

# Berlin Blockade | A1 Sample Answer

## Berlin Blockade: Notes

The allied forces were expected to all co-operate in administering Germany after the war; therefore, there was a joint occupation of Berlin.

June 1948: After much objecting from the soviets, a separate West German state was created which left any western ally presence in Berlin as odd and seemingly unnecessary.

Stalin wanted the western presence out of Berlin entirely: he wanted a government to claim Germany entirely and this would be easier if he had full control over the capital. But he could not intimidate voters and politicians in Berlin to give the communists power. Also, as long as Berlin was divided, it gave eastern Germans an opportunity to escape to West Germany. He was determined to make Berlin entirely dependent on the USSR.

In 1948, all communications to the west such as supply lines were severed. The USSR blocked the railway lines into Berlin and any road access to sectors of Berlin under their control.

The western allies could not allow Berlin to be dominated by the soviets. The Truman Doctrine had been put in place to support European nations in the fight against communism but Eastern Europe was still being affected. Czechoslovakia turned communist in March 1948. But they had to be careful in case starting conflict drove people in their own sectors to support the communists.

The US decided they could not abandon the people in Berlin as it would signal they had no real commitments in Europe and it would be viewed as a communist victory. The allies organised a huge airlift of supplies for the people in Berlin who were trapped. This was difficult as they had to airlift enough supplies to support 2 million people. As the airlifts continued, they became stronger and more successful. At the beginning they were airlifting 300 tonnes a day but eventually managed to airlift in the 4000 tonnes a day Berlin needed to survive. By March 1949, they were airlifting in 8000 tonnes a day.

The USSR could have cut the airlift too with an assortment of barrage balloons but they never even attempted to. When the airlifts started, they did not believe it would work and by the time they realised it was working, it was too late and the risk of war was too severe.

By March 1949, there was a counter blockade in place that prohibited goods being sent to the Soviet zone and the previous blockade was all but broken. The USSR was suffering more. In May 1949, Stalin lifted the Blockade after 328 days.

There were numerous consequences of this. One was that NATO was formed by the western allies in April 1949. The Warsaw Pact was signed by the USSR in 1955. The Berlin Wall was built to split Berlin into west and east in 1961 and did not come down until 1990. The Federal Republic of Germany (West) was established and the German Democratic Republic (East) was created.

The Berlin Blockade was one of the first major crises of the Cold War and the first allied victory in this. It was the first crisis of the war to result in casualties.