

# Economics in the Divided Germany- A Simulation

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# Preliminary Remarks

1. This simulation of the economic conditions in the former East and West Germany is designed with middle and High School students in mind. However, I have used it with my fourth grade students at the Milwaukee German Immersion School. With my fourth grade students I spent about 8 hours implementing these lessons (including time to learn about the history of the Wall).
2. Disclaimer: The author is aware that this simulation is a simplification of the economic conditions in the former FRG and GDR, and that even Germans will disagree on which aspects of the economic systems it accurately represents. However, the objective of the simulation is have students experience the daily life in the work place first-hand rather than read about it in a book. My classroom experience in implementing this unit showed that even young children were able to discern important aspects of production in the two economic systems, and form an opinion of the advantages and disadvantages of both.
3. My reasons for developing and implementing this simulation in my classroom were a) the significance of Berlin in Germany's History, and b) the anniversaries of important historic events (60 years since the Berlin Airlift in 2008; 20 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 2009).

# Background

It is recommended that the instructor and students be familiar with the history of the German Wall and the founding of the two German states prior to the simulation.

Some websites to learn about this history:

<http://www.chronik-der-mauer.de/index.php/de/Start/Index/id/652147>

(events in 1961 and 1989 related to the Berlin Wall and videos)

[http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/10\\_Press\\_Facts/03\\_Infocus/04\\_Without\\_Walls/Feature\\_2/Land\\_w\\_o\\_Borders\\_PDF,property=Daten.pdf](http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/10_Press_Facts/03_Infocus/04_Without_Walls/Feature_2/Land_w_o_Borders_PDF,property=Daten.pdf)

(timeline of German history from 1945 – 1990 with pictures and other interesting information about life in both German states)

# **Simulation:** Economic and social conditions in East-Berlin and West- Berlin prior to the Fall of the Wall in 1989

- **Learning objectives:** students will develop an understanding of the differences of the economic and social life on both sides of the Wall through a simulation.
- **Economic concepts:** means of production, raw materials, scarcity, production bottlenecks
- **Social concepts:** cooperation, sense of community, competition

# Preparation

- Divide the room with butcher paper or a bed sheet into two parts (Wall). I viewed with my students pictures of the Wall showing actual Graffiti. They then drew their own pictures on butcher paper (for the West side of the Wall), and I stapled the paper to sheets of hard foam wall for increased stability. To make it even more authentic, I used a had PVC pipe which I had cut open length-wise to simulate the upper edge of the Wall (see picture next slide).
- When using butcher paper or a bed sheet, it is important to make sure that the colors don't bleed through to the other (East Side).
- Divide students in two approximately equal groups (East-Berliners and West-Berliners)

# nd und die Berliner Mauer

CC46

1961-1989

1961: Die Berliner Mauer wird gebaut.

1987: Berlin wird 750 Jahre alt. Es wird zu beiden Seiten Berlin gefeiert.

Januar 1989: A 1000 Menschen klettern auf die Mauer und feiern.

Oktober 1989: Die Mauer wird von 100.000 Menschen zerstört.

9. November 1989: Die Mauer öffnet sich. Grenzüberläufe in Berlin.

Oktober 1990: Die Mauer wird offiziell abgebaut.

1990 bis 2000: Die Mauer wird abgebaut.

# als Schreib Anlass

Historical documents and photos related to the Berlin Wall, including maps and text excerpts.

Handwritten graffiti and posters on the wall, including the phrase "Wir wollen FREIHEIT" and a peace symbol.

Office furniture including desks, chairs, a printer, and storage bins.

# Materials

- Paper, scissors, and glue
- Copies of paper with the outline of a house  
Paper shapes (e.g. Triangles, squares, circles, rectangles)
- Copies of the worksheets for “East Germans”:  
Production
- Copies of worksheets for “West Germans”:  
Production
- Copy of the points table

