Historical Context

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Establishing the Historical Context: Suggestions for the Educator

One of the most difficult aspects of teaching about the Holocaust is establishing the historical context clearly. Several problems arise for many educators:

• few people, educators included, have a clear understanding of the events that led up to the Holocaust;
• this period in history is extremely complex; and
• events of the Holocaust progressed over a number of years and varied from one place to the next.

Rather than hoping to become an “instant expert,” you may choose to tap into some of the excellent resources already available. In this section of the resource book, *The Holocaust: Over Twelve Years of Fear* provides an overview of the events of this period written specifically for adult learners. The reading specifically links to social conditions that adult learners know firsthand, like prejudice, unemployment, and the loss of a family member. A vocabulary list and lessons are included specifically for this reading, and you will find references to it throughout the *Resource Toolkit*. Written at an accessible reading level, the history is complicated enough that it can be used by students at many academic levels and can be used several times to grasp different details.

Another especially useful resource is the book *Tell Them We Remember* by Susan Bachrach. Each stand-alone chapter is one to two pages long, includes photographs, and is written at an intermediate reading level. These chapters pair well with videos or other read-

“Another day we did a lesson using “The Holocaust: Over Twelve Years of Fear” through 1942. First, I wrote the vocabulary words on the board. I told the students to write down at least ten that they did not know. I made copies of the story for the students. I handed these out, and told the students to listen for these words as we read to see if they could define them using context clues. We then read aloud. I did much of the reading, but I did have a few student volunteers. I showed the picture of the two Rosenthal brothers (ages 2 & 5) wearing their Stars of David. As we read, we stopped occasionally for discussion (i.e., what the unemployment rate means, what it would be like to have to wear a "badge", etc.).

The GED class took turns reading the history out loud. (Susan and I had copied the history from the Toolkit and put it in folders. I like the fact that this is the 3rd time we have used [“Over Twelve Years of Fear”], so some people have read parts of it 3 times (and that is good), but we also had some new students today.)
Tuesday we did the lesson using Number the Stars. I read chapter 12 aloud as they followed along. We did the Toolkit discussion questions together. I had given them the vocabulary list to define from context as we read. We did the map exercise and finally I gave them the essay assignment. I have really gotten some interesting papers as a result. This chapter sparked interest in a student who have previously shown none. She went to the library to check out Number the Stars so she could read the whole story!

"
The Holocaust: Over Twelve Years of Fear

When people say “The Holocaust,” they are talking about events that happened in Europe from 1933 to 1945. That was just over 50 years ago. The Nazis were in power in Germany then. Their leader was Adolf Hitler. For 12 years, the Nazis and Adolf Hitler tried to get rid of people they hated.

Millions of people were hurt and killed during the Holocaust. A lot of the people who were killed were Jewish, but many other people died, too. This reading will tell you more about the Holocaust. It will help you understand why so many innocent people were killed by a government that did not believe in equality or freedom.

From World War I to 1933: Shame and Hunger

Before you start learning about the Holocaust, you need to know about some things that happened before 1933. The Holocaust began slowly, when Germany was unstable in a lot of different ways. Some of these ways include:

1) the German people were upset about losing World War I,
2) they felt poor and jobs were hard to find,
3) they hoped the government would solve their problems,
4) and they were suspicious of people who they thought were different.

When World War I ended in 1918, Germany was blamed for starting the war. The peace treaty that was signed after the war said the German government had to pay a lot of money for war damages. The people of Germany were furious! They thought it was unfair to have to pay so much money. They had a lot of damage in their country, and many Germans died in the war, too. The German people were usually
very proud of their country. After the treaty, they were embarrassed and ashamed.

For a few years, Germany began to recover from the war. Banks in other countries, like the United States, loaned money to Germany to help. The German people pushed their anger aside.

Then in 1929, the Great Depression began. The entire world was hurt by the depression. After the stock market crash in 1929, businesses closed, and people lost their jobs. By 1932 in the United States, for every 100 people old enough to work, 25 of the people did not have a job. This means that there was a 25% unemployment rate. If you read or listen to the news, you will hear about today’s unemployment rate.

