Germany: A Teaching Unit for the High School

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Purpose of Thesis

As Germany has become a major economic and political force since its original unification under Bismark, the importance of Germany has grown in relation to the United States and our global culture. To fully understand the development of Germany, one must study the history, religion, government, economics, geography and culture of the region. The purpose of this project is to orient students of many academic levels and learning styles to Germany, German people, German culture, and German history. This project contains materials which can be adapted to suit grade levels, learning styles, and time constraints.

The next page gives the generalizations and goals which are addressed by the exercises included in this project. The description which follows outlines the research and development of the materials which are included in this project. The use of the completed educational materials is discussed and suggestions made for the revision and reuse of the materials. It is hoped that through the use of these materials the students will become familiar with Germany, its history, its people, its customs, and its way of life today as well as in the past. In the process, it is hoped that a new tolerance and understanding of the similarities between the United States and Germany and their respective peoples will be realized.
Generalizations

1. Germany has vast and varied climates and landscapes.
2. Germany is a region of diverse cultural differences.
3. Germany has a long history of conflict and disunion.
4. The natural resources available in Germany are numerous.
5. Political and economic systems have varied in Germany through time.

Goals

1. Understand relationships between land, climate, and ways of life in Germany.
2. Describe historical development fostering economic, social, and cultural exchange within Germany.
3. Recognize Germany's rise in global contributions.
4. Incorporate current issues facing Germany into understanding of the standing nation.
5. Define significant terms associated with Germany.
6. Sequence significant events in German history.
7. Locate major cities, landforms, and bodies of water in and around Germany.
8. Identify the major factors influencing the climates of Germany and determine their effects.
9. Identify major natural resources and their uses.
10. Identify the importance of waterways for transportation and economic activity.
11. Describe the political system of Germany.
12. List and give the significance of major industries in Germany.
The purpose of this completed project, consisting of a unit plan, two learning centers, and a resource packet, is to provide knowledge about the country of Germany to students with many different learning abilities and learning styles. The goals of the state mandated curriculum are achieved through including Germany's history, geography, economy, culture, government and language. Ultimately, this project could be used in teaching middle school and high school students about the diverse and influential country of Germany and its people. At the conclusion of this unit of study, students will have an understanding of the many regions of this country. Students will realize how the regions compliment each other and how they impact the United States and the rest of the world.

Germany was chosen as the topic for this project because of a trip I took to Germany in the summer of 1988. Personal interests always make a more interesting research project. The suggestion of Germany by my student teaching supervisor as a possible topic confirmed my first choice as a suitable one because my student teaching experience would offer a forum for using the materials developed for this project. A foundation and direction for research were established by acquiring a list of available textbooks and juvenile resources in the Educational Resources Section of Bracken Library.

Resources were also gathered from the General Collection area of Bracken and the Social Studies Materials Center in the History Department. In addition, personal collections
belonging to friends, former teacher, parents and myself were consulted. Four topics of concentration emerged: World War I, World War II, geography and topography, and reunification. Topography, and Reunification.

After accumulating a sufficient amount of materials for consultation, the revision of existing material, development of new material, and formal writing began. The resource packet offers an abundance of prepared activities ranging from creative, hands-on learning to the traditional read and write format. Examples of some of these creative activities have been added at the conclusion of this document. Many of the high school and middle school textbooks and their resource manuals were used to lift appropriate materials for the topics of study. However, in many cases, the existing activity did not lend itself well to the desired effect and the overall direction of the project. The activities were revised or totally rewritten to suit the situation and provide continuity to the project as a whole.

Many of the activities which appear in the resource packet are original ideas spurred by a piece of information or an adaptation of activities experienced in other classroom settings. Personal experiences with interesting and enjoyable activities added many exercises and much variety to the project as a whole after these activities were revised to suit the topic.

Two books which were of immense help in the development of the learning centers were Panati's *Extraordinary Origins of*
Everyday Things and Hart's *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*. Michael H. Hart's book of historic figures offers interesting and detailed accounts of the lives of many Germans which can demonstrate the impact of German accomplishments through the work sheets developed to accompany each article. Charles Panati's compilation of the origins of things which affect the students on a daily basis offers some insight into those items which might never have been considered in a study of Germany. The enrichment activities developed to accompany the articles from Panati's book will further exemplify the impact of the German people on the American culture of today.

Three packets included in the resource materials are prepared by the German Information Center and the Goethe Institute. These provide for quick and concise integration of the social studies and foreign language courses. One activity packet concentrates on a comparison of the U.S. geography and that of Germany. A packet on reunification concentrates on all aspects of the proposition of a combined nation. The third packet concentrates on questions like "Why study Germany?" with answers being derived from hands-on exercises, films and exploration of personal impressions. At the secondary level, many school districts offer German. With the help of the German instructor, a social studies class can be augmented and the curriculums combined to create a greater sense of pertinence of the topic in the students' lives.
The unit plan demonstrates a typical unit of instruction for a high school geography class. It may be used as it stands or in conjunction with any of the exercises in the resource packet or learning centers. This plan could be used to facilitate the recognition of Germany as a fascinating and exciting modern culture with a deeply rooted history. The interactive exercises and oral activities will aid students in their research, cooperation, and communication skills. A copy of this unit has been included at the conclusion of this document.

