

2.4 CODE NAME: OPERATION VITTLES

How do individuals or groups work together to help those in need?

C3 Framework Indicator	<p>D2.His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.</p> <p>D2.His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.</p>	
Staging the Compelling Question	Students will review the division of Germany after World War II and learn about the Berlin Airlift, code name “Operation Vittles,” which was conducted in response to the Soviet Blockade of Berlin during 1948–1949.	
Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What was the Berlin Blockade, why did it happen, and what was the Western Allies’ response?	What was the Berlin Airlift?	What was Operation Little Vittles?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
After reading about the Berlin Blockade, students will create a timeline of events for the Berlin Blockade.	After reading a news article about the Berlin Airlift, students will analyze the article to determine the important points.	Student groups will analyze an assigned image of Operation Little Vittles and read an article about Gail Halvorsen as a class. Students may also view The German History Scavenger Hunt.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<p>Source A: Handout 2.4.1</p> <p>Source B: Handout 2.4.2</p> <p>Source C: Berlin Blockade</p>	<p>Source A: Handout 2.4.1</p> <p>Source B: Handout 2.4.3</p> <p>Source C: Berlin Airlift</p> <p>Source D: The Berlin Airlift AKA Operation Vittles (1948)</p>	<p>Source A: Handout 2.4.4</p> <p>Source B: Photo Analysis Worksheet</p> <p>Source C: Gail Halvorsen</p> <p>Source D: The Candy Bomber</p> <p>Source E: The German History Scavenger Hunt</p>
Summative Performance Task	<p>Argument: Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical or contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.</p> <p>Extension: Research examples of other airlifts of supplies to areas in need and create a presentation to share with your classmates.</p>	
Taking Informed Action	<p>Understand: Throughout our communities, there are people in need of help such as housing, food, education, or transportation.</p> <p>Assess: Contact your local community support organization to determine what sort of help is needed.</p> <p>Act: Write a letter to your school administrator or post to social media about a cause that would benefit from additional support through volunteers or through donations in your local community.</p>	

❓ COMPELLING QUESTION

- How do individuals or groups work together to help those in need?

INQUIRY OVERVIEW

Students will review the division of Germany after World War II and learn about the Berlin Airlift, code name “Operation Vittles,” which was conducted in response to the Soviet Blockade of Berlin during 1948–1949. Using primary source images, students will learn about “Operation Little Vittles,” a morale-building mission for the children of Berlin.

TEACHER BACKGROUND


In the period after World War II (1945–1949), the Allies divided Germany into four occupation zones, with each zone being controlled by one of the allied countries: United States, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and France. The Allies also decided to divide the city of Berlin into four sectors, with each of the Allies controlling one sector, even though the city itself was physically within the Soviet occupation zone. Because of their differing philosophies over the administration and the future of Germany, the communist Soviet government began to disagree with the democratic governments of the other Allies. Thus, the Soviets wanted the Western Allies to leave West Berlin as it was within their zone. The United States, United Kingdom, and France felt that if they left West Berlin, it would come under the communist regime. It appeared that, even though the Allies’ intention was to eventually return Germany to German rule, the Soviets would not give up their control. To prevent the spread of communism, the Western Allies decided to remain in West Berlin. Neither the Soviets nor the Western Allies used their military power to remove the other. With the memory of WWII so fresh in their minds, no one wanted to start another “hot” war; therefore the Cold War began. Berlin became one of the so-called battlegrounds in this new kind of warfare.



