The Land Claim

Trace how a Nazi idea shaped invasion and occupation.

TOT.C.6.1 "Examine the term "lebensraum" (living space), which was an essential piece of Nazi ideology and explain how it led to territorial expansion and invasion."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the Nazi claims about who should control land, circle the two invasions, and number two ways people living in conquered areas were affected. Use your marks to trace the connection from ideology to action.

What Did "Living Space" Mean?

1. In the 1920s, Adolf Hitler argued that Germany needed *Lebensraum*, a German word meaning "living space." He did not mean that crowded families simply needed larger houses. Nazi leaders claimed that Germans belonged to a superior "race" and should take farmland and resources in eastern Europe. They described Slavic peoples who lived there as inferior and treated Jewish people as enemies to be removed. These claims were racist, not facts about human worth. By presenting conquest as a necessity for the German nation, the Nazis turned a demand for land into a reason to seize other people's homes.

2. This idea helped shape decisions about war. In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, beginning World War II in Europe. Nazi leaders planned to control Polish land, remove many of its residents, and make room for German settlers. In June 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Its leaders sought vast areas of land, food, and raw materials, especially in the east. These invasions had other strategic and political aims, but *Lebensraum* was central to Nazi plans for eastern Europe. Military conquest was the first step toward taking territory that was already home to millions of people.

3. What happened under occupation shows what "living space" meant in practice. German authorities expelled Polish families from some areas and brought in German settlers. In occupied Soviet territory, Nazi planners sought to take food for Germany even though this would leave local people hungry. German forces and their collaborators also murdered millions of Jews and other civilians as part of the regime's wider racist policies. The aim was not to find empty land. It was to remake an inhabited region through conquest, forced displacement, and mass violence. Connecting the idea to these actions reveals why *Lebensraum* mattered to the invasions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Nazi claims about Germans and Slavic peoples turn a demand for land into a reason to invade eastern Europe?

2. How did Nazi plans for Polish land connect the idea of *Lebensraum* to the 1939 invasion?

3. How did the goals of the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union reflect *Lebensraum*?

4. Why is it misleading to describe *Lebensraum* as a plan to settle empty land? Use evidence about occupation.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A museum draft says, "Germany invaded because its people needed more room." Write a 75 to 95 word replacement label that corrects this claim. Explain how *Lebensraum* connected to both invasions in the passage and describe at least one effect on people living in the conquered areas.

ANSWER KEY

The Land Claim

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the Nazi claims about who should control land, circle the two invasions, and number two ways people living in conquered areas were affected. Use your marks to trace the connection from ideology to action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Nazi claims about Germans and Slavic peoples turn a demand for land into a reason to invade eastern Europe?	**Nazis claimed Germans were superior and entitled to eastern European land while treating the Slavic people who lived there as inferior. They used those racist claims to justify taking inhabited territory.**
2	How did Nazi plans for Polish land connect the idea of *Lebensraum* to the 1939 invasion?	**After invading Poland, Nazi leaders planned to control its land, remove many residents, and make room for German settlers.**
3	How did the goals of the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union reflect *Lebensraum*?	**Nazi leaders invaded to gain eastern territory, food, and raw materials for Germany, even though people already lived on that land.**
4	Why is it misleading to describe *Lebensraum* as a plan to settle empty land? Use evidence about occupation.	**The land was inhabited. German authorities expelled Polish families, and Nazi plans to take food from occupied Soviet territory threatened local people with hunger.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The claim that Germany invaded because it simply needed more room hides the racism behind *Lebensraum*. Nazi leaders said Germans deserved land in eastern Europe and treated people already living there as obstacles. Germany invaded Poland in 1939, then the Soviet Union in 1941, seeking territory, food, and resources. Under occupation, authorities expelled Polish families, while Nazi plans for Soviet food supplies threatened local people with hunger. This was not a move into empty space. It was a plan to gain land through invasion and displacement.

Accept responses that connect racist claims about land to the invasions of Poland and the Soviet Union and identify a documented effect on residents. Students may note that the invasions also had other aims.