# Purpose of a Simulation

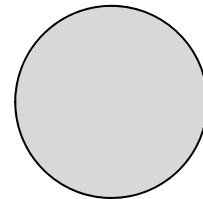
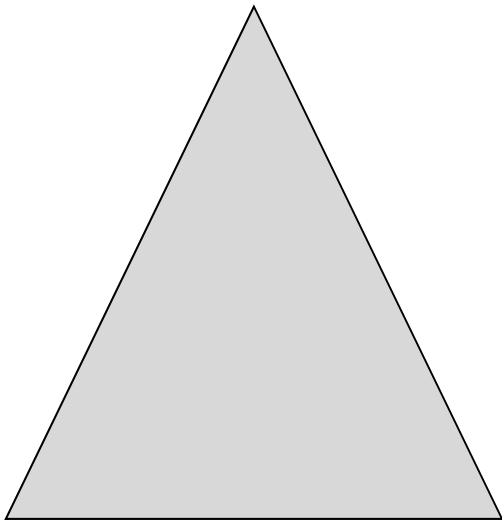
- What is a simulation? Related words: similar, simulation (computer game)
- Why do a simulation?
- Why do we need to simulate the life on both sides of the Wall?



# Simulation: Game Instructions

- **Goal of the game:** Manufacture as many complete pictures as possible in the time allowed.
- **Consideration:** A different product to build could be selected. However, it is important that all students need approximately the same time to build one unit to yield the expected results. This puts a damper on creativity.
- **Task:** Cut out a triangle, square, circle, and rectangle, and glue them on the paper with the outlined house. (square = house; triangle=roof; circle =window; rectangle = door)

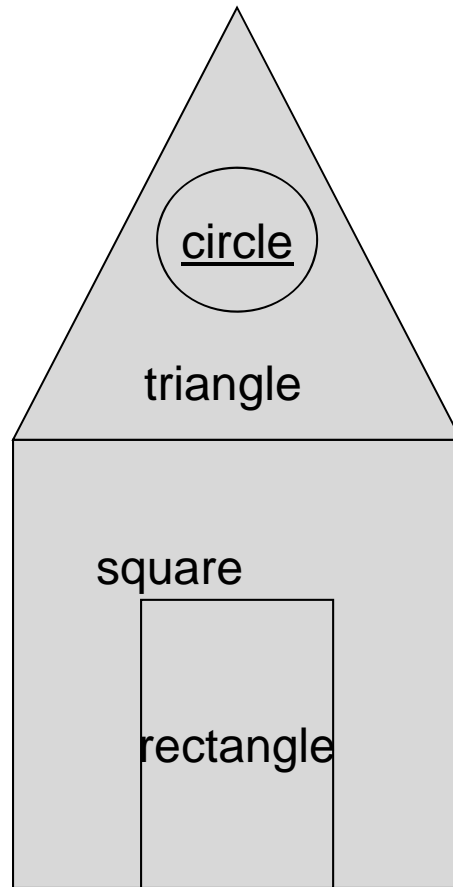
# Shapes Worksheet



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# Completed product: House



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## Rules of the Game

1. Each student may only take a new sheet of paper after he/she has completed a house.
2. Students may only take a gluestick once all shapes to make a house have been cut out, and need to return it to the bin when they are done glueing.
3. When time is called, students need to cease production.

**Please observe how members of your group are working, and what they are doing when they are not working.**

## Determination of points earned by individual students

- (Note: It is essential that students understand how their efforts will be rewarded to allow this knowledge to influence their productive behaviors.)
- At the end of the game, the individual points students earn will be determined as follows:
- **For East Germans:** individual points earned = total product units divided by number of students on the East Side (rounded up to the next whole number)  
**For West Germans:** individual points earned = number of completed product units for each student

## Instructions for the Teacher

- The West German group receives enough paper with the house shape outline, papers with shapes, and glue sticks for  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the group, so that each member can build 10 or 15 houses.
- The East German group will receive enough paper so that each member can also manufacture 10-15 houses. However, the East German group will only receive glue sticks or scissors for about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of its members. Thus, creating a larger bottleneck for East Germany which will slow down production.



## Explanation for the Teacher

- Subsequent to the determination of each student's point total, the teacher could use the worksheet on the following slide to have students reflect individually or with a partner about their simulation experience.
- The teacher may then select to discuss the answers with the entire class, or alternatively have small groups of students composed of East- and West Germans discuss their answers
- If time is at a premium, the teacher could discuss these questions / reactions with the whole group.
- The worksheets (slides 18-21) are intended to assess students understanding and evaluate their ability to connect their game experiences with the economic situations in both German states.
- In addition, the worksheets allow for differentiation. The worksheets on slides 18 and 20 are designed for students who require more structure. Slides 19 and 21 are for students who need less structure.



