

Immersion Handbook for Students

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1. All About Immersion

Why study immersively?

The global spread and importance of English cannot be denied. In addition to its presence within the worlds of business and finance, English has been widely adopted as the *lingua franca* by the international science community.

As a result, many university courses both at undergraduate level but especially at Masters level and above in Switzerland, will be taught in English. In order to meet the language demands of such studies, the universities have expressed the importance of students being much better equipped when they start university.

Therefore, the immersion programme serves as the ideal preparation for such courses or opens up many more opportunities to study in the USA, the UK, Ireland and Australia among others.

The main concept underlying the programme is that you are learning the language naturally through performing tasks and getting things done, and where the focus is still on the subject and not the language itself.

What you can expect from immersion

Having collected data for several years from placement test results, an immersion class typically finishes the programme with an advanced C1 level (or higher). This is in contrast to the achieved level of B2 by a regular class.

Despite initial concerns, numerous research studies have confirmed that immersion students' subject knowledge does not suffer as a result of being taught in English.

However, what we cannot guarantee is a native-like accent at the end of the programme. Even if all your immersion teachers were native speakers (which the majority are not), it is probable that they all have different accents, too. Therefore, the fact that most of your immersion teachers are Swiss is not a problem at all, as long as their accent does not interfere with the understanding of the subject. The vast array of native and non-native English accents around the world is something that you will have to get used to anyway.

If you really want to develop a specific native accent, then you need to fully immerse yourself in that country for an extended period of time.

What teachers expect from you

- That you make as much effort as possible to communicate in English at all times during the lesson. This therefore includes the asking and answering of questions, as well as when working in groups.
- That you assist your classmates with the language whenever appropriate and that you are willing to read longer English texts even if they include technical terms.
- That even if you are not sure how to say something you still try, as it is better to speak with a few mistakes than be perfectly silent.

2. Sample Immersion Timetable

School Year	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Lessons
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	
Biology *			2	2	2	2			160
Chemistry *			2	2	2	2			160
Economics			2	2					80
Geography *	2	2	2	2	2				200
History			2	2	2	2	2	2	240
Computer Science *	2	2	1	1					120
Mathematics			3	3	3	3	4	4	400
Physics			2	2	2	2	2	2	240
Total									1600

* At least two subjects from biology, chemistry, geography or computer science will be taught in English

Please note that this timetable is only a guide, as teachers may start teaching in English slightly earlier or later than stated. This primarily depends on the nature of the topics being taught at the time. Additionally, note that other deviations from the timetable may occur during the programme because some topics are simply better suited to being taught in German (e.g. Swiss law).

Subject changes could also arise due to staff availability but this does not cause any problems as the school is well above the minimum 800 lessons stipulated by the educational authorities.

3. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will there be a lot of extra work because the lessons are in English?

A: At the beginning, there will be more work because there are many new terms to learn but former students adapted to the new situation very quickly.

Q: Will it be a problem if I do not know the German for specific terms?

A: Usually not but the German equivalents of key terms will be mentioned, especially during the earlier stages of a subject or when the terms are very different.

Q: Will it be possible to go on an exchange year during the programme?

A: It may be possible to go on an exchange year. A shorter exchange of six months may also be possible if suitable schools can be found. Generally, the second year is the best time for such an exchange but students should remember that there is no right to an exchange.

Q: What have former immersion students enjoyed most about the programme?

A: That with time they were able to speak more fluently and without fear of speaking in a foreign language in front of others. They also started to think in English, meaning that for some it became more like a second first language.

Q: Will immersion teachers be correcting my language errors?

A: The important point here is that the focus is on the subject in contrast to the accuracy of the language. However, teachers will intervene when they deem it necessary, say for more serious and repeating errors that could lead to misunderstanding. This is why the English lessons are vitally important; there you will receive the structured language instruction required for your immersion lessons.

Q: Will I have to write my Matura Paper in English?

A: Even though this is not compulsory, it is something we would strongly recommend as it is an excellent opportunity to write such a paper in English. You will also be given support in the form of a workshop highlighting the main points about writing a paper in English, in addition to general language assistance should any problems arise.

Q: Will I receive an International Baccalaureate (IB) certificate at the end?

A: No, as the IB programme is completely different and primarily designed with international schools in mind. However, you will receive a certificate acknowledging the successful completion of the «Zweisprachige Matur». Your certificate will also contain an English translation and make reference to the subjects taught and examined immersively.

Q: Would former students choose to do the programme again?

A: Almost all have said that they would definitely do it again because it was an excellent experience. The few that would not do it again mentioned that the level of the class was high and caused them some problems.

