

LESSON PLAN: HISTORIC FIGURES IN THE HOLOCAUST

Grade 5 Standard

SS5H4 Explain America's involvement in World War II.

d. Identify Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill, Hirohito, Truman, Mussolini, and Hitler.

This lesson provides students with profiles and policies of the world leaders who led the Allies and the Axis Powers in World War II. Students learn about their contributions to the war and their responses to the Holocaust in each of their countries.

OVERVIEW: WHAT WAS THE HOLOCAUST?

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany, its allies and collaborators, between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims - six million were murdered.

Roma (Gypsies), physically and mentally disabled people and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including the LGBTQ community, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political opponents also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

By 1945, the Germans and their allies and collaborators killed nearly two out of every three European Jews as part of the "Final Solution." The "Final Solution" was the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe.

Source: US Holocaust Memorial Museum Holocaust Encyclopedia: Introduction to the Holocaust

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/introduction-to-the-holocaust>

NEW VOCABULARY

Systematic	Done or acting according to a fixed plan or system; methodical.
State sponsored	Actions organized by the civil government of a country
Persecution	To harass or punish in a manner designed to injure, hurt or remove rights; grieve, or afflict
Collaboration	To work with another person or group in order to achieve or do something. German authorities required the assistance of local people in the regions they occupied to implement the "Final Solution." These collaborators helped to commit some of the worst crimes of the Holocaust era.

RESOURCE: ANIMATED MAP - THE HOLOCAUST

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/gallery/introduction-to-the-holocaust-maps>

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INSTRUCTIONS

- Divide the class into 7 groups.
- Assign each group one of the 7 world leaders.
- Students in each group will read the USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia article about their world leader.
- Students will discuss the Critical Thinking Questions.
- Students will analyze the photographs, videos, maps and documents about their assigned leader. Analysis worksheets are linked below.

National Archives Primary Source Analysis Worksheets

Worksheets for Novice or Younger Students, or Those Learning English

- [Photograph](#)
- [Written Document](#)
- [Artifact or Object](#)
- [Poster](#)
- [Map](#)
- [Cartoon](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Sound Recording](#)
- [Artwork](#)

Worksheets for Intermediate or Secondary Students

- [Photograph](#)
- [Written Document](#)
- [Artifact](#)
- [Poster](#)
- [Map](#)
- [Cartoon](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Sound Recording](#)
- [Artwork](#)

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Worksheet for Understanding Perspective in Primary Sources - For All Students and Document Types

This tool helps students identify perspective in primary sources and understand how backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences shape point of view.

- [Understanding Perspective in Primary Sources](#)

[LINK FOR HOLOCAUST GLOSSARY](#)

[LINK FOR HOLOCAUST CHRONOLOGY](#)

PROJECT

Using the resources included for their assigned leader, students in each group will create an obituary for their world leader. The template for the obituary is attached here. Students will share their obituary with the class.

OR

Using the resources in their packet, students will create a full size exhibit panel about their assigned world leader.

RESOURCES

Writing a short biography with obituaries – NYT Article and Lesson Plan

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/23/learning/lesson-plans/writing-a-short-biography-with-obituaries.html>

Activity – Creating a Museum Exhibit

Ask students if they have ever visited a museum. If so, ask them what they saw and experienced.

Brainstorm reasons museums collect and exhibit photographs, documents, maps, videos and artifacts.

Show students photos of different museum exhibits. What objects, photographs, videos, labels, or other materials are in each exhibit? What similarities and differences do they see between exhibits? What story is each exhibit telling?

Lead students in making their own mini museum exhibits, either in a hard copy or a virtual exhibit.

Students will:

- Create an interesting title for their exhibit.
- Choose photographs, documents, objects, maps, to enhance the content of the exhibit.
- Create captions for the items above.
- Create text to tell the story of the historic figure they have been assigned. Text and other resources should reflect ONLY factual, historically correct information.
- Arrange the materials and text to tell the story chronologically.
- Compose a worksheet for students to help them interpret the exhibit.
- Present the exhibit to the class.

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www.holocaust.georgia.gov



Brooklyn Museum: Heritage Panels



A Century in the Making | National Museum of African American History and Culture



Connecticut State Museum of Natural History

www.holocaust.georgia.gov

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Winston Churchill

Photo courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

Resources:

UK Government History – Past Prime Ministers: Winston Churchill website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/winston-churchill>

Library of Congress – Churchill and the Great Republic website:

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/churchill/wc-hour.html>

Imperial War Museum: How Churchill Led Britain to Victory in the Second World War website:

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/how-churchill-led-britain-to-victory-in-the-second-world-war>

The National Archives UK – Churchill's reaction to the Holocaust website:

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/holocaust/churchills-reaction/>

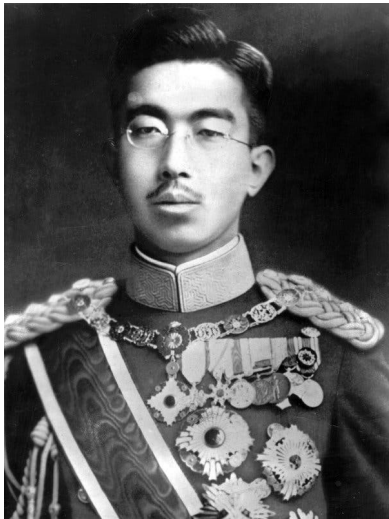
BBC Churchill and the Holocaust website:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/genocide/churchill_holocaust_01.shtml

Critical Thinking Questions

- How did Churchill “take the English language and send it into battle.”
- How did Churchill respond to the Holocaust?

