

1.3 GERMANY: A MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

? FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- What are the advantages of a united Europe?
- How does it promote the concept of global interdependence?

STANDARD #3 PEOPLE, PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS.

STANDARD #6 POWER, AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE.

STANDARD #9 GLOBAL CONNECTIONS.

LESSON OVERVIEW:

This lesson focuses on the advantages of being a nation in a united Europe and being a member of the European Union. Students will learn when and why Germany became a founding member of the organization. They will be able to recognize the 28 member countries as well as understand the basic timeline of the EU's development and Germany's participation. When presented with a PowerPoint that provides the basic structure of the EU and its timeline, students will be engaged in teacher-led lectures and class discussions requiring literal, visual, and interpretive level thinking. As a culminating activity, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation strategies will be used by students as they create a case study of Germany as an EU member using the PowerPoint format.

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Prior to this lesson students should have a general knowledge of World War II and its impact on the world. They should also have a general knowledge of the name and location of European countries. The lesson may take longer depending on the depth of their prior knowledge. The following overview coincides with the accompanying PowerPoint and may offer the teacher additional information.

The EU has widened and deepened since its creation; it has taken steps towards closer integration at the same time as it has enlarged. The Union has grown from six members to 28 members and may continue to grow. The European Union is a unifying force on the European continent.

When the process of European integration began in the late 1950s, there were just six countries involved: France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. [Note: it was only West Germany, because after WWII, Germany was divided into East and West.] These countries formed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. Uniting these countries economically and politically helped to rebuild a war-torn Europe more quickly by consolidating resources and helping to secure peace. In 1957 they signed the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community (EEC, known commonly as the EC). The United Kingdom had refused to join the ECSC, because of its concerns about sharing sovereignty and again rejected the offer to join the EC.

1st Enlargement:

The UK changed its mind and applied for membership in 1961; yet the British application was vetoed twice by France. Finally, the UK joined the EC in 1973. Ireland and Denmark also joined the EC at the same time.



2nd and 3rd Enlargements:

Greece (1981) and Spain and Portugal (1986) joined the Union in these two enlargement stages. Their inclusion was considered as the southern enlargement of the EU. Their motives for joining the EU had to do with further democratization and prosperity. In 1986 the European Union flag was unveiled with a blue background and 12 gold stars arranged in a circle. With the coming into force of the so called Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the European Community was re-chartered as the European Union (EU).

4th Enlargement:

The Cold War had ended and Germany had reunified. In January 1995 Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the EU. Their motives for joining included less of a need for neutrality due to the end of the Cold War and the desire to participate in discussions and decisions on major political, security, and economic issues.

5th Enlargement:

The countries that were previously under the influence of the Soviet Union wanted to join the EU following the end of the Cold War. While the EU member states were in favor of increasing relations with these countries and believed that they needed to be brought under the Union's umbrella, there were a lot of questions about how this enlargement process would take place and which countries would/should be given priority. Hesitations on the EU side concerning eastern enlargement persisted in the early 1990s. But in June 1993, the European Council took a historic step in Copenhagen and decided that "the associated countries of central and eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the Union. Accession will take place as soon as a country is able to assume the obligations of membership by satisfying the economic and social conditions."¹

With this decision, any European country that wished to join the EU was promised membership. However, the Council had also decided that those countries wishing to apply for membership needed to meet certain conditions for membership. The Copenhagen Criteria (**Handout 1.3.6 on Instructional Resource Disc**) stated that membership of the Union requires that a country 1) "has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; 2) the existence of a functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; 3) the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union."² In 1994 the first former Eastern bloc countries to apply for membership were Hungary and Poland followed in 1996 by eight more countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The European Commission recommended in 1997 to open accession negotiations with five of these countries: Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovenia (plus Cyprus). The European Union's greatest enlargement came in 2004 with the entry of 10 new countries: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia.