## Worksheet for individual reflection or partner work

- Name:
- Circle on which side of the Wall you worked:
- East-Berlin                      West-Berlin
- Did you work the entire time? If not, why not?
- Who or what helped you to complete your pictures?
- What did you do so that your group completed as many pictures as possible?
- What did not work well on your side? Who (please no names) or what was at fault?
- What do you think of your work / performance?
- Do you feel treated fairly? Why or why not?
- On which side of the Wall would you rather be? Why?

## Diskussion – Reflection (Whole group)

- Who had the most points?
- On which side was the winner? Why do you think that is so?
- Math extension: Teacher may instruct students to make a bargraph of the distribution of points totals of the West German and East German students, and compare them.
- What conclusions can you reach about the better performance of the students on the West German side? Are the East Germans lazy? Are the West Germans better workers?
- What attitude helped members on the East- and West German side to be successful?
- What attitude was rewarded? What attitude harmed the individual and what attitude was detrimental to the group?
- What do you think of your performance? What do you think of your reward?
- Do you feel treated fairly?
- On which side of the Wall would you rather be? Why?

## **Worksheet for East Germans: Production**

Connect a statement about the production of goods with the corresponding statement about a simulation experience.

- **Production on the East Side auf (GDR)**

1. **The workers in the GDR often had to wait for raw materials.**
2. **The workers were not motivated to give their very best.**
3. **Even when a worker worked little or not at all, he/she was paid.**
4. **Work was not too stressful.**
5. **It is important to work together, if you want to get work done.**

- **Simulation**

- A. **Although some students made few houses, they received just as many points as more productive students.**
- B. **Some students did not work the entire time.**
- C. **Some students did not have glue sticks and /or scissors.**
- D. **Even the students who had all supplies did not work particularly fast.**
- E. **I completed more pictures because I worked cooperatively with other students.**

## **Worksheet for East Germans: Production**

Write a statement about your simulation experience which would correspond to a statement about production in the GDR.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Production on the East Side auf (GDR)</b></li></ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Simulation</b></li></ul> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>The workers in the GDR often had to wait for raw materials.</b></li></ol>      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li></ol>                  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. <b>The workers were not motivated to give their very best.</b></li></ol>          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.</li></ol>                  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. <b>Even when a worker worked little or not at all, he/she was paid.</b></li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3.</li></ol>                  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. <b>Work was not too stressful.</b></li></ol>                                      |   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. <b>It is important to work together, if you want to get work done.</b></li></ol>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4.</li></ol>                  |
|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5.</li></ol>                  |

## **Worksheet for West Germans: Production**

Connect a statement about the production of goods with the corresponding statement about a simulation experience.

- **Production on the West Side (FRG)**

1. The most productive workers earned the most money.
2. If you produce little, you earn little money.
3. There were enough raw materials so that all willing workers could manufacture many units of a product.
4. To earn a lot of money, it makes sense to have access to the means of production at all times.
5. There was a lot of stress because workers would try to best each other.

- **Simulation**

- A. Almost all students could work all the time because there were enough papers, scissors, and glue sticks.
- B. Some students were hoarding the supplies.
- C. Students who worked very efficiently, earned the most points.
- D. Some students fought over the supplies because they thought it was their turn to have a pair of scissors or a glue stick.
- E. Students who completed few pictures, received few points.

## **Worksheet for West Germans: Production**

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- **Simulation**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

# Synthesis: Comparison of the production systems in East and West Germany prior to 1989

- **Production on the West Side (FRG)**
  1. The most productive workers earned the most money.
  2. If you produce little, you earn little money.
  3. There were enough raw materials so that all willing workers could manufacture many units of a product.
  4. To earn a lot of money, it makes sense to have access to the means of production at all times.
  5. There was a lot of stress because workers would try to best each other.
- **Production on the East Side auf (GDR)**
  1. The workers in the GDR often had to wait for raw materials.
  2. The workers were not motivated to give their very best.
  3. Even when a worker worked little or not at all, he/she was paid.
  4. Work was not too stressful.
  5. It is important to work together, if you want to get work done.

# Food for Thought

- How can you use the individual points students have earned in this game to highlight other aspects of the economic systems in East and West Germany prior to reunification? Maybe in another simulation?
- P.S. I am working on that.



Ideas to improve this Simulation  
are always welcome.

Have fun with it!