

**ALIKE AND DIFFERENT: GERMANY, THE UNITED STATES, AND
OUR REGION**

A Second Grade Lesson Plan

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(NOTE: The Second Grade Lesson below can be used by teachers in other states. All that has to be done is to substitute their state and city for Ohio and Portsmouth.)

PRIOR TO THIS LESSON

- LESSON ON LANDFORMS
- LESSON ON READING MAPS
- LESSON ON SKIMMING FOR INFORMATION

ALIKE AND DIFFERENT: GERMANY, THE UNITED STATES, AND YOUR REGION

Overview:

This lesson will ask students to examine the similarities and differences between Germany and their own country, state, and city. Students will practice basic map skills by inspecting a wall map, globe, maps and transparencies of Germany (the latter two provided by the Goethe Institut), and the National Geographic website www.nationalgeographic.com/expeditions/atlas. They will look at a map of Germany and major cities in that country that were part of the teacher's study/tour: Berlin, Frankfurt, and Munich (one city per small group) and compare that German city to a map of their own city. They will note similar features such as, rivers, lakes, hills, mountains, etc. They will locate additional information about their German city by visiting the CIA website www.cia.com. Finally, they will fill in and label their own blank outline maps of Germany (featuring the *lander* and major city) and the United States (featuring their state and city) and give a presentation of the comparison to their peers in any format that they choose.

Connections to the Curriculum:

Geography

Connections to the National Geography Standards:

Standard 1: "How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective"

Standard 3: "How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface"

Standard 4: "The physical and human characteristics of places"

Time:

Several weeks

Materials Required:

- Computer with Internet access
- Globe, wall map of the world, maps and transparencies from the Goethe Institut
- Maps of major German cities visited during study/tour
- Maps of the U.S., the state of Ohio, and the city of Portsmouth
- Blank Expeditions outline maps of Germany, the United States, and Ohio, one for each student
- Writing and drawing materials

Objectives:

Students will

- explore and use various maps of Germany, U.S., Ohio, and Portsmouth to learn geographic facts about the two countries, the states, and their own city and a major city in Germany
- look at a city map of Berlin, Frankfurt, or Munich and compare it to a map of their own city
- fill in maps of Germany and their own country, state and city, labeling important places and geographical features
- find similarities and differences between the two countries, their state, and their city

Geographic Skills:

Asking Geographic Questions

Acquiring Geographic Information

Organizing Geographic Information

Answering Geographic Questions

P r o c e d u r e

Opening:

Using a wall map of the world and a globe, make sure students know where Germany is located. Next, using the maps provided by the Goethe Institut and the National Geographic Web site www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas introduce students to Germany. What do they know about it already? Which countries and bodies of water can they name or find on the maps?

Development:

To better acquaint the children with Germany, ask the students to look at maps of their own region (state and city) and maps of Germany provided by the Goethe Institut. Do they see similar geographic features? How are the regions alike? How are they different?

Assign a major German city (that was part of the study/tour) to each small group. Ask students to look at a map of their German city (Berlin, Frankfurt, or Munich) using maps brought back from those cities or use the Internet. What do they see in that city that reminds them of their own city? Does the city they live in have bridges, zoos, memorials, parks, a river, etc? Provide the children with a chart that includes a checklist of items, the name of their city of Portsmouth, and a blank column where they are to write the name of their German city. Have each group mark as many things as they find on their lists that are similar to things they find in their own city and their German city.

Take children to the computer lab and ask students to go to the National Geographic's kid's page by visiting www.kids.nationalgeographic.com and typing "Germany" in the search engine. Then have them click on "Germany Country Facts ..." Ask them to skim

the information by looking for key words to help them answer the game questions below which are on listed on their sheets. Elicit ways that they could work cooperatively to locate information before they begin. List their responses on the SMART Board as a reminder during the research. If they have trouble locating all their information about Germany on the National Geographic site, have them go to www.cia.gov site. Instruct them to click on the right-hand side of the page on "World Factbook" under "Quick Links" in order to find additional information they may need to help them. They may also refer to maps which they looked at previously to answer questions. Remind them that at this time they are only searching for answers to questions about Germany. We will find out the answers to the other questions as a class, but if they do know the answers to any other questions, their group may complete those questions, as well.

