Ghettos and Resistance

Read for the purposes, conditions, and significance of Nazi ghettos.

SS24.HOS.13 "Explain why the Nazis established ghettos.* 13a Identify tactics utilized by the Nazis to control, isolate, and weaken Jewish people in the ghettos. 13b Describe Jewish life in the ghettos, including means of resistance..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Nazi purposes and control tactics, circle acts of Jewish resistance, and put a star beside phrases that explain a ghetto site's location or significance.

Life and Resistance in the Ghettos

1. In Nazi-occupied Europe, authorities forced many Jewish people into crowded districts called ghettos, especially in occupied Poland and farther east. These were not places Jewish residents chose to live. Nazi leaders used ghettos to separate Jewish people from their neighbors, seize their homes and businesses, and make them easier to control. Guards and walls restricted movement; permits limited who could leave. Officials confiscated property, restricted food supplies, and forced residents into labor. Starvation and disease followed these policies. Later, Nazis used ghettos as collection points for deportations to killing centers. The timing and conditions differed from city to city.

2. Inside the ghettos, families tried to keep daily life going despite hunger, overcrowding, and constant danger. In Warsaw, neighbors shared food, and some people secretly brought food past the guards. Teachers held forbidden classes, while writers and historians hid records of what they saw. Such acts preserved knowledge and helped people survive, but they did not remove the danger. Armed resistance also took place. In April 1943, Jewish fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto rose against German forces sent to deport those still there. The fighters were vastly outgunned; their revolt showed resistance under desperate conditions.

3. Three ghetto sites show why location and local history matter. Warsaw, in central Poland, held the largest ghetto in Nazi-occupied Europe; its underground archive preserved evidence of persecution, and its 1943 uprising became a symbol of armed resistance. Łódź, in central Poland, had a ghetto where Nazi officials exploited Jewish labor for years; most remaining residents were deported in 1944. Vilna, in what is now Lithuania, had been a major center of Jewish learning before Nazi occupation. In its ghetto, residents organized schools and cultural activities, and an underground group prepared armed resistance. These sites reveal both Nazi control and Jewish responses.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Nazi authorities establish ghettos? Connect one purpose to a tactic described in the passage.

2. How did restrictions on food and movement affect life in the ghettos, and how did some residents respond?

3. How does the history of the Warsaw Ghetto show more than one form of Jewish resistance?

4. Where were the Łódź and Vilna ghettos, and what does each site's history reveal?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose Warsaw or Vilna and write a museum label of 75 to 100 words. Explain where the site was, why Nazis established ghettos, how one control tactic affected residents, and at least two acts of Jewish resistance; connect those details to why the site matters.

ANSWER KEY

Ghettos and Resistance

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.13

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline Nazi purposes and control tactics, circle acts of Jewish resistance, and put a star beside phrases that explain a ghetto site's location or significance. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Nazi authorities establish ghettos? Connect one purpose to a tactic described in the passage.	**They sought to isolate and control Jewish people. Guards, walls, and permits restricted residents' movement.**
2	How did restrictions on food and movement affect life in the ghettos, and how did some residents respond?	**The restrictions contributed to hunger and danger. Some residents shared food or secretly brought it past guards.**
3	How does the history of the Warsaw Ghetto show more than one form of Jewish resistance?	**Residents secretly brought in food and hid records of persecution. In 1943, Jewish fighters also resisted German forces sent to deport residents.**
4	Where were the Łódź and Vilna ghettos, and what does each site's history reveal?	**Łódź was in central Poland, where Nazi officials exploited Jewish labor for years. Vilna was in what is now Lithuania, where residents maintained cultural activities and an underground group prepared armed resistance.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Warsaw, in central Poland, held the largest ghetto in Nazi-occupied Europe. Nazi authorities separated Jewish residents from their neighbors to control them and later used ghettos for deportations. Guards restricted movement, making hunger more dangerous. Some residents secretly brought food past the guards to help others survive. Others hid records of persecution, preserving evidence for the future. In 1943, Jewish fighters resisted German forces sent to deport people who remained. Warsaw matters because its archive and uprising show different ways people resisted Nazi control.

Accept other passage-supported connections between Nazi control and Jewish responses. Distinguish efforts to survive and preserve evidence from armed resistance without treating one as more important than another.