

Chapter 6

Federal Republic of Germany

(Bundesrepublik Deutschland)

CHAPTER PREVIEW

People

Emperor (Kaiser) Wilhelm I, Adolf Hitler

Places

Bavarian Alps, Rhine River, Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Elbe River, Danube River, Berlin

Terms

autobahn, acid rain, alliances, Treaty of Versailles, reparations, Nazi Party, Holocaust, Cold War, Berlin Wall, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Warsaw Pact, Länder, Bundestag, Bundesrat, president, chancellor, welfare state, deficit, surplus, euro, Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC)

Germany is one of the world's most prosperous countries. Its people enjoy a high standard of living. The Germans are well educated and have a reputation for quality. Their scientific community is world class. Germany's location in the central part of Europe along the European Plain has been an encouragement to trade. The country is sometimes recognized by its huge pretzels and cuckoo clocks, or by the traditional clothing—*lederhosen* and *dirndl*—worn in the southern part of the country. Bach and Beethoven are two of its famous musicians. Fairytale castles dot the landscape, and *Grimm's Fairy Tales* such as *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Rapunzel*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *Cinderella* are known by children around the world. In sports, Germany is one of the top medal winners in the Olympic Games, and its favorite sport is football (soccer). Germany is also a modern country that is similar to the United States in many ways.

You may recognize some of its largest companies such as automobile makers Audi, BMW, Mercedes, Porsche, and Volkswagen. Adidas and Puma are famous for athletic clothing, and Bayer is known for its aspirin and other pharmaceuticals. In fact, Germany has Europe's largest economy. The United States is its fourth-largest source of imports and its largest customer for products made in Germany. Germany trades about \$12.8 billion in goods each year with Georgia.

It is hard to imagine that this clean, strong, and developed nation was in ruins only 70 years ago. World War I saw the death of 2-1/2 million Germans. Only a few years later, World War II ended with the death toll in Germany over 7 million. Its cities were rubble and highways, railroads, bridges, and water supplies were destroyed. Even today, the piles of debris from the war form hills near many German cities. Berlin's Teufelsberg is one such hill and is the city's second-highest point.

Since World War II, the United States and Germany have developed a strong political and military partnership. The United States and other countries worked to rebuild Germany after the war, and the leaders of West Germany took a strong stand against the Soviet Union and communism during the Cold War. Both countries are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other organizations that work to settle disputes between countries and promote security. Germany has assisted the United States in the war on terror since 9/11 and has itself been a victim of terror attacks.

"For Germany, Europe is not only indispensable, it is part and parcel of our identity. We've always said German unity, European unity and integration, that's two parts of one and the same coin. But we want, obviously, to boost our competitiveness."

—Angela Merkel,
chancellor of Germany
2005-2021



Background: The Spree River flows through the city of Berlin, capital of Germany.

MAP 6.1 GERMANY

Map Skill: Name the countries and bodies of water that border Germany.



Area: 137,847 square miles

Area Rank: 63

Natural Resources: coal, lignite, natural gas, iron ore, copper, nickel, uranium, potash, salt, construction materials, timber, arable land

Environmental Issues: emissions from coal-burning utilities and industries contribute to air pollution; acid rain, resulting from sulfur dioxide emissions, is damaging forests; pollution in the Baltic Sea from raw sewage and industrial effluents from rivers in eastern Germany; hazardous waste disposal; government phased out use of nuclear power in 2023; government working to meet EU commitment to identify nature preservation areas in line with the EU's Flora, Fauna, and Habitat directive

Background: The Brandenburg Gate, built in the 19th century, is one of Berlin's most famous landmarks.

Figure 6.1

Timeline of Germany

1800

- 1870 Franco-Prussian War began
- 1871 Unification of Germany under Emperor (Kaiser) Wilhelm I

1900

- 1914 World War I began
- 1919 World War I officially ended with Treaty of Versailles
- 1933 Adolf Hitler became leader of Germany
- 1936 Hitler sent troops into former German territory
- 1938 German troops controlled Austria and Czechoslovakia
- 1939 Germany invaded Poland; World War II began
- 1945 World War II ended; Germany and Berlin divided into 4 zones
- 1948 Russian zone renamed East Germany under Soviet control
United Nations passed Genocide Convention
Israel opened its borders to Jews
- 1949 NATO formed; Warsaw Pact formed
- 1961 Berlin Wall built
- 1989 Berlin Wall torn down
- 1990 Reunification of East and West Germany
- 1992 Main-Danube Canal completed

2000

- 2005 Angela Merkel, the first woman chancellor elected
- 2011 Shutdown of 8 nuclear reactors after Japan's nuclear disaster
- 2015 Minimum wage law took effect
- 2029 Expected completion of 11-mile Fehmarnbelt Tunnel under the Baltic Sea



PASSPORT



Official Name: Federal Republic of Germany
(Bundesrepublik Deutschland)

Capital: Berlin

Form of Government: parliamentary democracy

Head of Government: Chancellor

Head of State: President

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

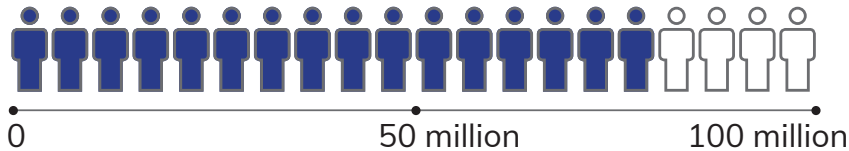
Currency: Euro (€)



Top: German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.
Above: The Reichstag building in Berlin is the seat of the German Bundestag. The inscription over the entrance reads "To the German people."

