

Pass auf! Sample Round

The primary purpose of posting this sample round is not to provide you with specific questions to study; these questions are a tiny drop in the bucket of the massive question bank. Rather, the goal is to give you an idea of the types of questions you might encounter in a typical round. All of these questions were used in actual Novice or Varsity rounds at regionals or State in 2026. Even though they're being publicly posted, these questions will remain in the question bank, but since questions are typically used no more than once every 3-4 years, it's unlikely that these specific questions will resurface in any official matches before 2029, and even then, they will be used sparingly. Study them if you want to, but you should be under no illusion that knowing the answers to these 25 questions is sufficient preparation for a *Pass auf!* tournament.

In an actual round, all of the 10-point questions will be asked first (one each from the categories Arts & Letters, Current Events & Special Topic, *Erdkunde*, History & Politics, and Odds & Ends – but not always in that order), then all of the 20-point questions, and so on. This sample set, however, is arranged by category rather than by point value.

Unless otherwise specified, if the answer to a question is a person's name, the last name is sufficient, but if you provide a first name in your answer and it's wrong, then you'll be ruled incorrect even if you had the last name correct: bottom line, it's wise to answer with last names only. In the answers to the questions below, any words in parentheses are optional, and things separated by a slash (/) are alternate acceptable answers. The word "multi-part" precedes any question that **either** has multiple questions that you have to answer **or** requires more than one answer, i.e., a list of two or more answers.

Arts & Letters for 10

What is the full name of the German author who wrote short stories, novellas, and novels such as *Buddenbrooks*, *The Magic Mountain (Der Zauberberg)*, and *Death in Venice (Der Tod in Venedig)* and received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1929?

ANS: Thomas Mann

Arts & Letters for 20

Which German actress who starred in the film *Der blaue Engel* left Germany for Hollywood in 1930, resisted offers from the Nazis to return to Germany, and became an American citizen in 1939?

ANS: (Marlene) Dietrich

Arts & Letters for 30

Which German physicist who received the 1932 Nobel Prize in Physics was a pioneer of quantum mechanics and formulated the uncertainty principle that is named after him?

ANS: (Werner) Heisenberg

Arts & Letters for 40

Which German philosopher developed the concept of the *Übermensch*, a person who transcends societal norms and achieves self-realization, in his most famous work, *Also sprach Zarathustra*?

ANS: (Friedrich) Nietzsche

Arts & Letters for 50

Which German composer worked in the Austrian and French royal courts and changed opera as it had been established in the Baroque period, using shortened arias and other techniques to keep the action moving? His operas include *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Alceste*, and *Iphigénie en Tauride*.

ANS: (Christoph Willibald) Gluck

Note about the next five questions: The special topic for 2026 was “Expressionism in the arts of the German-speaking world,” but of course the topic changes every year, and the questions on current events cover the time period from January 2025 through February 2026. Obviously, there is no value to studying these particular questions, but they are provided here as samples.

Current Events & Special Topic for 10

Which word was chosen by the *Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache* as Germany’s 2025 “word of the year”?

ANS: (*die*) *KI-Ära*

Current Events & Special Topic for 20

In which city did four artists form the Expressionist group *Die Brücke* in 1905 and hold their first exhibition in 1906?

ANS: Dresden

Current Events & Special Topic for 30

Which Austrian artist painted *Portrait of Elisabeth Lederer*, which sold at auction in New York in November 2025 for \$236.4 million, the second highest price ever paid for a painting at a public auction?

ANS: (Gustav) Klimt [The record is held by Leonardo’s *Salvator Mundi*, sold at auction in 2017 for \$450.3 million.]

Current Events & Special Topic for 40

Which German Expressionist poet wrote about the dark side of the modern city in works such as “*Der Gott der Stadt*,” “*Die Stadt*,” and “*Umbra Vitae*” and seemed to foresee World War I in “*Der Krieg*,” although he did not live to experience the war as he drowned in an ice-skating accident in 1912 at age 24?

ANS: (Georg) Heym

Current Events & Special Topic for 50

Which former foreign minister of Germany was elected in June 2025 as president of the United Nations General Assembly?

ANS: (Annalena) Baerbock

Erdkunde für 10

Was ist die Landeshauptstadt von Brandenburg?

ANS: Potsdam

Erdkunde für 20

Von welchem österreichischen Bundesland ist Graz die Hauptstadt?

ANS: (die / von der) Steiermark

Erdkunde für 30

Welcher Fluss fließt durch Tübingen, Stuttgart und Heidelberg?

ANS: (der) Neckar

Erdkunde für 40

Welche Inselgruppe besteht aus den Inseln Borkum, Juist, Norderney, Baltrum, Langeoog, Spiekeroog, Wangerooge und anderen kleineren Inseln?

ANS: Ostfriesische Inseln / die Ostfriesischen Inseln

Erdkunde für 50

Multi-part: Was sind drei Städte oder Kreise das Ruhrgebiets?

ANS: [any 3:] Bochum, Bottrop, Dortmund, Duisburg, Ennepe-Ruhr-Kreis, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Hagen, Hamm, Herne, Mülheim (an der Ruhr), Oberhausen, (Kreis) Recklinghausen, (Kreis) Unna, (Kreis) Wesel

History & Politics for 10

Who is the current federal chancellor of Germany?

ANS: (Friedrich) Merz [as of when this question was used in 2026]

History & Politics for 20

What is the official currency of Liechtenstein?

ANS: the Swiss franc / (*der*) *Schweizer Franken*

History & Politics for 30

What is the collective name of the two 1648 peace treaties that ended the Thirty Years War, recognized the Peace of Augsburg, and added Calvinism to the recognized religions, alongside Lutheranism and Catholicism?

ANS: Peace of Westphalia / *der Westfälische Friede*

History & Politics for 40

Multi-part: What are the German names of the two chambers of the Swiss parliament?

ANS: (*der*) *Nationalrat*, (*der*) *Ständerat*

History & Politics for 50

Which English missionary who lived from 675 to 754 and worked to Christianize the Germanic tribes and establish church institutions such as monasteries and dioceses in Thuringia, Hesse, and Bavaria, came to be known as the "Apostle of the Germans"?

ANS: (Saint) Boniface / (*Sankt*) *Bonifatius*

Odds & Ends for 10

Multi-part: What are the two German words for "Saturday"?

ANS: *Samstag*, *Sonnabend*

Odds & Ends for 20

Multi-part: If you are at a *Flohmarkt* and you find a *Schnäppchen*, where are you and what have you found?

ANS: flea market, bargain/good deal/good buy/"a steal"/etc.

Odds & Ends for 30

Multi-part: Standard license plates in Germany begin with a code indicating the city or district in which the vehicle is registered, followed by the coat of arms of the *Bundesland* and then more letters and numbers. Which cities have the one-letter codes L, N, and S?

ANS: [L:] Leipzig, [N:] Nuremberg/*Nürnberg*, [S:] Stuttgart

Odds & Ends for 40

What is the German proverb that is similar to "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"?

ANS: *Ein Spatz/Sperling in der Hand ist besser als die/eine Taube auf dem Dach.* / *Besser/Lieber den Spatz/Sperling in der Hand als die Taube/zehn (Tauben) auf dem Dach.*

Odds & Ends for 50

Which German town on the Romantic Road is home to the annual *Kinderzeche* festival, which re-enacts how a group of children purportedly saved the town during a siege by the Swedish army during the Thirty Years War?

ANS: Dinkelsbühl