

## Germany: A United Country!? Die Folgen der deutschen Wiedervereinigung nachvollziehen (Kl. 9/10)

Nach Ideen von Manuel Köhler, Würzburg



© picture alliance/Wolfgang Kumm

On 3 October 1990 Germany celebrated the nation's unification.

Welche Ereignisse führten 1989 dazu, dass die Mauer in Berlin fiel? Welche politischen und sozialen Maßnahmen wurden im Zuge der Wiedervereinigung getroffen? Gibt es beinahe 30 Jahre nach der Wende noch immer Unterschiede in den Lebensverhältnissen zwischen Ost und West?

Anhand von zeitgenössischem Bildmaterial, informativen Sachtexten sowie Internetrecherche beschäftigen sich Ihre Schüler mit der Thematik der deutschen Einheit. Sie verschaffen sich wichtige Einblicke in die politischen und gesellschaftlichen Herausforderungen, die zu bewältigen waren, um die Lebensverhältnisse der Menschen in Ost und West anzugleichen.

**Klassenstufe:** 9/10

**Dauer:** 5 Stunden

**Bereich:** Deutschland nach 1945, Wiedervereinigung

**Kompetenzen:**

- die wichtigsten Ereignisse der friedlichen Revolution Ende der 1980er-Jahre in der DDR kennen
- die wesentlichen politischen, wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Maßnahmen nach der Wende darstellen
- die noch immer bestehenden Unterschiede in den Lebensverhältnissen der Menschen in den neuen und alten Bundesländern erläutern

## Die Reihe im Überblick

Overview (Fo)      Photos: The German reunification (zu M 1, M 5 und M 6)

### 1./2. Stunde:      **Why did the Wall come down in 1989?**

M 1      (Ab/Bi)      9 November 1989 – The Wall comes down!

M 2      (Tx)      Why did the Wall come down?

M 3      (Ab/Bi)      "We are the people!" – The Monday demonstration

M 4      (Ab/Ka)      "We'll go over!" – Mass flight in the summer of 1989

### 3./4. Stunde:      **What measures were taken in the course of the reunification?**

M 5      (Ab/Bi)      "We are one nation!" – The German reunification

M 6      (Bi/Tx)      The GDR dissolved itself! – The time between the Fall of the Wall and reunification

M 7      (Tx)      The turn of the GDR – The political changes

M 8      (Tx)      The turn of the GDR – The economic and social changes

M 9      (Bi/Tx)      The turn of the GDR – The analysis of the Stasi past

M 10      (Tx)      The turn of the GDR – The future of the GDR public servants

### 5./6. Stunde:      **Are the living conditions of the people in a reunified Germany still different?**

M 11      (Tx)      Germany today – Taking stock after almost 30 years of unity

M 12      (Ab)      Germany today – Taking stock after almost 30 years of unity

M 13      (Tx)      On opinions, prejudices and trends – Interesting facts about the attitudes of the Germans

### Lernerfolgskontrolle

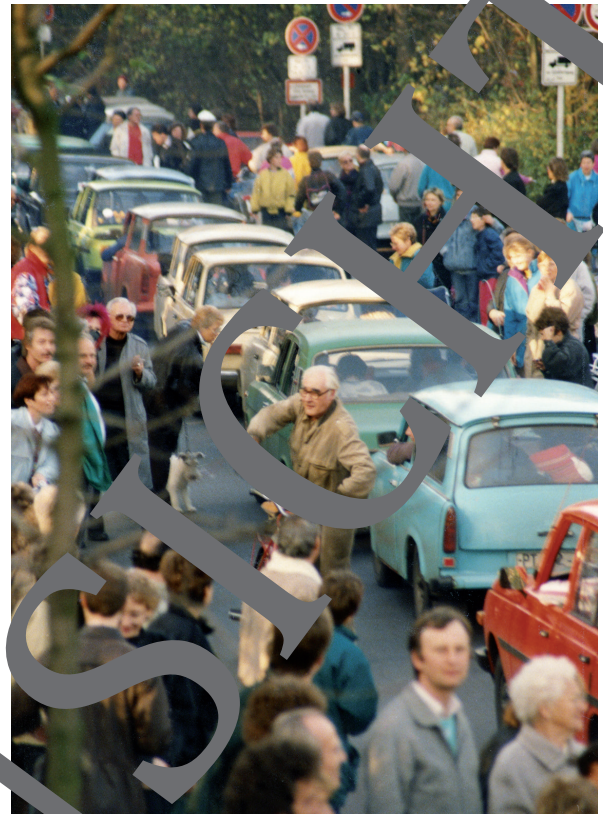
M 14      (Ab)      Test your knowledge! – A word search on the consequences of the reunification

