



Western Civilization from 1650 to the Present

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TOPIC 16.3. PRIMARY SOURCES: THE BERLIN WALL

THE BERLIN WALL

The seventy-mile-long Berlin Wall stood for twenty-eight years as a physical and symbolic divider between East Germany and West Germany, socialism and democracy. Guard towers, floodlights, and armed East German soldiers with "shoot to kill" orders defined the wall. In 1989 in the midst of Soviet political changes, the wall was torn down and Germany was reunited.

Explore this exhibit on the rise and fall of the [Berlin Wall](#) and then answer one or more of these questions:

Why did the communist government build the Berlin Wall?

What did the West Germans call the wall?

About how many East Germans tried to escape to the West? How many were successful? How many died?

Despite the wall, how did East Germans learn about the West?

Although people in East Berlin were not permitted even to go near the Berlin Wall, the residents of West Berlin covered the wall with words and drawings that expressed their feelings about the wall, the government, and their friends and family on the other side. Imagine that you live in West Berlin during the period of separation. Decorate a piece of paper or a PowerPoint slide as you might have decorated a section of the Berlin Wall.

Adapted from [Human Heritage: A World History](#)