



THE HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CARDS

The following resource has been created by Holocaust Learning UK in partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust and is designed for use with Holocaust Learning UK's *The Holocaust* film.

Holocaust Learning UK offers a unique array of films, tailor-made for secondary school students, supported by bespoke resources and expertise provided by the Holocaust Educational Trust. All their films are free to view and provide students with the essential historical facts of the Holocaust, together with memorable personal testimony, archive footage and a diverse cast of student actors to foster historical learning and an understanding of the Holocaust's contemporary relevance: linking the past, present and future.

The Holocaust Educational Trust works to ensure that people from every background are educated about the Holocaust and the important lessons to be learned for today. Since 1988, the Holocaust Educational Trust has worked with schools, universities, and communities around the UK to raise awareness and understanding of the Holocaust. The Trust provides teacher training, an Outreach programme to enable Holocaust survivors to share their personal testimonies, teaching aids and resources. Through their flagship programme, the *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project, tens of thousands of young people have had the opportunity to see for themselves the site of the former Nazi concentration and death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. They return inspired and passionate about ensuring that the legacy of the Holocaust continues for generations to come, and having seen where antisemitism can lead, they are committed to calling it out wherever it is found.

INTRODUCTION

This collection of resource/discussion cards has been designed to be used in conjunction with Holocaust Learning UK's film *The Holocaust* to explore the history of the Holocaust, first-hand eyewitness accounts and some of the important challenges raised by its study. The film and these resources are intended to be used in the classroom and are appropriate for a cross-curriculum approach to teaching the Holocaust. In particular, the resource can be used in the following subjects:

1. History
2. RE & Philosophy
3. PSHE

The resource is devised to allow for students to discuss and respond in pairs or in small groups; however, teachers may also wish to choose 2-4 cards (depending on time constraints and students' ability) to discuss as a class. To ensure the most meaningful and effective use, the cards are to be discussed in the classroom with guidance and **not to be given as a homework or independent activity**. This is particularly important as some cards detail events which are emotive and can be difficult to engage with. Therefore, a teacher/educator must be present to support students and ensure that their engagement with the discussions fosters a robust and meaningful understanding of the Holocaust which does not dramatise the events and is empathetic over emotional.



Each card has an accompanying contextual resource for teacher/educator use.

The aim of the discussion cards is to ensure students develop an understanding of the Holocaust that is embedded in thoughtful consideration of testimony and, consequently, individual human experience. This in turn enables students to look beyond the statistics of the Holocaust and recognise that the Holocaust is not simply history but living history, with important implications and relevancy for today. Therefore, the cards are founded in the core pedagogical aim of re-humanisation of the victims of the Holocaust and looking at individual, personal experiences rather than broad, impersonal chronological arcs.

The cards combine testimony extracts featured in the film with connecting discussion questions. The questions have been chosen to prompt students to deepen their understanding of what is being described in the extract; to connect it to the timeline of the Holocaust; and to further connect the themes and events raised to a wider contextual understanding of the Holocaust. These include, but are not limited to, the geographical scale of the Holocaust, the methods of de-humanisation employed by the Nazis, the impact of living conditions on one's self-understanding and ability to survive, and the challenges of liberation. The intention behind this is to scaffold students' historical understanding of the Holocaust with a deeper questioning or awareness of complex issues of identity, survival, antisemitism, resilience, and human behaviour.

It is recognised that the time available to teachers to teach the Holocaust is limited, meaning that opportunities to broaden the scope of students' study of the Holocaust are similarly restricted. In utilising the film and the discussion cards either in part or in whole, there is increased capacity to engage students in a dual focus of essential, foundational, historical understanding with important considerations of diverse questions of humanity and human experience which weighs heavily on this history and requires careful unpacking.

1. LESSON PLAN

Resource Cards 1

You will need:

- A3 Timeline of Testimony (this can be either displayed on screen or printed for students)
- A5 Resource Cards 1 (printed double sided)
- Highlighters/pens
- Biographies:
 - o [Ann Kirk](#)
 - o [Bob Kirk](#)
 - o [Manfred Goldberg](#)
 - o [Vera Schaufeld](#)

This set of discussion cards is to be used alongside 'Part 1' of the film. The cards explore the growing threat of Nazism, the impact of strengthening antisemitism and anti-Jewish laws and the impact this had on individuals and their families. The connecting questions prompt students to consider, alongside these historical realities, themes such as:

- Unsafe spaces
- Dilemmas and difficult choices
- Identity
- Isolation and separation
- Home
- Last goodbyes

The discussion encourages a closer reflection regarding the impact the historical events of the Holocaust had on real people, thus shifting students' understanding of the Holocaust as history to living or lived history, looking beyond the statistics of the Holocaust and at individual experiences. This underpinning aim runs through all discussion card packs and teachers should ensure that students come back to this essential point before concluding the lesson.

