

German Unification 1871 and 1989—A Comparison
Jonathan Keiler, TOP 2009 (jonathan.keiler@pgcps.org)

Unit Focus: A comparison of the historical process involved in national unification in different time periods and in differing social, political and economic climates. This unit is oriented for use in Advanced Placemen World History and/or European History.

Concepts:

- Centralization and decentralization
- Demography
- Political and social processes
- Military power
- Economics
- Nationalism
- Social Darwinism

Key Learning Objectives: Students will be able to describe how 19th Century Germany fits into the generalized decentralized European political landscape, and how German decentralization and late unification sheds light on national movements, economic imperatives, social concepts and military power. Students will then be able to move to the later unification of Germany and describe these processes in a different environment in a different century. Students will be able to competently analyze similarities and differences in the two historical events.

Key Questions:

- Why was Europe as a whole decentralized as opposed to Eastern Empires?
- Why did Germany stay decentralized longer than the rest of Europe?
- What factors finally led to 19th Century German unification?
- What factors brought 19th Century unity to an end?
- How was Germany reunified in the late 20th Century?
- How do these two events demonstrate historical processes in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Unit Organization: The unit is organized to draw out key learning objective and to answer key questions through a series of activities, lectures and assessments. Lessons are contextualized primarily with the objectives consistent with those the AP World History course.

Activity #1: Introductory Group Activity: Students in assigned groups will use a chart to map out the context of European political, social, economic status in the 19th and 20th Century unification consistent with AP World History themes and objectives, to place German processes in context.

Activity #2: Comparative guided reading activity. Students will read and analyze two documents on the unification of Germany in 1871 and 1989 respectively. The first is an

essay on Bismarck and unification, the second a speech by Helmut Kohl. Students will answer in short essay form, guided by teacher.

Activity #3: Geography activity. Students will analyze five maps of Germany to put events into geographical and international context, as follow: Germany before Prussian unification; Germany 1914; Germany 1945; Germany during the Cold War; and Germany reunified.

Activity #4: Short connections essays. Working in pairs students will use short analytical essays of approximately 50 words each to draw connections—not necessarily comparisons, of differing but related historical events, people, concepts.

Activity #5: Document Based Question (DBQ) assessment. Students will complete an eight document essay assessment focusing on German unification and reunification using standard AP World History DBQ essay format.

AP World History Standards/Objectives Overview

Develop greater understanding of the evolution of global processes and contacts in different types of human societies.

Use selective factual knowledge and appropriate analytical skills.

Highlight the nature of changes in global frameworks and their causes and consequences as well as comparisons within and among major societies.

Emphasize relevant factual knowledge, interpretive issues, and skills in analyzing historical evidence.

Periodization explicitly discussed forms the organizing principle to address change and continuity through world history consistent with the themes of the course.

This unit of learning addresses two AP World History Periods: Modern 1750-1914; WWI-Present 1914-2009.

Activity Number 1:

Working in groups complete the following comparison chart:

Germany (Prussian and German States) 1871	Federal Republic (West Germany) 1989	GDR (East Germany) 1989
Form of Government	Form of Government	Form of Government
Society and Economics	Society and Economics	Society and Economics
International Situation	International Situation	International Situation

Activity Number 2:

Read the following documents. After reading analyze the differences in approach of the German leadership to unification. How did the historical context affect these differing approaches? After considering these factors, and following class discussion, write a short essay stating your conclusions.

German Unification 1871

On September 22, 1862 Bismarck met King Wilhelm I [of Prussia] and assured him that he could form a ministry and carry through the army reforms desired by the king, if necessary against the will of the deputies in the Landtag. Given this assurance the King decided not to abdicate. Bismarck was appointed acting chief minister to the House of Hohenzollern.

