

INTERMEDIATE

OLLY RICHARDS

SHORT STORIES **in** STORIES **GERMAN**

Read for pleasure at your level
and learn German the fun way



Teach[®]
Yourself

SHORT STORIES **GERMAN**

for Intermediate Learners

Read for pleasure at your level and
learn German the fun way!

OLLY RICHARDS

Series Editor
Rebecca Moeller

Development Editor
Wolfgang Weermann, TextMedia

Contents

About the Author

Introduction

How to Read Effectively

The Six-Step Reading Process

Der Feuer-Traum

Hartnäckigkeit zahlt sich aus

Eine schreckliche Stadt

Mein Freund, der Supercomputer

Uli Uhlmann und das geheime Limonadenrezept

Skull Tooth

Gespräche über Beziehungen

Der Monster-Wettkampf

Answer Key

German–English Glossary

Acknowledgements

**Don't forget
the audio!**



Listening to the story read aloud is a great way to improve your pronunciation and overall comprehension. So, don't forget – download it today!

The audio that accompanies this course is available to purchase from readers.teachyourself.com and to download to the accompanying app.

Use **audio50** at readers.teachyourself.com/redeem for 50% off any purchase.



About the Author



Olly Richards, author of the *Teach Yourself Foreign Language Graded Readers* series, speaks eight languages and is the man behind the popular language learning blog *I Will Teach You a Language*.

Olly started learning his first foreign language at age 19 when he bought a one-way ticket to Paris. With no exposure to languages growing up, and no special talent to speak of, Olly had to figure out how to learn a foreign language from scratch.

Fifteen years later, Olly holds a master's in TESOL from Aston University as well as Cambridge CELTA and Delta. He has also now studied several languages and become an expert in language learning techniques. He collaborates with organizations such as the Open University and the European Commission, and is a regular speaker at international language events and in-person workshops.

Olly started the *I Will Teach You a Language* blog in 2013 to document his latest language learning experiments. His useful language learning tips have transformed the blog into one of the most popular language learning resources on the web. Olly has always advocated that reading is one of the best ways to improve your language skills and he has now applied his

expertise to create the *Teach Yourself Foreign Language Graded Readers* series. He hopes that *Short Stories in German for Intermediate Learners* will help you in your language studies!

For more information about Olly and his blog, go to
www.iwillteachyoulanguage.com.

For more information about other readers in this series, go to
readers.teachyourself.com.

Introduction

Reading in a foreign language is one of the most effective ways for you to improve language skills and expand vocabulary. However, it can sometimes be difficult to find engaging reading materials at an appropriate level that will provide a feeling of achievement and a sense of progress. Most books and articles written for native speakers are too difficult for language learners to understand. They often have very high-level vocabulary and may be so lengthy that you feel overwhelmed and give up. If these problems sound familiar, then this book is for you!

Short Stories in German for Intermediate Learners is a collection of eight unconventional and entertaining short stories that are especially designed to help intermediate-level German learners* improve their language skills. These short stories offer something of interest for everyone and have been designed to create a supportive reading environment by including:

- **Rich linguistic content in different genres** to keep you entertained and expose you to a variety of word forms.
- **Interesting illustrations** to introduce the story content and help you better understand what happens.
- **Shorter stories broken into chapters** to give you the satisfaction of finishing the stories and progressing quickly.
- **Texts written especially at your level** so they are more easily comprehended and not overwhelming.

- **Special learning aids** to help support your understanding including:
 - **Summaries** to give you regular overviews of plot progression.
 - **Vocabulary lists** to help you understand unfamiliar words more easily.
 - **Comprehension questions** to test your understanding of key events and to encourage you to read in more detail.

So whether you want to expand your vocabulary, improve your comprehension, or simply read for fun, this book is the biggest step forward you will take in your studies this year. *Short Stories in German for Intermediate Learners* will give you all the support you need, so sit back, relax and let your imagination run wild as you are transported to a magical world of adventure, mystery and intrigue – in German!

* Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels B1–B2.

How to Read Effectively

Reading is a complex skill. In our first languages, we employ a variety of micro-skills to help us read. For example, we might skim a particular passage in order to understand the general idea, or gist. Or we might scan through multiple pages of a train timetable looking for a particular time or place. While these micro-skills are second nature when reading in our first languages, when it comes to reading in a foreign language, research suggests that we often abandon most of these reading skills. In a foreign language, we usually start at the beginning of a text and try to understand every single word. Inevitably, we come across unknown or difficult words and quickly get frustrated with our lack of understanding.

One of the main benefits of reading in a foreign language is that you gain exposure to large amounts of words and expressions used naturally. This kind of reading for pleasure in order to learn a language is generally known as ‘extensive reading’. It is very different from reading a textbook in which dialogues or texts are meant to be read in detail with the aim of understanding every word. That kind of reading to reach specific learning aims or do tasks is referred to as ‘intensive reading’. To put it another way, the intensive reading in textbooks usually helps you with grammar rules and specific vocabulary, whereas reading stories extensively helps show you natural language in use.

