

Preparation Material for the Internal Oral Examination at RWU as part of the University- specific Entrance Qualification

For the oral part of the university-specific entrance examination, the examinees are required to have good understanding of German culture, German society, German economy and German politics. Choose one sub-topic from each of the four major topics and research it further. The resources and information shared in this document form the general framework of the preparation. The examinees are advised to research more using other authentic sources of information.

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Framework Conditions for the University-Specific Access Examination

Admission

Candidates that have successfully completed the written part of the university-specific access examination and submitted it to the admissions office, are qualified to take part in the oral examination.

Contents of the Oral Examination

The oral examination focuses on the participants' general knowledge of cultural, political, social, and economic topics.

Duration

The oral examination typically lasts 30 minutes per participant.

Examination Results

After successfully passing the oral examination, a certificate is issued that includes an average grade.

Certificate

The certificate includes a grade regarding the subject- and university-specific study qualification, which is valid only in combination with the foreign educational certificate. The date of obtaining the higher education entrance qualification corresponds to the date of passing the university-specific access examination.

Repetition

The university-specific access examination can be repeated once in the event of failure.

Failed exam

Candidates who do not pass the examination will receive a notification regarding their participation and the result. Those who fail the university-specific access examination definitively cannot be admitted to any further university-specific access examinations for the same or a related field of study at any university in Baden-Württemberg.

Implementation

The examination is conducted online via the BigBlueButton software.

Examination board

Attending the oral exam: the examiner, a keeper of the minutes, and the examinee.

Scope of the Examination

General questions will be asked from all four areas: German culture, society, politics, and economy.

Preparation for the Oral Examination

The preparation document provided by RWU gives an overview of topics that are included in the oral examination.

Data Protection Regulations

The data protection regulations for oral examinations at RWU apply to the oral examination.

Overview of topics

We recommend acquiring knowledge on the following topics to prepare for the oral exam.

- German Culture
- German Society
- Society and Culture in Baden-Württemberg
- German politics
- German economy
- Economy in Baden-Württemberg

German Culture (Compared to the Home Country)

German culture is a multifaceted concept encompassing both tangible and intangible aspects shaped by historical, societal, and regional influences. It includes a rich tradition of festivals, customs, music, literature, art, cuisine, and a distinctive language, German, which is spoken in various dialects.

Language

German is the official language of Germany and is spoken by the majority of the population. Additionally, there are recognised minority languages such as Sorbian, Romani, Danish, and Frisian.

Traditions and Customs

Germany boasts a wide variety of traditions and customs, which can differ from region to region. These include carnival celebrations, Oktoberfest, Christmas festivities, easter festivities and wedding customs such as the *Polterabend* and table manners.

Festivals

In addition to those mentioned above, other celebrations like the Spring Festival (*Frühlingsfest*), Harvest Festival (*Erntedankfest*), and regional church fairs (*Kirchweihfeste*) are integral to cultural life.

Art, Music, and Literature

Germany is renowned for its rich art and literary heritage, with famous poets and thinkers such as Goethe, Schiller, and Kant, as well as classical music by composers like Beethoven.

Historical landmarks

Germany is home to numerous iconic landmarks that reflect its rich history, culture, and architectural heritage. These landmarks attract millions of visitors each year and showcase the country's diverse regions. Some of the most famous German landmarks include: Brandenburg Gate (Berlin), Neuschwanstein Castle (Bavaria), Cologne Cathedral (Cologne), Reichstag Building (Berlin).

Cuisine

German cuisine is diverse, featuring hearty dishes such as sausages, sauerkraut, potatoes, bread, cakes, pastries and desserts. Beer and coffee are particularly popular beverages.

Clothing

While most Germans wear Western-style clothing, each region also has its own traditional costumes (*Trachten*), which are worn during festivals or on special occasions.

German Sports

Germany has a rich sports culture, with a wide range of popular activities and a strong tradition of international success. Sports are deeply embedded in German society, with many people actively participating in or supporting sports clubs and events. Popular sports are für example football

(soccer), handball, tennis, motorsport, hockey. Germany also excels in winter sports like skiing, snowboarding, biathlon.

German Values and Virtues

Typical German values include punctuality, efficiency, thriftiness, and directness.

Influences

German culture has been shaped by various historical events and influences, including the Celts, Germanic tribes, Romans, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution. The division and reunification of Germany have also left lasting cultural imprints.

Example Questions:

What are the Christmas customs in Germany? Name three and describe one.

Some examples:

- a) Advent wreath
- b) Saint Nicholas
- c) Christmas tree
- d) Gift giving (Christ Child or Father Christmas)
- e) Christmas dinner

What types of waste separation exist in German households?