Bismarck made an appearance before the Landtag on the September 29 where he spoke expressing his regret at the hostility of the deputies to passing of the military budget and stressed the need for progress to be made on the military proposals favored by the king. The next day at a meeting of a Budget Committee Bismarck went perhaps further than he his better judgment might have intended in asserting that:-

" The position of Prussia in Germany will not be determined by its liberalism but by its power ... Prussia must concentrate its strength and hold it for the favorable moment, which has already come and gone several times. Since the treaties of Vienna, our frontiers have been ill-designed for a healthy body politic. Not through speeches and majority decisions will the great questions of the day be decided - that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849 - but by iron and blood "

This somewhat aggressively phrased speech caused alarm to liberal opinion in the Germanies and beyond. This was in part attributable to subsequent reportage amending its wording to read more pithily as " blood and iron ". This speech has since become known as Bismarck's Blood and Iron Speech.

Prussia had long hoped to be dominant in the Germanies north of the river Main, this was now achieved but a groundswell of Germanic sentiment supported the establishment of a more territorially extensive German nation state. Bismarck was keen to preclude threats to Prussian influence in the German lands and was also open to achieving yet more expansions of the territory of Prussia-Germany. In strategic terms the France of Napoleon III was a presumptive opponent of any increased influence being exercised by the Prussian dominated North German Confederation over the states of Southern Germany.

What followed are known as the German wars of unification against Denmark, Austria and France. The final conflict, the "Franco-Prussian" War, which is sometimes referred to as *the* War of German Unification, included the formation of a federal German Empire.

This "Second German Reich" was proclaimed after the King of Prussia was persuaded to accept the Imperial Crown that had been offered on behalf of all the German Princes by King Ludwig II of Bavaria. The actual announcement taking place in the fabulous Hall of Mirrors in the sumptuous palace of Versailles outside Paris.

The Second German Empire was a Confederation composed of clearly separate constituent states (4 kingdoms, 5 grand duchies, 13 duchies and principalities, and the free cities of Hamburg, Lübeck and Bremen). Within this Confederation the inherently powerful Kingdom of Bavaria was able to retain its own army, which would fall under Prussian command only in times of war. Bavaria could also retain its own railways, its own postal system, and maintain its own diplomatic contacts. As with the now defunct North German Confederation the Presidency was vested in the Prussian Crown and the Prussian Minister was to be Imperial Chancellor.

Imperial Germany was to operate as a federation with strong central control. Both the short-lived North German Confederation and the subsequent German Empire functioned under constitutional arrangements which, whilst including a Federal Parliament, or Reichstag, elected by universal suffrage, did not concede effective power to that Reichstag. Authority over the duration of administrations, central finances, and the armed forces, residing more so in a Bundesrat of State delegates dominated by Prussia.

The outcome of the Wars of German Unification considerably altered the European political scene. France deplored the seizure of Alsace-Lorraine by Imperial Germany after the Franco-Prussian War and Bismarck thereafter strove to diplomatically isolate France denying her the opportunity of winning back her lost provinces as an outcome of war. Aside from this limitation on alliances that might threaten Imperial Germany Bismarck hoped that France would progress and be reconciled and was prone to encourage her to direct her energies towards extending sway over parts of North Africa. The German Empire's establishment inherently presented Europe with the reality of a populous and industrializing polity possessing a considerable, and undeniably increasing, economic and diplomatic presence.

Excerpted and amended from Age-of-the-Sage.org article entitled "Wars of German Unification Bismarck – German History 1871. http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/german_unification.html

Following are excerpts from Chancellor Helmut Kohl's speech November 29, 1989:

Prime Minister Modrow spoke in his Government declaration of a community based on bilateral treaties. We are prepared to take up this consideration. The nearness and the special character of the relations between both German states require an increasingly tighter network of agreements in all sectors and at all levels.

This cooperation will also increasingly require common institutions. Existing common commissions can assume new tasks, further commissions can be created. I am thinking especially of the economy, transport, environmental protection, science and technology, health and culture. It is self-evident that Berlin will be fully included in this cooperation.

I urge all social groups and institutions to participate in the formation of such a community.

We are also prepared to take a further decisive step, namely, to develop confederative structures between the two states in Germany in order to create a federation. A legitimate democratic government in East Germany is a prerequisite.

