

## ***Introduction to Western Europe***

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This unit introduces students to the Western Europe countries of England, France, and Germany. Students study the physical geography, climate, history, economy, and culture of each country. They also learn how each of these countries has influenced the United States. Visual images are used throughout the teacher presentations and student activities to motivate discussion and facilitate learning objectives.

**Lesson Plan Title:** Introduction to Western Europe – Unit Plan

**Keywords:** Western Europe, France, Germany. British Isles

**Curriculum Area:** Geography & World History

**Grade Level:** 9 - 12

**Appropriate Group Size:** Whole Class

**Time Expected to Complete Instructional Plan:** 20 days

### **Instructional Objectives:**

1. To introduce students to the physical geography, climate, history, economy and culture of the countries of Western Europe
2. To promote student understanding of the important role of the sea in the region's history and economy
3. To practice discerning the most important points in a passage of text.
4. To realize the impact various countries of Western Europe have had on the United States
5. To allow students to explore the physical and psychological impact of the Industrial Revolution on England and France through art images
6. To encourage students to formulate opinions on historical events and to consider solutions to current events.
7. To encourage students to use media research skill and explore their own creativity.
8. To allow students to use a multi-sensory approach in learning about French culture.

### **Indiana State Proficiencies:**

World Geography, High School

1. Use maps, globes and other tools and technologies to acquire and process information about people, places and environments.
2. Explain the concept of region and describe the human and physical characteristics of place.
3. Explain the human characteristics of Earth's environment: political patterns, population dynamics, cultural mosaics, and land use.
4. Analyze how humans affect and are affected by their physical environment.
5. Analyze the patterns and networks of human economic interdependence.
6. Apply geographic understandings to interpret past events, analyze and make rational choices for present challenges, and influence future trends.

## World History, High School

1. Examine historical events, personalities, and movements as they impacted world history.
2. Investigate nations and cultures in terms of their diversity, commonalities and inter-relationships.
3. Describe the impact of geographical patterns and their interrelationships on the growth of modern civilization.
4. Analyze the effect that different economic systems have had on the development of selected societies
5. Use a variety of resources to gather and analyze information for making decisions, drawing conclusions, and designing presentations.

### **Materials and Resources Needed:**

#### Hands on:

Sketch pads, construction paper  
Map outlines  
Colored Pencils, markers  
French language flash cards  
Examples of food using French products  
French-perfumed cotton ball  
Butter cookies and grape juice  
Images from image databases below

#### Internet Sites:

Corbis Images <http://www.corbisimages.com>  
National Gallery, D.C. <http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery>  
Art Institute of Chicago <http://www.artic.edu/aic>  
Grove Dictionary of Art Online <http://www.groveart.com>

#### Publications:

*Gardner's Art Through the Ages*. Ninth Edition. Harcourt, Brace, Jobanovich, New York, 1991.  
ISBN: 0-15-503771-4  
*Geography: People and Places in a Changing World*. Paul Ward English. West Educational  
Publishing New York, 1997. ISBN: 0-314-20145-9

#### Newspaper:

Indianapolis Star. April 5, 1997. "U.S. Victims of Nazi Camps to Receive Tokens of Justice"

#### Videos/CD's:

Video: "Northern Ireland – The Troubles"  
CD: Debussy's "Afternoon of a Faun"  
CDs: Bach and Beethoven

### **Preparation:**

1. Overhead transparencies of Western Europe (political boundaries, cities, landforms, etc) and projector

2. Outline maps of the British Isles, Northern Europe, Continental Europe and Mediterranean Europe
3. Overhead transparencies of images of the Holocaust

### **Student Instruction:**

#### Lesson One:

Introduce students to the physical geography of Western Europe using an overhead outline and a series of map transparencies. Include discussions of how Western Europe's geographic location, topography, and proximity to the sea influence its climate, history, and economy.

Activity: At the beginning of the lesson, show students an overhead transparency of Western Europe. Ask the students to speculate on economic activity in the area based upon this image (long coastlines, etc.)

#### Lesson Two:

Inform students about the geography and culture of individual countries of Western Europe.

Activity: Divide students into 7 groups; The British Isles, Northern Europe, France/Germany, Benelux/Super Dike, Switzerland/Austria, Mediterranean Europe, The Micro-States. Have them read their sections and take notes, attempting to discern the important points. Each group should then give a synopsis of their portion of the reading to the rest of the class. Students take notes during each presentation, and groups create quizzes over their portion.

#### Lesson Three:

Invite students to discuss British and Irish influence on the United States. Topics include the Puritans, Enlightenment ideas regarding government by John Locke, and the Industrial Revolution.

Activity: Students are shown a woodblock art image depicting the whipping of a child worker in a textile mill. (The White Slaves of England, New York Public Library) Ask them to examine the artwork and determine the situation. Ask students to search Grove Dictionary of Art Online for keywords woodcut and wood-engraving.

