

5.2 NATIONAL IDENTITY AND NATIONAL SYMBOLS: FLAG AND NATIONAL ANTHEM

? FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- What is nationalism and what are some of the symbols which people use to express this potent force?
- What does it mean to be German today and what are the challenges involving regionalism and pluralism?

STANDARD #1 CULTURE.

STANDARD #2 TIME, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE.

LESSON OVERVIEW:

This series of lessons investigates the concept of nationalism and how it applies to Germany today. Students will read an introductory essay from *The New York Times* (Kulish, 2010) which examines the search for national identity in contemporary Germany and will then focus on the national symbols of the flag and the national anthem. In addition, students will read about and discuss the German men's national soccer team and the 2006 men's soccer World Cup as an example of the changing demographics in Germany and what it means to be German today. Students will be able to define "nationalism" and discuss the problems associated with expressing it (the German flag and national anthem) in contemporary Germany. They will understand the laws of citizenship in Germany and how the concept of being "German" has changed with the growing diversity of the German population.

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The phrase "nationalism in Germany" may evoke strong response, depending on where you live, how old you are, and how you view history. "German nationalism or patriotism" might evoke an uneasy feeling in some people because these words are still associated with both World Wars and the Nazi period. But, the Nazi regime did not invent German nationalism. If anything, the Nazis exploited and abused cultural values by misusing them. A positive sense of nationalism surfaced for the first time since WWII during the 2006 FIFA Men's Soccer World Cup held in Germany, again during the 2010 FIFA Men's Soccer World Cup held in South Africa, and once again in 2011 during the FIFA Women's Soccer World Cup held in Germany. During each of the events, Germans proudly waved the German national flag. Because most Germans had not felt comfortable being nationalistic since WWII, it was a freeing moment in German national history to wave the flag and be proud of being German. After the World Cup festivities, the German flags disappeared again, only to be seen flying atop government buildings such as the *Reichstag* building in Berlin. Another outward manifestation (although rare) of German national spirit is singing the national anthem. Following the German reunification, just the third verse of the original three-verse German national anthem from the year 1922 was declared the new official national anthem. The first two verses were deemed too closely associated with the Nazi-era. The German National Anthem, or *Das Deutschlandlied*, was written by August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben in 1841. The accompanying melody, composed by Joseph Haydn, was taken from a 1797 anthem for Austrian Emperor Franz II.



TIME:**(2-3) 45 minute class periods****INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES:**

- *German Identity, Long Dormant, Reasserts Itself* Article (**Handout 5.2.1 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- *Germany's Soccer Squad Boasts Ethnic Diversity* Article (**Handout 5.2.2 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- German Laws on Nationality Handout (**Handout 5.2.3 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- Germany and the Flag (**Handout 5.2.4 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- Germany's National Anthem (**Handout 5.2.5 on Instructional Resource Disc**)

PROCEDURE:

Before beginning this lesson, the students should read *German Identity, Long Dormant, Reasserts Itself* Article (**Handout 5.2.1 on Instructional Resource Disc**). To reflect on the article, students should explain the significance of the following phrases as well as identify the author's thesis.

Volker Schlöndorff	Goethe
Kurfürstendamm	Schiller
<i>The Tin Drum</i> by Günter Grass	Conscription
Angela Merkel	Thilo Sarrazin
Self-absorbed colossus Greek debt crisis	Brothers Grimm
Constitutional identity "is not open to integration"	Lisbon Treaty
Helmut Kohl	Hartz IV
Forgotten People	Otto von Bismarck
Aging, shrinking population	

DAY 1:

Anticipatory Set: The teacher should ask the students to define the concept of "nationalism" and to identify symbols which represent American nationalism. Students should answer the following questions:

- Do you have an American flag at home?
- If you do, when do you display it?
- When and where do you see an American flag displayed, and how does it make you feel?
- What is the national anthem of the United States?
- When and why is it sung?
- How does it make you feel?
- What does it mean to be an American?

As a variation to this exercise, the teacher could ask the students to complete the following sentence verbally or as a writing assignment: "I am proud to be an American when I ..."

Next, the teacher should ask the students to identify the thesis of the *German Identity, Long Dormant, Reasserts Itself* Article (**Handout 5.2.1 on Instructional Resource Disc**) and how the author supports it. The teacher should facilitate a discussion on the changing demographics in contemporary Germany and the differences between ethnic Germans and German immigrants. What makes someone German? For homework, the students should read the *Germany's Soccer Squad Boasts Ethnic Diversity* Article (**Handout 5.2.2 on Instructional Resource Disc**).