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Japanese Emperor Hirohito

Photo courtesy of Associated Press

Resources:

New York Times: Aide's Diary Suggests Hirohito Agonized over His War Responsibility:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/24/world/asia/japan-hirohito-war-diary.html>

American propaganda poster with anti-Nazi and anti-Japanese caricatures

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn520990>

New York Times: Before Pearl Harbor, Emperor Warned Against War

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/10/world/asia/before-pearl-harbor-japans-emperor-cautioned-against-war-with-us-documents-show.html>

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History: Japan declares war, 1941 - A Spotlight on a Primary Source by Hirohito, Emperor of Japan

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/japan-declares-war-1941>

USHMM Collections - Arthur Szyk drawing:

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn520300>

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia – Axis Powers in World War II:

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/axis-powers-in-world-war-ii>

Critical Thinking Questions

- How did the Japanese people view the Emperor before World War II?
- What was Emperor Hirohito's role in World War II?
- What happened to Hirohito after the war? Why do you think the Allies made this decision?

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Adolf Hitler

Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

Resources

The National World War II Museum - How Did Adolf Hitler Happen?

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/how-did-adolf-hitler-happen>

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia - Adolf Hitler

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/adolf-hitler>

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia - Making a Leader

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/making-a-leader?series=4>

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia - Adolf Hitler – Early Years 1889–1913

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/adolf-hitler-early-years-1889-1913?series=4>

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia - Adolf Hitler and World War I 1913–1919

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/adolf-hitler-and-world-war-i-1913-1919?series=4>

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia - Adolf Hitler 1919 – 1924

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/adolf-hitler-1919-1924?series=4>

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia - Adolf Hitler 1924 – 1930

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/adolf-hitler-1924-1930?series=4>

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia - Adolf Hitler 1930 – 1933

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/adolf-hitler-1930-1933?series=4>

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia -The July 20 1944 Plot to Assassinate Adolf Hitler

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-july-20-1944-plot-to-assassinate-adolf-hitler?series=4>

Critical Thinking Questions

- What qualities and characteristics of leadership did Hitler seem to have and to demonstrate?
- What other factors and attitudes contributed to the rise of Hitler?
- How can knowledge of the events in Germany and Europe before the Nazis came to power help citizens today respond to threats of genocide and mass atrocity?

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Benito Mussolini

Photo courtesy of The National Archives (540151)

Resources:

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia:

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/benito-mussolini-1>

PBS - The Dictator's Playbook – Episode 3: Benito Mussolini website:

<https://www.pbs.org/tpt/dictators-playbook/episodes/benito-mussolini/>

Imperial War Museum Collections – Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini – website:

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/search?filters%5BagentString%5D%5BMussolini%2C%20Benito%20Amilcare%20Andrea%5D=on>

Critical Thinking Questions

- What conditions in Italy helped Mussolini come to power? Which of his policies appealed to the Italians? Why?
- What was Mussolini's government's policy regarding the Jews of Italy? What happened to the Italian Jews when his government fell?

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Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Photo Courtesy of FDR Library

Resources:

PBS American Experience website:

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/eleanor-fdr/>

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia Article:

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/franklin-delano-roosevelt>

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum website:

<https://www.fdrlibrary.org/fdr>

The White House/Franklin D. Roosevelt website:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/franklin-d-roosevelt/>

USHMM Video – Keep Out of This War

<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust>

Critical Thinking Questions

- What challenges did American political leaders, including Franklin D. Roosevelt, face in mobilizing public support for rescuing Jews and other persecuted peoples in Nazi-controlled Europe?
- During crises, what are the responsibilities of our leaders to shape public opinion rather than follow it?

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Joseph Stalin

Photo courtesy of Newsweek.

Resources:

USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia

Josef Stalin:

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/josef-stalin>

German- Soviet Pact:

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/german-soviet-pact>

The Eastern Front: The German War Against the Soviet Union:

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-soviet-union-and-the-eastern-front>

BBC Teach: Joseph Stalin: National hero or cold-blooded murderer?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/joseph-stalin-national-hero-or-cold-blooded-murderer/zhv747h>

Yad Vashem Shoah Resource Center – Stalin, Joseph Vissarionovich:

https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206042.pdf

Critical Thinking Questions

- What is genocide? How do the Holodomor and the Holocaust fit the definition?
- Why did Stalin sign the German – Soviet Pact? -How long was this pact in effect? When did it end? Why?
- Why are treaties signed and/or broken?