Other images of child labor can be found in the Corbis Images:

- Child Pushing Coal Cart Through Shaft
- Children at Work in a Paper Mill
- Children Working in Brickyard
- Scene From Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist Other images of the Industrial Revolution found in Corbis Images:
  - "Excelsior Iron Works" by Lyman W. Atwater
  - Illustration from Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens
  - Match Makers
  - New England Factory Life
  - Nineteenth-Century Lithograph of a Textile Spinning Workshop
  - Portrait of Charles Dickens

This leads into a conversation on child labor during the Industrial Revolution and the mass migration of British and Irish workers to the US during this time.

Activity: After viewing “Northern Ireland – The Troubles,” students form groups to discuss possible solutions to the problem.

#### Lesson Four:

Students learn about various aspects of French culture through a multi-sensory lesson; hearing music, tasting food, smelling French perfume, seeing French art.

Activity 1: Give a brief introduction covering religion, national holidays, leading export products, currency unit, governmental structure, etc. During this overview, play music by Debussy in the background.

Activity 2: Ask students about sports that are important in France. This will lead into a discussion on the Tour de France.

Activity 3: Direct students in a mini-French lesson by writing simple words on the board with translations, using flash cards to familiarize the vocabulary. Say the words in English and ask for the French responses. Finally, ask students to think of French words that are part of the American vocabulary.

Activity 4: Encourage students to think of some foods that are identified with France. This can lead into a discussion of escargot, truffles, the development of sauces, pastries based upon France’s dairy industry, and the importance of the wine industry and why France is geographically a good wine-growing region. Treat students to a butter cookie (dairy) and grape juice (wine).

Activity 5: Explain the disparity between Paris and rural France. Ask students to write down four things they associate with Paris. This should lead into a discussion of Paris as the haute couture and perfume center of the world. Pass around a jar containing a Chanel #5 scented cotton ball.

Activity 6: Encourage students to experience the uniquely-French phenomenon, Impressionistic art. Project the first image, a detail-image of Rouen Cathedral by Monet, without explanation. Encourage student comments, and lead into a discussion of the qualities of impressionism in the visual arts, literature, and music. (Again, use “Afternoon of a Faun” as an example). Show an array of Monet, Degas, Renoir, Manet, and Morisot paintings, and solicit comments on each. Finally, help students to understand the impact of Post-Impressionism on modern art will further images by Cezanne and Braque.

Activity 7: Remind students of the problems the Industrial Revolution brought to England. Then project impressionistic images depicting environmental and social problems faced by Paris due to the Industrial Revolution there.

Images used in Activities 6 and 7: [National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.](#):

1. Rouen Cathedral and details, Monet
2. Banks of the Seine and details, Monet,
3. Ballet Scene and details, Dega (Images 1-8)
4. The Blue River, Renoir
5. Girl with Watering Can, Renoir
6. At the Races, Degas
7. Girl in a Boat with Geese, Morisot

8. Hanging Laundry out to Dry, Morisot
9. Mont Sainte Victoire, Cezanne, Philadelphia Museum of Art  
Corbis Images:
10. Violin and Glass, Braque, Private collection (images 9-11)
11. Gare St. Lazare, Monet, National Gallery, London
12. The Absinthe Drinker, Degas, d'Orsay Museum, Paris
13. At the Moulin Rouge, Lautrec, Art Institute of Chicago

#### Lesson Five:

Culminating activity for the French lesson:

Activity: Instruct students to choose an artistic medium; visual art, literature, or music, and compose their own impressionistic work. Tell them they must be prepared to fully discuss their rendering. (to be done outside of class)

#### Lesson Six:

Provide an outline presentation on Germany highlighting The Ruhr, the autobahn, the Reformation, the division/reunification of Germany and an introduction to the Holocaust.

Activity: Inform students that there are those who deny the Holocaust ever existed. Then, have a discussion as to whether or not this may be a valid view.

#### Lesson Seven:

Assist students in going through a progression of negative-to-positive images of Germany.

Activity 1: Divide students into groups to decide on three things they think of when they hear the word, "Germany." Have the class share their thoughts; the Holocaust is sure to be a response. Show graphic transparency images of the Holocaust with brief explanations (significance of the Star of David on prisoners, etc.)

Provide students with a newspaper article to read for further discussion, "US Victims of Nazi Camps to Receive Tokens of Justice."

Corbis Images:

- Disinfection Room at Concentration Camp
- Flight Of Jewish Family From Germany
- Gas Chamber at Mauthausen
- Interior View of Crematory at Concentration Camp
- Male Concentration Camp Prisoners
- Prisoners in Concentration Camp
- Spectators Gazing into Nazi Crematoriums
- Survivors of a Nazi Concentration Camp

Activity 2: Challenge students to research the autobahn and gather information that relates Hitler's road-building program in Germany to Eisenhower's interstate road system in the U.S.

Activity 3: Display positive images of the German people and their craftsmanship for the students to see and feel. A crystal stein from Munich, a woven tapestry from Heidelberg, a religious candle

and a wooden nutcracker from Bavarian villages, and precision tools manufactured in northern Germany are examples of items to share.