While you may have started your language learning journey using only textbooks, *Short Stories in German for Intermediate Learners* will now provide you with opportunities to learn more about natural German language in use. Here are a few suggestions to keep in mind when reading the stories in this book in order to learn the most from them:

- **Enjoyment and a sense of achievement when reading is vitally important.** Enjoying what you read keeps you coming back for more. The best way to enjoy reading stories and feel a sense of achievement is by reading each story from beginning to end. Consequently, reaching the end of a story is the most important thing. It is actually more important than understanding every word in it!
- **The more you read, the more you learn.** By reading longer texts for enjoyment, you will quickly build up an understanding of how German works. But remember: in order to take full advantage of the benefits of extensive reading, you have to actually read a large enough volume in the first place. Reading a couple of pages here and there may teach you a few new words, but it won't be enough to make a real impact on the overall level of your German.
- **You must accept that you won't understand everything you read in a story.** This is probably the most important point of all! Always remember that it is completely normal that you do not understand all the words or sentences. It doesn't mean that your language level is flawed or that you are not doing well. It means that you're engaged in the process of learning. So, what should you do when you don't understand a word? Here are a few steps:
 1. Look at the word and see if it is familiar in any way. Remember to look for vocabulary elements from your first language that may be familiar. Take a guess – you might surprise yourself!
 2. Re-read the sentence that contains the unknown word several times. Use the context of that sentence, and the rest of the story, to try to guess what the unknown word might mean.

3. Think about whether or not the word might be a different form of a word you know. For example, you might encounter a verb that you know, but it has been conjugated in a different or unfamiliar way:

sprechen – to speak

haben gesprochen – (they) have spoken

sprach – (he) spoke

You may not be familiar with the particular form used, but ask yourself: *Can I still understand the gist of what's going on?* Usually, if you have managed to recognize the main verb, that is enough. Instead of getting frustrated, simply notice how the verb is being used, and carry on reading. Recognizing different forms of words will come intuitively over time.

4. Make a note of the unknown word in a notebook and check the meaning later. You can review these words over time to make them part of your active vocabulary. If you simply must know the meaning of a bolded word, you can look it up in the vocabulary list at the end of the chapter, in the glossary at the back of this book or use a dictionary. However, this should be your last resort.

These suggestions are designed to train you to handle reading in German independently and without help. The more you can develop this skill, the better you'll be able to read. Remember: learning to be comfortable with the ambiguity you may encounter while reading a foreign language is the most powerful skill that will help you become an independent and resilient learner of German!

The Six-Step Reading Process

In order to get the most from reading *Short Stories in German for Intermediate Learners*, it will be best for you to follow this simple six-step reading process for each chapter of the stories:

1. Look at the illustration and read the chapter title. Think about what the story might be about. Then read the chapter all the way through. Your aim is simply to reach the end of the chapter. Therefore, *do not stop to look up words and do not worry if there are things you do not understand*. Simply try to follow the plot.
2. When you reach the end of the chapter, read the short summary of the plot to see if you have understood what has happened. If you find this difficult, do not worry. You will improve with each chapter.
3. Go back and read the *same* chapter again. If you like, you can focus more on story details than before, but otherwise simply read it through one more time.
4. When you reach the end of the chapter for the second time, read the summary again and review the vocabulary list. If you are unsure about the meanings of any words in the vocabulary list, scan through the text to find them in the story and examine them in context. This will help you better understand the words.
5. Next, work through the comprehension questions to check your understanding of key events in the story. If you do not get them all

correct, do not worry: simply answering the questions will help you better understand the story.

6. At this point, you should have some understanding of the main events of the chapter. If not, you may wish to re-read the chapter a few times using the vocabulary list to check unknown words and phrases until you feel confident. Once you are ready and confident that you understand what has happened – whether it's after one reading of the chapter or several – move on to the next chapter and continue enjoying the story at your own pace, just as you would any other book.

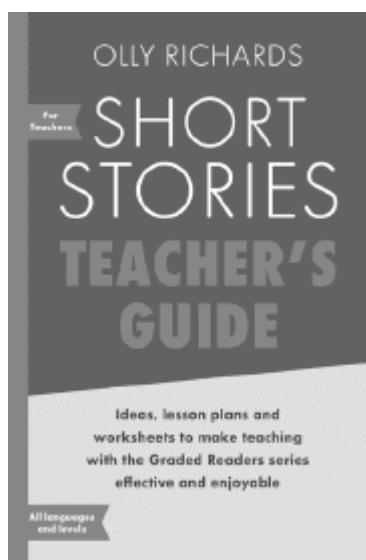
Only once you have completed a story in its entirety should you consider going back and studying the story language in more depth if you wish. Or, instead of worrying about understanding everything, take time to focus on all that you *have* understood and congratulate yourself for all that you have done so far. Remember: the biggest benefits you will derive from this book will come from reading story after story through from beginning to end. If you can do that, you will be on your way to reading effectively in German!