1. **Ann Kirk, born in Berlin, Germany, 1928:**

The discussion and connecting questions prompt students to consider a key starting point to Holocaust testimony and the marker of how life began to be torn apart by Nazism. In Ann's extract, the expected safety of home and childhood is juxtaposed as she questions what being safe in your home country means. This mature, conceptual thinking which also hints at the growing threats being posed to Jews in Germany in the late 1920s/early 1930s is contrasted with the indicators of childhood and, to a degree, childhood innocence, as she recalls "Mum and Dad talking" and not fully understanding the implications of their perspectives nor their conversations.

More astute students may comment on the phrasing "beginning to become a country not very safe to live in". There's a subtle clue here to the fact that Ann's family and their Jewish community had been living comfortably in Germany for many years. Teachers could also

expand this to German Jews having lived in Germany for centuries as an established community. Depending on the prior knowledge of the students, teachers could connect this to learning that has already taken place on themes of Pre-War Jewish Life across Europe and the long, diverse and vibrant history of Jewish life in Germany. By drawing upon these broader connections, students can develop a more nuanced understanding of how lives were torn apart and the incremental stages of anti-Jewish laws and, in extension, the Holocaust. Recognising this, students can then make links with the issue of why many families did not choose to leave their home countries, a question which is raised in card 5.

2. Bob Kirk, born in Hamburg, Germany, 1925:

In this extract, students can gain an insight into how quickly relationships transformed from something friendly or benign to something hostile and, in this case, openly violent. What is most shocking about this extract is that Bob is describing the actions of young children who had previously been his friends. The emotional implications of this can lead students to consider the experience of isolation, ostracisation, fear and confusion this caused for Bob and many other children struggling to make sense of the events around them. The extract and discussion questions, therefore, provide another opportunity for students to develop historical empathy. This is not to say that students begin to build a sense of what it was like for victims or survivors of the Holocaust, but that they establish a more emotionally aware understanding of the impact of the Holocaust on individual lives.

The discussion questions ask students to contemplate Bob's individual experience but then connect this to the wider experiences of the Holocaust. The subsequent connecting questions invite students to place their learnings or conclusions from the extract to broader issues such as the spread of antisemitism, the pervasiveness of Nazi ideology in all aspects of society and how this led to both covert and overt hostility towards Jews, therefore further encouraging students to deepen their understanding of Holocaust history through the lens of individual experience. In other words, using one lens or aspect of the Holocaust to then extrapolate out to build a larger, more nuanced picture of the Holocaust.

3. Ann Kirk, born in Berlin, Germany, 1928:

This extract illustrates the rapidity of the implementation of anti-Jewish laws and the extreme visibility of antisemitism. Ann explains that the laws "were known everywhere in the post boxes, in the street, on the radio". Ann also describes the sudden awareness, even at the young age of 10, that it was not safe to disclose one's Jewish identity.

The discussion questions ask students to further explore the personal impact of anti-Jewish laws on Ann, but also what this can tell us about the extent of the impact of anti-Jewish laws across all areas of daily life for Jewish people. It is advised that teachers share/remind students of some of the anti-Jewish laws put in place by the Nazis to emphasise the incremental stripping away of rights from Jewish people. The connecting question further highlights the extensive impact of anti-Jewish laws and, to a certain degree, the extremity of Nazi antisemitism as even children were seen as racially inferior and carrying a risk that needed to be contained.

4. Vera Schaufeld, born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, 1930:

This card offers another illustration of the impact of anti-Jewish laws on daily life; that even a radio was seen as a threat or problem in the hands of Jewish people and needed to be confiscated. Vera's description also provides insight into the emotional impact of anti-Jewish laws, especially on children. Vera recalls her fear and intimidation as armed soldiers marched into the home.

The discussion questions follow a similar theme to the ones explored in card 3 and ask students to consider the rationale behind and impact of anti-Jewish laws and how they related to Nazi antisemitism. In other words, where and how did the Nazis perceive the necessity of such laws to manage the threat they believed Jewish life posed? The second 'connecting question' also asks students to pay attention to the provenance of the extract, specifically that Vera was born in Czechoslovakia. The conclusion teachers should support their students in drawing is that of the geographical scale of the Holocaust. The previous cards explain experiences in Germany whereas they are now thinking about how Nazi antisemitism was impacting Jewish people across Europe. Therefore, in a simple yet important way, students can broaden their awareness of the scale and breadth of the Holocaust and the vast human experiences within that.

5. Bob Kirk, Germany:

This extract introduces the challenge of difficult dilemmas for Jewish people as the Nazi threat developed. It also provides further insight into pre-war Jewish life and the contributions Jews had made to their home countries for years: decades or even centuries prior. Bob explains that they didn't want, or felt unable, to leave because of their own sense of national pride, identity and belonging. Expanding this discussion, students can further recognise and challenge the falsehoods in Nazi antisemitism, in particular the charge that Jewish people were conspiring to bring about the downfall of Germany.