When the Great Depression began, the banks decided to “call in” their loans. To call in a loan means they wanted their money back—now! Many Germans got angry about the treaty again, because Germany’s war debt meant the government could not help its own people.

In the early 1930s, even more people were out of work in Germany than in the United States! The German unemployment rate went as high as 42%. People were unable to pay their bills. It took a lot of money to buy food, so most families were hungry.

At the end of 1932, there was an election in Germany. The government in power was weak, and people were unhappy. They wanted change quickly!

Several people were running for President, including Adolf Hitler. He told the people that he would make them proud of Germany again, and give them a better life. Hitler made a lot of promises that sounded good—even simple ones like promising people bread and jobs! He also told people that Jewish people were the real problem.
The hard times were not caused by Jewish people, but Hitler knew it would help him win votes. There were very few Jews in Germany, and some people already considered them “different.” People often look for people who seem different to blame when there are problems. Falsely blaming other people for a problem is called “finding a scapegoat.”

Think of your own community. Can you think of people who are used as scapegoats?

**From 1933 to 1938: The Nazis Come to Power**

In the 1932 election, Paul von Hindenburg, who was already the President of Germany, was **re-elected**. Hitler came in second place, but neither man had a **majority** of the votes. Von Hindenburg was worried because the German people were still upset. They had no faith in the government. In 1933, he decided to **appoint** Hitler to be **Chancellor** of Germany so more people would trust the government. He thought Hitler would help him rebuild the country. Von Hindenburg was wrong about that assumption!

When Hitler became Chancellor, he and the Nazis quickly took over. They declared a **state of emergency** and took away people’s **rights**. This meant that the Nazi police could read anyone’s mail, listen to their telephone calls, and search their homes. People who spoke out against the Nazis were called **enemies of the state**. Some people were sent to **makeshift** prisons called **concentration camps**. Books they wrote were burned. Many people were hurt or killed.

About one year later, President von Hindenburg died. Adolf Hitler decided he should be the only leader in Germany. He called himself the **Führer**. In German, this means “the Leader.” Then things began to get much worse for a lot of people!
Adolf Hitler and the Nazis believed that some groups of people were better than others. They wanted to create a **master race**. They called the master race the Aryans. To the Nazis, the “perfect Aryan” had blonde hair, blue eyes, and light skin. They were supposed to be tall and strong. Look at a photograph of Adolf Hitler. Does he look like a perfect Aryan to you?

The Nazis thought some people were **inferior**. These groups included Jews, Gypsies, and people who were **mentally** or **physically handicapped**. The Nazis made laws forbidding them from getting married or having children. Many people tried to leave Germany, but other countries were having hard times, too. Most countries, including the United States, were having trouble feeding their own people.

Jewish people were treated extra badly by the Nazis. They could not be German **citizens** anymore and were kicked out of schools. Doctors, lawyers, or people who owned businesses were forbidden to do their work. Park benches and the beaches had signs saying, “No Jews Allowed.” Jews even had to give away their pets! Every month new laws were written by the Nazis to hurt the Jews and others.

For Nazis or people who helped them, life began to improve. They were given jobs, like painting signs that said, “No Jews Allowed.” The jobs that were taken away from **non-Aryans** had to be done. Lots of police were needed to enforce all of the new laws. People who helped the Nazis were allowed more food than people who disagreed with them, too. In a country that had been so poor after the first World War, more food sounded great.

Many people were happy and excited to be Nazis. The Nazi men wore fancy uniforms with shiny, tall,
black boots. Aryan women were expected to have lots of perfect Aryan children. Even the children were supposed to join the “Hitler Youth,” a club that taught them how to be Nazis. The Nazis paraded through towns with their flags. They made it seem exciting to be a Nazi.

The radio stations and newspapers were controlled by the Nazis. They played Nazi songs. They told how wonderful Adolf Hitler and the Nazis were. They convinced some Germans that people who were different were sub-human. This term meant that they were considered “less than human.” They used the mass media, like radios and newspapers, to hurt certain groups of people. The Nazis used a lot of propaganda to gain support from the German people.

