Choices Under Threat

Acts of resistance and the risks behind them

TOT.C.5.6 "Examine the choices and actions of individuals and groups defying Nazi policy at great personal risk."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one act that defied Nazi policy and circle one risk in each paragraph. Draw a line from each underlined act to the person or group that carried it out.

Different Ways to Resist

1. In 1943, siblings Hans and Sophie Scholl carried anti-Nazi leaflets into the University of Munich. They belonged to the White Rose, a small group that used written appeals instead of weapons. Its leaflets condemned Nazi crimes, including the murder of Jews, and urged Germans to resist. The Scholls left stacks where students might find them, despite knowing that distributing such words was forbidden. A university custodian reported them. The Gestapo arrested the siblings, and a Nazi court sentenced them to death. Their choice made private opposition visible, but it exposed their names to a state that punished dissent.

2. In Berlin, factory owner Otto Weidt employed blind and deaf Jewish workers making brushes and brooms. As Nazi authorities deported Berlin's Jews, employment did not reliably protect his workers. Weidt tried to keep them safe by bribing officials, hiding people, and obtaining false papers. These actions challenged Nazi efforts to remove Jews from the city, but each could draw police attention to his workshop and to the people he sheltered. Weidt could not save everyone. His choices show that resistance sometimes meant using money, a workplace, and personal connections to protect people targeted by the state.

3. In occupied Denmark, German authorities planned to deport Danish Jews in October 1943. After a warning spread, Danish neighbors helped families find shelter and reach the coast. Fishermen carried thousands across the narrow sea to neutral Sweden, often in small boats. Some passengers paid for the crossing; others received help with the cost. German patrols might catch the boats, placing passengers and helpers in danger. Most of Denmark's Jews escaped, although hundreds were deported. Unlike a leaflet, this defiance moved people out of reach of the deportation order. It depended on many people sharing information, shelter, money, and boats.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the White Rose's method of opposing Nazi policy make the Scholls vulnerable?

2. How did Weidt use his workplace to defy Nazi efforts, and what danger did his choices bring?

3. Why did the escape from Denmark require cooperation beyond the fishermen? What danger did the helpers face?

4. Compare what the White Rose and the Danish helpers tried to accomplish. How did their methods differ?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 90 word museum label comparing Weidt's choices with the Danish rescue. Explain how each depended on other people, identify a risk in each case, and use evidence from the passage to argue why one approach could protect more people at once.

ANSWER KEY

Choices Under Threat

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.5.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one act that defied Nazi policy and circle one risk in each paragraph. Draw a line from each underlined act to the person or group that carried it out. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the White Rose's method of opposing Nazi policy make the Scholls vulnerable?	**They placed forbidden leaflets where others could find them. A custodian reported them, leading to their arrest and death sentences.**
2	How did Weidt use his workplace to defy Nazi efforts, and what danger did his choices bring?	**He employed Jewish workers and tried to protect them by bribing officials, hiding people, and obtaining false papers. His actions could draw police attention to the workshop and those he sheltered.**
3	Why did the escape from Denmark require cooperation beyond the fishermen? What danger did the helpers face?	**Neighbors spread the warning, offered shelter, helped families reach the coast, and helped with costs. German patrols might catch the boats, endangering passengers and helpers.**
4	Compare what the White Rose and the Danish helpers tried to accomplish. How did their methods differ?	**The White Rose urged Germans to resist Nazi crimes by distributing leaflets. The Danish helpers defied a deportation plan by sheltering Jews and helping them escape by boat.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Otto Weidt used his workshop, money, and contacts to protect Jewish workers in Berlin. People he hid depended on secrecy, and police attention could put them in danger. In Denmark, neighbors shared warnings, offered shelter, and helped families reach fishermen who carried them to Sweden. Patrols could catch the boats, endangering passengers and helpers. The Danish network could protect more people at once because many neighbors and fishermen joined in, while Weidt's efforts centered on one workplace. Neither choice was safe or guaranteed success.

Accept different supported comparisons of scale, cooperation, and risk. Students should distinguish the Scholls' public appeal from actions that directly helped people escape or avoid deportation.