

# What Was the Holocaust?

## Definition of the Holocaust:

The **Holocaust** was the **systematic**, state-sponsored **persecution** and **murder** of **6 million** Jews by **Nazi Germany** and its **collaborators** between **1933** and **1945**. The Holocaust is also called the **Shoah**, which means 'catastrophe' in **Hebrew**.

**6 million • Holocaust • collaborators • persecution • Nazi Germany  
Hebrew • 1945 • Shoah • murder • systematic • 1933**

## Who were the perpetrators of the Holocaust?



The perpetrators are all the people who were responsible for the Holocaust. This includes all of the people who were leaders and followers of the Nazi party. It also includes people from other countries who helped the Nazis.



Hitler was the ruler of **Germany** from 1933-1945. He was elected by the people because he promised to help their country become great again after losing **World War I**. Hitler became a **dictator**, which meant that he could make up any **laws** that he wanted.

### Adolf Hitler



The Nazis were Hitler's political **party** - the National Socialist Party. When Hitler came to power, he chose a symbol  called the **swastika** for the new flag. Hitler took this symbol from countries in Asia where it is a religious symbol  representing good luck and hope, and turned it into a symbol of **hate**.

### The Nazis



Hitler and the Nazis had a lot of supporters both inside and outside of Germany. These were **governments** as well as individual **citizens** who agreed with Hitler and wanted to help him carry out his plans. Some people helped because they were **afraid**, but many did it for **greed** or because they also hated Jews. A few good people took action to help, but most people were **bystanders** who remained silent.

### Collaborators

**World War I • party • governments • laws • citizens • Germany • swastika • afraid • dictator • bystanders • hate • greed**

## Who were the victims of the Holocaust?

Circle **True** or **False** for each statement.

Jewish people were the main target of the Nazis.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
There were about 15 million Jews in the world in 1933.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
The Nazis only targeted the Jews.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
Before the Holocaust, there were 9.5 million Jews in Europe.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
Jewish people had been living in Europe for over 2,000 years.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
Europe was home to 40% of all the world's Jews.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
All Jewish people look alike and behave the same way.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
Jewish people were good citizens in their home countries.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
The Nazis respected the rights of LGBTQ+ people.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
There were only Jewish communities in Germany and Poland.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
There were Jewish soldiers fighting for Germany and other European countries in World War I.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
2 out of every 3 Jews in Europe were murdered in the Holocaust.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
Most Jewish communities in Europe were destroyed by 1945.	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>

## Where did the Holocaust happen?

The Holocaust began in Germany and eventually spread across most of Europe. Nazi Germany invaded and occupied many countries, beginning with Poland on September 1, 1939. This was the start of World War II.

In World War II, there were two sides: The Axis Powers and The Allies. The Axis powers were Germany, Italy, and Japan. The Allies were all of the countries that fought against the Axis powers. The main countries were Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States, sometimes called 'the big three'. As part of the British Commonwealth, Canada joined Great Britain and fought along with the Allies. Some countries remained neutral, and didn't get involved in the fighting.

The following map shows some of the countries that were involved but it does not tell the complete story. The reality is that alliances changed throughout the war as the military action happened. So, some countries listed here under one category may have been part of another category as well. For example, France was an ally of Britain from the beginning. However, it was invaded and occupied by Germany, so it is listed as an occupied country instead of as an ally.

Another example is Finland. Finland was in a fight with the Soviet Union over their own conflict. Since Germany was the enemy of the Soviet Union, Finland chose to help the German side. They chose the side that they considered to be better for their future, not necessarily because they supported the Nazis.