Answers:

- a) Organic waste (Biomüll)
- b) Paper waste (Papiermüll)
- c) Residual waste (Restmüll)
- d) Plastic (Yellow Bag)
- e) Glass and textile containers

German Society (Compared to the Home Country)

The term "German society" describes the entirety of people who live in Germany and together form a social, cultural, and economic community. It is characterized by shared values, norms, traditions, and a shared history, but also by diversity and different ways of life.

German society is characterized by historical diversity that has influenced its development over centuries. After World War II, Germany was divided into the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), which led to different social and economic structures. After reunification in 1990, a process of integration began that continues to shape social dynamics today.

Democratic Order

The values of German society are strongly shaped by the democratic constitution and is a welfare state. Fundamental rights such as freedom of expression, equality, and religious freedom play a central role.

German Legislation

Germany's legislative system is structured as a federal parliamentary democracy, where legislative power is shared between the federal government and the 16 federal states (Bundesländer). The framework is rooted in the Basic Law (Grundgesetz), Germany's constitution, which guarantees democratic principles, the rule of law, and fundamental rights.

Welfare State

German society is supported by a strong social security system that aims to ensure equal opportunities and social protection. Germany is also a country of immigration and supports migrants. Offers are for example:

- Germany offers protection to refugees and asylum seekers under international and EU law. Those fleeing persecution or war can apply for asylum and receive temporary or permanent residency if granted.
- The country also offers opportunities for legal migration through work, education, or family reunification programs.
- Migrants are offered integration courses, which include German language training and lessons about German culture, history, laws, and societal norms.

Living and working in Germany

Topics related to life and work in Germany, such as waste separation, night-time quiet hours, shopping opportunities, taxes, and employment contracts.

Education

Education holds a high value in German society and is considered the key to individual and societal development. The German education system is shaped by various values. One of them is equal opportunity.

Economic Structure

German society is closely tied to its economic development and to its social market economy. Germany is regarded as one of the leading industrial nations, which impacts the standard of living, work culture, and societal structures.

Geographical Location

Germany is bordered by nine countries, making it one of the nations in Europe with the most neighbouring countries. Germany is divided into 16 federal states and has approximately 80M residents. Its main capital is Berlin.

History

Germany's history is rich and diverse and has had a profound influence on the country's culture.

Some early key historical events and their impact on German culture are as follows:

- Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Germanic tribes, Christianization)
- Holy Roman Empire (962–1806)
- Renaissance and Reformation (Reformation (1517), Martin Luther's posting of his theses in Wittenberg initiated the Reformation)
- German Enlightenment: Thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottfried Herder, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing contributed to the development of philosophy and literature. The ideas of reason and self-determination had a lasting influence on German culture and politics.
- Weimar Classicism: The works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller shaped German literature and cultural identity. Dramas such as Faust and Wilhelm Tell are still central components of German culture today.
- Romanticism: Romanticism emphasized emotions, nature, and mysticism. Poets like Novalis and the Brothers Grimm collected folk tales that continue to shape German identity to this day. Romantic music by composers such as Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Schubert also contributes to the cultural identity.
- Nation-State and Unification (1871): The founding of the German Empire strengthened national consciousness. A sense of pride in German achievements in art, science, and technology emerged.

20th Century: Wars and Cultural Changes:

- First World War and Weimar Republic: After the First World War, Germany experienced a cultural golden age. The "Roaring Twenties" brought progress in art, cinema (e.g., Fritz Lang's Metropolis), and architecture (Bauhaus).
- National Socialism and Second World War: The Nazi era had devastating effects on culture. Many artists and intellectuals were persecuted or emigrated. After the war, German culture became focused on confronting and processing the past.
- Post-War Period and Division: Cultural development in East and West Germany diverged significantly. While the West was influenced by American culture, the GDR (East Germany) promoted a socialist culture

Present: Unity and globalization

- Reunification (1990): Reunification brought a new cultural dynamic. The diversity of the regions was once again more strongly recognized, and culture experienced a new renaissance.

Example Questions:

At the age of 18, a person in Germany is legally an adult. This could mean:

- a) They can sign contracts.
- b) They are liable to pay taxes.
- c) They are legally accountable.
- d) They can marry without parental consent.

What is the significance of the concept of the social market economy for German society?

Possible answers:

- a) The social market economy combines the principles of the free market with social responsibility.
- b) The market largely regulates supply and demand, but the state intervenes to correct social inequalities.
- c) Competition is promoted to prevent monopolies.

