

A typical school day in Germany

Background information

Most children start pre-school in a *Kindergarten*, between the ages of two and six. Starting primary school is a big occasion in Germany. Children are given a *Schultüte* by family and friends. It is a large cardboard cone filled with sweets and pencil case items for school. Many children receive a *Füller*, a fountain pen, which they will write with throughout their school life. After the child's first day at school relatives and family call round to congratulate them and enjoy coffee and cake together.

Children start primary school (*die Grundschule*) at the age of six. After that, at the age of ten, they have a choice of schools: *Gymnasium*, *Hauptschule* and *Realschule*.

Gifted children are encouraged to attend *Gymnasium*, which prepares them for university. Intermediate children can attend *Realschule* which combines practical subjects with academic classes. Less able pupils attend *Hauptschule* which offers slower paced instruction in core areas, along with vocational training. It leads to apprenticeship training for specific jobs. In some German States, pupils are able to attend a *Gesamtschule* (comprehensive school), which offers a combination of all three choices.

School starts at around 8am and finishes around 1–2pm. Children will then usually go home for a hot lunch. They may have already snacked on fruit or sandwiches in the short breaks between their school sessions. Traditionally lunch (*Mittagessen*) was the main meal of the day. In modern times people tend to eat in the evenings, to fit around working life. Depending on their age, and which school they go to, on certain days children may have one or two more lessons in the afternoon.

Children do not wear uniform in German schools. They are given a lot of homework and some complain of the pressure of school (*der Schulstress*). Some schools in Germany have lessons on Saturday mornings. Most classes will go on at least one school trip a year (*eine Klassenfahrt*), often a residential trip. Children have a good choice of clubs outside of school hours (*die Arbeitsgemeinschaft*) including music, sport and drama.



Teaching activities

- ◆ Pupils could think about their first day at school in a new school year. How did they feel? What did they do?
- ◆ You could teach the German names for some school subjects and children could design a timetable, taking into account the different timings. They could then compare this to their own timetable.
- ◆ You could display your class timetable in German and ask pupils which lessons they have had, or will have.
- ◆ Pupils could design a brochure to welcome newcomers to their year group next September.
- ◆ Pupils could decorate a typical menu for a German child, drawing a picture of each dish. The audience could be German children.

Speisekarte

Hauptspeise

Kartoffelsalat mit Frikadellen

Grüne Bohnen

Möhren

Nachtisch

Apfelfannkuchen

Main course

Potato salad with
meatballs

Green beans

Carrots

Dessert

Apple pancakes

- ◆ Pupils could draw or write what they had for their last meal, and compare it with the German meal.
- ◆ Pupils could revise the German names of the fruit and vegetables they have learned as a link to healthy eating. They could draw and label them.
- ◆ Pupils could list food they do and do not like.

Schlüsselwörter

der Kindergarten	nursery
die Grundschule	primary school
die Hauptschule	vocational secondary school
die Realschule	general secondary school
das Gymnasium	grammar school
die Gesamtschule	comprehensive school
das Mittagessen	lunch
der Schulstress	pressure of school
eine Klassenfahrt	school trip
die Arbeitsgemeinschaft	after school clubs
Mathe	Maths
Naturwissenschaft	Science
Deutsch	German
Englisch	English
Kunst	Art
Geschichte	History
Erdkunde	Geography
Musik	Music
Sport	PE
Werken	Design and technology
Informatik	ICT

A typical German lunch



Name:

Datum:

Plan and design a PowerPoint presentation in German depicting your typical school day.

Email or write a letter to a German friend asking them questions (in German) about their daily routine.



**And now for some
RESEARCH!**

Research school lunches in Germany. List key information and design a lunch menu in German.

Quick quiz

- ◆ Name some differences between German and British schools.
- ◆ What time does school start and finish in Germany?
- ◆ What do a family do after a child's first day at school?