

The Holocaust Differentiated Reading Comprehension Sheets

The resources in this pack are designed to support teaching on or around Holocaust Memorial Day or as part of an UKS2 unit on the Second World War. This pack is specifically aimed at an UKS2 audience due to the distressing nature of the content.

Please be aware that it will not be appropriate for the children in your class to research further into the Holocaust due to the harrowing information and images freely available on the Internet.

Be aware of individuals in your class and any children that may have lost their own family members due to the relatively recent nature of this event and ongoing incidences of conflict resulting in genocide which have occurred since.

Know your class: some content may be too upsetting for some children.



The Holocaust

The Holocaust was the mass murder of millions of innocent people. It happened in the years leading up to and during the Second World War.

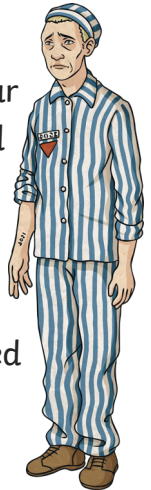
Number of Victims

It is impossible to know exactly how many people were killed during the Holocaust because the information was not written down by the **Nazis**. It is estimated that up to 17 million people lost their lives.

Affected Groups

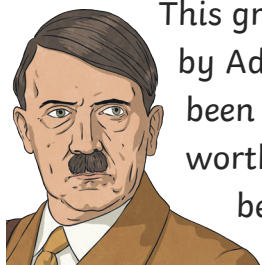
Most victims of the Holocaust were killed because they belonged to particular racial or religious groups. This means that they came from a certain place or held a certain set of beliefs. The Nazis wanted these people removed from Europe.

The largest group of victims of the Holocaust were Jewish people. The Nazis also killed people for many other reasons, including people of colour, people with disabilities or people they thought were criminals. Anyone who disagreed with Hitler and The Nazi Party would also be killed, including teachers.



The Nazi Party

In 1918, Germany lost the First World War and German people were facing hard times. Many people in Germany believed that it was the government's fault that they did not have money to buy food. They began to look for a new government party that would change this.



This group became The Nazi Party, which was formed in 1919. It was led by Adolf Hitler. The Nazi Party believed that the people of Germany had been born to rule over 'inferior races' – people the Nazis thought were worth less than them. Hitler spoke about Jewish people in this way. He began to spread the message that Jewish people were responsible for the problems Germany faced.

Anti-Semitic Rules

Hitler and The Nazi Party began creating **anti-Semitic** rules for Jewish people. Jewish people were not allowed to go to lots of public places in Germany. They were also made to wear yellow badges or white armbands with the Star of David sewn onto them.

During this time, Germany's armed forces had begun to invade other countries. They had started to kill a lot of people, including millions of Jewish people. When German soldiers invaded Poland in 1939, the Second World War began.



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Concentration Camps

By 1942, The Nazi Party had started to try to remove all Jewish people from Europe. They began to move people to places which had been set up to cause their death, known as concentration camps. Some people were killed straight away, whilst others were forced to live in horrible conditions. Prisoners kept at these camps were not given food or water even though they had to do hard jobs. They became so weak that they could barely move.

Prisoners were kept at these camps until the end of the Second World War in 1945. Any prisoners still in the camps were freed but it is believed that over 17 million people had already been killed.



Glossary

anti-Semitic: Something which specifically discriminates against Jewish people.

Nazis: A shortened name for the National Socialist German Workers' Party.



Questions

1. In which year was the Nazi Party formed? Tick one.

- ☐ 1919
☐ 1939
☐ 1942
☐ 1945

2. Join the boxes to show the year in which the events took place.

Germany lost the First World War.

1939

Germany invaded Poland and triggered the Second World War.

1918

The Second World War ended.

1945

3. Find and copy the name of the symbol which was sewn on to the badges and armbands that Jewish people were forced to wear.