In November 1938, things changed. The Nazi government began to use violence against Jewish people, instead of just passing laws and saying bad things. For two days all over the country, they destroyed Jewish businesses. They burnt down the Jewish places of worship, called synagogues. Homes were broken into. People were beaten. About 30,000 people
were arrested, and many were never seen again. Every Jewish person was in danger: children and old people, women and men, rich people and poor. These two days are now called Kristallnacht, or the “Night of Broken Glass.” Some Jewish people thought times were as bad as they could get, but then they got much worse.

**From 1939 to 1942: World War II and the “Final Solution”**

Adolf Hitler and the Nazis had big ideas. They wanted to create a master race, the Aryans. They wanted other groups of people to be their slaves. They also wanted to have more space to live. Adolf Hitler hoped to control all of Europe.

Poland is a country that is east of Germany. Controlling Poland would give the Nazis more living space. In 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and World War II began. Germany took over Poland in just a few days. Soon Germany invaded many other countries. By 1941, they had over taken Poland, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway. Find these countries on a map to see how much territory the Nazis controlled.

As the Nazis took over more countries, they had even more Jewish people under their control. The Nazis made all Jews wear a Star of David on the outside of their clothing, so they were easy to find. They were forced to move out of their homes and into ghettos. A ghetto is an area of the city where a minority group is forced to live. The word “ghetto” is still used today.

The ghettos in Europe were dirty and crowded. Food was scarce, and many people were sick and dying. Often, when the ghettos were too full, the Nazis would send people to concentration camps or
labor camps. They also killed lots of people to make more space.

World War II was still going on. Germany was fighting two wars. One war was against other countries. The other war was against Jews and other groups of people the Nazis hated. That list of people was getting longer. Some groups of people were considered inferior, like Jews, Poles, Gypsies, handicapped people, and African-Germans. The Nazis wanted to get rid of these people.

The Nazis wanted to “re-educate” other groups of people. In other words, the Nazis wanted teach them how to be good Nazis or punish them if they refused. These groups included homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and communists. People who helped any of these groups were “enemies of the state” also.

In January 1942, fifteen Nazi officials met in Wannsee, a suburb of Berlin, Germany. They wanted to close the ghettos and get rid of the Jewish people. They came up with a plan called the “Final Solution.” For 9 years, the Nazis had killed many Jews, but the new plan was even more serious. They decided to kill all of the Jewish people in Europe—about 11 million people!

From 1942 to 1944: The Death Camps

Killing millions of people takes a lot of planning and space. The Nazis built killing centers called death camps. They wanted to keep their homeland pure, so most of the death camps were in Poland. They hid the purpose of these camps, so people would not resist as much. The largest death camp was called Auschwitz. There were only six death camps but hundreds of concentration, labor and transit
Lessons from the Holocaust

People who arrived at the death camps were unaware of the “Final Solution.” They were afraid of the Nazis, but they were unsure how bad they really were. Sometimes they told each other, “It can’t get any worse than it is now,” but then it would get much worse!

The death camps were like factories to kill people. First, people were sent to the camp in crowded, locked boxcars on very long trains. The train boxcars were like the kind used for cows. Most of the people rode in the boxcars for days without food, a place to sit, or even a bathroom. They were hungry, dirty, and scared. They thought they were going to a labor camp to work.

When the doors were opened, they were told to leave their suitcases behind. Men had to line up in one area, women in different area. Old people, sick people, and mothers with young children and babies were sent to another area. People who objected were shot in front of everyone. The people felt confused and afraid. The Nazis told them that they would get food after they took a shower. If you had ridden on a dirty train for days, a shower would probably sound good to you, too.

The showers at the death camps had two uses. One use was to bathe a lot of people at once. People who could work as slaves for the Nazis
were showered with ice cold water. Then all of the hair on their bodies was shaved off. They were shaved for two reasons: to make them look different so it would be hard to escape, and to reduce problems with lice, a small bug that gets in your hair and makes you itch. The new prisoners were given a number to use instead of their name. At some camps, the number was tattooed on their arm to mark them as prisoners forever.

