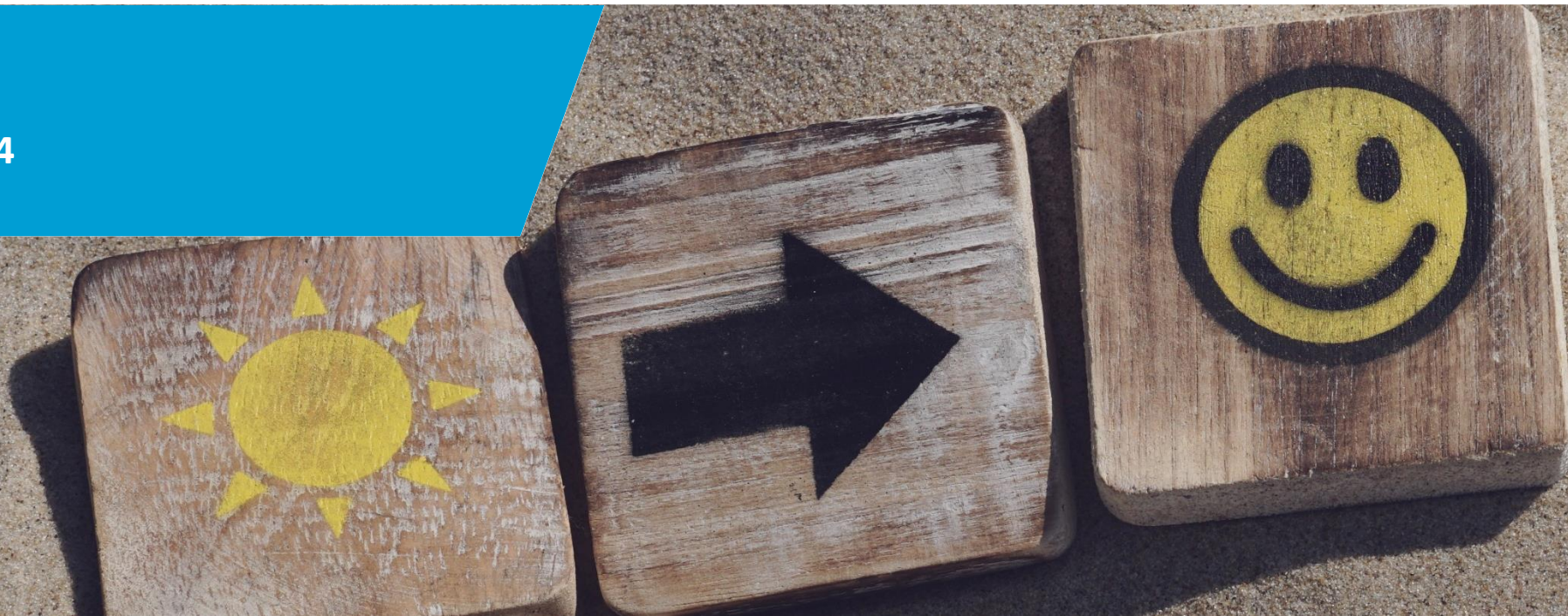




# Living in Germany - Tips & Tricks

[uni-siegen.de](http://uni-siegen.de)

4. April 2024





# Living in Germany







# Quiz

1. Form 4 teams! 😊
  2. Choose a name for your team!
  3. Stand in one line.
  4. You will be asked questions about Germany – they can be tricky!
  5. Discuss the answer in your team.
  6. If you know the answer, RUN to the BUZZER and press it.
- You will get 10 points if you gave the correct answer.

**YOU HAVE TO BE QUICK! LET'S GO!**





## Question 1

A German person invites you to dinner at their house for 7pm.

When do you arrive?



# Punctuality & Reliability



Germans take punctuality very seriously!

Especially at:

- work (job interviews, meetings, etc.)
- university (exams, lectures, etc.)
- Invitations (except parties)
- Appointments

→ Up to 5 minutes earlier or later is (just!) ok, apart from that better inform the person about your delay.

