

Text Set
to accompany
a unit on the
Middle Ages

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EDRD 518

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Gravett, C. (1994). *Castle*. London: Dorling Kindersley.

Summary

Castle is a non-fiction text containing information about castles and castle life. The content is mainly centered on castles existing during the medieval times. Pictures supplement the facts given in paragraph and caption formats throughout the book. Every two pages focuses on a different aspect of castle history or castle life, including sections like “What is a castle,” “The first castles,” “Castles in Germany,” “Tricks of defense,” “Crusader castles,” “The great hall,” “At the table,” “Women and children,” “The lord,” “In the fields,” “Animals in the castle,” and “Castles in decline.” The book doesn’t just focus on castles in Germany, however. It also includes sections on castles found in Japan, France, and Spain.

Commentary

This book is structured in a way that can appeal to teachers of all grade levels and many content areas. Each section has something to offer various subject areas and the pictures laid out on every page allow the text to be useful to readers of all levels and abilities. Within the German content area for fourth graders, students could use this text to assist in constructing their own version of a medieval castle, for instance. Or the section about “Castles in Germany” in the book could be used as a resource for a Castle Scavenger Hunt, which might be a game that allows students to find out certain pieces of information about castles located in Germany. Another idea that comes to mind is to have students read different sections in class after they complete an anticipation guide alone or in small groups.

Hinds, K. (2001). *Life in the Middle Ages: The City*. New York: Benchmark Books.

Summary

Life in the Middle Ages: The City is a book in a series of texts titled *Life in the Middle Ages*. The sections/chapters in the non-fiction text average from 5-10 pages and each chapter discusses a general theme such as “Urban Europe,” “Inside the City Walls,” “Feast Days and Plays,” and “Growing Up in a Medieval City.” Additionally, each chapter has a one to two page mini-discussion of a specific topic related to the chapter theme. For example, in the chapter titled “Growing Up in a Medieval City,” there is a one-page description on how to play a popular game called Hunt the Slipper. Another chapter on “Home Sweet Home” has a recipe for a candy enjoyed by families during the medieval era.

Commentary

This is an excellent selection for an older group of elementary students because of the large amount of text. It would be more difficult for younger students to wade through without an abundance of pictures. However, if manipulated to isolate certain portions, the text could essentially be navigable for any level of reader. In a unit on medieval life in Europe, this book is set up to offer many ideas and opportunities for use in the German language classroom. The ginger candy recipe on page 37, for example, could be taken and talked about in German, which would introduce students to some new cooking terms and a few new food related vocabulary words. Then, students could be asked to look up other medieval recipes online and participate in a Show & Tell. Or, a specific segment from the book could be extracted and introduced as a read aloud or tackled by a small group assigned different reader roles.

Hinds, K. (2001). *Life in the Middle Ages: The Countryside*. New York: Benchmark Books.

Summary

This non-fiction text is part of a series titled *Life in the Middle Ages* and its focus is on rural life during the medieval age. The book begins with descriptions of the different classes of people who played a role under the structure of feudalism. It moves right along into describing a typical layout of a medieval village, as well as the dwellings and other buildings within. There are also sections in the book on work and free time, in addition to a chapter on family. Each chapter has a page or two devoted to a more specific concept related to the general chapter theme, such as directions for playing a medieval game in the chapter on “Rest and Recreation.” There are also several legends and songs from the Middle Ages included in the book.

Commentary

This book is eloquently written and is difficult to set down once picked up and opened. The style of writing makes the content easily understandable and the author explains definitions of new vocabulary terms and provides a pronunciation guide in parentheses after each word. I think this book could be broken up into chunks and used as read alouds to introduce feudalism. As each section is discussed based on the read aloud there would be opportunities to talk about the people and lifestyles in German, introducing new vocabulary as necessary. Additionally, I would make the text available to students during reading center time to allow them to absorb the information on their own. Another possibility for using the book in the classroom involves comparing and contrasting information about medieval life with modern day living in our society. Connections are

one of the standards for foreign language learning and this text offers more than one chance to engage in establishing connections between the past and present and a foreign society and our native one.

Martin, A. (2005). *Knights & Castles: Exploring History Through Art*. Chanhassen, MN: Two-Can Publishing.