The discussion questions ask students to think more deeply about what this extract tells us about Jewish identity and the reality that, for many Jews in Germany, they considered themselves German first and Jewish second, and that this is a self-understanding that existed across Europe.

In this discussion, teachers may find it appropriate to bring in terms such as assimilation, integration or acculturation to help students further understand Jewish connections to their home countries and their identities.

6. Ann Kirk, Germany:

This extract conveys the building fear and anxiety for Jewish families and the sense of running out of safe spaces and time. Ann explains the constant day-to-day movement and how unsettling and disorienting this was for her. There's also now a sense of a more direct threat to her family. Her father explains that he is at risk as a Jewish man and that Jewish men are starting to be arrested. Therefore, the fear and uncertainty that Ann described in a previous card is becoming more defined. This demonstrates the expansion of Nazi antisemitism and growing severity of treatment towards Jews. Consequently, students

should build a deeper understanding of how the Holocaust developed and was not inevitable from the point of the Nazis coming to power and enforcing anti-Jewish laws.

The connecting questions combine a consideration of risk with impact on individual human experience in turn encouraging the establishment of an empathetic understanding of the Holocaust beyond historical facts.

7. Manfred Goldberg, born in Kassel, Germany, 1930:

This card introduces a key event or turning point in the history of the Holocaust, *Kristallnacht* (or the November Pogrom). To aid the discussion, students should refer to the accompanying timeline. Teachers should also ensure that students have an understanding of what *Kristallnacht* was and what it entailed. This is explained in the film, but students will need to have foundational knowledge to be able to engage with this card fully. Teachers can refer to the Holocaust Educational Trust's resources to support this.

The extract conveys the heightening of antisemitism and the worsening of violence towards Jews across Europe. It also suggests that *Kristallnacht* was not a spontaneous outburst of violence, but a planned state-sponsored attack on Jews. This is evident in the fact that Manfred's father was prewarned by a neighbour in the police service. The interaction between the neighbour and Manfred's father can also provide an avenue into the complex discussion of different roles played by individuals. The neighbour works for the Nazi state as a member of the police service, is aware of the threats posed, and chooses to warn Manfred's family. Therefore, there are questions of whether the neighbour is complicit, a resister or rescuer in this scenario. The connecting questions are not designed to ask students to pass judgments, but to recognise the varied complexities and nuances that surround the impact of human choices and behaviour in the Holocaust.

8. Vera Schaufeld, Czechoslovakia:

This extract should be accompanied by an explanation of the *Kindertransport* to ensure students are fully aware of what Vera is describing and can engage with the discussion questions. This is briefly explained in the film and teachers can refer to the Holocaust Educational Trust's resources for additional support.

The extract is emotive and explains candidly the struggle and difficulties of families separating to ensure the safety of the children. The questions ask students to think through some of these difficulties as well as the obstacles to rescue efforts; therefore, zoning in on the emotional realities of the *Kindertransport* through Vera's experience and zoning out to consider the logistical challenges of rescuing Jewish children and seeking to oppose the Nazi threat.

For further resources, you can access Holocaust Learning UK's resource on the *Kindertransport* [here](#).



Conclusion:

At the end of the film and the discussion cards, students should have a sense of the key turning points in the development of the Holocaust: the challenges Jewish people faced; the growing fear; and that the Holocaust happened in stages and did not occur overnight. Before concluding the lesson, ensure key points are re-established and students are comfortable with what they have engaged with.

The key points to re-emphasise are:

- The threat of the Nazis developed over time and the Holocaust did not emerge overnight.
- Antisemitism existed in all areas of society and became more visible with the Nazis' rise to power.
- Jewish people faced various challenges and dilemmas.
- Many Jewish people felt connected to their home countries and had made important contributions to society.
- When learning about the Holocaust, it is crucial that we focus on individual human experiences to understand its impact on real people and look beyond the statistics.

2. LESSON PLAN

Resource Cards 2:

You will need:

- A3 Timeline of Testimony (this can be either displayed on screen or printed for students)
- A5 Resource Cards 2 (printed double sided)
- Highlighters/pens
- Biographies:
 - o [Janine Webber](#)
 - o [Steven Frank](#)
 - o [Mala Tribich](#)
 - o [Manfred Goldberg](#)

This set of discussion cards is to be used alongside 'Part 2' of the film. The cards explore the establishment and experience of different Holocaust sites, the decline in living conditions, deportations and the struggle to survive. The connecting questions prompt students to consider alongside these historical realities, themes such as:

- De-humanisation
- Resilience
- Movement, displacement and disorientation
- The external and internal struggle to survive

The discussion encourages a closer reflection regarding the impact the historical events of the Holocaust had on real people, thus shifting students' understanding of the Holocaust as history to living or lived history, looking beyond the statistics of the Holocaust and at individual experiences. This underpinning aim runs through all discussion card packs and teachers should ensure that students come back to this essential point before concluding the lesson.