→ If something has been agreed upon, it should be kept.



## Question 2

When does the officially regulated night resting time period in Germany start and end?



## Rest periods



Attention: The understanding of "loud" and "quiet" can be very different -> If in doubt, ask the neighbor.



In Germany, there are legally regulated resting time periods:

- Night rest: 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- All day on Sundays and public holidays
- Noon rest: regulated by landlord

That means, at this time:

- "indoor volume"
- no loud work
- no loud conversations
- no loud music (-> headphones!)
- no meetings / parties

Germans usually take this very seriously!

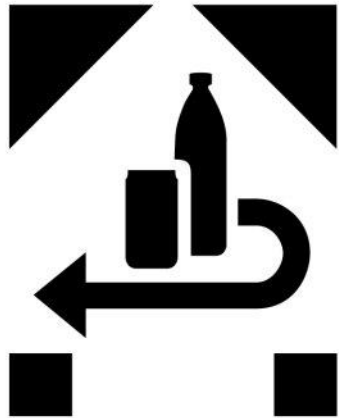
In case of disregard, the police can be called!

If a party or something similar is planned, please friendly inform your neighbors beforehand (and invite them ;-)).



## Question 3

How much Pfand (deposit) do you get for an aluminium can?



# Bottle deposit



If you buy drinks in glass, plastic bottles or in cans, mostly you have to pay a deposit of between 8 and 25 cent.

As soon as you bring the empty bottles/cans back to the supermarket, you'll get the money back. So do not just throw them into the waste!



## Question 4

What are the two pronouns in German to address someone?



# Social manners



## „Siezen“ and „Duzen“

- There are two pronouns to address someone: “Du” is rather personal, “Sie” is more respectful:
- As a rule, you use “Sie” with people you do not know and/or who are persons of respect (i.e. lecturers, people at work, etc.)
- Students say “du” to each other
- If in doubt, wait until someone offers you the “Du”

## Eating

- Normally you wait until everyone is seated before you start eating
- You try to eat quietly (no smacking) and have a friendly conversation