Summary

In *Knights & Castles* the author tells stories through art. Some of the accompanying stories are truer than others. Some of the depicted paintings include stories that are presumed factual, whereas others may not have a definite history so the author asks the reader/listener to picture himself/herself as a part of the story instead. The pictures encourage stories of courtly life, estate life, of life during times of war, and festivals/holidays. Following a general description and story of the entire painting, the author breaks each piece of art into segments and discusses the details of the artwork in more depth. Finally, a brief biography is attached to the name of the artist of each work, if known.

Commentary

The organization of this book is very user friendly and the pages are beautifully decorated with art and bits of text. I would recommend including this book in a unit on anything dealing with the Middle Ages for any level of learner. The pictures make the journey through the book appealing and less difficult. In fact, the nature of the book requires the inclusion of artwork, since history is being explored through art. It would be interesting to copy the art for students onto handouts or to scan them onto a powerpoint slide and then have students predict what they think the different elements in the individual works of art might represent. After making predictions, students can listen to a read aloud given by the teacher from this book and compare their notes with what the author suggests.

Then, students might be asked to draw their own medieval painting, incorporating some of the symbols common to medieval artists.

Frank, A. (1953). *Anne Frank: The Diary of A Young Girl*. Pocket Books.

Summary

The Diary of Anne Frank is a novel-like documentation of a young Jewish girl's attempt to survive with her family through World War II in Europe. As the Jewish population is marked by Hitler's army as an enemy entity, Anne Frank's family seeks asylum in the Netherlands, hoping to avoid capture. Behind a tiny door in a secret annex of the house where the Franks are avoiding capture a story of a teenage girl is being told through use of her diary. She experiences normal parts of growing up in an abnormal setting. There are traces of romantic feelings, arguments with her parents, and other typical teenage dilemmas. What makes the story so remarkable is the early close to Anne Frank's life in a concentration camp. Her family is captured by the Nazis and spread out in camps across Germany. Anne Frank's journal is recovered by her father, who survived the Holocaust, and then later published.

Commentary

A teacher could tie in this book with a unit on the Middle Ages by focusing on the notion of a hero and/or a nation's social system and beliefs. There are numerous stories of heroic actions by knights and even by normal, lower class peasants during the medieval times. Several characters in Anne Frank can be perceived as heroes: Anne Frank herself, her father, the family that took in the Franks to protect them from the Nazis. Reading this account of Anne Frank could open up a discussion about what it takes to be considered a hero. The book could also serve as a logical gateway to a unit on World War II or the Holocaust, after engaging in some comparative dialogues and/or activities about the two eras.

Gibbons, G. (1995). *Knights in Shining Armor*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Summary

Knights in Shining Armor is a picture book that portrays knights during the Middle Ages as they conduct their everyday affairs. It is a descriptive piece of literature that talks about everything from the time frame of the Middle Ages to the word for “knight” in different countries in Europe. The feudal system is introduced, followed by information on castles and then the process of becoming a knight. Different weapons used by knights, in addition to their suits of armor, are also discussed over several pages and displayed through colorful illustrations. The origination of legends and tournaments also receive attention and the author even talks about modern day knighthood.

Commentary

This picture book is a nice introduction to learning about knights. The information is direct and simplified, making it understandable for many levels of readers, especially with the support of colorful, meaningful illustrations on every page. The text does not take up a whole lot of space on each page, either. In addition to the book about Anne Frank, a teacher could use *Knights in Shining Armor* to open the thought process for comparing traditional knights to modern day heroes, knights, and dames. It would be a wonderful read aloud for any class and could instigate a follow up assignment that asked students to search out an example of a modern day knight or hero.

Caselli, G. (1988). *The Middle Ages*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books.

Summary

This picture book is more like an encyclopedic work than anything else. It is also a sequel to a book released earlier, titled *The Roman Empire and the Dark Ages*. Some references are even made to that volume in this work. Each chapter in the book can be read as a story of sorts, but the captions accompanying each picture are more descriptive in nature. The content spans sections on knights, the Crusades, cathedrals, Marco Polo, technology, life in the countryside, markets, recreation, medicine, the Burgundian court, wealthy citizens, and progressive thought.

