

This text set has a number of different texts that surround the theme of the fall of the Berlin Wall. These texts give different perspectives from people from the East and West as well as before, during and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Young and old writers can also be found in this text set. Many different forms of writing can also be found in this text set including diary entries, editorials sent into local newspapers, newspaper articles, a poem and personal writings. This text set will give students different perspectives surround the fall of the Berlin Wall, that is they will be able to see from personal experiences what people were thinking who were actually there when the Berlin Wall came down. Hopefully these texts will spark interest in the students and help them to understand the importance of the Berlin Wall, not just in German history, but in World history as well.

### **Text 1**

Jendryschik, M. (1989). Straßentage. In B.M. Turneure (Ed.), *Im Spiegel Der Literatur* (p. 274). New York/London: W.W. Norton and Company.

This text is an excerpt of a personal diary by Manfred Jendryschik which describes the events of the peaceful demonstrations in Leipzig in October 1989 leading up to the fall of the Berlin wall. Jendryschik was there and is describing what he saw, the mood of the people, the political implications of the demonstrations and everything that is going on around him. He describes what the people are like, for example they are peaceful, holding signs with slogans such as: Freedom!, and everybody is shuffling together towards the new town hall in Leipzig. According to the SMOG readability formula, this excerpt has an estimated grade level of grade 14. It is quite a difficult text but there is a vocabulary list included which highlights important words and phrases in the text. I have included this text because I believe it gives a good sense of the feelings and the atmosphere of the peaceful demonstrations in East Germany leading up to the fall of the Berlin Wall. This excerpt gives students the chance to see first hand what was going on there, getting it from somebody who was actually there at the time this even happened. In the diary excerpt the author also compares the scene of the demonstrations to a famous painting by Delacroix. This gives the students something that they might already know of and connect it to the events being studied. Also, through this painting it gives them a chance to compare and contrast the events of the peaceful revolution in Berlin and the French revolution.

### **Text 2**

Girrbach, B. (1990). Mauertanz. In A. Lixl-Purcell (Ed.), *Stimmen eines Jahrhunderts*

1888-1990 (p. 297). Thomson/Heinle.

This text is a short writing by Bettina Gurrbach, who was a 24 year old college student at the time the Berlin Wall came down. This writing describes what she was feeling when she learned of the fall of the Berlin Wall. She describes that before it came down, there was much doubt in everybody's mind that it would ever come down. But she remarks, only after a few short months, this feeling changed and the Wall indeed did come down. She mentions the demonstrations of the peaceful revolution and names in the non-bloody revolution. She describes the euphoria of everybody celebrating on the night the border between East and West was opened. The large celebrations of people from both sides, the excitement of greeting people from the other side, some families being reunited after 28 years. She describes the people dancing on top of the Wall (the title of this text means "Wall dance"), and how the Wall lost its function overnight and became a symbol of freedom. According to the SMOG readability formula, this text has an estimated grade level of grade 9. This text is indeed easier than the previous one in this text set but is still just as important. This text was included to show the great euphoria and the people from both sides of Berlin celebrating together. It is very difficult to get students to understand how great of a celebration it was when the Wall came down in Berlin and this text gives the students a first hand account of the happenings of that night. The author was at the celebration and hopefully through her writing, the students can better understand the feelings of the German people. Also, this text gives them an author that is much closer in age to the students. Hopefully this gives the students somebody to relate to and realize that it could have been there as well in the celebration.

### Text 3

Ostrogorski, W. (1990). Das Süße Wort Freiheit. In A. Lixl-Purcell (Ed.), *Stimmen*

*eines Jahrhunderts 1888-1990* (p. 299). Thomson/Heinle.

Walser, M. Die Sanfte Revolution. In A. Lixl-Purcell (Ed.), *Stimmen eines Jahrhunderts*

*1888-1990* (p. 299). Thomson/Heinle.

Wolf, C. Bleiben Sie Bei Uns. In A. Lixl-Purcell (Ed.), *Stimmen eines Jahrhunderts*

*1888-1990* (p. 301). Thomson/Heinle.

These three texts are include together because they are presented together in the book *Stimmen eines Jahrhunderts 1888-1990*. All three are editorials sent into local newspapers by famous writers from East and West Germany. The first editorial, sent in by Wladimir Ostrogorski to the newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel*, compares the fall of the Berlin Wall to the fall of The Bastille, which came down during the French Revolution in Paris 200 years before. He also expresses his opinions on the symbolic value of the Berlin Wall and its place in history. The next editorial by Martin Walser sent to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* newspaper describes Walsers feelings of the peaceful revolution before the fall of the Berlin Wall. He believes that this is the first time

of the century that Germany history turned out good. He describes what he believes a peaceful revolution is and why it is important to him and why it should be important to other people. The last editorial is by Christa Wolf, one of the most famous East German authors. Here she is urging her fellow East German citizens to stay in East Berlin and East Germany as opposed to moving to the West. She says that the East will have everything the West does and they wouldn't have to move from their home to get these benefits. She believes that the East, now that the Wall is down, will be just as good as a democracy as the West and she urges the East German people to realize this as well. According to the SMOG readability formula, these texts have an average estimated grade level of grade 10. These editorials were include to give the students a sense of what famous writers of the time were thinking about and how they felt about the fall of the Berlin Wall. Each calls on something from the common person and this would be a good activity for the students to do. That is decipher what each author is calling for. Another good activity for these texts would be for the students to determine whether the author came from the East or if they came from the West. These editorials give a number of different activities that could be done in the classroom and also raise many questions which could constitute a good discussion as well. Because of these factors, they have been included in the text set.