CULTURE CONNECTION

POPULATION



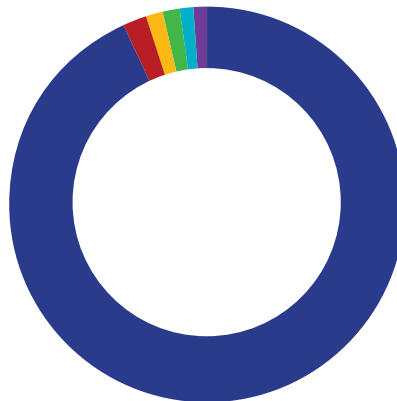
Germany
84,119,100 (2024 est.)
Population Rank 19

United States
341,963,408 (2024 est.)
Population Rank 3

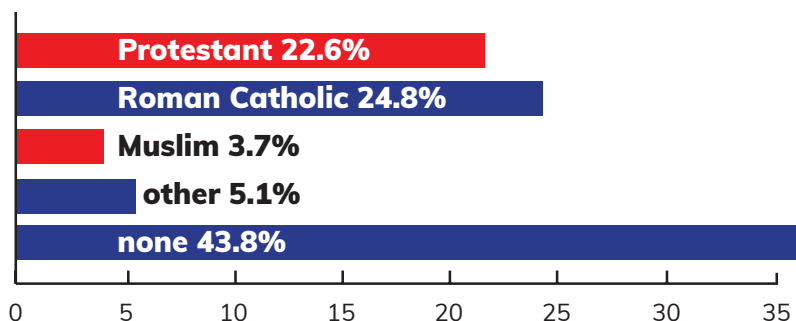
ETHNIC GROUPS

- German 85.4%
- Turkish 1.8%
- Ukrainian 1.4%
- Syrian 1.1%,
- Romanian 1%,
- Poland 1%, other/state less/unspecified 8.3% (2022 est.)

other 6.1% (made up largely of Greek, Italian, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish)



RELIGION (2022 est.)



FUN FACTS

Germany has nearly 700 zoological gardens, wildlife parks, aquariums, bird parks, animal reserves, or safari parks, including 414 registered zoos. Berlin's Zoologischer Garten is the largest zoo in the world, both in terms of number of species (1,500) and animal population (14,000).

Official Language:
German

Hello – Hallo

Goodbye – Auf wiedersehen

Good morning – Guten morgen

Good afternoon – Guten nachmittag

Thank you – Danke

You're welcome – Bitte

Yes – Ja

No – Nein



LIFE EXPECTANCY

Average 81.9 years (2024 est.)

Male 79.6 years

Female 84.4 years



EDUCATION

Education Expenditures

4.7% of GDP (2020 est.)

Rank 89

SECTION 1

Below: This overlay map compares the size of Germany to the contiguous United States.

The Geography of Germany

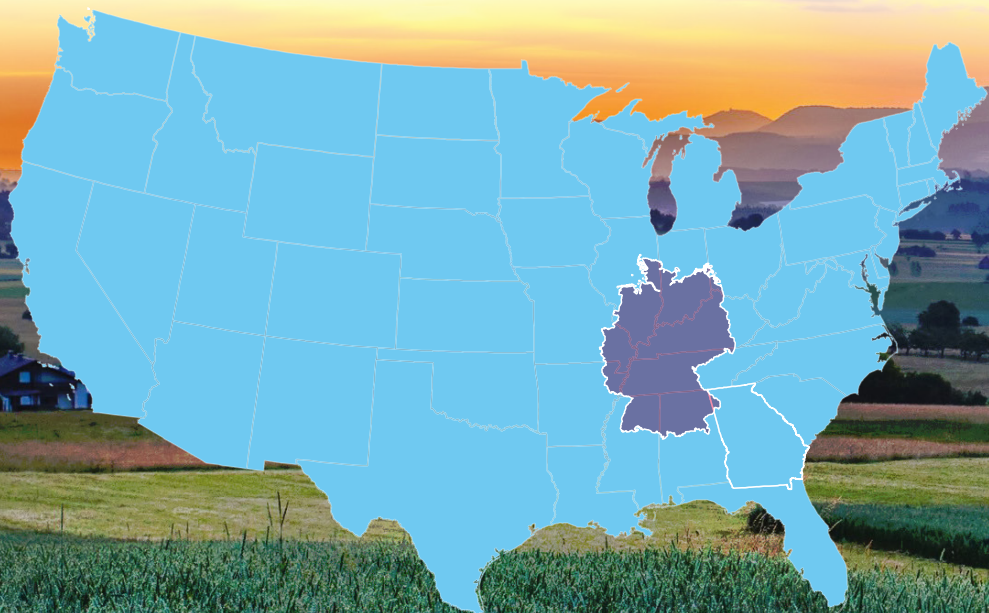
AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR...

- » Germany's location in the world;
- » the type of climate found in Germany;
- » how location and climate affect where Germans live;
- » the major environmental problems facing Germany today;
- » how the physical features of Germany affect the economy
- » terms: **autobahn**, **acid rain**.

Location and Size of Germany

Germany is located in Western Europe, in the northern and central regions. This location places it in the northern and eastern hemispheres. Its latitudes place it in line with the northern United States and Canada. Denmark, the Baltic Sea, and the North Sea lie to the north, while Poland and the Czech Republic are to the east. On the southern border lie Austria and Switzerland, and to the west are France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Germany shares a border with more countries than any other nation in Europe. Germany's location on the North and Baltic Seas allows it to have numerous ports with access to Baltic and North Sea countries as well as the Atlantic Ocean.

Germany is about the size of South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama combined. However, four times as many people live in Germany as in these three states. It is the 63rd-largest nation in the world in terms of land area.





Background: The western Swabian Jura region is a less-populated area of Germany. **Left:** The 19th century Neuschwanstein Castle is located in Bavaria, near the Austrian border.

Climate of Germany

Most of Germany has a marine climate. The waters of the Gulf Stream moving from the Gulf of Mexico across the Atlantic Ocean bring warmth and moisture to the region. This means that the warm waters of the ocean help to keep the land warm in winter. The sea also helps to cool the land in summer. The ocean brings important moisture to the land in the form of precipitation that provides enough moisture for farmers to produce good crops.

The Bavarian Alps have a climate that changes with their altitude. Some parts of the mountains are deep in snow all winter. Eastern Germany is farther from the effects of the sea; therefore this part of the country has longer, colder winters. Summers in this area tend to be longer, hotter, and drier.

