Fear and Resistance

Read how Nazi security forces tried to stop opposition.

SS24.HOS.5c "Analyze how the Schutzstaffel (SS) and the Gestapo broke resistance and instilled fear within Germany and in Nazi-occupied territories.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions taken by the Gestapo or SS. Circle words that show how those actions affected people's willingness or ability to resist.

How Fear Spread

1. In February 1943, Hans and Sophie Scholl scattered anti-Nazi leaflets at the University of Munich. A university custodian reported them, and the Gestapo, Nazi Germany's secret state police, arrested them. During questioning, Gestapo officers sought the names of others who had helped produce and distribute the leaflets. The Scholls were tried by a Nazi court and executed. This case shows how a report from an ordinary person could lead to an investigation and then a severe punishment. People who feared arrest might stop sharing leaflets or even avoid speaking openly about the war.

2. The SS was not the same organization as the Gestapo. Under Heinrich Himmler, the SS grew into a vast Nazi organization that ran concentration camps and carried out mass murder. The Gestapo investigated suspected opponents and could order people sent to camps without an ordinary court trial. SS guards controlled prisoners inside those camps, where people faced forced labor, violence, and death. News of arrests and disappearances reached families and neighbors. Because a person could be imprisoned without a fair hearing, even people who disliked the regime might decide that staying silent was safer than resisting.

3. In Nazi-occupied territories, SS units and Gestapo officers also targeted people suspected of helping resistance networks. Gestapo interrogators used torture to seek information about contacts and hiding places. SS forces carried out raids, deportations, and killings, sometimes punishing civilians far beyond those who had resisted. Occupiers used collective reprisals, threatening a wider community after an attack on German forces. Such punishment aimed to isolate resisters: neighbors might refuse shelter or supplies if helping could endanger their families. Still, people across occupied Europe continued to hide fugitives, pass information, and fight occupation despite these risks.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could the Gestapo's response to the Scholls discourage other people in Germany from resisting?

2. How did the Gestapo and the SS play different roles in making concentration camps a source of fear?

3. Compare how fear could silence people in Germany with how it could isolate resisters in occupied territories.

4. Why might collective reprisals make it harder for a resistance network to operate?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a resistance group in an occupied town plans to share a secret message. In one paragraph of 80 to 100 words, explain two different ways SS forces or the Gestapo might try to stop it and predict how each method could affect the group's choices. Create your own situation rather than retelling one from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Fear and Resistance

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.5c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions taken by the Gestapo or SS. Circle words that show how those actions affected people's willingness or ability to resist. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could the Gestapo's response to the Scholls discourage other people in Germany from resisting?	**Their arrest, questioning, and execution showed that sharing leaflets could bring severe punishment. Others might stop distributing leaflets or speaking openly.**
2	How did the Gestapo and the SS play different roles in making concentration camps a source of fear?	**The Gestapo could send suspected opponents to camps without an ordinary trial. SS guards controlled prisoners in camps where they faced forced labor, violence, and death.**
3	Compare how fear could silence people in Germany with how it could isolate resisters in occupied territories.	**In Germany, fear of arrest or imprisonment could keep people from speaking or sharing leaflets. In occupied territories, fear of reprisals could keep neighbors from sheltering or supplying resisters.**
4	Why might collective reprisals make it harder for a resistance network to operate?	**When a wider community faced punishment, neighbors might refuse to give resisters shelter or supplies to protect their families.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In an occupied town, a small group plans to pass warnings to families facing arrest. A Gestapo officer questions a captured messenger and pressures him to name other members. The group might stop using the same messenger and limit who knows each address. SS forces then raid homes suspected of hiding members and threaten to deport people who provide shelter. Neighbors might refuse to carry warnings because they fear for their families. The group could continue resisting by splitting its contacts into smaller circles, but fear would slow the spread of its messages.

Accept historically plausible explanations that connect a Gestapo or SS action to a specific effect on resistance. For Part 3, look for two distinct methods, a predicted effect for each, an original situation, and 80 to 100 words.