© Lt. Gail Halvorsen, “The Candy Bomber,” greets children of isolated West Berlin sometime during 1948–49 after dropping candy bars from the air on tiny parachutes. (U.S. Air Force photo)

On the night of June 23, 1948, the Soviets blocked all of the railways, roads, and waterways to prevent supplies from entering West Berlin. However, the Soviets did not stop the Western Allies from using the airspace. The Western Allies decided to fly planes into Berlin with supplies. This is called the Berlin Airlift, which lasted until August 27, 1949, over three months after the Soviet Blockade had ended on May 12, 1949. The supply boxes containing such items as coal and food were flown to awaiting West Berliners. During the airlift, a plane took off from Tempelhof Airport in West Berlin after having dropped off the supplies every 30 seconds. The code name for this military mission was Operation Vittles. Even American songwriter Irving Berlin wrote a song called “Operation Vittles” for this effort.

What about the children of Berlin? An American pilot, Lt. Gail Halvorsen, met some children along the fenced area of Tempelhof Airport and was touched by their politeness when he gave them some gum he had in his pocket. He told the small group of children that he would drop them some candy when he flew over the area the next day. He used handkerchiefs to make parachutes and attached gum and candy. He knew this was not following the rules, but he wanted to give the children some happiness. The small group of children grew to hundreds. Soon the Candy Bomber, aka Chocolate Pilot and Uncle Wiggly Wings, was discovered! His mission was allowed to continue, and American candy companies, schools, and other groups began to send candy to West Berlin for the growing numbers of Chocolate Pilots to drop the candy bombs. This small act of kindness helped to create a foundation of respect and cooperation between the American and German people that endures to this day.

 **TIME:** Three to four 45-minute periods

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

- Divided Germany Maps (**Handout 2.4.1**)
- Berlin Blockade Questions (**Handout 2.4.2**)
- News Article Analysis Worksheet (**Handout 2.4.3**)
- Photo Analysis Images (**Handout 2.4.4**)
- *Analyze a Photograph* – National Archives. National Archives, www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/photo_analysis_worksheet.pdf.
- *Gail Halvorsen*. PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/airlift-gail-halvorsen/.
- History.com Editors. *Berlin Blockade*. History.com, A&E Television Networks, June 1, 2010, www.history.com/topics/cold-war/berlin-blockade.
- History Dust. *The Candy Bomber*. Sept. 9, 2019. PBS. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGc4vY_GwSc. (41:09)
- Lee, Karen. Berlin Airlift. *Newspapers.com*, Nov. 21, 2018, www.newspapers.com/topics/cold-war/berlin-airlift/.
- Lee, T. (2014, November 13). 42 Maps That Explain World War II. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/2014/11/13/7148855/40-maps-that-explain-world-war-ii>.
- PBS Utah. *The Candy Bomber*. YouTube, PBS, Nov. 1, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMdYNYW4d5g>. (1:01)
- SlidePlayer. (n.d.). The Beginning of the Cold War. <https://slideplayer.com/slide/8740573/>.
- Transatlantic Outreach Program. *The German History Scavenger Hunt*. YouTube, Apr. 21, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ut2PTQptXpg>. (13:04–16:40)
- United States Air Force. (1948). *The Berlin Airlift AKA Operation Vittles*. YouTube, Mar. 31, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-lfKG4V9cU. (14:17)



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INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Show students an image of a castle and say: Pretend that you are living in a castle, and the enemy is approaching. The draw-bridge over the moat is raised just in time to prevent the enemy from entering. Now what? What needs must be met for you to survive? For example, food, water, heat. Your friends would like to help you without starting a battle. What can they do to help you? For example, dig tunnels or use disguises to look like the enemy. How many days can you survive before surrendering?

Ask: Consider yourself in the same situation, but your friends have access to modern-day technology. How might they be able to help you? For example, use airplanes to drop off supplies.

SUPPORTING QUESTION 1

What was the Berlin Blockade, why did it happen, and what was the Western Allies' response?

► Formative Performance Task

Project the map of a divided Germany (**Handout 2.4.1**) and briefly explain to students how Germany and Berlin were divided into four zones of occupation following the end of World War II.

Next, have students form groups of three. Each group should read the Berlin Blockade article and answer the questions about the article in **Handout 2.4.2**.

