**Holocaust Perspective - Victims**

**Name: Date: Per:**

Directions: Read the following primary source accounts from the Holocaust. You will read one account from Kristallnacht, ghetto life, Auschwitz, and liberation.

Kristallnacht: “What I saw was hordes of people standing in front of a beautiful synagogue, and throwing stones through these magnificent colored windows. And as we arrived, of course we ran past the place itself, the noise, the shouting, the screaming. I suppose there was an, an aura of eeriness about it, because we still didn't know what was happening, but I suppose just the mere fact that so many people were there and were screaming and shouting and, and throwing stones into the stained glass windows was enough to make us run. We arrived in school and were immediately told that our parents would pick us up, we should remain calm but there would be no school that day. And indeed a few minutes later my mother did arrive and took me to my grandmother's home where my father already was. And here then unfolded slowly but surely the grim story of what happened during the night, that the synagogues all through Germany had been set on fire, destroyed. The Torah scrolls were burned in most cases. It is known that in Hamburg people sacrificed themselves to run into the synagogue to save some of the scrolls, hide them, and I believe were successful in doing so. The Jewish stores in the center of Hamburg, in the downtown area of Hamburg, had been demolished, windows had been broken the merchandise had been thrown into the streets, covered with water and with ink. It was total chaos, a total destruction.” – Johanna Grechter Neumann

1) What was Kristallacht an example of? For what purpose do you think the Germans carried out Kristallnacht?

Ghetto Life: “One day there came an announcement that there will be a Jewish quarters, which has come to be known as the ghetto. But the Germans called it the Jewish quarters. It gave you perimeters where Jews could live, which was a tiny portion of the town, and I'm speaking of the town where I lived, but it was similarly true in other towns. The Poles who lived in that area had to evacuate, but there was no problem because the area that the Jews left was a much wider one, so whatever Pole was displaced, they got much better quarters anyway, but not the other way around. The Jews moved families into one room, two families, maybe one family in one room in the beginning. The ghetto would become smaller and smaller and smaller. But at first it was open, so you could get in and out in certain hours. For example, a Jew could not be in the street after seven o'clock. But all the other times you could get out and mingle, be outside. One day there was an announcement: the ghetto is closed. And there were gates, there were walls built and you couldn't get out. So you see there was this ever-increasing level of persecution.” – Emanuel Tanay

2) Why do you think the German’s moved Jews into ghettos? What purpose did the ghettos serve?

Auschwitz: “It was late at night that we arrived at Auschwitz. When we came in, the minute the gates opened up, we heard screams, barking of dogs, blows from...from those Kapos, those officials working for them, over the head. And then we got out of the train. And everything went so fast: left, right, right, left. Men separated from women. Children torn from the arms of mothers. The elderly chased like cattle. The sick, the disabled were handled like packs of garbage. They were thrown in a side together with broken suitcases, with boxes. My mother ran over to me and grabbed me by the shoulders, and she told me ‘Leibele, I'm not going to see you no more. Take care of your brother.’ My brother was 12 or 13 at the time. 10 minutes later, Mengele, the doctor, pointed to my little brother to go to the left. Before I could realize, he was gone, and I didn’t see him no more. I didn’t know at the time that I was the lucky one, because when I went into the showers, from the showerheads we got water. Other people got poison gas. When we came out of the showers, the sky was red, the air was filled with smoke from the odor of burning flesh and hair. A man went over to a German official and asked ‘Where is my wife and daughter.’ The official said, ‘There is no more wife and daughter.’ The man asked ‘What do you mean?’ The official turned and pointed to the chimney with the smoke bursting out and said, ‘This is their funeral. There they go.” – Leo Schneiderman

3) Based on this account, what do you think was the fate of the man’s wife and daughter? Why do you think the man was spared, but not his wife and daughter?

Liberation: “All of a sudden I saw a strange car coming down the hill, no longer green, not bearing the swastika, but a white star. It was sort of a mud-splattered vehicle but I've never seen a star brighter in my life. And two men jumped out, came running toward us and one came toward where I stood. He was wearing battle gear. His helmet was this mesh over that and he was wearing dark glasses and he spoke to me in German. And he said, "Does anybody here speak German or English?" and I said, "I speak German." And I felt that I had to tell him we are Jewish. I was a little afraid to tell him that but I said to him, "We are Jewish." He didn't answer me for quite a while. And then his own voice sort of betrayed his own emotion and he said, "So am I." I would say it was the greatest hour of my life. And then he asked an incredible question. He said, "May I see the other ladies?" You know, what we have been addressed for six years and then to hear this man. He looked to me like a young god. I have to tell you I weighed 68 pounds. My hair was white. And you can imagine, I hadn't had a bath in years. And this creature asked for "the other ladies." And I told him that most of the girls were inside. They were too ill to walk, and he said, "Won't you come with me?" And I said, "Sure." But I didn't know what he meant. He held the door open for me and let me precede him and in that gesture restored me to humanity.” – Gerda Weissmann Klein

4) Why was it that the simplest of gestures, having the door help open for her, restored Gerda to humanity?