

After the Wall Teaching Materials
Zeitgeschichtliches Forum, Leipzig

Resources

Zeitgeschichtliches Forum, Leipzig: <http://www.hdg.de/leipzig/>

General Questions

1. Name four themes that you would learn about if you went to the museum.
2. The museum's exhibits are made up of artefacts, photographs, documents and official media. Which of these do you think is the most revealing when it comes to understanding the GDR past?
3. The concept for the museum explains that it is designed to inform visitors about the GDR *and* the unification process. What are the advantages and disadvantages of including both of these themes in the museum's concept?
4. Why is Leipzig a particularly significant site for GDR history?
5. In September 2011 the *Haus der Geschichte* also constructed a site in the *Tränenpalast* in Berlin. Why is this site so significant? How did it get its name?
6. Do you think it is important for museums to be located at historically significant sites? Why (not)?
7. Read the 'Konzept' for the 'Dauerausstellung'. What is this exhibition aiming to teach visitors about the SED? Do you think this focus provides a useful window onto the GDR? Why (not)?
8. The museum plays a key role in education about the GDR in contemporary Germany.
 - a) Do you think links between education and the museum are a useful way of teaching visitors about the GDR? Why (not)?
 - b) Having examined the museum's website, what do you think the main focus of the teaching would be?

- c) Do you think this is appropriate? Would you add anything else to the programme to provide a fuller picture of GDR history?
9. The museum's website states that one of its aims is to explore eastern and western norms and values. Having examined the rest of the website, do you think it achieves this aim? What else could be done to ensure this aim is better fulfilled?

Group activities

1. Imagine you have been commissioned to develop a temporary exhibition for the museum. Taking the following points into account, draw up a design for the exhibition:
- what it will focus on;
 - what information it will provide;
 - which artefacts will be exhibited and the reasons for your choices.
2. The website for the museum explains that the 'Dauerausstellung' covers the following themes:
- Nachkriegsplanungen, Kalter Krieg und deutsche Frage
 - Gründung der Bundesrepublik und der DDR
 - Herrschaftssicherung durch die SED
 - Mauerbau
 - Deutsch-deutsche Beziehungen im internationalen Kontext
 - Wirtschaftspolitik im 'real existierenden Sozialismus'
 - Kultur- und Jugendpolitik der SED
 - KSZE und deutsch-deutsche Beziehungen
 - Prager Frühling und Opposition in der DDR
 - Ausbau des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit (MfS)
 - Friedliche Revolution 1989
 - Wege in die Gegenwart

Choose one of the themes to research on the internet. Put together a short presentation to explain to your classmates:

- a) the information provided under your theme;
- b) the material used by the museum to exhibit the theme;
- c) whether you would like to visit this part of the exhibition, and why (not).