

### Summary Description

This is the first in a series of eleven lessons that introduces the student to European American history.

### Learning Objectives

To have the student learn a few key facts about German American history and culture.

### Approximate Time for Lesson

60 minutes

### Suggested Maturity Level for Instruction

Student should be able to read simple words and perform simple addition and subtraction. Also, student should be able to sit still and engage in one-on-one conversation.

### References:

The German Americans, An Ethnic Experience, Willi Paul Adams - <http://www-lib.iupui.edu/kade/adams/cover.html>

"German Americans and Their Contributions to the American Mainstream Culture", German American Teaching Resources and Units, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) Max Kade German American Center - <http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/kade/nameword/nameword.html>

### Materials Needed

1. Internet Access - Pull up the following:
  - a. World Map (go to <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/index.html?Parent=world&Mode=d&SubMode=w>)
  - b. Europe Map (go to <http://www.sitesatlas.com/Maps/Maps/Europe.htm>)
  - c. German Population Map in the United States (go to <http://www-lib.iupui.edu/kade/adams/chap3.html>)

### Preparation

Make sure you have materials open, printed, and/or available prior to beginning the lesson.

### Script

#### Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Teacher: Today we will begin to learn about the European Americans. European Americans come from the continent of Europe, here [[point to Europe on the World map](#)]. This is a closer look of Europe [[show the Europe Map](#)]. As you can see, there are many countries in the continent of Europe and I'm sure that people from each country in Europe are living in the United States today. But because we don't have enough time, we are going to focus on only the European countries whose people now make up most of the people in the United States.

2. Teacher: In fact, European Americans are most of the entire United States population today. "Population" means how many people live in one place. So people who come from Europe make up most of the population of the United States. In fact, about six out of every ten people in this country are European Americans.
3. Teacher: [\[Showing the Student the World Map\]](#) So looking at the world map, how do you think the Europeans got to the United States? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that the Europeans came to the United States by ship since there were no airplanes during those times\]](#).
4. Teacher: That's right, the Europeans came to the United States by ship and the shortest way to get to the United States was to cross this giant body of water called the Atlantic Ocean.
5. Teacher: And so, ships upon ships came over to the United States from Europe. And the largest group of Europeans to come to the United States was the Germans from this country called "Germany" [\[point to Germany on the Europe Map\]](#).
6. Teacher: So are you ready to learn about the Germans? [\[Get positive response from Student and begin lesson\]](#).

Lesson (50 minutes)

1. Teacher: Great. Now, like I said before, the Germans were the largest group to move to the United States and something (or things) was happening in Germany that made the Germans move out of their own country. I mean, wouldn't it be hard for you to move out of your country to a whole different country where you don't even speak the same language? [\[Get Student's response\]](#).
2. Teacher: What kind of things would make you move out of your own home and country? [\[Engage the Student in conversation\]](#).
3. Teacher: Well, for the Germans, there were many sad things happening in Germany, so sad that some of them thought that actually moving to another country might give them a better opportunity for them and their families.
4. Teacher: In those days, the Germans who moved to the United States were not making much money to provide for their families. This was the biggest reason why the Germans moved to the United States. And doesn't that make sense? No matter how much you loved the place you lived in, what if you could not even make enough to provide food or clothes for your family? You would have no choice but to move somewhere else where it would be easier to provide for your family.
5. Teacher: And in the United States in those days, it was easier to own your own farm or business than it was in Germany and that is why many Germans left their home country for the United States.