**Colour each country on the map according to its category.**

### Allied Powers (Green)

Great Britain  
Soviet Union  
Canada  
United States  
Australia  
China  
South Africa  
*France (occupied in 1940)*

### Axis Powers (Red)

Germany  
Italy  
Japan  
Finland

### Neutral Powers (Yellow)

Switzerland  
Sweden  
Spain  
Portugal  
Ireland

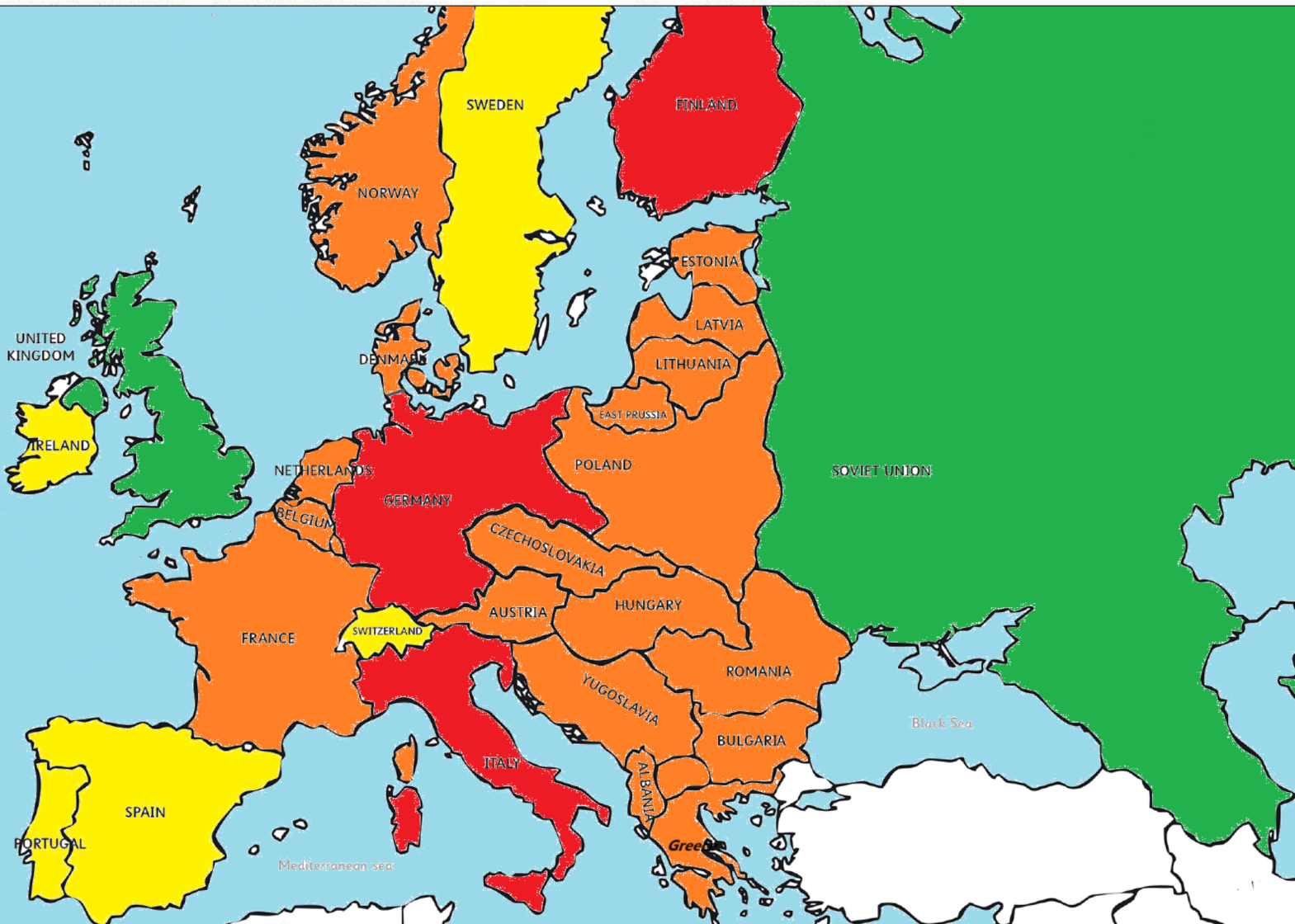
### Occupied Countries (Orange)

Austria • Albania • Belgium • Bulgaria • Czechoslovakia • Denmark • East Prussia • Estonia • France • Greece • Hungary • Latvia • Lithuania • Netherlands • Norway • Poland • Romania • Yugoslavia

# The World



# Europe in World War II





## Why did the Holocaust happen?

Hitler had strong views about what was wrong with the world and how things should be. This is called having an **ideology**.