The second use for the showers was to kill people. Poison gas came out of the shower heads and killed people who could not work as slaves (especially the old people, sick people, and young children). Millions of people died on the day they arrived at the death camp. Their families found out later that they were killed immediately.

The people who were chosen as slaves were shocked by what they saw. Thousands of people were forced to live in bunkers, which were like barns. They slept on wooden platforms. Each platform held so many people that they had to roll over at the same time when they slept.
Lessons from the Holocaust

In most camps, the only food was watered down soup, bread made with sawdust, and fake coffee. If the prisoners were worked hard and fed very little, the Nazis knew they would die quickly.

Most of the camps were surrounded by electric, barbed wire fences and guard stations. Guards shot anyone who tried to escape. Each day, everyone in the camps was counted. If anyone was missing, the rest of the prisoners stood in lines for hours. A few people did escape. When they were not at roll call, other people were killed or punished. Many people did not try to escape because they did not want to feel responsible for other peoples’ deaths.

From 1944 to 1945: The Last Days

At the beginning of World War II, the Nazis were very strong and powerful. Later, more countries including the United States became Allies to fight the Nazis. In late 1944, the Allies were winning the war in Europe.

The Nazis wanted to win their “war against the Jews,” even if they lost World War II. They tried to kill people faster. As the Allies came close to the concentration camps and death camps, the Nazis forced their prisoners to walk to camps in Germany. These are called the death marches. The winter was cold and snowy. Many people were too weak to walk and died on the side of the roads.

Finally, in the spring of 1945, the Allies won the war in Europe. Camps that were still being used were liberated. Their prisoners
were now free. The soldiers who found the camps were shocked. Dead and dying people were everywhere. Many soldiers took photographs so other people would believe them later.

At some camps, the local townspeople were forced to visit the camps, so they would know what happened in their own community. Sometimes the soldiers even made the townspeople help bury the dead people. The soldiers wanted to make sure that no one could ever deny knowing about the murders.

What happened to the perpetrators—the people who participated in the killing? As the Allied troops approached, the Nazis and other people who helped them, called collaborators, tried to destroy evidence of their crimes. When time ran out, they fled or hid. Some even put on prisoner uniforms and pretended to be prisoners, but they looked too healthy! Some of the perpetrators were caught by the troops. Some committed suicide. Some were tortured by their victims in revenge, but many went back to their “normal lives” and denied what they did during the war. Some escaped to other countries. They began new lives with new names and a made-up story about their past.

**From 1946 to 1948: The Aftermath of the Destruction**

Many people wonder how many people were in the camps or how many people died. It is difficult to estimate a population of people even in calm times. During the Holocaust, it was even harder. People often hid or pretended to be someone else so the Nazis would not arrest them. Many people left Europe illegally.

No one knows the exact number of people who were imprisoned in the camps during the years they were used by the Nazis. However, the Nazis kept records about the trains and people that arrived at the camps. They wrote down how many people were on each train. They kept long lists of the prisoners who died or were murdered each day.

When the Allies were close to liberating the camps, the Nazis tried to
Lessons from the Holocaust

It is difficult to estimate the number of people who died during the Holocaust. Think about a few of the ways people died:
— in the ghettos they starved or were shot,
— on the trains going to concentration camps,
— in the gas chambers at the killing centers,
— from too much work and too little food in the concentration and labor camps,
— and on the death marches.

One common estimate of the Jewish population who died is six million people. But saying “six million Jews” leaves out the other people who died, like Poles, gypsies, homosexuals, prisoners of war, and Jehovah’s Witnesses. We know the Nazis killed millions of people, but the exact number will never be known.

When people worry about how many million people died, they sometimes forget that every single person who died had someone who loved her or him. Think about how much it hurts when a friend or family member dies. Now think about how you would feel if all of your friends and family died. For many people, the Holocaust means the time when all of their friends and family were killed. For most of us, that is impossible to imagine.