4. **Hitler and the Nazi Party began creating anti-Semitic rules.** Explain what is meant by the word **anti-Semitic**.

5. Who was the leader of the Nazi Party?

6. Explain why the people of Germany were facing hard times in 1918.

7. Explain why the Nazi Party forced Jewish people to wear yellow badges or white armbands.

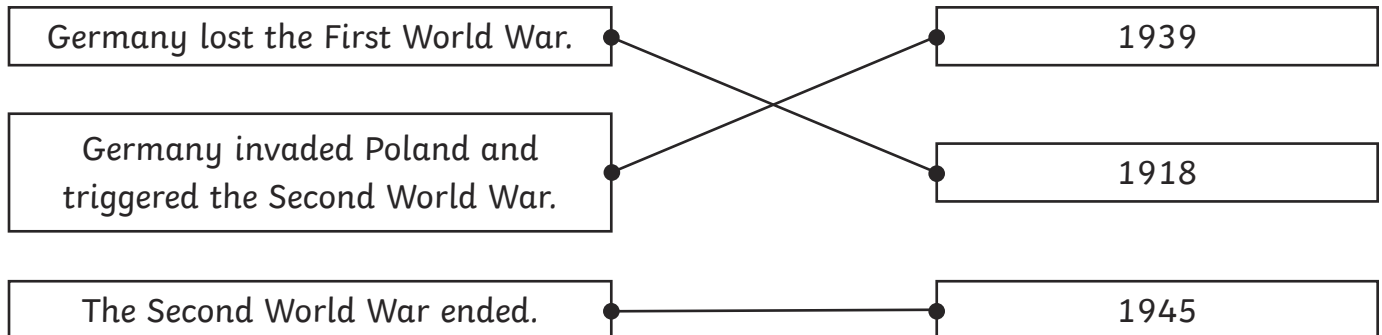
8. Why do you think the Nazi Party gained such power?

Answers

1. In which year was the Nazi Party formed? Tick one.

- ☒ 1919
☐ 1939
☐ 1942
☐ 1945

2. Join the boxes to show the year in which the events took place.



3. Find and copy the name of the symbol which was sewn on to the badges and armbands that Jewish people were forced to wear.

The Star of David

4. **Hitler and the Nazi Party began creating anti-Semitic rules.** Explain what is meant by the word **anti-Semitic**.

Something which specifically discriminates against Jewish people.

5. Who was the leader of the Nazi Party?

Adolf Hitler

6. Explain why the people of Germany were facing hard times in 1918.

Pupils' own responses, such as: People in Germany were facing hard times in 1918 because they had just lost the war the year before and they did not have enough money to buy food.

7. Explain why the Nazi Party forced Jewish people to wear yellow badges or white armbands.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The Nazi Party forced Jewish people to wear yellow badges or white armbands so that they could be easily identified in public places.

8. Why do you think the Nazi Party gained such power?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the Nazi Party gained such power because the German people believed that they would bring about the change they wanted and anyone who dared to oppose them was killed.

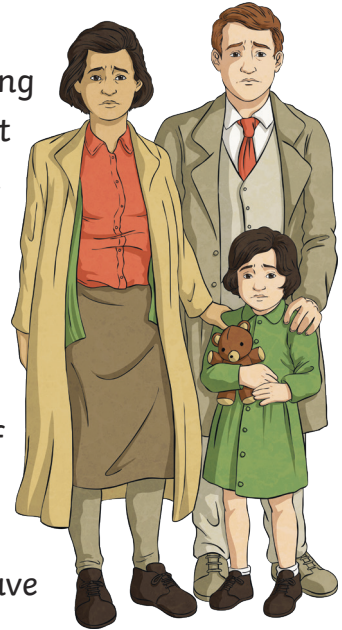
The Holocaust

The Holocaust was the mass murder of millions of innocent people in the years leading up to and during the Second World War.

