Knowledge and Action

Evaluate Allied responses to the Holocaust

SS24.HOS.18 "Critique the responses considered by the Roosevelt administration and the United States military to the suffering of European Jews in the Holocaust.* 18a Evaluate American and Allied officials' knowledge of and response to the Final..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two facts showing what officials knew, circle two responses they chose or refused, and label one camp liberated by each army U, B, or R. Use your marks to trace the difference between knowledge, decisions, and military action.

What the Allies Knew and Did

1. In 1942, reports reaching American and British officials described Nazi Germany's plan to murder Europe's Jews, known as the Final Solution. Some reports were initially questioned, but by late 1942 Allied governments had confirmed that mass killing was underway. On December 17, 1942, the United States and other Allies publicly condemned the murders. A declaration named the crime, but it did not open borders or stop deportation trains. American immigration quotas and strict visa rules continued to limit escape. To evaluate the response, distinguish what officials knew from what their actions could actually do for people in danger.

2. In January 1944, Roosevelt created the War Refugee Board, which helped fund rescue work and support refugees. It was a real change, but it came more than a year after the Allied declaration. In 1944, Jewish leaders and others urged the United States to bomb the rail lines to Auschwitz-Birkenau in occupied Poland, a killing center. The War Department rejected such requests, arguing that aircraft should strike military targets and that defeating Germany was the best way to end the murders. Historians debate whether bombing the tracks would have saved many lives, since the Nazis might have repaired them quickly.

3. As Allied armies pushed into Nazi-held territory, soldiers encountered camps and found survivors who urgently needed food and medical care. Red Army soldiers liberated Majdanek near Lublin, Poland, in July 1944, and Auschwitz near Oświęcim, Poland, in January 1945. U.S. troops reached Buchenwald near Weimar, Germany, in April 1945, after prisoners had taken control; they also liberated Dachau near Munich that month. British troops liberated Bergen-Belsen near Celle, Germany, in April 1945. These liberations exposed the crimes and brought aid, but advancing armies reached many camps only after countless prisoners had been killed or forced away.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What did Allied officials know by late 1942, and why was their public declaration alone an inadequate response?

2. Evaluate the timing of the War Refugee Board using the earlier Allied declaration as evidence.

3. Why did the War Department reject requests to bomb rail lines to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and what uncertainty complicates a judgment of that decision?

4. Name one camp and its nearby location for each liberating army: U.S., British, and Red Army. What was one limit of liberation?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence advisory note to Roosevelt set in 1944. Recommend one response beyond public condemnation, use two facts from the passage to support it, and explain one limitation or uncertainty.

Knowledge and Action

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts showing what officials knew, circle two responses they chose or refused, and label one camp liberated by each army U, B, or R. Use your marks to trace the difference between knowledge, decisions, and military action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did Allied officials know by late 1942, and why was their public declaration alone an inadequate response?	**They had confirmed that mass killing of Jews was underway. Condemning it publicly did not open borders or stop deportations.**
2	Evaluate the timing of the War Refugee Board using the earlier Allied declaration as evidence.	**The board supported rescue and refugees, but Roosevelt created it in January 1944, more than a year after the Allies publicly condemned the murders.**
3	Why did the War Department reject requests to bomb rail lines to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and what uncertainty complicates a judgment of that decision?	**It argued that aircraft should attack military targets and that defeating Germany was the best way to end the murders. Historians debate whether bombing the tracks would have saved many lives because the Nazis might have repaired them quickly.**
4	Name one camp and its nearby location for each liberating army: U.S., British, and Red Army. What was one limit of liberation?	**U.S.: Dachau near Munich, Germany; British: Bergen-Belsen near Celle, Germany; Red Army: Auschwitz near Oświęcim, Poland. Liberation brought aid, but many prisoners had already been killed or forced away. Accept Buchenwald near Weimar for U.S. troops or Majdanek near Lublin for the Red Army.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

President Roosevelt, ease strict visa rules so more Jewish refugees can seek safety. Allied governments had confirmed mass killing by late 1942, yet visa rules continued to limit escape. The War Refugee Board now supports rescue work, and wider entry could strengthen that effort. This change cannot protect people who cannot leave Nazi-controlled territory.

Accept a defensible recommendation other than easing visa rules if the four-sentence note supports it with two accurate passage facts and acknowledges a realistic limitation or uncertainty. For the camp question, students should distinguish U.S. troops' arrival at Buchenwald after prisoners took control from their liberation of Dachau.