



3. Where It All Began



Your aim

To introduce students to the idea of Europe by looking at the origin of the word and the myth behind it



Learning Outcome

By the end of the lesson the students will have thought critically and imaginatively about the concept of Europe and where it has come from.



Time

1 class period (double class if a group work approach is adopted)



Materials or Sources required

- » Map on wall showing Europe
- » Resource sheet 'Meaning and Legend of Europe'
- » Resource Sheet 'Europa in Art'
- » Copies of Europa Question Card (optional)



Preparation

- » Wall map of Europe
- » Photocopy both resource sheets and Europa Question cards (these can be collected for re-use)



Links to Investigating Europe

- » Investigating Europe IV – An Olympic Variety
- » Investigating Europe V – The Olympics



Potential Partner Activity

Ideas for partner activities given below

Introduction

The teacher begins the lesson by distributing the resource sheet 'Meaning and Legend of Europe' to the students. S/he asks the students to read these quietly, and to take into account the map of Europe on the wall.

S/he asks the students to consider the meanings given in the resource sheet.

The teacher could ask the following questions:

1. Do they seem realistic as origins of the word?
2. What do you think of the idea that Europeans did not name the area themselves?
3. Is it possible that it was the people to the East who identified Europe as a geographical region?

Whole Class and/or Group Work

The teacher distributes the resource sheet 'Europa in Art' with the images of 'Europa' and allows the students to read the story and look at the cartoon. Alternatively, a student can be asked to read it to the class.

The teacher encourages the students to think about and debate the following questions. The questions can be asked as a whole class or group work activity. (If group work is being used, ask the groups to report back their ideas to the whole class at the end.)

1. Have you ever seen any of the images before?
2. Which images stand out for you?
3. Mythical stories are often valued and passed on because they seem to portray an ideal world full of strength and virtues. What kinds of characteristics does this myth seem to portray as being virtues?
4. Does this story remind you of any other mythical story or legend? [Oisín taking Niamh Cinn Oir away to Tír na nÓg]. What kinds of characteristics are held up as being admirable in this other story?
5. Would the characteristics displayed in these mythical stories still be considered admirable today?
6. What do all the artistic representations have in common? Why do you think this particular part of the story is selected?
7. Why do you think that the Greeks used this image on their Euro coin? (Perhaps to illustrate that Greece was there at the heart of the origin of Europe.)

Conclusion

To end the class, the teacher can ask each group to report back on one or two questions or s/he can lead a whole class discussion on the importance of myths as a means of story-telling

Homework Option

As homework students could be asked to write a short (one page) reflective statement on 'My Idea of Europe' or their own mythical story on how Europe evolved.

The students could be asked to retell the mythical story in their own words (in written form).



Link to Investigating Europe

Remember if you wish you can link from this lesson to:

- » Investigating Europe IV – An Olympic Variety
- » Investigating Europe V – The Olympics



Potential Partner Activity

- » Create a class piece entitled 'Our Idea of Europe' and send it to your partner school.
- » Find out about some of the key myths about Ireland and email these to your partner school.

Origins and meaning of the word 'Europe'

According to the Greek poet, Homer, the name 'Europe' was originally given to Central Greece. Later it stood for mainland Greece and by 500 B.C. its meaning was extended to all the lands of the north.

Two possible origins of the word have been suggested:

- » One is a combination of the Greek words 'eurys' meaning "broad" and 'ops' meaning "face".
- » A second possible origin of the word stems from a Middle Eastern word 'ereb' which means "sunset". From a Middle Eastern viewpoint, the sun sets over Europe i.e. the lands to the west.

Legend – cartoon form

Zeus living on Mount Olympus	"Europa" gathering flowers in seaside meadow with friends	Zeus takes on shape of white bull and comes and kneels at her feet. Europa pats him and decorates his neck with flowers
Europa climbs on his back and he carries her back to Crete, reveals his true identity	Zeus makes love to her under a cypress tree	Europa becomes Queen of Crete, has 3 sons inc. Minos, who becomes King of Crete

Legend – story form

According to Greek Mythology, Zeus, the King of the Gods and the God of Thunder who was living on Olympus, came to Phoenicia (area of modern day Syria/Lebanon in Middle East) and saw Europa the beautiful daughter of the King of Phoenicia, who was gathering wild flowers in a seaside meadow with her friends.

Zeus, who sometimes transformed himself into an animal in order to pursue his love affairs, took on the shape of a white bull. He came gently over to her and knelt at her feet. 'Europa' who was fascinated by the docility of the bull, at first patted him and decorated his neck and horns with flowers, and then climbed up on the bull's back. He ran towards the sea and swam across to the island of Crete: the island of his birth. He then revealed his true identity and made her his lover under a cypress tree. Europa bore Zeus three sons including Minos (who later became King of Crete). Europa became the Queen of Crete when she married the King and he adopted her three sons.

Zeus reproduced the shape of the white bull in the stars which we recognise today as the constellation of Taurus. The image of Zeus abducting Europa has been used as the theme of many European paintings.



A commemorative Italian euro coin



Greek 2€ coin.



Europa and the Bull by Gustave Moreau, circa 1869



Europa in a fresco at Pompeii circa 1869



The Abduction of Europa by Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, 1632.

4. Conquering Europe – The Romans and The Holy Roman Empire



Your aim

To explore and understand a historical period from the past when Europe was united by conquest and the influences that one particular character i.e. the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne had on that process.



Learning Outcome

By the end of this lesson students will have come to understand and reflect on the fact that European empires created through conquest have risen and fallen over time. They will also have explored a key character from history by sharing information with each other.



Time

Double class



Materials or Sources required

- » Atlases
- » Resource sheets: **'Maps and The Triumph of Rome, 180 A.D.'** and **'The Death of Charlemagne, 814 A.D.'**
- » Question Sheet I: **Understanding the Past**
- » Question Sheet II: **The Real Charlemagne**
- » Charlemagne Cards



Preparation

- » Prepare copies of the resource sheets for whole class or groups on OHP/data projector depending on approach being taken
- » Photocopy and cut Charlemagne Cards
- » Photocopy the question sheet



Potential Partner Activity

Given at the end of the lesson