Victims of the Holocaust

It is impossible to calculate the number of people killed during the Holocaust; official documents were not kept and most remaining evidence was destroyed. However, it is estimated that up to 17 million people lost their lives as the result of **Nazi** policies.

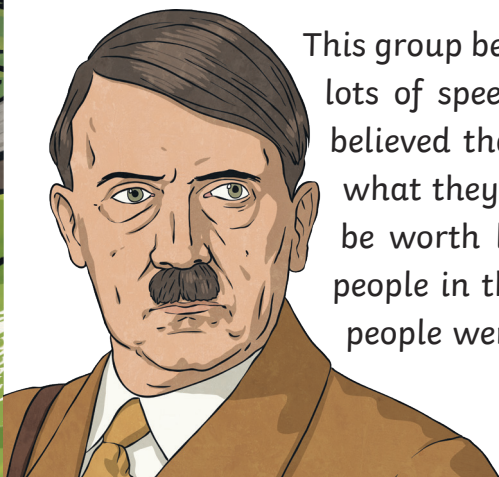
Most victims of the Holocaust were killed because they belonged to particular racial or religious groups, which the Nazis wanted to remove from society. The largest group of victims of the Holocaust were Jewish people. Approximately 70% of Jewish people within Europe were killed between 1933 and 1945. Over one million of these are believed to have been children.



The Nazis also killed people for many other reasons, including people of colour, people with disabilities or people they deemed to be criminals. German citizens, politicians, journalists and teachers who disagreed with Hitler and The Nazi Party would also be killed.

Adolf Hitler and The Nazi Party

The Holocaust occurred during Adolf Hitler's leadership of Germany. Adolf Hitler was the leader of The Nazi Party – a political group who ruled Germany. The Nazi Party was created in 1919; Germany had lost the First World War the year before and German people were facing hard times. Many people in Germany believed that the government was responsible for their lack of money and food so they began to look for a new government party that would change this.



This group became The Nazi Party and was led by Hitler, who made lots of speeches to spread The Nazi Party's message. The Nazis believed that the people of Germany had been born to rule over what they referred to as 'inferior races' – people they deemed to be worth less than them. Hitler specifically referred to Jewish people in this way. He began to spread the message that Jewish people were responsible for the problems Germany faced.

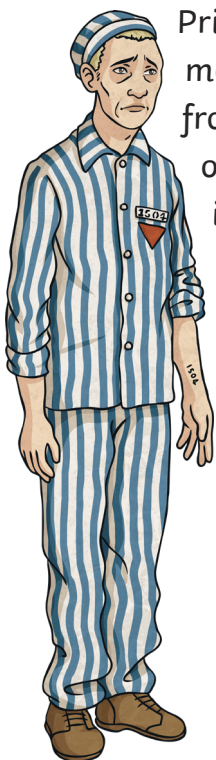
By 1933, Hitler and the Nazi Party began creating **anti-Semitic** rules for Jewish people. Jewish people were banned from many public places in Germany. By 1939, they were ordered to wear yellow badges or white armbands with the Star of David sewn onto them so that they could be easily identified in public.



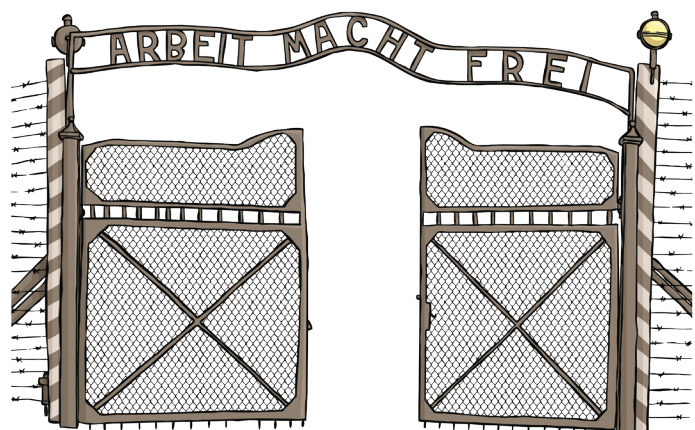
During this time, Germany's armed forces had begun to invade other countries, killing any person they deemed to be 'inferior'. This included millions of Jewish people. Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939 caused the Second World War to begin.

