

## Topic 2 Cultural Geography of Germany

### Lesson 3 What is school like in Germany?

#### Lesson Objectives

- The student will compare and contrast school life in Germany to that in the United States.
- The student will describe characteristics of a “typical” school day in the life of German children.

#### Materials and Resources

- Teacher Resource 6 “Going to Elementary School in Germany”
- Handout 3 “A ‘Typical’ School Day in Germany”
- Transparency 6 “A ‘Typical’ School Day in Germany”

#### Strategies

Cultural traits and values are influenced not only by the use of leisure time, but by the educational system. Begin the discussion of schools in Germany by asking students to generate a list of questions they would like to have answered about elementary school in Germany. The information in **Teacher Resource 6, “Going to Elementary School in Germany”** should provide the answers to most of the students’ questions.

Next, show the students the photographs on **Handout 3 and Transparency 6, “A ‘Typical’ School Day in Germany.”**

Photo 1 – The teacher organizes groups: In contrast to traditional lectures, teachers often plan activities requiring students to work in groups.

Photo 2 – Schoolyard: Lesson breaks are needed to allow for chats between friends.

Photo 3 – Gym: Physical Education (P.E.) classes have been a tradition in German schools and sports clubs for 200 years. The importance of physical education and training goes back to the fights for freedom of the Germans against Napoleon.

Photo 4 – Starting school: The first day of school for 6-year-old children includes the traditional gift of a cone full of sweets and school supplies.

Photo 5 – Road safety training: For more than 100 years, road safety training has been an important subject in primary school. Police officers teach children about street safety.

Photo 6 – Teamwork: Children learn quicker while communicating in a small group and doing research projects.

Photo 7 – Lunchroom: According to recent reforms in the German school system, more children stay at school for the entire day. For this reason, schools have recently begun to offer a light lunch.

Photo 8 – Music lesson: The arts are an important part of the education of German children. They serve as important tasks for the development of children’s creativity.

Students should examine the photographs and make a list of events which occur at a German school. Students should note how the children are dressed, how the classroom is furnished and decorated, and the activities in which the students are engaged.

The teacher should lead a discussion in which the following points, among others, are noted:

- students dress in a similar way both in Germany and in the United States
- students in Germany work on activities individually, in small groups, and large groups
- students in Germany study science, math, history and geography.
- classrooms in Germany “look like” classrooms in the United States with whiteboards, student work displayed, and desks.

During the afternoon and evening, students must complete lengthy homework assignments. In addition, many students enjoy being involved in community activities such as sports, music lessons, and playing with their friends.