# After the Gates

What U.S. troops did when they reached Nazi concentration camps

**SS24.HOS.18b** "Explain the role of the United States military in liberating concentration camps."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline actions U.S. military personnel took at the camps, and circle details showing why survivors still needed help after troops arrived. Use your marks to explain what liberation involved.

### Liberation Was More Than Arrival

1 In spring 1945, United States forces moving through Germany encountered Nazi concentration camps. These camps held people the Nazis had imprisoned, including Jews, political prisoners, and others they persecuted. On April 4, U.S. troops entered Ohrdruf, a subcamp of Buchenwald and the first Nazi concentration camp liberated by American soldiers. Guards had forced many prisoners to leave before the troops arrived. The soldiers found murdered prisoners and evidence of brutal conditions. Their arrival ended Nazi control at Ohrdruf, but it could not undo the deaths or immediately meet every survivor's needs.

2 On April 11, U.S. troops reached Buchenwald. Prisoners there had organized resistance and taken control of parts of the camp as Nazi guards fled. American soldiers secured the site, met surviving prisoners, and helped prevent the guards from regaining control. Later that month, U.S. troops entered Dachau, where they found thousands of prisoners alive, many dangerously weak or ill. Liberation meant more than opening gates. Soldiers had to restore order, bring food and water, and arrange medical care. Disease and starvation made recovery uncertain, and many people died even after the camps were freed.

3 U.S. military personnel also recorded what they found. They photographed camp conditions, gathered testimony, and preserved evidence of Nazi crimes. General Dwight D. Eisenhower visited Ohrdruf so he could witness the atrocities firsthand. The military brought officials and journalists to see some camps, making it harder to deny what had happened. American forces did not liberate every camp; Soviet and other Allied forces freed others. Their roles also differed from camp to camp. Still, U.S. troops helped end imprisonment at camps they reached, supported survivors, and documented crimes that the world needed to confront.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did U.S. troops' arrival change control of Ohrdruf, and what could their arrival not immediately do?

2. How did prisoners and U.S. troops each contribute to Buchenwald's liberation?

3. Why did entering Dachau not complete the U.S. military's work there?

4. How did U.S. military personnel help the world learn about crimes at the camps?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word museum label explaining what liberation meant at camps U.S. forces reached. Include actions at two named camps, one kind of help needed after arrival, and one limit of what liberation could accomplish.

ANSWER KEY

# After the Gates

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.18b

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions U.S. military personnel took at the camps, and circle details showing why survivors still needed help after troops arrived. Use your marks to explain what liberation involved. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did U.S. troops' arrival change control of Ohrdruf, and what could their arrival not immediately do? | **Their arrival ended Nazi control of Ohrdruf, but it could not undo the deaths or immediately meet every survivor's needs.** |
| 2 | How did prisoners and U.S. troops each contribute to Buchenwald's liberation? | **Prisoners took control of parts of the camp as guards fled. U.S. troops secured the site and helped prevent the guards from regaining control.** |
| 3 | Why did entering Dachau not complete the U.S. military's work there? | **Many prisoners were weak or ill, so soldiers had to restore order, bring food and water, and arrange medical care.** |
| 4 | How did U.S. military personnel help the world learn about crimes at the camps? | **They photographed conditions, gathered testimony, preserved evidence, and brought officials and journalists to see some camps.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At Ohrdruf in April 1945, U.S. troops ended Nazi control of a camp whose guards had already forced many prisoners away. At Buchenwald, prisoners seized parts of the camp as guards fled, and arriving American soldiers secured the site. These actions show that liberation was not one simple moment of opening a gate. U.S. personnel also supported survivors and documented Nazi crimes. Even after soldiers arrived, illness and starvation threatened prisoners' lives. Liberation ended imprisonment at the camps troops reached, but it could not immediately repair the harm people had suffered.

Accept explanations that distinguish prisoners' actions at Buchenwald from the U.S. military's role there. For the museum label, accept any two named camps from the passage if the actions and limits are accurate.