People who lived through the Nazi efforts against them are called “Holocaust survivors.” At the end of the war, they could not just return to their lives before this period. Most had lost everything—their family members, their homes, their furniture, their money. Some children were so young that they did not remember their own names! Places called “Displaced Persons Camps”—or DP camps—were set up to help family members find each other, and to provide a temporary place for people...
to live. Trying to rebuild a “normal” life was difficult for the Holocaust survivors.

Life after the war was different for the perpetrators. The ones who fled the country often created a new life for themselves. Many moved to the United States and Canada. Others returned to their homes and did not talk about their actions during the war.

A few Nazi leaders were tried for the crimes in the “Nuremberg Trials.” They were charged with “crimes against humanity.” Several, including Adolf Hitler, killed themselves at the end of the war before the trials began. Twenty-one men were tried in the first set of trials. Most of them, when asked, said they were “just following orders.” Of this group, 14 were sentenced to death by hanging. Later, another series of trials were held for 185 more people who were involved in these crimes. Of the thousands of people required to kill millions, very few were ever charged with a crime.

**From 1945 to Now: Remembering the Past to Protect the Future**

Each person who witnessed the Holocaust had a different experience. Some people were **victims**. Other people were **bystanders**. Some bystanders looked away and pretended they did not see such horrible things. Other bystanders were afraid for their own safety. Some people tried to help the victims. These people are called **rescuers**. They risked their lives to save others. Finally, the Nazis and their collaborators com-
mitted the millions of crimes that are known as the Holocaust.

To understand the Holocaust more, read about different people’s experiences. Think about the decisions each person made. Think about decisions you hope you would make in similar situations.

The Holocaust was not inevitable. People decided to act or not act in ways that allowed this tragedy to happen. Many people believe that times like the Holocaust will happen again unless we learn from this horrible part of history. We need to treat each other with respect, and help each other through hard times. By remembering what happened in the past, we can help protect the future.
Vocabulary Words
from “The Holocaust: Over Twelve Years of Fear”

“From World War I to 1933”

Nazis__________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

Jewish_________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

equality________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

freedom________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

unstable_______________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

peace treaty___________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

The Great Depression____________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

stock market crash_____________________ 
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

equality________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

unemployment rate______________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

freedom________________________________
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_______________________________________

war debt______________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

unstable_______________________________
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_______________________________________

scapegoat____________________________
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### Vocabulary words: “From 1933 to 1938”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chancellor</td>
<td>Government leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gypsies</td>
<td>Minority group</td>
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<tr>
<td>state of emergency</td>
<td>Condition of danger or necessity for action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mentally handicapped</td>
<td>Impaired physically or mentally</td>
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<tr>
<td>rights</td>
<td>Legal entitlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physically handicapped</td>
<td>Impaired physically or mentally</td>
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<tr>
<td>enemies of the state</td>
<td>Opponents or enemies</td>
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<tr>
<td>citizens</td>
<td>Members of a particular community</td>
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<tr>
<td>non-Aryans</td>
<td>People not of Aryan origin</td>
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<tr>
<td>sub-human</td>
<td>Inferior or non-human</td>
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<tr>
<td>concentration camps</td>
<td>Place of mass imprisonment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Führer</td>
<td>Leader of the Nazi Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>master race</td>
<td>Race of master</td>
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<tr>
<td>propaganda</td>
<td>Dissemination of false information via media</td>
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<tr>
<td>synagogues</td>
<td>Places of worship for Jews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aryans</td>
<td>Members of the Aryan race</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristallnacht</td>
<td>Night of broken glass</td>
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<tr>
<td>inferior</td>
<td>Lower in status or rank</td>
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*Center for Literacy Studies, The University of Tennessee*
**Vocabulary words: “From 1939 to 1942” and “From 1942 to 1944”**

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<td>territory</td>
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<td>labor camps</td>
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<td>Poles</td>
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<td>African-Germans</td>
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<td>re-educate</td>
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<td>homosexuals</td>
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<td>Jehovah's Witnesses</td>
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<td>communists</td>
<td></td>
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<td>death camps</td>
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<td>lice</td>
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<td>tattooed</td>
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<td>poison gas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>bunkers</td>
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<td>responsible</td>
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*Educators’ Resource Toolkit*  
*Center for Literacy Studies, The University of Tennessee*
Vocabulary words “From 1944 to 1945” and “From 1945 to Now”

