It's been a three whole months now since I started my ELA in Dinkelsbühl, Germany. Since I have arrived, the situation with Covid has been getting worse here. My weeks have been going fast and I cannot believe I've already been in Germany for so long. The Christmas markets have unfortunately been cancelled due to Covid; only small stalls are allowed some of which sell soaps, small sweets and Glühwein. Students have also been told to wear masks again in the classroom. Nonetheless, the atmosphere here is amazing and the decorations are beautiful. Since my last blog a lot has happened--as I mentioned, Covid is spreading fast and in Bavaria, where I am, most restaurants and bars are closing by 10pm. Also, all the Erasmus trips planned for next year have been cancelled. At the moment, it's snowing and is very cold. The morning walks to the school are a lot harder in the snow. I was out of the school for a week as I got Covid after my trip home with the German Erasmus group in Ireland. I had to take two self-tests and quarantine in my room until I could get a PCR test. I was lucky though as, at the time, there were not many students in the student accommodation so I could still use the kitchen myself in order to cook my own food. As I couldn't leave the house to go to the shops, some people I know here brought me food to cook which was really very nice of them. Unfortunately, the nearest PCR test centre was too far away for me to travel myself, so I had to call many doctors to get a PCR test. With the

help of many people, I finally got a test at a dermatologist's in Dinkelsbühl for sixty euro. I am planning to travel home for Christmas and I am really looking forward to celebrating with my family. Travel restrictions are changing--in order for me to travel home from Germany I need a negative antigen test and a passenger locator form. Luckily there is an antigen rapid test centre outside my student accommodation that I can attend by booking an appointment online, from which I will then receive a certificate of a negative result which I can show at the airport.

Anyway, enough about Covid! Working in the school has been going well and all the students have been very kind and helpful. At the moment there is a lot of focus on business letters, exam preparation and pronunciation work in the classroom. After school on Tuesdays I help out with the students doing homework and answer any questions they might have. I enjoy it a lot as each week the year group changes, and I get to experience differences in the level of language competency and interest. I travelled to Nuremberg last week and it was beautiful. There were many food stalls and decorations all around. I travelled on the train and I am finally getting more comfortable with the transport system here and I have more confidence travelling by myself. As I said in the last blog on the busses there is no announcement for the upcoming stop, but I have gotten used to my surroundings and feel more comfortable asking people for help. As the days go by I find out about new things and places I like and feel comfortable with. While I am here in Dinkelsbühl, I receive food vouchers for twenty euro a month for a local supermarket called Kupsch and when I don't have the vouchers, I shop in a different supermarket which is very expensive and the products are a bit unfamiliar, but the more I look around and talk to people the more I find out about things such as different supermarkets and small businesses where I can go to make life here a little bit easier.

All in all, I feel like I am beginning to understand things a bit more. During the week I also started to attend weekly German classes in the vocational school here to help maintain and improve my German skills. The class is three to four hours long and we focus on grammar and pronunciation. I like the class as it is very small and all the students in the class are not native German speakers, so we all are learning a lot together. Some students in the class are Romanian and Russian. It has been great to get to know new people from different backgrounds.

Laura