

NAME:

DAY # 1

# **6th Grade Social Studies (Blizzard Bag)**

## **DAY #1**

**(Only complete if we must go NTI)**

**Instructions: Please read the article carefully. Pay attention to the key events and changes happening in Syria as described in the text.**

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On December 8, 2024, Syrian rebels made a surprising move and took control of the capital city, Damascus, without facing much resistance. President Bashar al-Assad, who had been in power for 13 years, fled the country and went to Russia for safety. His family also went with him. This sudden change marked the end of the Assad family's rule in Syria, which had lasted for more than 60 years.

This event was a huge shock to the Middle East. It ended a long war that started in 2011, when many people in Syria protested against Assad's government. The war led to a lot of destruction, with hundreds of thousands of people dying, cities being destroyed, and millions of people forced to leave their homes and become refugees in other countries.

For years, Assad had the help of Russia and Iran to stay in power. Russia even gave Assad and his family a safe place to live after they ran away. The fall of Assad's government also meant that Iran and Russia lost a lot of influence in the Middle East. The rebels, who were partly supported by Turkey and some other countries, said their victory was a major win for the people of Syria and the wider Arab world.

One of the rebel commanders, Abu Mohammed al-Golani, spoke to a large crowd in Damascus, saying that this was the beginning of a new era for Syria. He talked about how many people had suffered during the war, including those who had to live in refugee camps or died trying to escape. He promised that Syria would rebuild and become a strong country again.

As the rebel fighters took over the city, people who had been in prison under Assad's rule were released. Many of them had been jailed for speaking out against the government. Families were reunited, and people celebrated in the streets. Some people even took pictures of the damaged Assad posters that rebels had torn down.

The country was not entirely peaceful right away, though. Some rebel groups were looting stores, and there was still some fighting and confusion. The rebels were setting up new rules, and some government buildings were looted, including the president's palace.

At the same time, other countries were watching closely. The United States and its allies, like Turkey, were keeping an eye on what would happen next. President Joe Biden of the United States said that while it was good that Assad had been overthrown, there were still many challenges ahead for Syria. There was a lot of work to do to bring stability and peace to the country after the long war.

Many other countries, like Israel and France, also reacted to the news of Assad's fall. Israeli leaders said that the rebels' victory had helped weaken Iran and its allies in the region. French President Emmanuel Macron called Assad's fall a victory for the Syrian people, but warned that Syria still faced many struggles ahead.

The rebel groups in Syria now face the big job of trying to rebuild the country. They will need to create a new government and make sure that everyone in Syria, from different religions and groups, can live together peacefully. There are also many people in Syria who need food, medical care, and a place to live, and the country will need help from other nations to recover.

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For now, the rebels are working to form a new government, but it's clear that the road ahead will be difficult. Many Syrians are hopeful, but they know that peace and stability will take time.

*This summary is paraphrased from a Reuters article written on December 8, 2024, by Maya Gebeily and Timour Azhari.*

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*Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Make sure your answers are detailed and show your understanding of the article (1-2 sentence responses are adequate).*

1. *Why was the fall of Assad's government important for the Middle East?*

<p><i>Answer:</i></p>
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2. *What happened in Syria after the rebels took over Damascus?*

*Answer:*

3. *What challenges will the rebels face in rebuilding Syria?*

*Answer:*