Society and Culture in Baden-Württemberg

The culture in Baden-Württemberg, one of Germany's most economically powerful and culturally diverse regions, is shaped by specific characteristics and values. These are partly influenced by German culture as a whole and partly by the region's unique features. Below are some of the defining traits of Baden-Württemberg's culture:

Diligence and Work Ethic

The people of Baden-Württemberg are renowned for their hardworking and industrious nature. The state's success as an economic hub (e.g., home to companies like Daimler, Bosch, or SAP) is closely tied to this mentality. The saying "Schaffe, schaffe, Häusle baue" (Work hard, build a house) reflects the region's strong work ethic.

Precision and Innovation

Baden-Württemberg is famous for its engineering expertise, particularly in the automotive and mechanical engineering sectors. A culture of precision and perfectionism is evident in the production of high-quality products and technical innovations.

Tradition and Local Pride

The people of Baden-Württemberg take pride in their traditions, dialects, and regional identity. Whether it's traditional clothing, folk festivals, or regional specialties, preserving traditions is an important part of the culture, for example „Fasching“ which is a traditional carnival.

Culinary Diversity

The cuisine in Baden-Württemberg is both diverse and traditional. Dishes like *Maultaschen*, *Spätzle*, Black Forest cake (*Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte*), and *Zwiebelrostbraten* are not only popular regionally but internationally recognized. Furthermore, the state is a significant wine-growing area, with regions such as the Kaiserstuhl or the Württemberg Wine Route.

Dialects and Identity

People in Baden-Württemberg are proud of their regional dialects, such as Swabian (*Schwäbisch*), Badenese (*Badisch*), or Alemannic (*Alemannisch*). These dialects are deeply rooted in everyday life and are a strong expression of regional identity.

Thriftiness and Down-to-Earth Attitude

Especially in Swabia, thriftiness is often regarded as a virtue. At the same time, people are down-to-earth and value modesty and practicality.

Connection to Nature

Baden-Württemberg is characterized by forests, mountains (e.g., the Black Forest and Swabian Jura), and lakes (e.g., Lake Constance). The population is nature-oriented and places great importance on environmental preservation. Activities such as hiking, cycling, and other outdoor pursuits are very popular.

Education and Science

Education holds a high value in Baden-Württemberg. The region is home to renowned universities and research institutions, such as those in Heidelberg, Tübingen, Stuttgart, and Karlsruhe. Known for its innovation, the area is often referred to as the “land of inventors and thinkers.”

Religious and Cultural Diversity

Historically, the culture has been strongly influenced by Catholicism and Protestantism. However, modern society in Baden-Württemberg is enriched by multicultural influences, reflected in festivals, religions, and culinary offerings.

Festive Spirit and Celebrations

Baden-Württemberg boasts a rich festival culture. Notable events include:

- The Cannstatter Volksfest (Stuttgart, one of Germany’s largest folk festivals),
- *Fasnacht/Fasnet* (Carnival, especially in the Alemannic region),
- Numerous wine festivals in the wine-growing areas.

Respect for Tradition and Progress

Baden-Württemberg values a balance between tradition and modernity. While customs are cherished, the region is also a leader in technology and industry. The coat of arms of Baden-Württemberg symbolizes the state's historical and cultural heritage.

Independence and Pride

The people of Baden-Württemberg are known for their strong regional pride and independence. They often emphasize that Baden-Württemberg is an economically and culturally distinct “Ländle” (a local term for their state). Hidden Champings are for example the companies Trumpf, Hugo Boss or ZF Friedrichshafen.

Hospitality

Despite the reputation of sometimes being a bit reserved, the people of Baden-Württemberg are warm and hospitable, particularly during regional festivals and celebrations.

Agriculture in Baden-Württemberg

Baden-Württemberg is one of the most agriculturally diverse states in Germany. Thanks to the mild climate in regions such as the Upper Rhine Plain, Neckar Valley, and Lake Constance, as well as fertile soils, a wide variety of agricultural products are cultivated here. Below are the key highlights:

Vine culture Baden-Württemberg is among Germany’s most significant wine-growing regions. The main wine-growing areas are Baden (e.g., Kaiserstuhl, Ortenau) and Württemberg (e.g., Remstal, Heilbronn region).

Main grape varieties:

- *Red grapes*: Trollinger, Lemberger, Pinot Noir (*Spätburgunder*), Schwarzriesling.

- *White grapes*: Riesling, Müller-Thurgau, Pinot Gris (*Grauburgunder*), Silvaner. Baden is especially renowned for Burgundy wines, while Württemberg specializes in Trollinger and Lemberger.

Fruit Cultivation

Baden-Württemberg is a major fruit-growing region in Germany, particularly around Lake Constance and the Rhine Valley. Main varieties:

- Apples: The famous Lake Constance apple is particularly notable.
- Pears
- Cherries: The region is known for Black Forest cherries, used in Black Forest cake.
- Plums
- Berries: Strawberries, raspberries, and currants.

