Germany

Program Summary

Meet 12-year-old Jacob. He and his family live in Berlin, Germany's capital. Join Jacob as he and his cousin Rafael take a canoe trip down the Spree and Havel Rivers to Potsdam. While there, they tour the Sanssouci Palace, an 18th-century residence built by Frederick II. Once back in Berlin, Jacob and Rafael race around a track in go-carts before heading to the German Museum of Technology, where they operate a printing press similar to the one Johannes Gutenberg invented. Discover aspects of German history when Jacob and Rafael see the Berlin Wall, the Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate and the "hollow tooth," a church that was damaged in World War II. After playing some antique instruments at the Museum of Musical Instruments, the boys shop for sweets at a store that specializes in chocolate that is shaped like some of Germany's most famous buildings! Finally, Jacob reveals some of Germany's religious traditions when he and his family celebrate Easter by attending church and participating in an Easter egg hunt.

Country Information

- **location:** Central Europe, bordering the Baltic Sea and the North Sea; bordered by Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland
- **capital:** Berlin
- **official language:** German
- **type of government:** federal republic
- **total area:** approximately 357,021 sq km
- **climate:** temperate and marine with cool, cloudy, wet winters and summers
- **terrain:** lowlands in the North, uplands in the center and the Bavarian Alps in the South
- **major bodies of water:** Rhine River, Elbe River, Danube River, Havel River, Spree River, Baltic Sea and North Sea
- **natural resources:** includes coal, lignite, natural gas, iron ore, copper, nickel, uranium, potash, salt, construction materials, timber and arable land
- **industries:** includes iron, steel, coal, cement, chemicals, machinery, vehicles, machine tools, electronics, food and beverages, shipbuilding and textiles
- **agricultural products:** includes potatoes, wheat, barley, sugar beets, fruit, cabbages, cattle, pigs and poultry

Vocabulary

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

euro — The currency of Germany and of several member nations of the European Union.

theory of relativity — A famous scientific theory, developed by Albert Einstein, that states that space and time are relative, rather than absolute concepts. It is often expressed mathematically as $E=mc^2$.

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Nazi — A member of a political group, led by Adolf Hitler, that persecuted and killed six million European Jews.

Reichstag — The name of the German parliament and the building in which they work.

Communist — A member or advocate of a political and economic system called Communism, in which private property is abolished and all goods are owned jointly.

currywurst — A dish of pork sausage that is cut into small pieces and seasoned with ketchup and curry powder.

curry — A shortened version of "curry powder," a seasoning prepared from cumin, coriander, turmeric and other spices.

harpsichord — A musical instrument that resembles a piano.

zither — A musical instrument that is composed of a flat sound box with strings stretched over it, which is played horizontally with the fingertips or a plectrum.

Reformation — A shortened way to refer to the Protestant Reformation, a religious movement started by Martin Luther in the early 16th century that sought to change what many Christians perceived to be injustices and corruption in the Christian Church.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Distribute outline maps of Germany to the class. Have them find and label the capital, other major cities and regions, bodies of water and the neighboring countries. Questions to ask include: Which countries border Germany to the north, south, east and west? How many cities are located on Germany's rivers? Why do you think so many cities are located along the Rhine?
- Introduce the idea of different points of view by asking students what they think about a particular place in the United States. As a class, explore where students got their information by asking questions, such as: Did you visit the place? Did you read about it? Do you know someone from there? Discuss how point of view and perspective can affect descriptions of place and culture. Inform students that the program they are about to view is presented from the point of view of a young boy. Have them watch for examples of the host's point of view and, after the program, discuss how what was shown might have been influenced by the host's point of view.
- Discuss what makes a place unique. Begin by having students brainstorm a list of things that they think make a place unique. Follow up with questions, such as: Are people a part of making a place unique? How would you characterize the place where you live? What makes it unique? As they prepare to watch the program, ask students to predict how Germany might be different from their communities. After the program, follow up by asking students to compare their predictions about Germany with what was shown. What are some of the things that were different? Was there anything that was similar to where you live?

Follow-up Activities

- The German auto industry is responsible for producing some of the world's most popular cars. Have students select German automobiles and create magazine advertisements for them. The advertisements can include information about the cars and pictures or illustrations. Visit **sps.k12.mo.us/khs/german/germany/autos/dtauto.htm** for information about German automobiles.

