The Origin and Impact of the Berlin Wall
By Deborah Jones

Overview: This lesson is going to provide background information on the Berlin Wall to prepare students for reading A Night Divided by Jennifer Nielson.

Geographic Question: How did the force of conflict among people impact the people of East and West Germany?

National Geography Standards: Standards 2, 13, & 14
Standard 2 How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context
Standard 13 How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth’s surface
Standard 14 How human actions modify the physical environment

Oregon Geography Content Standards: Standards 5 & 8
5. Apply geographic skills, concepts, and technologies (e.g., maps, GIS, Google Earth) to gather, display, and analyze spatial information.

Connections to Common Core:
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts

Objectives:
In completing this activity, students should be able to:
• Identify the boundary between East Germany and West Germany by comparing two maps.
• Know what continent Germany is on.
• Record observations, reflections and questions on an analysis tool as they view a gallery of primary source photos and a political cartoon.
• Use the computer to find out what event in history we are looking at and the cause and impact of the Berlin Wall.
Grade Levels: 6-8 graders  
Time: 3 days each 60 min.

Materials:
- Background Information for Teacher (See Appendix A)
- Maps of Germany before and after World War II (See Appendix B)
- Primary source photos (See Appendix C) and Political Cartoon (See Appendix D)
- Analysis tool for maps, photos, and cartoons (See Appendix E, F, G)

Procedures:

Day 1
1. Set out maps of Germany before and after World War II and primary source photos and political cartoon.
2. Pair students with a partner. Give each of them Analysis tools for maps, photos and cartoon and ask them to walk through the gallery of primary sources and answer the questions.
3. After 20 minutes come together as a group and ask different students to share their answer to a question in each row (1 observation, 1 reflection, and 1 question). Tell students that all the material we have been looking at has something to do with an event in history. Ask for ideas of what our sources might be pointing to.

Possible questions you could ask:
1. The maps we examined were of what country? Where is that country on a world map?
2. What differences did you notice in these maps?
3. What do you think happened? Why?
4. What did you notice in the photos that might give you a hint of what is happening?
5. Did you understand what the political cartoon was about?

**Day 2**

4. Open with a time of review from our last lesson. Let several students share what they remember. 10 minutes.
5. Give each student a blank sheet of notebook paper and have them write Germany 1946-1961 on the top line. Keeping in mind the map study, primary sources, and our discussions about Germany, the students are to use computers or any other library source to do some research. They are to find out what was going on in Germany during that particular time period. Write one paragraph about the historical event: what happened, why, how did it affect the people of the region and what was the impact on the environment. Please write the assignment description on the white board. (5 minutes)
6. Monitor students, keep them on task, and answer questions that will help them in their search and understanding. Let them work for 30 minutes. After 25 minutes tell them they have 5 minutes to finish up.
7. Have students take their research home and finish their paragraph. They need to bring their paragraph to the next class meeting.

**Day**

8. Have students pull out their paragraph from yesterday and pair and share, and then call on a few students to share their paragraph with the whole group.
9. Discuss as a whole group these questions:
   Why do you think large groups of people move from one location to another that is just nearby? Why do people build fences? Who built the barbed wire fence in this event?
What motivated the East Germans to build it?
How did this human action impact the people of East Berlin and West Berlin?
How do you think this might affect the physical land?

10. Introduce the students to the historical fiction novel **A Night Divided** by Jennifer Nielson. Tell them that this event in history provides the setting of the novel. Encourage them to read it to find out how the people responded.

**Assessment:**
- Analysis tools
- Paragraph on what happened that time in history in Germany
- Rubric to assess participation, critical thinking and writing assignment. (See Appendix H)

**Extensions and/or Adaptations:** Writing Assignment
Put yourself in the shoes of one of these individuals who woke up on August 13, 1961 to a fence being constructed to keep them in East Germany. Write a journal entry sharing your thoughts and feelings, and tell how this impacted you and/or your family.
Appendix A

**Background Information for Teacher**: It was post-World War II and relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers were deteriorating. There was a geographical problem that caused political problems so the Soviet sector of Germany became the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Western sector became the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Berlin was the capital city of both countries. Between 1946 and 1961 over two and a half million East Germans were leaving their state and crossing into West Germany in search of better jobs, more food, and material goods. East Germany tried to restrict their citizens from leaving because they were losing their work force. Since citizens continued to find ways to leave, on the night of August 12, army units and the People’s Police started to seal off East Berlin with posts and barbed wire. People woke up on August 13, 1961 to find their city was being fenced in and they were restricted from leaving. Eventually the wire would be replaced with a concrete wall named the Berlin Wall.
Appendix B

