

Angela Merkel

In this lesson, you will learn about the first female chancellor of Germany. You will also share your personal opinions about the refugee crisis in Europe and review common errors in written English.



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What is the title your native country uses for its head of government? What other titles are used around the world?
2. How do female leaders differ from male leaders?
3. What do you know about the migration crisis in Europe?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. migrate | a) to join with another group or organization |
| ___ 2. spokesperson | b) a maximum or limit |
| ___ 3. merge | c) forced enrollment into the army or navy |
| ___ 4. parliament | d) to move from one region or country to another |
| ___ 5. scandal | e) to remain independent or strong in a difficult time |
| ___ 6. coalition | f) the group of government officials who make laws |
| ___ 7. keep / stay afloat | g) a public survey on specific issues |
| ___ 8. abolish | h) one who speaks on behalf of a group or organization |
| ___ 9. conscription | i) a dishonourable wrongdoing that upsets the public |
| ___ 10. poll | j) a person's attitude and mannerisms |
| ___ 11. cap | k) to remove entirely |
| ___ 12. demeanour | l) a partnership (sometimes temporary) between groups or countries |

Reading

1. Angela Merkel is one of the most powerful women in the world. She is the first female chancellor of Germany and the longest-serving elected female head of government in history.
2. The chancellor was born in West Germany in 1954. Her family **migrated** to a small town in East Germany that same year. Angela was a bright student, and she received a PhD in chemistry. After marrying her college sweetheart, she became a research scientist. Her first marriage ended in her twenties, but she kept her ex-husband's surname.
3. In 1989, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Merkel developed a strong interest in politics. She joined the Democratic Awakening Party and became its **spokesperson**. In 1990, her party **merged** with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and Merkel won a seat in **parliament**. Between 1991 and 1998, she served as Minister of Women and Young People, Minister of the Environment, and General Secretary.
4. In 2000, after a financial **scandal** in the CDU, Angela Merkel became the first female to lead the party. In 2005, a grand **coalition** government formed, and Merkel, who was the party leader, became the first female chancellor of Germany. At the age of 51, she was also the youngest person to ever lead the nation.
5. Since 2008, Merkel's top priority has been to **keep** Germany **afloat** during Europe's economic crisis. Merkel introduced parental benefits and a minimum wage. She also shortened work hours. Keeping Greece in the eurozone has been another priority. Her bail-out packages and repayment plans have been unpopular in Greece, however. In fact, many Greeks blame Merkel for their weak economy.

Chancellor

ˈtʃan(t)-sə-lər\

In Germany, the *chancellor* is the head of the federal government. Other countries use the term *prime minister* or *president*.

6. Merkel has always been a cautious leader. She puts her scientific background to use by analyzing facts and public opinion **polls** before making big decisions. In 2011, she made some big announcements. She **abolished conscription** in Germany and promised to shut down all of the nation's nuclear reactor sites.
7. In 2015, the chancellor began to lose support due to her "open-door" refugee policy. Over one million migrants registered in Germany in 2015, which cost the country over 10 billion euros. Merkel has refused to put a **cap** on asylum seekers. Instead, she tells her people, "We will manage."
8. Merkel's critics have turned her surname into a verb meaning *to do nothing*. Her supporters, however, call her *Mutti* (*Mummy*). This nickname refers to her calm **demeanour** during tough times. There are no term limits for German chancellors, so Merkel could remain in power for many more years. Would the European Union fall apart without her?

"There is no tolerance of those who are not ready to help, where, for legal and humanitarian reasons, help is due." —Angela Merkel

Comprehension

A. Timeline

Place the following in chronological order (1–8).

One item is not mentioned in the reading.

Place a star beside it and guess where it belongs.

- _____ Angela Merkel became Germany's first female chancellor.
- _____ Merkel lost approval in the polls due to the refugee crisis.
- _____ Conscription was abolished in Germany.
- _____ The Berlin Wall came down.
- _____ Angela Merkel became the leader of the CDU.
- _____ Angela's father got a job as a pastor in East Germany and moved his family there.
- _____ Angela Merkel divorced her first husband but kept his surname.
- _____ Merkel began to try to fix Europe's economic crisis.

B. True or False?

Read the statements below. If the statement is true based on the reading, write T beside the sentence.

If it is false, write F and correct the information.

- _____ 1. Angela Merkel was born in East Germany.
- _____ 2. Angela Merkel has a doctorate degree in chemistry.
- _____ 3. Merkel is the chancellor's maiden name.
- _____ 4. To date, all men must join the army or navy in Germany.
- _____ 5. Angela Merkel wants to control exactly how many refugees are allowed to enter Europe.
- _____ 6. Most Greeks are thankful for Angela Merkel's leadership.

Vocabulary Review

Choose the word or phrase with the closest meaning to the underlined word in the following sentences.

1. Greece has threatened to abolish the use of the euro.
 - a) regulate
 - b) put an end to
 - c) reduce
2. They're forming a coalition to fight ISIS.
 - a) migration
 - b) union
 - c) method
3. If the airlines merge, fares could go down.
 - a) join
 - b) migrate
 - c) fail
4. According to the poll, only 10% of citizens are in favour of conscription.
 - a) media
 - b) parliament
 - c) survey
5. The Minister of Education wants to put a cap on class sizes.
 - a) hat
 - b) enrollment
 - c) limit
6. Their spokesperson has a very pleasant demeanour.
 - a) head of government
 - b) representative
 - c) parliament

Common Errors

A. Spot the Errors

Work with a partner to spot some of the most common English writing errors. Circle one error in each sentence and explain why it's wrong.

1. Angela Merkel is one of the most powerful woman in the world.
2. Europe's weak economy can't support it's migrants.
3. Angela Merkel lead several efforts to save the euro.
4. Less refugees are settling in the UK than in Germany.
5. It's to early to tell if Angela Merkel will serve for a fourth term.
6. Angela Merkel reminded Germans that freedom is more powerful then terror.
7. Maternity benefits have a positive affect on families.
8. Merkel's approval ratings have dropped. In fact, many people in Germany want there leader to quit.

Common Errors

B. Write Sentences

Now work together to write eight new sentences with the same or similar eight errors (in a different order). Challenge another pair to correct your sentences.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Discussion

1. Angela Merkel believes that many refugees will return home to the Middle East and North Africa when terrorists like ISIS are defeated. Do you agree that this will happen? If yes, how long do you think it will take?
2. In 2011, Angela Merkel abolished conscription in Germany. Do you think military service should be voluntary? What about when a nation is at war?
3. Angela Merkel has been in power for over a decade. In your opinion, how long is too long for a person to lead a country?