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- As one of the world's leading producers of chocolate, the Germans know a little something about the popular confection. But what do you know about chocolate? Students will have fun discovering the wonderful world of chocolate by visiting **www.fieldmuseum.org/Chocolate/about.html**. Working in small groups, have students select topics and create pages for inclusion in a class book about chocolate. The book can include sections on the history of chocolate, flowcharts that detail the various steps involved in making chocolate, information on how it is grown, time lines that trace chocolate's evolution and maps that show where chocolate originated and where different types of chocolate are made. Students can even seek out different types of chocolate from Germany and bring them to class to have a tasting. As an extension, students can use clay to make "chocolate sculptures" similar to the ones in the program.
- For many decades following World War II, Germany was actually two separate countries. This division was the most pronounced in the capital city of Berlin, where the infamous Berlin Wall stood as a stark reminder of the disunity in Germany at that time. Students can find facts about the history, building, and the ultimate destruction of the wall, and can discover the many heroic escapes that East Germans made over the years by visiting **www.newseum.org/berlinwall/index.htm**. Students can work together to create a time line that spans the life of the Berlin Wall that also includes pictures or illustrations, fact sheets and maps. After the students complete their sections of the time line, post them in the classroom.
- Students can learn basic German words and phrases by visiting **www.bbc.co.uk/languages/german/lj/**. Drawing from the various sections, have students write and perform skits using these phrases as if they were traveling in Germany, visiting places like Berlin, Bavaria and Munich. After each performance, students can translate their skits into English.
- Many world-renowned composers are from Germany, including Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg Friedrich Händel, Ludwig von Beethoven and Richard Wagner. Play some samples of music by these composers for the class. Students can write about their impressions of the music to share with the class. As an extension, students can listen to music by composers from other countries and compare and contrast the pieces. For samples of Bach's and Handel's music, visit **www.baroquecds.com/musamples.html**. For a wider selection of classical music, visit **www.classicsforkids.com/music**.
- Albert Einstein is widely regarded as a brilliant scientist, and his theory of relativity changed the way many scientists viewed the nature of reality and the universe. But the story of Albert Einstein's life is just as fascinating and complex as some of his scientific ideas. Engage students in a study of this groundbreaking and influential scientist and humanitarian. Working in small groups, students can find facts about Einstein. From the information they gather, students can work together to build a classroom display dedicated to Albert Einstein that can feature fact sheets, posters, time lines, pictures and illustrations. As a resource, students may enjoy reading Elizabeth MacLeod's *Albert Einstein:A Life of Genius* (Kids Can Press, 2003).
- Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, better known as the Brothers Grimm, were two German professors who collected and published folk- and fairy tales, such as "Rapunzel," "Rumplestiltskin" and "Hansel and Gretel." In the process of collecting these stories, they sometimes altered them from their original versions — adding new twists and ideas to the tales. Students can pick their favorite fairy tales and rework them as "fractured fairy tales," wherein key elements of the stories are altered and customized. Students can write and illustrate their new versions of the stories for inclusion in a Grimm's Fairy tales-inspired class book. For practice with writing fractured fairy tales, students can visit **www.readwritethink.org/materials/fairytales/** for an interactive guide that features samples and a tool for reworking the stories of "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Little Red Riding Hood" and "The Princess and the Pea."

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- Hello from Germany! Postcards are a fun way to show people the different places you've visited. Using information from the program, have students design and write a postcard as if they had visited Germany and wanted to tell their friends back home all about it. Students can visit **www.readwritethink.org/materials/postcard/** to create postcards online. For added authenticity, incorporate some German words and expressions like "guten tag" or "auf wiedersehen" into the postcard.
- Germany is known for its many castles and palaces. Students can see pictures of some of these castles and learn about them by visiting **www.guide-to-castles-of-europe.com/german-castles.html**. They can pick their favorite castles, sketch them and write fact sheets that contain information about the castles. Then, using various craft materials, shoeboxes and cereal boxes, students can design and build their own castles. They can name their castles and even invent histories for them, such as who lived there, how long it took to build the castle, why it was built, etc. Encourage students to share their designs and display the castles in the classroom.
- In the 15th century, German craftsman Johannes Gutenberg devised an invention that revolutionized the way people received information: the printing press. But the printing press isn't the only important invention to come out of Germany; from blue jeans and plastic to bicycles and kindergarten, German innovation has shaped the world in which we live. In the tradition of Gutenberg, students can work in small groups and use the interactive printing press at **interactives.mped.org/ppress110.aspx** to create informational pages about German inventions. The pages can include information about the inventions, such as how they work and what they do, pictures of the inventions and the inventors and brief biographies of the inventors. As they complete their first drafts, have students switch pages for a peer editing session. Students can even plan and give presentations on the inventions. For information on some German inventions, visit **www.enchantedlearning.com/inventors/germany.shtml**.

Suggested Internet Resources

- **www.historyforkids.org/learn/germans/index.htm**
  Discover ancient Germany. This site, by History for Kids!, features information on the history, culture, geography, people and art of ancient Germany. A quiz is also included.
- **www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3997.htm**
  This site, assembled by the U.S. Department of State, presents information on the geography, history, people, culture, government and economy of Germany.
- **www.germany.info/relaunch/education/Teacher_Kits/main.html**
  The German Embassy in Washington, D.C. offers online teacher's kits and other resources for the classroom.
- **library.thinkquest.org/CR0212302/germany.html**
  Learn about the culture and customs of Germany from the perspective of a child who lives there! The students of Roosevelt School in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin present this award-winning site to teach people about different cultures.
- **www.cia.gov**
  The CIA World Factbook web site presents detailed and up-to-date information on Germany 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

- Blashfield, Jean F. *Germany*. Children's Press, Danbury, CT; 2003.
- Gordon, Sharon. *Germany*. Marshall Cavendish, Tarrytown, NY; 2004.
- Heinrichs, Susuan. *Germany*. Children's Press, Danbury, CT; 2003.

Teacher's Guide written by Brian Wales, Curriculum Specialist, Schlessinger Media

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