**Lesson Title: Introduction to the Holocaust**

**Disclaimer: Before continuing with this lesson plan, please review** [**Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust — United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (ushmm.org)**](https://www.ushmm.org/teach/fundamentals/guidelines-for-teaching-the-holocaust)**.**

**Texas Holocaust Remembrance Week Lesson Alignment with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) – *Updated 2020***

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| **Grade**  | **Social Studies** | **English Language Arts and Reading** |
| 6 | World Cultures6.1B, 6.2A, 6.2B, 6.7B, 6.8B, 6.9A-C, 10A, 13B-D, 6.15A, 6.16C, 6.19A-C, 6.21A-D | 6.2, 6.5B, 6.6C, 6.6E-F |
| 7 | Texas History7.7E, 7.21A-D | 7.2, 7.5B, 7.5F, 7.6C, 7.6E-F |
| 8 | U.S. History to 18778.28A-E, 8.30A | 8.2, 8.5B, 8.5F, 8.6C, 8.6E-F |
| 9 | World Geography10.B, 13A, 14A-C, 15B, 17A, 17C-D, 18A-B, 22B-C | 9.2, 9.4B, 9.4F, 9.5C, 9.5F |
| 10 | World History1F, 10A, 10C, 11A-B, 12A-C, 15A, 17D, 18B, 21D, 25B, 28B-C, 30A | 10.2, 10.4B, 10.4F, 10.5C, 10.5E-F |
| 11 | U.S. History Since 18772B, 4F, 7A-D, 16B, 28A, 28B-C, 29B | 11.2, 11.4N, 11.4F, 11.5C, 11.5E-F |
| 12 | U.S. Government11A-B, 19A-D, 21A | 12.1A, 12.4B-C, 12.5A-C, 12.8A |

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| **LESSON FOCUS/GOALS:**This lesson may be taught on its own, or as an introduction to subsequent related topics. The goal of the lesson is to introduce students to the topic of the Holocaust using a KWL chart and through independent exploration of HMMSA’s permanent virtual exhibit. The provided worksheet guides students through some of the key parts of the exhibit and helps students to understand *how* the Holocaust happened.* Students will identify historical events and conditions, as well as Nazi policies and ideas, leading up to the Holocaust
* Students will understand that the Holocaust was not a single event that happened all at once. Hatred, repression and violence built up over time to culminate in genocide against European Jews.

Vocabulary: Holocaust, Censorship, Propaganda, Racism, Ideology, Antisemitism |
| **MATERIALS/RESOURCES:*** Introduction to the Holocaust Teacher Presentation (PowerPoint slides)
* Introduction to the Holocaust Teacher Presentation Notes
* KWL Chart (Optional, students can draw their own)
* Pen/Pencil
* Computer/Tablet with Internet Access
* Link to HMMSA’s Permanent Virtual Exhibit: <https://www.hmmsa.org/the-journey-through-nazism-to-liberation>
* Virtual Exhibit Exploration Worksheet
* Virtual Exhibit Exploration Worksheet Teacher Answer Key
* “Now that You Know” Card (Optional closing activity or take home assignment)
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| **STRUCTURE & ACTIVITIES:*****Suggested time: 45 minutes (may be extended up to 1 hour)******Pre-Activity/Starter: Begin KWL Chart (10 - 15 mins)***Use the provided KWL Chart or students may draw their own on a piece of paper. Ask students to complete the first two columns of the chart, by recording whatever they already know about the Holocaust and what they want to know about the Holocaust.Optional: Based on your students’ grade level and prior exposure to the topic, you may use the the “Introduction to the Holocaust Teacher Presentation” to share the definition of the Holocaust or any other key information before beginning the Virtual Exhibit Exploration Activity.***Activity: Virtual Exhibit Exploration Worksheet (20-25 minutes)***Provide students with a copy of the Virtual Exhibit Exploration Worksheet and the link to HMMSA’s virtual exhibit. This activity may be done independently or with a partner.Note: Students will need a device with internet access to complete this activity.***Post-Activity/Exit Ticket: Complete KWL Chart (5 - 10 minutes)***Returning to the KWL Chart that students began at the start of class, ask them to complete the “Learned” Column. Option for students to share outloud what they learned.***Optional Extension or Take Home Assignment: “Now That You Know” Card***Provide students with a copy of the “Now That You Know” card. Ask students to reflect on the importance of what they have learned and write a brief statement about what they will do with the information they learned today. For more advanced students, you may ask them to write a more detailed reflection about the importance of what they learned as a take home or in class assignment.  |

