

4.1.3 TIMELINE

ASSIGNMENT: GERMANY AND THE COLD WAR TIMELINE

Because understanding chronology is one of the key themes of historical study, this assignment asks you to develop a deep understanding of some of the key events of the Cold War as it relates to Germany.

1. Select a **subtopic or theme** of interest to you. Examples: Berlin, the GDR, Resistance, etc.
2. **Timeline:** Construct a timeline of *10 dates* from the period between 1945-1990. Your timeline may include significant events of the Cold War (outside Germany) as they relate to your theme.
3. **Explanation of Timeline (Why did you pick these dates?):** You should describe briefly what happened on each date that you feel merits inclusion on your timeline. There are two ways to present your descriptions: on the timeline itself, or in a separate “booklet.”
4. **Be creative.** You may present your timeline in any way you want. For example, it may be a traditional linear timeline, or it may take other forms, such as a board game, a diary, the Brandenburg Gate, etc.

Sources: Make sure to include a reference list.

Be original/creative, neat and most importantly, historically accurate.

4.1.3 TIMELINE

COLD WAR TIMELINE

DATE

EVENT

1945

May 8:	Capitulation of the German Wehrmacht officially ends World War II in Europe.
July 3:	Allied troops complete occupation of Berlin.
July 17 – August 02:	The four allied powers meet in Potsdam for the so called “Potsdam Conference.” Germany and Berlin are divided into four zones of occupation. Western Sector: the American, British, and French zones. Eastern Sector: the Soviet zone.

1946

March 5:	Winston Churchill, in a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, says an Iron Curtain has come down across Europe.
April 21:	Forced unification of the German Communist Party (KPD) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in the Soviet occupied zone to become the “Socialist Unity Party of Germany” (SED).
October 29:	A 30-day valid Interzonenpass (inter-zone passport) is required to travel between the Western and Eastern sectors in Germany.

1947

March 12:	President Truman urges the United States “to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure” (Truman Doctrine).
June 5:	Marshall Plan is announced, setting a precedent for helping countries combat poverty, disease, and malnutrition.

1948

June 21:	Monetary reform in the three Western allied zones, the Deutsche Mark comes into force and replaces the Reichsmark.
June 24:	(Berlin) The Soviet Union blockades all highway, river, and rail traffic into Western-controlled West Berlin in order to force the Western powers out of Berlin. The Berlin Blockade lasts almost 11 months. As a result the Western allied forces start the famous Berlin Airlift.

1949

April 4:	The United States, Canada, and Western European countries sign the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Washington, DC.
May 12:	End of the Berlin Blockade.
May 23:	Founding of West Germany by proclaiming the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in Bonn.
May 23:	(GDR) With the Basic Law going into effect, the death penalty in West Germany is abolished. (Article 102)
September 15:	(FRG) Adenauer becomes the first Chancellor of Federal Republic of Germany.
September 30:	End of the Berlin Airlift.
October 7:	Founding of East Germany, the German Democratic Republic (GDR).
December 15:	(FRG) The Marshall Plan for the rebuilding of West Germany is implemented.

1950

February 8:	(GDR) Founding of the Ministry for State Security (Stasi) as the “Shield and Sword of the Party.”
September 29:	(GDR) East Germany joins the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, an economic organization comprising the countries of the Eastern Bloc along with a number of communist states elsewhere in the world.

1951

August 9:	(FRG) Founding of the Goethe-Institut to promote the study of German and the German culture abroad.
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1952

January 11:	(FRG) The treaty for the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) is ratified by West Germany.
February 8:	(FRG) Against the votes of the Social Democrats (SPD), the Bundestag decides that West Germany will make a defense contribution.
May 27:	(GDR) East Germany closes its borders to West Germany in a one-sided undertaking. East Germany leaves the border between East and West Berlin open.
July 12:	(GDR) Start of collectivization of agriculture in order to build up agricultural production cooperatives.

1953

June 17:	(GDR) Protests and riots by East Berlin workers against the working conditions are suppressed by the Red Army.
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1954

July 4:	(FRG) West Germany wins the soccer world championship in Switzerland. The unexpected win evoked a wave of euphoria throughout Germany. This was also the first public singing of the German national anthem since WWII. This victory at the beginning of the so-called economic miracle is often regarded as a turning point in post-war German history.
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1955

May 5:	(FRG) West Germany gains full sovereignty.
May 9:	(FRG) West Germany joins NATO.
May 14:	(GDR) Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance (Warsaw Pact) officially established.
September 20:	(GDR) Sovereignty of East Germany.
November 12:	(FRG) Founding of the West German army, the Bundeswehr.
December 20:	(FRG) Start of the so called guest worker program to attract southern European workers to work in West Germany. It is officially stopped in 1973 because of the oil crisis.

