**The History of the Holocaust**

The [Holocaust](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=Holocaust) refers to the state-sponsored persecution and annihilation of an estimated six million European [Jews](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=Jews) by [Adolph Hitler](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22Adolph%20Hitler%22) and the Nazi regime during [World War II](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22World%20War%20II%22). The word holocaust comes from the Greek word holokauston, which means "that which is completely burnt." The persecution of the Jews in Germany began with the Nazi rise to power in 1933. Nazi ideology proclaimed that Aryans (Germans) were racially superior and that the Jews were a plague on the people of Germany. Although the Nazis targeted other groups such as [Roma (Gypsies)](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=Roma%20OR%20Gypsies), the [disabled](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=disabled), [homosexuals](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=homosexuals), [communists](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=communists), [social democrats](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22social%20democrats%22), [Jehovah's Witnesses](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=Jehovah%20Witnesses), [trade unionists](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22trade%20unionists%22) and some people of Slavic origins such as [Poles](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=Poles) and [Russians](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=Russians), no group was more severely affected than the Jews.   
  
When the Nazis came to power in 1933, the Jewish population in Europe totaled more than nine million people, according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Germany had a Jewish population of around 650,000, however, as the Nazi Empire grew, the number of Jews under Nazi control rose dramatically. By 1944, at the height of Nazi control over Europe, more than 7 million Jews fell under Nazi tyranny. By 1945, nearly two out of three European Jews had been murdered by the implementation of Hitler's "[final solution to the Jewish question](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22final%20solution%20to%20the%20Jewish%20question%22)."



The Holocaust began in earnest in the late hours of November 9, 1938. On this night, Nazi led mobs destroyed Jewish businesses and burned synagogues in several German cities. "[The Night of Broken Glass](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22The%20Night%20of%20Broken%20Glass%22)" was reported by the Nazi government as retaliation against the Jewish community for the murder of a German embassy attaché in Paris by a young Polish-German Jew.

Appendix #6b1

In reality, the murder simply gave the Nazis the opening they needed to begin their outright repression of the Jews on a mass scale, although the Nazi persecution of German Jews had begun as far back as 1933, with a boycott decreed by Hitler. By early 1939, the Nazis had implemented the use of [concentration camps](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22concentration%20camps%22) to imprison Jews and other groups targeted by the Nazis. An order from [Reinhard Heydrich](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22Reinhard%20Heydrich%22) implied that these camps should be close to railroads for the future implementation of the "[final solution](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22final%20solution%22)". By the time World War II began, the Nazis and their collaborators had created these camps as well as ghettos, transit camps and forced labor camps. In 1940, the Nazis opened the first, and most infamous, death camp at [Auschwitz](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=Auschwitz) in occupied Poland. This would be followed by the opening of death camps at [Madjanek](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=Madjanek) and [Chelmno](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=Chelmno) in 1941. By the end of World War II, the Nazis had six dedicated death camps.   
  
However, the murder of Jews and people of other groups were not limited to those in death camps. Beginning in 1941, the [SS Einsatzgruppen](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22SS%20Einsatzgruppen%22), mobile killing units, were sent in behind the advancing German army to exterminate Jews in the Soviet Union and other occupied territories. These groups were responsible for the deaths of more than one million people in occupied territory. During the final months of the war, SS guards began forcing concentration camp inmates into death marches to prevent their liberation by advancing Allied forces.   
  
The Soviet army liberated the concentration camp at [Madjanek](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=Madjanek) on July 24, 1944, and Auschwitz six months later. By the time of the German surrender on May 7, 1945, the Nazis had murdered more than 6 million Jews, along with millions of (Roma) Gypsies, Slavs, homosexuals, political dissidents, disabled and members of other religious and political groups, making the Holocaust the single largest atrocity in the history of man. Although the 20th century saw many instances of genocide, none reached even one-fifth of the number of deaths caused by the Nazi death machine.   
  
The Holocaust was an event like no other in human history that led not only to the development of the State of Israel, but to an international pledge to punish those who commit genocide. It created the legal precedent for the trial of government officials for "[crimes against humanity](http://www.holocaustarchive.com/search.aspx?search=%22crimes%20against%20humanity%22)," led to increased protections for refugees and brought more attention to the cause of international human rights. The Holocaust shaped the world we live in today in many ways and will undoubtedly continue to influence our world in the future.

<http://www.holocaustarchive.com/History.aspx>

**Highlighted Reading**

**“The History of the Holocaust”**

**Vocabulary: As you read, circle the following words and try to figure out the definition:**

Genesis -

Simultaneously -

Stifle -

Tempered -.

Incestuous -

Serendipity -

Ambiguity -

**Highlight the following:**

**1st Paragraph**

Holocaust comes from a Greek word meaning what?

Nazi ideology

Other targeted groups

**2nd paragraph**

Jewish population number in 1933

Number of Jews murdered by Nazis by 1945

**3rd paragraph**

What was the “Night of Broken Glass”?

Beginning of Nazi persecution

Importance of the order by Reinhard Heydrich

“Final Solution” death camps

**4th paragraph**

Role of the SS Einsatzgruppen

SS Einsatzgruppen responsible for how many deaths?

Death marches during final months of the war

**5th paragraph**

Liberation of the camps

Other groups murdered by Nazis

What made the Holocaust the single largest atrocity?

**6th paragraph**

Holocaust led to what two things?

What legal precedent was created?

Effect on the cause of international human rights?

**Summary Activities: Complete all of the following summary activities:**

1. **Informational pyramid summary**

**2. Determine Importance:** (1) Circle the most important word or phrase in the text.

(2) Underline the most important things written about this word or phrase, and (3) Write a summary statement. Write two to three supporting sentences.

**3. One-syllable-word summary**: Working in a group of three or four students develop a summary of the article using only one-syllable words.

**Informational-Pyramid**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Event’s name

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Two words describing the event

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Three words describing the setting

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Four words stating the problem

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Five words describing one event

6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Six words describing another event

7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Seven words describing a third event

8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Eight words describing a solution to the problem