6th Enlargement:

In 2007 Romania and Bulgaria enlarged the EU to 27 member states. Some experts feel this was not an actual "6th enlargement," but a completion of the 5th enlargement.

7th Enlargement:

On July 1, 2013 Croatia became the 28th member state of the EU.

Taking effect in 2009, the Treaty of Lisbon (**Handout 1.3.6 on Instructional Resource Disc**) was the international agreement that amended two earlier treaties — the Treaty on European Union (also known as the Maastricht Treaty) and the Treaty establishing the European Community (also known as the Treaty of Rome) — which comprise the constitutional basis of the European Union (EU). It provides the EU with the legal framework and tools necessary to meet future challenges and to respond to citizens' demands.

For more information refer to:

"Europa Gateway to the Europe Union": http://europa.eu/index_en.htm

"European Union Lesson Plans: Secondary Level": <http://www.euintheus.org/resources-learning/academic-resources/eu-lesson-plans-and-teaching-material/european-union-lesson-plans-secondary-level/>

¹ European Commission. (n.d.). Accession Criteria. Retrieved from European Commission: <http://ec.europa.eu/>

² European Commission. (n.d.). Accession Criteria. Retrieved from European Commission: <http://ec.europa.eu/>



**TIME:**

(5-6) 45 minute periods

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES:

- Germany and the EU PowerPoint (**PowerPoint 1.3.1 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- Political Maps of the US and Europe Worksheet (**Handout 1.3.2 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- Venn Diagram of United States and Europe Worksheet (**Handout 1.3.3 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- “Time Line Exit Ticket” Worksheet (**Handout 1.3.4 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- Winston Churchill’s Zurich Speech 1946 (**Handout 1.3.5 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- Handout on the Copenhagen Criteria and the Treaty of Lisbon (**Handout 1.3.6 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- Access to computer and internet

**PROCEDURE:**

Prior to beginning this lesson, the teacher should require the students to complete the map worksheet (**Handout 1.3.2 on Instructional Resource Disc**). Students should create a key to color code the map according to the six enlargement dates. Each country’s color should correlate to its year of entry into the EU.

Ask students to use their background knowledge and the completed map to answer the following questions:

1. Why might Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands have been eager to join together in 1957?

(A: *Joining together helped them compensate for their small land size and improve their economic growth.*)

2. What was revolutionary about the countries that joined in 2004?

(A: *They were all former communist states.*)

3. A goal of the EU is to promote peace. Name two countries which had been war enemies in the past, yet are now working toward a common goal.

(A: *France and Germany, etc.*)

DAY 1:

- **ANTICIPATORY SET:** Prior to mentioning the EU, the teacher should ask students how they would respond if they were on a vacation in Paris and a waiter asked them to identify where they were from? Would they say, “I am an American,” or “I am from (name of hometown or state),” or “I am from the US,” etc. Explain to students that this is the same question that someone from the EU must ask themselves. How is the European Union similar and different from the United States? Another way to approach the subject is to ask the students to discuss the pros and cons of belonging to a group or organization. Joining a group provides one with a feeling of support, connectedness, and identity; however, in order to belong must one forfeit one’s identity?

To determine the students’ background knowledge of the European Union, the teacher should begin a class discussion by asking students to answer the following basic questions:

1. Who are the members of the EU?
2. What historic event was the impetus for the creation of a united Europe?
3. Where is the general “headquarters” for the EU located?
4. When did the EU begin?
5. Why would a country wish to join the EU?
6. How can a country join the EU?