1. What is the **capital** of Germany? What is the name of the "state" (**Lander**) that your German city is in? (What is the capital of the United States? What is the capital of Ohio?)
2. What are the **colors** of the **German flag**? (What are the colors of the United States flag? What are the colors of the Ohio flag?)
3. Which **seas** are **north of Germany**? Does your **German city** have any bodies of water nearby? (What bodies of water surround the United States? What bodies of water are found in Ohio? Does Portsmouth have any bodies of water?)
4. Name **three countries** that are **neighbors of Germany**? Are there any countries that are your German city's neighbor? (What countries are neighbors to the United States? Are there any countries that are neighbors to Ohio? Are there any countries that are neighbors to Portsmouth?)
5. Describe the **land** in **northern Germany**. Is your German city located here? (What is the land like in northern U.S. and in northern Ohio?)
6. Describe the **land** in **southern Germany**. Is your German city located here? (What is the land like in southern U.S. and in southern Ohio?)
7. Which **3 main rivers** run through Germany? Is there any river near your German city: (Find 2 important rivers in the U.S., Ohio, and Portsmouth.)
8. Which **problem with nature** might Germany have to watch out for when there is a **lot of rain**? Does your German city have to watch out for the same problem? (Might the U.S., Ohio, and Portsmouth have the same problem?)
9. In which **part** of Germany is there a **forest**? (Where can you find forests in Ohio, and Portsmouth?)

[Note: If students have questions about a word or term that is new to them, they can look it up online in the dictionary or the [Encyclopedia Britannica](http://www.britannica.com) as well seek help from the teacher.]

Closing:

Bring students back together as a class and ask them to discuss what they have learned. What did they find most challenging about reading the maps and searching for information? Were they surprised to find that their city has so much in common with a city so far away?

Student Assessment:

Give each student a copy of a **blank outline map of Germany**, and ask them to work in their small groups to fill in and label the following:

- Country name (Germany)
- Capital
- Large bodies of water
- (North and Baltic Seas)
- Landforms
- A key to indicate the capital and landforms
- Also, information on assigned major city for sharing with peers

Now ask them to use a **blank outline map of the United States which features Ohio** and fill in similar information: national and state capitals, the bodies of water on either side of U.S., 2 state rivers, and landforms on U.S. map They should create a legend that uses symbols, such as a star to indicate a state capital and a different symbol for the national capital. Zigzag lines might indicate mountains, etc. The legend should be the same for both maps to illustrate similarities and differences between countries.

Small groups should then share their maps and interesting facts about their assigned German city and tell how their German city is alike and different from the U.S., Ohio, and Portsmouth.

Extending the Lesson:

Students will read e-mails and view photographs of second graders in Germany. Children will think about and discuss, "How do the experiences and feelings children in the e-mails remind students of their own experiences and feelings? How are they different?" Children will also share classroom lessons, special celebrations, and field trips with their peers in Germany, thus they will learn about each other, the school curriculum and their school year.

Artwork depicting historic or important sites in the region will be exchanged with children in Germany. The exchange will take place in April in preparation for the Art Show and Grandparents' Evening in May at Notre Dame Elementary. As a surprise to the German children and teacher, Notre Dame Elementary will use the digital photographs that are exchanged in the e-mails to **create a professional photo book featuring the children of Germany and the children of Notre Dame Elementary in Portsmouth, Ohio**. The photo book will be a surprise gift that the NDE students and Mrs. Dengel will **send to the teacher and children in Germany**. The Art Show/Grandparents Evening will also be our culminating activity for friends and family to not only view artwork that was exchanged and the photo book that we have created, but the children will share with family and friends what they have learned by giving individual presentations in any format that they choose. This culminating celebration will feature German pastries, German music, and German artwork of our second grade counterparts in Germany, as well.

Related Links:

www.kids.nationalgeographic.com (type Germany in search box)
www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas
www.cia.com