**STUDENT HANDOUTS:**

**VIRTUAL EXHIBIT EXPLORATION WORKSHEET**

Many people ask, “How could something this terrible happen?” To understand how the Holocaust was possible read the exhibit sections, “**Before the Whirlwind**” and “**The Gathering Storm.**” As you read these sections, answer the questions below.

**Before the Whirlwind - The Rise of Nazism**

1. What two historical events led many Germans to be angry or fearful about Germany’s future?

a. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** (1914 – 1918)

b. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** (1929)

2. In 1933 Adolf Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany, appointed by the German President Paul von Hindenberg. Hitler came to power through a democratic process but quickly moved to dismantle German democracy. What are some of the things he did to do this?

a. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** was imposed

b. A **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** campaign was implemented to control public opinion.

c. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** were removed from **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and burned.

d. The Nazi Party controlled **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,** schools, **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,** and the media. Other **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** parties were banned.

**Before the Whirlwind - The Master Race**

3. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** was at the very core of Nazi ideology. Hitler believed that Germans were members of a superior group of races called “Aryan.” He believed that Jews were a separate race and a threat to German racial purity.

**The Gathering Storm – Loss of Rights**

4. What is one example of the ways that Jews were excluded from society in Nazi Germany?

**The Gathering Storm – Turning Point**

5. Describe the event called “*Kristallnacht*”:

Hitler and the Nazi’s devised a plan to exterminate all of the Jews in Europe. They called it “The Final Solution”. Read the four sections titled, 1) “**The Nazi Assault - The Final Solution**”, 2) “**The Nazi Assault – Deportation**”, 3) “**The Machinery of Death- Arrival”** and **4) “The Machinery of Death- Selection.”**

6. What was the role of leaders and ordinary people?

7. How do you think people felt and reacted when they arrived at these concentration camps?

**​​TEACHER ANSWER KEYS:**

**VIRTUAL EXHIBIT EXPLORATION WORKSHEET**

**TEACHER ANSWER KEY**

**Before the Whirlwind - The Rise of Nazism**

1. What two historical events led many Germans to be angry or fearful about Germany’s future?

a. **World War I** (1914 – 1918)

b. **Great Depression** (1929)

2. In 1933 Adolf Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany, appointed by the German President Paul von Hindenberg. Hitler came to power through a democratic process but quickly moved to dismantle German democracy. What are some of the things he did to do this?

a. **Censorship** was imposed

b. A **propaganda** campaign was implemented to control public opinion.

c. **Books** were removed from **libraries** and burned.

d. The Nazi Party controlled **police**, schools, **universities,** and the media. Other **political** parties were banned.

**Before the Whirlwind - The Master Race**

3. **Racism** was at the very core of Nazi ideology. Hitler believed that Germans were members of a superior group of races called “Aryan.” He believed that Jews were a separate race and a threat to German racial purity.

**The Gathering Storm – Loss of Rights**

**4.** **What is one example of the ways that Jews were excluded from society in Nazi Germany?**

Text from the Exhibit:

In April 1933 the Nazis enforced a boycott of Jewish businesses throughout Germany. It was followed by a series of other regulations that barred Jews from civil service jobs and the legal and teaching professions. Thousands of musicians, academicians, lawyers, doctors, actors, and artists were driven from their jobs. In the public schools, Jewish students were tormented and abused.