Hop Cultivation

High-quality hops are grown in the Tettang area near Lake Constance. Tettang hops are internationally recognized for beer production.

Vegetable Cultivation

Baden-Württemberg is a key producer of fresh vegetables, especially in the Rhine Valley and around Lake Constance.

Main varieties:

- Asparagus (notably from Schwetzingen, known as the “asparagus capital”),
- Potatoes,
- Onions,
- Carrots,
- Cabbage (e.g., white cabbage for sauerkraut),
- Lettuce (e.g., lamb’s lettuce, locally called *Nüssle*).

Maize and Grains

Maize is mainly grown as animal feed. Grains such as wheat, barley, and rye are also important crops, especially in the fertile regions of the Upper Rhine Plain and Oberschwaben (Upper Swabia).

Rapeseed and Other Oil Crops

Rapeseed is cultivated for producing cooking oil and biofuels. Sunflowers can also be found in some regions.

Tobacco

Tobacco cultivation has a long tradition in the Rhine Valley, particularly in Ortenau. Tobacco from Baden-Württemberg is primarily used for cigars and cigarettes.

Special Crops

- Baden-Württemberg also produces unique agricultural goods:

- Truffles: Truffles are selectively cultivated in regions like Kaiserstuhl.
- Herbs: Basil, parsley, and other kitchen herbs are grown in greenhouses.

Walnuts and Hazelnuts

Walnuts and hazelnuts are grown in mild climates, especially around Lake Constance.

Flowers and Ornamental Plants Baden-Württemberg is also known for cultivating flowers and ornamental plants, particularly near Lake Constance.

Regional Highlights:

- Lake Constance: Fruit cultivation (apples, pears, berries), wine, hops.
- Upper Rhine Plain: Asparagus, wine, tobacco, vegetables.
- Black Forest and Swabian Jura: Potatoes, berries, herbs, dairy farming (indirectly linked to agriculture).

The agricultural diversity of Baden-Württemberg not only supports the state's self-sufficiency but also makes it one of Germany's leading agricultural hubs.

Example Questions:

Baden-Württemberg is often referred to as the "land of inventors and thinkers." Which industry is particularly strong in this state? **Compare and contrast** with your home country:

- a) Chemical industry
- b) Automotive and mechanical engineering
- c) Oil production
- d) Tourism

Baden-Württemberg is known for its agricultural products. Name three of them and describe some agricultural products from your country.

Possible answers:

- a) Fruit (e.g. apples, cherries, berries)
- b) Wine
- c) Vegetables (potatoes, cabbage)
- d) Hops

German politics (Compared to the Home Country)

German politics are defined by democratic principles, federal structures, and the separation of powers. Germany is a parliamentary democracy and a federal state where power is distributed across various levels and institutions. Key aspects of German politics are:

Form of Government and Constitution

Parliamentary Democracy: Germany is a democracy in which all power stems from the people ("All state authority emanates from the people," Article 20 of the Basic Law). Citizens elect their representatives in free, equal, and secret elections. In Germany, there is no direct democracy at the federal level, but rather a representative democracy.

The Basic Law: Germany's constitution, the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law), establishes the fundamental rights of citizens as well as the political structures and principles of the state. It guarantees, among other things, human dignity, freedom of speech, equality, and the rule of law.

Separation of Powers

Power in Germany is divided among three independent branches to prevent abuse:

Legislative (law-making authority): Exercised by the Bundestag (Federal Parliament) and Bundesrat (Federal Council). These institutions draft and pass laws.

Executive (law-enforcing authority): The Federal Government, made up of the Federal Chancellor and Federal Ministers, along with state governments, implements the laws.

Judiciary (law-interpreting authority): Courts, particularly the Federal Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*), ensure laws comply with the constitution and monitor their enforcement.

Federalism

Germany consists of 16 federal states (*Bundesländer*), each with its own constitution and areas of responsibility. States manage sectors such as education, policing, and cultural policies independently. The Bundesrat, which represents the states at the federal level, plays a central role in legislation and ensures the participation of states in federal governance.

Parliament

Bundestag: The Bundestag is the primary legislative body. Its members are directly elected by the public every four years. The Bundestag elects the Federal Chancellor and passes laws.

Bundesrat: The Bundesrat is composed of representatives from the federal states and participates in legislation, particularly on matters affecting the states.

Government

Federal Chancellor: The Federal Chancellor (*Bundeskanzler/-in*) is the head of government and determines the general policy guidelines. They are elected by the Bundestag.

