



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.

Scottish Sports. Organizing a Scottish Sports Event

Target group and Aim.

The idea, based on the Scottish Highland Games, is to create a school event which can last a whole school day or even longer. The project can be limited to PE/Sport but can also be linked to several other subjects (e.g. English, Art, Music, History).

The goals are multiple: classes can discover the fun of Scottish Highland Games, learn some English, use their internet research skills, practise planning and organising a real event, have fun actually participating.

The unit was created by Matthias Feisst and Christian Friedel, both students of English and Sport

Sprachlehrinstitut, Universität Konstanz

Summer term 2005

Course: Area Studies Scotland

The Event

The Highland Games, on which the idea for this school event is based, are a well-established tradition in Scotland in the summer. They are a happy mix of athletic events, music and dance, competition and entertainment. Success in the events is rewarded with silver cups and medals. They are held in various places all over Scotland, and some are attended by celebrities like Sean Connery, and the Queen.

Scottish Highland Games consist of up to 18 athletic events for individuals and teams, 12 dancing events and 9 music events. Further information is available in English at the websites given below and from www.VisitScotland.com , and in German from www.VisitScotland.com/de

For general information on Scotland (personal reports, websites, books etc.) see the other files in the Scotland section of www.FindYourFeet.de

The following is a sample of typical Highland Game events with suggestions for adapting them for use in a German school.

- Running Events
 - 100 yards (~90m)
 - 1 mile
 - 3000m
 - cross-country

To make the Running Events more interesting for the pupils they should be held on grass like the original events. The cross-country run should be well prepared (sign posts, instructors etc.)

- Jumping Events
 - High-jump
 - Triple-jump
 - Long-jump
- Musical and Dancing Events
 - single or group events
 - spontaneous or planned in class
 - depends on teachers and their methods

<http://www.visitdunkeld.com/highland-games.htm>

(Konstanz has a group of people who play the bagpipes, and the University library has books with the instructions for Scottish dancing.)

Heavy Events

- Tossing the Caber
 - original rules or smaller caber or different poles
 - just balance the caber instead of throwing

<http://www.nasgaweb.com/rules.asp>

- Stone Throw
 - original rules
 - stones of different sizes and weight (depending on age and sex)

<http://www.nasgaweb.com/rules.asp>

- Hammer Throw
 - original rules but with a lighter hammer

<http://www.nasgaweb.com/rules.asp>

- Height Throw
 - original rules but
 - no iron weights
 - use different balls

<http://www.nasgaweb.com/rules.asp>

- Sheaf Toss
 - original rules but
 - no pitch fork
 - use broomstick

<http://www.nasgaweb.com/rules.asp>

- Tug-O-War
 - original rules but
 - teams shouldn't be too big
 - strong rope needed

http://shortnews.stern.de/shownews.cfm?id=400799&news_archive=1

Tips for organizing the event

You need an Organization Team who will plan ahead, and fix the location and the date, see to the financing, choose the events, do the publicity, and organise the registration of competitors and so on. This is work, but fun.

As we said before, Scottish Highland Games involve competitions of music and dance as well as sport, and youngsters do not have to be great athletes to join in, so we see this as a very good opportunity to get lots of people involved. As can be seen below there are so many skills called for, from finding and understanding the rules of the different events to designing the posters and baking the cakes that there really is a job for everyone.

Organization

Organization Team

- who is going to be in this team, or committee (a whole class? Some teachers?)
- distribution of responsibilities

Location

- How many playing fields are available
- showers, locker rooms, toilets, etc.
- facilities for jumping and running events

Date of event

- check availability of location
- publicity (flyers, posters, etc.)
- season (weather, summer event)

Financing

- sponsors
- prizes (medals, gifts, etc.)
- catering (home-baked cakes, sandwiches, beverages)

Participants

- different age groups
- inviting pupils from other schools
- teachers and parents

After sign-in

- how many referees (teachers? parents?)
- announcer
- ambulance and first aid
- distribute date, rules and programme to participants
- buy or make prizes
- organize helpers (from other classes?)
- janitor

We can imagine the preparation of this event being linked to various subjects in school. Here are some examples:

English class:

- class project on Scottish sports
- famous Scottish sportsmen and women
- background information, general knowledge about Scotland

PE:

- learn the rules of the games
- train for the events
- fair play

Art:

- creating the posters
- creating your own tartan (for your own clan)
- your own clan flag

Music:

- traditional Scottish music and instruments
- dancing
- traditional musical events in Scotland (The Edinburgh Military Tattoo, the Mod, which is the annual festival of Gaelic music, etc.)

History:

- Scottish History in general
- history of Scottish sports, music, art
- the origins of the Highland Games

A PS from Fiona:

I think this is a brilliant idea and anyone who wants to try it out would be sure to find assistance from students of Sport and English at the university. (Matthias and Christian had fun trying out the various events themselves.)

Pupils involved in this project could find themselves thinking about things as strange as the weight of a real kilt (does that make it more difficult to jump and run?), the fact that some of the dances were originally performed by men, and how a football-crazy nation can still get so enthusiastic about the Highland Games.

August 2006