Commentary

The Middle Ages has wonderful, useful pictures throughout that would satisfy almost any level of learner or reader. However, the text may be more suitable for learners who have already been familiarized at least somewhat with the Middle Ages. A teacher might use this work as a supplement for students who are working on a presentation about a specific aspect of medieval life. For instance, students could be divided into groups and asked to choose a topic from a list of selected themes. Then, this book could serve as one reference to assist students in capturing knowledge for their project. The individual units of the book are potential read alouds, but the teacher needs to have something (an idea or prop perhaps) to help make the activity more interesting. Based on observation of the style of writing I almost feel the text is too mundane.

Clements, G. (1990). *The Truth about Castles*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, Inc.

Summary

In *The Truth about Castles*, there are cartoon-like people on each illustrated page depicting characters from all walks of life who lived during the Middle Ages. The captions, paragraphs, and conversation bubbles all contribute to the transfer of information from the author to the reader. Readers are taken on a journey that teaches one about building castles, living inside a castle, creating a meal, dwellers in the castle, protecting the castle from enemies and outsiders, and launching attacks on other castles. The last chapter of the book before the glossary of terms presents “Ten Famous European Castles:” Banos de la Encina, Castel del Monte, Castle of Chillon, Chateau Gaillard, Blarney Castle, Gravensteen, The Marksburg, Windsor Castle, Tower of London, and Harlech Castle.

Commentary

The cartoon-like people on each page add character and personality to the topic of castles. They make it more than bearable for even an adult to read and be educated about castles. After reviewing the list of famous European castles in the last chapter of the book, an interesting task for any age group of students might be to search for a castle located in present day Germany and report back about their findings. They could even go so far as to complete a mini written report on the castle, or to construct a poster display of that castle. Then, the teacher could display the different posters around the room for everyone to see.

Howarth, S. (1991). *Medieval People*. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press.

Summary

Medieval People is a non-fiction text containing chapters on a number of different personalities one would find if transported back to the Middle Ages in Europe. The book begins with a chapter called “The Chronicler,” which explains how we know what we know about the Middle Ages. Next, there is a segment titled “The King.” The main focus is on a medieval king’s power and maintenance of that power. After “The King” arises a discussion about “The Pope,” also a struggle to maintain political and religious power. Other chapters cover “The Bishop,” “The Knight,” “The Pilgrim,” “The Lady,” “The Herald,” “The Monk,” “The Doctor,” “The Heretic,” “The Mason,” and “The Merchant.”

Commentary

Medieval People is written in a manner suitable for all reader levels. It’s not an introduction to the medieval era, but it is an easily understandable compilation of medieval roles. The roles are logically situated based mainly on the feudal system – the book begins with the highest order and moves down. The pictures are not big and bold, but they still assist with conveying meaning from the text. In order to integrate this book into the German classroom, teachers could set up a bulletin board with the heading “Middle Ager of the Week” or “Medieval Character of the Week.” Then, throughout the week, portions of the relevant chapter can be read each day as Read Alouds. At the end of the series of characters students could be asked to dress up for one school day as their favorite Middle Ages persona. A lot of the vocabulary may be difficult for younger audiences, as well (and even some older ones), so the book also offers an excellent opportunity for vocabulary instruction.

Steffoff, R. (2005). *The Medieval World*. New York: Benchmark Books.

Summary

The text, *The Medieval World*, is a general discussion of the Middle Ages. There are three chapters, titled “The Rise of the European States,” “Conquering Powers,” and “The Late Middle Ages.” The first chapter talks about the importance of the medieval times and how the Middle Ages began, as well as the different regions of Europe playing central roles during the era. In the second chapter the author discusses the impact religion had during the Middle Ages on peace and war throughout Europe and parts of Asia. The final chapter introduces the later part of the Middle Ages, when feudalism began its decline, revolution became more popular, and the Black Plague swept the continent.

Commentary

This book is concise and covers a lot of material within a small number of pages. Often, that creates problems related to comprehension, but *The Medieval World* is eloquent and far from creating confusion. In addition to providing students with a super overview of the Middle Ages timeline and territorial expanse, the text can also be used as an introduction to making comparisons between then and now. Especially the second chapter on “Conquering Powers” can be used to discuss what is going on militarily in the world today. It offers people the chance to ask questions and to draw inferences. There is also a lot of great vocabulary throughout and each possible new word related to the Middle Ages is in bold. As with some of the other texts, there is an occasion to implement vocabulary instruction.