Hitler gave passionate speeches and explained his ideology in a book that he wrote called *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)*. Many Germans read his book and he developed a strong following because there were a lot of people who agreed with his ideology. This is how Hitler became the leader of **Germany** and his ideas became official Nazi **policy**.

The Nazi ideology can be summarized in two words: **race** and **space**.

Race refers to the  **people** and space refers to the  **land**.

**land • Germany • race • policy • space • ideology • people**

### Nazi Ideology Part I: Race



1) What did the Nazis believe about race? Was this true?

**Answers will vary. Key points to include - race determines everything, some races are better than others. Not true - believing this is racism.**

2) What is antisemitism? **Antisemitism is discrimination against or hatred of Jewish people.**

3) How was the Nazi type of antisemitism different from the older form of antisemitism?

**The Nazis believed that the Jews were dangerous and needed to be eliminated to protect the Aryan race.**

4) How did the Nazis spread their lies about Jewish people? What is this called?

**The Nazis used their power in the government to spread lies through media - pictures, posters, films, etc. They portrayed the Jews in many different negative ways. This is called propaganda.**

5) What is genocide?

**Genocide is a crime where acts are committed with the intent to destroy an entire group of people.**

## Nazi Ideology Part II: Land



Because Hitler believed that the German people were the master race, he also believed that they should rule over the **world**. They had the right to take what they wanted and to do whatever they wished with any people that were in their way. Hitler wanted Germany to be more than a country. He wanted it to be an **empire**. To accomplish this goal, Hitler needed more land for **lebensraum** or "living space". Hitler wanted to conquer as much land as he could for his new empire but Germany signed an **agreement** after World War I that they would not build up their **military** to **fight** against any other countries in Europe. This agreement did not stop Hitler and he **invaded** other countries anyway. After 6 years as leader of Germany, Hitler started **World War II**. WWII was the worst war in human history, resulting in over **60 million** deaths worldwide. **Canada** played a very important part in helping the Allies win the war. We remember the 1 million Canadians who were **soldiers** every year on **Remembrance Day**.



**invaded • 60 million • Remembrance Day • agreement • world • empire • Canada • soldiers • military • lebensraum • World War II • fight**

## World War II: 1939–1945

Fill in the timeline with the event from the list that matches each date.

● **September 1939**

**Germany invades Poland**

● **September 1940**

**Japan enters the war**

● **June 1941**

**Germany invades Soviet Union**

● **December 1941**

**United States enters the war**

● **May 1945**

**Germany surrenders**

● **August 1945**

**Japan surrenders**

## Events

Japan surrenders  
Germany invades Soviet Union  
Japan enters the war  
Germany surrenders  
United States enters the war  
Germany invades Poland

## How did the Nazis persecute Jewish people?

Fill in the type of persecution next to each description.

### Organized Violence

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*Kristallnacht*, the night of Broken Glass  
November 9/10, 1938.

The Nazis ordered attacks on Jewish people, businesses, and synagogues.  
30,000 Jewish men are arrested.

### Public Identification and Exclusion

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Boycotts of Jewish businesses, public humiliations, and forcing Jews to wear a yellow star to identify themselves as Jews.

### Forced Labour

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Jewish adults and children were forced to work for the German government and for private German companies as slaves.

### Plunder (Stealing)

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The Nazis took all of the property, personal belongings, and valuables of the Jewish people.  
Using this wealth was an important part of their plan to expand their power.

### Legal Discrimination

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Antisemitic laws took away the rights of Jewish people to live as full citizens.  
Jewish children could no longer attend school. Adults were fired from their jobs.

### Displacement and Imprisonment

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Without warning or explanation, Jews were removed from their homes and relocated to ghettos and concentration camps where conditions were very poor and many died of disease and starvation.

