Germany is a large country in the center of Europe. It is one of the richest countries in the world and an important member of the European Union (EU). Germany is famous for high-quality industrial products, especially from the fields of electricity, electronics, chemicals, and cars.

The **Nollendorferplatz** (in Berlin) around 1912. Painting by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

Northern Germany is quite flat with small hills and wide plains. In the lowlands on the North Sea coast are the cities of Bremen and Hamburg. The capital Berlin is also in northern Germany.

In the south lies the Black Forest, a low mountain range. From there you can see the white peaks of the Swiss Alps. The climate in the Rhineland is friendly. Not only maize, potatoes and wheat grow, but also asparagus and grapes.

Germany has 85 million inhabitants. Most of them speak German as their mother tongue. At school they all learn English as their first foreign language. Germany is also home to many people "with a migration background", e.g., Turks. Many foreigners came to Germany, especially in the 1960s. At that time, German factories were short of workers. Today, a large proportion of Germans work in industry or in service industries such as banks, insurance companies or hotels.

Until the 19th century, Germany consisted of many independent states: Baden, Bavaria, Brunswick, Dessau, Hesse, Lippe, Mainz, Nassau, Prussia and many more. In 1871, the King of Prussia was appointed **Emperor of Germany**. He united most of the German states into the German Empire. Under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, Germany became a great power.

Rivalries between Germany and the other major European powers led to the **First World War in August 1914.** After four terrible years, Germany lost the war. The Kaiser was blamed. He had to abdicate, and Germany became a republic.

In 1933, the Nazis took power in Germany. Their "Führer" (leader) Adolf Hitler ruled as dictator. He led Germany into the Second World War, which lasted from 1939 to 1945 and surpassed all previous wars in horror. The Nazis murdered 6 million of their fellow citizens in "concentration camps": Jews, Gypsies, political opponents.

The Second World War claimed 60 million victims. Germany lost the war again. The victorious powers included the USA, Great Britain, Russia, and France. The victors divided up Germany. Until 1990, there were then two German states: West Germany (the FRG) and East Germany (the GDR). West Germany was a rich capitalist country allied with the USA. Communist East Germany was poor and dependent on Russia.
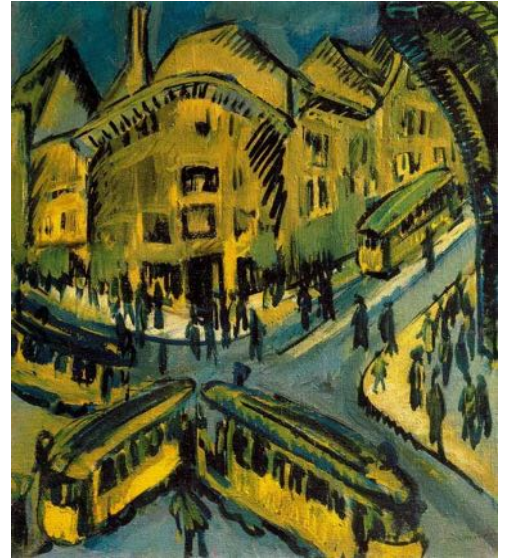
In the late 1980s, communism in Eastern Europe crumbled. This allowed **Germany to be reunited**. The event is celebrated every year on October 3rd, on the "German Unity Day".

Typically German!
You won't find any bullfights in Germany. They only exist in the south of France and in Spain.
Find four more things that are not typical for Germany:

- Aldi	- curry sausage	- palm tree beaches	- Vodka
- beer	- garden gnomes	- pretzel	- windmills
- ~~bullfight~~	- Horst	- punctuality	
- cheese fondue	- lederhosen	- Sauerkraut	
- cosiness	- Oktoberfest	- Uschi	

Read the text T356g about Germany. Then think about how to end the following sentences. Tick the correct variant:

Germany is in Europe, and is
☐ in the far west.
☒ pretty much in the middle.

The capital of Germany is
☐ Munich in southern Germany.
☐ Berlin in northern Germany.

Most Germans
☐ are farmers and work in agriculture.
☐ work in an industrial company or in the service industry.

Residents of Germany who were born abroad are now called
☐ people with a migration background.
☐ foreigners.

Important cities in southern Germany are
☐ Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Freiburg, Munich.
☐ Bremen, Hamburg, Berlin.

An important wine-growing region is located on the shores of
☐ the North Sea.
☐ the Rhine.

Service industries include
☐ Banks, insurance companies, restaurants.
☐ Factories, farms and coal mines.

Two hundred years ago Germany looked like a carpet, namely
☐ like a patchwork quilt of countless independent constituent states.
☐ like a large, monochrome stretched carpet that stuck immovably to the ground.

Germany was unified in 1871,
☐ under the leadership of Prussia.
☐ but remained dependent on Austria.

Germany lost the First World War,
☐ although it was completely innocent of the war.
☐ and the war was blamed on Germany.

The Nazis brought Hitler to power in 1933, and
☐ Germany became a dictatorship.
☐ Germany finally became a democracy.

The German painter Kirchner was one of the most important representatives of Expressionism. The Nazis
☐ praised the realism and beauty of his paintings.
☐ scolded his "degenerate" art.

During the Second World War, France, England, and the USA were
☐ enemies of Germany.
☐ allied with Germany.

Concentration camps were
☐ training camps for soldiers.
☐ political prisons of the Nazis.

In the Second World War Germany was
☐ at war with Russia.
☐ allied with Russia.

The division of Germany was a result of
☐ First World War.
☐ Second World War.

Bonn is a large city in the south of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. From 1949 to 1990 Bonn was
☐ the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany.
☐ the capital of the GDR.

One consequence of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989/90 was
☐ the division of Germany into two states.
☐ the reunification of East and West Germany into one German state.

Today Germany consists of
☐ 16 federal states.
☐ two federal states.

Almost every country has its bank holidays. In Austria it is 26 October, in Switzerland 1 August. In Germany it is
☐ 1 April.
☐ 3 October.