Hart, A. & Mantell, P. (1998). *Knights & Castles: 50 Hands-On Activities to Experience the Middle Ages*. Charlotte, VT: Williamson Publishing.

Summary

Knights & Castles begins with an invitation to explore the Middle Ages through reading in the book and observations of the outside world. The time frame and location of the Middle Ages is the first order of business, followed by a section on the people and places that existed during the medieval times. An entire chapter is devoted to the notion of feudalism and after that there is a chapter about what it was like as a kid living in the Middle Ages. Nobles and then castles receive chapters, as well. Medieval religion is a topic of discussion, as are peasant life and festivals/holidays of the Middle Ages. The final chapters of the book talk about education in the Middle Ages and, finally, the end of an era. Every chapter includes several hands-on activities with instructions. There are also “Think About It” sections that ask questions or present a problem on which readers can concentrate.

Commentary

Knights & Castles is an interactive book encouraging students to not only read, but to pay attention to their surroundings in the real world and make constant comparisons between the past and present. The best thing about this book is its ability to act as a reference for the teacher in developing ideas for activities and lessons during the course of a unit on the Middle Ages. Teachers could also copy the “Think About It” sections from the book and use them as activators/admit slips at the beginning of lessons.

Build a Medieval Castle

<http://www.yourchildlearns.com/castle.htm>

Shields, Knights and Heraldry

<http://www.yourchildlearns.com/heraldry.htm>

Summary

This is part of a website with different fun and educational activities for children to work on, called Owl & Mouse Educational Software. The links available on this page allow the user to download free software for creating a medieval castle, as well as instructions to put together the parts of the castle. There is also a link which transfers the user to a page filled with information about castles in the Middle Ages. Before reading about castles the site visitor learns about the social system (feudalism) and family relationships. After acquainting the reader with that information, the webpage content is focused on castles as residences and as defenses against enemies. Another segment of the website navigable from the “Build a Medieval Castle” page allows users to downloadable software and information about “Shields, Knights and Heraldry.”

Commentary

Each of these pages on this website could be useful to parents who want to help their children outside of the classroom in their free time. Another option is to keep this material printed out and handy in an emergency substitute folder, since the instructions are in English instead of German. Or, the website could remain bookmarked for use during Stations Time or for a Webquest activity. The section under “Shields, Knights and Heraldry” about blazonry (how to design/color a shield appropriately) is a great place to transition from English terminology to German, since a lot of the vocabulary here is probably new to students in English, as well.

Castles on the Web

<http://www.castlesontheweb.com/>

Summary

This website, “Castles on the Web,” is a place devoted entirely to castles all over the world. The main page consists of links to the following: an introduction to the website, a Q&A area, a photo gallery, castle of the day, recommended reading on castles, online castle tours, other castle websites, information on medieval times/medieval studies, heraldry, myths and legends, castle/medieval terminology, kids and castles, how to make donations, a guestbook, information on locating castles/palaces to stay in on vacation, etc.

Commentary

More than anything else, a teacher could consider this a home base for references to any site dealing with castles. Nothing on the site seemed inappropriate for any age group, but as always it would be best for teachers to have a very structured plan for learners to follow when navigating these websites, just to avoid any conflict relating to appropriateness of a site. All of the sites checked through the main page appear relevant and are very organized and easy to manipulate.

Discover Ghosts in a Medieval Castle

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/97/castles/enter.html>

Summary

“Ghosts in a Medieval Castle” is a feature located on the National Geographic for Kids website. Before entering the castle you must enter your name (first only) and create a name for your castle. From there you follow Marcus the Mouse into the castle’s interior and meet the ghosts along the way. Each ghost within the castle is there to share some historical information about his/her job and lifestyle within the residence. Additionally, the captions under each scene offer some information about the room or tools/objects inside that room.

Commentary

It would be great to share this website with the computer/media center teacher at the elementary school, in the hopes that she might somehow incorporate them as free time gaming websites for students. Otherwise, a teacher could include this link on a list of many links and summaries to send home to parents at the beginning of the unit for students to use at home or in the library. An important factor to consider is that not every student will have access to a computer or Internet outside of school, so asking students to do this as homework would be unfair.