6. Teacher: Now there were other Germans that left for the United States for other reasons. For example, some Germans tried to take over Germany from the people who were in charge of the country. Well, it didn't work and so these Germans had to run away from the people in charge and the United States was a good place for them to go. Another reason for moving to the United States was because of religion. Religion means something that you believe in - some religions believe in God and other religions don't believe in God, and still others believe in more than one god. Anyway, in Germany in those days, you and your family were not allowed to believe in just any religion. Instead, you could only believe in religions that the people in Germany told you were ok to believe in. If you believed in another religion that the people in charge of Germany told you wasn't ok, then you could get into some real big trouble, like going to jail. Now, how would you feel if you believed in a religion that the people in charge of Germany told you wasn't ok? [\[Engage the Student in conversation\]](#).
7. Teacher: So for all these reasons, the Germans took their families and belongings and moved to the United States. Now, if you were a German in those days and had to move to the United States, would you move to a place where everyone spoke English and didn't understand what you were saying (since you only know how to speak German) or would you move to a place where there were some Germans and so could understand each other in German? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but make the point that the newly arrived Germans tended to move to places where other Germans were already living in the United States because it was easier for them to communicate with each other\]](#).
8. Teacher: That's right. And not only did the German language make it easier, but if you were German, wouldn't you be used to eating German food and wearing German clothes? Well, living among other Germans in the United States made this possible, which made living in a new land a little easier.
9. Teacher: Today, Germans pretty much live everywhere in the United States, but they mostly live in this upper northern area of the United States [\[show the Student the point to the German Population Map of United States - the dark areas denote German population\]](#).
10. Teacher: As for the German language, although parents remembered how to speak German even though they were living in the United States, the children would remember less and their children would remember even less until the German language was almost forgotten among the German Americans today - all of this was replaced by the language of the United States, which was English. Why do you think the German language was forgotten like this? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but make that point that since English was the language of the United States and everyone spoke it in all aspects of their lives, the German language was spoken less and less with successive generations\]](#).
11. Teacher: That's right, the German language was simply not needed and not used anymore to communicate in this new country. Also, there was a time when Germany was actually

an enemy of the United States, not once, but twice. During these times, the United States was at war with Germany and during these times, the German Americans didn't want their neighbors to know that they were from Germany since they might get treated badly. So for these reasons, German Americans changed their ways of living and language pretty quickly to become English speaking Americans.

12. Teacher: The German Americans gave very much to the way the way Americans live today. For example, when you say words like "kindergarten", "pretzel", "noodle", or "hamburger", these are only a few of many English words that came from Germany. German Americans also brought many kinds of dogs over to the United States that did not exist before like the German Shepherd and Dachshund (i.e., the long hotdog-looking dog).
13. Teacher: Also, Germans are known for their smart and intelligent people. For example, Albert Einstein was a famous scientist and probably one of the best scientists in all human history and he was German. He helped the Americans create a brand new source of power called nuclear energy that would change the way the world would exist. President of the United States Dwight D. Eisenhower was German American. Remember when I said that Germany and the United States were once enemies? Well, it's kind of strange but before Dwight Eisenhower was President, he was actually a general of the United States army that was in charge of fighting against Germany. Don't you think that's kind of interesting? An American general that happens to be German American fighting against Germany?
14. Teacher: Without Dwight Eisenhower's help, we may not have even won the war against Germany. And if that happened, why I can't imagine what life today would have been like (maybe we would all be speaking German today!). So that's how important German Americans were to the United States.
15. Teacher: Finally, famous actors and actresses that are part German are Johnny Depp who played as Captain Jack Sparrow in the Pirates of the Caribbean movies and Kirsten Dunst who played Mary Jane Watson in all the Spiderman movies.
16. Teacher: In fact, there are too many things to talk about here that the German Americans gave to the American way of life but the important thing to know is that there are probably things that you do in your life today that was because German Americans shared them at one time with the Americans. I'll tell you one thing though, what do some people do with trees during Christmas? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that pine trees are bought and decorated in the house during Christmas\]](#).
17. Teacher: Guess who brought you that tradition? That's right, the Germans.
18. Teacher: OK - time for review. Get in front of the class. [\[Have the Student stand in front of you \(consider inviting other members of the family also to set the stage\) and ask her the following:](#)

- a. Why did the Germans move to the United States? Any one of the following: 1) To provide adequate food and clothing for their families, 2) to escape the current German government, and 3) to gain religious freedom.
- b. Why do you think the German language was easily forgotten once they moved to the United States? Because the Germans no longer needed the language to communicate with the Americans.
- c. Can you tell me some English words that came from the German language? Kindergarten, hamburger, pretzel, and noodle.

Teacher reviews any questions that the Student missed].

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Teacher: [Clapping] You did GREAT! Wonderful job! Are there any questions that you have regarding the German Americans? [Engage in conversation with the Student and resolve further questions by researching the Internet].