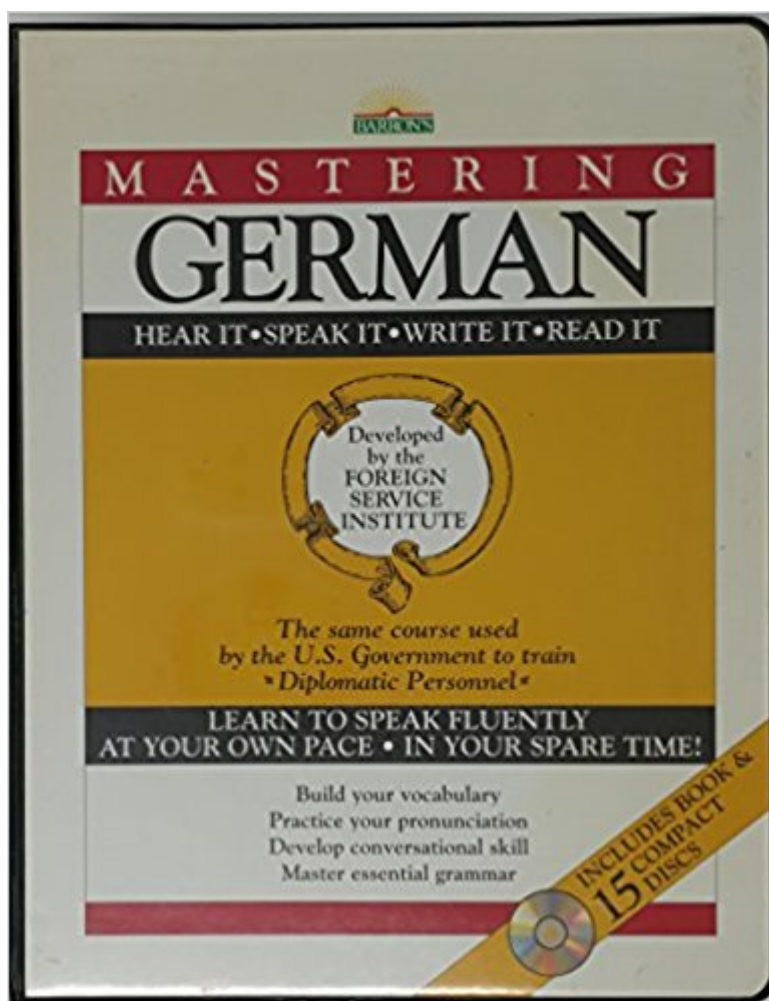


The book was found

Mastering German: With 15 Compact Discs (Mastering Series: Level 1 CD Packages)



Synopsis

These intensive programs are complete language immersion courses, and were created by the federal agency that trains U.S. government personnel in foreign language proficiency. They start with grammar and vocabulary basics, then bring students to proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. This program contains a grammar textbook plus fifteen compact discs.

Book Information

Series: Mastering Series: Level 1 CD Packages

Audio CD

Publisher: Barron's Educational Series (March 13, 1992)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 9.9 x 3.5 x 12.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 29 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,526,406 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #34 in [Books > Books on CD](#)
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[Foreign Languages](#) > [German](#) #1451 in [Books > Books on CD](#) > [Nonfiction](#)

Customer Reviews

So happy to have it :) it is very helpful, when I got it I was surprised it was bigger than I was expecting, I speak 6 languages and I know this book is going to help me a lot.

The recording is Average Good and clear to me and lots of repetitive good for learning Thank you

An amazing program for learning and commence for just learning. The speaking essentials are fabulous.

Baron's is the former FSI (Foreign Service Institute) material. I have tried a lot of self-teaching language material and the FSI stuff is by far the best and most comprehensive, including grammar, drills on difficult pronunciations, culture notes and depth of practice.

Let me preface this by saying I am first generation German/American who is familiar with the language. My major gripe is the fact that the audio drills do not include the words in English, this is a major disadvantage compared to other courses such as Berlitz (who have the insight to include them). Secondly, the audio drills are spoken too fast, I found myself going back 2-3 times to absorb what was said. Thirdly, because the drills were spoken so quickly the words were poorly enunciated, and that hinders comprehension. I was hoping to use this course in my car, which would be impossible, due to my previously mentioned reasons. This course would be best for someone who has the time to sit at home and listen while reading the book.