1. **Janine Webber, born in Lwów, then Poland (now Lviv, Ukraine), 1932:**

The testimony extracts and discussion questions in this set of resource cards focuses on the establishment of ghettos, concentration and extermination camps. Some extracts explain graphic and emotive scenes which students should not be encouraged to dwell on, but rather engage with sensitively to understand some of the realities of what victims and survivors of the Holocaust had to endure, as well as the different stages of the Holocaust.

In this extract, Janine describes the appalling conditions in the Lwów ghetto: the starvation, disease and death that characterised daily life in the ghetto and this being, in many ways, the beginning of their struggle to survive.

This is an intensification of the events of the Holocaust compared to the events and experiences described in the first set of discussion cards.

The discussion and connecting questions invite students to consider ghettos as a Holocaust site, challenging any existing misconceptions that the Holocaust only took place in concentration and extermination camps. It also prompts students to pay attention to the location of the ghetto and its proximity to the non-Jewish population, and consider again the geographical scale of the Holocaust. Therefore, the discussions to be had around this card ask students to diversify their understanding of Holocaust sites and landscapes.

2. Steven Frank:

In this extract, Steven describes a deportation by freight wagon (also often referred to, as Steven does, as “cattle trucks”). The imagery of freight wagons is often one that dominates in cultural understanding of the Holocaust, leading to misconceptions that all victims of the Holocaust experienced deportations. Therefore, an accurate and testimony-based study of these journeys is crucial.

The discussion and connecting questions also encourage students to think not only of the conditions inside the wagons, but how this method is reflective of Nazi antisemitism and their dehumanising treatment. Again, the intention behind the discussion points is to encourage diversity and nuance in students’ thinking, making wider connections and using individual experiences to extrapolate out.

3. Mala Tribich:

This card introduces the living conditions of concentration camps and specifically the arrival process. Alongside this description, Mala also reflects on the impact this had on one’s internal life or, in other words, the psychological, emotional and spiritual impact of becoming a camp inmate. In extension, this raises questions of survival, and how one retained their sense of identity and humanity in an environment which sought to dehumanise and exploit.

To ensure students can ground their understanding in accurate historical facts, it is important that the discussion takes place in the appropriate context. Therefore, teachers must explain where Mala is and what she is describing. Teachers should refer to the film and provide additional information when introducing the discussion card to students. The key points to make are that Mala is describing Ravensbrück and is alone with her younger cousin, Ann. The discussion can also allow for the introduction of important terms such as ‘dehumanisation’ in response to the second connecting question.

4. Manfred Goldberg’s Journey:

In this card, students are further considering the living conditions in ghettos and the issue of how one is to survive. Specifically, the issue described in this extract is the starvation rations Jews endured. Students are asked to reflect on the impact this had not just physically but mentally, and to connect this again to the Nazis’ rationale behind their treatment.

It is also important to prompt students to consider the provenance of this extract. Manfred was sent from Germany to Latvia, a very different direction to the other extracts and journeys explored. Students should therefore recognise again the diversity of experiences, of journeys

and the scale of the Holocaust, and perhaps consider how this developed depending on the progression of the war.

5. Janine Webber:

In this extract, Janine describes conditions in her hiding place with 12 other Jews and the physical and psychological endurance this became. It also illustrates the continuing risks that existed even while hiding in a supposedly safe place. The discussion and connecting questions therefore remind students to not assume that hiding places were complete refuges, but instead provided new challenges, anxieties and vulnerabilities. This is explored in the role Janine's aunt played in leaving at night to find supplies and the very fact that the hiding place had to be underground and perpetually in the dark.

The connecting questions also introduce the theme, or question of the role, of individuals and the choices that were made. Janine was able to hide and ultimately survive due to the role Edek played in protecting her and others, which is in stark contrast to the behaviour of the majority of the populations of occupied countries.

However, teachers and students should be careful not to draw simplistic conclusions: for example, that people were too scared to help Jews. While fear was a factor, the pervasiveness of antisemitism meant that for many the desire to rescue Jews or present any opposition to their treatment did not exist. The Holocaust is not a story of good versus bad, or strong versus weak, but a complex and deeply challenging event which raises questions about humanity and human behaviour which have no easy or satisfactory answers.

Conclusion:

At the end of the film and the discussion cards, students should have an understanding of the diversity of Holocaust sites: the movement and displacement in the Holocaust; the dire living conditions at different sites and the evolving struggle to survive. Before concluding the lesson, ensure key points are re-established and students are comfortable with what they have engaged with.

The key points to re-emphasise are:

- There were many different Holocaust sites/landscapes and thus there was no one universal experience of the Holocaust.
- Living conditions in ghettos, during deportations, forced labour and at concentration and death camps were appalling and had physical and emotional affects.
- The actions of individuals and different roles that were taken were hugely significant.
- When learning about the Holocaust, it is crucial that we focus on individual human experiences to understand its impact on real people and look beyond the statistics.

