

Year 9 Knowledge Organiser: The Holocaust

What do I need to know?

- ✓ Why Jews have been persecuted throughout history?
- ✓ What were the key stages in the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany?

KEY VOCABULARY

Antisemitism	Racism against Jewish people including prejudice, discrimination and hostile behaviour.	Persecution	Unfair or cruel treatment over a period of time- usually because of race or religion.
Scapegoat	A person or group who is blamed for the mistakes of others.	Citizenship	Being a citizen of a country and so having rights e.g. to vote and to be protected by the law.

Why have Jews been persecuted throughout history?

People often think that the persecution of the Jews was unique to Nazi Germany but this is not true. In fact, Jews have been persecuted throughout history and in many different countries.



Why?

- The Christian Church portrayed Jews as the killers of Christ.
- Many Jews appeared to be wealthy and people envied them. It was often said that rich Jews were part of a conspiracy to take over the world.
- Governments often made Jews scapegoats for problems in their country.

Where?

- In France in 1348, Jews were burned to death for causing the Black Death.
- In England in 1290, more than 250 Jews were hanged because they were seen as greedy and having more money than other English people.
- In Russia in the 1800s, Jews were blamed for the failure of the harvest because a few rich Jewish farmers have not suffered as much as others.
- In the 1920s, Jews were blamed for Germany losing the First World War.

Stage 1: The passing of anti-Jewish laws


As soon as the Nazis came to power in 1933, they started to pass laws that were intended to make the lives of Jewish people more difficult.



The 1935 Nuremberg Laws included:

- Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour: Marriages between Jews and German citizens are forbidden.
- Reich Citizenship Law: No Jew can be a German citizen.

Soon these laws were extended to include all aspects of Jewish life:

- September 1937 - Large numbers of Jewish businesses were confiscated.
- 1938 - Aryan and non-Aryan children are forbidden to play together.
- June 1938 - Jewish doctors, lawyers and dentists were forbidden to treat Aryans.
- August 1938 - Jews forced to use Jewish forenames, Israel for men and Sara for women.
- October 1938 - Jews had to have a red letter 'J' stamped on their passports.
- April 1939 - Jews can be evicted from their homes without reason being given or without notice.
- September 1939 - Jews are no longer allowed to leave their homes after 8pm. 

August 1934
Hitler becomes
dictator of Germany

September 1935
The Nuremberg Laws
are passed

KEY VOCABULARY



Ghetto	Walled off areas of cities where Jews were forced to live.	Holocaust by Bullets	The mass murder of 2 million Jews by the SS Einsatzgruppen (special action groups).
Final Solution	The plan to kill all the Jews in Europe.	Dehumanise	To take away human qualities by treating someone in an inhuman way.

Stage 2: Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass), November 1938

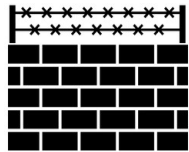
A Jewish man went to the Germany embassy in Paris, where he shot and killed a Nazi official. Kristallnacht was the punishment of all Jews for his actions.

- Josef Goebbels organised anti-Jewish demonstrations in Germany which involved attacks on Jewish property.
- 7,500 Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues were destroyed.
- Over 100 Jews were killed and 26,000 healthy male Jews were rounded up and sent to concentration camps.
- Jews were fined 1 billion Reichmarks for the damage caused on Kristallnacht.
- This event signaled a major change in the persecution of the Jews. Up to this point the persecution had been largely non-violent.



Stage 3: Life in the ghettos

Ghettos or 'Jewish districts' were set up in Poland to isolate Jews from the main population. These were walled off areas of cities where Jews were forced to live. Any Jews caught leaving could be shot. The Warsaw ghetto was the largest.



- It was run by the Judenrat, a Jewish council who carried out Nazi orders.
- It had a population of over 400,000 people living in a very small area – the ghetto was overcrowded.
- On average 7 – 8 people shared a room.
- Houses were unheated and dirty water entered the water supply leading to diseases such as typhus and typhoid fever.
- There was a limited food supply – each person received a bowl of watery soup and 300g of black bread twice a day.
- Dead bodies were often seen in the streets until they were removed by garbage men.
- Over 92,000 Jews died due to starvation, disease and cold.

