War and Refuge

Trace U.S. war policy and responses to Jewish refugees.

SS24.US2.6 "Trace the progression of events and policies leading to World War II and the United States' entry into the war. 6a Summarize the United States' foreign policies of isolationism and internationalism as World War II began and explain how the..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the dated events in chronological order, underline changes in U.S. war policy, and circle evidence of U.S. responses to Jewish refugees so you can compare how the two policies developed.

Two Policies in a Changing War

1 After World War I, many Americans wanted to avoid another European war. Congress passed Neutrality Acts beginning in 1935, restricting arms sales and loans to nations at war. These laws reflected isolationism, the belief that the United States should stay out of foreign conflicts. Meanwhile, Nazi Germany seized Austria in 1938 and attacked Jewish homes, businesses, and synagogues during Kristallnacht that November. Americans read reports of the violence, but opinions differed about accepting refugees. Some called for rescue; others feared competition for jobs during the Depression or held antisemitic views. Strict immigration quotas also limited entry.

2 In May 1939, the United States refused to admit the passengers of the St. Louis, a ship carrying Jewish refugees from Germany. The ship returned to Europe. When Germany invaded Poland that September, Britain and France declared war. The United States remained neutral, but Congress soon allowed nations at war to buy American weapons if they paid cash and carried them away. In 1941, the Lend-Lease Act let the United States supply arms to countries fighting the Axis without immediate payment. This shift toward internationalism meant active support for allies even while American troops stayed out of the fighting.

3 On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, killing more than 2,400 Americans. The United States declared war on Japan the next day. Germany then declared war on the United States, which responded with its own declaration. Pearl Harbor ended the debate over whether American forces would enter the war, but it did not settle how to aid people fleeing Nazi persecution. By 1942, reports described the systematic murder of Europe's Jews. Immigration restrictions remained, although the government established the War Refugee Board in 1944 to organize rescue efforts. Its creation followed years of warnings and limited admission.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the 1941 Lend-Lease Act change the approach reflected in the Neutrality Acts?

2. How did Pearl Harbor change the United States' role in the war, and what question about refugees remained unsettled?

3. How do Americans' reactions to Kristallnacht and the St. Louis episode show a gap between concern for refugees and U.S. policy?

4. By 1944, what evidence could someone use to argue that U.S. aid to Jewish refugees had come too late or remained too limited?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence editorial paragraph set in 1944 that judges whether U.S. treatment of Jewish refugees matched its growing role in the war. Cite two dated events from the passage, address one reason people opposed admitting refugees, and propose one action the government could take in 1944.

ANSWER KEY

War and Refuge

GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the dated events in chronological order, underline changes in U.S. war policy, and circle evidence of U.S. responses to Jewish refugees so you can compare how the two policies developed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the 1941 Lend-Lease Act change the approach reflected in the Neutrality Acts?	**The Neutrality Acts restricted arms sales and loans to nations at war. Lend-Lease allowed the United States to supply arms to countries fighting the Axis without immediate payment, increasing U.S. support without sending troops into combat.**
2	How did Pearl Harbor change the United States' role in the war, and what question about refugees remained unsettled?	**After Pearl Harbor, the United States entered the war against Japan and then Germany. The attack did not settle how the country would aid people fleeing Nazi persecution.**
3	How do Americans' reactions to Kristallnacht and the St. Louis episode show a gap between concern for refugees and U.S. policy?	**Some Americans called for rescue after Kristallnacht, but others opposed admitting refugees. Strict quotas limited entry, and the United States refused to admit the St. Louis passengers in 1939.**
4	By 1944, what evidence could someone use to argue that U.S. aid to Jewish refugees had come too late or remained too limited?	**The United States refused to admit the St. Louis passengers in 1939, and immigration restrictions remained after 1942 reports of mass murder. The War Refugee Board was not established until 1944.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

America's treatment of Jewish refugees has not matched its growing commitment to fight the Axis. In 1939, we turned away passengers aboard the St. Louis, even as war threatened Jews in Europe. The 1941 Lend-Lease Act showed that our government could act boldly beyond its borders to help people resist aggression. Some Americans worry that refugees will compete for jobs, but that concern does not justify leaving people trapped by persecution. In 1944, our government should speed visa decisions under existing quotas and give the War Refugee Board more resources to rescue those in danger.

Accept supported judgments that distinguish military aid from refugee policy. Proposed actions should be plausible for 1944 and respond to the barriers identified in the passage.