What happened to Germany after the War?

**German surrender**
The Second World War ended in Europe on 8 May 1945, with Soviet and Western troops stationed throughout Germany.

**Potsdam agreement divides Germany**
After the war Germany was divided into four temporary occupation zones, roughly based on the locations of the Allied armies. The German capital, Berlin, was also divided into four sectors: the French sector, British sector, American sector and the Soviet sector.

**The Marshall Plan binds the Allies together**
By June 1948 the regions under the care of America, Britain and France had been combined. They used West Berlin as a beacon of the capitalist way of life. The economic support that America was giving to Europe through the Marshall Plan was binding the Allies together.

**Soviet state constructs the Eastern bloc**
Stalin wanted a buffer from Western states that opposed the Soviet communist ideology. He constructed a bloc of communist states, and wanted a weak Germany on his western border.

**Berlin becomes the focal point of growing tension**
Berlin quickly became the focal point of both US and Soviet efforts to realign Europe to their respective visions. As Molotov noted, “What happens to Berlin, happens to Germany; what happens to Germany, happens to Europe.”

**Western half of Berlin is isolated in Eastern Germany**
Berlin was located 100 miles inside the Soviet occupation zone and there had never been a formal agreement guaranteeing rail and road access through the Soviet zone to the Western-controlled part of Berlin.
Deutschmark currency crisis
On 18 June 1948 the United States, Britain and France announced that on 21 June the Deutschmark would be introduced. Stalin worried that with a new currency and economy, Berlin would now be a capitalist centre within communist Eastern Europe.

Stalin blockades Berlin
Stalin wanted the Americans to leave Berlin and get rid of the currency. Soviets refused to permit use of the currency as legal tender in Berlin. Stalin believed it would be impossible for the West to supply Berlin if he blockaded the city - stopping supplies from getting in.

Soviet Union soldiers enforce the blockade
Soviet Union soldiers cut off all connections between West Berlin and West Germany on 24 June 1948. They wanted West Berlin to be dependent on the Soviet state for supplies, effectively bringing it under their control.

Aeroplanes are used by the West to transport cargo
In response to the blockade aeroplanes were used to transport goods to three airports in West Berlin. The cargo included food, clothing, medical supplies and even petrol and coal. When the airlift was at its peak, an aeroplane landed every 90 seconds.

Easter Parade demonstrates the blockade isn’t working
By April 1949 the Allies wanted a big event to boost morale. From noon on Easter Sunday, crews worked for 24 hours, completing 1,383 flights without a single accident. The airlift could now deliver more supplies than had previously been transported by rail - 4,700 tonnes every day.

Lifting the blockade
The Easter Parade proved the blockade wasn’t working, and prompted negotiations to end it. The Soviet blockade of Berlin was lifted at one minute after midnight on 12 May 1949.
Division of Germany

On 23 May 1949 the sectors of Germany controlled by France, the UK and the USA were merged to form the Federal Republic of Germany. On 7 October 1949, the Soviet zone became the German Democratic Republic, splitting Germany into two states for the next 40 years.