**Ab:** Arbeitsblatt; **Bi:** Bildimpuls; **F:** Folie; **Ka:** Karte; **Tx:** Text

### Photos: The German reunification



People climbing the Wall on 9 November



Inner-German border crossing on 11 November 1989



Festivities on 3 October 1990 on the occasion of German unity

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## M 4 “We’ll go over!” – Mass flight in the summer of 1989

Due to the reform movements in the Soviet Union, the Eastern bloc collapsed bit by bit. However, for the GDR citizens, travelling to the West was still forbidden. Escape to the Federal Republic of Germany was dangerous. Only vacationing<sup>1</sup> East Germans were allowed to stay in the neighbouring socialist countries. It was exactly there in the summer of 1989 when for tens of thousands the loophole<sup>2</sup> into the west opened.

**1** Until October 1989, thousands of East Germans fled to the embassy<sup>3</sup> of the Federal Republic of Germany in Prague. Both German governments negotiated<sup>4</sup> with each other. Under the cheer of thousands of refugees the then West German Foreign Minister Genscher finally declared that the GDR authorised<sup>5</sup> their departure. As a result, 15,000 GDR citizens could travel to West Germany in special trains.

**2** Since the spring of 1989, Hungary started to dismantle<sup>6</sup> its fortifications<sup>7</sup> at the Austrian border. No Hungarian border guard was ready to shoot at people fleeing. In the summer of 1989, thousands of East German “tourists“ crossed the border to Austria via Hungary and so reached the west. Coming from Austria, they could now travel legally to the Federal Republic of Germany.

**3** Mass flight via foreign countries and demonstrations of hundreds of thousands in the home country. The pressure<sup>8</sup> on the GDR leadership grew so much that the border crossings in Berlin were opened on the evening of 9 November 1989.

Grafik: Doris Köhl

### Annotations

**1 to vacation:** to be on holiday – **2 loophole:** *Schlupfloch* – **3 embassy:** a diplomatic building where ambassadors work – **4 to negotiate:** *verhandeln* – **5 to authorise sth.:** here: to give clearance for sth. – **6 to dismantle sth.:** hier: etw. auflösen – **7 fortification:** hier: Grenzsicherung – **8 pressure:** here: insistence

### Tasks

1. Read the texts in the order given and look at the map. Explain why GDR citizens fled to the West German embassy in Prague.
2. Give reasons why many East Germans vacationed in Hungary in the summer of 1989.

**Extra task:** The events on the evening of 9 November 1989 leading up to the border opening in Berlin are exciting and already almost legendary. Go to the Internet site <https://www.berlin.de/mauer/geschichte/oeffnung-der-mauer/>. Read the article and check the correct statements.

- After the demonstrations and the mass flight, a new travelling law came into force.
- From this point on, private travelling of GDR citizens was prohibited.
- Because of the many people the border crossings were opened on the evening of the 9 November.
- In the following days, border crossings were closed off again.