I was disappointed with the product. First, they have a lot of male speakers and just a few women speakers. This would be acceptable, but then you will hear in some places a male voice saying that their husband works at the consulate, etc. It gets to be funny. Second, in doing the drills, a person speaks the drill in English. I think I have acceptable English speaking ability, so I do not understand why they would have a person speaking ANY English in the program. Third, in doing the drills, just after a person says the sentence in German, you get about the first three words out in German and then the speaker says the next sentence in English. So, you are trying to speak German over someone saying the next sentence in English. Fourth, the sentences in German are poorly translated. They translate the German into English sentence structure which means you must figure out just how they would say the sentence in German not English. For example, on page 49 in the dialogue "Zu welcher Bank gehen Sie?" is translated into "Which bank are you going to?" I think a correct translation would be "To which bank going you?" So, this makes it harder to learn not only the words, but put the words into proper German, unless, of course, you only plan to say just the sentences you are learning in the program. Most of the translations are done this way. On well, I guess it is better than nothing.

This is a short review of Barron's (and similar vendors) FSI German with 15 CD's. For a long, rambling review of a related product, see my review of Barron's FSI German: Book One. First the good: 1. This is the only available program for serious, complete, audio with text, self-instruction, of basic spoken German and elementary grammar for English speakers. 2. Audio is realistic spoken street German. Various accents, various voices, fast pace, slurred sounds. This is what you will actually hear. This is not stage German. 3. Drills force substantial engram development. 4. Highly organized, stepwise presentation appeals to linear thinkers and serious learners. 5. Adherence to the program of drills and its completion guarantees a basic level of spoken German. 6. Excellent

remastered audio is available inexpensively or to some extent for free. Now the bad:

1. The repetitive drills are painful.
2. The original Federal Government materials, both audio and text, are poor quality. To the point where they are almost unusable.
3. Barron's text is riddled with introduced petty errors. This is a serious problem for the beginner, and an annoyance for non-beginners.
4. Free remastered downloads vary in quality and are a pain to download.
5. The program is only suitable for desk study. It is not suitable while driving or jogging.

And the ugly:

1. Physically ugly original typewriter manuscript.
2. Original Government audio has dead air, hisses, gurgling noises, etc. It really sounds as though there is office background noise and muffled traffic in the background. One of the spoken dialects is currently considered non-standard German.

The neutral:

1. Old school. Quaint. Pure "Hochdeutsch." None of the current pervasive American English in spoken German.
2. Does not conform with recent spelling reform.
3. Quality and price varies greatly from vendor to vendor. And the two are not correlated in any way.
4. The audio was an afterthought. The original program was meant to be used with a professional tutor in small groups.
5. Headings and such are in English. My preference would be to have as much German as possible.

My recommendation: Go to the dot com site, ForeignServiceInstitute, and buy their DVD version of the mp3 files for audio and pdf of the original text. Both are high-quality and inexpensive. If you need a paper copy of the text, have one made and bound at a copy center. Yes, you can download a pretty good set of mp3 files (parts of perhaps 2 files are even somewhat better than the ForeignServiceInstitute files, because they are louder), and pdf of the text, from the web for free, but it is a tedious pain. Barron's book is riddled with petty errors, so cannot be recommended. The original Government materials are terrible, so should be avoided. Most other vendors are just copies of the Government material, so should be avoided. This program would be only part of a German language learning plan. Be realistic. It will take about 2200 hours of serious study to become proficient in the language. For a start, this FSI program will take a few hundred hours. But at some point you will want to hire a trained tutor. They are harder to find than you would think. You need someone who is specifically trained in linguistics and DaF. As an aside. This program needs serious updating, serious re-recording of the audio, and serious visual improvement. A knowledgeable German scholar should be able to turn this public-domain program into a stellar product at little out-of-pocket expense. There must be some German linguistics graduate student, who wants to take on the task, copyright, distribute electronically, and make some money. I would certainly buy a copy. In the interim, if you are serious about learning German on your own, this program works. Get the ForeignServiceInstitute copy. Update 6 May 2012 After several months study with the mp3 files from the commercial ForeignServiceInstitute and the free dot org site (just search for FSI German Basic), I switch my

recommendation to the free files. The commercial files have been cleaned such that the pauses for student oral response are too short for a good speaking pace. The dot org files give much longer (and in my opinion better) periods for student response. But if one likes to be forced to speak quickly, choose the commercial files. Just remember, the free files require several dozen tedious downloads.

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