

Topic 4

Political Symbols of Germany

Lesson 1

What is the capital city of Germany like?

Lesson Objective

The student will explain the significance of Berlin in comparison to Washington, D.C.

Materials and Resources

■ Handout 15	“National Capitals: Berlin – A tale of two Capitals”
■ Handout 16	“National Capitals: Washington, D.C.”
■ Worksheet 13	“Comparing Capital Cities”
■ Worksheet 13 (Key)	“Comparing Capital Cities”
■ Worksheet 13, Page 2	“Comparing Capital Cities”
■ Worksheet 13, Page 2 (Key)	“Comparing Capital Cities”
■ Worksheet 14	“Berlin Across Time”

Strategies

Berlin and Washington, D.C. are both capital cities of their respective countries. They sit an ocean apart, yet they both serve the vital interests of their citizens as cities specifically chosen to be the seat of the federal government. Both cities have a long and interesting history, although Berlin predates Washington, D.C. by several centuries. The selection of the cities were surrounded by controversy, however.

Divide the class into groups of two students. Assign a different city (Berlin or Washington, D.C.) to each student and ask the student to read the information on **Handout 15, 16, “National Capital”** about their assigned city. Students should then collaboratively complete the timeline and the data retrieval chart (**Worksheet 13 “Comparing Capital Cities”**) to summarize information about the history of the cities. To summarize student learning, the teacher should lead a class discussion of the following items.

- Describe the controversies surrounding the establishment of Berlin and Washington, D.C. as the capital cities.
- Discuss why attitudes changed towards the selection of Washington, D.C. as the capital of the United States and Berlin as the capital of Germany.
- Why do tourists visit the capital city of a nation?

As a concluding activity, present students with the five Study Prints, **Worksheet 14 “Berlin Across Time”**. Have students examine each photograph and arrange them in chronological order.

- Study Print 1** Spandau Citadel, 13th Century
- Study Print 2** Potsdamer Platz, 1901
- Study Print 3** Berlin, 1945
- Study Print 4** Brandenburg Gate, 1989
- Study Print 5** Potsdamer Platz, 2004