Two Paths at Arrival

Trace what happened when deportees reached Auschwitz-Birkenau.

SS24.HOS.15a "Outline the arrival, selection, and process components of a prisoner's entry into a camp.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the three stages in the passage in order, underline one action at each stage, and circle the two different outcomes of selection.

Arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau

1 In May 1944, trains carrying Jews deported from Hungary reached Auschwitz-Birkenau in occupied Poland. Many people had spent days in crowded freight cars with little food, water, or space. At the arrival ramp, guards ordered them out and told them to leave their luggage behind. People stepped onto the platform without knowing what would happen next. Guards separated men from women and children, breaking up families within minutes. This arrival was not the same as being admitted to the camp as a registered prisoner. The next decision determined whether someone would be registered for forced labor or killed.

2 At the ramp, SS personnel, including doctors, carried out a selection. They judged who they considered able to work, often after only a brief glance rather than a medical examination. Some adults and older teenagers were directed toward registration and forced labor. Many children, older adults, and people judged unable to work were sent in another direction. Most of those sent away were murdered in gas chambers soon after arrival. These judgments were arbitrary and cruel, not a measure of anyone's worth. The two directions had different outcomes: only those chosen for labor went through the entry procedures described next.

3 For those selected for forced labor, entering the camp involved further steps. Guards took their belongings, and camp officials recorded personal details and assigned prisoner numbers. At Auschwitz, many registered prisoners had numbers tattooed on their arms, a practice that was not used at every Nazi camp. They were often forced to undress, had their hair cut or shaved, and went through washing and disinfection procedures before receiving prison clothing. The order of these steps could vary. Registration did not mean safety: prisoners faced starvation, violence, disease, and exhausting work. Describing entry accurately requires separating arrival, selection, and registration.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Outline what happened between the train's arrival and selection at the ramp.

2. Who carried out selection, and how were people directed into different paths?

3. Outline three procedures that people selected for forced labor faced after selection.

4. Why is the sequence “arrival, then registration for everyone” inaccurate?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence museum caption of 70 to 95 words that traces arrival, selection, and entry into Auschwitz-Birkenau in order. Contrast the outcomes of the two paths and explain why calling every arrival a registered prisoner would be inaccurate.

ANSWER KEY

Two Paths at Arrival

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the three stages in the passage in order, underline one action at each stage, and circle the two different outcomes of selection. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Outline what happened between the train's arrival and selection at the ramp.	**Guards ordered deportees out of the freight cars, told them to leave their luggage, and separated men from women and children.**
2	Who carried out selection, and how were people directed into different paths?	**SS personnel, including doctors, made quick judgments about who they considered able to work. They directed some people toward registration and forced labor and others toward the gas chambers.**
3	Outline three procedures that people selected for forced labor faced after selection.	**Accept any three: confiscation of belongings, recording of personal details, assignment of a prisoner number, tattooing of many registered prisoners, forced undressing, hair cutting or shaving, washing and disinfection, or receipt of prison clothing.**
4	Why is the sequence "arrival, then registration for everyone" inaccurate?	**Selection came between arrival and registration. Only those chosen for forced labor went through registration; most people sent in the other direction were murdered soon after arrival.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A train stops at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and deported people are ordered onto the ramp, leaving their bags behind. Guards split families into groups before SS personnel decide, often after a quick look, who will be forced to work. Those sent toward the gas chambers are murdered rather than registered as prisoners. Those chosen for labor have their possessions taken, receive numbers, and undergo procedures such as hair cutting and disinfection. Calling this a single entry route hides the fatal difference between the two paths.

Accept accurate paraphrases and variations in the order of registration procedures, which could vary. Do not accept an account that treats all arrivals as registered prisoners.