**Text Description**
When twelve-year-old Gerta goes to bed one night, the Berlin Wall rises. She wakes the next morning only to find her family divided overnight. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. This novel discusses the control the Soviet Government tried to exert on those under their control, the propaganda sent out and the struggles they face trying to make sense of their world, particularly from the point of view of Gerta. This is a coming of age novel that focuses on discovering one's true identity.

**What is your final recommendation based on quantitative, qualitative, and reader-task considerations? Why?**
The Quantitative Measures of this book place it within the 4th-6th grade level complexity band. The Qualitative Measures support that placement, however, if using the book to look for deeper meaning and themes, the book could be used up to 8th grade. Because the book is Less to Somewhat Complex, the task of answering the essential question, “How do we form our identities?” will be attainable for students 6th-8th grades through looking at Gerta’s perspective and the forces contributing to her identity.

**Mark all that apply:**
- Grade Level Band: K-5 ✓ 6-8 ✓ 9-12 □ PD □
- Content Area: English/Language Arts (ELA) ✓ Foreign Language (FL) □
- General (G) □ Health/Physical Education (HPE) □
- History/Social Studies (HSS) ✓ Humanities (H) □ Math (M) □
- Professional Development (PD) □ Professional/Technical Education (PTE) □
- Science (S) □

**Quantitative Measure**
- Quantitative Measure of the Text: Lexile level: 810
- Range: 740-1010
- Associated Grade Band Level: 4th-5th

**Qualitative Measures**
- Text Structure (story structure or form of piece): The text structure of this story is less complex. The story is told through the eyes of the 12 year old girl, Gerta. Gerta is experiencing Berlin during the Cold War where her father and brother are stuck in West Berlin and she and her mother and oldest brother are in East Berlin behind the wall. Gerta gets clues from her father on the other side of the wall telling her to start digging a tunnel under the wall where they are digging from the West to meet them. It is a first person narrative with a plotline that is chronological except one minor flashback in the beginning of the story. The story is easy to predict with clear and explicit plotlines and events.

- Language Clarity and Conventions (including vocabulary load): The Language Clarity and Conventions of this text are somewhat complex. Most of the language throughout the book is explicit and literal, with most vocabulary being contemporary, conventional and familiar to students. However, there are several words scattered throughout the book that are German in origin (i.e. grenzers: soldiers). The book explains pretty well what those words mean within the context of the story, but it may be a pitfall for students who struggle with vocabulary acquisition and may need to be scaffolded.

- Levels of Meaning/Purpose: The Levels of Meaning/Purpose is Less to Somewhat Complex. There is one level of meaning with an obvious theme that is clear and revealed early in the text. However, there are other themes that, students and teachers could bring out with discussion.
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary): The Knowledge demands of this text are Somewhat to Very Complex. The book gives a little background on the Cold War itself, but nothing about what lead up to the Cold War. Students don't have to know anything about the Cold War to understand the book, but if teachers are wanting to delve into the deeper meaning and themes of the book, students would need to have that background knowledge.

Visual Supports: N/A

Considerations for Reader and Task

Possible Major Instructional Areas of Focus (include 3-4 CCS Standards) for this Text:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1**
  - Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1**
  - Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.7**
  - Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1**
  - Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2**
  - Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Below are factors to consider with respect to the reader and task:

**Potential Challenges this Text Poses:**
Vocabulary may need to be taught ahead or scaffolded some other way. Students may have a harder time with the German words.

If teachers are discussing deeper meaning and themes, there may be some students who are not able to understand the effect the Soviet propaganda has on Gerta.

**Differentiation/Supports for Students:**
Pre-teach vocabulary: Because there are various German words introduced in the book, teachers could pre-teach vocabulary through a game of "Pictionary". One student could draw the word, (the words are all familiar to the students in English), then the teacher could introduce the new German word for the same thing. This would enable "whole-brain" learning and movement while at the same time begin engaging for students.

While reading for deeper meaning and themes, teachers should show current commercials or ads and talk to the students about whether or not they "like" the products and why. This will allow those students who might struggle understanding that deeper meaning or theme to better relate to Gerta’s struggle with how information affects her.