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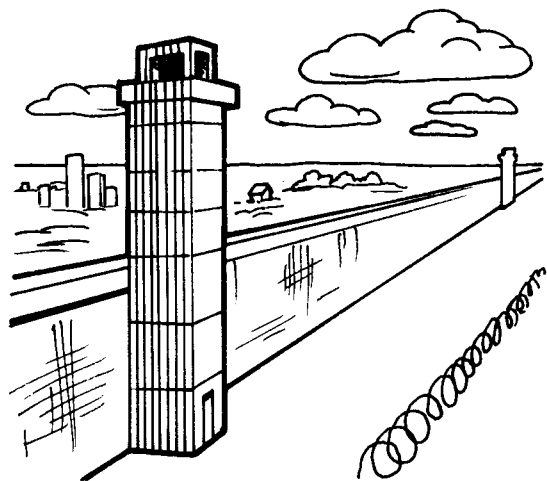
**History Standard:** Understands how post-World War II reconstruction occurred, new international power relations took shape, and colonial empires broke up

**Benchmark:** Understands the development of the Cold War

## The Berlin Wall

World War II ended when the Allied nations defeated the Axis nations of Germany, Italy, and Japan. When a war ends, the winners occupy the loser's country in order to establish control. Once things are running smoothly, they leave. After the war the Communist Soviets occupied East Berlin, Germany. Other Allied nations occupied other parts of the city. But when the rest of the Allied nations left, the Communists did not. Instead they renamed the area East Germany. Then in August 1961 they cut the phone lines, ended mail service, and shut down the border. No one could go into East Germany. No one could come out. If a child was visiting her grandparents in East Germany, she could not go home to her parents in West Germany. If a man was on business in West Germany, he could not get back to his family in East Germany. It took some families years to be reunited.

Work began on the Berlin Wall. The 20-foot (6 m) high cement wall had barbed wire on top. The Wall had 250 watch towers and 14,000 soldiers and dogs guarding it. Over the next 20 years, almost 600 East Germans died trying to cross it. Called the "Iron Curtain," its purpose was to keep the people under Communist control. It split Europe in two. On the west side was freedom. On the east side was Communism. This caused the Cold War of fear and **suspicion** between the Americans and the Soviets.



By the late 1980s the Soviets knew that they must find a way to feed their starving citizens. The government turned all of its attention to the matter. So when Hungary tore down its barbed wire barrier with Austria in March 1989, the Soviets did nothing. More than 150,000 East Germans left by this route. Another 1.8 million applied to leave. Then the Soviet government said they would reopen the border. As of midnight November 9, 1989, East Germans could cross the border for the first time in 28 years. Before midnight, an excited crowd took sledgehammers to the Wall. At midnight they slammed their hammers into the Wall. They danced and sang for two whole days. Today little remains of the Wall. Germany is reunited, and people move freely throughout the country.

# The Berlin Wall *(cont.)*

## Comprehension Questions

1. The Berlin Wall was destroyed in

- (a) 1961. (c) 1989.  
(b) 1980. (d) 2000.

2. On a historical timeline, what happened third?

- (a) The Berlin Wall was built.  
(b) Phone and mail service to East Germany ceased.  
(c) The Allies occupied Germany.  
(d) The Soviets would not leave East Germany.

3. Why didn't the Soviets react when Hungary and Austria destroyed their barrier?

- (a) The Soviet government didn't know that it had happened.  
(b) The Soviet government didn't have any way to stop them.  
(c) All of the Soviet soldiers had fled the country.  
(d) The Soviet government had other, more pressing problems.

4. A synonym for *suspicion* is

- (a) distrust. (c) loyalty.  
(b) secrecy. (d) disgust.

5. You can infer that the Soviets built the Berlin Wall because

- (a) they wanted to make the world's biggest monument.  
(b) they didn't want people to be able to leave the country.  
(c) they wanted to stop illegal immigrants from entering Communist territory.  
(d) they were ordered to do so by Adolf Hitler.

6. Picture the people destroying the Berlin Wall. What is the expression on their faces?

- (a) confusion (c) joy  
(b) worry (d) sorrow

7. Do you think that the Berlin Wall made Communism look stronger or weaker to the rest of the world? Explain.

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