



**GOVERNMENT**

## **THE IMPACT OF THE COLD WAR**

**How does Germany's history still divide it today?**

**High  
School**

<p><b>C3 Framework Indicator</b></p>	<p><b>Civics: Participation and Deliberation:</b> Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles  <b>Economics:</b> The National Economy  <b>Geography:</b> Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World  <b>History[BM1] :</b> Change, Continuity, and Context [BM1]Update formatting</p>	
<p><b>Staging the Compelling Question</b></p>	<p>Imagine a line was drawn between your town dividing it and your entire state into two different countries, how would this affect you?</p>	
<p><b>Supporting Question 1</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting Question 2</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting Question 3</b></p>
<p>Why was Germany formally divided into two countries in 1949? What types of government did each country establish?</p>	<p>What effect did this separation have on the people of Germany?</p>	<p>What are the lasting effects on Germany’s struggles with a fractured political ideology 30 years after reunification?</p>
<p><b>Formative Performance Task</b></p>	<p><b>Formative Performance Task</b></p>	<p><b>Formative Performance Task</b></p>
<p>Students will use a blank map of Germany to label the states, and the border between East and West Germany.</p>	<p>Read the article provided and find one additional first-hand account to answer this question. Think-Pair-Share your findings.</p>	<p>Students will create a graphic organizer that shows either the effects on economy or ideology.</p>
<p><b>Featured Sources</b></p>	<p><b>Featured Sources</b></p>	<p><b>Featured Sources</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">How Was Germany Divided?</a></li> <li>• Blank Map</li> <li>• Labeled Map</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voice of the Wall Handout</li> <li>• Living in a Divided Berlin Handout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Differences between East and West Germany Handout</li> <li>• East still trails the West Handout</li> <li>• Divisions Persist Handout</li> <li>• How East and West Views Compare Handout</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summative Performance Task</b></p>	<p><b>Argument:</b> Have students create a story map narrating the overarching question, “ How has Germany’s history as a divided country affected its current economic and ideological differences? “</p>	
	<p><b>Extension:</b> For APHG students this is a great segway into the attached - <a href="#">FRQ Germany 2019</a></p>	
<p><b>Taking Informed Action:</b> Using your voice to make change</p>	<p><b>Understand:</b> Separation over long periods cannot be fixed by redrawing boundary lines, as ideologies and habits become ingrained. Students will research firsthand accounts of families separated by the wall and share their stories in a class collection.</p>	
	<p><b>Assess:</b> Students could use databases to assess the economical differences between the former East and West Germany.</p>	
	<p><b>Act:</b> Students could write letters to the high school students in border towns to exchange ideas and further discuss the lingering effects of the separation.</p>	

# The Cold War's Lasting Impact: How does Germany's history still divide it today?

Target Grade Level: 12

Target Course: Comparative Government and Politics

## Compelling Question

How has Germany's history as a divided country affected its current economic and ideological differences?

## Inquiry Overview

In this lesson will be focused around the question "How can historical borders impact the future political ideology and economic success of a state? " The purpose of this lesson is to allow students to look at the history of a divided Germany and assess the impact this previous division has had on the political ideology of the state as well as the economic impact on the state. Students will be assessed on this lesson by producing their own story map of this topic.

## Teacher Background Information

This lesson was created to help students to understand the long lasting and long reaching effects of creating a border based on geopolitical issues such as ideological differences. This lesson can be used in a comparative government class or any class in which you discuss the social, political, and economic effects different types of political ideology has on a society. This lesson addresses this along with providing the historical background for such a border. Using the StoryMap platform from esri, it also encourages students to learn a new platform that is user friendly, free, and encourages the use of geographical terms and features when analyzing a historical or governmental problem. This lesson can be used in

- Comparative Government class
- AP Human Geography class
- Contemporary Global History

With just a few tweaks, this lesson can be adapted for use in many classes. Promoting student engagement as well as learning about varying viewpoints are both secondary reasons this lesson is helpful. This lesson is designed to be scaffolded and scaled based upon the level of study required for the applicable course.

## Suggested Time Frame

Five - six class periods

## Concept List

- Berlin Wall
- West Germany
- East Germany
- GDR
- reunification
- boundary
- unemployment
- migration
- communism

## Instructional Resources

- CES: [The End Of WWII and the Division of Germany](#)
- [Office of the Historian: The US Recognition of the FDR](#)
- [How Was Germany Divided?](#)
- Voices of the Wall (PDF Attachment)
- Living in a divided Berlin (PDF Attachment)
- Pew Research: Economic Differences between East and West Germany 2019 (PDF Attachment)
- Statista: 30 years united; East still trails the West (PDF Attachment)
- How divisions between East and West Germany Persist after 30 years (PDF Attachment)
- How East and West Views Compare After 30 Years (PDF Attachment)

## NCSS Thematic Strands

- Culture
- Time Continuity and Change
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- Global Connections

## Outcomes for Student Learning

- Students will create a Story Map showing the changes in the boundaries of Germany as it transformed from a unified state to two states split by differing political ideologies and back through reunification. They will also address the economic and ideological changes that have occurred through this process.
- APHG Students will be able to answer the Germany Spatial analysis FRQ.