The Middle Ages, Chivalry, & Knighthood
http://www.teacheroz.com/Middle_Ages.htm

Summary

More than anything this website is an entryway to a multitude of online resources with relevance to a Middle Ages theme. One can access websites informing visitors about important terminology, for example. There are also links to countless maps and timelines, as well as specific topics associated with medieval times, like the Black Plague, feudalism, music & theatre, art & architecture, jesters, food & fashion, punishment & torture, entertainment, witchcraft trials, castles, medieval women, science & technology, law, and warfare & weaponry.

Commentary

This website is an excellent resource to teachers and parents, but I am not sure it would be helpful to elementary-age learners, simply because of the sheer mass of material accessible from this one site. However, each of the individual sites reachable from the listed website can be valuable in some way to students, as long as the teacher plans a structured activity incorporating use of that site.

Middle Ages Online (Mittelalter-Online).

<http://www.mittelalter-online.de>.

Summary

This website is authentic material for a German classroom, since it was made by German speakers for German speakers. The site is easy to navigate and provides tabs for the following: Middle Ages related products, links to other sites, books on the Middle Ages, videos, music, and a guestbook. Under each of these main tabs, located at the top of the webpage, a site visitor can choose from various thematic tabs, such as literature, food and drink, or music and dance under the “Links” tab. After visiting the main book corner page there is a drop down box to allow users to select a specific Middle Ages topic so only those books are brought to the user’s attention.

Commentary

The Mittelalter-Online website is an excellent accompaniment to a unit on the Middle Ages. It is easy to navigate and the directions are very clear. Problems may arise if the teacher simply sends students to the site and expects them to figure out where to go on their own. In order to avoid any lost students or confusion in the class, a teacher’s best bet would be to have a clear set of directions for the given task so that students can focus more on what they’re looking for instead of whether or not they clicked the right button to get them to that information. One option for incorporating the website into classroom use might be including it on a list of helpful sites for completing a Webquest (online scavenger hunt). At the moment the content seems appropriate for most levels and age groups, but as is necessary with all online resources the teacher should check up on the website’s content before allowing students to venture there during classroom time.

Morris, G. (2003). *The Ballad of Sir Dinadan*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Summary

The young adult book, *The Ballad of Sir Dinadan*, is a novel about a young knight who would rather be a minstrel. Unfortunately for Sir Dinadan, his father, also a knight of King Arthur's court, imposes knightly duties on Sir Dinadan and forces him to become a knight like the rest of his family. His older brother, Tristan, is also a knight. Sir Dinadan spends his time singing atop his horse instead of fighting physically. He dreams of becoming a minstrel and even writes his own songs. His knightly abilities are visible through feats he accomplishes with his mind instead of his body.

Commentary

This young adult novel is appropriate for all age groups and can be used in different ways in the classroom depending on the students. For a fourth grade class it offers a way to open the floor for discussion about heroes and what makes someone a hero. After reading the novel, students could be asked to respond in English to the following question: Is it better to succeed by using your mind or to base success on your physical abilities? Another question to ask students is what they hope to be when they grow up. This is something they could do in German, too. Oftentimes, parents play a heavy part in their children's career decision-making process, so a more in depth question might be what role students feel their parents have the right to play when it comes to what students want to be when they grow up.

Morris, G. (2000). *The Savage Damsel and the Dwarf*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Summary

In *The Savage Damsel and the Dwarf*, which has characters of King Arthur's court, a castle is being attacked by a vicious knight called the Knight of the Red Lands. Lady Lynet is stuck there in distress and none of her attempted rescues are successful.

Therefore, she decides to sneak out of the castle by herself and find help. Along the way she captures a dwarf, Roger, and he travels with her to assist her in reaching her destination: Camelot. In Camelot, the only help Lady Lynet and Roger are able to recruit is that of another dwarflike creature who is known as Beaumains (but who is really Sir Gareth). On the way back to save the castle from the evil knight, the trio encounters obstacles, but they eventually make their way home to Lady Lynet's Castle Perle. Her sister, Lyonesse, remained at the castle during Lynet's escapade and is still there when she returns. At the end of the novel we learn that Sir Gareth, who was in disguise the whole time as Beaumains, achieves his quest to restore honor to Sir Lancelot.