The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 defined Jews biologically as descendants of Jewish parents and grandparents and invalidated their German citizenship. Marriage between Jews and Aryans was forbidden. In Nazi Gemany, anti-Semitism was no longer based on religious bias. It became a matter of German blood and racial purity from which there was no escape. Even those who had converted to Christianity were identified as Jews.

German Jews became outcasts. Signs barring them from public places and villages were posted throughout Germany. Physical attacks were commonplace, and hundreds were arrested without cause and sent to concentration camps. In 1936 Jewish athletes were not permitted to represent Germany in the Olympic games.

**The Gathering Storm – Turning Point**

**5.** **Describe the event called “*Kristallnacht*”:**

Text from the Exhibit:

On November 9, 1938, a violent anti-Jewish riot organized by the government broke out throughout Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland. The outburst was sparked by the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris by a young Jew whose parents had been among 15,000 Jews forcibly deported from Germany. The explosion of violence was called Kristallnacht, or Night of Broken Glass.

Angry mobs torched synagogues and vandalized Jewish businesses, schools, and hospitals. Under instructions from the government, police and firemen did not interfere. Jewish homes were raided, and thousands were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Synagogues were burned down, and nearly a hundred Jews were murdered. When the two-day riot ended, Jews were ordered to clear the rubble and pay for the damage at their own expense.

**6.** **What was the role of leaders and ordinary people?**

Text from the Exhibit:

The extermination centers operated with cruel efficiency. An entire bureaucracy was required to operate them and the hundreds of other concentration camps that were located throughout Nazi- occupied Europe. The Final Solution involved the cooperation of thousands of people who became willing cogs in the Nazi assembly line of death.

**7.** **How do you think people felt and reacted when they arrived at these concentration camps?**

Text from the Exhibit:

When the trains arrived at the death camps, the prisoners who had survived the journey stumbled out on the platform not knowing what lay ahead. Because there was general confusion and panic, the Nazis often went to great lengths to calm the new arrivals. The station platforms and buildings were disguised as normal railway stations. Nazi officers greeted the newcomers with false politeness, and sometimes camp orchestras played music.

Some prisoners attempted to question the uniformed inmates who worked at the station, but conversation was forbidden. Nazi guards assured everyone that they were going to be taken to shower rooms.

The newly arrived prisoners were divided according to their ability to walk. The elderly and infirm were whisked away quickly. Those who remained were separated, men in one line, women in another. Within moments, families were torn apart—few would ever be reunited.

In Sobibor, Treblinka, Chelmno, and Belzec, prisoners were marched directly from the trains to the well-disguised gas chambers. They were instructed to disrobe before taking showers. Although some became fearful and agitated, most could not imagine the worst. Unsuspecting, they followed orders and walked into the chambers to their death.

In two camps, Majdanek and Auschwitz, a small percentage of the prisoners were selected for forced labor. As lines of men and women stood before them at the train station, Nazi officers who were usually physicians quickly decided who would live and who would die. With a small motion of the hand, they sent the frail and elderly to the left to go directly to the gas chambers. Babies were torn from their mothers’ arms and handed to strangers who had been assigned to death. Those who appeared strong were waved to the right—they had been selected for a short life of slave labor.

The laborers faced immediate degradation. Their heads and bodies were shaved, and they were washed with corrosive chemicals. After a quick shower, uniforms were issued. At Auschwitz prisoners’ arms were tattooed with numbers, and they were no longer referred to by name.

The Nazis reduced the victims to consumable raw materials. Their hair was used to stuff mattresses. Their clothing and other possessions were sorted and sent to Germany for use there. Gold teeth were extracted from the mouths of corpses to be melted down into gold bars. Ashes from the crematoria became fertilizer. Nothing was wasted except life itself.