

THE LOCKE SOCIETY

LIFE, LIBERTY & EDUCATION



Unit

Topic

Cold War

Berlin Wall

*This lesson is a guideline. The Locke Society is working on completing a text set, but please use the recommendations to develop your own complete lesson at this time.

Lesson Plan

Aim

How did the people of West Berlin exercise their freedom on behalf of those suffering under communism in East Berlin?

Rationale

A recent historical analysis of the Berlin Wall that is being presented to students across America suggests that tearing it down harmed East Berliners because it “disrupted their way of life.” (Just one example of this perspective is represented in a [Financial Times](#) article.) This interpretation of history is misleading for students who are just learning about the Berlin Wall including the consequences it had for East Berliners and the urgency to tear it down. With student-centered learning, some teachers are taking the opportunity to present this history as sympathetic of communism, and even supportive of it. This lesson incorporates resources that factually present the differences in the quality of life between West and East Berlin, and the desperate desire to take down the Berlin Wall. Students will engage in civics learning as they reflect on how those who were free exercised their freedom on behalf of those who were trapped in an oppressive state.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to differentiate between the quality of life in East and West Berlin by researching the limitations of freedom and security in the East.
2. Students will be able to measure the extent to which West Berliners were able to protest on behalf of East Berliners by analyzing their methods of protest and aid.
3. Students will be able to evaluate the impact of Ronald Reagan’s speech on the tearing down of the Berlin Wall.

Civics Connection

How have people in power affected political, social, and economic developments regarding the freedom and protection of their people?

Vocabulary

Berlin Wall	Ronald Reagan	capitalism (basic tenets)	security
East Berlin	Mikhail Gorbachev	protest	
West Berlin	communism (basic tenets)	freedom	



Materials and Resources

Teachers can create a text set using some or all of these resources. Please read all texts and images and watch all media in all resources you plan to use. Please watch and read from beginning to end. Some content is explicit and may not be appropriate for the classroom. Use your best judgement on what to include in your lesson.

Life in East Berlin:

*PLEASE READ THROUGH ALL TEXT/IMAGES/VIDEOS BEFORE SELECTING AND DISTRIBUTING TO STUDENTS TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATENESS.

*<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1961/11/why-we-crossed-over-five-east-berliners-speak-out/376252?>

<https://afsa.org/remembering-1989-berlin-wall-stories>

<https://sciencehistory.org/stories/magazine/over-the-wall-six-stories-from-east-germany/>

Protests of East Berlin/free world:

*PLEASE READ THROUGH ALL TEXT/IMAGES/VIDEOS BEFORE SELECTING AND DISTRIBUTING TO STUDENTS TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATENESS.

https://www.archives.gov/files/research/foreign-policy/cold-war/berlin-wall-1962-1987/dvd/pdfs/vingettes/4_V-10.pdf

<https://www.thecollector.com/art-on-the-berlin-wall/>

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/3072635/the-berlin-airlift-what-it-was-its-importance-in-the-cold-war/>

Additional Resources:

*PLEASE READ THROUGH ALL TEXT/IMAGES/VIDEOS BEFORE SELECTING AND DISTRIBUTING TO STUDENTS TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATENESS.

<https://www.ddr-museum.de/en>

<https://www.the-berlin-wall.com/>

<https://www.gale.com/intl/archives-explored/berlin-wall>

<https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/berlin-w-germany-rudolph-wilde-platz-19630626>

https://www.aier.org/article/the-history-and-meaning-of-berlin-wall/?gclid=CjwKCAjwhdWkBhBZEiwA1ibLmHgpLibaZ0DC4e1dPQLtdmLgOIZktvIbVGvACFIx-BaLPDyuOsqaExoCsakQAvD_BwE

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/reagan-speech-tear-down-wall-1987>



Procedure

Do Now: Read an excerpt (the first 12 paragraphs, and the opening quote) from [“Tear Down This Wall”: How Top Advisers Opposed Reagan’s Challenge to Gorbachev - But Lost](#) by, Peter Robinson. Answer the questions on the handout.

Mini-Lesson: The teacher will review the history of why Berlin was divided between the East and West, and why the wall was built. (Teachers may use one of the following suggested resources: [GALE](#) or [American Institute for Economic Research](#).) Students will read the transcript of JFK’s 1963 speech, [“Let Them Come to Berlin”](#) and discuss the key points made by JFK that shows there is a harsh reality to communism that some may not have recognized.

Collaborative/Independent Work:

Part 1- In groups, students will measure the degree to which East Berliners and West Berliners were free and secure by comparing their access to food, property, jobs, mobility (travel), and freedom of expression (politics). Before beginning their research, students should define what it means to be “free” and “secure.” *Refer to “resources” for suggested possible texts.*

Part 2A- In groups, students will brainstorm ways West Berliners could have protested on behalf of East Berliners to help free them from communism.

Part 2B- In groups, students will research the different forms of protest that West Berliners engaged in according to historical records. *Refer to “resources” for suggested possible texts.*

Part 3- Students will read an excerpt from President Ronald Reagan’s “Tear Down This Wall” [speech](#). After reading, students will determine which parts of the speech may have been the most powerful and why.

Share: Students will discuss their work from reviewing the differences between East and West Berlin and the effectiveness of the methods of protest.

Close: What was the most effective means of protest in tearing down the Berlin Wall? Explain your answer. (Depending on class discussions, teachers may consider asking students to share whether they believe the Berlin Wall should have been torn down or not.)

Modifications

- Teachers may eliminate parts of the lesson to narrow the focus on just the forms of protest or just an analysis of Reagan’s speech.
- Teachers may provide a reference sheet on the differences between East and West Berlin to allow for more discussion time.
- Teachers may create texts based on the suggested resources.

Extension

Teachers may ask students to argue whether or not the wall should have been torn down. Students will be asked to ponder the possible implications of tearing down the wall for both the people of West Berlin and East Berlin.



Notes

**Use discretion for activities according to what is appropriate for your class.*



Name: _____

***“Tear Down This Wall”: How Top Advisers Opposed Reagan’s Challenge to Gorbachev -
But Lost
by, Peter Robinson***

1. Describe Robinson’s dilemma writing Reagan’s speech.
2. Did the people of West Berlin want the wall to come down? Explain why and cite text evidence.
3. Do you think the people of East Berlin wanted the wall to come down? Explain why and cite text evidence.
4. Why did Robinson choose to include “tear down this wall” in the speech?



Name: _____

Directions: Contrast the quality of life in West and East Berlin by describing the conditions of each category regarding **security** and **freedom**.

	West Berlin	East Berlin
Property		
Jobs		
Mobility (travel)		
Freedom of Expression (politics)		



Name: _____

METHODS OF PROTEST TO FREE EAST BERLIN

Directions: Brainstorm the different ways West Berliners could have protested to free East Berlin from communism and be united.

Possible Methods of Protest:

Directions: Record the different ways West Berliners/free world protested to free East Berlin from communism. Circle the method you think was the most effective and explain why on the lines provided below.

Methods of Protest:



Name: _____

“Tear Down This Wall” Speech - Ronald Reagan

Excerpt	Power Words	Why was this powerful?