## What was the "Final Solution"?

Before 1941, many Jews died as a result of these earlier types of persecution - from starvation, diseases, and Nazi violence. However, the Nazis didn't have an organized plan for the **mass** **murder** of the Jews until 1941, when they invaded the **Soviet Union**. The reason for this is that the Nazis realized that they had a bigger "**Jewish Problem**" than they had when they didn't occupy so many countries, because these new lands were home to millions **more** Jewish people. Before the war began, the democracies of the world, including Canada and the United States, had decided that they were not willing to deal with the large number of Jewish **refugees** who were trying to escape the Nazis. They allowed only a very small number of Jews to **immigrate**. Canada had an official policy for Jews that has been called **None Is Too Many**, which meant that they wanted no Jewish refugees at all. Because of the actions of these countries, Hitler knew that there was nowhere for the Jewish people to go. Hitler sent the top leaders in the Nazi party to have a meeting to **strategize** over their "Jewish Problem". They knew what Hitler wanted them to do. Their job was to figure out how to do it.

At that meeting, the Nazis planned out the "**Final Solution**" - the code word for the decision to kill every Jew in Europe. The Nazis prided themselves on being **organized**. They planned the Final Solution as carefully as they could to make it as **efficient** as possible, meaning that they could kill as many people as possible in the least amount of time, with the least amount of effort and expense. There were two main methods that they used: **shooting** and **gassing**.

**mass murder • immigrate • Jewish Problem • strategize • more • organized • refugees**  
**None Is Too Many • gassing • Final Solution • efficient • shooting • Soviet Union**



## Did the Jews fight back?

Each of the images below shows a type of Jewish resistance in the Holocaust. Describe the type of resistance shown using your own words.



**Acts of Resistance in the Ghetto: secret schools**



**Jewish Partisans: fighters surviving in the forests**



**Warsaw Ghetto uprising**

## Did anyone help the Jews?

Most non-Jewish people did nothing to help the Jews during the Holocaust. Some were too

**afraid**

\_\_\_\_\_ to help, some didn't want to worry about the Jews because they were

**suffering**

\_\_\_\_\_ themselves, and some did not want to help the Jews because they

were **antisemites**

\_\_\_\_\_ who agreed with the Nazis. Today, we would call these

people **bystanders**

\_\_\_\_\_ because they stand **by** \_\_\_\_\_ instead of taking

**action**

\_\_\_\_\_. A small number of people did help Jews, even at great **risk**

to themselves. These **heroes** \_\_\_\_\_ often didn't plan their actions, but when they were

given a choice, they acted according to their own **moral** \_\_\_\_\_ **beliefs** \_\_\_\_\_.

Today, we would call these people **upstanders** \_\_\_\_\_ because they stand **up** \_\_\_\_\_ and

take action to **help** \_\_\_\_\_.

**action • up • heroes • suffering • moral beliefs • bystanders • help • afraid • antisemites • by • risk • upstander**

## What happened after the Holocaust?

1) After the Holocaust was over, why didn't the survivors go back to their homes?

**Many tried to go home but found that they had been taken over by other people who were violently opposed to them coming back.**

2) Where did they live while they were waiting to emigrate to a new country?

**They lived in displaced persons (DP) camps in Europe.**

3) Where did most of the survivors want to go? Why?

**Most wanted to go to Israel because it was a Jewish country and they thought it was the only place that they would be safe from antisemitism.**

## Who are Holocaust survivors?

We call the victims who lived through the Holocaust **survivors**. The **trauma** that they experienced affected them for all their lives and will continue to affect their families for **generations**. Some survivors couldn't speak about their experiences because it was too painful but some survivors found purpose in telling their stories as often as possible. They believed that they were doing a service to humanity by telling what happened, by bearing **witness** to the truth. This is called **testimony** and it is a very important part of understanding the Holocaust. Since the Holocaust ended nearly 80 years ago, there are very few survivors alive today to give their testimony. We are fortunate to have thousands of hours of **video recordings** of testimonies that we can watch. New **technologies** are also providing opportunities for us to interact with the testimonies as if the survivors were here in person.

**generations • trauma • survivors • witness • technologies • testimony • video recordings**