Response and Reckoning

U.S. actions during and after the Shoah

USH.C.5.3 "Summarize the United States of America's reactions to the events of the Shoah (Holocaust). Describe the United States of America government's reactions to news of the Shoah during the war including condemnation of Nazi genocide of Jews and..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline U.S. actions, circle limits on those actions, and number the actions in the order they occurred. Use your marks to track how the U.S. response changed.

From Condemnation to Accountability

1. In 1942, reports of Nazi mass murder of European Jews reached the United States. That December, the United States and other Allied governments publicly condemned the killing. Condemnation did not immediately open America's doors: strict immigration rules kept many refugees out. In January 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the War Refugee Board. It worked with aid groups and diplomats to help people escape and to send relief to Jews and others threatened by Nazi persecution.

2. As Allied armies advanced in 1945, American soldiers liberated concentration camps including Buchenwald and Dachau. They found starving prisoners, bodies, and evidence of widespread abuse. Soviet troops, not American troops, liberated Auschwitz, a major Nazi killing center. For those who survived, freedom did not mean an immediate homecoming. Many lived in displaced persons camps in Europe. U.S. immigration limits initially restricted entry, but the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 later allowed many survivors to move to the United States.

3. After Germany surrendered, the United States joined Britain, France, and the Soviet Union in prosecuting major Nazi leaders at Nuremberg. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson served as chief American prosecutor in the first trial, held from 1945 to 1946. The court heard evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the persecution and murder of Jews. Some defendants were convicted and sentenced; others were acquitted. The trials showed an American response that sought legal accountability, not only wartime rescue.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did U.S. government action change between its 1942 statement and the creation of the War Refugee Board?

2. What did U.S. troops find when they liberated camps, and how was the liberation of Auschwitz different?

3. How did U.S. immigration policy affect survivors before and after 1948?

4. How did U.S. participation at Nuremberg differ from its actions during the war?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label explaining whether the U.S. response stayed the same from wartime through the aftermath. Support your judgment with one detail from each paragraph and mention a limit of U.S. action.

ANSWER KEY

Response and Reckoning

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.5.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline U.S. actions, circle limits on those actions, and number the actions in the order they occurred. Use your marks to track how the U.S. response changed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did U.S. government action change between its 1942 statement and the creation of the War Refugee Board?	**The government moved from publicly condemning the killing to creating a board that helped people escape and sent relief.**
2	What did U.S. troops find when they liberated camps, and how was the liberation of Auschwitz different?	**U.S. troops found starving prisoners, bodies, and evidence of abuse at camps such as Buchenwald and Dachau. Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz.**
3	How did U.S. immigration policy affect survivors before and after 1948?	**Immigration limits initially restricted entry. The 1948 Displaced Persons Act later allowed many survivors to move to the United States.**
4	How did U.S. participation at Nuremberg differ from its actions during the war?	**During the war, the U.S. condemned Nazi killings and supported rescue. Afterward, it helped prosecute Nazi leaders for their crimes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The U.S. response changed from public protest to rescue efforts and then legal action. In 1942, the government condemned the killing of Jews, but immigration limits still kept many refugees out. American troops liberated Buchenwald and Dachau in 1945, revealing the camps' brutal conditions. After the war, an American prosecutor helped try Nazi leaders at Nuremberg, showing that the United States also sought to hold perpetrators accountable.

Accept other accurate judgments about change or continuity if the label uses a detail from each paragraph and identifies a limit, such as immigration restrictions. Students should distinguish camps liberated by U.S. troops from Auschwitz, which Soviet troops liberated.