Distribution of People in Germany

Germany is Europe's third most populated country with over 84 million people. Germany's average population density is 243 people per square mile, making it one of Europe's most densely populated areas. Approximately 78 percent of Germans live in urban areas, and most live in the country's northern and western parts. The region along the Rhine River near Cologne and Frankfurt is the most heavily populated. This area has the highest level of manufacturing jobs and a large transportation system. Hamburg, on the Elbe River, is Germany's largest seaport. This area in northwest Germany is also densely populated. The former East Germany and the Alps regions are least crowded.





Natural Resources of Germany

Germany has numerous natural resources. Iron ore, coal, and potash are major products from mining. Uranium, which is used for nuclear fuel, is also found in Germany. Nickel, natural gas, and copper are important too. Timber is a renewable resource. This means that, once the timber is harvested, it can be replanted to be harvested again in the future. Many of the forests in the north have been cut away to provide land for farms, villages, and towns, but there are still large amounts of timber in the south. About one-third of the land is arable, or able to be used for agriculture.

Natural resources have shaped the way Germany has developed. For example, natural resources such as coal have helped to build large industrial areas. These areas then became large cities in Germany. Many of these cities developed along the Rhine River. The Rhine is an excellent transportation route for goods and people. For that reason, the Rhine River region is very densely populated.

Physical Features of Germany

Rivers and waterways are the lifeline of Europe. Travel, trade, and transporting goods are all important to the economies of the European countries. The Rhine River, much of which lies in Germany, is very important for trade. This river is over 800 miles long. That is more than double the length of Georgia's Chattahoochee River. The Rhine begins high in the Alps of Switzerland and flows north through Germany to the North Sea.

In 1992, the Main-Danube Canal was completed. It connects the Rhine and Main Rivers in Germany with Europe's second-longest river, the Danube. Following this route, a ship can travel from the North Sea for 2,200 miles through 15 countries to connect with the Black Sea. Water transportation for trade and tourism has increased along these rivers because of the completion of the canal.

Germany's location in the center of Europe makes it an important crossroads for travel and trade. The country's excellent highway system has helped Germany take advantage of its location. Germany's freeways, known as the **autobahn**, are among the best-built in the world. They connect key cities in Germany with one another and with other cities in nearby countries.

Did You Know?

The US Interstate Highway System was implemented by President Dwight Eisenhower based on the German autobahns he had seen as a general during World War II.

Did You Know?

On over half of the autobahn highways, there is no speed limit for cars and motorcycles.





Countries from Eastern Europe and Western Europe transport goods to and across Germany. The relatively flat European Plain makes transportation easier in the northern part of the country. The plain stretches from the Pyrenees Mountains in western France eastward to the Ural Mountains of Russia. This mountain-free landform has provided a connection between countries that has been used by travelers for centuries. Not only has Germany's autobahn taken advantage of this landform, the country's high-speed trains crisscross it as well with speeds up to 185 miles per hour.

Traveling south, the steeply rising Alps make transportation more difficult. Germany has constructed many highways, bridges, and tunnels through the Alps to improve trade with countries to the south.

On the seacoast, Germany has eight major ports, which handle the country's exports and imports. These ports give businesses access to the Atlantic Ocean through the North Sea and to markets around the world. In 2020, Germany began constructing a tunnel under the Baltic Sea to connect with Denmark, which is expected to be completed in 2029. This 11-mile tunnel will provide quicker access from northern Germany to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

Top: The Port of Hamburg is Germany's largest port.

Bottom: A Siemens ICE 3 long-distance high-speed train.



Environmental Issues of Germany

Germany is a country of ancient forests, beautiful rivers, and historic artwork and buildings. Over the past few decades, **acid rain** (rain with increased acidity caused by air pollutants) has taken its toll on these landmarks. Acid rain has ruined nearly half of the Black Forest in southwestern Germany. It has damaged the soil and the trees growing in it. Many acres of diseased trees are at risk of dying. Sulfur and nitrogen, the harmful chemicals in acid rain, eat holes in the surfaces of statues and buildings. Acid rain pollutes rivers, like the Danube and the Rhine, and kills the wildlife living there.

Did You Know?

Zugspitze is Germany's tallest mountain at over 9,700 feet. A new cable car to the top has a world-record free span between towers of 2 miles!



Top: A German forest damaged by acid rain. **Bottom:** Coal Power Plant burning lignite in Weißwasser, Saxony.

When it comes to the problem of acid rain, Germany is its own worst enemy. The main sources of acid rain are smoke from factories and power plants. These facilities burn fuels like natural gas, coal, and oil. Cars and buses that burn gasoline and diesel produce these gases too. Germany, however, depends on manufacturing to provide jobs and income for its people. The industries that produce its leading exports—cars, steel, and chemical products—have many coal-burning factories.

Germans also own more cars than do people of most other countries. This adds to the acid rain problem through auto emissions. Nature also plays a part in this problem. The toxic smoke from manufacturing plants is carried by air currents to other places before it falls to Earth in the form of acid rain.

Because Germany shares its borders with many other countries, acid rain is a more difficult problem to solve. For example, air currents bring the chemical-filled smoke from coal-burning factories in the United Kingdom eastward to Germany. The chemicals fall to Earth in Germany as acid rain (see Figure 5.2 on page 97). Germany has been working on how to solve the acid rain problem. In southern Germany, plants that use water power, or hydroelectric power, from streams and rivers in the region are replacing many coal-burning factories. The German government has passed laws to reduce emissions from factories and automobiles. Factories that are not close to rivers are switching to cleaner fuels. They are also building taller smokestacks that will scrub the smoke, or control the amount of sulfur dioxide particles, before it enters the air.





Above: The Krughütte Solar Park is a 247-acre solar power station in Germany.

In 2007, Germany, as a member of the European Union, promised to increase its use of cleaner, renewable energy by 20 percent. Germany's goal is to decrease the use of fossil fuels like coal and oil. Germany is developing new types of energy. It is the world's leading producer of wind turbines and solar-power technology. It is home to the largest wind farm and the largest solar energy plant in the world. Because of these changes, the country's harmful emissions are falling. This is reducing the amount of acid rain.