We could imagine the following institutions coming about soon after free elections: A common governmental committee for permanent consultation and political harmonization; common technical committees; a common parliamentary committee.

Previous policy toward East Germany essentially had to concentrate on small steps that strove to alleviate the results of our division and uphold and sharpen the consciousness for the unity of the nation. If in future a democratically legitimized, that is, a freely elected government, becomes our partner, totally new perspectives open up.

New forms of institutional cooperation can emerge and be developed in stages. Such a growing together is part of the continuity of German history. Now we can again make use of these historical experiences.

Nobody knows how a reunified Germany will look. But I am sure that unity will come, if it is wanted by the German nation.

The development of inner-German relations remains bedded in the pan-European process and in East-West relations. The future structure of Germany must fit into the architecture of Europe as a whole. The West has to provide peacemaking aid here with its concept for a permanent and just European order of peace. ...

The powers of attraction and the aura of the European Community is and remains a constant feature in the pan-European development. We want to strengthen this further.

Translation by Reuters



Identify and describe:



Identify and describe:



Identify and describe:



Identify and describe:

Activity Number 4: Actively working in pairs and not just divvying up essays write short essays of approximately 50 words each draw connections between each of the elements listed below.

Otto von Bismarck and Helmut Kohl

German Confederation and Warsaw Pact

“Blood and iron” (Bismarck) and “swords to ploughshares” (slogan of East German opposition movement)

Franco-Prussian War and Cold War

Activity Number 5: Document Based Question (DBQ)

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying documents. (The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.) Write an essay that

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with evidence from the documents
- Uses all of the documents
- Analyzes the documents by grouping them in as many appropriate ways as possible
- Takes into account the sources of the documents and analyzes the author's point of view
- Identifies and explains the need for at least one additional type of document.

Using the documents, compare and analyze the processes that led to the unification of Germany in the late 19th Century and the reunification of Germany in the late 20th Century.

Document 1



“We are One People” German Poster 1989

Document 2

“Whereas the German princes and the free cities have unanimously called upon us to renew and to assume, with the restoration of the German Empire, the German imperial office, which has been empty for more than sixty years; and Whereas adequate arrangements have been provided for this in the constitution of the German Confederation;

We, Wilhelm, by the grace of God King of Prussia, do herewith declare that we have considered it a duty to our common fatherland to answer the summons of the united German princes and cities and to accept the German imperial title. In consequence, we and our successors on the throne of Prussia will henceforth bear the imperial title in all our relations and in all the business of the German Empire, and we hope to God that the German nation will be granted the ability to fashion a propitious future for the fatherland under the symbol of its ancient glory. We assume the imperial title, conscious of the duty of protecting, with German loyalty, the rights of the Empire and of its members, of keeping the peace, and of protecting the independence of Germany, which depends in its turn upon the united strength of the people. We assume the title in the hope that the German people will be granted the ability to enjoy the reward of its ardent and self-sacrificing wars in lasting peace, within boundaries which afford the fatherland a security against renewed French aggression which has been lost for centuries. And may God grant that We and our successors on the imperial throne may at all times increase the wealth of the German Empire, not by military conquests, but by the blessings and the gifts of peace, in the realm of national prosperity, liberty, and morality. Wilhelm I, Kaiser und König.”

Imperial Proclamation of Wilhelm I, 1871

Document 3

“Nobody knows how a reunified Germany will look. But I am sure that unity will come, if it is wanted by the German nation.

The development of inner-German relations remains bedded in the pan-European process and in East-West relations. The future structure of Germany must fit into the architecture of Europe as a whole. The West has to provide peacemaking aid here with its concept for a permanent and just European order of peace. ...”