- The students should look at the political maps of the United States and Europe (**Handout 1.3.2 on Instructional Resource Disc**). The teacher should inform the students that historically the US has been economically stronger than any one European country and have the students discuss why this would be true. Example answers should be: the US is greater in size than any one European country, US has greater resources than any one European country. The teacher should then ask the students to look at the physical map of Europe and point out the land mass without artificial political boundaries. The teacher should ask the students to think about what European nations could do to be more competitive with the US. The students should determine that Europe could (1) have one currency and (2) work together to combine their economic strength. During the discussion, introduce the European Union, an organization of countries or member states, that remain independent nations but work together in order to gain strength and world influence that would be unlikely otherwise. The EU has (1) reinforced peace between its members, (2) increased prosperity for its citizens, (3) created a single European currency (the euro) and (4) created a frontier-free ‘single market’ where goods, people, services and capital move around freely (Adapted from *How the European Union Works*, European Communities, 2003). The teacher can assess the lesson by having students compare and contrast the EU with the US. Students should create a Venn diagram (**Handout 1.3.3 on Instructional Resource Disc**) on their own paper as the teacher uses the chalk/whiteboard or SmartBoard to create the sample.

DAYS 2-3:

The teacher should present the PowerPoint on Germany and the European Union (**Powerpoint 1.3.1 on Instructional Resource Disc**). During the presentation, the students should take notes. The teacher should discuss the conditions in Europe after World War II. At Slide 4, the teacher should distribute the short reading with questions on Churchill (**Handout 1.3.5 on Instructional Resource Disc**). When the teacher reaches the map slides, the students should compare their completed EU map (**Handout 1.3.2 on Instructional Resource Disc**) with the slide maps. By the end of the PowerPoint, all the EU countries should be identified with their dates of admission to the EU.

As an exit activity, each student should be given the “Timeline Exit Ticket” handout (**Handout 1.3.4 on Instructional Resource Disc**). This will help the teacher to determine student recall.

DAY 4:

Students will spend the class time creating a case study of Germany as a member of the EU. Some information will come from their notes, but research will be required. The class should be divided into groups so that the following slides may be created. The slides will be sent to the teacher and one PowerPoint will be made.

SLIDE FORMAT

These are suggested topics. They may vary depending on the interest and ability of the students.

SLIDES	DESCRIPTION
Slide 1	Title slide
Slide 2	Credits
Slides 3-6	Geography: size and shape, land and water forms and resources, political boundaries, population of country, major cities, capital
Slides 7-10	Government: flag, symbols, current leader biography, and political platform
Slides 11-14	History: entry into the EU and related historic events
Slide 14-20	Economic Issues of EU: benefits, future concerns, current issues from a German perspective
Slide 21-26	Identity issue? What are the restrictions when becoming an EU member (e.g. same license plates, same street sign format, etc.)
Slide 27-30	Map of the European Union. Have a picture and explanation of its parts.

DAYS 5-6:

Students will present their slideshows to the entire class.

WHOLE GROUP REFLECTIONS:

- The teacher should require students to write an essay reflecting upon the activity. They should answer the questions in their response:
 - How well do you feel you worked as a team to gather information?
 - How well do you feel you used the information you collected?
 - How well do you feel you planned your work?
 - How would you rate the quality of your work?
- The teacher should facilitate a discussion on what new information and understandings about Germany the students gained from participating in this project. What do they believe are the advantages and disadvantages in Germany's membership in the European Union?

MODIFICATION:

- Depending on student ability, the teacher may require fewer slides to be created per topic in the group slide presentation.

EXTENSIONS:

- Have students research one of the following topics. They should print a hard copy of the article(s) they researched, write a summary, and be prepared to share their knowledge and comments with the class. The teacher may organize the students using a panel format if their topics yield to this design.
 - Discuss the "Top Five" roles that Germany has played throughout the EU's history.
 - Explain the process for a nation to gain entry into the EU and why a nation would choose to join.
 - Discuss the advantages and disadvantages for Germany as an EU member nation.
 - Identify a current EU issue and discuss how Germany has responded to the challenge.
 - Predict some challenges that the EU and Germany as a member nation will face in the future
 - The Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union. For what reasons did the committee cite as justification for awarding the prize?
 - Complete the Lisbon Treaty and Copenhagen Criteria Handout (**Handout 1.3.6 on Instructional Resource Disc**)