

## **Pass auf! Special Topic for 2027: Ferien-Straßen**

by Rustin Buck, State *Pass auf!* coordinator

Germany, Austria, and to a lesser extent Switzerland have dozens of *Ferien-Straßen* or “tourist routes,” each of which links a series of towns and other sites that share something in common. The most famous one is probably *Die Romantische Straße*, known in English as the Romantic Road. The primary purpose of these routes is to promote tourism in those areas – often smaller towns that people might not otherwise think about visiting. Participating towns pool resources to publish promotional brochures, maps, and websites and install uniform signage along the routes. To get an idea of the number and variety of such routes, click [here \(mostly Germany\)](#) and [here \(Austria only\)](#).

*Keine Angst!* Never fear, I’m not asking you to study ALL these routes; that would be nearly impossible. Instead, I have selected **5 routes** for you to focus on. But even that would leave you flailing in a sea of endless links that lead to more links, so I have curated a set of links with what I think is a digestible amount of information. For 4 of the 5 routes, I’m sending you to one English-language brochure in PDF form, and for the fifth route, I’m giving you clear guidance on which specific parts of that route’s website to review.

As you review the provided links, if you want to explore in more depth particular towns/attractions that interest you, feel free to do that, but rest assured that the answers to the 48 questions that I have written on this special topic can be found in the linked materials, without extra research. (Yes, there are 48 “special topic” questions in play in 2027. Where does that number come from? Each year, I compile 5 sets of questions for Novice, 5 sets for regional Varsity, and 8 sets for State Varsity. That’s 18 sets of questions. Within each set, there are 5 Current Events & Special Topic questions, for a total of 90 CE&ST questions. Generally, half those questions (45) should be on current events and the other half (45) on the special topic, but this year I fudged a bit and made 48 questions on the special topic, leaving 42 for current events.)

Here are the **5 Ferien-Straßen that you should study** with links to the recommended material:

**Bergstraße** (Of the 48 questions about *Ferien-Straßen* in the question bank, 7 are about this route.)

**Deutsche Limes-Straße** (4 of the 48 questions)

The questions about this route are fairly general. Review the map on p. 3 of the PDF (pp. 4-5 using the pagination of the booklet itself) and the general info on p. 4 of the PDF (p. 7 of the booklet itself). Other pages to review: pp. 6, 10, 16, 19, and 24 of the PDF (pp. 11, 19, 31, 37, and 47 of the booklet itself). Note on pronunciation: the word *limes* is from Latin, related to our word “limit” (i.e., boundary/limit of the Roman Empire). In Latin, it would be pronounced LEE-mays. In English, it seems to be properly pronounced LYE-meez, although sources differ, but definitely not LYMES like the citrus fruit. In German, people seem to follow German pronunciation rules, thus LEE-mess. Since the word will tend to occur in the German phrase *Deutsche Limes-Straße*, I will instruct the proctors to say LEE-mess.

**Deutsche Märchenstraße** (19 of the 48 questions)

The last page of the PDF with the map and the 66 town-by-town blurbs is by far the most important. Put yourself in my shoes as the question-writer and try to identify which blurbs have the most specific, most important, and most unique tidbits that would yield the best questions.

**Romantische Straße** (10 of the 48 questions)

**Sisi-Straße** (8 of the 48 questions)

Of the 10 tabs across the top of the page, explore *only* the tabs “Bavaria” with its 3 locations, “Austria” with its 5 locations, and “Switzerland” with its 2 locations. If you don’t already know who “Sisi” was, start by reading the biography tab!