Concentration Camps

By 1942, The Nazi Party had started to try to remove all Jewish people from Europe. They began to transport people deemed to be 'inferior' to places which had been set up to cause their death, known as concentration camps or extermination camps. Some people were killed straight away, whilst others were forced to live in horrible conditions. Prisoners kept at these camps were not given food or water and they were exposed to diseases. They became so weak that they could barely move.



Prisoners were kept at these camps until countries from around the world managed to defeat Germany and end the Second World War. Soldiers from these countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States of America, China and the Soviet Union, freed any remaining prisoners in concentration camps. However, by this time, it is believed that over 17 million people had already been killed in the largest **genocide** ever recorded in human history.



Glossary

anti-Semitic: Something which specifically discriminates against Jewish people.

genocide: The deliberate killing of a large group of people.

Nazis: A shortened name for the National Socialist German Workers' Party.

Questions

1. **It is impossible to calculate the number of people killed.**

In this sentence, what does the word **calculate** mean? Tick one.

- ☐ forget
- ☐ work out
- ☐ estimate
- ☐ downplay

2. The invasion of which country triggered the Second World War? Tick one.

- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ China
- ☐ Soviet Union

3. What was the full name of the Nazi Party?

4. **Countries from around the world managed to defeat Germany.** What does the word **defeat** mean in this sentence?

5. Fill in the missing words.

The Holocaust occurred in the years _____ and _____ the Second World War.

6. Discuss two anti-Semitic actions undertaken by the Nazi Party.

7. Explain why the Nazi Party gained popularity in the early 1920s.

8. What message did Adolf Hitler attempt to spread about Jewish people?

9. Discuss why the exact number of people killed in the Holocaust cannot be known.

Answers

1. **It is impossible to calculate the number of people killed.**

In this sentence, what does the word **calculate** mean? Tick one.

- ☐ forget
- ☒ work out
- ☐ estimate
- ☐ downplay

2. The invasion of which country triggered the Second World War? Tick one.

- ☐ Germany
- ☒ Poland
- ☐ China
- ☐ Soviet Union

3. What was the full name of the Nazi Party?

The National Socialist German Workers' Party.

4. **Countries from around the world managed to defeat Germany.** What does the word **defeat** mean in this sentence?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Defeat means to have victory over someone or beat them at something.

5. Fill in the missing words.

The Holocaust occurred in the years **leading up to** and **during** the Second World War.

6. Discuss two anti-Semitic actions undertaken by the Nazi Party.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The Nazis stopped Jewish people from going into many public places and also forced them to wear a yellow star or white armband to identify themselves in public.

7. Explain why the Nazi Party gained popularity in the early 1920s.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The Nazi Party gained popularity because the German citizens blamed the government for their lack of money and wanted a new party who would do something about that. They thought that the Nazi Party would be the answer to the problem.

8. What message did Adolf Hitler attempt to spread about Jewish people?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Hitler spread the message that the Jewish people were an 'inferior race' and that they were responsible for the problems Germany faced.