Federal President: The Federal President (*Bundespräsident/-in*) is Germany's head of state with primarily ceremonial and representative functions. They are elected by the Federal Convention (*Bundesversammlung*).

Federal Government: The government consists of the Chancellor and the Federal Ministers, who oversee various ministries such as Finance, Interior, and Health.

Elections and Political Parties

Elections: Citizens elect the Bundestag every four years. State elections (*Landtagswahlen*) are held in the federal states, and there are also elections at the municipal level. The fact that elections in Germany are free is a fundamental principle of German electoral law and is guaranteed by Article 38 of the Basic Law and by the principle of democracy.

Political Parties: Political parties play a central role in German democracy. The largest parties include:

- CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union / Christian Social Union)
- SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
- Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (The Greens)
- FDP (Free Democratic Party)
- Die Linke (The Left)
- AfD (Alternative for Germany)

Foreign Policy

Germany is a strong advocate of European integration and a member of the European Union (EU). It promotes peace, human rights, and international cooperation. Germany is also a member of organisations such as NATO, the United Nations (UN), and the G7/G20. Together with the United Nations, Germany is committed to peace and security worldwide.

Political Challenges

- German politics face a range of challenges, including:
- Climate change and the energy transition (*Energiewende*).
- Demographic change (an ageing society).
- Integration and migration.
- Digitalisation and technological innovation.
- Social justice and economic stability.

Example Questions:

Germany is a parliamentary democracy. What does this mean?

Possible answers:

- a) Political power is exercised through elected representatives (via the Bundestag).
- b) The Federal Chancellor is the head of government.

- c) The Federal Chancellor is elected by the Bundestag.

How does the federal system in Germany work?

- a) Germany consists of 16 federal states.
- b) Each federal state has its own state government.
- c) The federal states participate in federal legislation through the Bundesrat.

German economy

Basic Information

Economic System: Germany has a social market economy, combining market freedom with social security.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): Germany ranks among the countries with the highest GDP in the world.

Unemployment Rate: Germany has relatively low unemployment rates, which vary by region (lower in the west, higher in the east). Traditionally, the unemployment rate has been low (2022: approximately 5.3%).

Population Size: Approximately 84 million people (as of 2025), making Germany one of the largest markets in Europe.

Current Figures on the German Economy (as of 2023):

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP):
- Germany's nominal GDP in 2022 was approximately €4.07 trillion (around \$4.4 trillion USD).
- This makes Germany the fourth-largest economy in the world (after the USA, China, and Japan) and the largest in the European Union.
- Germany invests heavily in research and development (around 3% of GDP).
- Export share (exports as a percentage of GDP): approximately 47% (2022).

Export Orientation

Germany is one of the world's leading export nations, with exports accounting for a significant share of its GDP. Key export goods include:

- **Vehicles:** Cars, trucks, and motorcycles (e.g., from VW, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Porsche).
- **Machinery:** Industrial machines, equipment, and tools.
- **Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals:** Products from companies like Bayer, BASF, and Merck.
- **Electronics:** Medical technology, semiconductors, household appliances.
- **Technology:** Artificial intelligence, software solutions, energy, and environmental technology.

Key trading partners include EU countries, the USA, China, and other Asian nations.

Key Industries

The German economy is diverse, with particularly strong industries including:

Automotive Industry:

- Germany is one of the largest automobile producers in the world.
- Leading brands: Volkswagen, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Porsche.

- Approximately 5% of GDP comes from the automotive sector.

Mechanical Engineering:

- Germany is a global leader in machine and plant construction.
- Companies like Siemens, Bosch, and KUKA dominate this sector.

Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry:

- Major companies like BASF, Bayer, and Merck make Germany a leader in chemical production.

Electrical Engineering and Electronics:

- Siemens, Infineon, and Bosch are among the world's leading manufacturers in this field.

Energy Sector:

- Germany is a pioneer in energy transition, heavily investing in renewable energy like wind and solar power.

Service Sector:

- The service sector accounts for a significant portion of the German economy (e.g., banking, insurance, trade, tourism).

Innovation and Research

Germany invests heavily in research and development (R&D), particularly in technology, automation, and renewable energy. There are numerous research institutes, such as:

- Fraunhofer Society
- Max-Planck-Institutes
- German universities (e.g., Technical Universities in Munich, Berlin, and Aachen).

The close collaboration between industry and academia fosters innovation.

Labour Market

Shortage of Skilled Workers: Germany faces a shortage of skilled professionals in sectors like IT, healthcare, and engineering.

Collective Bargaining: The labour market is strongly influenced by unions and collective agreements, ensuring stable working conditions.

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs): SMEs (the "Mittelstand") are the backbone of the German economy, employing the majority of the workforce.

