

Understanding rental agreements – a simple explanation for students

What must be included in a rental agreement?

A valid rental agreement should include the following:

Item	Explanation
Name & address	Of both the landlord and the tenant
Address of the apartment	Full address, including floor and unit number
Start date & duration	When the rental begins and whether it's fixed-term or open-ended
Base rent (cold rent)	Monthly amount before utilities or extra charges
Utilities / additional costs	Costs for water, garbage disposal, heating, etc.
Total rent (warm rent)	Base rent + utilities
Security deposit	Also called "deposit", maximum 3 months' base rent in Germany
Notice period	Usually 3 months (standard in Germany unless stated otherwise)
Signatures	Must be signed by both tenant and landlord

Sample rental agreement:

Mietvertrag zwischen:

- Vermieter: Max Mustermann
- Mieter: Maria International
- Adresse der Wohnung: Musterstraße 12, 3. Stock, 12345 Musterstadt
- 1. Beginn des Mietverhältnisses: 1. Oktober 2025
- 2. Dauer: unbefristet
- 3. Grund-/Kaltmiete: 450 €
- 4. Nebenkosten (Pauschale): 120 €
- 5. Gesamtmiete pro Monat: 570 €
- 6. Kautions: 1.350 € (entspricht 3 Monatskaltmieten)
- 7. Kündigungsfrist: 3 Monate (zum Monatsende)
- 8. Haustiere: Nicht erlaubt
- 9. Anmerkungen: Fahrradabstellraum kann genutzt werden

In practice, rental agreements can be quite detailed and several pages long. They might contain additional rules, so please read them carefully and get help from others, for example, the International Office, if you find certain passages hard to understand.

Kind regards
International Office