#### Lesson Eight:

Students will begin their study of Italy with an activity:

Activity: Provide students with bumper-sticker-sized pieces of colored construction paper. Ask them to design a bumper sticker based upon a pre-conceived mental image they have of Italian spaghetti and the leaning tower of Pisa are frequent themes). Discuss the students' bumper stickers, and lead into a brief instructor-led overview of Italy including economic differences between the north and the south, agricultural and industrial products, and Rome/Vatican City.

#### Lesson Nine:

Inform students the class period will focus on learning about some of the contributions Italy has made to the United States and the world. The first three areas – alphabet/language, Christianity, and exploration/science/technology – are instructor led.

Activity 1: Ask students to name some characteristics of the governmental structure of the US. Have them list these on the board. Then, encourage a comparison between the government of Republican Rome and the current structure of contemporary democratic governments.

Activity 2: Divide students briefly into groups and encourage them to write down three ideas upon which U.S. law is based. Have group leaders share ideas with the class. Introduce students to principles of Roman law, and ask students to compare characteristics of U.S. law to those of ancient Rome.

Activity 3: Share a visual presentation to demonstrate the impact of Italian architecture on US architecture, and to show how a western concept of beauty and ideal proportion began with the Italian Renaissance. Introduce students to “The Big Three” artists through this presentation:

Images used in Activity 3:

- The Pantheon, Rome
- Villa Rotunda, Vincenza Palladio
- Monticello, Charlottesville, Jefferson, image #JG004010/sheet 1
- Drawing of an Anatomical Study, Royal Library, Windsor Castle
- Mona Lisa, Leonardo da Vinci, The Louvre, Paris
- A Woman, Raphael, Pitti Palace, Florence
- Adam, Raphael, Uffizi Museum, Florence
- Cherubs, Raphael, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City
- David/detail of head, Michelangelo, Florence Academy of Art
- Young Captive, Michelangelo, Florence Academy of Art
- Pieta, Michelangelo, St. Peter's, Rome
- Doni Tondo, Michelangelo, Uffizi Museum, Florence

#### Lesson Ten:

Lead an interactive overhead presentation of the major environmental issues faced by Western

Europe.

Activity: Have students research their choice of a Western European environmental problem in the media center and write a one-page paper on their topic using the following format:

Paragraph 1 – Describe the environmental problem

Paragraph 2 – Describe the cause(s) of this problem

Paragraph 3 – Describe the effect(s) of this problem on the environment

Paragraph 4 – Describe what is currently being done to solve the problem

### **Student Assessment:**

1. Provide students with a progression of outline maps as each sub-region/country of Western Europe is discussed. Include a list of geographic features to illustrate on their maps, and grade them on their accuracy and completion.
2. After students complete Lesson 2 above, have each group formulate a quiz over their section of the reading (with teacher guidance on issues of informational importance, clarity of questions, etc.)
3. Students impressionistic art as described in Lesson 5 should be graded on creativity, originality, use of impressionistic style, and effort.
4. The environmental research papers described in Lesson 10 should be graded on completion of the proper format, clarity, and understanding of the issue and remedies.
5. Give students an outline map of Western Europe and ask them to identify various geographic features. They are graded on their ability to locate these features.
6. Give a unit test which will combine objective questions, a choice of short essay questions, and an opinion. (To be submitted later)

### **Extensions of this unit** - a few suggestions

1. There are speakers, often found through local Jewish community centers, who will talk of their Holocaust experiences.
2. The National Geographic video series has videos depicting the beauty of Ireland, Austria, Switzerland, Bavarian Germany, etc.
3. A visit to a local art museum could reinforce the lesson on French Impressionism and familiarize students with the works of other Western European artists, both past and present.
4. In discussing the history of Western Europe, students could divide into groups and make posters:
  - a. depiction of the various European trade routes, colonies, etc. during the Age of Exploration
  - b. a poster showing various artists, musicians from the different countries
  - c. a poster showing the agricultural/industrial products produced in Europe
5. Students could choose a country and do computer research on famous artwork from that country. They could then choose three pieces of art to display, tell about the artist, and explain why the work is representative of their chosen country.

### **Teacher Notes:**

1. Lesson 2: Students tend to be nervous about student-generated quizzes. Be certain to check all questions for relevance, clarity, and fairness. Students might even generate a pre-test review game based upon numerous possible questions, and then choose a few questions for their portion of the quiz.
2. Art visual presentations: This is the maximum number of images to show. Too many tends to confuse and/or bore the students, whereas a few images accompanied by interesting information holds their interest.

3. Lesson 5: Display all of the students' artwork, making it a positive experience for all. However, it is fun to have students vote on the two or three best images and discuss why these are considered superior.
4. Activity 7-1: Warn students of the graphic images of the Holocaust in the event someone should choose not to view the transparencies.
5. Activity 7-3: Have library books on Germany available around the room for students to thumb through as they look at the various Germany products displayed.