## Germany-Related Learning Goals

- Students will understand the history behind the issues facing contemporary Germany in regard to economic disparity and political ideological differences between former East and West Germany.

## Compelling Question

# How has Germany's history as a divided country affected its current economic and ideological differences?

## Introductory Discussion

- Imagining a line was drawn between your city dividing it and your entire state into two different countries, how would this affect you? Have students discuss in groups before discussing as a whole class.

## Supporting Question 1

### Why was Germany formally divided into two separate countries in 1949? What types of government did each country establish?

#### ► Formative Performance Task 1

Students will work in groups and use the video provided along side textbook and internet searches to answer the above questions.

Students will then in groups use the blank map of Germany to label the states, and the border between East and West Germany.

#### ► Resources

- Look Back History. "How Was Germany Divided? The Allied Occupation of Europe." YouTube, Aug 29, 2022. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVsDc7fUiHQ\\_](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVsDc7fUiHQ_)
- Blank Map of Germany
- Map of Germany Answer Key

## Supporting Question 2

### What effect did this separation have on the people of Germany?

#### ► Formative Performance Task 2

Students will first spend time thinking on their own about the supporting question and what they believe the effect could be. Students will then split into groups to read the article provided. Students will work in their groups to find one additional first-hand account to answer the supporting question. Students can research articles online or interviews with people who lived through the separation and reunification of Germany. Groups will then present on their findings to the class and discuss the different accounts they have found during their research.

## Resources

“Voices of the Wall.” Imperial War Museum, 4 November 2025, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/voices-of-the-wall>

“Living in a Divided City: West-Berlin” Visit-Berlin, 4 November 2025, <https://www.visitberlin.de/en/living-divided-city-west-berlin>.

### Supporting Question 3

#### What are the lasting effects on Germany’s struggles with a fractured political ideology 30 years after reunification?

## Formative Performance Task 3

Read the attached articles, divide the class into two groups, have each group then create a graphic organizer that shows either the effects on economy or ideology.

## Resources

- Gramlich, John. “Former East Germany remains economically behind West” pewresearch.com, 4 November 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/11/06/east-germany-has-narrowed-economic-gap-with-west-germany-since-fall-of-communism-but-still-lags/>.
- Richter, Felix. “30 Years United, East Germany Still Trails the West” statista.com, 4 November 2025, <https://www.statista.com/chart/19903/economic-differences-between-eastern-and-western-germany/>.
- Dale, Gareth. “How divisions between East and West Germany persist 30 years after reunification” theconversation.com, 4 November 2025, <https://theconversation.com/how-divisions-between-east-and-west-germany-persist-30-years-after-reunification-126297>.
- Gramlich, John. “How West and East German views compare 30 years after fall of Berlin Wall” pewresearch.org, 4 November 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/10/18/how-the-attitudes-of-west-and-east-germans-compare-30-years-after-fall-of-berlin-wall/>.

### Summative Performance Task

<b>Essay / Presentation</b>	Divide class into groups and have each group create a story map narrating the overarching question, “ How has Germany’s history as a divided country affected its current economic and ideological differences? “ They can complete the task in a variety of ways; I prefer to use a digital platform called <a href="#">StoryMap</a> . This is a free platform (you do have to create an account) that is powered by esri. This allows students to input maps, visuals, and photos along with their own writing. You can create as difficult or as simple a rubric [BM1] as suits your students. It is a great way for them to compile and synthesize all that they have learned.
<b>Extension Option</b>	For APHG students this is a great segway into the attached FRQ - <a href="#">FRQ Germany 2019</a>

## Taking Informed Action

<b>Understand</b>	<i>Students will research additional first-person accounts of families that were separated by the boundary wall and share their stories in a class volume.</i>
<b>Assess</b>	<i>Students could use databases to assess the economical differences between the former East and West Germany. This would involve establishing economic criteria by which to assess and create a comparison to display the differences. {unemployment, production, innovation, etc}</i>
<b>Act</b>	<i>Students could write letters to the high school students in Vacha to exchange ideas and further discuss the lingering effects of the separation.</i>

## Modifications for Differentiation

For lower-level students you may have to create a vocabulary word bank to review or teach before you do this lesson. If you do not have access to technology to create a digital story map, you can create a story map or narrative using a piece of butcher block and have them work in groups.



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