3. LESSON PLAN

Resource Cards 3

You will need:

- A3 Timeline of Testimony (this can be either displayed on screen or printed for students)
- A5 Resource Cards 3 (printed double sided)
- Highlighters/pens
- Biographies:
 - o [Renee Salt](#)
 - o [Hannah Lewis](#)
 - o [Susan Pollack](#)
 - o [Manfred Goldberg](#)
 - o [Mala Tribich](#)

This set of discussion cards is to be used alongside 'Part 3' of the film. The cards explore the realities of genocide and mass murder, personal loss, concentration camp environments, death marches and the challenges of liberation. The connecting questions prompt students to consider alongside these historical realities, themes such as:

- Grief and loss
- Experiential nature/impact of the concentration camp system
- The external and internal struggle to survive
- Loss of faith in humanity
- Issues raised by the Holocaust

The discussion encourages a closer reflection regarding the impact the historical events of the Holocaust had on real people, thus, shifting students' understanding of the Holocaust as history to living or lived history, looking beyond the statistics of the Holocaust and at individual experiences. In this section, students are also tasked with considering the broader implications of the Holocaust and the challenging issues it raises for us today, therefore introducing the concept of the Holocaust's contemporary relevance which has complex practical, historical and philosophical meanings to explore. The discussions to be had are varied and at times nuanced and students should be encouraged to think deeply, drawing together their historical understanding and their personal reflections. This underpinning aim runs through all discussion card packs and teachers should ensure that students come back to this essential point before concluding the lesson.

1. **Renee Salt, born in Poland, 1929:**

In Renee's testimony extract she describes the liquidation of the ghetto in Zdunska Wola, Poland. It emotively describes the chaos, confusion and despair of the scene and the separation of families. While students can gain an important insight into the events of the liquidation of the ghetto, and in extension the liquidation of other ghettos across Europe, Renee also introduces the concept of religious questioning and the philosophical dilemmas that arise from the Holocaust. The final line of "Almighty God help us, where are you?" provides a compelling point for classroom discussion, primarily, how and why did the

Holocaust happen and who is ultimately responsible. While Renee's question is directed at a deity, it carries a moral question which is arguably universal to the Holocaust. If this lesson is delivered in a Religious Education and/or Philosophy setting, this can lead on to a discussion of the problem of evil.

Additionally, students may reflect on the religious identity of some Jews and how the Holocaust impacted and challenged one's faith. This can also take students to questions of losing one's faith and the different experiences of loss within the Holocaust.

2. Hannah Lewis, born in Wlodawa, Poland, 1936:

In this extract, Hannah describes the moment her mother was murdered by the *Einsatzgruppen*. It's a vivid and highly emotive description and introduces students to the difficult realities of the Holocaust. The details of Hannah's memory border on graphic imagery and the teacher should use their discretion and professional judgment on whether it is appropriate to include in the discussion. However, it must also be considered that the story of the Holocaust is not an easy one and the facts should not be sanitised to the point of diluting the reality of the Holocaust. Guiding the discussion to ensure that students do not dwell on difficult details but instead focus on developing their understanding will ensure that students are supported, and the integrity of Hannah's testimony is maintained.

The questions follow a similar pedagogical intention to the previous resource cards. They encourage students to consider Hannah's experience while thinking about how this can relate to, expand and problematise their existing understanding of the Holocaust. The questions also hint at the issue of myths and misconceptions of the Holocaust and the need to unpack and correct this. Teachers should use their knowledge of what their students understand and be receptive to the discussions had by students to recognise where misconceptions might arise and where to challenge this. For example, in Hannah's testimony she is describing her mother being murdered in a mass shooting. The connecting questions ask students to think about how this might be different to their understanding of mass understanding of the Holocaust, where the image of the gas chambers often dominates. By reflecting on different experiences, it allows students to create a picture of the Holocaust which is diverse and equipped to recognise popular preconceived ideas about what the Holocaust was, where it took place and how people were murdered.

3. Susan Pollack:

This card further describes the arrival process and stepping into the concentration camp environment. It also introduces some of the challenges to survival: specifically, one's age, one's ability to work, breaking the camp rules and losing one's sense of humanity and identity. The discussion questions ask students to consider the initial processes of entering the camp system and the small moments which could play a significant part in a person's survival, considering the practical aspects of this experience. In contrast, the connecting questions ask students to consider the internal cognitive, emotional and spiritual aspects of being inducted into a concentration camp. By considering Susan's description of human feelings starting to leave her and the impact of this, students deepen their awareness of the multifaceted and all-consuming torment the camps imposed. This further supports the development of historical empathy or empathetic understanding as it not only responds to

the practical realities of the camps but the human, individual, personal realities people faced in their struggle to survive in the environment the Nazis created.