As a class, using the article and answers on **Handout 2.4.2**, create a timeline of events for the Berlin Blockade.

► Resources

- Divided Germany Maps (**Handout 2.4.1**)
- Berlin Blockade Questions (**Handout 2.4.2**)

- History.com Editors. *Berlin Blockade*. History.com, A&E Television Networks, June 1, 2010, www.history.com/topics/cold-war/berlin-blockade.

❓ SUPPORTING QUESTION 2

What was the Berlin Airlift?

► Formative Performance Task

Assign student pairs a news article about the Berlin Airlift from the Newspapers.com website. Students should analyze the article using the News Article Analysis Worksheet (**Handout 2.4.3**) to determine the important points regarding the Berlin Airlift.

If possible, project the articles and ask students to share what they learned with classmates; answering questions.

Teachers may wish to have students view the YouTube video *The Berlin Airlift AKA Operation Vittles* (14:17 minutes) after the completion of this task. A map showing the air routes used during the airlift can be found on **Handout 2.4.1**.

► Resources

- Divided Germany Maps (**Handout 2.4.1**)
- News Article Analysis Worksheet (**Handout 2.4.3**)
- Lee, K. (2018, November 21). Berlin Airlift. <https://www.newspapers.com/topics/cold-war/berlin-airlift/>.
- United States Air Force. (1948). *The Berlin Airlift AKA Operation Vittles*. YouTube, Mar. 31, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-lfKG4V9cU. (14:17)

❓ SUPPORTING QUESTION 3

What was Operation Little Vittles?

► Formative Performance Task

Assign an image from **Handout 2.4.4** to small groups of students. Each group should analyze the assigned image using the Photo Analysis Worksheet.

Post the images and ask students to explain what they learned from their image. Next, read the PBS Gail Halvorsen article as a class. Use the article to add to students' understanding of the images.

View the PBS YouTube video (1:01), *The Candy Bomber*. Ask students to use what they learned from the video to clarify or add to their understanding of the images used in the photo analysis.

If time allows, the full video of *The Candy Bomber* is available at (41:09): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGc4vY_GwSc.

Teachers may wish to share the Transatlantic Outreach Program's video of a visit by German students with Colonel Halvorsen on the 70th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift, *The German History Scavenger Hunt*, starting at 13:04 ("Tempelhof Airport played a big role in German history.") and ending at 16:40 ("...with the same ideas, that's what freedom means.")

► Resources

- Photo Analysis Images (**Handout 2.4.4**)
- *Analyze a Photograph – National Archives*. National Archives, www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/photo_analysis_worksheet.pdf.
- Gail Halvorsen. PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/airlift-gail-halvorsen/.
- History Dust. *The Candy Bomber*. Sept. 9, 2019. PBS. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGc4vY_GwSc. (41:09)
- PBS Utah. *The Candy Bomber*. YouTube, PBS, 1 Nov. 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMdYNYW4d5g>. (1:01)
- Transatlantic Outreach Program. *The German History Scavenger Hunt*. YouTube, Apr. 21, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ut2PTQptXpg>. (13:04–16:40)

✔ SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE TASK

How do individuals or groups work together to help those in need?

Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.

⊕ EXTENSION (OPTIONAL) TASK

As with the Berlin Airlift, countries have come to the aid of others in need. Research examples of other airlifts of supplies to areas in need and create a presentation to share with your classmates.

★ TAKING INFORMED ACTION

Understand: Throughout our communities, there are people in need of help such as housing, food, education, or transportation.

Assess: Contact your local community support organization to determine what sort of help is needed.

Act: Write a letter to your school administrator or post to social media about a cause that would benefit from additional support through volunteers or through donations in your local community.

CONCEPTS LIST

- Vittles
- Airlift
- Blockade
- Western Allies
- Soviet Union
- Airway
- Communist
- Tempelhof Airport
- West Berlin
- Germany
- Cold War
- Stalin
- Candy Bomber