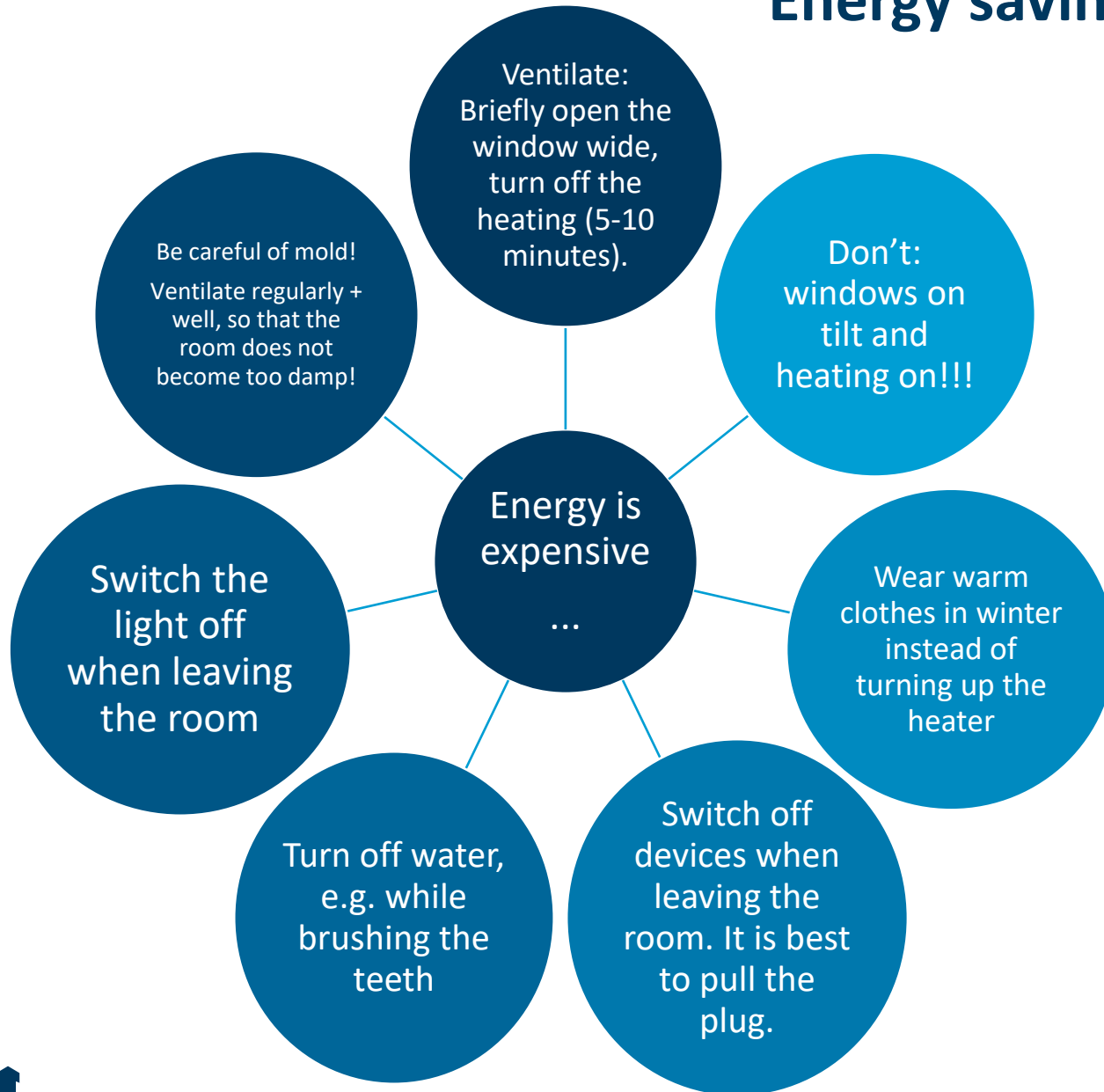


## Question 5

Name five things you can do to save energy at home.



# Energy saving tips





## Question 6

What happens when you cross the street when the traffic light is red and the police sees it?



# Rules



Germans tend to love rules. They have rules for a lot of situations and like to follow them very strictly.

(e.g. traffic lights)

Rule breaks can have consequences!



## Question 7

What is the cancellation period for a rented room/flat in Germany?



# Accommodation

Please take note of your rental contract – German landlords are quite strict with it, e.g.:

## Cancellation period

- Normally there is a cancellation period of 3 months, running until the end of a month. If e.g. you cancel your contract on June 14th, you have to rent the apartment until end of september.
- If you live in a shared flat (WG), please talk to your flatmates and ask for details.

## Deposit

- Normally you have to pay a deposit when renting a room/flat (around 3 monthly rents, after signing the contract)
- Confirmation of the deposit: e.g receipt or note in the rental agreement
- When you move out, you only get the (whole) amount back if you leave the apartment clean and tidy. It may take some months until you get the deposit back.

## „Kalt- und Warmmiete“ (basic rent + additional costs)

- The basic rent (Kaltmiete) is paid for the use of the rooms.
- The additional costs and operating costs (Warmmiete) are e.g. for water, heating, garbage disposal, janitor etc..
- Cold rent + service charges = warm rent (paid to the landlord).
- Attention: In addition, there are usually costs for electricity, Internet / telephone, etc..