4. Susan Pollack:

In this extract, Susan describes in more detail the first few hours of entering the concentration camp environment. There's a powerful juxtaposition between provision and deprivation, power and disempowerment: the "elegant" Nazi officer in contrast to the naked imprisoned girls; the line or "decision" between life and death; the resolve to survive in the face of an extreme environment of death and destruction.

The questions should allow students to consider these extremes through the lens of Susan's experience. Again, there is a dual exploration of practical, external realities and their internal consequences. Susan recognises the need for her to look strong and capable, so she pinches her cheeks to look pink and healthy. This act is also reflective of her internal resolve and strength to survive. Therefore, this extract is far more multifaceted than initially thought and teachers should guide their students in recognising these dual realities.

The connecting questions also start to introduce the specificities of the female experience by asking not just how the prisoners were treated in this situation, but how the *female* prisoners were treated. While the extract is fairly limited in how much it can tell us about the uniqueness of the female experience, there are indications of the vulnerabilities and exploitations young girls and women endured in the camps which are valuable to note. The experience of young, naked girls having to stand before a clothed man is a difficult and unsettling image and one that Susan describes plainly. The scope of the discussion to be had with students in this regard is arguably not as broad as explained here, but it is important for the teacher to be aware of and they should use their discretion as to how and how far these points are explored.

5. Manfred Goldberg:

In this card, students learn about Manfred's experience on a death march towards the latter years of the war. While the term 'death march' is not used in the testimony nor the connecting questions, the intention is that students will recall this terminology from their prior learning or that the teacher will introduce this when facilitating the discussion. In doing so, students not only expand their understanding of key terms in Holocaust history but also their knowledge of chronology and geographical implications of the Holocaust. Death marches inform us not only of another Holocaust landscape, the constant movement and disorientation of inmates, but also how this developed alongside the Second World War. As the Nazis' defeat loomed ever larger, camps were evacuated and inmates moved to other sites. There are various reasons as to why the Nazis chose this course of action as opposed to a blanket policy of abandoning or liquidating camps, but one conclusion which students should draw is that of antisemitism remaining a core ideological belief and priority for the Nazis, as well as the desire to avoid their crimes being uncovered. Therefore, there are important points to be identified about the strength and centrality of Nazi antisemitism and the question of escaping justice.

6. Mala Tribich's Journey:

In this card, students are introduced to another camp – Bergen-Belsen. It is interesting to note that the first question names the camp whereas previous questions have been largely thematic in their approach. This provides an opportunity for teachers to point out the specificity of space in testimony and individual experiences, of the vast geographies within the Holocaust and the numerous journeys victims and survivors of the Holocaust had to undertake. While the questions do not ask students to consider this, teachers can use the naming of space in the card's provenance and the first question to introduce students to these ideas. This can also aid the placement of the discussion within the context of Mala's journeys to different camps and the movement in her testimony. It might also be worth pointing out to students that Bergen-Belsen was eventually liberated by the British Army; therefore, there is a clear link between Holocaust history and British history.

The core aim of the discussion here is for students to consider the sensory aspects of the camps as described in testimony. Mala's description is vivid, and the stench of the camp is what dominates in her memory. While students have considered what prisoners saw and felt in the camp environment, it is difficult to draw the sensory assault of the camps into this study. However, it is important to recognise to ensure the Holocaust is not problematically sanitised. The intention is not to ask students to imagine themselves in the camps but to support the development of understanding that the camp was an experiential environment. The connecting questions should guide students to pointing out the sensory description of the camp and how this is different to previous descriptions they've encountered. This should hopefully then lead them to think about what we can really know or understand about how the Holocaust was experienced.

7. Susan Pollack's Journey:

In this card, Susan is describing her moment of liberation. While the term 'liberation' is not used in the testimony nor in the connecting questions, the intention is that students will recall this terminology from their prior learning or that the teacher will introduce this when facilitating the discussion. By thinking about liberation through Susan's testimony extract, students are also asked to think about the new challenges Susan and survivors faced; therefore, ensuring that students do not assume that liberation resulted in a happy, easy ending but instead brought new difficulties, losses and obstacles. For Susan, as conveyed here, this included the urgent need to receive medical treatment and recover. Liberation was not a guarantee of new life and Susan describes how precarious her survival was even with the arrival of her liberation.

Susan also raises complex questions about humanity and loss of faith in humanity. She explains her disbelief at experiencing kindness from others and that there can still be good in the world, thus introducing to students both external and internal challenges to life after the Holocaust: namely, physically recovering while also recovering one's trust in humanity and the world. The connecting points invite students to consider Susan's questions and apply this to the issues the Holocaust raises about humanity. These questions are difficult to grapple with and are arguably more philosophical in nature. However, they provide an opportunity for students to elevate their thinking and engage with the Holocaust as not just

an historically important event, but an event with far-reaching implications for how we understand humanity, human behaviour and ethical responsibilities which remain relevant today.

