

Essay Competition

25 Years Fall of the Berlin Wall



Are you interested in the Fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989?

Do you see a link between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and other events and issues, both global and domestic?

Have you travelled to Germany and Berlin and have something to tell?

If so, be creative and write an essay about **ONE topic of your personal choice** from the list below. For a better overview, the list of topics is divided into four major areas. Other than the required length of your paper, there are no restrictions of how you want to go about the topic. You may choose a more formal or a more personal approach. You may include research literature or express your own vision.

Essays will be evaluated based on their originality, creativity, imagination, and the ways in which they put forward compelling arguments.

Three campus-wide winners will be chosen by a jury of professors and be awarded attractive monetary prizes: **\$300 for 1st prize, \$150 for 2nd prize, and \$100 for 3rd prize**. All participants will be invited to join us during campus events and will receive an honorary mention and a small gift. Winners will be announced in November.

Length of Paper: 2500 words maximum

Submission Deadline: October 24, 2014

Submit electronically to all committee members: wlueckel@austincollege.edu
dsalisbury@austincollege.edu
rstewart@austincollege.edu

Committee Members: Wolfgang Lueckel (German), Don Salisbury (Physics), Rod Stewart (Philosophy)

For questions please contact wlueckel@austincollege.edu

For more information about the Fall of the Wall Campus Weeks:

www.austincollege.edu/fall-of-the-berlin-wall

<http://www.germany.info/fallofthewall>

www.facebook.com/GermanCampusWeeks



Made possible by a generous grant from the German Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Organized by the Austin College German Program



ESSAY TOPICS – FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL

Historical Impact:

- ❖ What factors made it possible for the Berlin Wall – which in January 1989 was expected to exist “for 50 or even 100 years” – to fall on November 9, 1989?
- ❖ The Fall of the Wall and the Collapse of the East vs. 9 / 11 – two global events of similar proportions?
- ❖ What is the relationship between the Fall of the Wall and current political shifts (such as the crisis in Ukraine and the conflict between Russia and the Western World)?
- ❖ American Triumphalism – Did Americanism win over the world after 1989? Is this the happy end of history?
- ❖ Israeli-German relations – How did West and East Germans deal with the Holocaust before and after 1989?

Cultural and Artistic Impact:

- ❖ Berlin’s “Gender Bender:” liberated expression of sexuality and gay and lesbian culture in post-1989 Berlin (Love Parade etc.)
- ❖ Modern art and music and the Fall of the Wall (from public art like wall graffiti to a growing museum culture in Berlin and beyond)
- ❖ Culture of Remembrance and Forgetting- What does the new reunited Berlin offer as a site of coming to terms with the past and the future (such as memorial sites and museums)?
- ❖ What is the role of the Brandenburg Gate and the Fall of the Wall as icons in pop culture, especially in American culture (such as JFK, Ronald Reagan, David Hasselhoff)?
- ❖ Is post-1989 Berlin a gateway to the East or a melting pot of East and West?
- ❖ The Death of *Multikulti* – Did Germany’s new conservatism in the “Merkel Republic” impact diversity?
- ❖ The architecture of pre-1989 East and West? How did people build and live in the former spheres of Communism and Capitalism?

- ❖ The architecture of the new rebuilt Berlin after 1989/1990 and the birth of a new urban culture in former East Berlin

Political, Economic and Social Impact:

- ❖ What made the people in East Germany take to the streets, first demonstrating for the abolition of restrictions on free travel and finally in a call for German reunification? How did churches, brave individuals, and vocal critics and artists support a broad peaceful revolution? Under what circumstances did political opposition to the authoritarian socialist system grow?
- ❖ *Realpolitik* – the political exploitation of 1989 and the eastward expansion of capitalism and NATO
- ❖ What role did US foreign policy and that of other major powers play in and around 1989?
- ❖ Coming to terms with the *Stasi* (state security) – How have people dealt with the former GDR as surveillance state after 1989?
- ❖ Has Germany emerged as a dominant power within the European Union after the Fall of the Wall?
- ❖ How has Germany's post-1989 economy changed? What impact has the Fall of the Wall made?
- ❖ Have religious and spiritual attitudes changed after the Fall of the Wall? How do the "atheist" East and the more religious West intersect? How does this compare to traditionally more religious societies such as the United States.
- ❖ Has the Fall of the Wall been a launching pad for a strong and growing European Union?
- ❖ How did family support and women's rights in the East and the West change after 1989? Did the official disappearance of the socialist society cause problems?
- ❖ Minorities and majorities – How do the different regions in Germany's former East and West deal with immigration and the presence of minorities after 1989?

Scientific Impact:

- ❖ Environmentalism and German leadership in "green engineering" (such as solar and wind technology) after 1989 – what are the major accomplishments?
- ❖ Is Berlin a major center for the sciences? Comment on scientific research in the reunified Germany (Max Planck society, medical research etc.)
- ❖ What are the environmental and ecological consequences of the reunification?