This unit was implemented while student teaching in Central Indiana. The results were outstanding, and students responded with interest and enthusiasm. In the future, the unit will be augmented with the inclusion of some of the materials from the resource packet which were not complete at the time of instruction. The method of evaluation which was used for the unit returned unsatisfactory results and did not reflect the level of knowledge and understanding held by the students. Next time this unit is used the testing method will be altered to include a more expressive and complete form rather than the objective testing method used recently. For example, to coincide with the aforementioned unit comparing German geography to United States geography, an essay question will be included asking students to compare and contrast the information in the unit in a page or more.

Overall, the completed project will be an asset to my career. Developing these educational materials has been an
endeavor which has added depth and insight to my educational experience at Ball State.
Creative Activities

1. Have students listen to a piece of German music (any type) and have them draw what they hear — freeform, expressive, an actual work of art — and display their work on a bulletin board.

2. Encourage students to create a mobile showing the different industries or products or natural resources or kinds of castles or city symbols.

3. Ask students to research German uniforms from World Wars I or II and recreate a uniform of their choice. As an enrichment exercise for the class, students could deliver an oral presentation to explain the symbolism of all the parts of the uniform.

4. Have students listen to the German language records as a group and repeat the words as they are stated on the record.

5. Students can create a model of a German Unterseeboot from World War I or a German bomber plane from World War II.

6. Have students write an imaginary interview of a German Jew in a concentration camp then enact the interview live in front of the class or on videotape using friends from the class.

7. Keep a collective class scrapbook or wall of German current events during a one month period before, during and after the unit on Germany.

8. Compare the German monetary system to that of the United States.
   - how and where it is made
   - different denominations of money
   - figure exchange rates

9. Teach the songs "Three Blind Mice" and "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" auf Deutsch (in German) to experience the sound of German words in a familiar song and have the class sing together.
Unit Plan

Day 1

Goals: 1. Introduce Germany as the new topic for classwork.
2. Establish impression & give opinions of Germany and the German people.

Materials: 1. 30 copies of "Impressions of Germany and the Germans"
2. 30 copies of "The Location of Germany in Europe"
3. Creativity and Ideas of students

Activities: 1. Short introduction to topic of discussion.
   - Germany
2. Brainstorm what students think of when they hear about Germany.
3. Discussion of brainstormed ideas.
4. Complete attitude inventory.
5. Discuss answers to attitude inventory in conjunction with the brainstormed ideas drawing conclusions using similarities and differences.
6. Homework-"Location of Germany in Europe" sheet
   - Explain directions. Answer questions. Give a few minutes to begin before class ends.

Day 2

Goals: 1. Establish understanding of the location of Germany in relationship to the U.S. and Europe.
2. Give background information on German history, religion, population, topography, and economy.

2. Transparencies of a world map, European map and a German map.
3. Transparencies outlining lecture/discussion material of Goal #2.

Activities: 1. Using the map transparencies, discuss the homework assignment and relationships of Germany to its international neighbors.
2. Lecture/Discussion of factual material over Germany as a general overview of the country.

Days 3-8

Cooperative Learning Exercise:
Travel Brochure and Speech

Goals: 1. Create a travel brochure about a particular region of Germany which has been introduced in the topography section the previous day.
2. Improve research skills.
3. Describe, in written and oral exercises the information found through research.
Materials: 1. Posters, visual aids, travel catalogs, almanacs, maps, atlases, and pictorial essays of Germany or having information about Germany from the school and public libraries.
2. 8 1/2" x 11" paper folded in thirds for the final copy of the brochure.
3. 3" x 5" index cards for the oral presentation.
4. 30 copies of the criteria for the completed brochure and oral presentation.

Criteria: 1. One paragraph must be written per subtopic for the region covered.
   a. history   b. major sites and famous events
c. industries d. natural resources
e. travel tips f. original artwork for cover
g. cultural facts
2. Use at least three other sources besides textbook, citing the book and page using the MLA style and include a bibliography on the back of the brochure.
3. Final copy must fit on the paper provided after it is folded in thirds and must be handwritten in ink or typed.
4. All resources available in the classroom must remain in the classroom.
5. An oral presentation will be given by each group member pertaining to one or more of the subtopics included in the brochure.
6. Only a single 3" x 5" card may be used for presentation notes.
7. Each person will be assigned a group grade, an individual grade (awarded by group members), and an oral presentation grade.