Conclusion:

At the end of the film and the discussion cards, students should have a sense of the scale of the Holocaust both geography and experience; of the experiential nature of the camp environment; the impact of camp living conditions on one's sense of identity and humanity; the ongoing struggle to survive and the new challenges brought by liberation. Before concluding the lesson, ensure key points are re-established and students are comfortable with what they have engaged with.

The key points to re-emphasise are:

- The living conditions and environments Jewish inmates experienced had both external and internal implications. For example, on one's ability and resolve to survive, and strength to hold onto their individual identity.
- The camp environment assaulted all senses which cannot be and should not be replicated in our study. However, this presents the question of what we can really know about the Holocaust.
- Antisemitism was of central importance to Nazi ideology throughout the war despite external factors.
- Liberation and the end of the Holocaust brought new challenges and was not a guarantee of new life. Often, survivors were severely unwell and needed to not only physically recover but recover their faith in humanity.
- When learning about the Holocaust, it is crucial that we focus on individual human experiences to understand its impact on real people and look beyond the statistics.

BACKGROUND READING FOR TEACHERS

i. Defining the Holocaust

For a fuller exploration of the definition of the Holocaust, we encourage you to read the Holocaust Educational Trust's teaching guide here: [Defining the Holocaust](#). A brief summary of the key points for conceptual understanding is outlined below. Further explanation to some of the key points has been included for knowledge and interest.

- a. The Holocaust was the murder of approximately 6 million Jewish men, women and children by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Second World War.**
- b. The Nazis persecuted many groups of people for racial and ideological reasons.**
- c. The definition is specific because the Nazi treatment of Jews was distinctive and only Jews were singled out for total destruction.**
- d. The Holocaust is widely viewed as unprecedented due to the aim to murder every Jewish person in Europe and beyond, and industrialised methods used to carry out mass murder.**
- e. 'Holocaust' has become the accepted term.**
- f. It had previously been used to describe ritual sacrificial burnings and later to describe calamitous events.**

The Nazis persecuted many groups of people for racial and ideological reasons.

This persecution extended to murder for some cases. 3 million Soviet Prisoners of War lost their lives in Nazi captivity; in occupied Poland thousands of Polish elites and intelligentsia were executed whilst hundreds of thousands perished in massacres, deportations, concentration camps and starvation. More than 200,000 Roma and Sinti were murdered and more than 200,000 people with disabilities were gassed, starved or murdered through lethal injections. Gay men, Jehovah's Witnesses and political opponents were also victims of Nazism and perished in concentration camps. Soviet POWs, Poles, Sinti and Roma and people with disabilities were murdered as threats to the racial 'health' of Germany.

All victims of Nazism deserve to be remembered and there should be no hierarchy of suffering. The Holocaust's definition is specific because historians agree that the treatment of Jews was distinctive and unprecedented because the Nazis aimed to kill every single Jew. Therefore, the specificity and uniqueness of this treatment requires its own definition to differentiate it from both other Nazi crimes, previous and subsequent genocides.

The definition is specific because the Nazi treatment of Jews was distinctive and only Jews were singled out for total destruction.

What was different about Jews was that the Nazis viewed them as an existential threat; that is, the Jews were seen as the mortal enemy of Germany, and Europe. The Nazis genuinely believed in the existence of a world Jewish conspiracy which supposedly had Germany as its chief target. In Nazi thinking, therefore, this threat had to be eliminated in one form or another to ensure the survival of the Reich and, indeed, mankind.

This is not to say that the Holocaust was inevitable, but it does indicate that the Nazis' treatment of Jews would be severe and likely violent.

The key decisions were taken – between the summer of 1941 and the spring of 1942. The Nazi regime and its allies sought to murder all Jews wherever they found them. It is this intended totality – the quest to murder every member of a group, encompassing millions of human beings – that made the Holocaust unprecedented: in no other genocide has a regime attempted to annihilate an entire people.

The attempt to murder every Jew gave the Holocaust another distinctive characteristic: its continental scale. Murder was perpetrated in every state under Nazi control whilst the ultimate aim was to extend this process to every country in Europe and, indeed, beyond – Jews from France’s North African colonies, for example, were also victims, whilst there were plans to send SS killing squads to Mandate Palestine in the event of Britain’s defeat.

The Holocaust is widely viewed as unprecedented due to the aim to murder every Jewish person in Europe and beyond, and industrialised methods used to carry out mass murder.

It has sometimes additionally been said that the Holocaust was unprecedented because of the ‘industrialised’ killing methods used in the form of gas chambers. However, at least half of the Holocaust’s victims lost their lives through other means: mass shootings, extermination through labour, disease or starvation. Indeed, it may be argued that this fact – that every available killing method was deployed – takes us closer to understanding the totality of the Holocaust and thus to comprehending what distinguished it even from the many other dreadful crimes perpetrated by the Nazis and their collaborators.

