



DemokratieWEBstatt – the web site of the Austrian Parliament for kids and youngsters

GOALS OF THE DEMOKRATIEWEBSTATT

The *DemokratieWEBstatt* is the web site of the Austrian Parliament for kids and youngsters aged 8 to 14. One of the main targets is to make young people of this age group familiar with democracy and parliamentary processes. That means that political practice is presented in a way appropriate for the age group. Besides, the target groups are to be offered ways by the web site to get actively involved, thus being made aware that their opinions and ideas are taken seriously and sought after.

The *DemokratieWEBstatt* dates back to 2007 and is constantly being upgraded with new interactive, playful and graphic elements of information. The final product is a platform for kids and youngsters that provides information. Apart from that elements for communication, action and interaction on a political level are fostered and supported.

Besides, the latest dates on the workshops of the *Demokratiewebstatt* in the Palais Epstein are made available and newspapers, films, audio recordings as well as photos generated there are published.

The *DemokratieWEBstatt* aims at conveying to kids and youngsters a positive basic attitude towards politics and parliament, at making their opinions and interests visible and, above all, at generating pleasure in taking part in the decision making process. All that is in addition to the mandate for education to offer basic knowledge on democracy.

The DemokratieWEBstatt is also on facebook:

www.facebook.com/demokratiewebstatt

The latest information on how to convey democracy in education, on events as well as news from the DemokratieWEBstatt and the DemokratieWERKstatt are available there.

STRUCTURES OF THE DEMOKRATIEWEBSTATT

Once you are on the site of the *DemokratieWEBstatt* the navigation bar at the top shows you the various parts: **TOPIC** names all issues dealt with in the *DemokratieWEBstatt*, **PARLIAMENT** provides information on guided tours in the Houses of Parliament as well as a virtual visit of the building and facts about the various MPs. It also serves as a platform for parliamentary staff who do not normally take centre stage but here get a chance to introduce their work; in addition it gives information and dates of the chats. **KNOWLEDGE** supplies and explains information and contents on democratic and parliamentary





procedures in a way suitable for the age group as well as an encyclopaedia with a glossary.

PLAY ALONG focuses on playful learning and the fun with hands-on experimenting drawn from films, picture colourings, games, and quizzes on knowledge. Questions, requests and ideas supplied by the kids on all parts are welcome any time.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO INCORPORATE THE DEMOKRATIEWEBSTATT EFFECTIVELY IN LESSONS

Versatile use and application of the *DemokratieWEBstatt* were the predominant ideas behind when developing the platform. In terms of subjects the site is particularly suitable for German, History, Civic Education, Geography and Arts. An interdisciplinary approach provides an excellent opportunity to incorporate the *DemokratieWEBstatt* in connection with projects and project weeks whereby pupils look into the Austrian political system, into democratic processes in general as well as into possibilities of getting actively involved in the decision making process.

DemokratieWERKstatt

The menu item *DemokratieWERKstatt*, top right in the page navigation, offers latest information on dates and events. All essential details can be found here in case you intend to visit the *DemokratieWERKstatt* in the Palais Epstein.

Adults

You will find the category **Adults** top right. It supplies materials for kids and youngsters aged 8 to 14 and it comprises work sheets, power point transparencies and e-books on a range of topics.

Parliament

The virtual tour is an exciting opportunity for pupils to look into the buildings of the Houses of Parliament, their history and their use. It is an interactive tour allowing the user to move from one room to the next or to take a look into the various rooms from an illustrated map. It generates interest, makes curious and proves to be an exciting way of learning. Each room is described in language appropriate for the age group. A lot of knowledge is pooled here: the architecture of the building, the philosophic and artistic background, historic events and developments as well as the present use of the rooms and what they are used for.

Who is who in Parliament offers the opportunity to find out more about the MPs, to meet them on a “people-like-you and me” level, thus reducing barriers. It also becomes obvious that they are people from all walks of life and their careers do not depend on university





degrees or a compilation of qualifications. The seating on the map corresponds with the seats in the Lower and the Upper House.

Who works where shows once more how complex procedures are in Parliament and much takes place behind the scenes in order to make parliamentarianism work in Austria. Kids and youngsters realise that not only politicians work there but a wide variety of different types of jobs are required.

Chats with MPs: Politicians of various parties and pupils from different provinces meet at the chat room of the *DemokratieWEBstatt* at regular intervals. Each chat is dedicated to a certain topic - the current topic of the *DemokratieWEBstatt* – on which politicians and pupils express their opinions. All dates and topics as well as photos and chat records of previous chats are available here.

Knowledge

The extremely concise info-part of the *DemokratieWEBstatt* provides complex basic knowledge on **democracy, elections and laws** in a simple and well-structured fashion. Answers on questions like “What is a minister?” “Who is allowed to vote?” or “How are laws made in Austria?” can be found here. A number of terms in politics and parliament are suitably explained in the **encyclopaedia on democracy**. It is the main task of the **link references**, topic-sorted, to forward pupils according to their interests and exercises.

Play along!

The law-generator in the menu item **Create your own law** offers an ideal tool for the presentation of the rather complex law making procedure. It is a step by step process explaining in a simplified way all details that need to be written down in a law and what must be observed in a bill. As pupils get actively engaged in the creation of a law the individual steps are reinforced and become traceable and comprehensible. (It is a good idea to combine it with the knowledge part “All about laws”.)

The **games** are very useful at the end of a lesson, the brain game leaves a good impression of the parliament building by the choice of pictures. The **colouring pictures** can be printed out and filled in. They have been especially designed for younger visitors of the *DemokratieWEBstatt*. A collection of animated films on topics of the *DemokratieWEBstatt* can be found in the category **films**. The interactive elements of the web site can also be found here. It is a tool for pupils to take an active part in the expansion of the *DemokratieWEBstatt*. All ideas can be forwarded to the editorial office by means of an **input mask**. There they are taken care of and dealt with in the best possible fashion.





Topic

The respective main topics of the *DemokratieWEBstatt* deal with exciting issues relating to democracy. Each subject matter is processed in a target group oriented way and also provides a topic related interview with experts as well as interactive elements for experimentation intended to lead to in-depth acquisition of knowledge; on top there is an e-book available, too.

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IDEAS FOR THE USE IN CLASS

German – class assignment

- Describe your experience “An exciting day in Parliament” or “Footpath through the Houses of Parliament”(a virtual tour)
- Describe a room (a virtual tour)
- Retell the tour of the Houses of Parliament (a virtual tour)
- Explain the purpose of the various rooms of the H.o.P. (a virtual tour)
- Quiz - Find the correct term
- Role play “A law is born”.

Arts

- We decorate the H.o.P. (a virtual tour)
- Explore the history of art of the building (a virtual tour)

History and Civic Education

- Class assignment – explore the political processes in the Houses of Parliament and find out how they relate to your personal situation (a virtual tour)
- Class assignment – What are the tasks of Parliament towards the ministries
- (knowledge)
- Demonstrate the process of federal lawmaking (law generator/knowledge)
- Which official languages are used where in A?

Multidisciplinary

- Class assignment – Draft a law and present it in class (Create your own law/knowledge)
- Group work for teacher and class – write down rules for the class as a draft and call for a decision (create your own law)

