

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Grade 6: Lesson 6

Text: *The Wall* Chapter 1

August 12, 1961

East Berlin

Early morning

“Schnell! Schnell! Franz, you are going to be late for school!”

In his bedroom, Franz yawned as he stretched out in bed. He **groggily** reached over to his nightstand, blindly searching for an object he knew was somewhere on the wooden surface. His hand brushed the cool metal and smooth leather, so he closed his fingers around the object and brought it in front of his unfocused eyes as he slowly sat up. Franz blinked several time to get rid of the blurriness and read the face of his watch: 6:57 A.M.

Franz groaned and thought, *I could’ve had another three minutes of sleep.*

He threw his quilt aside, gave a longing glance at his comfortable pillow, and rose from bed, strapping the watch to his wrist as he did so. His now-adjusted eyes scanned the closet for his jacket. When he finally caught sight of it hanging at the very end of the line of clothes, he rolled his eyes and sighed. He pulled it on slowly; it was as if the jacket were weighed down with rocks. Now Franz wondered which bothered him more—waking up early or the itchy clothes he had to wear to school.

The door to Franz’s room swung open, revealing his mother standing in the hallway with her arms crossed, wearing a look of **admonishment**.

“You’re going to be late,” she said, tapping her foot impatiently.

Franz dismissed his mother’s concerns with an incoherent mumbled response and **scurried** past her toward the kitchen. He scooped up his school books and the case that held his pens and pencils. In the center of the kitchen table was a wicker basket filled with various types of bread rolls. Franz reached over and grabbed a plain roll, took a large bite, and muttered “good-bye” to his mother with his mouth still full.

The front door to the Müllers’ apartment slammed shut as Franz hurried out into the hallway. He **wincing** knowing how often his mother had told him to close the door gently whenever he left. Hoping to avoid another lecture this early in the morning, he bolted down the hallway.

Rounding the corner, he blurted out “Guten Morgen!” to his neighbor, a startled Mrs. Schulz, then flew down the stairs to the front entrance of the building. He was about to make his exit when he faintly heard his mother call out, “Die Tr (dee-tee-air’), Franz Müller! What did I tell you about the door?”

The morning air was cool and damp, typical for Berlin. Franz paused for a moment in front of his building and inhaled deeply. It smelled distinctly like summer, but it didn’t feel like summer anymore—not now that school was back in session. Franz sighed deeply and began his short trek to school.

A steady stream of pedestrians, young and old, lined the street. It was the morning rush when most East Berliners commuted to work or to school. A handful of Trabants zipped past Franz in the busy road, headed in the opposite direction. Anyone who lived in Communist-controlled East Berlin and had a car was most likely using it to drive to a job in democratic West Berlin.

From what Franz had heard his parents say, life over in West Berlin was much better than it was in East Berlin. He didn't know what was so great about it, but he knew that a lot of people were leaving and not coming back. Five classmates had moved to West Berlin with their families last year.

Franz's father had even taken a job over there. It paid nearly twice what the same job would pay in East Berlin. But Franz didn't think it was worth the money. He barely got to see his father anymore.

"Running late this morning, aren't you, Franz?"

Surprised, Franz snapped out of his daze and turned around. "Oh, hello, Karl. Sorry, I guess I was daydreaming."

Karl was in the full uniform of the Combat Groups of the Working Class, a volunteer police force. Franz's father often complained that the group was just a way for the Soviets to strengthen their hold over East Berlin. Franz liked Karl, (page 5) though. He always had a good joke or a funny story to tell.

"Well, it's a good idea to get daydreaming out of your system before class," said Karl with a grin. He glanced at his watch and laid a hand on Franz's shoulder. "I have great dog joke for you, but school is about to start. You better hurry."

Franz looked down at his own watch, which now read 7:26 A.M. and began to run toward the plainly painted white-brick façade of the school. As he hustled, it occurred to Franz he had only one year left here before he would be leaving all of his friends, either to get a job or to become an apprentice.

That's if I don't get expelled for being late again, Franz said to himself as he pulled open the door to the school building and ran inside as quickly as he could.

When school got out that afternoon, Franz headed directly home. His friends had asked him to stay and hang out, but he wasn't in the mood. He just wanted to be alone. He had found out that his best friend, Roland, was moving to West Berlin tomorrow night, and there was nothing he could do about it. *I hate West Berlin,* he thought.

Slam.

"Franz!"

"Sorry, Mother," he mumbled.

He had forgotten about the door again.

Despite his mother's frustration, she addressed him calmly, without pausing from her dinner preparations. "Dinner's ready, Franz," she said. "I made Buletten (Bew-let-tin), your favorite."

Franz walked slowly into the kitchen and dropped his books onto the table. "Danke (Dahn-kuh)," he muttered absently.

His mother turned around to look at Franz, her expression a portrait of a mother's omniscience. She knew immediately that something was bothering Franz. "Do you want to talk about it?" she asked.

"No thanks," said Franz as he slumped down in his chair. He wasn't hungry, and he definitely didn't feel like talking.

"Oh, your father called," remarked his mother, not pushing the topic. She placed Franz's plate in front of him. "He had to work late again, so he'll be staying with Tante (taun-tuh) Fran for the night. He'll be home a bit earlier than usual tomorrow, though."

Franz's reply was a barely noticeable nod. He and his mother ate their dinner in silence, and Franz washed up and crawled into bed immediately after. He felt his eyelids sink the moment his head touched the pillow. He slept so deeply that even the sounds of heavy construction in the middle of the night barely stirred him. When he heard someone shouting "Mauer!" (Mou-er) over and over again, he figured he was dreaming. He rolled over and let himself drift back to sleep.

Independent practice

We've read Chapter one of this work of historical fiction. We know that the setting is a real time and place in history. In this first chapter, we learned a little about East and West Berlin, but most of the events—getting up late, going to school, finding out bad news—could have happened to anyone, anywhere, anytime. I wonder how the events in the next chapters will be influenced by the specific time in history—August 1961—and the place—East Berlin.

To capture your thoughts from Chapter 1, write a summary of the events using the notes on your chart. Then write a paragraph about what you think might happen next.

Be sure to include events from the beginning, middle, and end of the chapter, important characters, and the setting in your summary.

Once you have written your paragraphs, go back and check for correct punctuation and capitalization. Make sure that each sentence expresses a complete thought. Add transition words to help a reader follow the flow of your ideas. Transitions could include words like first, next, then, also, while, and finally.