

Student Activity

Vera Laska: Power of Resistance

Name _____

Vera Laska was born July 21, 1928, in Kosice, Czechoslovakia. Before the war changed her life, Vera was, in many ways, a typical teenager who enjoyed adventure, sports, and spending time with friends while also maintaining a strong will and idealistic beliefs. During the war, along with friends and strangers, Vera resisted and defied her oppressors through nonconformity and opposition. Although Vera doesn't explicitly state her reasons for becoming involved in the resistance, there are other times in her testimony, where her beliefs and her actions form a more direct cause-and-effect relationship.

Directions: After viewing Vera's testimony, in small groups examine the following columns of cause and effect. Place the letter of the cause in the blank that best represents its effect. The first one is done for you. Be prepared to justify your answers.

Causes:

- A. Vera was idealistic and patriotic,
- B. Vera was young, athletic, strong-willed, and adventurous,
- C. Because she wanted to maintain the safety of individuals and of the whole resistance movement,
- D. To keep up morale and "live through the insanity" of Auschwitz,
- E. Vera believed statistically few people die on their birthdays,
- F. To sabotage the Nazi war machine and also save energy,
- G. As proof of the existence of another kind of life,
- H. Vera saw an opportunity for freedom amidst chaos,

Effects:

1. A so she was heartbroken and angry when the German Army marched into her country.
2. _____ Vera learned to break a thread with the touch of her finger at the textile factory.
3. _____ so she agrees to lead from Slovakia to Hungary two men who lacked proper identification papers.
4. _____ so she escapes while on a death march to Mauthausen.
5. _____ Vera took part in a "cooking group" while at Auschwitz.
6. _____ Vera never talked about resistance activities except with other members.
7. _____ Vera puts up a picture of a horse she found in a scrap of newspaper at Dora-Mittelbau.
8. _____ so on July 21, 1944, while at Auschwitz, she takes a chance and volunteers for work at a textile factory.

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Discussion Questions

1. Why should we study cause-and-effect relationships?
2. Do you think there was a main underlying belief system that moved Vera to engage in resistance activities? If so, what were those beliefs? If not, why not?
3. Some would say Vera's beliefs led to her actions of resistance. Others might feel her resistance actions led to the formation of her beliefs. Based on her testimony, which seems more likely? Why?