Stage 5: The Final Solution

The Final Solution was the plan to kill all Jews in Europe.

- Altogether 6 extermination camps were built in Poland including Auschwitz- Birkenau and Sobibor.
- Each camp had purpose built gas chambers. Each of the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau could hold up to 2,000 Jews and the gas, Zyklon B, could kill them within 20 minutes.
- Jews were transported to the camps in cattle trucks. Upon arrival a selection took place. The elderly, the disabled and young children were sent straight to the gas chambers.
- Those who were not sent straight to the gas chambers were kept alive to be used as slave labour. They would be worked to death in a process known as 'destruction through work'.



Stage 4: The Holocaust by Bullets

In June 1941, Germany invaded Russia and occupied a lot of Russian land. Russia was home to many Jews; they now came under Nazi control.



- The German army was followed by the SS Einsatzgruppe. This was a special force, whose job was to murder all the Jews – men, women and children – it could find.
- Whole communities were rounded up and shot into mass graves.
- Altogether, it murdered over two million people.

November 1938
Kristallnacht

October 1939
The start of the move
to ghettos

June 1941
The start of the
Holocaust by bullets

January 1942
The Wannsee Conference is
held to plan the Final Solution

KEY VOCABULARY

Resistance	An act of opposing or fighting back against something or someone.
Liberation	The act of freeing people from a place of imprisonment or oppression.
Perpetrator	Someone who carries out and is responsible for a crime or immoral act.
Collaborator	Someone who works with people they know are committing crimes or immoral acts.
Bystander	Someone who is present when a crime or immoral act of committed but does not take part.

How did Jewish people resist?

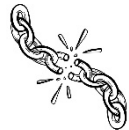
Jewish people resisted the Nazis in various ways, some violent and some non-violent. Examples include:



- In April-May 1943, Jews in the Warsaw ghetto rose in armed revolt. The Germans were at the major fighting within a few days, but it took them nearly a month before they were able to completely pacify the ghetto.
- In October 1943, over 300 Jewish prisoners escaped from Sobibor extermination camp. This was the most successful uprising in any of the camps.
- The Bielski partisans rescued Jews from extermination and fought against the Nazis. They blew up railway lines and attacked supply lines.
- Some Jews published underground newspapers and leaflets. They continued to observe Jewish religious holidays.
- The Frank family went into hiding in the annex above the factory owned by Otto Frank. Here they hid for two years, helped by who brought them food and other things that they would need.

How were the camps liberated?

Auschwitz was liberated on January 27, 1945 by Soviet troops.



In the weeks beforehand the Nazis began to destroy evidence of their crimes.

- Most Auschwitz prisoners had been forced to march westward in what would become known as death marches.
- They murdered most of the Jews who had worked in Auschwitz's gas chambers and crematoria, then destroyed most of the gas chambers.
- The Germans ordered prisoners to tear down many buildings and destroyed many of their meticulous records of camp life.
- They also took steps to move much of the material they had looted from the Jews they murdered elsewhere.
- When they entered the camp, Soviet soldiers found over six thousand emaciated prisoners alive. These prisoners greeted the soldiers as their liberators.

Who was to blame for the Holocaust?

The answer to this question seems to be simple: Hitler. The truth is more complicated.



Perpetrators – people who carried out the Holocaust

- Heinrich Himmler - he was head of the SS. The SS were the people who ran the death camps.
- Irma Grese – she was a guard at Belsen concentration camp. She shot Jews and helped select victims for the gas chambers.

Collaborators – people who worked with the Nazis

- Jaqueline Hering - she and her husband owned a furniture company who would buy Jewish hair from the camps to stuff their products with.
- Charlotta Elias - Polish woman who told SS officers about a Jewish family hiding in the woods close to her home.

Bystanders – those people who witnessed it but did not take part

- A German man – he watched from the other side of the street, as a Jewish shopkeeper cleared up the smashed glass from his shop window after Kristallnacht.
- The Allies (British, French and American armies) – they knew about the transportation of Jews to Auschwitz but doing nothing to stop them.

April – May 1943
Uprising in the Warsaw
ghetto

October 1943
Escape from Sobibor

January 1945
Liberation of Auschwitz