# Waste separation / recycling



## Gelber Sack (Yellow bag)

- Plastic
- Metal (e.g. tins)
- Packaging  
(e.g. milk cartons,  
yoghurt cups...)
- Aluminum foil



## Kompost/ Bio (organic waste)

- Leftovers from  
fruits and  
vegetables
- Eggshells
- Tea bags
- Leftover from food  
(not cooked)



## Papier (paper)

- Newspaper
- Magazines
- Carton
- Cardboard



## Glas (glass)

- Bottles and jars  
(sorted by colour:  
Green, brown,  
white)



## Restmüll (residual waste)

- Everything else (but  
no electronic  
devices/ pieces)  
→ Werkstoffhof  
(recycling centre)
- You give batteries  
to drug stores (DM,  
Müller, etc.)



**Further information:** <https://www.siegen.de/leben-in-siegen/buergerservice/abfallentsorgung/abfall-abc/>  
<https://www.siegen.de/fileadmin/cms/pdf/Abfallentsorgung/AbfallTrennenMehrsprachig.pdf>  
<https://www.siegen.de/leben-in-siegen/buergerservice/abfallentsorgung/abfallkalender/>

**And now:**

**Our game for  
Waste separation! 😊**





# Typical German behavior...

(of course not all Germans are like this... ;-)





**Group work 😊**  
**Prepare role plays**



## Group 1: Rules and Regulations

Do you already know some rules that people in Germany follow, that you would not see in your homecountry?

e.g. stopping when the traffic light is red, even though there are no cars...

Discuss these in your group. Choose one and prepare a role play. You will show it to all the other students and they have to guess the rules you are referring to.



## Group 2: Time management / planning

In Germany, planning and time management is very important.

Read the following scenario and discuss it in your group.

Can you understand why Sofia is irritated?

Prepare a role play with people from your group to play the scenario in front of the other students.

Sofia from Spain works in a German research laboratory. She has often asked her German colleagues if they would like to go for a drink together after work and has received a rejection every time. She is surprised to receive responses like, "I can't, unfortunately, because I have to be in the lab very early tomorrow and want to go to bed early as a result." Furthermore, her colleagues often mention having household or garden chores to do. One colleague even said that he wouldn't have time for the next two weeks because he's working on publishing his research results. Sofia can't understand this behavior.



# Time management

- Germans not only plan their work schedule but also their free time
- Appointments are taken seriously
- Advantage: Germans are reliable
- Time is used effectively
- Long term planning
- Disadvantage: no flexibility and spontaneity





# Privacy



- Privacy is important to Germans
- Separation of work and career
- Possibilities of retreat, being alone
- Clear separation between "yours" and "mine"

## Group 3: Communication

Germans have a very direct communication style. Discuss the scenario. Do a role play of the situation for the other students.

A man from England living in Germany participates in a meeting discussing the next step in a technical development. He is surprised by the tone of the Germans: the group leader has a strong opinion that he asserts with certainty and justification: "This is how it must be done because...". Another colleague, an experienced engineer, is convinced of a different approach and presents it emphatically. Both argue, which the English colleague perceives as very loud and aggressive. The Englishman wonders: Why do Germans speak to each other in such a manner?



# Direct communication



- Germans have a very direct way of communicating
- It is appreciated when you are open and honest (even if it sometimes feels rude).
- Admitting mistakes is appreciated (and expected)!



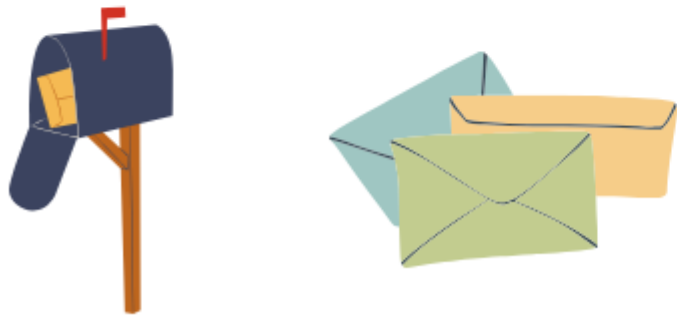
## Group 4 Bureaucracy

There is a lot of bureaucracy in Germany. It can be overwhelming sometimes.

Imagine you get a letter from the city hall/foreigners registration office and you don't understand it.

