Doors to Safety

Immigration barriers and the Kindertransport

TOT.C.5.5 "Describe how Jewish immigration was restricted by various nations and explain how the Kindertransport saved the lives of Jewish children."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each rule or decision that restricted Jewish refugees. Circle the words that show how the Kindertransport offered a different route to safety.

When Borders Closed

1. In May 1939, the ocean liner St. Louis crossed the Atlantic carrying 937 passengers, most of them Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. Many hoped to enter Cuba, but Cuban authorities denied entry to most passengers, although a small number were allowed to land. The ship then approached the United States, where immigration quotas and visa requirements blocked admission for passengers who lacked the required papers. The ship returned to Europe. Several countries took in its passengers, but many later faced Nazi occupation. Their journey shows how a person could escape one border yet still find safety blocked at another.

2. Restrictions were not limited to one ship. United States laws set annual immigration quotas by country of birth, and applicants often faced long waits and demanding paperwork. Britain also limited immigration to Palestine, which it governed under a mandate. Its 1939 White Paper capped Jewish immigration there at 75,000 over five years and made further immigration depend on Arab consent. These policies did not all have the same purpose, but each narrowed a route to refuge while Nazi persecution grew. For Jewish families trying to leave, a border rule could decide whether they reached safety or remained in danger.

3. One route opened for children. After the anti-Jewish violence of November 1938, Britain allowed thousands of unaccompanied children from Nazi-controlled lands to enter through the Kindertransport. From late 1938 until war began in September 1939, about 10,000 children arrived, most of them Jewish. British sponsors promised to cover the children's care, and many children lived with foster families or in hostels. Their parents generally could not come with them under this arrangement. The journeys saved children from Nazi persecution and, for many, from death. Yet separation carried lasting pain, and many children never saw their parents again.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did United States immigration rules affect passengers aboard the St. Louis?

2. How did decisions by Cuba and Britain each narrow a route to safety for Jewish refugees?

3. How could Britain restrict Jewish immigration to Palestine while also admitting children through the Kindertransport?

4. Explain how the Kindertransport saved lives and why it did not bring whole families to safety.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word caption for a museum display titled "A Door Opened, Others Closed." Explain how restrictions by two nations shaped Jewish refugees' options, then contrast those barriers with the Kindertransport and one limit of that rescue.

Doors to Safety

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each rule or decision that restricted Jewish refugees. Circle the words that show how the Kindertransport offered a different route to safety. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did United States immigration rules affect passengers aboard the St. Louis?	**Immigration quotas and visa requirements blocked admission for passengers who lacked the required papers.**
2	How did decisions by Cuba and Britain each narrow a route to safety for Jewish refugees?	**Cuba denied entry to most St. Louis passengers, though a small number landed. Britain capped Jewish immigration to Palestine and made further immigration depend on Arab consent.**
3	How could Britain restrict Jewish immigration to Palestine while also admitting children through the Kindertransport?	**Britain limited one route, immigration to Palestine, but allowed unaccompanied children from Nazi-controlled lands to enter Britain through a separate program.**
4	Explain how the Kindertransport saved lives and why it did not bring whole families to safety.	**It brought about 10,000 children, most of them Jewish, to safety from Nazi persecution. Their parents generally could not come under the arrangement.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A ship could cross an ocean and still find no safe harbor. In 1939, Cuba denied entry to most passengers aboard the St. Louis, while United States quotas and visa rules kept passengers without the required papers out. Britain restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine, yet it admitted about 10,000 children through the Kindertransport. For those children, the exception offered safety from Nazi persecution. It was not a rescue for entire families: most parents could not travel with their children, and many never met again.

Accept any accurate pair of national restrictions supported by the passage. Students should distinguish Britain's limits on immigration to Palestine from its admission of children to Britain.