## M 6 The GDR dissolves itself! – The time between the Fall of the Wall and reunification

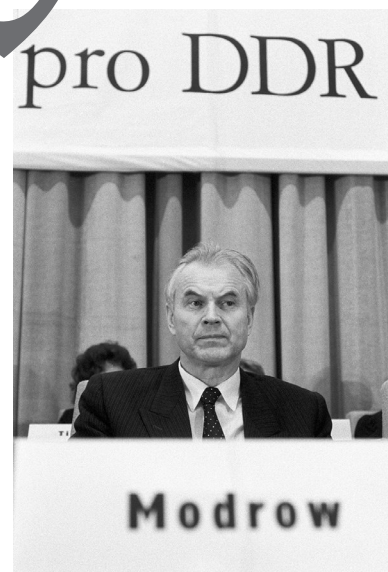
The GDR did not cease<sup>1</sup> to exist with the Fall of the Wall. However, for East Germans it was obvious how things should proceed<sup>2</sup>: “Germany, united fatherland”, was the chant of the hundreds of thousands at the Monday demonstrations that were still taking place. But on the road to reunification some hurdles needed yet to be overcome. In the following months though, the GDR virtually dissolved<sup>3</sup> itself.



Inner-German border crossing on 11 November 1989

Since 1970, the Federal Republic of Germany paid every visitor from the GDR so-called “welcome money”. After 9 November 1989, the traffic jammed for many kilometres at the inner-German border crossings because countless East Germans wanted to explore the west immediately. They wanted to meet friends and relatives, but also to look around and to shop. After the Fall of the Wall, tens of thousands of GDR citizens stood in line at the pick up offices where they could get their “welcome money” to the amount of DM 100.

The GDR government refused to accept a German reunification. They only wanted to grant<sup>4</sup> the population freedom of travel and free elections, but communism was supposed to remain. However, the catastrophic economic situation could not be ignored. At the same time, East Germans visiting the west could get an idea of the living standards of the people in West Germany. On 18 March 1990, the first democratic elections in the GDR took place. The immediate successor party<sup>5</sup> of the SED was the PDS with its candidate Hans Modrow. It got merely 16 per cent of the votes. The GDR was virtually elected out of office.



PDS election poster from 18 March 1990

### Annotation

1 **to cease**: to discontinue – 2 **to proceed**: to move ahead – 3 **to dissolve**: auflösen, zerbrechen – 4 **to grant**: to let have – 5 **successor party**: Nachfolgepartei

1. Read the text carefully and look at the pictures. Give reasons why many East Germans visited the Federal Republic of Germany after the Wall came down.

2. Explain how the GDR government envisioned the future of its country.

**Extra task:** With a partner, discuss why the defeat of the PDS at the first free elections in the GDR was predictable.

## M 9 The turn of the GDR – The historical revision of the Stasi past

*The fact that the “unjust state” GDR could exist for over 40 years would not have been possible without the criminal and inhumane work of the state security<sup>1</sup> (Stasi). Tens of thousands of officials and unofficial collaborators<sup>3</sup> of the MfS (Ministry for State Security) spied on, interrogated, tortured and arrested several hundred thousand citizens of the GDR. But must a society not examine its past communist dictatorship, especially as it has aligned itself with democracy since the turn?*

After the Fall of the Wall, files existing from the offices of the Stasi were secured. The dimension of the surveillance was gigantic: over 112 kilometres of files, including five million photos as well as 5000 films and videos were in stock.

5 These contained protocols from interrogations, photos from surveillances as well as the names of the snitches who betrayed their neighbours and colleagues, friends or even family members to the Stasi. The question was how should one deal with these files? Should they be destroyed or should people have access to “their” files? Joachim Gauck, the first commissioner for the Stasi documents, had a clear opinion on this: “We can spin and turn the Stasi problem – but we will cope with it better if we can analyse accurately this sinister legacy of the perished GDR.”

