

## 7.1 THE DRESDEN ELBE VALLEY: UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE STATUS AND ECONOMIC DECISION MAKING

### ? FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- Economic decision-making involves making choices: What are the opportunity costs incurred when deciding between historical preservation and urban planning and expansion?

STANDARD #2 TIME, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE.

STANDARD #3 PEOPLE, PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS.

STANDARD #7 PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND CONSUMPTION.

STANDARD #9 GLOBAL CONNECTIONS.

### LESSON OVERVIEW:

Students will understand that Germany and the residents of Dresden had to make significant choices between preserving their past (designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site) and ensuring economic health. Students will work in groups of three. Working in groups, students will summarize for the other members information from articles on the situation, i.e., the costs and benefits of historical renovation and retaining the UNESCO World Heritage Site Status in the Dresden Elbe Valley. This lesson will focus on the important economic concept of opportunity costs. Each group will create a poster detailing the costs and benefits and identifying at least one opportunity cost paid by losing World Heritage Site status in 2009 by building a four-lane bridge in the heart of the cultural landscape.

### TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The UNESCO General Conference adopted the “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage” in 1972. It places the conservation of monuments, ensembles, industrial monuments and extraordinary landscapes under special protection by the international community. Currently, in 2013, there are 38 places in Germany that have been designated as World Heritage sites. These range from the Cathedrals in Aachen, Köln, and Speyer, Museum Island in Berlin, Bauhaus sites in Dessau and Weimar, Wartburg Castle in Eisenach and the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Estate in Essen. A recent controversy involved the city of Dresden and its decision to build a large bridge over the Elbe River with lanes for both vehicles and tram service. As a result UNESCO rescinded World Heritage Site status in 2009 because plans for the bridge construction were implemented. The Dresden Elbe Valley originally met several of UNESCO’s criteria for selection when it was named to the list in 2004. Among other criteria, UNESCO cited the Dresden Elbe Valley as “an outstanding example of land use, representing an exceptional



development of a major Central-European city. The value of this cultural landscape has long been recognized, but it is now under new pressures for change” (UNESCO, 2009). Dresden occupies a significant place in German and European history. After its devastating bombing during World War II, the city has been rebuilt, especially since German unification, with many buildings restored to their baroque splendor.

## TIME:



(2-3) 45 minute class periods

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES:

- Poster paper and markers
- UNESCO Criteria for Selection as a World Heritage Site (**Handout 7.1.1 on Instructional Resource Disc**)
- UNESCO World Heritage Site Newspaper Articles (**Handout 7.1.2 on Instructional Resource Disc**)

## PROCEDURE:



### DAY 1:

- **Anticipatory Set:** Individuals and groups make choices. *Every choice has a second-best option which must be given up, and that's the opportunity cost.* In economic terms, for example, if an asset such as capital is used for one purpose, the opportunity cost is the value of the next best purpose the asset could have been used for. What are examples from everyday life that illustrate this concept? Studying for a major social studies test or going to the movies with friends, more government military spending or more government funds for education. Honoring and preserving their history creates challenges for Germans when faced with economic concerns.
- Each student should read one of six articles (**Handout 7.1.2 on Instructional Resource Disc**) and take notes on the assigned article listing the costs and benefits of a modern bridge spanning the Elbe at Dresden and the maintenance of the UNESCO World Heritage Site status, especially for tourism.
- As a prior homework assignment and before reading the articles, the students should be assigned preliminary reading on the internet on the history of Dresden and its unique place in the annals of World War II, and selection criteria for UNESCO. Students should check the Dresden website: [www.dresden.de](http://www.dresden.de) and the UNESCO Criteria for Selection as a World Heritage Site (**Handout 7.1.1 on Instructional Resource Disc**)



### DAYS 2-3:

- Each student will orally present information from his or her article(s) to the other members of the triad.
- Using the information from the six articles, each group will create a chart on poster paper and detail costs and benefits for various individuals and groups supported by information from the articles. Each chart will also contain at least one opportunity cost paid by groups favoring the bridge, and one paid by those who would have maintained World Heritage status for the Elbe Valley.

## WHOLE GROUP REFLECTION

- Follow up by combining two or three groups of students and allowing them to discuss findings and compare each other's charts in class. Then, bring closure to the lesson with a full class discussion on the topic. The final question to be discussed is whether the final UNESCO decision to remove the World Heritage Site designation was justified. There is, of course, no “right answer” to this question.