DAY 2:

Do-Now Activity: Students should identify the different ethnicities represented by the players of the men’s German national soccer team.

The students should summarize the main point of their reading assignment (*Germany’s Soccer Squad Boasts Ethnic Diversity*) and discuss the World Cup’s impact on expressing German national pride. Fuel a discussion of changing definitions of German nationality by asking students: “Living in an era of globalization and greater movement of people, does the traditional concept of nationalism become meaningless?” The students should then read excerpts from the German Laws on Nationality Handout (**Handout 5.2.3 on Instructional Resource Disc**) and identify the importance of the following phrases:

- Children born in Germany to foreign parents
- Section 7 of the Nationality Act
- Eight years of habitual residence
- Spouses of German nationals
- Adequate knowledge of German (language)
- Avoiding multiple nationality
- Children born abroad
- Re-acquire [...] German nationality

DAYS 3-4:

The teacher should show the students a German flag (a real one or electronic image) and discuss it as a national symbol (see www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/bundestag/symbols/flag/index.html for further information).

Next, the teacher may have students read one or more of the articles from Germany and the Flag (**Handout 5.2.4 on Instructional Resource Disc**) and answer the following questions:

- How does a flag come to represent a nation?
- What are Germany’s issues regarding the display of the German flag?
- How do these issues compare to the display of the American flag in the United States?
- Are German citizens as likely to display their national flag on the Day of German Unity (October 3rd) as Americans are to display their national flag on Independence Day (July 4th)?
- Can you explain the difference in the display of national pride between Germany and the United States?

Next the teacher should distribute the lyrics to Germany’s National Anthem (**Handout 5.2.5 on Instructional Resource Disc**) and review them with the students. If possible, the teacher should play an audio recording of the German anthem before having the students answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of a national anthem?
- When are national anthems performed?
- What emotions does the German national anthem evoke in you when you listen to it?
- Describe the sentiment expressed in the lyrics.

The teacher should divide the students into four groups and each group should receive one of the following additional national anthems: USA, Canada, United Kingdom, France. In their groups, the students should compare and contrast the lyrics of these national anthems with that of the German National Anthem and report their findings to the class. How are the sentiments expressed in each anthem similar? How are they different?

WHOLE GROUP REFLECTIONS:

- In closing, the students should ponder whether Germans should feel comfortable displaying the German flag and singing the national anthem or if they should continue to be more reserved with their national pride. Since the demographics of Germany have changed significantly over the past twenty years (since the reunification), do these symbols of German unity assume a different meaning and importance?
- A useful in-class or homework exercise is for the students to compose an essay on expressions of German nationalism based upon the different readings, class activities, and discussions. For example, how do Germans express their patriotism and does this present any difficulties for them?

MODIFICATIONS:

- The teacher may need to create specific questions for the different readings to accommodate varying reading and comprehension levels. Students with special needs can easily participate in this lesson.
- The teacher may prefer to use some of the readings in a jigsaw cooperative learning activity rather than for full class discussion.
- During the discussion about the men's soccer World Cup and nationalism, the students could explore the differences in how Americans celebrate national participation in international athletic competitions such as the World Cup or the Olympic Games versus Germans.

EXTENSIONS:

- Another German national symbol is an eagle (*Bundesadler*). The teacher could incorporate a discussion of the German eagle and its history. The symbol appears in the *Bundestag* chamber in the *Reichstag* building and on the back of the German euro coins.
- The teacher may assign the following essay on the *Bundesadler* as homework:

Write a 300/350-word essay in which you answer the following question: Why has the eagle deserved to be the symbol of German nationalism through the ages? Your essay should have an introduction with a thesis statement, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

- The eagle is also a symbol of nationalism in the United States and in Poland. Students should research the American and Polish eagle symbols and discuss their similarities as well as differences.
- The topic of national identity lends itself to many possibilities for additional research projects and paper assignments for students. Here are some topic suggestions students may investigate:
 - Possible Future Tensions: National identity for the European Union and its interests
 - German identity and pluralism
 - Immigration and German citizenship

Sources:

Sections of this lesson have been adapted from a lesson designed by 2010 TOP Fellow Michael Robinson.

Robinson, M. (2010). *Goethe TOP Program Lesson Plan: Germany – Mapping, Culture, Integration, Soccer*. Retrieved from the Goethe-Institut Washington.