Electricity production is an important industry for Germany, but Germany had a number of nuclear power plants for this purpose. Following the March 2011 Fukushima, Japan, nuclear disaster, German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that 8 of her country's 17 nuclear reactors would be shut down immediately and the remaining plants would close by 2022. Following the closure of its nuclear power plants, Germany produces over 50% of its electricity through renewable energy sources.

REVIEW AND SUMMARIZE

1. How do rivers play an important part in German trade?
2. Where do most people live in Germany? Why?
3. What natural resource can be attributed to creating many industrial areas in Germany?
4. How has the German government responded to the acid rain problem in recent years?

SECTION 2

A Brief History of Germany

AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR...

- » European rivalries that led to World War I;
- » impact of the Treaty of Versailles;
- » how the economic conditions in Germany following World War I led to Hitler's rise to power;
- » how Hitler's views of the Jews led to the Holocaust;
- » Germany's role during the Cold War;
- » how Germany was reunited at the end of the Cold War;
- » terms: **alliances, Treaty of Versailles, reparations, Nazi Party, Holocaust, Cold War, Berlin Wall, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Warsaw Pact.**



Above: Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany. **Opposite Page:** German soldiers on the way to the front in 1914.

European Rivalries

Spain, France, and Great Britain among others continued their rivalry for power and wealth into the 1800s. On the continent of Europe, France was the most powerful, and its leaders wanted to keep it that way. Before 1871, the area known as Germany was not a united country. It was, instead, made of many smaller German-speaking kingdoms and territories. France was worried that all of these German-speaking countries might join together. If they did, France could lose its first-place position on the continent. France went to war in 1870 against Prussia's King Wilhelm and the German-speaking rulers who followed him. France lost the conflict, and a result was the unification of Germany under Emperor (Kaiser) Wilhelm I. Under the Kaiser's leadership, Germany grew wealthier, and more of its people were able to work their way out of poverty.

In order to increase their power and wealth, more countries began to acquire colonies. Britain, France, the United States, Russia, Japan, and Germany were among those nations that wanted to become colonial powers. These countries needed raw materials for manufacturing. Less-developed parts of the world might have what they needed. Africa and parts of Asia were the main areas of this new colonization. In Africa, there was so much competition by the Europeans that it became known as the "Scramble for Africa." Competition increased, as well, for markets for manufactured goods.



World War I

Tensions were high in Europe because of this competition. Many of the countries were connected by **alliances** (agreements to defend each other in case of attack). In June 1914, a group of Serbians assassinated Austria-Hungary's Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This was the spark that ignited the explosion. Germany supported Austria's invasion of Serbia, which was a friend of Russia. By August, Germany had declared war on Russia and France. German troops marched through Belgium on their way to France. This invasion caused Great Britain to join in against Germany as a friend of Belgium. Little by little, more countries entered the war, including the United States in 1917. Germany and the Central Powers surrendered in 1918.

Germany faced many problems after World War I. It had lost lands that contained valuable natural resources. About 2-1/2 million Germans had lost their lives. About 4 million were wounded. Industries and farms in the country had been destroyed. Highways, bridges, and railroads had to be rebuilt. The people were left with little hope.

The German government worked to solve the country's problems. However, the country had another obstacle. The 1919 peace treaty (**Treaty of Versailles**) said Germany had to pay reparations to the Allies. (**Reparations** are monies paid by the losing country to the winners to make up for damages done in the war.) Millions of dollars were leaving Germany for France and Great Britain. Germany was also forbidden to have a large army or navy, so many military people lost their jobs. Prices went up as goods became scarce. Basic items such as food and clothing, which were once plentiful in Germany, were now not always available. Men had trouble finding jobs to support their families.

As things became worse, people blamed the government. They wanted their leaders to find solutions to their problems. Then, the stock market crashed in the United States. This made conditions even worse for Germans. Businesses and people around the world stopped buying as much. Many Germans were without hope. Many were angry.

Figure 6.2 Alliances in World War I

Allied Powers*	Central Powers
France	German Empire
United Kingdom	Austria-Hungary
Russia	Ottoman Empire
United States	Bulgaria
Italy	
Japan	
*Other associated allies not listed	

The Rise of the Nazi Party

Adolf Hitler came on the scene with a big plan. He and his followers, called the National Socialist or **Nazi Party**, said they could fix the problems in Germany. They blamed the Treaty of Versailles for many of the problems. The Nazi Party also said that Jews in the country were controlling the banks and money. They blamed Jews for the fact that many Germans were not able to make a good living. The Jewish people were a minority in Germany, and Hitler used the prejudice some people had toward the Jews to his advantage. One of his quotes about improving Germany was, "We shall regain our health only by eliminating the Jew." His words against the Jews caused some to feel hatred toward their neighbors and provided a target for their anger.

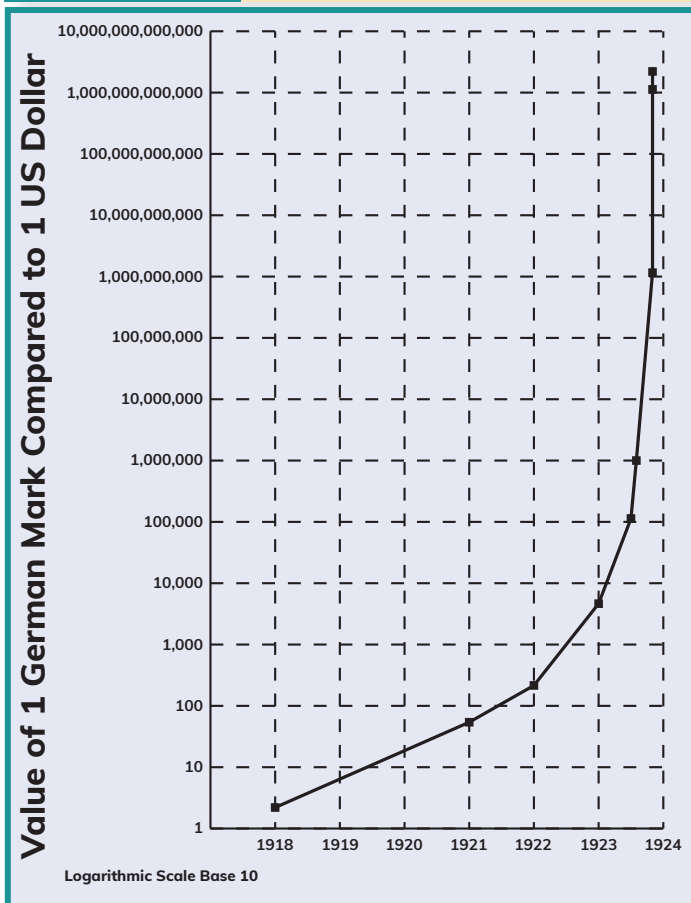
Hitler became the leader of Germany in 1933. He made sure laws were quickly passed to give him more power. Soon he had complete control of the government and acquired the powers of a dictator. He and the Nazis began working to rebuild Germany's military, making it stronger to defy the Allies. He opened factories to build weapons. He put unemployed people to work building a superior highway system. The economy improved for a time, but people lost many of their civil rights. However, many decided it was better to lose rights than to go without food. Hitler gave the people what they wanted: a new Germany where there was hope for a good future. While many disagreed with Hitler's words and ideas, it was risky to speak against him. He and the Nazi Party workers were providing the income and hope the German people needed.