Maps of Germany

[Map of Cold War Europe showing NATO and Warsaw Pact territories]

[Map of West and East Germany with major cities marked]
Appendix C

Primary Source Photos
Appendix D

Political Cartoon

Quite an AWOL problem
Cartoon shows a Soviet soldier standing on the Kremlin wall holding a long strip of paper labeled “Growing List of Refugees to the West.” Reflects the increasing number of persons leaving the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe for the West. In particular, may refer to the flight of East Germans to West Berlin in the spring of 1953.

Contributor Names
Bimrose, Art, 1912-, artist

Created / Published
1953 Mar. 27.

Subject Headings
- Kremlin (Moscow, Russia)—1950-1960.
Appendix E

Map Analysis Tool with a Geographic Lens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observe</th>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the title of this map?</td>
<td>What was the motivation of the organization or person making the map?</td>
<td>Why is the map significant or important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What area of the world does this map represent?</td>
<td>What does the map show (physical characteristics, human patterns)?</td>
<td>How does this map illustrate human, physical, economic, societal, cultural, and political conditions for the time when the map was made?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kinds of labels are on this map?</td>
<td>How does this map compare to current maps of this place?</td>
<td>How could you (as an individual) use this map?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What continent is this county on?</td>
<td>What other information can you infer from the map?</td>
<td>What else did you observe about the map? What questions do you have about this map?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix F
### Photo Analysis Tool with a Geographical Lens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the form of the image (painting, print, photograph, drawing)?</td>
<td>What languages do the words represent?</td>
<td>How do the clothing, buildings, transportation and/or landscape reflect the economic, political, or societal conditions for the time when the image was created?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe who is in the image.</td>
<td>If there is no date, when do you think the image was made?</td>
<td>What was the likely motivation of the creator of the image?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there objects in the image? Do you recognize them? What are they used for?</td>
<td>What place or region does this image show?</td>
<td>How does this image connect to other documents, maps, recordings, images, or artifacts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the landscape and physical features in the image.</td>
<td>Can you identify a geographic theme (region, place, movement, physical system, human environment interaction, etc.) for this image?</td>
<td>Why is this image significant?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix G
### Political Cartoon Analysis Tool with a Geographic Lens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observe</th>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you see first?</td>
<td>What do the people or symbols represent?</td>
<td>What are the messages of this cartoon?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the setting for the cartoon.</td>
<td>Describe what is happening in the cartoon.</td>
<td>What event(s) do you think prompted the creation of this cartoon?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List the people or objects in the cartoon.</td>
<td>Who do you think created this cartoon?</td>
<td>How do the clothing, buildings, transportation and/or landscape reflect the economic, political, or societal conditions for the time when the cartoon was made?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What words do you see? List those you think are important (title, caption, phrases).</td>
<td>Describe the spatial patterns illustrated in this cartoon. These patterns might be shown through the people, transportation, buildings, or landscape.</td>
<td>How does this cartoon connect to other documents or pictures?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix H

## Rubric for Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td>Student responsibly participated in each activity of the lesson. They were engaged, followed directions and treated others with respect.</td>
<td>Student participated in each activity of the lesson. Most of the time they were engaged, followed instructions and treated others with respect.</td>
<td>Student participated in half of the activities of the lesson. They were less engaged, did not follow instructions for some of the activities, and were unsuccessful in respecting others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking</strong></td>
<td>Student correctly used each of the Analysis tools provided. Recorded a thoughtful response to the questions under each column.</td>
<td>Student correctly used two of the Analysis tools provided. They recorded a thoughtful response to the 3/4 of the questions under each column.</td>
<td>Student partially used the Analysis tools. They recorded responses to less than half of the questions on each tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written Communication</strong></td>
<td>Student used the analysis of primary sources, researched the topic, and clearly communicated their understanding of the topic in a paragraph.</td>
<td>Student used the analysis of primary sources, did some research, and communicated some basic understanding of the topic in a paragraph.</td>
<td>Student did minimum research, and was unable to communicate an understanding of the topic in a paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exceeds</strong></td>
<td><strong>Meets</strong></td>
<td><strong>Needs Improvement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources


"The Cold War in Berlin." *JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM*.  

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-88832-0001,_Berlin,_Mauerbau,_Friedrichstraße.jpg

