

Essen,  
Germany

APRIL  
2023

Erasmus+  
Project

# ERASMUS *on stage*



# ERASMUS+ PROJECT



## Our week in Germany

From April 17 to 22, Erasmus students from all over Europe took a magnificent trip to Germany. During our stay we learned about the German culture, we met new friends and improved our social skills and language fluency.

## Summary of the week

Monday 17th

Arrival and accommodation in Essen

Tuesday 18th

Getting to know each other, presentation of our prep work based on the novels studied, performance of the play, workshop, school tour and costume party

Wednesday 19th

Visit to Junges Literaturhaus in Köln and city tour

Thursday 20th

Tour of Essen and visit to Zollverein Colliery, World Heritage Site, and Ruettenscheid and another workshop with theatre director Julie Stearns

Friday 21th

Preparation of our mini-play and closing ceremony

Saturday 22th

Back home







## ABOUT THE PROJECT

During this amazing Erasmus experience, the students prepared a mini-play which they performed in the school's auditorium. The workshop was led by Julie Stearns, a professional that has lots of years of experience.

On Tuesday, we talked about similarities and differences between the books that were read by the students at their respective schools. This workshop has helped the students to develop problem-solving skills. We faced many problems such as books being from different eras, having to decide how to create a play of our own...

By Thursday, the participants had already finished their scripts, and thanks to the extraordinary commitment of some of the students, all the scripts were merged.

Afterwards, we decided which roles everyone would take.



## ABOUT THE MINI-PLAY

Broadly speaking, the play is about a mysterious murder: a detective travels through time and through different countries to discover what happened. The mystery is of course not solved until the very end.

This mini-play could not have been done without both the students and the theatre director Julie Stearns. We also want to show our gratitude to Goetheschule for letting us use their stage to make this play possible.



# CREATIVE WORK

## A Story from Dark Times



Imagine finding an old, yellowed photograph that tells a story from the 1930s. It is the story of Franz, an awkward boy who starts an apprenticeship in Vienna with Otto Trsnjek, the owner of a newspaper and cigar shop who lost his right arm in the Great War. Otto loves the peace and quiet of his little shop and the freedom that reading the world's newspapers opens up to him and his customers. But times are changing. The paperboy and the children who used to walk carefree in the streets are the first to notice that the men who are carrying a new flag to Vienna are changing the atmosphere in the city. Customers like the old Professor Freud, who has become a fatherly advisor to Franz, are suddenly no longer welcome in their own neighbourhood. And Franz's romance with the pretty Anezka, about whom he writes enthusiastically to his mother, seems to have no future either. When the hatred of angry neighbours is unleashed, Franz realises that it is time to write his own story - the story of one who is determined to find his own answers.

Before coming to Essen we had to do some preparations in our own countries. We had to do a little research about what a bildungsroman is.

Following that we read different coming-of-age novels and bildungsromans, which all had similar structures and storylines.

The German group read "The Tobacconist", the Danish group read "The Perks of Being a Wallflower", the Spanish group read "Looking for Alaska", the Lithuanians read "Benedict's Thresholds", and the Polish students read "Springtime".

After reading each novel we had to do some creative writing. We could choose to write fanfics, Twitter novels, hyperpoems,...

[Book](#) [Author](#) [Characters](#)

## THE NOVEL

**benediktastrijonis**  
@benastrijonis

Mielieji draugai, artimieji, kolegos, studentai, pažįstamieji! Lietuvos nacionalinis operos ir baleto teatras kviečia į pirmąjį kamerinio orkestro pasirodymą!

Translated from Lithuanian by Google

Dear friends, relatives, colleagues, students, acquaintances! The Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theater invites you to the first chamber orchestra performance!

**Alaska remake**

After pulling up an unforgettable prank in the name of Alaska, the characters were trying their best to forgive what happened so that they could keep on with their lives.

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**The torturous road to Alaska**

Looking for Alaska, a tale of youth,  
Of searching for meaning, for love and truth.  
Miles Halter, a boy with a thirst for life,  
Leaves home for Culver Creek, free from strife.

There he meets Alaska, with her wild flame,  
A girl who's troubled, yet with wisdom and game  
Together with Chip and Takumi they roam,  
Smoking and drinking, seeking their own home.



# A Story from Dark Times

*by Amalia, Tonia and Rosalie*

## **What is the play of the German group about?**

In the beginning, a young man (Franz) goes into the tobacco shop and asks the tobacconist (Otto Trsnjek) for a job in his shop. As Otto tells Franz about his experiences, some customers come and buy cigarettes and newspapers. When an old man (Prof. Freud) comes in, Otto tells Franz that he is a regular customer and when Freud leaves with cigarettes, Franz follows him because he forgot his hat in the shop. They talk about life and love.

In the next scene, you can see Franz's mother reading a letter in which he tells her about his new job and about a girl he met and that she is special to him. Suddenly Anezka leaves him because she is not able to make a living. She prefers a National Socialist with money.

One night, men dressed in black break into the tobacconist's shop and write 'Jew lover' on his wall. When Otto sees it in the morning he is shocked and can't believe it, but before he can do something about it, the Nazis come and arrest him. He ends up being killed.

