

Spotlight



Spending Time Abroad: Some Options

MITTEL AUDIO by Clare Maas

I'm here today from the International Office to talk to you about spending time abroad. Here are some options.

Let's start with being an au pair. As an au pair, you can spend 6–12 months living with a host family and looking after their children. In return, the host family provides accommodation and meals, and usually pays you some pocket money. Popular destinations are the USA, China and Western Europe. Spending time as an au pair is a way to experience life abroad while living in the safe environment of a host family. To work as an au pair, you must be able to prove competence in the language of your destination, and some experience in childcare. There are certified agencies which can help you to find a host family!

Another option is an internship. Doing an internship allows you to gain practical experience. Especially as a university student, you may be required to complete an internship to gain an insight into a certain professional field. Internships may last from a few weeks to a full year. You usually don't get paid for your work, but there are plenty of scholarships available, and you can work in any field you like. The website auslandsstipendien.de is a good starting point for getting some ideas, as well as finding scholarships.

Instead of just working, though, perhaps you'd be more interested in a work and travel trip. This option allows you to combine exploring another country with gaining work

experience. You can travel around your chosen country and boost your finances by doing temporary jobs, for example as a waiter, harvest hand or nanny. There are organizations which can help you to sort out the basics before your arrival and provide you with an advisor for the duration of your stay. The most popular destinations for work and travel are Australia and New Zealand.

Moving completely away from working, you might also consider studying abroad. If you are enrolled at a German university, you have lots of options for completing some of your degree at a university in another country. The normal length of a stay is either one semester (so five months) or one academic year (so 10 months). Usually, your home institution will accredit any classes you take abroad, and there are lots of programmes to help you cover your costs. For example, Erasmus is a popular exchange programme for universities within Europe, which gives you a scholarship and lets you off paying any tuition fees abroad. The German Academic Exchange Service has a list of other scholarships and programmes on their website.

If you want to spend a shorter time abroad, another option is a summer school. A summer school course is like an intensive university seminar which lasts 6–10 weeks. The key advantages of a summer school are that you can get a taste of university life, try out different teaching methods and learn new things, while

improving your foreign language skills. The preparation required is relatively small, though you will usually have to fund a summer school trip yourself. As a first step you should look at the websites of universities in the country you would like to travel to.

Similar to summer schools, if you want to improve your foreign language skills, many universities offer intensive language courses. For English language courses, popular destinations include the UK, Malta and Ireland. Again, you can usually find more information on the universities' home pages, or through organizations like the German Academic Exchange Service. There are also plenty of private language schools around the world which offer similar courses of varying duration. Note, though, that you might need to provide a certificate of your existing language skills before you can be accepted on a language course.

EXERCISE

Modal verbs 1: Find all of the modal verbs in the text and decide whether they express:

1. Ability (Fähigkeit)
2. Possibility (Möglichkeit)
3. Obligation (Pflicht)

Write in your notebook. An example has been done for you.

... you can spend 6-12 months living with a host family... = 2. Possibility

Modal verbs 2: Write two sentences about each option for spending time abroad to highlight the key points about what is necessary, possible or obligatory to do. Write in your notebook. An example has been done for you.

As an au pair, you may get pocket money from your host family.

ANSWERS

- Modal verbs 1:
- ... you must be able to prove competence in the language of your destination. = 3. Obligation
- There are certified agencies which can help you to find a suitable host family. = 1. Ability
- You can travel around your chosen country ... = 1. Ability
- There are organizations which can help you to sort out the basics before your arrival ... = 1. Ability
- Internships may last from a few weeks to a full year. = 2. Possibility
- ... you will usually have to fund a summer school trip yourself. = 3. Obligation
- ... you should look at the websites of universities in the country you would like to travel to. = 3. Obligation
- ... you can usually find more information on the universities' home pages ... = 1. Ability
- ... you might need to provide a certificate of your existing language skills ... = 2. Possibility
- ... before you can be accepted on a language course. = 1. Ability
- **Modal verbs 2: Suggestions**
- If you do work and travel, you can gain work experience.
- You may get a scholarship to do a summer school course.
- You should look at the German Academic Exchange Service to find certified language courses.



In fünf Schritten zum Studium, Praktikum oder Sprachkurs im Ausland: „studieren weltweit – ERLEBE ES!“ liefert die wichtigsten Informationen, Organisations- und Planungshilfen für einen Auslandsaufenthalt während des Studiums. Schau dir die Infos jetzt schon an und lass dich von Correspondents - Studierende, die weltweit live von ihren Aufenthalten berichten und Tipps geben - inspirieren!

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