15 With the Unification Treaty, a separate agency was created to archive the Stasi files, and, above all, grants access to them. In the beginning, this agency was named “Gauck office”, after its first director. This agency dealt with three task areas. First and foremost, former GDR citizens can have insight into their personal Stasi file in order to analyse the past and find out about yet undiscovered issues. In addition, authorities inquire whether employees or newly hired civil servants themselves used to be Stasi collaborators. Furthermore, with the help of the Stasi documents, committed criminal offences should be reported and solved.



The archives of the MfS

© picture alliance/ZB

### Terms

- State security (Stasi):** “Ministry for State Security” (also MfS); state run secret service of the GDR.
- Official employees of the MfS:** “full-time employees”; were employed by the MfS.
- Unofficial collaborators of the MfS:** usually, they worked in other professions and provided information to the full-time employees of the MfS; they often received benefits, e.g. in the housing allocation.

### Tasks

- Read the text and look at the picture carefully. Differentiate the options the Stasi files could be dealt with.  
Describe the task areas of the so-called “Gauck agency”.

**Extra task:** Go to the Internet site: [https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/stasi-akten-einsicht-die-neugier-der-naechsten-verwandten.976.de.html?dram:article\\_id=302174](https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/stasi-akten-einsicht-die-neugier-der-naechsten-verwandten.976.de.html?dram:article_id=302174). Read the article carefully. Give reasons why the number of requests to gain insight into the Stasi files currently have increased.

### M 14 Test your knowledge! – A word search on the consequences of the reunification

Have you paid attention in the previous lessons? Here you can test yourself. Note down searched terms and mark them in the puzzle – horizontally or vertically.

**Tip:** no spaces; words and letters can overlap.

L	I	V	I	N	G	C	O	N	D	I	T	I	O	N	S	U	A	H	
U	W	E	L	C	O	M	E	B	E	N	E	F	I	T	M	O	N	E	Y
Q	R	B	W	I	U	B	E	R	L	I	N	W	V	N	M	Y	R	Z	P
A	D	T	R	C	W	M	B	X	O	I	E	G	M	B	C	G	Q	C	R
R	W	S	Y	X	C	V	M	K	H	D	O	P	R	E	A	R	N	A	
Q	W	P	R	Z	P	C	V	N	G	U	E	Q	U	K	U	V	H	G	
E	I	B	Y	J	F	A	T	E	F	U	L	D	A	Y	Q	C	V	H	U
X	B	E	E	U	P	M	N	V	G	F	D	S	A	C	T	K	W	U	E
R	T	Y	C	N	M	F	K	E	O	H	B	C	P	A	S	K	L	N	Z
M	O	N	D	A	Y	T	Z	F	L	O	C	I	S	H	I	N	G	V	
R	I	H	Y	X	C	V	B	N	M	J	H	G	S	F	T	Z	A	W	
G	H	X	A	K	L	B	V	M	N	C	Z	R	W	D	I	T	P	R	W
W	Q	G	O	R	B	A	C	K	E	V	V	M	B	I	Z	Y	P		
Q	U	N	I	F	I	C	A	T	I	O	N	T	R	E	A	T	Y	C	P
R	U	H	C	B	N	M	Y	H	G	D	E	T	R	W	P	O	Z	T	R
T	Z	K	W	O	K	O	S	L	E	V	B	N	M	U	R	W	O	P	T

1. He initiated the reforms in the Soviet Union: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Day of the mass protests in the GDR at the end of the 1980s: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Starting point of the mass flight of GDR citizens: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Place of German Embassy accommodating GDR citizens: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name for 9th November in German history: \_\_\_\_\_
6. He is called "chancellor of unity": \_\_\_\_\_
7. He promised East Germans these "landscapes": \_\_\_\_\_
8. The regulations for reunification have been written down here: \_\_\_\_\_
9. New capital and German unity: \_\_\_\_\_
10. This should be adjusted after reunification: \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_ first headed the "Stasi files agency": \_\_\_\_\_
12. Every German citizen received this when visiting the Federal Republic of Germany: \_\_\_\_\_