

# A newcomer: Helene

This year we've got a new friend in our classroom: Helene Lamberz. She'll stay here one year. She is from Sanitz, a little village near Rostock, in the north of Germany, near the Baltic Sea. Her father is a mathematician and he carries out 3-D prints, that is he designs three dimensional projects on computer. Her mother instead is a potter. She has also one brother, Leo, who's 25, and one sister, Luise a 22 year-old girl; in the past they both went abroad, like Helene now.

In her free time Helene likes dancing, playing tennis, meeting her friends and listening to music. Her favourite singer is Eminem, a famous American rapper.

We've interviewed her for you.

**Q** First of all, Helene, what are guys like in Germany?

**H** Oh, funny question! They're friendly and they're more independent than the Italians. After finishing school they immediately leave home to go to University or to start work. And girls too!

**Q** And what about parents?

**H** They are open minded, less protective than Italian parents. They allow their children out. They give children free time.

**Q** And... there rules of any sort that you have to follow?

**H** Rules? Er... Well, when I was younger, but not now. But it depends on the family. Some families allow children to go to the disco or have a boyfriend, and there are families who are a bit stricter. I can do what I want, because I have an older brother and an older sister, so my parents are less strict. Maybe they are just less strict now than they used to be with my brother or my sister.

**Q** What about rules in your school?

**H** We are not allowed to eat or drink during the lessons. Here, instead, students aren't supposed to do that but teachers don't say anything if they do. In my school there are two 20-minute breaks and you can go out to the school's background, where there are some places where people can smoke.

**Q** Oh, I see... And..... how long do you have to stay at school?

**H** 45 minutes each lesson and every 2 lessons, there is a break of 20 minutes. We may have from 4 to 8 classes a day.

**Q** Why have you decided to come to Italy?

**H** Because I like the country and the people. My sister went to France, but she said that people are not very friendly there and my brother went to America, but he said that people are kitch, without good taste.

So I have decided to come to Italy!

**Q** Let us know more about that, will you?

**H** Last year I decided to come to Italy for one year. Before I came here, I had been in Italy twice and then I wanted to get to know more about the people and the country. So my parents and I looked for organizations which have "Italy" in their program for a one-year-exchange. After I had chosen one, I had to do an interview to see if from a psychological point of view I would be able to stay one year away from home, abroad and alone. It was like a psychology test. I had to write everything about myself and my family, about my hobbies and my habits. The school and my teachers. I had to access my abilities too. And I had to go often to the doctor's for vaccinations.

I had to wait long for the answer. But then, how lucky! I had got the chance!

The last thing was a meeting with all the exchange students in Berlin. There we got again a lot of information and could ask what we wanted to know. One week before departure, I got the name of the family. On the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2002 at 2.55 p.m. I said goodbye to my family and at 3.00 p.m. my plane started. Destination: Italy.