Choices and Consequences

Weigh U.S. actions and limits during the Holocaust

9-12.US2.16 "Analyze American participation in the international response to the Holocaust."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline U.S. actions in the international response to the Holocaust. Circle limits or delays that affected what those actions could accomplish.

America's Response to the Holocaust

1 In 1939, more than 900 Jewish refugees sailed from Germany aboard the *St. Louis*, hoping to enter Cuba. When Cuba refused most passengers, the ship approached the United States. U.S. officials did not offer the passengers entry outside normal immigration rules, and the ship returned to Europe. Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands took in its passengers, but some later died after Nazi Germany invaded those countries. U.S. immigration quotas and strict paperwork requirements also blocked other people fleeing Nazi persecution. These barriers show that American participation in the international response included decisions about whom to admit, not just actions taken during battle.

2 By 1942, reports of Nazi mass murder had reached Allied governments. In December, the United States joined Britain, the Soviet Union, and other Allies in a public declaration condemning the systematic killing of Europe's Jews. The declaration warned that those responsible would face punishment, but it did not itself open escape routes. In January 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the War Refugee Board to help people threatened by Nazi persecution. The board worked with relief groups and representatives of neutral countries, including Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg. Protective documents and safe houses used in his mission helped shelter Jews in Hungary.

3 The War Refugee Board helped arrange rescue efforts and send aid into Nazi-controlled territory, yet it began work after millions of Jews had already been murdered. Its success depended partly on cooperation from governments and aid workers outside the United States. In 1945, American troops liberated camps, cared for survivors, and reported what they found to the world. Liberation saved people still alive in those camps, but it could not undo the killing. To judge the U.S. role, weigh these actions against earlier immigration barriers and the board's late start, while recognizing that international partners carried out much of the rescue work.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did U.S. immigration rules shape the outcome for refugees aboard the *St. Louis*?

2. What did the 1942 Allied declaration accomplish, and what could it not accomplish on its own?

3. How did cooperation with people outside the United States strengthen the War Refugee Board's work?

4. Compare the War Refugee Board's work with the liberation of camps in 1945. How did timing limit each action's effect?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 3 to 4 sentences proposing one U.S. policy change before 1944 that might have helped people fleeing Nazi persecution. Explain how the United States could work with another country, identify an obstacle named in the passage, and weigh a possible benefit against a limit.

ANSWER KEY

Choices and Consequences

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.US2.16

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline U.S. actions in the international response to the Holocaust. Circle limits or delays that affected what those actions could accomplish. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did U.S. immigration rules shape the outcome for refugees aboard the *St. Louis*?	**U.S. officials did not admit the passengers outside normal rules. The ship returned to Europe, where some passengers later died after Nazi Germany invaded their host countries.**
2	What did the 1942 Allied declaration accomplish, and what could it not accomplish on its own?	**It publicly condemned the killing and warned of punishment, but it did not open escape routes.**
3	How did cooperation with people outside the United States strengthen the War Refugee Board's work?	**The board worked with relief groups and representatives of neutral countries. Wallenberg's mission used protective documents and safe houses to shelter Jews in Hungary.**
4	Compare the War Refugee Board's work with the liberation of camps in 1945. How did timing limit each action's effect?	**The board supported rescue, but it began after millions had been murdered. Liberation saved surviving prisoners, but it could not undo earlier deaths.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1942, the United States could have eased immigration paperwork for people escaping Nazi persecution. It could have worked with Allied governments to arrange places for refugees to stay. Existing immigration quotas would have been an obstacle unless the government changed those rules too. Earlier admission might have saved some people, but changing U.S. rules alone would not have opened escape routes.

Accept other plausible pre-1944 policy changes if the response names a passage-based obstacle and explains both a possible benefit and a limit. Do not require students to claim that a proposed change would certainly have saved lives.