1956

January 18:	(GDR) Founding of the East German army (Nationale Volksarmee).
February 25:	(GDR) With the so called “Secret Speech” by Nikita Khrushchev, three years after Stalin’s death a period of reform and opening-up starts, which also has an impact on East Germany.
August 17:	(FRG) Interdiction of the Communist Party.
October 24:	(GDR) Student unrest takes place in East Germany (and other Soviet satellites), which is suppressed by the police. This unrest contributes to the unrest and the uprising in Hungary.

1957

March 28:	(FRG) West Germany is one of six nations to sign the founding treaties of the European Economic Community, the predecessor of the EU.
October 4:	USSR launches Sputnik into Earth orbit.

December 11:	(GDR) Leaving East Germany without permission is forbidden and violations are prosecuted with up to three years in prison.
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1958

July 1:	(FRG) The Gleichberechtigungsgesetz (equal rights law) comes into effect; women finally receive the same rights as men in all fields of daily life and society.
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1960 - 1989

1960 - 1989	(GDR) The Schießbefehl (order to fire) is in place in various forms for the entirety of this time period. It's a standing order that instructs border patrols of East Germany to prevent border penetration by East German citizens by all means necessary. Only in 1982 is this order formally legalized by §27 of the border law.
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1960

February 10:	(GDR) Founding of the National Defense Council, with Walter Ulbricht as chairman.
August 29:	(FRG) West Germany contracts out of the inter-zone-agreement with East Germany because of travel restriction put into force by the GDR.
September 12:	(GDR) The position of the president is abolished and the State Council is founded, with Walter Ulbricht as chairman.

1961

April 1:	(FRG) The first acknowledged conscientious objectors (to military service) start their civilian service (Zivildienst), a kind of compulsory community service
June 1:	(GDR/ FRG) The birth control pill is introduced. In East Germany it's promoted as the Wunschkindpille (planned-child pill), in West Germany as Antibabypille (anti-baby pill).
August 13:	(GDR) Building of the Berlin Wall to block the stream of East German refugees from leaving East Germany to enter West Germany.
October 25-28:	(East/West Berlin) Army tank confrontation; American and Soviet tanks face each other at Checkpoint Charlie.

1962

October 22-27:	The Cuban Missile Crisis takes place between the USA and the Soviet Union. The Cold War reaches new heights.
October-December:	(FRG) The Spiegel Affair, one of the major political scandals in Germany during the era following World War II. During the scandal, the government had to be reshuffled, and finally the freedom of press was strengthened.

1963

January 22:	(FRG) The Elysée Treaty of Friendship between France and West Germany is signed.
June 23:	(West Berlin) US President John F. Kennedy visits the city and declares: "Ich bin ein Berliner." ("I am a Berliner.")

1964

June 12:	(GDR) Mutual assistance pact and friendship treaty between the Soviet Union and the GDR.
August 17:	(FRG) Start of the Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr (voluntary social year), a voluntary social service for teenager and young adults.
September 10:	(FRG) The one millionth so-called guest worker is ceremoniously welcomed.

1967

January 1:	(West Berlin) The famous Kommune 1 or K1, the first politically motivated commune, is created. It originated from the non-parliamentarian opposition of the student movement.
June 2:	(West Berlin) The university student Benno Ohnesorg is shot by a West Berlin police officer who, simultaneously, is a secret spy for the Stasi. Start of the “student revolution.”

1968

April 6:	(GDR) Ratification of the new constitution for the GDR as the “Socialist State of the German Nation.”
April 11:	(West Berlin) Unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Rudi Dutschke, the most well-known spokesperson of West Berlin and the West-German student movement, by a right-wing extremist.
May 29:	(FRG) Under harsh protests the Bundestag passes the Emergency Constitution allowing the German government to defend West Germany in an emergency.
June 10-11:	(GDR) The People’s Chamber (Volkskammer), the unicameral legislature of East Germany, enacts passport and visa enforcement for the transit traffic between West Germany and West Berlin.