After all Franz had to go through, he decides to take down the NS flag and puts up Otto's jacket instead.

In the last scene of the play everyone who had a role in the play lined up and told the audience why Franz might have done this.

## **What's the message?**

After the murder of Otto Trsnjek, Franz takes a stand. He puts down the flag of the German Nazis and hoists the tobacconist's jacket instead - as a symbol of respect for the murdered Otto Trsnjek, and his deep anger at the murderers. At the end of the play, every actor comes on stage, saying why Franz may have decided for resistance. "Maybe he did it...". Every single person gives a possible reason: friendship, loyalty, a future without hatred.

"Maybe he did it... for you!"

# ABOUT ESSEN

Essen is a city in the center of the Ruhr area and the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region. After Cologne, Düsseldorf and Dortmund, Essen is the fourth largest city in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and one of the regional centers.

After Essen had become European Capital of Culture in 2010, it received the title of European Green Capital in 2017.

The German group, students of the Goetheschule, have been hosting some of us, the Erasmus students, and have been showing us the city and surroundings.



## THE GROUPS:

German group



Polish group

Danish group



Lithuanian group

Spanish group







## Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> First day

The first day of the project activities was filled with joy, new connections, and experiences. We started the day with getting-to-know-you games and then moved on to presentations about what we had done in preparation of the project. Then it was time to see the play that the German students had prepared. After that, we brainstormed about the performance that would be presented on the last day of the project to the whole community of Goetheschule. We also had a tour of the school and learned about its history. Finally, we ended the day with a book character-themed party where we got to socialize, dance and spend time together.



### COSTUME PARTY

*"I met new fun people and new cultures"*

- Kasia & Amelia

*"It was a very nice ice-breaker!"*

-Daniella





Wednesday 19th

Second day:

# KÖLN



## Students visited the city of Köln

On Wednesday we all went to Köln. There we got to visit the Literaturhaus, and had the chance to do a workshop with Dr. Anje Arnold about German literature and the genre of the bildungsroman.

Afterwards, we went to visit the amazing cathedral which has a fascinating history and is colossal and really impressive.

Then all the students got some free time to explore and visit the city by themselves.







Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>

## Third day

On the third day we went on a trip to “Zeche Zollverein”.

All host students were invited to join. After we had started the trip at 8.15a.m, we were allowed to explore the site on our own.

Later we enjoyed the view from the panorama roof. We had lunch in Rüttenscheid (one of Essen’s districts).

We finished our day in school where we continued to work on our project.



ZECHER ZOLLVEREIN



Until 1996 “Zeche Zollverein” used to produce coal. It was a very important colliery in Essen. In the past, many workers came from Poland and Turkey to the Ruhr Area, about 30% of them stayed after the coal mines had been closed and their families still live here.





Friday 21<sup>th</sup>

## Fourth day

On our last day in Essen we finished rehearsing the play and later we presented it in front of our classmates. In the meantime, the press team was working on this trip souvenir magazine.

After having seen the mini-play, we can just say that we are amazed by the result achieved. Despite the fact that we had not too much time for creating scripts or having rehearsals, we can proudly say that the play was a great success.

Finally, we all gathered together for a closing ceremony and received our Erasmus certificates. In the afternoon we had free time to enjoy with our new friends and host families.





# Students share their experience

Inés & Giorgio (Spain)

"Our favorite part of the project was getting to know everyone. We wanted to participate in the project to become open-minded. This experience taught us how to interact with people."



Silas & Janis (Denmark)

"Our favorite part of the project was the free time we had and the trip to Cologne. We wanted to participate in the project to have an opportunity to meet people and do interesting things."



Nina (Poland)

"My favorite part of the project was meeting new people. I wanted to participate in the project because it's a great opportunity. This experience taught me more about German culture."



Gabija (Lithuania)

"My favorite part of the project was the time spent working on the play. I wanted to participate in the project because I'm interested in literature. This experience helped me to communicate with others."



### Gabriel (Poland)

"My favorite part of the project was seeing different countries work together. I wanted to participate in the project to see what life is like in Germany. This experience helped me to get to know others."



### Weronika (Poland)

"My favorite part of the project was the free time in Cologne. I wanted to participate in the project because I had good memories of other exchanges and wanted to see new countries and people. This experience taught me to be social and self-confident."



### Johann (Germany)

"My favorite part of the project were the interactions, the trips, and the meetings after school. I wanted to participate in the project because I like acting. This experience taught me how to achieve goals as a group."



### Julius (Germany)

"My favorite part of the project was getting together and working together with others. I wanted to participate in the project because I'm interested in drama even though I have never done it before. This experience helped me to improve my English language skills"







This week has been an experience worth remembering. We have learned about new cultures and we have made friends that we will take with us in our hearts.

We are very grateful to all the organizers of Erasmus and to all the participants who made it possible.

**Danke Euch allen!**  
(Thank you all!)

*Editorial team: Eva, Tadas, Víctor, Gala, Daniella and Alba.*