Commentary

First of all, I see this book as being one that I would make available to students who had some extra free time for reading on their own if they finished all their work early. Or maybe someone would want to check it out from the teacher and take it home to read there. It's important to have a lot of books like this one available, especially for children who may not have Internet access at home and could therefore not partake in some of the web-related extra activities available to them. Questions that can be raised by this book in class include asking students to what extent they would go to fight for something they believed in.

Morris, G. (1999). *The Squire, His Knight, & His Lady*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Summary

In *The Squire, His Knight, & His Lady*, Terence (the squire) and Sir Gawain (Terence's knight) set out on an excursion. First, they assist the other Knights of the Round Table and King Arthur in fighting a war. Gawain wins a final battle for King Arthur against the supposed Emperor of Rome and they meet Sir Lancelot at this point. Gawain soon after accepts a challenge from the Green Knight, and to seal the deal he chops the head off the Green Knight. Then, after a bit more time at the Court of King Arthur, Gawain and Terence must go off on a quest. They meet several different characters on the way and encounter Lady Eileen, whom they save and who then accompanies them the rest of the trip. Eileen and Terence fall in love and at the end of the novel Terence is knighted with the name Sir Wozzell. He wins a tournament that makes him the greatest knight in England, which shames the previously honored and undefeated Sir Lancelot, who decides to ride off and hide himself away.

Commentary

Teachers could use this novel as a read aloud over several days – asking students to predict what might happen next and to discuss/answer written questions about things that already took place. Another possibility is to leave the book available for stations time or to allow students to take turns checking it out and reading at home, since all students aren't fortunate enough to have web access at home.

Morris, G. (2001). *Parsifal's Page*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Summary

In *Parsifal's Page*, the story of Parsifal and the Grail King is told. Piers is a page on a quest with his knight and is soon abandoned when his knight is slain. He meets Parsifal, another page on his own, and the two join together to ride further. They arrive eventually at the castle where the Holy Grail is protected and they meet King Anfortas. The Grail King is not well and he has been waiting for the right person to come along and show sympathy, which will in turn make that person the new Grail King. Parsifal does not show this sympathy, though, and is thrown back out into the world to learn what is important. Piers remains with him throughout his journeys and they return once more to the Castle Munsalvaesche, where Anfortas has remained ill. This time Parsifal does ask the necessary question, "What ails you?", and Anfortas becomes well once more. Then, Parsifal is dubbed a knight and becomes the new Grail protector.

Commentary

This is another novel that is perfect for setting the scene for some discussion of life questions, such as "What are the important things in life?" and "Are material possessions more important than other kinds of possessions?"

As with all other Young Adult novels, teachers could leave the books available for students to check out and read in their spare time or during Stations Time in class.

Parsifal's Page is an exceptionally good book to include in this text set because many famous German authors have written novels based on Parsifal and the quest for the Holy Grail.

QuizDetektiv: Deutschland. Arena Verlag.

Summary

The *QuizDetektiv* is a compilation of 144 trivia questions dealing with all aspects of German life and the German lands. General themes of the questions include general questions about Germany, politics and history, German states, cities, famous Germans, landforms, nature, tourism, bodies of water, islands, regional specialties, streets, and mountain ranges. There are three questions per page and pictures on every surface.

Commentary

The set up of this trivia book enables three questions to be on one side of the flip chart and the answers on the back of that same card. Every question has multiple choice answers, but a teacher could make it more difficult depending on the class and not give the multiple choice option. The questions span a time frame inclusive of every era throughout Germanic history, so its devotion is not just to the Middle Ages. Therefore, the teacher would need to pick out the appropriate questions prior to going into the classroom with the *QuizDetektiv*. This book is fitting for all levels and all age groups of learners. Teachers can extract a daily question from the *QuizDetektiv* and make a competition out of giving the correct answers throughout the semester, or it can be the basis for a cultural trivia activity during one class.

Brucker, B. (2006). *Spiele Unterwegs*. Bindlach, Germany: Gondrom.

Summary

This book is a collection of games meant to be played while traveling. There are all sorts of games, from those created long ago and passed from generation to generation, like „Ringel, Ringel, Rosen“, to games of a more modern era, such as „Stadt, Land, Fluss.“ Every game possesses brief, clear instructions for playing and there are usually examples that model the process of the game.

