

Countries Around the World™

Denmark

Program Summary

Meet Mikkel. He lives in Copenhagen — Denmark’s capital city. Follow him as he tours Copenhagen and its surrounding areas by bike. Along the way, students will learn about Denmark’s location in Europe, its position as a top producer of windmills and the sports that are enjoyed by many there. A stop at Christiania will unveil a unique and independently-governed community. At the center of Copenhagen is Strøget, the city’s main shopping street, where you’ll find the town hall and the wax museum. Students will learn that Denmark is a constitutional monarchy and is committed to promoting peace throughout the world. Explore historic Tivoli Gardens — a center for fun and amusement that boasts flower gardens, rides and venues for concerts and plays. Finally, venture with Mikkel across land and water to Odense, on the island of Fyn. The journey there will reveal the country’s flat landscape as well as the importance of manufacturing and agriculture to its economy. Odense is the hometown of Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, best known for his collection of fairy tales that include “The Ugly Duckling,” “The Little Mermaid” and “The Little Matchstick Girl.”

Country Information

- **location:** Northern Europe; on a peninsula north of Germany, bordering the North Sea and the Baltic Sea; bordered by Germany; also includes two major islands (Sjælland and Fyn)
- **capital:** Copenhagen
- **official language:** Danish
- **government type:** constitutional monarchy
- **total area:** approximately 43,000 sq km
- **climate:** temperate; mild, windy winters and cool summers
- **terrain:** low and flat to gently rolling plains
- **major bodies of water:** North Sea, Baltic Sea, Kattegat, Skagerrak
- **natural resources:** includes petroleum, natural gas, fish, salt, limestone, chalk, stone, gravel and sand
- **major agricultural crops and products:** includes barley, wheat, potatoes, sugar beets, pork, dairy products and fish

Vocabulary

Danes — Native people or inhabitants of Denmark.

wind energy — Energy that is produced when the wind blows. Wind energy turns windmills to generate electricity and is a renewable, nonpolluting energy source.

Christiania — A self-governing community that resides in Copenhagen.

Strøget — Copenhagen’s main shopping street.

Dannebrog — The name for the national flag of Denmark.

constitutional monarchy — A government with a constitution, elected representative body and a monarch with limited powers.

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Hans Christian Andersen — A 19th-century Danish author, best-known for his collection of fairy tales.

Fyn — A major island of Denmark in the Baltic Sea whose chief city is Odense.

European Union (EU) — A family of democratic European countries that are committed to working together for peace and prosperity. Denmark is a member of the European Union.

Danish krone — The official currency of Denmark.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- What is a “place of interest”? Engage students in a discussion of the types of places that might be included under this category. Have students prepare a list of places of interest in their own community. As students watch the program, instruct them to note any similarities or differences between the places of interest they identified and those presented by Mikkel.
- Discuss transportation with students and how they travel from place to place. When do they walk, pedal a bike or ride in a car? Have they ever ridden aboard a train or airplane? What are some other modes of transportation? As students prepare to watch the program, instruct them to note the different modes of transit used by the host.
- Locate Denmark on a map. Use the map and other geographical information to make inferences about the country’s landscape and people. Return to this list after viewing the program. Which inferences were confirmed? Should unconfirmed inferences be regarded as false? Why or why not? Discuss the pros and cons of investigating the country from the viewpoint of one child.

Follow-up Activities

- Denmark has been a member of the European Union (EU) for over 30 years. Visit europa.eu/abc/index_en.htm to learn more about the EU. Discuss its motto, “United in Diversity,” and what it means. Provide students with an outline map of Europe. Students can locate Denmark, its capital, as well as other member countries of the European Union. Have students answer questions such as: What is the northernmost EU country? The southernmost?
- Discuss the cultural elements of Mikkel’s daily life. Which aspects of his life appear to be unique to Denmark and which are more universal in nature?
- Did you know that the Danish monarchy can be traced back more than 1,000 years? Visit kongehuset.dk/english/ to learn more about the royal family of Denmark and to see the royal lineage. Have students trace their own ancestral lineage and create family trees. It would be interesting to see how far back students are able to trace their heritage. Many students may be able to trace their lineage to other countries. Mark these countries on a world map.
- Hans Christian Andersen, a 19th-century Danish author, is best-known for his collection of fairy tales that include “The Ugly Duckling,” “The Little Mermaid” and “Thumbelina.” Investigate the fairy tale genre by sharing some of Andersen’s classic tales with students. (Many of Andersen’s tales are available online at www.aesopfables.com/aesopfca.html.) Students can select a favorite tale to perform live in the form of a puppet show, mime skit, student play or dramatic storytelling. As an extension, students can write their own fairy tales.
- Ja or Nej? In Danish, “ja” means yes and “nej” means no. Visit www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european_languages/languages/danish.shtml to learn how these basic words and other key phrases of the Danish language are pronounced. Present students with a series of questions in which they must answer “ja” or “nej.” These questions can be about the country of Denmark or they can be about other topics of study in the classroom. For example, “Does $78 \times 9 = 702$?” The answer is “ja!”

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- Windmills are a well-known part of Denmark’s landscape. Discuss the reason for the prevalence of windmills and compare some of the country’s historic windmills with modern-day designs. Do newer windmills serve the same function as those built 250 years ago? Gretchen Woelfle’s *The Wind at Work: An Activity Guide to Windmills* (Chicago Review Press, 1997) is a helpful resource for discovering more about the history of windmills and how they work.
- Tivoli Gardens is a popular site in Copenhagen. An urban park boasting beautiful gardens, amusement park rides and venues for performances, there is something there for everyone. Invite students to design their own urban park for a city near them. Encourage them to include gardens that feature plants native to that region. Students can draw a park map or build a model of their design. For some inspiration, visit www.tivoli.dk/composite-5447.htm for an interactive map of Tivoli Gardens. As an extension, students can research the benefits of building urban parks or investigate other great urban parks of the world.
- Football — or soccer, as it is called in the United States — is Denmark’s national sport. In small groups, have students research different elements of the sport, such as the rules of the game, where it is played, what equipment is used, etc. Then, have students compile their research into a *How To...* book. Students can include illustrations, labeled diagrams, biographies of soccer stars, etc. If the weather permits, celebrate the book’s completion with a class soccer match.

Suggested Internet Resources

- media.denmark.dk/kids/index.html
With a cartoon kid as your tour guide, explore Denmark and find out more about what it is like to live there. This site is by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.
- www.museum.odense.dk/andersen/manuskript/billedstart.asp?sprog=engelsk
This site, by the Odense City Museums, allows people from all over the world to view some of Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale manuscripts. See his handwriting, what he crosses out and what he adds in. It’s the writing process in action!
- www.cia.gov
The CIA World Factbook web site presents detailed and up-to-date information on Denmark and many other countries. Topics include geography, people, government, economy, transportation and communication. On the main page of the CIA site, click on the “World Factbook” link.

Suggested Print Resources

- Andersen, Hans Christian. *Hans Christian Andersen’s Fairy Tales*. Penguin Young Readers Group, New York, NY; 2006.
- Murphy, Patrick J. *Denmark*. Capstone Press, Mankato, MN; 2002.
- Pateman, Robert. *Denmark*. Marshall Cavendish, Tarrytown, NY; 2006.

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