

Before You Read: Think About It

Holocaust Timeline (1933–1945)

- 1933 – Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany
- 1935 – Nuremberg Laws begin discrimination
- 1938 – Kristallnacht ('Night of Broken Glass')
- 1941 – Mass deportations to camps begin
- 1945 – Allied forces liberate the camps

Reflection Questions

1. What do you already know about World War II or the Holocaust?
2. Why do you think it's important to learn about painful events in history?
3. Have you ever seen a memorial? What was it for?
4. What does the word 'resistance' mean to you?
5. What would you do if you saw someone being treated unfairly?

The Holocaust: A Dark Chapter in History

The **Holocaust** was a tragic event in world history that happened during **World War II**, from 1939 to 1945. It was a time of terrible **persecution**—when millions of people were treated cruelly and unfairly. Led by **Adolf Hitler**, the **Nazi** regime in Germany carried out the systematic murder, or **genocide**, of six million **Jewish** people, simply because of their religion and identity. The Nazis also targeted Romani people, **refugees**, people with disabilities, and others they labeled “undesirable.”

The Holocaust started with **discrimination** and **anti-Semitism**—which means hatred toward Jewish people. Jewish families were forced to wear yellow stars, banned from schools and jobs, and pushed out of public life. These restrictions began with laws passed by the Nazis in 1935, known as the Nuremberg Laws. These actions grew worse over time. The Nazis also used **propaganda**—false or one-sided messages designed to influence people’s thoughts and beliefs. They spread hateful ideas through posters, films, and school lessons, trying to make people blame Jewish families and believe lies about them. In 1938, a violent event called **Kristallnacht**, or “The Night of Broken Glass,” took place. Nazi forces and their supporters destroyed thousands of Jewish homes, shops, and synagogues, which are places where



Kristallnacht, 1938 — A Jewish shop stands destroyed after a night of Nazi-led attacks across Germany. This event marked a shift to open violence against Jewish people.

Jewish people worship and gather as a community. About 30,000 Jewish men were arrested. This marked a dangerous turning point from unfair treatment to full-scale violence.

Soon after, the Nazis began forcing Jewish people to live in **ghettos**—overcrowded parts of cities with poor conditions. Later, millions were taken to **concentration camps** and death camps such as Auschwitz and Treblinka. In these camps, many died from starvation, hard labor, or gas chambers. Some brave people showed **resistance** by fighting back or helping others escape, even though doing so was very dangerous. In the Warsaw Ghetto, Jewish people organized an uprising. Others, like **Oskar Schindler** and the **French Resistance**, risked their lives to hide Jewish families or help them flee.

The Holocaust ended in 1945, when Allied forces, including soldiers from the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, defeated the Nazis and began the **liberation** of the camps. **Survivors**—people who lived through the Holocaust—began to tell their stories so the world would never forget what happened. Many Jewish people had lost their families, homes, and communities. Today, **memorials**, museums, and education programs help people remember the victims and honor those who resisted.



The Holocaust teaches us about the dangers of hatred, **injustice**, and staying silent when others are being hurt. One **survivor**, **Elie Wiesel**, who won the Nobel Peace Prize, once said:

“We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

These powerful words remind us that silence helps those who do harm. We must speak out, protect others, and never forget what happened during the Holocaust.

Words to Know from the Passage

People & Groups

- **Jewish People** – People who follow Judaism or are part of Jewish culture.
- **Nazi** – Member of the group that ruled Germany under Hitler.
- **Adolf Hitler** – Nazi leader who started WWII and led the Holocaust.
- **Survivor** – Someone who lived through the Holocaust.
- **Refugee** – A person who flees their country to find safety.

Places & Events

- **Ghetto** – A crowded area where Jewish people were forced to live.
- **Concentration Camp** – A prison-like camp where many suffered.
- **Liberation** – When people in camps were freed at the end of WWII.
- **Memorial** – A place to remember those who died.

Key Concepts

- **Holocaust** – The time in WWII when millions were killed by the Nazis.
- **Genocide** – Trying to destroy a group because of who they are.
- **Persecution** – Cruel treatment based on identity.
- **Discrimination** – Unfair treatment based on race, religion, or background.
- **Injustice** – When people are treated unfairly.
- **Resistance** – Fighting back against cruelty.
- **Anti-Semitism** – Hatred of Jewish people.
- **Propaganda** – False or one-sided messages used to shape how people think, often to spread hate or control public opinion.

Name:

Date:

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice (Circle the correct answer)

1. **What was one major cause of the Holocaust?**
 - A) A natural disaster
 - B) Hatred toward Jewish people
 - C) A fight over land
 - D) World peace agreements

2. **What event marked a shift from discrimination to violence?**
 - A) Nuremberg Laws
 - B) World War I
 - C) Kristallnacht
 - D) The liberation of camps

3. **What does the word *genocide* mean?**
 - A) A large battle between countries
 - B) Trying to destroy a group because of who they are
 - C) Helping others escape persecution
 - D) Teaching others about kindness

4. **Who were the Allied forces that helped liberate the camps?**
 - A) Germany, Italy, and Japan
 - B) France, Spain, and China
 - C) Poland, Austria, and Switzerland
 - D) United States, Britain, and Soviet Union

5. **Why did some people show resistance during the Holocaust?**
 - A) To help and protect others from harm
 - B) To escape from the country
 - C) To support the Nazis
 - D) To start a new war

6. **What is propaganda?**
 - A) A type of peaceful protest
 - B) A fair and balanced news report
 - C) A message meant to influence people's beliefs, sometimes using lies
 - D) A law passed to protect people's rights

Open-Ended Questions

Directions: Write your answers using complete sentences.

7. What were some ways Jewish people were treated unfairly before the violence began?

8. What does Elie Wiesel's quote mean to you? Why is it important to speak out?

9. Describe what life might have been like in a ghetto or concentration camp, using clues from the text.

10. Why is it important to remember events like the Holocaust?

11. What are some ways people resisted the Nazis during the Holocaust? Give one or two examples from the reading.

Photo Analysis



12. What do you notice?

13. What emotions do you think these people are feeling?

14. How does this connect with what you read?

Answer Sheet

Multiple Choice (Page 4)

1. **B** – Hatred toward Jewish people
2. **C** – Kristallnacht
3. **B** – Trying to destroy a group because of who they are
4. **D** – United States, Britain, and Soviet Union
5. **A** – To help and protect others from harm
6. **C** – A message meant to influence people's beliefs, sometimes using lies

Open-Ended Questions (Page 5)

7. Sample Answer:

Jewish people were forced to wear yellow stars, banned from schools and jobs, and pushed out of public life.

8. Sample Answer:

Elie Wiesel's quote reminds me that if we don't speak up, we are helping the people who are doing wrong. It's important to stand up for others.

9. Sample Answer:

Life in a ghetto or concentration camp was harsh. People had very little food, lived in crowded and dirty places, and many were forced to work or sent to gas chambers.

10. Sample Answer:

It's important to remember the Holocaust so we can prevent similar events from happening in the future and honor those who suffered or resisted.

11. Sample Answer:

Some people resisted by fighting back, like in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Others, like Oskar Schindler, helped Jewish people escape or hid them from the Nazis.

Photo Analysis (Page 6)

12. Sample Answer:

I notice children standing behind a barbed-wire fence, wearing striped uniforms. They look very serious.

13. Sample Answer:

They might be feeling scared, sad, or confused after being trapped for so long.

14. Sample Answer:

This photo shows how children were affected by the Holocaust and helps me understand the suffering described in the reading.



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