

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will learn the series of events following the end of WWII which developed into the fragmentation of Germany into sections controlled by the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union.
2. Students will discuss the challenges faced by citizens of a country being controlled externally by clashing powers, namely struggles between the Soviet Union and the other three controlling countries.
3. Students will compare and contrast their own lives with the lives of children living in Germany during the time in which the country and Berlin were divided.

Social Studies Standards Addressed:

1. Understands the causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs
2. Understands domestic policies after World War II
3. How post-World War II reconstruction occurred, new international power relations took shape, and colonial empires broke up.
4. How has the United States influenced other nations and how have other nations influenced American politics and society?

Rational:

This series of lessons will follow several weeks of study focused on the end of WWII and the beginning of the Cold War. Normally Germany is not discussed in the curriculum after WWII, when the Soviet Union became the focus of the United States' attention. These lessons will help children to understand the duality of societies, and the importance of looking at cultures through various perspectives. By intentionally choosing to read texts which tell the story of post-war Germany from the perspective of children, I hope that the students will begin to view this and other societies from a more open perspective.

Time Frame:

5 days – can be taught consecutively in one week or spread out over 2-3 weeks, reading of the text *Escape to West Berlin* may extend beyond the completion of these lessons.

Activities:

Day 1: Understanding Germany in 1945

Read section of history text book which describes the split of Germany between various Allied Powers following the end of WWII. Following the reading, split children into 4 groups for discussion, and assign each of the groups one of the following questions:

- 1) Why was Germany split between the U.S., France, Britain, and Russia? Why were these 4 countries chosen?
- 2) How was Germany split? Do you think this division was fair? Why or why not?
- 3) What did Germany look like at the time it was divided? What did the German population look like?
- 4) What work would the countries in control of Germany need to do in order to help the citizens survive?

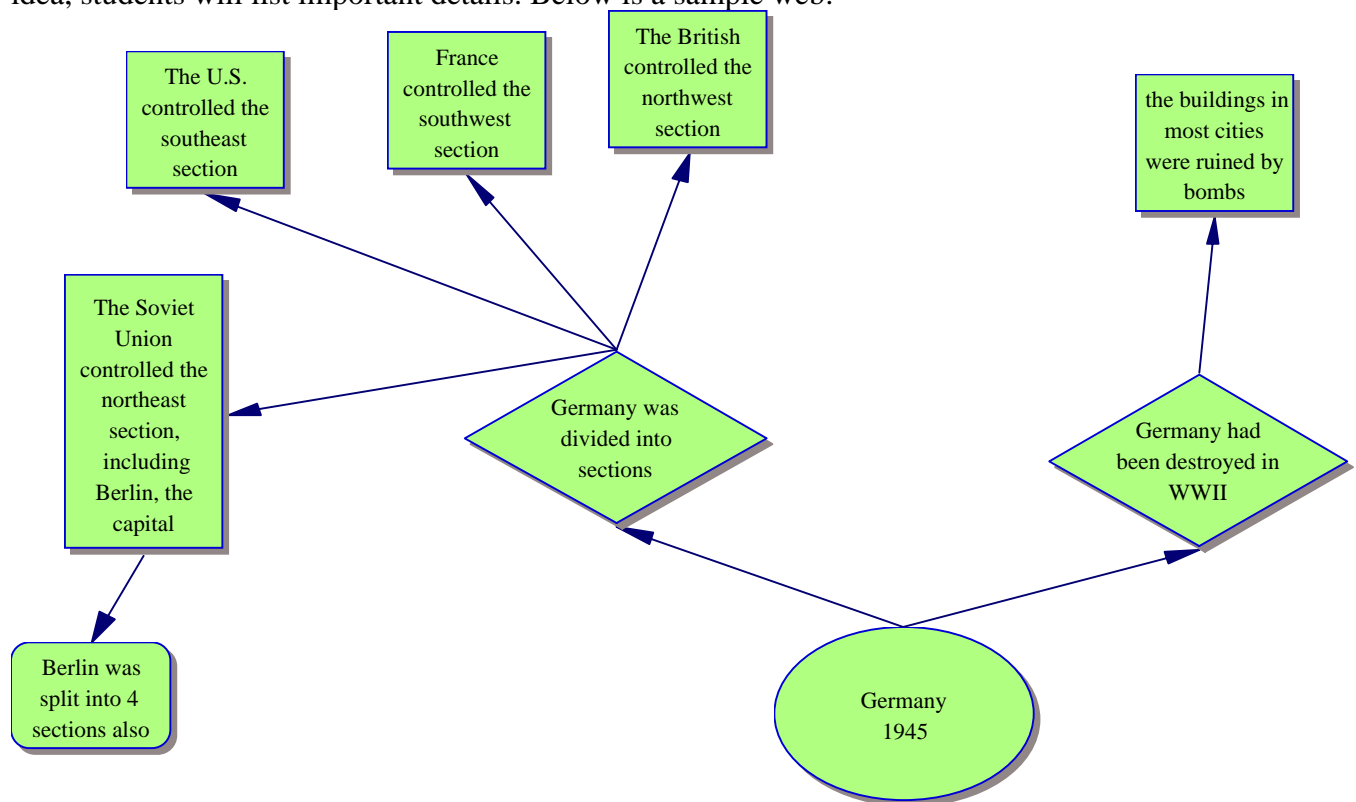
As students discuss, circulate between the groups to make sure the following themes are coming up in conversation.