Allies ______________________________ victims____________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
death marches ______________________ bystanders___________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
liberated____________________________ rescuers___________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
local townspeople____________________ perpetrators_______________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
deny ________________________________ collaborators_______________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
population___________________________ inevitable________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
illegally ______________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
estimate_____________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
witnessed____________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Timeline Lesson

Creating a timeline of the Holocaust as a group or class project is an effective way to visually reinforce facts from the *Over Twelve Years of Fear* reading. This lesson also allows adult learners to work together toward a common goal. The timeline details can be expanded through additional student research.

**Checklist of Suggestions and Ideas for Creating a Timeline**

- Decide the start and end years for your timeline. Consider having the timeline continue to the present.

- Establish the types and location of events that will be included. Will the timeline include only significant events from Europe, or can events in the United States be included?

- Establish the level of detail that should be written. Do you expect a heading, a sentence, or a paragraph for each “entry” on the timeline?

- You may want to post the years or ranges of years high on a wall. Have timeline entries for that year/range posted below the date. This method allows more flexibility for especially “crowded” years.

- Be sure your ranges of years do not overlap to reduce confusion. For example, use “1931-1935” and “1936-1940”, *not* “1930-1935” and “1935-1940.”

- Record events on separate pieces of paper with their dates in a specific place. Organize the stack by dates after all events are collected.

- Begin organizing Holocaust events by having learners scan the *Over Twelve Years of Fear* reading.

- Several videotapes, including “Camera of My Family” are arranged sequentially. Suggest that students takes notes about dates and events as they view the film.

- Have additional resources on hand in the classroom. For example, *Tell Them We Remember* by Susan Bachrach is an excellent resource for more Holocaust dates and information.
☐ Encourage learners to look for photographs or create drawings or diagrams for their entries.

☐ Consider having students search your local newspaper’s archives for articles from the same years. Most public libraries have newspaper and magazine archives on microfilm for use by patrons. Include significant local/regional events to connect the timeline to your community.

☐ As questions about the Holocaust arise that you can not answer, write them down for future student research ideas. Have students report their findings back to the class—and add the new information to the timeline.
Sentence Structure Exercise

After you have read each paragraph, fill in the chart to construct a sentence to describe the reading’s major point. You may omit a section of the chart if it makes your sentence sound better, but do not leave out the subject or verb! An example is shown below.

**EXAMPLE**

In the 1932 election, Paul von Hindenburg, who was already the President of Germany, was re-elected. Hitler came in second place, but neither man had a majority of the votes. Von Hindenburg was worried because the German people were still upset. They had no faith in the government. In 1933, he decided to appoint Hitler to be Chancellor of Germany so more people would trust the government. He thought Hitler would help him rebuild the country. Von Hindenburg was wrong about that assumption!

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<td>President Von Hindenburg</td>
<td>appointed Hitler to be Chancellor</td>
<td>to gain the German people’s trust</td>
<td>in 1933.</td>
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**READING #1**
When World War I ended in 1918, Germany was blamed for starting the war. The peace treaty that was signed after the war said the German government had to pay a lot of money for war damages. The people of Germany were furious! They thought it was unfair to have to pay so much money. They had a lot of damage in their country, and many Germans died in the war, too. The German people were usually very proud of their country. After the treaty, they were embarrassed and ashamed.

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**READING #2**
In November 1938, things changed. The Nazi government began to use violence against Jewish people, instead of just passing laws and saying bad things. For two days all over the country, they destroyed Jewish businesses. They burnt down the Jewish places of worship, called synagogues. Homes were broken into. People were beaten. About 30,000 people were arrested, and many were never seen again. Every Jewish person was in danger: children and old people, women and men, rich people and poor. These two days are now called Kristallnacht, or the “Night of Broken Glass.”