The Nazis continued to build their military power. Germans who spoke against them were put in prison or murdered. As Hitler's strength grew, he made plans to go to war. In 1936, Hitler sent troops into some of Germany's former territory. By 1938, German troops controlled Austria and Czechoslovakia. Other European countries protested but did nothing to stop Hitler. In 1939, Germany invaded Poland. With that, France and Great Britain decided something had to be done. They declared war on Germany, and World War II began. Another part of Hitler's plan to conquer the world was a strategy to systemically kill every Jewish man, woman, and child under Nazi rule. This plan was the **Holocaust**.



Figure 6.3

Hyperinflation



Right: Germans give the Nazi salute as Nazi soldiers pass by.

Special Feature

The Holocaust

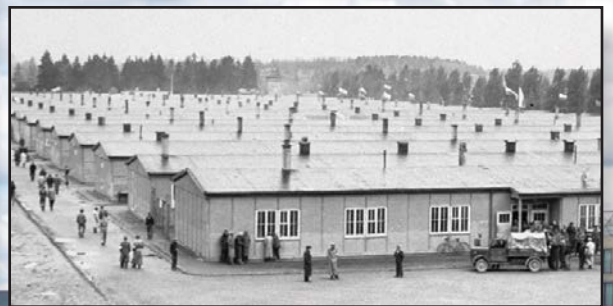
As Hitler began to carry out his Holocaust strategy, the Nazis imprisoned Jews in certain sections of cities, made them wear special identifying armbands with the Star of David, and separated them from their families. This was only the beginning. The Nazis built concentration camps and sent Jews from the cities by railcar to these camps.

When the Jews arrived, their heads were shaved and a number was tattooed onto their arms. Many were immediately herded into what appeared to be showers but were actually poison gas chambers. In such places, as many as 2,000 people could be killed at one time. Thousands died from forced labor, little food, and exposure to the summer heat and winter cold. By the time World War II was over, as many as 6 million Jews were dead.

Other groups were Hitler's victims as well. He targeted anyone he felt was inferior: political prisoners, the mentally ill, and the disabled. Genocide, the planned killing of a race of people, became a crime when the United Nations passed the Genocide Convention in 1948.

At the end of World War II, when the Allies gained control of the camps, the survivors of the Holocaust had no place to go. Many had no living family members. They were trapped in the country of their oppressors. The Jews wanted a safe place to return to, a state in Palestine, which was their ancient homeland in the Middle East. In 1947, the United Nations divided Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state, Israel. The European Jews began immigrating to the land more significantly after the partition plan was announced. Israel officially opened its borders to Jews in 1948. How do you think the Holocaust has affected the Jewish people's desire to protect Israel?

Background: The Holocaust Memorial in Berlin consists of 2,711 concrete slabs. **Top:** Trains of prisoners arriving at Auschwitz. **Middle:** The prisoners' barracks at the Dachau concentration camp. **Bottom:** Jewish deportees march through the German town of Würzburg to the railroad station on April 25, 1942.



World War II

World War II was the bloodiest conflict in human history. It is estimated that over 60 million people lost their lives as a result of the war. That is about the same number of people who now live in the states of Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi combined.

Germany surrendered in 1945, six years after the war began. The United States, France, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union and their allies had defeated Hitler and the Nazis. Intense bombing of Germany had destroyed much of the country. Large portions of its cities were in ruins. The highways, railroads, bridges, and water supplies that supported the work of the country were gone. More than seven million of its citizens had died, including Hitler. The British, French, American, and Soviet allies divided Germany and Berlin into four zones, each under the control of one ally. The goal was to rebuild the country so it would not feel the need to attack its neighbors again.

The Cold War

Beginning in 1945, the **Cold War** was a period of distrust and misunderstanding between the Soviet Union and its former allies in the West, particularly the United States. The Soviet Union was a communist country with a powerful central government that controlled the economy and the government. Its ideas were very different from the capitalism and democracy of the United States. Like the United States, the Soviet Union held elections. However, the candidates running for office were usually all chosen by the Communist Party, and there was only one candidate running for each position.

After World War II, Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin formed a “bloc” of many Eastern European countries that were under Soviet control. The line separating the Eastern Bloc from the countries of Western Europe became known as the “Iron Curtain.”

MAP 6.2

DIVISION OF GERMANY

Map Skill: How was the division of Germany similar to the division of Berlin?



Another concern of the Cold War was the division of Germany. The United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union each continued to control a zone of defeated Germany. In 1948, the Western Allies wanted to reunite Germany, but Stalin disagreed. He declared the Soviet section of the country East Germany; the reunited sections became West Germany. Even the capital of Berlin, which was in East Germany, was divided into East and West. Tensions grew. In 1961, communist leaders built the **Berlin Wall** to prevent people in East Germany and East Berlin (communist-controlled areas) from escaping to West Germany (controlled by the Western Allied countries).