For further information and guidance, please refer to the Holocaust Educational Trust’s [Teaching Resources](#) which can be downloaded free online. In particular, teachers may find the resources listed below of note.

- [Myths and Misconceptions](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Timeline](#)

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

ii. Victims of Nazi Persecution

Holocaust Learning UK’s film *The Holocaust* also touches upon the Nazis’ treatment and persecution of other victim groups such as adults and children with disabilities and gay men. As explained in ***Part One of Conceptual Understanding***, the Holocaust refers to the murder of Jews who were uniquely set apart for total destruction; therefore, this resource focuses on the experiences of Jewish victims. However, teachers may find it helpful for their own contextual knowledge to note the information provided below.

For a fuller exploration of victims of Nazi persecution, we encourage you to read the Holocaust Educational Trust’s teaching guide here: [Victims of Nazi Persecution](#). A brief summary of the key points for conceptual understanding is outlined below. Further

explanation to some of the key points has been included underneath this for knowledge and interest.

- a. **Nazism sought to create a 'racial state' – a utopian society based on principles of 'race' and 'racism'. They believed the wellbeing of Germany was directly linked to blood and, since aptitudes and characteristics were all understood to be transmitted through inheritance, it was seen as imperative that the purity of German blood be protected and improved.**
- b. **The Nazis believed that the 'Aryan' race was under serious threat by so-called 'inferior' races and asocial elements.**
- c. **During the years 1933 to 1945, the Nazis and their collaborators were responsible for the persecution of millions of people from a variety of ethnic, religious, social and political backgrounds.**
- d. **Persecution was motivated by ideological, political and racial reasons.**
- e. **The Nazis persecuted people from Slavic nations (Poland and Soviet Russia/USSR), mixed race Germans, people with disabilities, Roma and Sinti, and gay men.**
- f. **Persecution took many forms. The most severe was murder and forced sterilisation**

The Nazis persecuted people from Slavic nations (Poland and Soviet Russia/USSR), mixed race Germans, people with disabilities, Roma and Sinti, and gay men.

Although only Jews were ultimately targeted for complete extermination by the Nazis, many other groups of people fell victim to Nazi racism. In particular, the Slavic peoples of eastern Europe were considered to be racially inferior. The perception of the USSR as both a racial and an ideological enemy led to Soviet prisoners of war becoming, in numerical terms, by far the largest victim group after Jews. The Roma and Sinti peoples of central and eastern Europe (known pejoratively as 'Gypsies' by the Nazis) were also victims of genocide, being viewed as a racial threat and as an asocial element within Germany.

The Roma and Sinti most likely to be persecuted in Germany were those who were the products of mixed relationships, rather than 'pure Gypsies', since they were seen to be corrupting the 'Aryan' bloodline. Similarly, mixed-race children born to German women and French colonial troops from Africa were forcibly sterilised in the 1930s.

Sterilisation was also used as a weapon against Germans and Austrians with disabilities. Seen as a threat to the long-term biological survival of their 'race', people with disabilities became the first victims of Nazi mass murder in 1939. There was to be significant overlap between the murder of people with disabilities and the Holocaust in terms of both killing methods and personnel.

Gay men were also amongst the 'Aryans' persecuted as a result of racial theories. Their 'crime' was not that they were weakening the nation's racial stock but rather that they were failing to do their 'duty' to add to it. Many Nazi leaders – notably Himmler – were obsessed with the idea that Germany was losing out in the perpetual struggle between the races because of the loss of almost two million potential fathers in the First World War. If, as Himmler believed, a further two million men were homosexual then – it was argued – Germany risked being overrun by other nations with higher birth rates.



However, the persecution of gay men – like that of Roma and Sinti and, to some extent, Jews and Poles – also tapped into long pre-existing prejudices.

Additionally, there were certain groups who were persecuted for rather different, though still ideological, reasons. Political opponents, for example, were subjected to discrimination and violence by the regime not on account of their 'race' but rather for their political 'crimes'; similarly, Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted for their spiritual refusal to accept the regime and their perceived anti-Nazi behaviour. The Nazis hoped to 'reclaim' them aiming to force them to accept the new order through persecution. This helps to explain why they – along with gay men, who were also seen as potentially redeemable, and Black and mixed-race Germans who were relatively few in number – were not targeted for murder, although several thousand members of these groups (chiefly gay men and political opponents) did die as a result of their atrocious treatment.

Thus, only certain groups beyond Jews – Soviet prisoners of war, Poles and some other eastern European civilians, Roma and Sinti, and Germans and Austrians with disabilities – were victims of deliberate mass murder. **However, it is essential that educators and students do not fall into a pernicious trap of seeing victimhood in competitive terms. Instead, it is important to appreciate the specific experiences of each group and what they can tell us about the ideology which brought about their suffering, and to understand the humanity of all victims of Nazi persecution without seeking to create a hierarchy of suffering.**