



Teaching about Scotland

This is one of a series of units for teaching about Scotland in German Secondary schools. All the materials were created by very motivated students in my Area Studies Scotland class, some with experience of teaching in a “Gymnasium“. The materials can be tried out as they are, or altered as desired. They can also be combined. One basic idea behind them all is that both the teacher and the learners can develop the materials themselves, according to their own interests, and then even offer them to another class. For some of these units printed information material is needed, for example ferry timetables, but if you don't have this, it is no problem to print it out from the Internet. Useful websites are given.

A Poster Project - Scottish Music and Dance

Target group and Aim.

This project is intended for pupils in their last year or two of secondary school (the “Oberstufe“) as it requires a good deal of research in English.

The aim is for students to learn about Scottish music and dance by researching the topic and producing a poster on it for display and discussion at a class “poster fair“.

The project from beginning to end will take four to five weeks; the actual in-class activity will take three double sessions.

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The main goals of the poster presentation are to encourage independent research and learning and to spark the students' interest in a different country and culture. They are "forced" to focus on the subject and find suitable materials and sources themselves, and since preparing a poster is so much more interesting than doing their usual homework we hope that preparing for the presentation will leave positive memories – memories that they will associate with the unit and with the topic as well.

We would recommend letting the pupils form the groups themselves as this makes it more likely that those in a group will actually cooperate with each other and make a combined effort to create a good poster.

Another goal of this type of work is to improve their oral skills. Instead of preparing an ordinary presentation they will be forced to be responsive to their classmates' questions. This is good practice for their oral Abitur presentations. It teaches them flexibility and spontaneity and gives them confidence in the use of the English language.

1 Preparing the project

A two-hour class would be ideal to introduce the topic of Scotland in general. The teacher can do some sort of brainstorming with the pupils in order to find out whether they have any knowledge of the country. She will already have prepared several topics (enough to divide the class into groups of two to four) such as languages, education, literature, sports, geography, music and dance.

The teacher will also have prepared checklists with main points to focus on in their presentations and a list of useful websites.

After forming groups and choosing/drawing lots for a topic the groups do some Internet research in the media room.

Materials needed:

Large heavy quality blank posters, glue, marker pens

In the following two weeks the pupils will have to do their research at home. During this time there will be no further homework to do.

After the two weeks the students will have to make some kind of progress report: a brief outline of the topics they will touch on in their presentation and a list of sources.

The first presentations will take place another two weeks later. Four to five groups will present their poster in one session. The other presentations will be held in the next class. So roughly five weeks should be calculated for this project.

3 Presenting the poster – a poster fair

The classroom set-up:

The presentations should be held in a double session. The groups presenting their posters should arrive at the regular time and the rest should arrive fifteen minutes later. In the meantime the groups presenting will hang up their posters in the classroom – as far apart as possible in order to give the others enough space to move around the classroom.

The whole classroom should be reorganized so as to resemble a trade fair with posters, tables, objects of interest. Each group can set up a table in their section of the classroom to display additional material (magazines, travel guides, photos, etc.). The group presenting music and dance will ideally have a selection of songs ready to listen to.

The pupils who “visit the fair” walk around the classroom, examine the posters, sample food, listen to music, watch videos, and ask the “experts” questions on the content of the posters. (Later those visiting the fair will have to assess a poster of their choice.)

The presenters should give the “visitors” enough time to absorb the information on the posters and be prepared to answer questions; they should also be open and approach the visitors, providing additional information. The goal is to attract the visitors’ attention and interest.

Assessment

The Pupils Evaluate Each Other

(If grades have to be given)

The final grade for this whole project can consist of a grade for the presentation and a grade for the written review of one of the posters.

While visiting the fair and examining the posters the pupils have to gather information on the content, but even more important, judge the quality of the information presented on the poster and the way it was presented by their fellow pupils. We suggest they write about half a page (typed) on the quality of the poster of their choice. This review should be handed in a week after the second round of presentations.

The Teacher’s Grading

When deciding on the grade the teacher can take several things into account: the amount of work that the pupils did before the first “check” two weeks after the distribution of the topics, the content of the poster, the structure of the poster, the way it was presented and finally, the review that the students have to write about a poster of their choice.

We suggest one grade for all the members of each group, but the review will be graded individually. We would suggest a weighting of 2:1 in favour of the poster presentation.

An evaluation sheet for the poster could look like this:

(more than one option can be checked)

1. The poster was
 - a) well structured
 - b) interesting
 - c) chaotic
 - d) boring

2. The information was
 - a) up-to-date
 - b) relevant
 - c) wrong
 - d) easy to read

3. The presenters were
 - a) friendly
 - b) well-prepared
 - c) eager to help and provide information
 - d) sure of their facts
 - e) unsure when asked unexpected questions
 - f) unmotivated

4. The presentation of the poster was clearly
 - a) a team effort
 - b) an individual effort

5. The photos/print-outs/diagrams were
 - a) a great help
 - b) poor quality
 - c) too many
 - d) not enough

5.1 Internet Sources for Scottish Music and Dance

<http://scotlandinter.net/music.htm>
<http://www.rampantscotland.com/music.htm>
<http://www.siliconglen.com/Scotland/music.html>
<http://www.contemplator.com/folk.html>
<http://www.electricscotland.com/music/index.htm>
<http://www.siol-nan-gaidheal-usa.com/music.htm>
<http://www.scotsmusic.com/failte.htm>
<http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/home/scotland/music.html>
<http://www.rscds.org/>
<http://www.scottishdance.net/>
<http://www.highland-dancing.de/>
<http://www.frankfurt-scd-club.org/>
http://www.siliconglen.com/Scotland/10_5.html
<http://www.stdt.org/>

<http://www.ibiblio.org/gaelic/Albanuadh/4.2.html>

There are many good books in the University library e.g. Williams, Isobel E. *Scottish Country Dancing*. Edinburgh: Chambers 1991.