<table>
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</tbody>
</table>
READING #3

World War II was still going on. Germany was fighting two wars. One war was against other countries. The other war was against Jews and other groups of people the Nazis hated. That list of people was getting longer. Some were considered inferior, like Jews, Poles, Gypsies, handicapped people, and African-Germans. The Nazis wanted to get rid of these people or use them as slave laborers.

READING #4

In January 1942, fifteen Nazi officials met in Wannsee, a suburb of Berlin, Germany. They wanted to close the ghettos and get rid of the Jewish people. They came up with a plan called the “Final Solution.” For 9 years, the Nazis had killed many Jews, but the new plan was even more serious. They decided to kill all of the Jewish people in Europe—about 11 million people!
READING #5
The soldiers who found the concentration camps were shocked. Dead and dying people were everywhere. Many soldiers took photographs so other people would believe them later. In some places, the local townspeople were forced to visit the camps so they would know what happened in their own community. Sometimes the soldiers even made the townspeople help bury the dead people. The soldiers wanted to make sure that no one could ever deny knowing about the murders.

READING #6
The Holocaust was not inevitable. People decided to act or not act in ways that allowed it to happen. Many people believe that times like the Holocaust will happen again unless we learn from this horrible part of history. We need to treat each other with respect, and help each other through hard times. By remembering what happened in the past, we can help protect the future.
Unemployment Rates

The unemployment rate tells you the percentage of people old enough to work who do not have a job. In “The Holocaust: Over Twelve Years of Fear,” you read about how the unemployment rate affected people in both the United States and Germany.

If a community has a low unemployment rate, like 3%, it means that most people have jobs. Only 3 out of each 100 people do not have a job, but 97 do have jobs. This community probably would be a good place to look for a job.

If a community has a high unemployment rate, like 20%, it means that a lot of people need a job. Out of each 100 people, 20 people do not have jobs, and 80 people do have jobs. If you looked for a job in that community, a lot of other people are trying to get the same job. It probably would be hard to find work.

Unemployment rates vary in different places and at different times. For example, think about what happens when a large company moves to a town and hires a lot of people. More people have jobs, and fewer people are unemployed. The town’s unemployment rate goes down. But suppose that company goes out of business later. Many people will have to look for another job. The town’s unemployment rate goes up again.
Use the information you know about unemployment rates to fill in the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>UNEMPLOYMENT RATE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PEOPLE OUT OF 100 WITHOUT JOBS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PEOPLE OUT OF 100 WITH JOBS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the 1994 rates, in which country was it easiest to find a job? ____________________________

Looking at the 1994 rates, in which country was it hardest to find a job? ____________________________

**Further Research** *(go to the library, read the newspaper, or call a local government office)*

1) What is the unemployment rate in your city or town now? _________________________________________

2) What is the United States unemployment rate now? _____________________________________________
Population Statistics

The most common estimate of Jewish victims of the Nazis is 6 million people. Of that 6 million, about 1 1/2 million were children. Some researchers estimate that another 6 million people died who were not Jewish, including Poles, Gypsies, homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, political prisoners, and others.

Imagining millions of people is difficult to do. Try counting each person you see in a normal day, including total strangers who drive by on the road. On a busy day in a city, you probably can count about six hundred—if you make it that far! One way is to compare the place value of 6 in each of these numbers:

- 600  Six hundred
- 6,000  Six thousand
- 60,000  Sixty thousand
- 600,000  Six hundred thousand
- 6,000,000  Six million

Comparing the actual numbers shows a huge difference between 600 and 6 million, but it is still difficult to read numbers and imagine people as people, not as numbers.

