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# 1989: A LESSON FROM THE PAST

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## TARGET GROUP

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4th grade of  
High school



## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

methods  
materials  
outcomes

Didactic materials for  
history educators on the  
democratic revolutions of  
1989 and the transition to  
democracy

# THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONS OF 1989 AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

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**Subject**

**History**

**Target group**

**4th grade of High school (other grades if applicable)**

**Duration**

**90 minutes**

**Correlation**

**Civic education, Geography, Politics, Ethics, Art.**

**Learning outcomes**

- **The students list the most important figures, events, and dates related to the revolutions of 1989**
- **The students understand the reasons behind the political, economic, and cultural changes**
- **The students apply their previous knowledge in a new situation**
- **The students analyze the events of 1989 and how the democratic revolutions reshaped the image of Europe**

# THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONS OF 1989 AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

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- The students evaluate the importance of political changes in Europe in 1989

## Methods

- questions and answers
- discussion
- work with audio-visual sources
- group work

## Teaching resources and aids (materials)

- textbook (if applicable)
- audio-visual sources
- projector

# LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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- Introductory activity
- Postage stamps activity
- Film activity
- Discussion
- Homework

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

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15 -20 min

The students are presented with a photo (source 1) and are asked to answer the following questions:

1. Who is presented in this photo, what is he doing?
2. Do you think what he is doing is significant or unimportant? Explain your answer.
3. Do you have any idea where this could have happened? Explain your answer.

## Source 1



# POSTAGE STAMPS ACTIVITY

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20 -25 min

The teacher divides the students into 3 groups.

With their teacher, the students check their history knowledge while trying to answer questions using postage stamps (source 2, 3 & 4). The first group receives source 2, the second group source 3, the third group source 4.

## Questions

1. Which historical figure is presented on the postage stamp?
2. Which country did he come from?
3. To which historical period does he belong? Try to be as precise as possible (century, decade, or even some event connected with him).
4. Was he historically important and influential?

After answering the introduction questions, the students are trying to answer an additional question:

5. Can we establish any connection between these historical figures?

Source 2



Source 3





## Source 4



# FILM ACTIVITY

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30-35 min

The students remain in the same groups and are presented with a short educational film. Each group answers specific questions, guided by the main question for each group. The students are asked to focus on a specific part of the film, which corresponds with their main question. The main question for each group is underlined.

## Group 1:

1. According to the testimonies in the film, what was it like to live in Europe before 1989?
2. Which testimony leaves the strongest impression on you and why?
3. What sounds the most incredible to you when you hear these testimonies?
4. What do you think has influenced the limitations listed in the testimonies?
5. Do you think that the lives of the people in the mentioned countries before 1989 were difficult or not? What leads you to that conclusion?

### Group 2:

1. According to the testimonies in the film, what were people's hopes and fears during the democratic revolutions?
2. Which testimony leaves the strongest impression on you and why?
3. Why do you think the memories of the people who witnessed these events are so vivid?
4. What challenges did people face most often during this period?
5. What would you consider to be the "Berlin Wall" today?

### Group 3:

1. According to the testimonies in the film, what is the aftermath of 1989?
2. Which testimony leaves the strongest impression on you and why?
3. What challenges did people face most often during this period?
4. Do you think that the lives of the people in the mentioned countries changed for better or for worse after 1989? What leads you to that conclusion?

## DISCUSSION

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15 min

Based on the gathered information and the discussion, the students are trying to form their conclusions on the final questions:

1. What have you learned about 1989?
2. What do you think about the democratic revolutions in 1989? Explain your conclusions and thoughts.
3. Has this personally affected you and your beliefs? If yes, in what way?
4. Think of your own question related to the topic and ask another student to answer it.

## HOMEWORK

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Make an interview with someone who was growing up before the revolutions of 1989 occurred. You can use the questions used in this class as a guide. Share your findings with your classmates. Try to make a comparison between your findings, but also compare them with the testimonies in the film. Debate on the differences and similarities.

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These didactic materials are created by Igor Radulović & Miloš Vukanović (Hipmont) as a part of the project “Reshaping the Image of Democratic Revolutions 1989: European contemporary perspectives and forgotten lessons from the past”.



**Reshaping the Image of  
Democratic Revolutions 1989:**  
European contemporary Perspectives  
and forgotten Lessons from the Past

The project seeks to remind European citizens about the democratic revolutions 1989-1990 as a period of arduous struggles for pluralistic democracy and peaceful coexistence in Europe with the aim to strengthen the contemporary commitment of the European citizens to the preservation of democratic pluralism and democratic institutions.

The project is coordinated by Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past (Croatia) and brings together the following European organizations and institutions:

- Aarhus Universitet (Denmark)
- BLOCKFREI – Verein für Kultur und Kommunikation (Austria)
- Centrul Roman pentru Inovatie in Dezvoltare Locala (Romania)
- European Network Remembrance and Solidarity (Poland)
- Hipmont – Udruženje profesora istorije Crne Gore (Montenegro)
- Tartu Ülikool (Estonia)
- United Societies of Balkans (Greece)

**You can find more about the project here:**

**<https://kulturasjecanja.documenta.hr/en/projects/reshaping-the-image-of-1989/>**

**You can also follow us on Instagram:**

**@reshapinng1989**

**The project is co-financed by the European Union through the program “Europe for Citizens”.**



**Co-funded by the  
Europe for Citizens Programme  
of the European Union**

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