Tracing T4's Legacy

Origins, methods, and connections to the Final Solution

SS24.HOS.10 "Summarize the German T4 ("euthanasia") Program, including its origins and purposes, and explain how it contributed to the Final Solution.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline T4's origins and stated purposes, circle two methods used to carry it out, and number two ways its work contributed to the Final Solution.

From T4 to the Final Solution

1. In 1939, Nazi officials began organizing the murder of people with disabilities in Germany. The program grew from Nazi racial ideology and earlier policies that forced sterilization on people labeled "unfit." Child killings began before the larger adult operation. Adolf Hitler signed a secret authorization, backdated to September 1, 1939, that allowed selected doctors to kill patients they judged "incurably ill." The operation became known as T4, after the address of its Berlin office, Tiergartenstrasse 4. Leaders claimed that killing would relieve suffering and free hospital beds and resources for wartime use. Those claims disguised a state policy of murder.

2. Officials sent forms to hospitals and institutions, then physicians reviewed the paperwork to select patients for death. Many patients were taken by bus to six specially equipped killing centers in Germany and annexed Austria. Staff used carbon monoxide gas to kill them and cremated their bodies. Families often received false notices about how and where their relatives had died. The program targeted people with disabilities, not Jews as a group. After public protests, Hitler ordered the centralized gassing operation halted in August 1941. Yet killings continued through starvation, drugs, and other methods in hospitals and institutions until the war's end.

3. The murder campaign helped build methods and a workforce later used in the genocide of European Jews, which the Nazis called the "Final Solution." Some T4 personnel moved to killing centers built in occupied Poland for Operation Reinhard, where Nazis murdered Jews using gas. T4 had shown organizers how to move victims under false pretenses, hide deaths, and coordinate staff across offices. These were connections, not an identical program: T4 targeted people with disabilities, while the Final Solution aimed to murder Europe's Jews. The transfer of experienced people and practices helped turn that broader genocidal plan into mass killing.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did T4 grow out of earlier Nazi policy, and what wartime purpose did its leaders claim for it?

2. Summarize how officials selected and killed patients, including one way they hid the murders.

3. Why would it be inaccurate to say that the T4 killings ended in August 1941?

4. Explain two ways T4 contributed to the Final Solution. How did the programs differ in whom they targeted?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A museum visitor says T4 and the Final Solution were the same program. Write a 75 to 100 word museum label that corrects the claim, explains T4's origins and purpose, and shows how its methods or personnel contributed to the Final Solution.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.10

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline T4's origins and stated purposes, circle two methods used to carry it out, and number two ways its work contributed to the Final Solution. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did T4 grow out of earlier Nazi policy, and what wartime purpose did its leaders claim for it?	**T4 grew out of Nazi racial ideology and forced sterilization policies. Leaders claimed that killing patients would free hospital beds and resources for wartime use.**
2	Summarize how officials selected and killed patients, including one way they hid the murders.	**Physicians selected patients by reviewing forms from institutions. Patients were taken to specially equipped killing centers and murdered with carbon monoxide gas. Staff concealed the murders with false death notices.**
3	Why would it be inaccurate to say that the T4 killings ended in August 1941?	**The centralized gassing operation halted after public protests, but killings continued in hospitals and institutions through starvation, drugs, and other methods.**
4	Explain two ways T4 contributed to the Final Solution. How did the programs differ in whom they targeted?	**Some T4 personnel moved to Operation Reinhard killing centers, bringing experience in organizing mass murder. T4 also developed practices for moving victims deceptively and hiding deaths. T4 targeted people with disabilities, while the Final Solution targeted Europe's Jews.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

T4 and the Final Solution were connected, but they were not the same program. Rooted in Nazi racial ideology, T4 began in 1939 to murder people with disabilities. Its leaders claimed the killings would free resources for the war. Staff moved patients to killing centers and sent families false death notices. Later, some T4 workers took jobs at Operation Reinhard killing centers in occupied Poland, bringing experience in organizing mass murder. The Final Solution targeted Europe's Jews, not the same group T4 had targeted.

Accept accurate paraphrases. For the museum label, look for a clear distinction between the victim groups and a specific explanation of how T4 personnel or practices contributed to later mass murder.