parliament of your Bundesland, in Rheinland-Pfalz every five years. The **Kommunalwahl** elects the local council, and often the Bürgermeister directly. The **Europawahl**, every five years, elects the Abgeordneten of the European Parliament. Everything else is indirect, and the test loves the difference: the Bundestag elects the Bundeskanzler, the Bundesversammlung elects the Bundespräsident, and no citizen ever votes for either by ballot. If an option says the people directly elect the chancellor or the president, it is wrong every single time.

THE FIVE ADJECTIVES

Wahlen in Deutschland sind allgemein, unmittelbar, frei, gleich und geheim, and the catalogue tests three of the five by name. Frei means nobody may pressure you toward a candidate or punish your choice, and that voting itself is a right, not a duty. Gleich means every vote weighs the same, the professor's and the student's. Geheim means the booth and the folded ballot; nobody, ever, may demand to see your vote. The three together are the answer pattern for questions 5, 112, 119, and 122, in whatever order the options shuffle them.

Each adjective rules out something that really happened in German history. Allgemein, universal, rules out the old Prussian system that weighed votes by taxes paid, and the years when Jewish Germans and women had no ballot at all. Frei and geheim rule out

the DDR, where an election meant folding a pre-printed list in public view, where using the booth was itself suspicious, and where the result was announced as 99 percent; the catalogue's wrong answers about pressure and punishment describe that system exactly. Unmittelbar, direct, means your vote itself creates the Abgeordnete, with no intermediate electors in between.

ONE SUNDAY

A few weeks before election day the Gemeinde sends every wahlberechtigte citizen a Wahlbenachrichtigung. Whoever prefers the kitchen table applies for Briefwahl and posts the ballot. Everyone else walks to the Wahllokal on Sunday, where volunteer Wahlhelfer check the register and hand over the Stimmzettel. In the booth the voter makes two crosses: the Erststimme for a person from the district, the Zweitstimme for a party's list. The Zweitstimme is the one that decides the balance of the Bundestag, because seats are distributed in proportion to it. At six the doors close and the same Wahlhelfer count the votes in public; counting is the one civic office a citizen can be obliged to take. Parties under five percent of the Zweitstimmen stay outside, the Weimar lesson in arithmetic form. In the weeks that follow, the parties that can jointly pass fifty percent of the seats negotiate a Koalition, write its contract, and elect the chancellor, and the largest party outside the deal becomes the Opposition, whose constitutional job, question 88 says it plainly, is to control the government until the next Sunday like this one, four years on.