

4.4 FAMILY VACATION ALONG THE GERMAN FAIRY TALE ROAD



FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- How does travel enhance one's understanding of the culture and history of one's own country?

STANDARD #1 CULTURE.

STANDARD #3 PEOPLE, PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS.

LESSON OVERVIEW:

This lesson focuses on the family vacation of a fictional girl, Annalena, and her parents on the so-called *Märchenstraße* or Fairy Tale Road along the Weser River. The students will follow the trip through a PowerPoint presentation which integrates many aspects of German culture and history. They will visit many of the picturesque towns associated with the fairy tales and folktales of the Brothers Grimm, including a stay in the town of Hamelin. Annalena and her parents will also stop in the small city of Vechta in Lower Saxony to visit grandparents and finally will spend a day in the former Hanseatic city-state of Bremen. Through this lesson, the students will revisit many topics which have previously been the focus of other lessons in this book: measurement, transportation, food. The narrative of the PowerPoint also integrates conversion skills of temperature, distance, and finally euros into dollars.

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This lesson integrates many different topics about Germany: geography, the tales of the Grimm Brothers and Baron Münchhausen, food, transportation, monetary systems, time, temperature, the metric system, architecture, and even the Holocaust. The *Märchenstraße* or Fairy Tale Road is the historic route through Germany traveled by the Brothers Grimm in order to collect and sample traditional stories.

TIME:

1-2 (45-minute Class Periods)



INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES:

- *Märchenstraße* PowerPoint (**PowerPoint 4.4 A on Resource Disc**)
- *Märchenstraße* PowerPoint Narrative (**Handout 4.4 B on Resource Disc**)
- *Märchenstraße* PowerPoint Worksheet (**Handout 4.4 C on Resource Disc**)
- Map of Germany
- Calculators

PROCEDURE:



DAYS 1-2:

- **Anticipatory Set:** The teacher should ask the students if their families take travel vacations and what they do on their trips. How do they travel? Where do they stay? What do they do for meals? This activity should provide background for introducing the vacation trip of a fictional girl from the city of Berlin and her family on the *Märchenstraße*, a route that follows the Weser River.
- Before beginning the *Märchenstraße* PowerPoint (**PowerPoint 4.4 A on Resource Disc**), the teacher should make sure that the students are somewhat familiar with the section of Germany where the trip occurs. Using a map of Germany, the teacher should point out (or ask the students to point out) the locations of Berlin, Kassel, Hamelin, Vechta, and Bremen as well as many of the other smaller towns and cities where the family stops. It is important that the teacher locate the Weser River which also factors into the trip.
- The teacher should distribute the *Märchenstraße* PowerPoint Narrative (**Handout 4.4 B on Resource Disc**) to each student. The teacher should read through the entire script to become familiar with the different aspects – day with time and weather, activities with distances etc. The teacher should predetermine how he/she plans to use the narrative. For example, one could expand any of the locations for the purposes of discussion, or one could focus on what the family eats, etc.
- After the completion of the *Märchenstraße* PowerPoint (**PowerPoint 4.4 A on Resource Disc**), the teacher should distribute the *Märchenstraße* PowerPoint Worksheet (**Handout 4.4 C on Resource Disc**) and have the students individually or with a partner answer the questions. In order to complete the conversions, the students will need calculators. The completion of the worksheet may become a homework assignment.

DAY 2:

- The teacher should allow students time to complete the worksheet before reviewing the answers with the students.
- As a final activity, the students should assume the identity of Annalena and write a letter to their American cousin in Milwaukee describing the vacation trip. In the letter, the students should include how they traveled, several highlights of the trip, and what they liked the best.

WHOLE GROUP REFLECTION:



- The teacher should ask the students to share what they learned about Germany from this vacation trip of a fictional family from Berlin. Did this lesson give them any insight into Germany that they did not know before?

MODIFICATIONS:

- The worksheet can be modified depending on the age of the students. In addition, the teacher may opt to have the entire class work on it together rather than as individuals or in pairs.
- Rather than writing a letter to your American cousin about your trip, the students could create a scrapbook of the five highlights of the trip with illustrations and captions.

EXTENSIONS:

- The teacher could assign students to read the Grimm Brothers' fairytales that are mentioned in the PowerPoint (**PowerPoint 4.4 A on Resource Disc**): Hansel and Gretel, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel, Snow White, Puss in Boots, Pied Piper of Hamelin, the Bremen Town Musicians, and then share the stories with the class.
- The teacher could assign the students to read several stories about Baron Münchhausen and also research the life of the actual historic personality.
- Reference to UNESCO World Heritage Sites is made when the family is in Bremen. The teacher could assign an on-line research project in which students select one of the 36 sites in Germany.
- There are many references to the transportation system in Germany. Students should investigate more about Deutsche Bahn and its extensive railroads, including the ICE. The family rents a Mercedes for their trip. Students might research and report on the different automobiles manufactured in Germany (Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen, Audi, BMW, Porsche, Opel). Another transportation project could focus on the Autobahn system.
- When Annalena and her grandmother are shopping in Vechta, they see the *Stolpersteine* (Tripping Stones). The teacher might instruct the students to research these Holocaust memorials and discuss their significance.
- Half-timber houses are prevalent in the area of Germany the family visited. The teacher might assign students to research this style and other types of architecture associated throughout history with Germany (e.g. Bauhaus in the 1920's).