

Reactions to World War II

*The Great Depression and
World War II (1929–1945)*



The home front

Rapid change

The Holocaust

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will learn about what the Holocaust was and be able to answer these key questions:

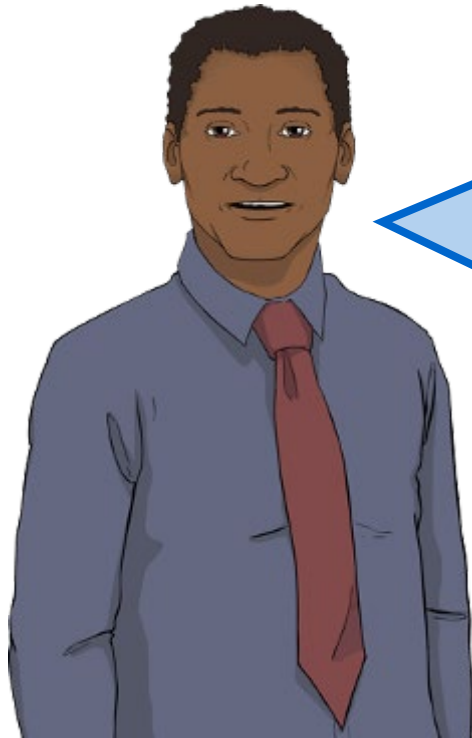
- Why did the Holocaust happen? How did the persecution begin?
- Who were the victims of the Holocaust?
- What was its aftermath? What impact has it had on international relations?



What was the Holocaust?



The **Holocaust** is the name given to the **genocide**, or the deliberate mass murder, of approximately 11 million people across Europe by the **Nazis** during World War II.



Adolf Hitler believed in an **Aryan** “master race” of blue-eyed, fair-haired people. Other races were deemed inferior and tolerating them was seen as undermining the Aryan race. Hitler, therefore, believed that it was necessary to rid Germany of these people.

What do you know about the Holocaust?



As soon as he came to power, Hitler began a systematic state-led attack on the Jewish race. At first, persecution was generally non-violent and mainly targeted Jewish rights and businesses. However, soon the persecution became violent and eventually led to mass-murder.

Can you sort these events in the progression of Nazi persecution of Jewish people into the correct order?

Press **start** to begin.

start



Why do you think this persecution was not prevented?



After Kristallnacht, many Jewish people in Germany tried to **emigrate**. However, other countries tended to have strict immigration quotas and would not increase these limits.

People of “exceptional merit,” such as **Albert Einstein**, had a higher chance of being accepted as part of the 100,000 refugees allowed entry to the U.S.

In 1939, 740 passengers on the ship *St. Louis* were turned away from Miami, despite having U.S. immigration papers. Over half of these died in the Holocaust.

TRIPPLICATE (To be given to declarant) No. 1442

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DECLARATION OF INTENTION
(Valid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

United States of America In the District Court
District of New Jersey at The United States of Trenton, N. J.

I, Dr. Albert Einstein

now residing at 112 Mercer St., Princeton, New Jersey my own residence

occupation Professor aged 55 years, do declare on oath that my personal description is
Sex Male color White complexion Fair color of eyes Blue
color of hair Grey height 5 feet 7 inches weight 175 pounds visible distinctive marks
none

race Jewish nationality German

I was born in Ulm, Germany on March 14, 1879

I am married. The name of my wife Elise

we were married on April 8th 1917 at Berlin, Germany (she or he was
born at Neuchâtel, Germany on January 19, 1877 entered the United States
at New York on June 5, 1905 for permanent residence therein, and now
resides at Ulm, Germany I have 2 children, and the same, date and place of birth,
and place of residence of each of said children are as follows: Albert born 5-14-1906 and
Edward born 5-28-1910 both born and reside in Switzerland

I have not heretofore made a declaration of intention: Number _____ at _____

my last foreign residence was Berlin, Germany

I emigrated to the United States of America from Germany Great Britain

my lawful entry for permanent residence in the United States was at New York, N.Y.
under the name of Albert Einstein on June 5, 1905
on the vessel SS Queen of Bermuda

I will, before being admitted to citizenship, renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly, by name, to the prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of which I may be at the time of admission a citizen or subject; I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy and it is my intention in good faith to become a citizen of the United States of America and to reside permanently therein; and I certify that the photograph affixed to the duplicate and triplicate hereof is a likeness of me: So help me God.