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Harry S. Truman

Photo courtesy of The New York Times

Resources:

The White House – Harry S. Truman

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/harry-s-truman/>

Harry S. Truman Library * Museum - Biographical Sketch: Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States

<https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/trivia/biographical-sketch-harry-truman>

The White House Historical Association – Harry S. Truman

<https://www.whitehousehistory.org/bios/harry-truman>

National World War II Museum - "The Creed of Liberty" Harry Truman's Independence Day Message, July 4, 1945

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/truman-independence-day-message-1945>

USHMM History Unfolded: US Newspapers and the Holocaust - President Truman Orders Quota Preference for Displaced Persons

<https://newspapers.ushmm.org/events/president-truman-orders-quota-preference-for-displaced-persons>

USHMM Film: Truman Proclaims Victory in Europe

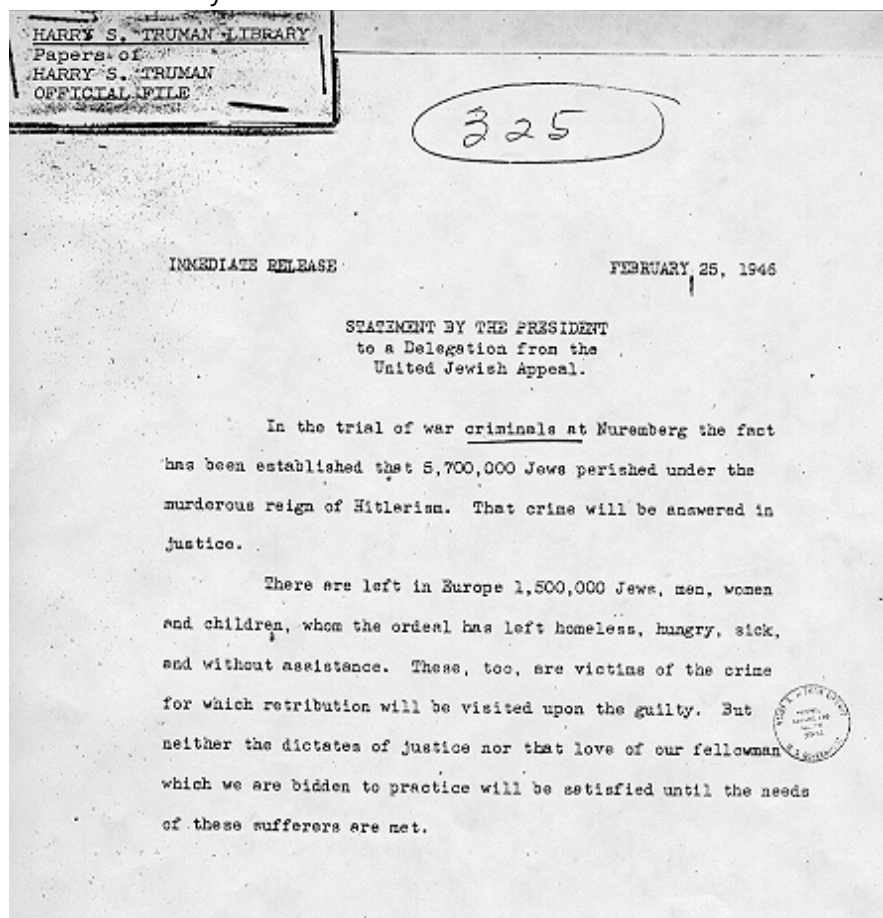
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/truman-proclaims-victory-in-europe>

Experiencing History: Letter from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Harry S. Truman September 18, 1945

<https://perspectives.ushmm.org/item/letter-from-dwight-d-eisenhower-to-harry-s-truman-september-18-1945/collection/displaced-persons-and-postwar-america>

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Document Analysis



Anticipating the defeat of Germany in October of 1943, the Allies established a United Nations War Crimes Commission to collect evidence that could be used to prosecute Nazi war criminals. After the surrender of Germany, President Truman appointed Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson as chief counsel to investigate and try Nazi war criminals. From November 1945 until October 1946, the International Military Tribunal, in the former Nazi stronghold of Nuremberg, heard cases against 22 senior, Nazi leaders. The court sentenced twelve to death and three to life sentences. Hundreds of other lesser figures in the Nazi conspiracy (what Truman called "second stringers") were tried from January 1946 to April 1949. The Office of Military Government found 185 more Nazis guilty of war crimes.

Document-Survey: Questions

1. Who made this statement?
2. Who was this statement made to?
3. When was this statement made and how does it fit into the chronology of the Nuremberg Trials?
4. What is Truman saying about the Nuremberg Trials?
5. What is Truman saying about the Survivors of the Holocaust?