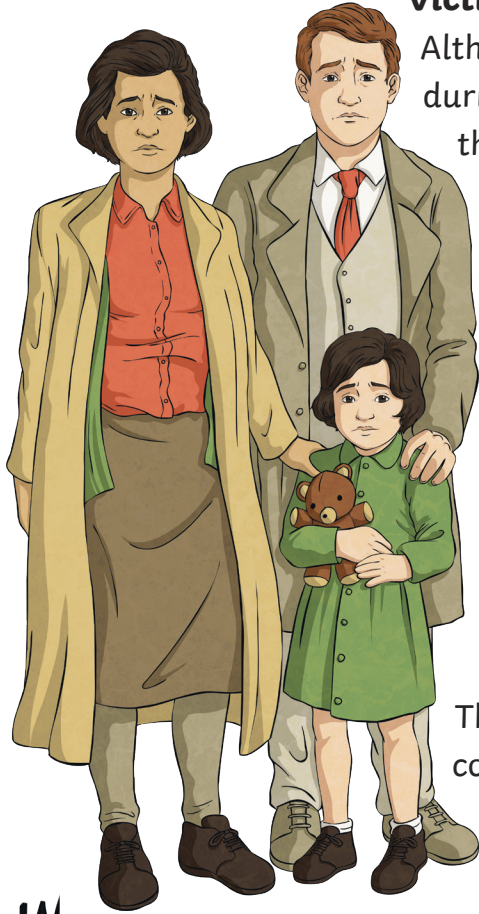
9. Discuss why the exact number of people killed in the Holocaust cannot be known.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The exact number of people killed during the Holocaust cannot be known because official documents were not kept and most remaining evidence was destroyed.

The Holocaust

The Holocaust was the mass murder of millions of innocent people, including over two-thirds of the European Jewish population, in the years leading up to and during the Second World War.

Victims of the Holocaust



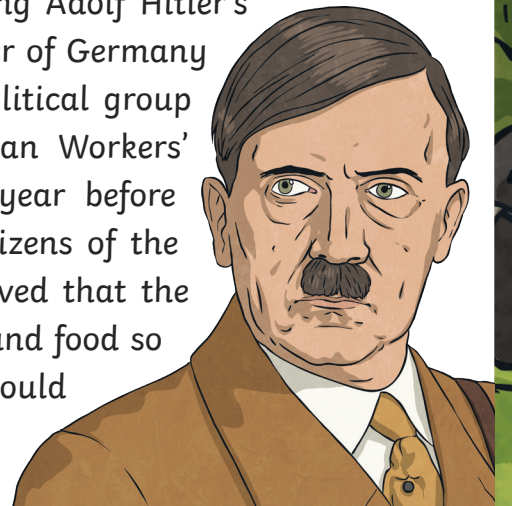
Although calculating the exact number of individuals killed during the Holocaust is impossible, due to the sheer scale of the atrocity and the destruction or lack of documentation, it is estimated that up to 17 million people lost their lives as the result of Nazi policies.

Most victims of the Holocaust were killed because they belonged to particular racial or religious groups, which the Nazis wanted to remove from society. This act – the deliberate killing of a specific group of people – is called genocide. The largest group of victims of the Holocaust were Jewish people, with approximately 70% of Jewish people within Europe killed between 1933 and 1945; over one million of these are believed to have been children.

The Nazis also killed Roma, Jehovah's Witnesses, people of colour, people with disabilities, people they deemed to be criminals and citizens of what was then called the Soviet Union – a group of countries in eastern Europe. German citizens, politicians, journalists and teachers who spoke out against Hitler and The Nazi Party would also be transported to concentration and extermination camps.

Adolf Hitler and The Nazi Party

The atrocious events of the Holocaust occurred during Adolf Hitler's leadership of Germany. Adolf Hitler became the leader of Germany because he was the leader of The Nazi Party – a political group whose full name was the National Socialist German Workers' Party. The Nazi Party was created in 1919. The year before this, Germany had lost the First World War and citizens of the country were facing hard times. Many citizens believed that the government was responsible for their lack of money and food so they began to look for a new government party that would bring about change.



Holocaust

This group became The Nazi Party and was led by Hitler. Hitler used speeches full of powerful statements to spread The Nazi Party's message. The Nazis believed that the people of Germany had been born to rule over what they referred to as 'inferior races' – people they deemed to be worth less than them. Hitler specifically referred to Jewish people in this way and began to spread the message that Jewish people were responsible for the problems Germany faced.

