

The Berlin Wall: Divided Lives



Writing Challenge

Imagine you wake up in the middle of the night and look out of your window to see soldiers rolling barbed wire down the street. Write a diary entry about it. What did you see? What did you hear? How did it make you feel? How many soldiers were there? Did people come out of their houses onto the street? What did they do? Maybe they tried to break the barrier down? I'll leave that all up to you. But remember, this is a diary entry, so you'll be writing in the first person and you can use quirky conversational writing to really let your personality show.

Information for teachers

The Berlin Wall stood for almost thirty years before it finally fell in November 1989. It divided the city of Berlin, separating families and friends. When it was fully built, The Berlin Wall completely surrounded West Berlin and was actually two walls that were 155km long and four metres high. The heavily guarded and mined corridor of land between the walls was known as 'The Death Strip'. This area was protected by electric fences, sniper towers, armed patrols, dogs, and spikes. Despite all of that, more than 5,000 people managed to escape over, through, or under the wall in the time that it stood.

Try This:

Look at some pictures of the Berlin Wall. Imagine if you had to escape it. How would you do it? Discuss it with your friends and make a plan. Research how other people managed to escape. Write a description of how you would plan to do it. Make a list of materials you would need, and draw diagrams. Consider all the things that might stand in your way.

Hint:

Some of the methods of people used to escape include tunnelling under it, zip-wiring over it, or swimming across the river. Some people hid in car boots, another crashed a train through the wall to escape. Some people even escaped by hiding inside a plastic cow.

About the author

Growing up, Dan Smith led three lives. In one he survived the day-to-day humdrum of boarding school, while in another he travelled the world, finding adventure in the padi-fields of South East Asia and the jungles of Brazil. But the third life he lived in a world of his own, making up stories . . . which is where he still lives now, writing historical adventure stories, and scary stories for young readers. His historical books include *My Friend the Enemy*, *She Wolf*, *Nisha's War* and *The Wall Between Us*. Dan's scary books include *The Crooked Oak Mysteries* series and *The Night House Files* series.

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