Albert Einstein
Subscribed and sworn to before me in the office of the Clerk of said Court,
at Trenton, N. J. the 15th day of January
anno Domini 1939. Certificate No. 150742 from the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization showing the lawful entry of the declarant for permanent residence on the date stated above, has been received by me. The photograph affixed to the duplicate and triplicate hereof is a likeness of the declarant.

George T. Cranmer
Clerk of the U. S. District Court.
By [Signature] Deputy Clerk.

FORM 1005-2-3
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

(The seal of the court will be impressed on us to secure a portion of the photograph)



Why did other countries not aid all Jewish refugees?





After the meeting at Wannsee, Nazi officials stepped up their efforts to exterminate “undesirables”. The Final Solution saw Jewish people initially driven out of their ghettos and into existing **concentration camps**.

Some of these quickly turned from harsh prisons and labor camps into straightforward execution sites.



In addition, brand new “**Death Camps**” were created.

These were built by the prisoners themselves and were designed specifically to kill people as quickly as possible.



What happened to the inmates?



The first of six "Death Camps" to start operating in Poland was Chelmo in 1941. The largest of these was **Auschwitz**. All of the camps had large gas chambers designed for the Nazi's Final Solution – the mass murder of Jewish people. This activity outlines what happened to the Jewish people in these camps.

Press **start** to begin.

start





What do you know about the Jewish population of different European countries before the war and the approximate Jewish death toll during the war? Use this animation and press on different parts of the map to find out more.

Press **start** to begin.

start



Why was the Jewish death rate higher in some places?





Who was persecuted?



As a result of the Holocaust, six million Jewish people were killed. However, they were not the only group of people that the Nazis condemned to death.

The Nazis persecuted others that they believed to be a threat to their “master race.” These included:

- homosexuals
- gypsies
- Jehovah’s Witnesses
- vagrants
- the mentally or physically disabled.



Why were these people targeted?



As Allied troops pushed towards Germany from both sides, they were horrified to discover the extermination camps.

Inside, the Allies found many near-starved prisoners, mass graves, large crematoriums and the large piles of personal belongings, such as clothes and shoes.

In the camps liberated by U.S. troops, **General Eisenhower** made the local populations come into the camps and view what had been done.



Who do you think was responsible for the Holocaust?



The Nuremberg Trials



Between 1945 and 1946, over 200 Germans and Austrians were put on trial in the German town of Nuremberg. They were tried for crimes against humanity and **war crimes**.

Part of the Nuremberg trials involved judging 24 Nazi leaders. In the end, the court sentenced 12 to death and many of the others to prison.

In the lesser trials of doctors, ministers and judges many were convicted of war crimes.



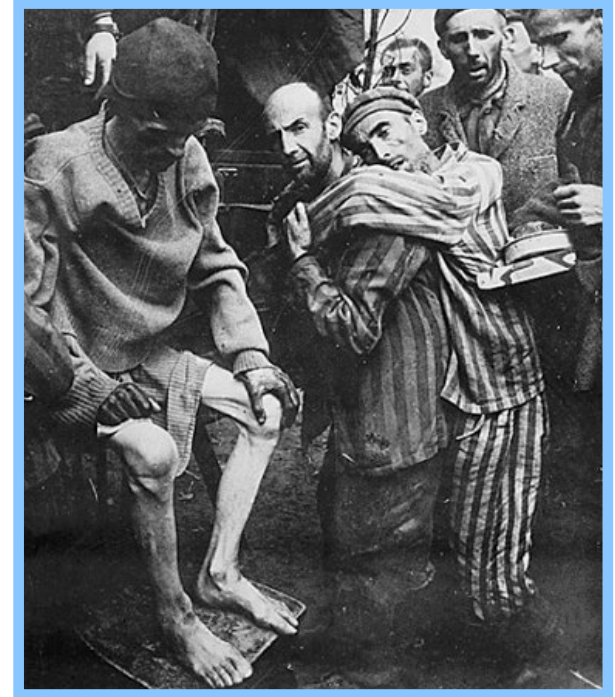


After World War II, the international community was horrified to discover the true scale of what had happened in the concentration and death camps.

Many wanted to make amends for not stepping in sooner.

In 1947, the UN, under pressure from Britain and the U.S., gave the Jewish people their own homeland in **Palestine**.

The U.S. also pursued a policy of strengthening **democracy** in the world to try to establish tolerance and peace.



How might these decisions lead to further problems?



Test your knowledge about reactions to
World War II with this quiz.

Choose the correct answer to each
question to see how much you can
remember about reactions to the war.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Test your understanding of the reactions to World War II by recapping key terms and important people using this glossary. Press on the tabs and then each term to see a definition.

Press **start** to begin.

start