What do you do?

Prepare a role play for the other students.



# Bureaucracy



- There is a lot of bureaucracy in Germany.
- Lots of rules, lots of paperwork, lots of forms....

## Tips:

- Keep calm.
- Stay friendly.
- Ask and / or get help.
- And: Even Germans often do not understand the forms ! ;-)

# Bargaining



- Bargaining is very uncommon in Germany (except at flea markets and in the business world).
- **Not** a good idea: Attempting to negotiate grades / exam results.
- Attempts to negotiate / bargain usually have negative consequences!



# Respect & Boundaries

- **Personal Zone:**

also called private sphere,  
allowed for acquaintances and friends, for greetings and smalltalk

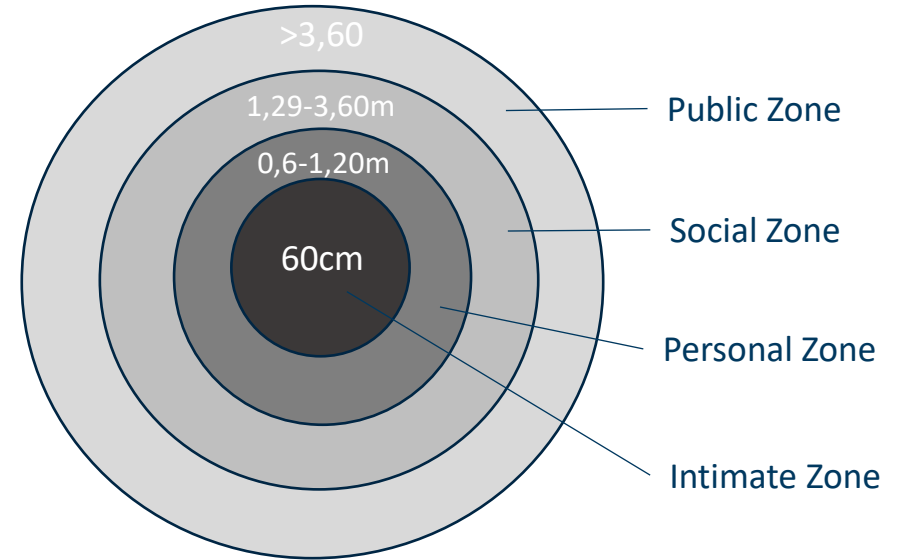
- **Intimate Zone**

also called intimate sphere,  
just for close friends, family or partner, should not be crossed by other people  
→ western european average value, can be different in other cultures

**If your personal zones are crossed, do not hesitate to make this clear!!**



Distance Zones by Hall



If you experience any violation of your personal zones, please contact us!  
(Department ISA – International Student Affairs)



# Other contact points for harassment, sexualised violence or discrimination

- **Security on Campus**  
Tel.: 0271 / 740 - 2600  
[bmteam@uni-siegen.de](mailto:bmteam@uni-siegen.de)
- **Equal Opportunities Officer University of Siegen:** Dr. Elisabeth Heinrich  
Phone: 0271/740-2227  
[gleichstellungsbeauftragte@uni-siegen.de](mailto:gleichstellungsbeauftragte@uni-siegen.de)
- **Women's Counseling Center Siegen:** Freudenberger Straße 28, 57072 Siegen (close to the ZOB & train station),  
Phone: 0271 21887, E-Mail: [frauenberatung@frauenhelfenfrauen-siegen.de](mailto:frauenberatung@frauenhelfenfrauen-siegen.de)
- Equality Body of the City of Siegen: Haus Seel, Kornmarkt 20, 57072 Siegen  
**Miss Kratzel, Room: 233**  
Phone:(0271) 404-3457, E-Mail: [m.kratzel@siegen.de](mailto:m.kratzel@siegen.de)

**Be attentive and observe. It takes a little time to get to know a country and its rules of behavior.**

**Ask if you don't understand something.**