

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

by S. Linda Cotter (Columbus, OH)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Even though this lesson was written for 1st and 4th grade students, you can easily adapt it for high school. At the end of the lesson plan you will see some suggestions on how to modify it.

OBJECTIVES:

- Compare and contrast the first day of school experiences in the U.S.A. with those in Germany (facilitate intercultural understanding).
- Review basic map skills and vocabulary (scale, direction, location, etc.).
- Become familiar with some German words (contents of Schultüte).
- Encourage a relationship between the first and fourth grade students, which will continue during the school year.
- Apply public speaking skills through choral reading.
- Create pictures and designs for the Schultüten, and the first day of school booklet.
- Apply written language skills when completing the booklet and journal entry.
- Apply active listening skills as first graders dictate booklet contents.
- Practice expressive language skills when dictating content of booklet and reading the journal entry aloud.
- Practice social skills necessary to work cooperatively with students of different ages and abilities.
- Motivate students to be interested and excited about school.
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MATERIALS:

1. Schultüte (28 inch square of wrapping paper for each cone) for each student
2. Stapler, transparent tape, scissors, compass (or string attached to pencil to draw arc, large pieces of colorful tissue paper, ribbon.)
3. School supplies, treats and other contents for the Schultüten (You could request donations from the parents in advance. Suggested items include: pencils or pens, small erasers, small pencil sharpener, stickers, individually wrapped candy, piece of fruit)
4. Crayons or markers to write on the booklets

SCHULTÜTEN PREPARATION:

1. Draw an arc connecting 2 opposite corners of a 28 inch square piece of craft or wrapping paper. Cut along the arc, and recycle the cutaway.
2. The piece remaining has a curved edge and two straight edges. If not using wrapping paper with pre-printed designs, decorate with stickers or draw designs based on a theme (fairy tales, sports, school, etc.)
3. Roll the piece into a cone with the curved edge forming the top rim, and the corner forming the tip. Tape the tip in place and staple the top rim in place along the seam.
4. Place a large piece of tissue paper in the cone with the four corners extending out the top about 4 inches.
5. Fill the cone with a few school supplies and tie the tissue paper shut with a piece of ribbon.
6. Repeat for each cone to be given to the older students.
7. Make another set for the first grade students, and leave them empty except for the tissue paper. These will be filled and presented by the fourth graders.
8. Prepare copies of a first day of school poem (see example below) for each fourth grader

- to use during the choral reading.
9. Also prepare First Day of School Booklets, a blank notebook containing on each page questions or statements about their first day of school to be completed by the fourth grade students. Also include a list of Schultüten words in German and English
 10. You can also prepare a large backdrop for photos with the words **Viel Glück zum Schulanfang!**

PROCEDURE

1. Have the filled Schultüten on the desktops when the fourth graders arrive on the first day of school. Open and go through them. Teach them the German word for each item. Eat some of the treats.
2. Fourth grade students should contribute to a discussion of their first day of school memories. Ask them to write their memories to share with a younger student. Explain the custom of giving Schultüten on the first day of first grade in Germany and compare.
3. Complete the First Day of School booklets with the fourth graders.
4. Locate Germany on a world map and have students describe its location in relationship to the students' home state. Estimate the distance between the two and determine the longitude and latitude of the home city and Berlin.
5. Explain the ceremony for the first graders and practice the choral reading of the poem.
6. Fourth graders fill the Schultüten for the first graders and help to arrange the auditorium for the ceremony.
7. Fourth graders greet their assigned first grade buddy and help him/her to complete a first day of school booklet. The fourth grader shares the first day of school memory he/she wrote earlier. The fourth grader tells the first grader about the Schultüten and seats his / her buddy for the ceremony.
8. Fourth graders form ranks in the front, facing the first graders and recite the choral reading. Afterwards, the teacher calls each first grader individually to come forward and receive a Schultüten from the fourth grade buddy. The buddy then leads the first grader to the side where he/she will have a photo taken in front of the prepared backdrop. After all the cones and photos are completed, the first graders will open their cones with the help of their buddies. The buddies will also help them to carefully repack them to take home and share.
9. Print the photos or put them in a slideshow to be shared during the first parent night at school.

CHORAL READING

Welcome

by Amy Tevelthuis

Welcome children, I'm glad you're here.

We're all going to have a wonderful year!

We'll draw and we'll write,

We'll sing and we'll play,

We'll paint and we'll build,

And learn new things each day!

MAKE IT WORK!

Ideas for adapting the lesson plan for high school

- Make 1 Schultüte and go through the first day of school as a class or make several and divide the class into groups.
- Use the idea of a German first day of school to begin language lessons on personal introductions.
- Allow students to make and decorate their own Schultüten.
- Make one Schultüte for the entire class and fill it with prizes; use the contents throughout the year to reward students