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, 1989

Document 4



Political Cartoon, 1989

Document 5

“The war of 1866 [between Prussia and Austria] was entered on not because the existence of Prussia was threatened, nor was it caused by public opinion and the voice of the people; it was a struggle, long foreseen and calmly prepared for, recognized as a necessity by the Cabinet, not for territorial aggrandizement, for an extension of our domain, or for material advantage, but for an ideal end--the establishment of power. Not a foot of land was exacted from Austria, but she had to renounce all part in the hegemony of Germany. . . Austria had exhausted her strength in conquests south of the Alps, and left the western German provinces unprotected, instead of following the road pointed out by the Danube. Its center of gravity lay out of Germany; Prussia's lay within it. Prussia felt itself called upon and strong enough to assume the leadership of the German races.”

Field Marshal Helmut von Molke, 1866

Document 6

“The symbol *Schwerter zu Pflugscharen* (swords into ploughshares) was one of the most important emblems of the German Democratic Republic's opposition movement in the 1980s which finally lead to the "revolution" of 1989 and the German unification. There

was no unitary organization or party but a large number of local groups (most of them protected—but not ruled— by the Church) with different political orientations — unified in their opposition to the Communist regime and mostly inspired by pacifism, democracy and ecological ideas. I cannot remember to have seen the flag you are presenting. Under the pressure of GDR police (and security service) it would not have been possible to use a flag like this in the public. The symbol was mostly shown on scarves, buttons and so on — but not (or very rarely) combined with the colors of the national flag.”

Jaume Olle, Member of former East German opposition movement recalling events of the 1980s

Document 7

"The position of Prussia in Germany will not be determined by its liberalism but by its power ... Prussia must concentrate its strength and hold it for the favorable moment, which has already come and gone several times. Since the treaties of Vienna, our frontiers have been ill-designed for a healthy body politic. Not through speeches and majority decisions will the great questions of the day be decided - that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849 - but by iron and blood.”

Otto von Bismarck, 1862

Document 8

While the two states of postwar Germany existed, Germans could believe in the unity of their nation, of a people with a common language, a common past, even a common fate. Now unified within one state, the deep divisions among Germans are more visible. No doubt there is truth in Freud's words about "the narcissism of small differences" that divides neighborhoods and family members, and yet in 1989 there was an expectation that Germans would understand Germans. In the first flush of enthusiasm, people forgot the estrangements that had grown so strong over 40 years, as West Germans came to regard the French or the Tuscans or the Dutch as closer, and perhaps more attractive, to them than the East Germans. For their part, East Germans lived with a prescribed if gradually attenuated hostility to the Federal Republic of Germany (F.R.G.), and with a nonprescribed envy and resentment of its freedom and prosperity, witnessed nightly on their television screens.

Article excerpt, "Travails of New Germany" Fritz Stern, 1993

Teacher Focus and Objectives *Activity 1*

This is an introductory to be done in a group so that students can develop basic knowledge and understanding for the rest of the unit.

Teacher focus is active work in the group setting and interaction moving to completion of the chart.

Objective is for students to accurately complete the chart. While information can differ student answers should generally cover the following:

Germany/Prussia

1. Form of Government—decentralized monarchy/parliamentarian hybrid—after unification government is more centralized
2. Society and Economics—growing national identity, strong capitalist economy, socially conservative
3. International situation—dynamic, striving, seen as a growing power and threat by neighbors

Federal Republic

1. Form of Government—Federal, parliamentary, democratic
2. Society and Economics—progressive liberal society, strong economically, socialist/capitalist hybrid
3. International situation—NATO alliance, European Union, well integrated into international community

German Democratic Republic

1. Form of Government—Communist authoritarian, police state
2. Society and Economics—society highly regimented, limited rights, general parity, weak command economy
3. Warsaw Pact, generally isolated

Discuss as class after submission of papers.

Teacher Focus and Objectives *Activity 2*

This is an individual activity designed to help prepare students for handling documents on the DBQ. Excerpts from each of the two documents are on the DBQ.

Teacher focus is helping students understand the basic meaning of documents and assisting in translating understanding into a well written analytical product. Students should read the documents first, and only after a guided class discussion begin writing.

Objective is for students to produce essays that take into account the point of view of the writers, historical context, and overall meaning.