Regional Differences

There are economic disparities between regions:

Western Germany: Industrially well-developed, with major metropolitan areas like the Ruhr region, Munich, and Frankfurt.

Eastern Germany: While the economy has developed well since reunification, some regions are still weaker than the west.

Strengths of the German Economy

"Made in Germany": This label is globally synonymous with quality, reliability, and innovation.

Stable Political Environment: Germany's stable political system promotes investments and economic growth.

EU Membership: As a member of the European Union, Germany benefits from a large internal market and trade advantages.

Products Made in Germany

Germany is globally renowned for its high-quality products, known for precision, quality, and reliability. Notable categories include:

Automotive Industry: Germany is a leading automotive nation, producing world-renowned brands such as:

- **Cars:** Volkswagen (Golf, Passat, ID series), BMW (3 Series, 5 Series, i Series), Mercedes-Benz (C-Class, S-Class, AMG models), Audi (A3, A4, Q series), Porsche (911, Taycan), Opel (Astra, Corsa).
- **Motorcycles:** BMW Motorrad.
- **Suppliers:** Bosch, Continental, ZF Friedrichshafen (auto parts).

Machinery and Industrial Products:

Machines and Equipment: Siemens (industrial plants, automation), KUKA (industrial robots), Trumpf (laser machines).

Tools: Bosch (power tools), Festool (professional tools), Wera and Wiha (screwdrivers).

- **Chemicals:** BASF, Bayer, Henkel.
- **Electronics:** Siemens, Infineon.
- **Household Appliances:** Miele, Bosch, AEG, Liebherr.
- **Food and Beverages:** Beer (Beck's, Erdinger, Bitburger), chocolate (Ritter Sport, Haribo, Milka).
- **Luxury Goods:** Hugo Boss, Adidas, Puma, A. Lange & Söhne (luxury watches).
- **Medical Technology:** Siemens Healthineers, Dräger.
- **Environmental and Energy Technology:** SMA Solar Technology, Enercon.
- **Toys:** Playmobil, Ravensburger, Steiff.

European Union (EU)

Germany is a member of the European Union (EU), a political and economic union of 27 European countries. As one of the founding members of the EU, Germany plays a significant role in shaping its policies and decision-making processes. The country is deeply integrated into the EU's structures, participating in the single market, which allows the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people across member states. Germany also uses the euro as its official currency, which is shared by 19 other EU countries in the Eurozone.

The German Civil Code (Bürger Gesetzbuch)

The German Civil Code (BGB) regulates private law relationships between natural and legal persons in Germany. The BGB thus serves to clarify legal issues in the private sphere, such as contracts, property ownership, family matters, and inheritance. It relies on fundamental principles such as private autonomy, freedom of contract, and the protection of property. It forms the basis of German civil law.

The German Commercial Code (Handels Gesetzbuch)

The German Commercial Code (HGB) is the central code of German commercial law and regulates the legal relationships of merchants and commercial transactions. It supplements the German Civil Code (BGB) and contains specific provisions for the commercial sector. The HGB entered into force on January 1, 1900, and is divided into five books.

General Part

- General provisions that apply to the entire civil law, such as legal capacity, capacity to act, declarations of intent, and time limits.

Law of Obligations

- Regulates obligations between individuals, such as contracts (purchase contracts, rental agreements, service contracts), as well as compensation for damages and unjust enrichment.

Property Law

- Relates to rights in property (e.g., ownership, possession) as well as their transfer and encumbrance (e.g., mortgages, liens).

Family Law

- Governs marriage, registered civil partnerships, kinship, guardianship, and legal relationships within the family.

Inheritance Law

- Includes regulations on succession, wills, inheritance contracts, and estate administration.

Example Questions:

Which EU member states can you name?

Possible answers:

- a) Belgium
- b) Malta
- c) Portugal

What does the German Civil Code (BGB) regulate?

Answers:

- a) Private legal relationships between natural and legal persons in Germany.
- b) Purchase agreements.
- c) Rights to property (e.g., ownership, possession).
- d) Marriage and registered partnerships.

Economy in Baden-Württemberg

The economy of Baden-Württemberg is one of the strongest and most successful in Germany and Europe. The federal state is known for its highly developed industry, strong export orientation, and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Baden-Württemberg is often referred to as the "engine of the German economy."

Key Features of the Economy in Baden-Württemberg

Strong Industrial Base:

- Baden-Württemberg is one of the most industrialised states in Germany, with around 40% of its value creation coming from industry.
- Key sectors include mechanical engineering, the automotive industry, and electrical engineering.