**MODIFICATIONS:**

- Depending on the background of the students, the teacher may have to explain the essential economic principle of opportunity cost before beginning the activity.
- If pressed for time, the teacher may want to assign all the reading to be completed as a homework assignment.
- A variation of this procedure would be to use a “RAFT” format for the organization and presentation:

Component	Purpose
Role	Advisors for the Historic Preservation and Promoting the Economy
Audience	The Dresden City Council
Format	Presentation to the Dresden City Council: “A Bridge for History, the Future . . . or Both?”
Topic	Economic Decision-Making and Opportunity Costs and Historic Preservation

**EXTENSIONS:**

- Students may research the controversy over building a bridge over the Rhine in the “Lorelei Valley” (another UNESCO World Heritage Site in Germany) and write an essay in which they compare and contrast the similarities in the Rhineland to the situation in the Elbe Valley. They will find ample background information at UNESCO’s website ([www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)).
- Students may be assigned to research some of the following UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Germany. Their findings can be presented to the class as a simple PowerPoint with some visuals, a brief description of the site and the justification (according to UNESCO World Heritage Site criteria) for the designation:
  - Aachen Cathedral (1978)
  - Abbey and Altenmünster of Lorsch (1991)
  - Ancient Beech Forests of Germany (2011)
  - Bauhaus and its Sites in Weimar and Dessau (1996)
  - Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe (2013)
  - Berlin Modernism Housing Estates (2008)
  - Castles of Augustusburg and Falkenlust at Brühl (1984)
  - Classical Weimar (1998)
  - Collegiate Church, Castle, and Old Town of Quedlinburg (1994)
  - Cologne Cathedral (1996)
  - Fagus Factory in Alfeld (2011)
  - Frontiers of the Roman Empire (1987)
  - Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz (2000)
  - Hanseatic City of Lübeck (1987)
  - Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar (2002)
  - Luther Memorials in Eisleben and Wittenberg (1996)
  - Margravial Opera House Bayreuth (2012)
  - Maulbronn Monastery Complex (1993)
  - Messel Pit Fossil Site (1995)
  - Mines of Rammelsberg, Historic Town of Goslar and Upper Harz Water Management System (1992, extended 2010)
  - Monastic Island of Reichenau (2000)

- Museumsinsel (Museum Island), Berlin (1999)
- Muskauer Park / Park Mużakowski (2004)
- Old town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof (2006)
- Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin (1990)
- Pilgrimage Church of Wies (1983)
- Prehistoric Pile dwellings around the Alps (2011)
- Roman Monuments, Cathedral of St Peter and Church of Our Lady in Trier (1986)
- Speyer Cathedral (1981)
- St Mary's Cathedral and St Michael's Church at Hildesheim (1985)
- Town Hall and Roland on the Marketplace of Bremen (2004)
- Town of Bamberg (1993)
- Upper Middle Rhine Valley (2002)
- Völklingen Ironworks (1994)
- The Wadden Sea (2009)
- Wartburg Castle (1999)
- Würzburg Residence with the Court Gardens and Residence Square (1981)
- Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex in Essen (2001)
- Students should research the life of Nobel scientist Günter Blobel and his role in both the restoration of the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden and the proposed construction of the bridge over the Elbe River.

**Sources:**

(2009) *Dresden is Deleted from UNESCO'S World Heritage List*. Retrieved from UNESCO, August 2012: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/522>

*This lesson has been adapted from the work of 2009 TOP Fellow, Victoria Deniston Reed.*

## 7.2 GERMANY: A MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY

### **?** FOCUS QUESTION:

- How do the collaborative efforts of government, corporations and individuals help to create a sustainable environment?

**STANDARD #3 PEOPLE, PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS.**

**STANDARD #8 SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY.**

### LESSON OVERVIEW:

In this lesson students will conduct research on Germany's successful efforts to work toward a sustainable environment. Students will use the knowledge and concepts learned to help them develop projects they will share with peers during their participation in a Sustainability Exposition. The exposition will require students to be able to describe and discuss a specific course of action being taken by Germany for the purpose of providing background and conveying information about sustainability efforts in Germany.

### TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Sustainable development is an ongoing task and is considered a benchmark for a society's progress. In a 2008 progress report on Germany's National Sustainability Strategy, the German government focused on topics such as climate and energy, the management of raw materials, and food for the world. The aims of the sustainability strategic plan are to promote intergenerational equity, a good quality of life, social cohesion, and international responsibility. Sustainability affects all policy areas both at national and international levels. It does not stop at the peripheries; nor does it stop at borders.

Germany is a successful contributor in the global challenge to create a sustainable environment. Government initiatives help to make Germany a major player in the fight to save the environment. Its support and direction to develop programs such as waste prevention and recycling guidelines, green space planning, international solar competitions to promote green technology, and policies to inspire business compliance bring Germany to the forefront as a 21st-century world leader of sustainability. Being proactive has helped Germany face the challenge of reducing pollution and enhancing the environment. Germany's commitment to environmental protection has remained strong despite the economic crises of 2008/2009 and the sovereign-debt crises within the EU starting in 2011. In spite of the international economic and political pressures faced by all countries around the world, Germany is still a significant role model for other major industrial nations.

