

Die Lorelei

Summary

The student will use a traditional German folksong to:

Learn Vocabulary

Relate to Geography

Identify a Historical Time Period

Note: This can be an Internet activity.

Time Frame

3 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Individual

Materials

Internet resources: Text and audio recording of *Die Lorelei* Map and photo of Loreley location
Information about author and composer English translation of German text

Background for Teachers

Die Lorelei

is a well-known and often performed German folksong. The words were written by the exceptional German poet Heinrich Heine (1799-1856) and first published 1827 in Buch der Lieder (Book of Songs), his 'most famous collection of lyrics' which were 'chiefly inspired by his unrequited love for his Uncle's daughter, Amalie.' Heine's poetry has 'natural rhythm and melodic charm,' and *Die Lorelei* 'achieved the simplicity and depth of folk poetry.' The music was composed by Friedrich Silcher (1789-1860), a composer, poet, music teacher, publisher, and choral director noted for his encouragement of German folksong singing.

Die Lorelei (Loreley Rock), located near St. Goarshausen (between Bingen and Koblenz), rises ruggedly and steeply to a height of 133 meters (399 feet) above the surface of the Rhein River. The stoney ridges, projections, and shallows combined with a strong river current makes this a dangerous place. The Rhein is a major inland waterway, and over the centuries numerous boatmen, especially the unattentive, have lost their lives here.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will learn to understand the meaning of *Die Lorelei*.

Instructional Procedures

Imagine a man guiding a small boat in the fast-moving Rhine river past treacherous rocks. Add a view of a golden-haired maiden combing her hair on a rocky ledge high above the water. She awaits the return of her knight from battle.

Provide text and play audio recording of *Die Lorelei*.

Request students to read poem and list unfamiliar words.

Have students read poem aloud and discuss its meaning one line at a time.
Show map of Germany and identify the location of Loreley Rock.

Extensions

Have each student do the following:

Select a favorite folksong from his or her own culture.

Prepare a short report which includes the origin (author, composer, and setting) and cultural significance of the song.

Share the report and song with the class.

Assessment Plan

Bibliography

(See references, Links (in Procedure Steps),)

Reinhardt, Kurt F. Germany: 2000 Years (F. Ungar, New York, 1961) 580-583

Authors

[Milton Beck](#)