#### **Text 4**

Wirth, F. (1989, November 13). Drang zur Freiheit stärker als Beton. *Die Welt*, p. 1.

This text is a newspaper article reporting on the phone conversation between president George H.W. Bush and the capitol city of West Berlin, Bonn. Bush congratulates the German people on the fall of the Berlin Wall and says that their urge for freedom is indeed stronger than concrete. He states that the 1980s were a period of rebuilding for America, but the 1990s will be a period of rebuilding for Democracy. Bush conveys his excitement to visit Germany and Berlin, now that the Wall has come down as now he can visit East Berlin. The article also mentions the strong relationship between president Bush and the leader of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev. The article's main focus is president Bush's excitement for East Germany to experience Democracy. According to the SMOG readability formula, this text has an estimated grade level of grade 13. I believe this text is important because it gives the students an understanding that the events surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall didn't just affect Berlin and Germany, but it also affected the USA, as well as the rest of the world. This article gives students an idea of what our president was thinking shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall and his and the American feeling of the wall coming down. I believe it is good to have many perspectives and not just the ones directly surrounding the events and that is why I believe it is important to include this text.

#### **Text 5**

Marr, W. (1989, 2002). Berlin Wall Peddlers. Retrieved October 22 2007 from

[http://home.comcast.net/~wmarr9/wap.htm#BerlinWallPeddlers.](http://home.comcast.net/~wmarr9/wap.htm#BerlinWallPeddlers)

This text, even though it was written by a famous Chinese poet, is very relevant to the theme of this text set. This poem describes peddlers around the Berlin Wall selling chunks of the Berlin Wall. Marr describes these peddlers as selling history, describing some chunks with bullet holes and blood stains. He describes the feet that danced on top of the Wall on the night it came down and the machines that took it down. He exclaims that since the fall of the Wall, there is quite an abundance of chunks that could be sold. He seems to believe that, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world can begin tearing down a number of other walls including the walls between the rich and the poor and the oppressors and the oppressed. According to the SMOG readability formula, this text has an estimated grade level of grade 5. The length of this poem accounts for the low grade level (it is rather short), and the words are all very simple. Also, this is the first text that is in English, as all others have been in German. This poem is important to include in this text set for it gives a variety of texts as it is a poem, but it also gives the students a chance to think, there was a bunch of history in the bricks of the Berlin Wall. May it be the bullet holes or the blood from an attempted escape, or the symbol of the Cold War, this poem brings up a number of different issues. This poem gives the students a chance to develop their critical thinking skills as well as provide something for a good discussion during class. The students, in analyzing this poem, will discover that, even though there are many negative aspects attached to the Berlin Wall, there are also many positive ones as well, including the footprints caused from people dancing on the top of the Wall when it fell. This poem makes students think deeper into the overall meaning of the Berlin Wall and if it could be used as a catalyst to tear down other walls in the world.

## **Text 6**

(2004, February 6). Did David Hasselhoff really help end the Cold War? *BBC News*.

Retrieved October 22 2007 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/3465301.stm>.

This text is an article found online about David Hasselhoff, the actor from Baywatch, and his supposed role in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War. Hasselhoff believes that there should be a photo of himself in the Checkpoint Charlie Museum in Berlin. Hasselhoff believes that with his increased popularity in Germany, and his performance of his song, Looking for Freedom, on New Year's Eve 1989, merits his picture hung in the museum. This article explores Hasselhoff's importance in these matters and examines his popularity in Germany during this time. There are opinions going either way so this debate is still up in the air. According to the SMOG readability formula, this text has an estimated grade level of grade 15. I believe this article is not that difficult and the inflated reading level can be explained by the number of times the author uses the words Hasselhoff and Germany. I included this article because I believe students would find this article interesting because it has to do more with pop culture than a normal class might find. It poses an interesting question: Should there be a picture of David Hasselhoff in the Checkpoint Charlie Museum in Berlin? This would give the students something to debate on and something that might spawn an interesting discussion during class. It also gives the students the perspective that celebrities were also involved with the fall of the Berlin Wall and give them something that they might talk about out of class with

other classmates to find their ideas about the subject.

### **Text 7**

Tagliabue, J. (1989, October 1). East Germans Get Permission to Quit Prague for West.

*New York Times.*

This text is a New York Times article from October 1989 reporting on the East German government temporarily opening the border between East and West Germany so that a large number of East German refugees could leave the West German embassy in Prague to a city in southern Bavaria, in West Germany. There were a number of these freedom trains leaving Hungary and Czechoslovakia during this period. The article describes the excitement of the refugees being allowed to leave the East to go to the West. According to the SMOG readability formula, this text has an estimated grade level of grade 12. This text is included because it shows a different means of East Germans trying to escape from the East to the West. This is one mode of escape that surprisingly, actually worked out. This article gives the students to see another aspect of the events surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall, that is events that led up to the fall and perhaps even caused it. This shows students that East Germans did try and go around East Germany to get to the West, not just over the Wall in Berlin. It also shows the students that the East German guards did not show any opposition to the East Germans climbing the walls to get into West German embassies in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This is an aspect the students could discuss in class and come to their own reasons why this was true.