



The Europaklasse is an immersive language and cultural experience taking place every year in Bielefeld. German-studying students from all across Europe come together to form one class in which they follow a timetable of lessons such as Biology, Music and German Literature dotted with trips and cultural experiences including a weekend's excursion into Berlin, giving an insight into the city's unique history and sites.

We first heard about the Europaklasse at the end of last year's Bielefeld Exchange, and after a successful and enjoyable time in Germany, we were eager to return and learn more about Germany; its language, culture and people. It's fair to say that we were thrown in at the deep end on our first day - understanding physics on its own is one thing, but doing it in another language is another! Switching entirely from English to German was definitely demanding, but over the course of the two weeks we found that our understanding of the language improved, allowing us to communicate better both in lessons and with friends from the group. By the end of the trip, our German was and still is much more instinctive, letting us speak naturally!

One great benefit of taking part in the Europaklasse was the opportunity to meet new people and experience new cultures. In times of European tension, understanding and sharing international culture is hugely important and the project allowed us to learn more about the continent and its people, making friends from France, Italy and all the way to Russia! Spending time with people of different upbringings with different views coupled with the independence the trip provides led us to develop more as individuals - not only were we mixing with people of various backgrounds and ideas, we were doing so and making friends whilst speaking a foreign language! This proved tricky at first but became almost second nature by the end of the trip, especially after our trip to Berlin.



Overall, the Europaklasse is a once in a lifetime opportunity to not only learn German, but to experience its rich culture and implement what we have learnt in class in real life. It highlights both the importance of learning a new language and what doing so can offer; an insight into foreign culture, the chance to develop one's confidence in new situations and an opportunity to bond with new people, creating lifelong friendships across the globe. We thoroughly enjoyed the project and will never forget it!

Aadarsh, Manav and Val, Year 10.