

The Holocaust

The story of the Holocaust is one of the saddest chapters in human history. During World War II, over 6 million Jewish men, women, and children were killed in death camps. The German leader, Adolph Hitler, hated Jewish people. When he became Chancellor of Germany, he made laws to limit the freedoms of Jewish people. His political party, the Nazi Party, distributed anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish propaganda to the German people. During the war, Hitler rounded up all Jewish people who were still in Germany and Nazi-controlled territories. Many had already left or were in hiding, but some had nowhere to go. The Jewish people were sent to concentration camps. Some of the camps were **labor**¹ camps. The prisoners were treated **inhumanely**² and forced to work hard hours. Many died because they were too weak to keep working. Other camps were death camps. No one who went in came out alive.

Hitler, who had brown hair and brown eyes, wanted a country of all white, blue-eyed, blond-haired citizens. He thought that the Aryan or white race was superior to other races. Hitler called anything having to do with the treatment of Jewish people, “The Jewish Question.” His government referred to its own anti-Semitic policies as an answer to “The Jewish Question.” **Extermination**³ camps were called, “The Final Solution.”

When the world found out about the Holocaust, people were shocked and horrified. Other governments had an idea about Hitler’s anti-Jewish feelings and policies. But no one knew the extent of the horror. How could 6 million people, in the modern world, be killed for no reason other than their ethnicity, or cultural background? People asked themselves these questions. We will probably never know the answers. It is important to remember the Holocaust and to study what happened. Only by understanding this **bleak**⁴ part of history can we prevent such horror from happening again.

¹ **labor:** work

² **inhumane:** not human; lacking pity or kindness; not fit for humans

³ **extermination:** complete and immediate extinction by killing off all individuals

⁴ **bleak:** grim; depressing; cruel; dismal

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. How many Jewish men, women, and children were killed in Nazi concentration camps?

- a. Only American men, women, and children were killed.
- b. Over 6 million Jewish men, women, and children were killed.
- c. Approximately 3 million men, women, and children were killed.
- d. Less than 6 million Jewish men, women, and children were killed.

2. Hitler did all of the following to the Jewish people except for

- a. making laws to limit the freedom of the Jewish people.
- b. placing Jewish people in work camps.
- c. having many of them killed in extermination camps.
- d. hiring them to work in his army.

3. The word anti-Semitic means to be

- a. against Seminese people.
- b. against Jewish people.
- c. for the Jewish people.
- d. against Swedish people.

4. What did Hitler mean by “The Jewish Question”?

- a. He meant that Jewish people asked a lot of questions.
- b. He used this phrase to describe his treatment of the Jewish people.
- c. He had a question about whether there could be more Jewish people.
- d. He used this phrase to describe his questions about Judaism.

5. What was Hitler’s political party called?

- a. the not-white party
- b. the German party
- c. the Nazi party
- d. the Aryan party

6. What was Hitler's main goal?

7. Why is it important to study and understand the Holocaust?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Hitler and the Holocaust are a part of our history, _____ it is certainly not a period of time of which we are proud.

- a. but
- b. and
- c. because
- d. then

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

In Germany, the Nazi Party was responsible for forcing Jewish people out of their homes and into labor and death camps, all because of anti-Semitism.

What? _____

(was) What? responsible for forcing Jewish people out of their homes and into labor and death camps

Why? _____

Where? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** inhumane: lacking compassion, pity, or kindness towards man; not fit for humans.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 790

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: The passage provides a brief overview of the events of the Holocaust, including Hitler’s motivations, the murderous anti-Semitic policies of Nazi Germany, and the reaction of the world upon learning the extent of the horror.

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6. What was Hitler's main goal?

Suggested answer: Hitler's main goal was to have a country populated by Aryans, or whites, who were blue-eyed and blond-haired. He believed Aryans were superior to other races. He wanted to achieve this goal by getting rid of all the Jews and other groups that were not Aryan.

7. Why is it important to study and understand the Holocaust?

Suggested answer: Students may say that to know and understand why Hitler thought and acted the way he did, we could know what kind of person he was and avoid letting someone like that have any power in the future. Students may say that if we are educated on history, we won't let it happen or repeat itself again.

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(was) What? responsible for forcing Jewish people out of their homes and into labor and death camps

Why? **because of anti-Semitism**

Where? **in Germany**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** inhumane: lacking compassion, pity, or kindness towards man; not fit for humans.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.