Q: What do immersion students intend to do with their English afterwards?

A: The most typical responses are for travel or for future studies either in an English-speaking country or in Switzerland itself.

4. Current Immersion Team



Remo Badii
Physics

Lorenz Böckli
Geography



Irmgard Bühler
Mathematics

Karin Bühler
Computer Science



Francesco Canonaco
Chemistry



Christina Frei
Economics

Simon Hallström
Mathematics



Carole Jobin
Geography

Stephan Keiser
Economics



Sarah Knecht
Biology



Ariane Knüsel
History

Michael Laufer
Economics



Andreas Meier
Biology

Günther Palfinger
Mathematics/Physics



Rita Stadler
Mathematics



Caroline Streif
Economics

Daniela Tenger
History



Wolfgang Zierhofer
Geography

Colin Browne
Immersion Coach



5. School and Classroom Vocabulary

School Administration

Kanti Baden	Baden Upper Secondary School*
Schulleitung	school management
Rektor	headmaster, principal, head of school
Prorektor	deputy headmaster, vice principal
Abwart / Abwärtin	caretaker ^{BE} , janitor ^{AE}
Arbeitswoche	(week-long) workshop
Assistent	assistant or lab. technician for the sciences
Aufnahmeprüfung	entrance test / exam
Austauschschüler	exchange student / guest student
Berufsberatung	careers guidance
Besuchstag	open day, open house day
Betreuer	supervisor, mentor
Elternabend	parents' evening / night
Exkursion	excursion / field trip
Fachschaft	department
Fachschaftsvorsitzende	head of department; e.g. head of the English department
Halbklassenunterricht	half-class teaching / lesson
Hausdienstpersonal	maintenance staff / assistant caretakers, cleaners, cleaning staff
Klassenlager	class camp
Lehrerfortbildung	teacher training
Lehrerkonferenz	teachers' meeting
Lehrling	apprentice
Matura	final / school leaving / matriculation exams
Maturaarbeit	final year paper, «Matura»* paper
Maturafeier	school leaving ceremony

Mediotheksangestellte	librarian
Notenabgabe	submission of marks
Notenkonferenz	discussion of marks meeting
Praktikant	trainee (teacher), intern AE
Schularzt	school doctor
Schulausflug	school outing
Schülerorganisation	students' organisation
Schulinterne Beratung	school counselling
Schulkalender	school calendar
Schulkommission	school board
Schulreise	school trip
Sekretariat	school office
Sekretariatsangestellte	clerk, head clerk, office staff
Semesterverzeichnis / Stundenplan	timetable, schedule AE
Sozialdienst	civilian service
Stellvertreter	supply teacher BE, replacement / cover depending on context, substitute teacher AE
Weiterbildung	further education
zweisprachige Matur	bilingual programme

Classroom Management

Absenzenheft	absence booklet
Arbeitsplatz (im Labor)	workbench
Daumenregel	rule of thumb
die Schule schwänzen	to play truant (to skip school) / to play hooky ^{AE}
dispensiert	excused / exempt (from)
eine Lektion vorholen	to bring forward a lesson
eine Lektion verschieben	to shift / move a lesson
Einzahlungsschein	paying-in slip

Ergänzungsfach	subsidiary subject / minor (subject) ^{AE*}
Folgefehler	error carried forward (ECF)
Freifach	optional subject / elective (subject) ^{AE*}
Gedankenexperiment	Gedankenexperiment, thought-experiment
Grundlagenfach	foundation (core) subject
Hellraumprojektor	overhead projector
Klassenbuch	class book (class register if just used for attendance)
Klassenbuchverantwortliche/r	person responsible for the register
Klassenchef	class spokesperson / representative
Klassenkasse	class account
Klassenkassier	class treasurer
Klassenlehrer	class tutor, class / form teacher
Klassenlehrerstunde	class tutor's / form teacher's lesson
Klassensprecher	class spokesperson / representative in the students' organisation / council
Leitprogramm	self-study module
Lernkartei	flash cards
Nachprüfung	make-up test / exam
Plaudertasche	chatterbox
Praktikum	practical (as in lab work)
Probezeit	probationary period
schwätzen	to chat
Schwerpunktfach	specialty subject / major (subject) ^{AE}
spicken	to cheat / copy
Spickzettel	cheat-sheet
Strafarbeit	punishment
Streichnote	ignored lowest mark
Stundenausfall	lesson cancellation
Tafelputzdienst	blackboard duty
unentschuldigte Absenz	unauthorised absence
Unterrichtsbuch	textbook

