

Comparison of Deutsch Downunder 1, Katzensprung 1 and Genau

Deutsch Downunder 1 (published by Pearson Longman)

Course components (total sample outlay - \$360.95, over a suggested 18 month time-frame)

- Course book - \$46.00
- Student activity book - \$34.95, incl. student CD
- Teacher's book (including tests for each chapter, solutions for activity book and tests, blackline masters, transcripts of audio CDs) - \$160.00
- Audio CDs - \$120.00
- Student CD – see student activity book
- Free companion website

Strong points

- Excellent grammar explanations for complete beginners.
- Course book has a clear layout with easy-to-read headings.
- Cartoon format less likely to date.
- *Lerntipps* encourage good learning strategies.
- Revision section at the end of each chapter (with answers at the back of book).
- Ideas given for internet research and ICT tasks are very general (not linked to specific sites). This should increase the course's longevity.

Weak points

- Some activities are duplicated in the activity book and the course book – this could confuse some students, or make them feel they can take a pen to the course book!
- Vocabulary list in back of course book a bit hard to read (although the list at the end of each chapter is good).
- The student CD contains a cached version of the website, a pdf version of the activity book and key pages from the course book. It's not as interactive as other CDs on the market.

In conclusion

A well-paced, comprehensive course for the Australian context. Accessible to all students, from the very able to those experiencing a learning difficulty. I very much like the clearly written instructions.

***Katzensprung 1* (published by Heinemann)**

Course components (total sample outlay - \$330.55, over a suggested 12 month time-frame)

- Textbook - \$45.10, incl. student CD-ROM
- Workbook – \$22.55
- Teacher’s Resource and Assessment Kit (including tests for each chapter, solutions for workbook and transcripts of audio CDs) - \$169.95
- Audio CDs - \$92.95
- Student CD-ROM – see textbook

Strong points

- CD-ROM focuses on consolidation and extension, not just repetition. I like the way that students can see a sample for each writing task (these are all using ICT), and then be linked to the correct software (e.g. Word) to complete the task.
- Reading tasks on CD-ROM.
- *Pluspunkte* in each chapter, to extend the more able students.
- One book per year (e.g. *Katzensprung 1* in Year 8, *Katzensprung 2* in Year 9 and *Katzensprung 3* in Year 10) gives students a better sense of achievement and progress – although this can be a negative as the cost is greater.
- I prefer the photo-stories (in place of cartoons) as I like the use of real students (but appreciate this may date the course more quickly).
- Vocabulary lists are duplicated in the workbook, making homework more accessible.
- Gives ideas for internet research and ICT tasks.

Weak points

- Busy layout in both textbook and workbook – this can be distracting to students experiencing a learning difficulty.
- Grammar explanations can sometimes be too simplistic or lack detail.
- The listening section on the CD-ROM is not very challenging, and it would have been good to have cultural information for each chapter.
- The grammar section on CD-ROM is quite dry (‘drag and drop’).

In conclusion

Very bright, modern and colourful, this course would appeal to most students. Teachers who are using it are generally happy, with one of the few criticisms being that it moves too quickly for some students. The interactive student CD-ROM is a good addition to the course (and students will like the certificates they can print off with their results), and will help teachers who aren’t very confident with ICT, but it doesn’t contain anything especially innovative.

Genau (published by Thomson)

Course components (total sample outlay - \$443.45, over a suggested 18-24 month time-frame)

- *Kursbuch* - \$40.50
- *Arbeitsbuch* (with student audio CD) – 26.50
- Teacher Resource Pack book (including tests for each chapter, 140 blackline masters, solutions for activity book and blackline masters, transcripts of audio CDs and a methodology CD-ROM) – \$195.95
- Audio CDs - \$180.50
- Free interactive website (due in 2005)

Strong points

- I like the presentation of this book the best out of the three.
- Grammar is given a good focus and is well presented.
- Vocabulary is well-presented at the end of each chapter, using colour to show grammatical function (although the English isn't given – many teachers will prefer this).

Weak points

- I checked a few of the websites required to complete an activity. One no longer existed and another was far too complex for a beginning German student. Others were great, so it seems to be a case of pot luck!
- The student audio CD which is included with the *Arbeitsbuch* actually goes with activities in the *Kursbuch*.

In conclusion

A well-paced, clearly presented course which should appeal to a broad cross-section of students.

Disclaimer:

- I hope my thoughts help teachers in making choices about which course to use. There are plenty of other choices on the market, including *Geni@l*, *Logo!*, *Projekt Deutsch*, *Zick Zack Neu* and *Eins, Zwei, Drei*. These three courses have been compared here as they were all released on to the market recently (2003-2004).
- My intention is not to cause offence to any writers and/or publishers.
- Prices correct as at July 2005.

Note:

- I believe the best student CD-ROM on the market at the moment is the CD-ROM which accompanies *Geni@l IA* – this could be used to supplement any Stage 4 course.
- All three courses are available for loan from the German Language Consultant, should you prefer to make your own comparison. Call 02 9886 7643.