With the threat that the Cold War could turn into a nuclear war, the Western European countries and the United States formed the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** in 1949. The Eastern European countries counteracted by forming the **Warsaw Pact** that same year.

Reunification of Germany

By 1985, the economy of the Soviet Union had become unstable because of the country's ever-increasing spending to put down revolts and keep up with the arms race. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev reduced government control of business and increased personal freedoms. Relations with the United States began to improve, and people in the Eastern Bloc countries began to demand freedom.

In November 1989, the Berlin Wall was torn down, and Germany began the process of reunification. People around the world celebrated. East and West Germany were united as one country in 1990. The Cold War was officially over. By the end of 1991, the Soviet Union split up into 12 independent republics, of which Russia was the largest.



REVIEW AND SUMMARIZE

1. How did the Treaty of Versailles damage Germany's economy?
2. How did Hitler use prejudice to get others to support him?
3. How did the Cold War affect the division of Germany?
4. What events led to the reunification of Germany?

Top: The Warsaw Pact was a defense treaty signed by the Soviet Union and seven other Eastern bloc countries intended as a balance against NATO. **Above:** Teenagers climb the Berlin Wall.

Special Feature

The Wall

Sixteen years after the start of the Cold War, East Germans, with the help of the Soviets, built what became an icon of the Cold War: the Wall. Known in German as *die Mauer*, the Wall was officially built to protect East Germans from spies and invaders from the West—including the United States and Great Britain. Actually, the Wall was built by the East Germans to keep its people in. It is estimated that 4 million East Germans had fled to the West. From the East German government's point of view, the migration had to stop!

The Wall began as a barbed wire fence, but it eventually became two walls, sometimes as much as a football field apart. The space between the two walls was guarded by more barbed wire, guard dogs, and heavily armed soldiers. When the Wall went up with little warning in 1961, some people were separated from their family and friends. Some risked crossing the Wall, but guard towers and increased soldiers made crossing a deadly gamble. More than 100 people were killed trying to cross the Wall, but many escaped in creative ways. Cars with secret compartments, tunnels, and balloons were used by East Germans trying to escape to the West. It is estimated that more than 5,000 were successful. Are there any places in the world like *the Wall* today?



Background: Crowds stand on either side of the Berlin Wall.
Above: U.S. President Ronald Reagan gives a speech at the Berlin Wall calling for the Wall's removal.

SECTION 3

The Government of Germany

AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR...

- » the type of government in Germany today;
- » how the head of government in Germany is selected;
- » the rights of citizens in Germany's welfare state;
- » terms: **Länder**, **Bundestag**, **Bundesrat**, **president**, **chancellor**, **welfare state**.

Structure of Government

Germany has a federal government system organized by its constitution, the Basic Law. The states, called **Länder**, share government power with the national government. Giving more power to the states would make it more difficult for a dictator such as Hitler to come to power.

The states and national government have a parliamentary system. The German Parliament is made up of two houses: the Bundestag and the Bundesrat. The more powerful of the two is the lower house, the **Bundestag**, with about 600 members. The citizens of the states elect members of this house. The Bundestag selects the chancellor. The 69 members of the upper house, the **Bundesrat**, are appointed by the individual states and not voted by the general population. Members of the Bundesrat are selected to represent the interests of each state.

The **president** is the head of state. The president has limited powers but has an important role in government as a respected leader who signs laws and treaties, among other duties. The **chancellor** is the chief executive of the German government and head of the military. The chancellor, as the head of government, takes care of the day-to-day business of the nation.



Did You Know?

The German Parliament meets in a building in Berlin called the Reichstag. The dome of the building is made of glass to symbolize that Parliament's work is not to be done in secret. The light of the sun and the eyes of the visitors walking in the dome above them remind leaders that the people are in charge.





Citizen Participation

In Germany, citizens have freedom of religion and expression. All citizens are viewed as equal before the law. Germans have the same basic freedoms as citizens of the United Kingdom and the United States. They have equality, freedom of the press, and protection of the family. The Basic Law also states that Germany is a **welfare state**. This means that the government guarantees people certain benefits when they are unemployed, poor, disabled, elderly, or sick.

Germans have the right to vote for representatives in their government. From the age of 18 years old, Germans are free to vote for the members of the Bundestag. Although they do not directly elect the chancellor, the people use their voting rights to speak through the representatives they elect.

German citizens also elect representatives to the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, and Strasbourg, France. This group is the representative body of the European Union.

Did You Know?

In some German cities and states, the voting age is 16 for local elections.

Top: German voting.
Below: The Plenary chamber of the German parliament.

REVIEW AND SUMMARIZE

1. How does Germany's federal system help to keep a dictator from coming to power?
2. Who is in charge of the day-to-day business of the government?
3. What is the German Basic Law?
4. What role do the German citizens play in selecting the leaders?



SECTION 4

The Economy of Germany

AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR...

- » the type of economy present today in Germany;
- » evidence of strong trading partnerships between Germany and other countries;
- » goods exported from Germany;
- » the standard of living in Germany;
- » the type of currency used in Germany;
- » terms: **deficit**, **surplus**, **euro**.

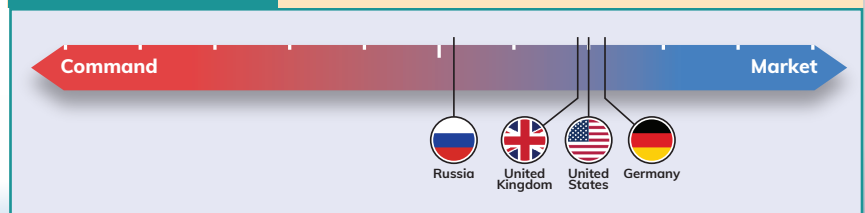
Below: The skyline of the city of Frankfurt includes both skyscrapers and historical buildings.

Economic System Today

Germany has had a strong economy for many years. The government has worked to keep spending under control. Being ranked in the top 20 economies in the world for economic freedom, Germany has stood its ground in the face of hardships. On the economic continuum from pure market economy to pure command economy, Germany has a strong market economy. German businesses have many freedoms and access to free markets with very little government interference. Like most other countries, Germany does impose certain laws of protection for business owners and regulation by government agencies. However, the economy is based on the interaction of consumers and producers to answer the three economic questions that all societies must answer: what to produce; how to produce; and for whom to produce.

