

History: What was the Holocaust?

Year 8

Term 5



Timeline

30th January 1933	Hitler is elected Chancellor of Germany
14th July 1933	Disabled people and others, such as severe alcoholics, begin to be forced to have operations that prevent them from having children.
1935	The first Nuremburg laws are passed .
9th November 1938	Kristallnacht. Across Germany, a night of violence against Jewish people results in nearly 100 murders.
1939	Jews are grouped together in ghettos in towns to make it easier to control and deport them.
June 1941	Invasion of the Soviet Union. Roma are seen as difficult to control and over 100,000 Roma are shot into mass graves by the <i>Einsatzgruppen</i>
December 1941	The first death camp is built at Chelmno to murder the Jews of Lodz and its neighbouring towns. Killing begins in December 1941, using gas vans.
20th January 1942	The Wannsee Conference. The Final Solution to the Jewish problem is decided: to exterminate all Jews within reach.
27th January 1945	Auschwitz Birkenau is liberated by US troops.

Key people

Adolf Hitler	Adolf Hitler was the Austrian-born, leader of the Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945. He had extreme views on the need for Germany to be full of German people and this led to anti-Semitic policies growing in Germany.
Reinhard Heydrich	A high-ranking German Nazi official during World War II, and one of the main architects of the Holocaust.
Heinrich Himmler	A high-ranking Nazi official, he formed the <i>Einsatzgruppen</i> and built extermination camps. He was the leader of the SS.

Key Terms

Holocaust	The Holocaust was the attempt by the Nazis and their collaborators to murder all the Jews in Europe.
Jew	A person whose religion is Judaism.
Antisemitism	Discrimination, prejudice or hostility toward Jews.
Persecution	A program or campaign to exterminate, drive away or control people based on their religion, ethnicity, social or racial group.
Nuremburg Laws	Marriage between Jews and Aryans is banned. Jews are not allowed to be German citizens or vote.
Ghetto	A section of a city, (sometimes walled) , where all Jews were forced to live.
Concentration camp	Camps established by the Nazis in WWII as a place to hold Jews, political opponents and gypsies.
Auschwitz	Opened in 1940. One of the largest of the Nazi concentration and death camps, it was a network of camps where Jewish people and other perceived enemies of the Nazi state were exterminated,
Einsatzgruppen	Special SS and police units. These squads ruthlessly carried out the mass murder of Soviet Jews, Roma and political opponents.
Perpetrator	A person who carries out a harmful, illegal, or immoral act.
Bystander	A person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part.
Resistance	The act of fighting against something that is attacking you, or refusing to accept something.
Genocide	The deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular nation or ethnic group.

Key Events

Causes of Antisemitism

- Antisemitism dates back to medieval times. The Jewish population of Europe have been persecuted for centuries. Medieval antisemitism is based around religion, misconceptions and beliefs .
- Nazi Antisemitism is developed by Hitler, it is based upon beliefs about race. It is fuelled by anxieties and worries during the interwar years.

The Rise of Persecution

- Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and starts to pass laws that slowly restrict and persecute Jews.
- It starts by trying to remove Jewish influence from Germany. This progresses to forced migration. Life is so difficult that Jews want to leave Germany.
- Eventually the persecution turns to a systematic campaign of mass murder.

The Final Solution

- After the initial success Operation Barbarossa (the invasion of the Soviet Union) 4 million more Jews fell under Nazi control. The Nazis created a plan to deal with this:
- Fit and strong Jews would be spared for a few months to work for Germany.
- Those of no use, like mothers, the old, the very young and the sick, would be sent for 'special treatment'.

Britain's role in the Holocaust

- From the Nazi rise to power through to the outbreak of war, Great Britain had access to information and evidence about the Nazi's actions and policies. However, there was very little protest from the British government.

Liberation and After

- As the allied troops made their way through Nazi occupied land they encountered many concentration camps. Auschwitz was liberated by US troops on 27th January 1945.
- Many of the Nazi officials who were involved in the Holocaust were put on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Nuremburg Trials.
- However, despite the horrors of the Holocaust, genocide has occurred in many other countries since and is still happening today.