After the Fighting

Tracing the lasting consequences of World War II

MWH.C.7.1.A "Explain the major consequences of World War II, including physical and economic destruction, civilian loss of life, mass displacement and expulsion of ethnic minorities, and the accelerated decline of European colonial empires."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline evidence of destruction, civilian deaths, displacement, and colonial decline. Circle words or phrases that explain why a consequence happened or lasted.

What the War Left Behind

1. In 1945, people returning to Warsaw found blocks of ruins instead of homes. Bombing and ground battles had wrecked roads, bridges, factories, and rail lines across much of Europe and Asia. Rebuilding required money and materials that governments struggled to find. Civilians had also died in enormous numbers from bombing, hunger, disease, and Nazi mass murder. The loss of workers and family members made recovery harder even where buildings still stood.

2. Survival did not always mean a return home. Millions of people were uprooted by combat, persecution, and changes to national borders. After the war, ethnic Germans were expelled from Poland and Czechoslovakia; many had to leave farms and possessions behind. Holocaust survivors often found their former homes destroyed or occupied, and some faced continued hostility. Camps offered temporary shelter, but finding a permanent home could take years. Displacement therefore continued long after the shooting stopped.

3. War also weakened Europe's hold on overseas colonies. Britain, France, and the Netherlands had spent heavily on fighting and reconstruction, leaving fewer resources to maintain colonial rule. In parts of Asia, Japanese occupation had disrupted European control. Meanwhile, local independence movements had grown stronger. Britain granted India independence in 1947. Indonesia declared independence from the Netherlands in 1945 and gained Dutch recognition in 1949 after years of conflict. These changes did not end colonialism everywhere, but they accelerated its decline.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did damage to roads, bridges, and factories create an economic problem after the war?

2. How did civilian deaths make recovery harder, even where buildings still stood?

3. Why did displacement continue after the fighting ended? Give two reasons from the passage.

4. How did the war help speed the decline of European colonial empires? Include one example.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 55 to 75 word museum label explaining why the end of fighting did not mean the end of hardship. Connect at least two different consequences in a cause-and-effect chain, and use one specific example from the passage.

After the Fighting

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline evidence of destruction, civilian deaths, displacement, and colonial decline. Circle words or phrases that explain why a consequence happened or lasted. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did damage to roads, bridges, and factories create an economic problem after the war?	**They needed to be rebuilt, but governments struggled to find the money and materials.**
2	How did civilian deaths make recovery harder, even where buildings still stood?	**Communities had lost workers and family members who would have helped them recover.**
3	Why did displacement continue after the fighting ended? Give two reasons from the passage.	**Ethnic Germans were expelled from Poland and Czechoslovakia, and some Holocaust survivors found their homes destroyed or occupied.**
4	How did the war help speed the decline of European colonial empires? Include one example.	**European governments had fewer resources to maintain colonial rule, while occupation had disrupted control in parts of Asia and independence movements had grown stronger. Britain granted India independence in 1947.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A war can end before people find a safe place to live. In Warsaw, blocks of ruined homes made it difficult for families to return. Across Europe, damaged rail lines could also slow the delivery of materials needed for rebuilding. Families who had lost homes needed shelter while governments faced costly repairs. Destruction could therefore prolong displacement and make recovery harder for entire communities.

Accept other accurate cause-and-effect explanations supported by the passage. For the museum label, look for two distinct consequences, a clear connection between them, and a specific example.