The German economy is the third-largest in the world in terms of GDP and is Europe's largest economy. Germany is a leading exporter of machinery, vehicles, chemicals, and household equipment. It benefits from a highly skilled labor force. Germany's economy has faced challenges in recent years. The aging population and low birth rate have decreased the number of workers in Germany. In recent years, the growth in Germany's economy has also slowed.

Figure 6.4 Economic Continuum



The government also introduced a minimum wage of about \$11.60 (8.50 euros) per hour that took effect in 2015. Stimulus efforts in 2008 and 2009 and tax cuts increased Germany's total budget **deficit** (shortfall). However, slower spending and higher tax revenues reduced the deficit. By 2012, Germany reached a budget **surplus**. In other words, the government had money left over after all the expenses to run the country had been paid. In recent years, the budget fluctuated between a surplus and a deficit.

Trade

Germany is a global power in worldwide manufacturing and trade. In fact, Germany is one of the prominent producers of steel, iron, coal, machinery, tools, electronics, and automobiles. The exports in Germany add up to more than \$2 trillion per year. More than one-fourth of the working population in Germany is employed in manufacturing. The United States, France, and the United Kingdom are among Germany's top trading partners, solidifying the countries' relationship with one another. Imports, exports, and military alliances have been a driving force for these countries since World War II.

Imports are the other side of the trading equation. Imports to Germany from the Netherlands, China, Poland, Belgium, and Italy represent more than \$1.9 trillion in goods and services. With Germany sending out so much technology and manufactured goods, they must import oil and gas, small machinery, and food and agriculture items. With a fairly large percentage of laborers working in manufacturing, only about 1 percent of Germans work in agriculture. This is an example of specialization. Countries spend years studying what goods they can produce efficiently and what items they can import from other countries to balance the economic equation. German cars and machinery have a solid reputation for being well built and dependable. Because Germany produces so many manufactured goods for export, it must import food and other agriculture products to meet the needs of its people.

In 2023, Germany exported goods worth more than \$171 billion to the United States, and the U.S. exported goods to Germany that totaled more than \$72 billion. In 2023, German investment in the United States was worth more than \$472 billion, while U.S. investment in Germany was worth more than \$193 billion.

Standard of Living

Although there is no real price tag on happiness, money has become necessary to achieve a higher living standard. Many things we take for granted as a part of life were once thought of as only luxuries. Televisions, cell phones, air conditioning, and modern plumbing were once reserved for only the richer members of society. Achieving this ever-changing standard of normal in our lifestyle choices requires a higher income level—which requires continuing with education and acquiring the necessary tools for earning high wages.



Top: German automaker Mercedes-Benz was founded in 1926.

Most adults in Germany work outside the home, and there is a high standard of living. Germany is also like many other first-world countries. Education and literacy have a large impact on the types of jobs citizens have. High-paying jobs require a secondary education or additional schooling after high school. More than 95 percent of the German people work in service industries and manufacturing careers. Therefore, additional education is necessary to keep informed of the changes in technology and to compete for the best-paying jobs. When business owners invest in human capital and help their workers continue training in the workplace, German workers can continue to be successful.

Germans tend to save more and borrow less than American workers. The average German saves about 10 percent of income and has little or no debt. Their good economy has kept unemployment low. Their welfare state government pays for most people's university education and medical expenses. Germans typically work fewer hours than workers in other countries. The average is 35 hours per week with an average of 34 days off per year.

Currency

Germany has experienced many changes to its economy and currency since the end of World War I. From the reparations payments demanded by the Treaty of Versailles, to the worldwide depression of the 1930s, to the devaluation of its currency, the German (Deutsche) mark, and then World War II, the Germany economy was hit hard.

At the time of the reunification of Germany, however, the mark was very strong and highly valued as a stable and safe currency. The mark was in place until the introduction of the **euro** in 1999. Currently there are 19 countries using the euro as currency. They are known as the Eurozone countries. With this common currency, purchases are more easily and cheaply made across borders. This promotes trade and encourages people to travel and shop in other countries.



By the Numbers

Germany's currency is the euro. One euro (€) could be exchanged for \$1.07 in 2024.



REVIEW AND SUMMARIZE

1. Describe Germany's position on the economic continuum.
2. What are Germany's main exports?
3. Does Germany's minimum wage law move the country toward the command or market side of the continuum? Explain your thinking.
4. What evidence is given of a strong trade relationship between Germany and the United States?

Top: The University of Freiburg features a modern library finished in December 2015. **Above:** Euro.

SECTION 5

U.S.-German Relations



AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR...

- » ways Germany and the United States work together militarily;
- » evidence of good trade relations between Germany and the United States;
- » term: **Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC)**.

Working Together for Security

The United States is committed to preserving peace and security in Europe, and U.S.-German relations have been important for this goal since the end of World War II. Germany is one of the most important nations when discussing European affairs and is a key partner in U.S. relations with Europeans in NATO and the European Union. The goal of U.S. policy toward Germany is to keep a close relationship, not only as friends and trading partners but also as allies. The security and prosperity of the United States and Germany depend on each other. Political, economic, and security relationships are based on close cooperation.

As allies in NATO, the United States and Germany work side by side to maintain peace and freedom. U.S. and German troops work together in NATO and UN operations worldwide due in part to the joint training carried out at U.S. military installations in Germany. Over 40,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Germany and continue to support the region's NATO troops. According to the German embassy, over 17 million American military personnel have served in Germany since the end of World War II.

Bottom: The Group of 7 (or G7) is composed of leaders from the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Germany hosted the group's annual meeting in 2022 to discuss economic and security issues affecting these countries.



There are many examples of the two countries working together. Germany was an important part of the UN forces in Afghanistan in the 2000s. German and U.S. naval forces also fought piracy off the Horn of Africa. Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, Germany has been a reliable U.S. ally in efforts to fight global terrorism.