Day 3
Activities: 1. Explain project goals.
2. Distribute and clarify the project criteria.
3. Acquaint students with materials for use in the classroom.
4. Give due date for completion of the brochure -- day 6.
5. Give dates for presentation -- days 7 & 8.
6. Answer any remaining questions.
7. Divide students into small groups of 3 to 5 and assign them to a region.
8. Make assignments for oral presentation dates.

Day 4-6
Activities: 1. Begin class with reiteration of the rules for materials usage and due dates.
2. Students work independently.
Day 7

Activities: 1. Oral presentations given.
2. Note taking by students in audience.
3. Individual evaluation sheets for group work completed by students.

Day 8

Activities: 1. Oral presentations given.
2. Homework assignment -- each student must create 30 questions using all notes taken during the past eight days of the unit for review for the test on day ten.

Day 9

Goals: 1. Preparation for the test on day ten.
2. Culmination of information from all groups.
Activities: 1. Collect questions written by students as homework.
2. Divide students into two teams; each with and equal number of students.
3. Direct each team to choose a name for themselves and an order for competition.
4. Using the questions written as homework, each team sends one person to the board with the intention of answering the question correctly.
5. Require each student to face the blackboard until s/he has given up or completed the answer.
6. Reviewing in this manner may continue until the end of the hour.

Day 10

Activities: 1. Answer any remaining last-minute questions.
2. Handout test to be completed by the end of the hour.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Poss.</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Geography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Facts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Industries &amp; Natural Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Major Sites &amp; Famous Events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Travel Tips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Original Artwork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Documentation &amp; Sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Creativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Neatness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

200 Total Possible

Total Earned:
Name of Student Evaluated

**Individual Evaluation Sheet**

Upon completion of your project, each person in your group will be evaluated by you, except yourself, using one of these sheets per person. Answer each of the following questions honestly and as specifically as possible.

1. This person contributed valuable information to this project.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. This person completed all work asked of her/him.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. This person completed all work asked of her/him in a timely fashion.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. This person was an asset to the group, and I would work with her/him on future assignments.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 7 8 9 10

List and explain all the things this person did while in class or outside of class that contributed to this project. Make sure you list is complete and specific!!
Bibliography


Germany: West Germany and Berlin, 1986.


* *Future Problems and Alternatives.* Milliken, 1986.


Strasser, Dr. Otto. *Free Germany Against Hitler.* Free-German Movement, 1941.


Teacher Resources


Student Resources


* For Whom the Bell Tolls. Scribner, 1940.


Clouds of War, 1916-1917 - 25 minutes
1914-1918 - 56 minutes
Versailles: The Lost Peace - 26 minutes
Witness to History: The U.S. in World War I - Filmstrip
The Germans Parts 1 & 2 - 26 minutes each
Western Europe - Germany - A Series: Albert's Family,
Industrial Heartland, Keystone of the Continent.
- Filmstrip
The Darkest Hour - 25 minutes
The Inevitable War, 1939-1940 - 13 minutes
Roosevelt: Manipulator-in-Chief - 24 minutes
Restless Conscience - 2 hours
East Germany - 53 minutes
Berlin Blockade - filmstrip
The Berlin Connection - 16 minutes
One Nation Undivided - 29 minutes
Sound Recordings

Listen and Learn German. Gustave Mathieu. Record.

Folk Dances of Many Lands. Records.
   a. German at the Inn
   b. German Kreuxkoenig
   c. German Windmeuller

Music Near and Far. Record.
   The German Band

Folkways/Scholastic Records
   a. Sound of World Poetry.
   b. One Language of the World. Dr. Mario Pei.
   c. German Children's Songs; Volumes 1 & 2.
   d. Children's Folk Songs of Germany.
   e. Early German Ballads; Volume 1
   f. German Folk Songs.
   g. German Favorite Songs.
   h. German Students' Songs.
   i. The German Ballad; The Classical Age, Burger, Goethe, Schiller.
   j. Poetry of Friedrich Von Schiller.
   k. Goethe/Faust.
   l. Music of the World's Peoples.
   m. Anthems, Volume 1.
   n. Mountain Songs and Yodeling of the Alps.
   o. Traditional Schuhplatter Dances.
   p. Christmas Songs from Many Lands.
   q. German Christmas Songs.
   r. Dances of the World's Peoples
Personal Resources

1. German Information Center "Free Materials" Packet
3. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum "Free Materials" Packet
4. Rheinlauf Map
5. "What About Germany" pamphlet
6. Berlin Busline Map
7. Photo Albums (2) and postcards
8. School Exchange Service German Vocabulary List
9. McDonald's "Guten Appetit!" tray liner
11. Plotzensee Memorial pamphlet
13. Assortment of German coins
15. Road Atlases - one East German; one West German
16. City Street Maps - Essen, Frankfurt, Hamburg
17. Die Schneekönigin - Snow White
18. School Exchange Service Introduction to the Federal Republic of Germany