By 1933, Hitler and The Nazi Party began creating rules which specifically told Jewish people what they were and were not allowed to do. These laws were anti-Semitic: they discriminated specifically against Jewish people. Jewish people were banned from many public places in Germany and, by 1939, they were ordered to wear yellow badges or white armbands with the Star of David sewn onto them so that they could be easily identified in public.

During this time, Hitler had also recruited more people into Germany's armed forces. They began to try to take over other countries, invading them and killing any person they deemed to be 'inferior'. This included millions of Jewish people. Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939 caused the Second World War to begin.

Concentration Camps

By 1942, The Nazi Party had decided to use the power of their armed forces to remove all Jewish people from Europe. They began to transport people to places which had been set up to cause their death, known as concentration camps or extermination camps. Upon arrival, some people were killed immediately, whilst others were forced to live in terrible conditions without food or water and exposed to horrible diseases. The prisoners became so weak that they could barely move.

This abhorrent practice continued until countries from around the world combined to defeat Germany and end the Second World War. These countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States of America, China and the Soviet Union, liberated the concentration and extermination camps. They freed any remaining prisoners but, by this time, it is believed that over 17 million people had already been killed in the largest genocide ever recorded in human history.



Questions

1. In which year did Germany invade Poland? Tick one.
☐ 1919
☐ 1932
☐ 1939
☐ 1942
2. By which year were Jewish people banned from many public places? Tick one.
☐ 1919
☐ 1933
☐ 1939
☐ 1945
3. List two countries whose soldiers liberated concentration and extermination camps.
1. _____
2. _____
4. What was the Soviet Union?

5. **These laws were anti-Semitic: they discriminated specifically against Jewish people.**
Define what is meant by the word **discriminate**.

6. Discuss why German citizens may not have tried to stop the Nazi Party's actions.

7. Explain why most victims of the Holocaust were killed.

8. **Exactly 17 million people lost their lives as the result of Nazi policies.** Is this statement true? Explain how you know.

9. Why do you think that Hitler recruited more people into Germany's armed forces?

10. Summarise the final paragraph of this text in 20 words or less.

Answers

1. In which year did Germany invade Poland? Tick one.
 - ☐ 1919
 - ☐ 1932
 - ☒ 1939
 - ☐ 1942
2. By which year were Jewish people banned from many public places? Tick one.
 - ☐ 1919
 - ☒ 1933
 - ☐ 1939
 - ☐ 1945
3. List two countries whose soldiers liberated concentration and extermination camps.
Accept two of the following: United Kingdom; United States of America; China; Soviet Union.
4. What was the Soviet Union?
The Soviet Union was a group of countries in eastern Europe.
5. **These laws were anti-Semitic: they discriminated specifically against Jewish people.**
Define what is meant by the word **discriminate**.
Pupils' own responses, such as: Discriminate means when you treat one person or group differently to everyone else just because of who they are.
6. Discuss why German citizens may not have tried to stop the Nazi Party's actions.
Pupils' own responses, such as: German citizens may not have tried to stop the Nazi Party because they knew that they would be killed as well if they did.
7. Explain why most victims of the Holocaust were killed.
Pupils' own responses, such as: Most victims of the Holocaust were killed because they belonged to a particular racial or religious group, or they disagreed with Nazi policies.
8. **Exactly 17 million people lost their lives as the result of Nazi policies.** Is this statement true? Explain how you know.
Pupils' own responses, such as: This statement is not true. I know this because the text says that no historical records exist to prove how many people were killed so we cannot know that it is 17 million people for certain.

9. Why do you think that Hitler recruited more people into Germany's armed forces?
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Hitler recruited more people into the German armed forces so that they would be able to have more success with invading countries and apprehending Jewish people.
10. Summarise the final paragraph of this text in 20 words or less.
Pupils' own responses, such as: Although countries from around the world united to defeat Germany, over 17 million people had already been killed.