Bilateral Economic Relations

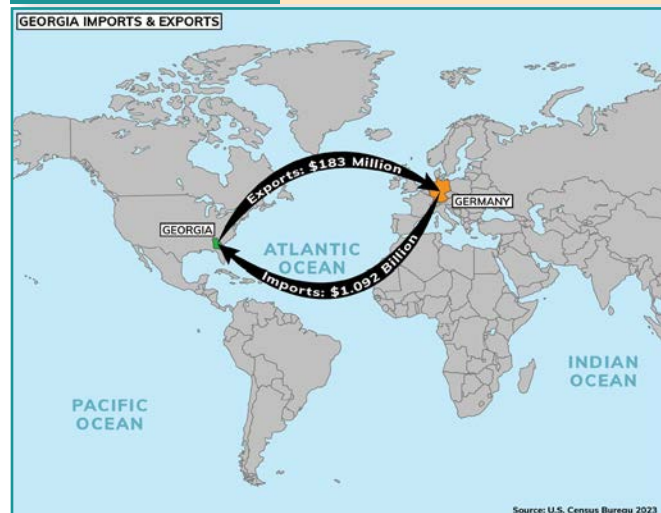
As two of the world's leading trading nations, the United States and Germany share a commitment to an open and expanding world economy. As a member of the European Union, Germany, in 2007, pushed for the creation of the **Transatlantic Economic Council**. This political body, known as the **TEC**, seeks to increase cooperation between the United States and the European Union by promoting economic growth through trade and job creation.

Germany and the United States have a relationship in which both sides contribute and both sides gain. The United States is one of Germany's leading export markets. Combining the total goods traded between the countries, it can be seen that Germany is the fifth-largest trading partner of the United States. The billions of dollars invested by each country in the other also bring mutual benefit. It is to each country's advantage for the other to do well in order to protect these large investments. German investments in the United States focus on manufacturing, retail and wholesale establishments, and finance and insurance. Altogether, German businesses employ over 900,000 American workers, with about 25,000 in Georgia.

Top: Independence-variant littoral combat ships USS Tulsa (LCS 16), left, and USS Jackson (LCS 6), right, transit the Philippine Sea with the German navy frigate FGS Bayern (F 217). Jackson & Tulsa, part of Destroyer Squadron.

Figure 6.5

Georgia-Germany Trade 2023



REVIEW AND SUMMARIZE

1. What are some benefits of good relations between the United States and Germany?
2. What evidence was given that the military from the United States and Germany work together?.

Chapter Review

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Section 1: The Geography of Germany

- Germany's location is good for trade because it borders more countries than any other in Europe and has eight major ports along its coasts.
- The Rhine River has been an important water highway for trade. This has caused densely populated cities to develop along the river.
- Acid rain is a serious problem that has destroyed the country's natural beauty, but Germans are turning to clean energy to decrease the level of harmful emissions that cause acid rain.

Section 2: A Brief History of Germany

- In 1871, many German-speaking kingdoms and territories united under Kaiser Wilhelm I to form the modern country of Germany.
- During World War I, farms and infrastructure were destroyed and many Germans died. After the war, Germans were required to pay reparations. The anger and hopelessness caused by these factors helped Adolf Hitler come to power.
- World War II began when Hitler sent troops into some previous German territories and then invaded Poland. This bloody war ended six years later.
- After World War II, the Allies divided Germany and its capital of Berlin into four zones in an attempt to rebuild the country.
- As part of the Cold War, the Soviets declared their zone of Germany to be East Germany. They built the Berlin Wall to separate their communist section of Berlin from West Berlin. Germany did not reunite until 1990.

Section 3: The Government of Germany

- After Hitler's dictatorship, Germany redistributed power so the states share power with the national government.
- The German Parliament has two houses: the Bundestag and the Bundesrat.
- Germans have a high quality of life with many freedoms, access to benefits, and a strong economy to provide education and jobs.

Section 4: The Economy of Germany

- Germany has a strong market economy that is the fourth largest in the world.
- Over a quarter of Germans work in manufacturing, and German exports are world renowned for their excellent quality.
- The strong economy has contributed to a high standard of living and investment in human capital.
- The adoption of the euro in 1999 made it even easier for German goods and services to be purchased across the Eurozone.

Section 5: U.S.-German Relations

- The United States and Germany have become close allies after World War II in an effort to safeguard global stability, particularly in Europe, and in the fight against terrorism.
- Because the two countries trade extensively and invest in each other, they ensure the other does well politically and economically to guarantee continued trade.

ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNING

Reviewing People, Places, and Things

Use each of the following vocabulary words in a sentence that does not define the word.

renewable resource
acid rain
autobahn
kaiser
reparations
Holocaust
chancellor
welfare state
budget surplus
euro

Understanding the Facts

1. Why can trains and cars travel at such high speeds across Germany?
2. How has Germany's geography encouraged trade?
3. How was the modern country of Germany formed?
4. What is the system of government in Germany?
5. What is the difference between Germany's president and its chancellor?
6. Why did Germany ally with Austria in World War I?
7. Why was Germany central to the Cold War between the Soviets and Western countries?
8. What are Germany's top exports?

Developing Critical Thinking

1. German citizens enjoy a high quality of life—arguably better than that of American citizens because of their welfare state. Based on your knowledge and experiences, use two examples to compare and contrast the quality of life of Germans and Americans.
2. Germany has a market economy, but like most countries, it takes measures to ensure a strong economic future. What are two examples of Germany intervening or investing in the economy? Why are these important for the future of Germany?

Writing across the Curriculum

Many historians believe the poor quality of life for Germans immediately after World War I made World War II almost inevitable. Write a short report on the quality-of-life issues faced after World War I, what emotions these may have stirred in the German people, and how these emotions allowed for World War II and the Holocaust to occur. Be sure to use examples from this book to support your writing.

Applying Your Skills

Create a map of Germany that shows the country's various terrains and geographical features. Include a legend to identify each terrain and properly label geographical features.

Exploring Technology

Use the Internet to research the architecture of the Reichstag, specifically the building's glass dome that was added in 1999. Using specific architectural examples and historical events, explain why the design of the dome is considered to be symbolic of modern German political values.