Student answers should generally touch on the following:

Document 1: Demonstrates the still decentralized political situation in Germany and Bismarck's actions to bring the German confederation within the Prussian orbit. It shows that Bismarck was conservative and authoritarian politically, although the end result of unification was essentially a federalized constitutional monarchy. Bismarck's general attitude, employing so-called *Real Politik* and seeking to form a union through "iron and blood," is clearly reflected in the piece and stands in stark contrast to German attitudes at the time of the reunification of 1989. Bismarck utilizes war and conflict to galvanize the sentiments of the various German states and ensure Prussian dominance. The views of other European nations are ignored or pushed aside, through diplomatic pressure or military force.

Document 2: Students should note the contrast between this document and the one on Bismarck. Unification is deemed consensual between the two peoples (east and west). Moreover, reunification is to be accomplished only within the European framework and done peacefully. There is also a greater sense of ambivalence in the words of Kohl, than reflected in the words and actions of Bismarck.

Teacher Focus and Objectives *Activity 3*

Teacher focus is generating basic geographical literacy for the unit. Student can and should use resources in class to answer the questions and identify the maps.

Objective is for students to demonstrate a basic understanding of Germany's geographical situation over the period in question, including the important changes.

Student answers should generally first note Germany's central position in Europe and the advantages and disadvantages that entails. With respect to the specific maps:

1. This map show a lot and students should identify the map as Germany on the eve of unification, reflecting the political status in the 1860s, followed by the general federalization of Germany after unification and the borders of the new German empire, and finally the red border showing the former boundaries of the HRE.
2. This map shows Germany on the eve of WWI including the disputed provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, taken during the Franco-Prussian War.
3. Map shows the occupation zones of Germany immediately following the Second World War. Students should note that Western zones dissolved (although remained the basis for NATO deployments) but the eastern zone became the GDR.
4. This map shows West Germany as part of the NATO alliance and the GDR as part of the Warsaw Pact, demonstrating the wildly differing political and diplomatic orientations of the divided state.
5. Map shows Germany after reunification with it's federalized state system. Students should note that this map, like Maps 3&4 shows Germany without Alsace and Lorraine (lost after WWII) and East Prussia and Silesia (completely lost after WWII).

Teacher Focus and Objectives *Activity 4*

The focus of this activity is not compare and contrast but in drawing connections, which is a bit more subtle. The focus of the teacher is assisting students in finding a common thread in the concepts presented.

The objective is for students to demonstrate historical knowledge and analytical skills by finding common threads between the concepts and presenting them in short, to the point essays.

Student responses should develop along the following lines:

1. Bismarck and Kohl are related because each led Germany during a period of unification. Each proved to be a controversial figure. In each instance unification had pro and cons. While each sought a unified Germany they differed in the nation's place within the family of Europe and the means of accomplishing the goal.
2. The German Confederation and the Warsaw Pact are related because in their respective times each was a transnational unifying organization incorporating some, but not all, German states. While both organizations were influential, neither directly controlled the internal governance of the German states under respective influences, but did effectively control foreign policy.
3. The two slogans are both directed toward similar goals, which is the unification or reunification of the German state. However, quite obviously, they differ in their thrust and method. Also, the speakers differ—one a major historical and powerful statesman; the other the common slogan of low level GDR revolutionaries.
4. The Franco-Prussian War and the Cold War are related because each event helped foster German unification. Otherwise they differ in many respects, the F/P war being a normative shooting conflict in contrast to the broader socio-political ambit of the Cold War, and the F/P was started deliberately to foster unification, while Germany's role in the Cold War, while important, was tangential. Reunification was a by-product of the resolution of the Cold War, not the conflicts goal, as the war was essentially "waged" by powerful non-German nations.

Teacher Focus and Objectives *Activity 5*

This is a standard AP World History formatted DBQ assessment. Teacher focus is on reinforcing the rubric (below) so that students can apply historical knowledge and analytical skills properly within the essay format.

