

German For Gringos Lesson 2 Courtesy Essentials 2026 10 04

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Maya: Welcome back to German for Gringos. I'm Maya.

Devon: And I'm Devon. Lesson two is courtesy essentials. The five polite words that will make every German you meet like you instantly.

Maya: First, "BIT-tuh". That means please. Pronunciation tip: say it like "bitter" without the er. Short and crisp.

Devon: Here is the wild thing about "BIT-tuh". It also means "you're welcome" and "here you go" and "go ahead". One word, four jobs. Context does all the work.

Maya: Next, "DAHN-kuh". That means thank you. The A is open, like in "father", so "DAHN-kuh", not "dank" like a basement.

Devon: Feeling fancy? Add "shurn" at the end. "DAHN-kuh shurn". That means thank you very much, literally "beautiful thanks".

Maya: And what do you say when someone thanks you? "gairn guh-SHAY-en". That means "you're welcome", literally "happily happened". It is a lovely phrase, honestly.

Devon: Pronunciation tip for that one: "gairn" rhymes with "fair" plus an N, and "guh-SHAY-en" stresses the middle. Say it slow at first, it gets easier fast.

Maya: Now the big one: "ent-SHOOL-dee-goong". That means excuse me or I'm sorry. It looks scary but it is just four syllables. "ent" like enter, "SHOOL" like school with an sh, "dee", "goong".

Devon: Use "ent-SHOOL-dee-goong" to squeeze past someone on a train, to get a waiter's attention, or to apologize for a small bump. It is the Swiss army knife of politeness.

Maya: Last phrase: "kine pro-BLAYM". That means no problem. Pronunciation tip: the K is hard, "kine" rhymes with "fine", and "pro-BLAYM" stresses the second half, like blame with a pro in front.

Devon: So if a waiter says "ent-SHOOL-dee-goong" for being slow, you hit them with "kine pro-BLAYM" and watch them smile. You just defused a situation in their own language.

Maya: Let's hear them all in a demo. Devon's a barista. I'm ordering.

Devon: HAH-lo, what can I get you?

Maya: GOO-ten MOR-gen. "BIT-tuh", ein Kaffee, "BIT-tuh".

Devon: Here you go. Enjoy.

Maya: "DAHN-kuh shurn!"

Devon: "gairn guh-SHAY-en". And as Maya turns around she bumps into someone.

Maya: Oh! "ent-SHOOL-dee-goong!"

Devon: "kine pro-BLAYM", have a great day.

Maya: Cultural note. Germans take courtesy seriously but differently than Americans.

They will not do the big fake smile, but they absolutely notice manners. Say "BIT-tuh" when ordering and "DAHN-kuh" when receiving, every single time. It is non-

the trap that gets every English speaker. CHOOss!