Commentary

These games can easily be adapted for use in the classroom and are wonderful for any age group. Some of the games might actually stem from the medieval times, like „Ringel, Ringel, Rosen,“ which is equivalent to „Ring Around the Rosie.“ Rumour has it that „Ring Around the Rosie“ was sung by children during the Black Plague times, which happened in the late Middle Ages. If that statement can be verified, it would be fun to play with small children and tell them some of the history behind it, though not all of the history, since it’s somewhat gruesome. Highschoolers would probably enjoy hearing the truth behind the game, however. Also, other games in this book could be used to test student knowledge of what they’ve learned so far of the Middle Ages. For instance, „Stadt, Land, Fluss“ could be altered to something like „Ritter, Schloss, Land.“ (Knight, Castle, Country)

Schloss Wernigerode: Museum Guide. Verlag Janos Stekovics.

Summary

This museum guide, written in English, presents information and a plethora of photographs pertaining to the Wernigerode Castle in the town of Wernigerode. It was built and maintained during the Middle Ages and is still standing today. A Count originally lived there and his line of counts reigned after his lifetime, from the 1100s into the 1400s. Then, the last remaining count from the House of Wernigerode chose a new line of counts to take over. The rulers remained until well into the 1800s. After the mini general history lesson, the book discusses each aspect of the castle structure alongside the pictures.

Commentary

This guide could easily be used to peak student interest in castles, especially prior to assigning a project on building their own castle or researching another famous existing castle from the Middle Ages. The book is written in a manner that is easy to read and enjoy and all age groups would be satisfied with the layout and multitude of photographs that accompany the text. In addition to this castle guide, teachers could include other collected guides to have in one of the stations or simply on hand for students to borrow. Another fun activity is to show students a picture from the book of something specific to the Middle Ages found in the castle and have them guess what they think the object or room is. The best guess (meaning closest to the right guess) could win a small prize, like a sticker or piece of candy.

Griep, H.G. (2002). *Harz: Mythologie, Märchen, & Sagen*. Goslar: Schadach.

Summary

Harz: Mythologie, Märchen, & Sagen is a book compilation of myths, legends, sagas and fairytales. The Harz Mountains region is in northeast Germany and is home to the famous Hexentanzplatz (Witches' Dancing Place) and Rosstrappe. Surrounding these areas are many other locations that are also home to many tales and mythological stories from long ago. The Rosstrappe, for instance, is a story about a beautiful princess who was riding her horse as fast as possible from an evil knight who wanted to marry her. She and her horse made a jump across a wide gully and on the way her crown fell into the water below. Her horse supposedly left a massive footprint in the stone of the mountain where they landed. You can still see the imprint today. The knight and his horse attempted to do the same, but he fell instead to his death.

Commentary

This book is great for any age group and any level. For younger or less experienced German students, the language can be simplified and the legends can be relayed from memory or a story board, instead of using the language directly from the book's version of a legend. After hearing and engaging with several legends from this and other sources, students could be asked to compose their own myths, legends, and/or fairytales. Elementary schoolers are much more creative than we often give them credit for, as are middle- and highschoolers. Therefore, it's always so exciting to come across something that allows them to stimulate that creativity and learn at the same time.

Perlen deutscher Burgen und Schlösser. (2005). Marksburg: Die Deutschen Burgenvereinigung.

Summary

Perlen deutscher Burgen und Schlösser is a guide listing the castles and fortresses considered by many to be the most famous and beautiful gems in Germany. Every page is colorful with pictures from the presented castle and includes a short paragraph of castle/fortress history, as well as visitor information, tour times, open/closed schedules, specialties available at the castle/fortress, food and drink offered, the castle/fortress owner, and an address, website, and telephone number.

Commentary

Students could plan a trip to one of the castles featured in this guide. Before doing so, the class could discuss some similarities and differences they notice between the German Castle guide and an American tour guide about some US attraction. For instance, telephone numbers are written differently, as are postal addresses. This is something any age group would be familiar with in English, so it would be feasible to tackle such a task in German. A lot of vocabulary will be repeated over and over throughout the guide, so it's definitely a great opportunity to discuss some new vocabulary associated with travel and tourist locales.

Picture Books

*Non-fiction
Juvenile Texts*

*Young Adult
Novels*

Miscellaneous

Websites

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The Middle Ages, Chivalry, & Knighthood http://www.teacheroz.com/Middle_Ages.htm