1969 – 1973

May 17:	(FRG) Bundestag ratifies the so-called Eastern Treaties (Ostverträge) as part of the new Eastern policies between West Germany and the Soviet Union, Poland, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria.
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1969

November 28:	(FRG) West Germany joins the Non-Proliferation Treaty.
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1970

December 7:	(FRG) FRG and Polen sign the Treaty of Warsaw, in which they recognize each other’s territories, agree to only peaceful methods of border change and increased trade. Chancellor Willy Brandt kneels before the Warsaw memorial for the victims of the uprising in the Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw.
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1971

September 3:	(Berlin) The Four Power Agreement over Berlin is reached. It charges the FRG and GDR with negotiating an accord that would regulate access to and from West Berlin from the FRG and secure the right of West Berliners to visit East Berlin and the GDR.
December 10:	(FRG) Chancellor Willy Brandt receives the Nobel Peace Prize for his so-called Ostpolitik (Eastern policy), a policy aimed at improving relations with the Eastern bloc, which caused considerable controversy in West Germany.

1972

January 6:	(GDR) For the first time, Central Committee secretary Erich Honecker calls West Germany a “foreign country.”
March 9:	(GDR) A new abortion law allows abortions within the first trimester of pregnancy.
August 26 – September 11:	(FRG) West Germany hosts the XX Summer Olympics in Munich. The games are overshadowed by the hostage-taking of the Israeli sports team by Palestinian terrorists on September 5th. During the crisis, two hostages are murdered during a unsuccessful attempt by the German police to liberate the hostages. All captives and five of the eight kidnappers are killed; in all, 17 people died. After a day of mourning the games were continued.
December 10:	(FRG) As the first writer in German postwar history, Heinrich Böll is awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.
December 21:	(East Berlin) Signing of “The Basic Treaty” between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. The treaty committed both Germanys to develop normal relations on the basis of equality, guaranteeing their mutual territorial integrity as well as the border between them, and recognizing each other’s independence and sovereignty. They also agreed to the exchange of “permanent missions” in Bonn and East Berlin to further relations

1973

May:	(GDR/FRG) East and West Germany establish formal diplomatic ties.
June 21:	(FRG) "The Basic Treaty" with East Germany is implemented.
September 18:	(GDR/FRG) East and West Germany become members of the United Nations.
November-December:	(FRG) First oil crisis which leads to a government ordered ban of driving on four Sundays.

1974

April 24:	(FRG) Günther Guillaume, one of the closest staff members of Chancellor Willy Brandt, is uncovered as an East German spy. It's the most important case of political espionage between the two Germans.
May 7:	(FRG) Chancellor Willy Brandt takes the political responsibility of the so-called Guillaume-affair and resigns from office.

1975

October 1:	(FRG) Opening of the Bundeswehr, the West German army, for women on a voluntary basis, but only in the field of medical and music service.
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1977

Fall:	(FRG) So called "hot fall" of the West German terrorist movement Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF, Red Armee Fraction).
April 7:	(FRG) Assassination of the attorney general Siegfried Buback.
September 5 - October 18:	(FRG) Kidnapping and eventual killing of Hanns Martin Schleyer, president of the Confederation of German Employers' Association.
October 13:	(FRG) Hijacking of a Lufthansa Airline's plane in Mogadishu, Somalia.

1978

August 26:	(GDR) Astronaut Sigmund Jähn becomes the first German in space. He flies together with Waleri Fjodorowitsch Bykowski in a Soviet Sojus 31 to the Soviet space station Saljut 6. The flight is seven days, 20 hours, 49 minutes and four seconds long. During the 125 orbits around the earth they conducted many experiments.
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1979

December 24:	Soviet Union intervenes Afghanistan.
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1980's

Spring:	(GDR) Lutheran church circles criticize the invasion of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The peace movement of East Germany becomes more important.
	(FRG) The West German peace movement focuses their protests against the NATO Double-Track Decision and against the United States' plans for additional armament.

1980

January 13:	(FRG) The Green Party was founded.
August 31:	Gdansk Agreements, leading to establishment and official recognition of independent Polish trade union "Solidarity."

1982

April 24:	(FRG) For the first time in history the 17-year-old singer Nicole (Seibert) wins the Eurovision Song Contest with her song "Ein bisschen Frieden" (A Little Peace) for West Germany.
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1985

March 11:	Mikhail Gorbachev becomes the 6th General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, initiating a campaign of openness called “glasnost” and restructuring called “perestroika.”
December 12:	(FRG) Joschka Fischer appears in scandalous sneakers, jeans, and a sportive jacket in the Hessian Parliament to be sworn in as the first green minister for environment and energy.
1986	
April 26:	(GDR/ FRG) The Chernobyl disaster takes place. Radioactive fallout falls over Germany. The East German government and the state-controlled media ignore it completely. The West German government addresses the topic and issues warnings to the population to stay indoors, not to consume certain fresh vegetables, fresh milk, etc.