Export Orientation:

- Baden-Württemberg is highly export-oriented.
- In 2022, its export value was approximately €235 billion, making it one of Germany's top export regions, alongside Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia.
- Important export goods: vehicles, machinery, medical technology, and chemical products.

Innovative Strength:

- Baden-Württemberg invests heavily in research and development (R&D).
- Around 5% of its gross domestic product (GDP) is spent on research – a leading figure in Germany.
- The state is renowned for its close collaboration between academia, research institutions, and businesses.

Strong SME Sector:

- SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) are the backbone of Baden-Württemberg's economy.
- Many of these companies are "hidden champions" – global leaders in niche markets.

Labour Market:

- Baden-Württemberg has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Germany (2023: approximately 3.5%).
- However, a shortage of skilled workers is a challenge in sectors such as IT, healthcare, and skilled trades.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP):

- In 2022, Baden-Württemberg's GDP was approximately €630 billion, making it the third-strongest economy among German states (after North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria).
- GDP per capita is among the highest in Germany.

Important Industries in Baden-Württemberg

Automotive Industry:

- The automotive sector is the most important industry in the state.
- Baden-Württemberg is home to global corporations such as:
- Mercedes-Benz Group (Stuttgart).
- Porsche AG (Stuttgart).
- Bosch (Gerlingen, also an automotive supplier).
- Numerous suppliers and research institutions are also based in the state.

Mechanical Engineering:

- Baden-Württemberg is a leader in mechanical engineering.
- Around 30% of Germany's mechanical engineering originates here.
- Notable companies: Trumpf, Festo, Heidelberger Druckmaschinen.

Electrical Engineering and Electronics:

- This is a key industry, especially in automation technology and Industry 4.0.
- Major companies: Bosch, SEW-Eurodrive, Stihl.

Medical Technology and Biotechnology:

- Baden-Württemberg is a hub for medical technology and biotech.
- Companies like Aesculap and Karl Storz are global leaders.

IT and Software:

- The Karlsruhe region is often referred to as the "TechnologyRegion Karlsruhe."
- Many innovative start-ups and IT companies are based here.
- SAP, Europe's largest software manufacturer, has its headquarters in Walldorf.

Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry:

- The chemical industry is also strong, with companies such as Evonik and BASF (headquartered in Ludwigshafen but strongly linked to Baden-Württemberg).

Renewable Energy and Environmental Technology:

- Baden-Württemberg is a pioneer in renewable energy and environmental technology and climate targets are part of the country's politics.
- Many companies focus on solar technology, wind turbines, and energy storage.

Tourism:

- Tourism also plays an important role. The Black Forest region, Lake Constance, and cities such as Stuttgart and Heidelberg attract millions of tourists annually.

*Important Economic Regions in Baden-Württemberg***Stuttgart:**

- Centre of the automotive industry (Mercedes-Benz, Porsche).
- Headquarters of many suppliers and mechanical engineering companies.

Karlsruhe:

- Strong IT and technology sector.
- Known as the "TechnologyRegion Karlsruhe."

Mannheim/Heidelberg:

- Focus on chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and biotechnology.
- BASF is a key employer in the region.

Freiburg:

- Centre for environmental technology and renewable energy.
- Strong research institutions, particularly in climate protection.

Lake Constance Region:

- Strong tourism sector.
- Important companies in the aerospace industry, e.g., Diehl Aerospace.

Craftsmanship is an important training sector in Baden-Württemberg:

- Every year, thousands of young people start a dual vocational training in a skilled trade.
- Around 30% of trainees in the state choose vocational training in a craft profession.
- The Chambers of Crafts (e.g., in Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Freiburg) support businesses and apprentices during their training.

Examples for craftsmanship are:

Construction Industry:

- Bricklayers, roofers, carpenters, road builders.

Electrical and Metal Trades:

- Electricians, plant mechanics, locksmiths, precision mechanics.

Sanitary, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Technology:

- Installers, heating engineers.

Food Trade:

- Bakers, confectioners, butchers.

Agriculture in Baden-Württemberg

In Baden-Württemberg, one of Germany's most agriculturally diverse federal states, a wide variety of agricultural goods are cultivated. The favorable climate, fertile soils, and diverse landscapes (e.g., the Rhine Valley, the Black Forest, the Swabian Jura) enable a broad range of crops. Baden-Württemberg's main agricultural products include grains, fruits, vegetables, wine, and specialty crops such as hops and asparagus. The region is particularly renowned for its high-quality Lake Constance apples, wines, and cherries from the Black Forest. Thanks to its climatic and geographical diversity, the state offers a wide array of agricultural products that are highly valued both regionally and beyond.

