

U.S. History
CNN: The Cold War
Episode 4: Berlin

The Berlin Airlift was considered a watershed moment in the early days of the Cold War. Why was it necessary? What was at stake? Could the need for an airlift have been avoided? These are some of the questions this film will address. Listen carefully, and note your answers below. First, read the definition for “black Market.”

A **black market** consists of economic activity that takes place against the laws of the government. In this case, it involved bartering, or trading goods instead of using currency to buy things. Black market transactions let people avoid government price controls, taxes, and using currency that is either worthless or too scarce.

1. How many zones was Germany divided into after World War II? Which countries controlled those zones?
2. Berlin was divided too. How did Berlin’s location cause difficulty in transporting American products to Berlin?
3. Describe the economic situation in Berlin after World War II. How did this lead to the creation of a “black market?”
4. How did each of the following lead to a confrontation between the Soviet Union and the other former allies?

Creation of new currencies –

Secret meetings between the U.S., Great Britain, and France –

The Soviet creation of a new political party -

5. What happened at the Berlin Control Council meeting on March 20th of 1948? How did this lead to the Soviet blockade?

6. What was Joseph Stalin trying to accomplish with the blockade? What were the effects on West Berliners? How did Great Britain and the U.S. respond?

7. What was the American nickname for the Berlin Airlift? What was the British name?

8. What kinds of supplies were airlifted to Berlin? Why was coal important?

9. What were some of the challenges faced by pilots and others trying to get supplies to Berlin?

10. The U.S. and Great Britain considered using a convoy (of trucks) on the ground to try to break the blockade. Why did they decide against this?

11. How did the “counter blockade” lead to talks between the Soviets and the other former allies? What was the most important issue to Stalin? What was the result of these talks?

12. Who was the “candy bomber?” What did he do? Why do you think his actions, although against orders, were tolerated?

13. How did western propaganda reach Berliners? What effect might this have had on the election in December of 1948?

14. How successful was the Berlin airlift? What ultimately happened that is evidence of this success?