1987

March 25:	(FRG) Bundeswehr soldiers participate in maneuvers of the Warsaw Pact in the GDR.
June 6 – 8:	(West Berlin/ GDR) A three-day open-air rock concert in West Germany, only meters away from the Berlin Wall, leads to violent clashes between the East German police and East German teenagers who want to listen to the concert from East Berlin.
June 12:	(West Berlin) U.S. President Ronald Reagan visits West Berlin and calls on Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall.
September 7 – 11:	(GDR/ FRG) Erich Honecker, chairman of the State Council of the GDR, visits West Germany.
December 18:	(GDR) The death penalty is abolished in East Germany.

1989

May 2:	(GDR) Hungary opens its borders to Austria, so hundreds of GDR-citizens can emigrate to the West.
May 7:	(GDR) Regional elections take place in East Germany. Citizens protest against election fraud committed by the East German government. In Leipzig more than 100 demonstrators are arrested by the Stasi.
June 6:	(FRG) State visit of President Mikhail Gorbachev in West Germany.
July 1:	(West Berlin) The first Love Parade takes place. About 150 participants dance behind a small truck with techno music along the Kurfürstendamm, the major shopping street in West Berlin. It was as a political demonstration for peace and international understanding through love and music.
September 30:	(FRG) West German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher announces in the West German Embassy in Prague that all of the almost 6,000 GDR citizens, who had fled to the embassy grounds, are allowed to emigrate to West Germany.
October 7:	(GDR) The 40th anniversary of the founding of the GDR is celebrated with a huge parade. At the same time the Stasi applies force on demonstrators in different parts of East Berlin.
October 8:	(GDR) During his visit to East Berlin, President Mikhail Gorbachev declares: “He, who comes too late, is punished by life.”
October 9:	(GDR) Peaceful “Monday demonstration” in Leipzig with 70,000 participants chanting “We are the people.”
October 18:	(GDR) Egon Krenz succeeds Erich Honecker as general secretary of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), the ruling party of East Germany.
November 4:	(GDR) Anti-government demonstration in East Berlin with about 1 million demonstrators.
November 8:	(GDR) The entire Politbüro (cabinet council) of the Socialist Unity Party resigns.
November 9:	(Berlin) The East German government announces that visits to West Germany and West Berlin will be permitted. Immediately, thousands of East Berliners pass into West Berlin as border guards stand by. That same night, people begin tearing down the Berlin Wall (Mauer), which is finally opened.
November 13:	(GDR) Hans Modrow becomes new Prime Minister of East Germany.
November 28:	(FRG) Chancellor Helmut Kohl presents his Ten-Point-Plan for the reunification of Germany.
December 4:	(GDR) The Erfurt Stasi-office is occupied to prevent the Stasi from destroying files. Afterward all over the GDR Stasi-offices are occupied by the opposition.
December 6:	(GDR) Egon Krenz resigns as chairman of the State Council of the GDR.

December 7:	(GDR) Begin of the “Round Table Talks” between representatives of the West German government and the East German opposition.
1990	
February 24-25:	Chancellor Helmut Kohl meets with President Bush at Camp David to discuss the German reunification process.
February 4 - March 8:	Kohl refuses to guarantee future German acceptance of the Polish-German border, unless Poland promises not to seek WWII reparations. Such a treaty should guarantee rights of ethnic Germans in Poland. Kohl retreats from these demands; West German Bundestag passes a resolution renouncing all claims to Polish territory.
March 18:	(GDR) First free and democratic elections were held in East Germany.
June 19:	(FRG) West Germany signs the “Schengen Treaty” (in the city of Schengen) pledging to decrease inner-European border controls.
July 1:	(GDR/FRG) Both West and East Germany sign the treaty to merge monetary, economic, and social matters going forward. The introduction of the Deutsche Mark in the GDR, replacing the Ostmark currency, marks the beginnings of the currency union.
August 31:	(GDR/ FRG) Both Germanys sign the Unity Treaty.
September 12:	(GDR/ FRG) U.S., Britain, France, Soviet Union, East Germany, and West Germany sign the “Two-Plus-Four-Treaty” in Moscow. This treaty is the final settlement to WWII and officially ends the four allied powers’ rights and responsibilities in Germany.
September 24:	(GDR) East Germany formally withdraws from the “Warsaw Pact.”
October 3:	(GDR/ FRG) Day of German Unity: East Germany formally joins West Germany creating one unified Germany.
1991	
throughout 1991	The Warsaw Pact is dissolved. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev resigns and the Soviet Union breaks apart into Russia and several countries.

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