Climate Goals

Baden-Württemberg has set ambitious climate goals to combat climate change and promote sustainable development. The state aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2040, making it one of the frontrunners in Germany for climate action. To reach this goal, Baden-Württemberg focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning to renewable energy sources, and improving energy efficiency across all sectors.

Key measures include expanding wind and solar energy, promoting sustainable mobility (e.g., electric vehicles and public transportation), and supporting energy-efficient building renovations. Additionally, the state actively encourages innovative green technologies and fosters collaborations between businesses, research institutions, and local governments.

Example Questions:

Name an internationally known company headquartered in Baden-Württemberg.

- a) Volkswagen
- b) Daimler (Mercedes-Benz)
- c) Siemens
- d) Adidas

What measures is Baden-Württemberg taking to achieve climate targets?

- a) Expansion of wind turbines, especially in the Black Forest and on the Swabian Jura.
- b) Promotion of photovoltaic systems on rooftops and open spaces.
- c) Utilization of agricultural residues and wood for energy production.
- d) Promotion of energy-efficient renovation of old buildings through state programs.

Preparation, Literature and Links

We would like to emphasize that the provided preparation materials, including literature, references, and links, are intended as suggestions for further exploration of the topics covered in the oral examination outlined in this document. The questions in the oral examination will focus exclusively on the topics listed here. You are encouraged to deepen your understanding of the topics at your own discretion and make use of additional resources as needed.

1. German Culture

Resources:

- Goethe-Institut (<https://www.goethe.de/en/index.html>) – Focuses on German culture, language, and arts.
- Deutsche Welle (DW) Culture Section (<https://www.dw.com/en/top-stories/culture/s-1443>) – News and articles on German cultural topics.

2. German Society

Resources:

- Federal Statistical Office of Germany (<https://www.destatis.de/EN/>) – Official stats on Germany's social structure.
- Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb): Overview of German history (www.bpb.de)
- German Historical Museum: Overview of German history (www.dhm.de)

2.1 German Legislation:

Resources:

- Bundestag Official Website (<https://www.bundestag.de/en>) – Offers detailed information on Germany's legislative process, current laws, and parliamentary work.
- Bundesrat Official Website (<https://www.bundesrat.de/EN/homepage/homepage-node.html>) – Explains the role of the Federal Council in the legislative process.
- Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) (https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/EN/Homepage/homepage_node.html) – Provides insights into constitutional law and judicial reviews.

Legal Databases:

- Gesetze im Internet (https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/Teilliste_translations.html)
- Official portal for accessing English translations of German laws, including the Basic Law and other key statutes.
- German Law Archive (<https://germanlawarchive.iuscomp.org/>)
- English translations and summaries of German legislation, case law, and legal developments.

3. Society and Culture in Baden-Württemberg

Resources:

- Baden-Württemberg Official Website (<https://www.baden-wuerttemberg.de/en/>) – Covers cultural and societal aspects of the state.
- Baden-Württemberg Tourism (<https://www.tourism-bw.com/>) – Insights into the region's cultural landmarks and traditions.

4. German Politics

Resources:

- German Bundestag Official Website (<https://www.bundestag.de/en>) – Information on Germany's political system and legislation.
- Federal Foreign Office (<https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en>) – Covers Germany's foreign policies.

5. German Economy

Resources:

- Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (<https://www.bmwk.de/EN/>) – Updates on Germany's economic policies.
- Germany Trade & Invest (<https://www.gtai.de/en/home>) – Information on Germany's economic sectors and industries.

6. Economy in Baden-Württemberg

Resources:

- Baden-Württemberg Economic Development Corporation (<https://www.bw-invest.de/en>) – Covers the regional economy and key industries.
- Baden-Württemberg Chamber of Commerce (<https://www.bw.ihk.de/>) – Insights into economic activities in the region.

Other Resources

The naturalization test in Germany is an important step toward obtaining German citizenship. It includes questions on topics such as law and society, history, and German culture. Proper preparation is essential to pass the test successfully. The test can only be taken in German.

Structure of the Naturalization Test

- The test consists of 33 questions, drawn from a question bank of 310 potential questions.
- 30 questions are about Germany in general, and 3 questions are specific to the federal state where you live.
- You need to answer at least 17 out of 33 questions correctly to pass the test.
- The questions are multiple-choice, with four possible answers for each question.

Important!

For the university entrance examination, the examinees are required to have good understanding of german culture, german society, german economy and german politics. Choose one sub-topic from each of the four major topics and research it further. The resources and information shared in this document form the general framework of the preparation. The examinees are advised to research more using other authentic sources of information.

The university assumes no responsibility for the accuracy or currency of information provided online. Examinees are strongly advised to verify details independently and remain informed about potential updates or changes.

Good Luck!