It may be easier to think about the people who died during the Holocaust by considering the people in Tennessee. This state’s 1996 estimated population is between 5 and 6 million people. That number is almost equal to the number of Jewish people who died in the Nazi camps between 1939 and 1945. The 1996 populations of Tennessee and Georgia combined are about equal to all of the people murdered by the Nazis (including Jews, Gypsies, prisoners of war, homosexuals, handicapped people, and others). In this lesson, try to visualize how many people died by considering the people in your own community, town, or state.*

*Adapted from an idea of Shreema Sarghvi, Christine Ngeo, and the Student Holocaust Committee at Cold Spring Harbor High School, NY.
## COMPARING POPULATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOLOCAUST TIME PERIOD</th>
<th>ESTIMATED POPULATION TO COLOR GREY</th>
<th>TENNESSEE COUNTIES*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>Johnson  Sullivan  Carter       Unicoi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>Washington  Greene  Hawkins  Hancock  Hamblen  Cocke  Sevier  Jefferson  Grainger  Claiborne  Campbell  Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>Scott  Anderson  Knox  Blount  Monroe  Loudon  Roane  Morgan  Fentress  Pickett  Clay  Overton  Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>Macon  Trousdale  Smith  Putnam  Dekalb  White  Cumberland  Rhea  Bledsoe  Van Buren  Warren  Grundy  Sequatchie  Meigs  McMinn  Polk  Bradley  Hamilton  Marion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>Sumner  Wilson  Davidson  Cannon  Rutherford  Bedford  Coffee  Moore  Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>1,250,000</td>
<td>Robertson  Cheatham  Williamson  Marshall  Lincoln  Giles  Maury  Montgomery  Dickson  Hickman  Lewis  Lawrence  Wayne  Perry  Humphreys  Houston  Stewart  Henry  Benton  Carroll  Henderson  Decatur  Hardin  McNairy  Chester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>Weakley  Obion  Lake  Dyer  Gibson  Crockett  Madison  Haywood  Lauderdale  Tipton  Shelby  Fayette  Hardeman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The population estimates given for the Tennessee counties shown are higher than official population estimates for comparative purposes. The July 1996 U.S. Census estimate for Tennessee is about 5,320,000. Although “6 Million” is the number most commonly cited for Jewish deaths, a statistician named R. J. Rummel (*Democide*, 1993) explains that the actual number of Jewish victims of the Nazi camps could be as low as 3.6 million, or as high as 7.7 million. He argues that the Jewish death toll was “most likely” about 5,291,000—an estimate quite close to the 1996 estimated population of Tennessee.
POPULATION EXERCISE

1. Study the Tennessee map with county names.
2. Find your own county and mark it with a red dot.
3. The 4 largest cities in Tennessee are Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville, and Chattanooga.
   • Put a star on Davidson County for Nashville, the state capital.
   • Put a blue dot on each county with a major city:
     —Shelby County for Memphis,
     —Knox County for Knoxville,
     —Hamilton County for Chattanooga.

4. Color counties of the Tennessee map grey to show the estimated Jewish deaths between 1939 and 1945. Use the “Comparing Populations” chart and Tennessee map for your work. Each year should be a different color.
5. Compare your colored Tennessee map with the map called *Estimated Jewish Deaths Between 1939 and 1945*. (See Appendix C.)
6. Remember, the population of Tennessee is similar to either the number of Jewish deaths or the number of deaths of the combined “other victims” of the Nazi camps. The combined number of deaths is closer the 1996 populations of both Tennessee and Georgia!
Learning through Looking: Photograph and Artifact Inquiries

As we look around each day, we learn from our surroundings. Similarly, we are able to learn about the past by studying historical photographs and objects (often called “artifacts”). Use these steps to learn more about the Holocaust and other events in the past.*

*Adapted from a similar lesson developed by the Education Department of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.
1. Describe what you see. Think about the details of the photograph or artifact. Some things to look for include:
   — peoples’ expressions, moods, and posture
   — the objects in the photographs
   — peoples’ clothing and style
   — colors and lighting

2. Based on the details you noticed, what do you think might be happening in the photograph? Or how do you think this artifact was used? (You may have several answers to these questions.)

3. What other information can you guess about the people, objects, or setting of the photograph?
   Why was the photograph taken? Who took it? Who may have used this object? For what reason or purpose?

4. Is there a way to discover more about the object or photograph’s background?
   Try to find more about the actual circumstances in the photograph or use of the object.

5. Put the ideas and information you have together.
   Why was this object or photograph important in the past? What does it tell us about today?