- 1) the allied powers split Germany because they were victorious in WWII and wanted to keep Germany weak.
- 2) The split of Germany was relatively equal in land area, but there was debate about who would control the capital, Berlin. This led to a split of Berlin within the Soviet area.
- 3) Germany was destroyed in the bombings of WWII in and much need of rebuilding. The population, particularly of young men, had been diminished through the war.
- 4) Since Germany was almost completely destroyed, particularly in cities, buildings would need to be rebuilt, schools and government institutions opened, agriculture redeveloped, and so on.

After groups have discussed these questions, have students number off within their group and comprise new groups so that each new group contains one member of each of the former groups. In these new groups, ask students to take turns sharing what their first group discussed. All students should record key ideas in their notebooks.

Day 2: Organizing Information about 1945 Germany

Begin by asking students to review their notes from the previous day. Then, have students work in pairs to create a graphic organizer web of the situation in Germany in 1945. Begin by having all students put “Germany” in the center of their web. Then, coming out of this central idea, students will list important details. Below is a sample web:



After students have completed their webs, begin reading aloud the book *Escape to West Berlin* by Maurine F. Dahlberg. Chapter 1 describes the division of Germany following WWII, in the midst of a story told from the perspective of Heidi, a 12-year-old girl living with her family in East Berlin.

Continue reading a chapter of the book daily through the remainder of the unit. During each reading, allow time for students to discuss how they would feel if they were in Heidi's

position during her various trials in the book

Day 3: Berlin Blockade Simulation

Create a classroom simulation of the blockade of Berlin. Before the lesson, use chalk on the playground to outline the general shape of Germany, divided into the 4 sectors of 1945-1949. Be sure to leave a circle to represent Berlin in the middle of the Soviet territory. Also prepare slips of paper labeled “food” and “coal”; you will need about 60 of each.

When class begins, divide the class into 4 sections, having each section represent a country (U.S., France, Britain, or Soviet Union) and stand in their section of the map. Give each child one “food” paper and one “coal” paper. Explain that these papers represent the necessities of German residents – food to keep them alive and coal to burn for heat in the winter. As the simulation progresses, explain that during each month of the simulation they will use up one “food” card. During the months of November-February they will also use up one “coal” card. When a card is used they will have to return it to you. Choose one person from each group to represent the government, who will distribute food and coal evenly throughout the simulation. Give each of these government officials a stack of food and coal cards. Ask each country to send one person to Berlin to represent them in the capital.