Wahlfach	chosen compulsory subject*
Wandkarte	map
Wandtafel	blackboard
Zeugnis	school report
Zwischenresultat	interim result
Zwischenstunde	free lesson
Zwischenzeugnis	interim / mid-term report

Places in School

Aula	(school) assembly hall / auditorium
Gang	corridor / hallway
Garderobe	cloak room
Getränkeautomat	drinks machine
Kopierraum	photocopy room
Lehrerzimmer	staffroom
Mediothek	library, media centre
Mensa	school canteen, cafeteria*
Pausenplatz	school yard
Postfach (Lehrerzimmer)	pigeonhole
Raucherzone	smoking area
Schliessfach	locker
Schüleraufenthaltsraum	recreation / common room
Stockwerk	floor
Treppenhaus	stairway, stairwell
Turnhalle	gym (gymnasium)
Umkleidekabine	changing room

* English only necessary perhaps when dealing with English-speaking countries.

BE – British English

AE – American English

6. Useful Expressions in the Classroom

Translation

What's the English for?
How do you say in English?
What does mean?
I don't know the word for

Language issues

Can I answer/explain this in German?
I can't find the words.
Sorry, I didn't quite get/understand that. Could you explain it again please?

Not hearing

Sorry, I didn't quite get/catch that. Could you say it again please?
Could you repeat the question please?
Could you speak up a little please?

Apologising

Sorry, I forgot to do my homework.
Sorry, I forgot to bring my textbook.
Sorry that I'm late.

Asking for help

Could you help me with this exercise please?
Could you give me a hint? I'm stuck.
I'm really lost. Could you help me please?

Homework

What do we have to do for homework?
I had some problems with the homework.
When is the homework due?

Tests/exams

Do we need to know this for the test?
How much is the test worth?
Could we take another look at before the test?
Are we allowed to use a dictionary in the exam?

7. Reading Numbers and Common Symbols

Numbers:

101	one hundred and one
199	one hundred and ninety-nine
2,880	two thousand, eight hundred and eighty
6,600,000	six million, six hundred thousand
7,777,000	seven million, seven hundred and seventy-seven thousand
0.7	nought/zero point seven
0.07	nought/zero point oh seven or point oh/zero seven ¹
0.185	nought/zero point one eight five
€598,340	five hundred and ninety-eight thousand, three hundred and forty euros
£478m	four hundred and seventy-eight million pounds
\$7.5bn	seven point five billion dollars
1m	one million
3bn	three billion

Please note:

- British English is with «and» while American English is without «and».
- The comma above is used to separate the thousands and is NOT a decimal point.

Exponential Notation:

10^1	ten
10^2	100 / ten squared
10^3	one thousand / ten cubed
10^4	ten thousand / ten to the (power of) four ^{BE} / ten to the fourth ^{AE}
10^5	one hundred thousand / ten to the (power of) five ^{BE} / ten to the fifth ^{AE}
10^6	one million / ten to the (power of) six ^{BE} / ten to the sixth ^{AE}
10^7	ten million / ten to the (power of) seven ^{BE} / ten to the seventh ^{AE}
10^8	one hundred million / ten to the (power of) eight ^{BE} / ten to the eighth ^{AE}

1 NOTE: «oh» never said before decimal point, only after.

10^9	one billion ^{BE / AE}	one thousand million ^{EU}	«eine Milliarde»
10^{10}	ten billion ^{BE / AE}	ten thousand million ^{EU}	
10^{11}	one hundred billion ^{BE / AE}	one hundred thousand million ^{EU}	
10^{12}	one trillion ^{BE / AE}	one billion ^{EU}	«eine Billion»

BE – British English
 AE – American English
 EU – Mainland Europe

Please note:

There are two different numbering systems used when talking about billions. That is, the American system (where one billion is one thousand million) and the European system (where one billion is one million million). The American system is now widely used within British English, which was not always the case. Even though the word «milliard» does exist in British English, it is rarely used.

Years:

1800	eighteen hundred
1905	nineteen oh five
1984	nineteen eighty four
2006	two thousand and six (twenty oh six was not widely used)
2018	twenty eighteen (although you will still hear two thousand and eighteen)

Dates:

In British English, dates usually have the order day/month/year such as the example: *I handed in my work on 14 June 2018* (or *14th June 2018*). This date would be spoken as “the fourteenth of June, twenty eighteen”. Therefore, note that even though “the” and “of” are spoken here, they are not written.

In American English, dates usually have the order month/day/year such as the example:

I handed in my work on June 14, 2018. This date would be spoken as “June (the) fourteenth, twenty eighteen” or “June fourteen, twenty eighteen”.

Symbols:

=	equals / is equal to
$\sqrt{\quad}$	square root of
π	/paɪ/