Using *Teach Yourself Foreign Language Graded Readers* in the Classroom

The *Teach Yourself Foreign Language Graded Readers* are great for self-study, but they can also be used in the classroom or with a tutor. If you're interested in using these stories with your students, please contact us at learningsolutions@teachyourself.com for discounted education sales.

Want to easily incorporate extensive reading into your curriculum?

Check out the *Short Stories Teacher's Guide* from readers.teachyourself.com to get ready-made lesson plans, adaptable worksheets, audio, and pre-, during- and post-reading activities.





Der Feuer-Traum

Kapitel 1 – Können Träume wahr werden?

Steffi hätte ihren Freund Christian am liebsten unter dem Tisch getreten. Seinetwegen schauten alle am Tisch sie an. **Sie warf ihm einen bösen Blick zu.** Er antwortete mit einem Lächeln. Nadine, Steffis beste Freundin, sah Steffi mit einem dünnen Lächeln an. Johannes, Nadines Freund und Christians bester Freund, saß ebenfalls am Tisch. Sein **Gesichtsausdruck** zeigte sowohl Schock als auch **Neugier**. Mark und Verena, die mit allen befreundet waren, schauten Steffi fragend an.

Warum bloß muss Christian allen Leuten von meinen Träumen erzählen?, dachte Steffi. Dann hob sie den Kopf und sagte: „Ja, das stimmt.“ Sie warf Christian noch einen bösen Blick zu und fing an zu erklären: „Ich träume manchmal von unwichtigen Dingen und diese Träume werden am nächsten Tag wahr. Es passiert fast genau sechs Stunden, nachdem ich aufgewacht bin. Aber es geht immer nur um wirklich dumme, kleine Dinge – niemals um etwas Wichtiges.“

„Wirklich? Was zum Beispiel?“, fragte Mark.

„Na, als ich vier war, habe ich mal davon geträumt, dass ein Löffel vom Tisch fällt und dabei ein lautes Geräusch macht“, sagte Steffi. „Am nächsten Tag hielt mein Vater bei einer Party eine Rede. Gerade als er eine Pause machte, ließ jemand einen Löffel auf den Boden fallen. Das war in dieser Situation richtig laut und alle haben sich **erschrocken**. Tja, so wurde der Traum dann wahr.“

Alle Freunde lachten.

Johannes schaute Steffi kritisch an und sagte dann mit einem Lächeln: „Aber das scheint eher ein **Zufall** als alles andere zu sein.“

„Das habe ich zuerst auch gedacht“, sagte Christian daraufhin ganz aufgeregt. „Aber dann hat mir Steffi von ihren anderen Träumen erzählt und ich habe angefangen, ihr zu glauben. Außerdem habe ich sie getestet und habe erlebt, wie es tatsächlich passierte!“

„Du hast sie getestet?“, fragte Johannes. „Wie?“

„Vor ein paar Monaten habe ich gewartet, bis sie aufwachte, und dann habe ich sie aufgefordert, mir von dem letzten Traum zu erzählen, an den sie sich erinnern konnte“, sagte Christian. „Sie erzählte mir, dass sie von jemandem geträumt hatte, der 17 Mal **nieste**, und alle darüber lachten. Dann habe ich sechs Stunden abgewartet und, während wir zu Mittag aßen, fing eine Frau im Restaurant tatsächlich an zu niesen. Wenn sie nur ein paar Mal geniest hätte, glaube ich nicht, dass es irgendjemand bemerkt hätte. Aber die Frau nieste und nieste, und ich habe mitgezählt. Sie nieste genau 17 Mal. Als sie fertig war, fing das ganze Restaurant an zu lachen. Es war so lustig!“

„Ja, und die arme Frau war so **verlegen**, dass sie aufgestanden ist und das Restaurant verlassen hat“, sagte Steffi und schlug Christian gegen die Schulter.

„Ach, hör auf!“, sagte Christian. „Ich finde das einfach unglaublich! Ich erzähle Leuten gerne davon.“

„Das ist kein Partytrick, Christian“, sagte Steffi. „Du weißt, dass ich nicht gerne darüber spreche, mit niemandem. Wenn die Leute so etwas hören, denken sie, dass ich **seltsam** bin.“

„Ich finde nicht, dass das seltsam ist!“, sagte Verena. „Ich finde, das ist eigentlich ziemlich cool.“

„Ja, ich auch“, meinte Mark.

„Ich auch“, sagte Nadine schüchtern und lächelte Steffi an. „So etwas wollte ich schon immer können!“

„Sind deine Träume jemals nicht wahr geworden?“, fragte Verena.

„Na klar, das passiert ständig“, erklärte Steffi. „Die wirklich unheimlichen Träume werden nie wahr. Das ist genauso, wenn ich von etwas wirklich