Read aloud the following descriptions:

- 1) It is May of 1948. Germany has been divided for almost three years, and the German people in all areas of the country have been working hard to rebuild their houses. One month has passed, please turn in one food slip. The government may now distribute more food to each of its members. (Allow government members to cross through other territories as necessary to give food to their representatives in Berlin.)
- 2) It is June of 1948. The Soviet Union has never gotten along well with the western countries of the U.S., France, and Britain, and things are getting worse. Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, is angry that France, the U.S., and Britain have been holding meetings without inviting him. The main highway in Germany is closed for repairs, making it impossible to travel to Berlin from other areas. Another month has passed, please turn in one food slip. (Only the Soviet Union may give more food to their Berlin representatives; no other government representative may travel to Berlin)
- 3) It is July of 1948. The U.S., French, and British citizens in Berlin are not able to travel in or out of the city. They have some food left, but not much. Another month has passed, please turn in one food slip. (Only the Soviet Union may give more food to their Berlin representatives; no other government representative may travel to Berlin)
- 4) It is August of 1948. The citizens of West Berlin are beginning to run out of food. Some of them are getting sick. Another month has passed, please turn in one food slip. (Only the Soviet Union may give more food to their Berlin representatives; no other government representative may travel to Berlin)
- 5) It is September of 1948. The people in West Berlin can see that those in East Berlin are receiving food from the Soviet Union, but they are still hungry. Another month has passed, please turn in one food slip.
- 6) It is October of 1948. The citizens of West Berlin are getting very worried. The last two winters have been hard since many homes were not yet rebuilt. Now this winter there may not be coal for heat either. Another month has passed, please turn in one food slip.
- 7) It is November of 1948. The United States has met with France and Great Britain and they have decided that something must be done to help the people of West Berlin. They will immediately begin an airlift, flying from western Germany into Berlin to deliver supplies to the people.

End the simulation here. As the students who lived in West Berlin to share how they felt during the simulation.

Day 4: Child in West Berlin

Read aloud the picture book *Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot* by Margot Raven. This book tells the true story of the Berlin Airlift, from the perspective of a child in West Berlin.

After finishing the story, ask students to create a graphic organizer to compare and contrast the feelings expressed by Mercedes in the story with those shared by their classmates during the simulation on the day before.

Day 5: Modern German Children

Group children into pairs and give each pair one picture from Transparency 6 of the materials unit “A Kid Like Me Across the Sea”. Ask students to complete the primary source analysis sheet about their picture (see following page).

After each pair has analyzed their picture, allow them to present the most important information found in their source to the class.

Assessment:

Students will write a letter from the perspective of a child living in Germany at the end of WWII. The letter will be graded on the following rubric:

	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
letter format	the letter includes an appropriate date (1945), greeting, body paragraphs, signature, and closing	the letter includes at least 4 of the key elements listed under "4 points"	the letter includes at least 3 of the elements listed under "4 points"	the letter includes 0-2 of the elements listed under "4 points"
content	the letter accurately describes the destruction in Germany and the division of the country	the letter mentions the destruction in Germany and division of countries, but is vague or unclear	the letter mentions either destruction of Germany or the division of the country, but not both	the letter mentions neither the destruction in Germany nor the division of the country
accuracy	all historical information in the letter is accurate and detailed	all historical information in the letter is accurate, but may lack detail	most information in the letter is accurate	most information in the letter is not accurate

Primary & Secondary Source Analysis Sheet

Title of the source: _____ primary or secondary

Step 1: First Impressions

Look at your source for a minute or two. Write down the first thoughts that come to you about this source.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 2: Explain the Context

Ask yourself, "What is this source telling me?" List 3 important pieces of information you get from this source.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 3: Ask Questions

Identify 3 questions the source raises in your mind.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 4: Similarities and Differences

How are the lives of the children in this picture similar to your life? How are their lives different? Use evidence from the picture to explain your answer.

Step 5: Final Impressions

How does source make you feel? Does it change your thoughts that you may have had before today? Record your thoughts below.