The objective is for students to produce an essay that would garner at least 5 (of a possible total of 7) basic DBQ rubric points. For better students scores above 7 are possible with demonstration of superior historical knowledge, analytical skills and mastery of the rubric.

Essay Rubric—Basic Core:

Thesis statement (1 Point): Has acceptable thesis.

- Thesis statement may not just repeat or reword the prompt.
- It must address at least the fact that the documents reflect two very different approaches to unification in two very different time periods.
- It must state at least one substantive difference in approach in to unification within the two historical periods, e.g., that the 1989 unification valued consent while the 1871 did not, etc.

Understands the basic meaning of the documents (1 Point):

- Students must address all eight documents.
- Students must demonstrate understanding of basic meaning in at least seven.
- Students may demonstrate basic understanding by grouping documents correctly as relating to proper period of unification.
- Students may demonstrate basic understanding by accurately discussing the approach to unification reflected in the document.
- Merely quoting or describing a document does not demonstrate understanding.

Supports thesis with evidence from all or all but one document (2 Points):

- Specific and accurate evidence of how Germany approached unification must be specifically drawn from at least seven documents.
- Simply listing the document does not count as evidence.

Correctly analyzes point of view in at least two documents (1 Point):

- Point of view explains why this particular person/organization might have this particular opinion or what particular feature informs this point of view.
- Students must move beyond mere description by considering and explaining the tone, characteristics of author, intended audience, etc.
- Students may challenge the veracity of document (bias) but must explain why.

Analyzes documents by grouping them in two ways (1 Point):

- Students must explicitly and correctly group the documents in two ways.
- A single document, appropriately analyzed, can form a group or sub-group

- Grouping must coherently address the prompt.
- Possible groupings are (Docs 1,3,4,6,8 Reunification), (Docs 2,5,7 First Unification), etc. There are several other possible groupings.

Identifies and explains the need for one type of appropriate additional document or source.

- Students must identify and appropriate additional document or source and explain how it would contribute to their analysis of German unification/reunification.
- An example could be the reaction from a political leader or commentator who is not German. There are many other possibilities.

Expanded Core—demonstrates excellence by expanding beyond basic core of seven points. Students must earn all seven core points to be eligible for up to two additional points. Excellence can be demonstrated by:

- Has a clear analytical, comprehensive thesis.
- Shows careful insight and analysis of the documents.
- Uses documents persuasively as evidence.
- Analyzes point of view in more than two documents.
- Includes groupings beyond the two required.
- Brings in particularly accurate or more than one accurate additional document or content.

Unit Rubric

Does not meet standard	Meets standard	Exceeds standard
<p><i>Historical Knowledge</i> The student demonstrate gaps of important factual information and geography, has poor command of dates and sequencing, and misunderstands or misapplies cause/effect.</p>	<p>The student demonstrates a grasp of historical events, processes, and geography during the time periods in question, including sequencing and cause and effect.</p>	<p>The student meets the basic standard plus demonstrates command of higher order thinking by clear analysis of historical events and processes beyond recitation of facts and understanding cause and effect.</p>
<p><i>Written expression</i> Student is unable to clearly articulate in written form acceptable answers to prompts in short or long essay form, and/or fails to score at least 4 points on DBQ.</p>	<p>The student is able to clearly and concisely write an acceptable DBQ essay (at least 4 points,) and also basic long and short form essays within the unit, and demonstrates capacity to write on multiple lines of inquiry and conclusions.</p>	<p>The student meets basic standard plus demonstrates the ability to build compelling, interesting and factually accurate essays. Student would score Expanded Core points on DBQ.</p>
<p><i>Accurate analysis</i> Student is unable to correctly organize and assemble factual data and historical knowledge and organize or present it in a way that accurately presents an analysis of historical events and processes.</p>	<p>Student is able to assemble facts and historical knowledge to present accurate and correct analysis of historical processes and events.</p>	<p>Student meets the basic standard but moves beyond it to engage in second level analysis of historical processes and events, demonstrating a high level of university level analytical thinking.</p>