

# Holocaust & Heroism Remembrance Day

**Intermediate Level**

יום השואה

## Vocabulary Preview

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. commemorate        | a) grief, sadness  |
| _____ 2. mourning           | b) to separate or exclude  |
| _____ 3. devastation        | c) the refusal to use or acknowledge something                             |
| _____ 4. genocide           | d) to remember and honor   |
| _____ 5. discriminatory     | e) the mass killing of people from one race or group                       |
| _____ 6. boycott            | f) a part of a city that has very poor living conditions, slums            |
| _____ 7. concentration camp | g) widespread damage or loss   |
| _____ 8. segregate          | h) a prison camp with harsh conditions                                     |
| _____ 9. ghetto             | i) related to unfair treatment based on one's race, religion, gender, etc. |
| _____ 10. pledge            | j) to promise or vow   |

## Reading

- Yom Ha'Shoah, known in English as "Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day", takes place on 27 Nisan in the Hebrew calendar.\* This memorial day **commemorates** millions of people who were killed during the Holocaust, including approximately six million Jews. In Israel, Yom Ha'Shoah is a national day of **mourning** and a public holiday.
- The Hebrew word "Shoah" means **devastation** or waste. Between 1933 and 1945, millions of people were killed by the Nazis on account of their religion, race, origin, physical abilities, political views, or sexual orientation.
- Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, who believed that Germans were racially superior, led the **genocide** of the Jews. One of his first **discriminatory** decisions was to **boycott** Jewish-run businesses in Germany. Next, German Jews lost their citizenship and marriage rights. Eventually they lost their rights to hold jobs. Signs saying "Jews Unwelcome" were placed in public places. In 1938, tens of thousands of Jews were identified as "political enemies" and sent to forced-labor camps.
- When World War II erupted in 1939, Germans began occupying Europe. Jewish people were **segregated** wherever Nazis were in control. They were forced to wear the yellow Star of David as an identifying symbol. Jewish children were expelled from schools and families were forced to live in **ghettos**. From there, Jews were transported to **concentration camps**. Millions died or were killed within days or months of arriving. Some died in gas chambers and others were exterminated by firing squads. Many starved to death.
- At the beginning of 1945, at the end of the war, the Nazis tried to remove evidence of the camps. Thousands of prisoners were forced to march away in the cold winter, only to be killed in remote locations. In April of 1945, the remaining prisoners in the camps around Europe were finally liberated. Jewish survivors of the Holocaust had nowhere to go. In 1948, the State of Israel was created to be their new homeland.
- Holocaust Remembrance Day is a day to remember and honor the victims of this genocide, and to **pledge** to never allow it to happen again. Throughout the world, Jewish people light memorial candles and say prayers for the victims. Each year, thousands of Jewish high school students take part in "the March of the Living" at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest death camp. The walk contrasts the death march of their ancestors.

*\*This memorial falls in April or May on the Western calendar. The date is sometimes moved ahead or back a day if it interferes with Shabbat, the Jewish day of rest.*

## Comprehension

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in the spaces below. Use full sentences.

1. Why is the date of Holocaust Remembrance Day sometimes adjusted slightly?

---

2. What does the Hebrew word "Shoah" mean?

---

3. During what period of time did the Holocaust occur?

---

4. Who was Adolf Hitler?

---

5. What did Jewish families have to do to display their origin publicly?

---

6. What were some of the rights that Jewish-Germans lost in the early days of Hitler's leadership?

---

7. What happened at the concentration camps?

---

8. Why did the Nazis lead prisoners away from the camps at the end of the war?

---

9. Why was the State of Israel created?

---

10. What do many high school students do on Yom Ha'Shoah? What is the symbolism?

---

## Vocabulary Review

### A. Choose the Closest Meaning

Choose the word closest in meaning to the underlined word in the following sentences.

1. The discriminatory laws favored people with white skin and blond hair.
  - a) *racist*
  - b) *genocide*
  - c) *devastation*
2. In the ghettos, many people starved to death.
  - a) *prisons*
  - b) *concentration camps*
  - c) *slums*
3. We lit candles to mourn those who died during the Holocaust.
  - a) *believe*
  - b) *grieve for*
  - c) *capture*
4. The young people took a pledge to never forget this period in history.
  - a) *vowed*
  - b) *marched*
  - c) *remembered*
5. The children were often segregated from their parents in the concentration camps.
  - a) *separated*
  - b) *enclosed*
  - c) *released*
6. Genocide has occurred a number of times in history.
  - a) *The Holocaust*
  - b) *Mass murder*
  - c) *Racism*

### B. Complete the Sentences

Choose the correct word from the list to complete the following sentences.

1. In the \_\_\_\_\_, Jews were forced to do hard labor.
2. Holocaust Remembrance Day \_\_\_\_\_ the millions of lives lost when the Nazi regime was in power.
3. Some of the \_\_\_\_\_ at the concentration camps was left intact, and can still be viewed today.
4. Jewish people weren't the only ones who faced \_\_\_\_\_ by the Nazis.
5. The leader of Israel \_\_\_\_\_ to protect his people from racism.
6. The Nazis promoted anti-Semitism by \_\_\_\_\_ Jewish-made products.

#### WORD LIST

- ghetto
- commemorate
- mourning
- devastation
- discriminatory
- genocide
- boycott
- concentration camp
- segregate
- pledge

## Pair Work (Student A)

### NUREMBERG

You and your partner each have a short reading passage about Nuremberg. Your passage is about the discriminatory Nuremberg Laws. Read your passage and then summarize your information for your partner (orally). Work together to complete the questions that follow (orally).

#### A. Reading

The **anti-Semitic** Nuremberg Laws were introduced at a **rally** by the Nazis in Germany in 1935. One law identified German Jews as “subjects” rather than citizens. Subjects could not display the national flag or participate in certain organizations and professions. Another law prohibited German Jews from marrying or having romantic relationships with blond-haired blue-eyed Germans (“Aryans”). More laws were gradually introduced.

The Nazis created charts to classify people as “Jews”. People who had at least three Jewish grandparents were classified as a pure “Jew” and were considered the enemy. This included people who called themselves Christians. The Nazis considered Jews a race.

People with Jewish heritage weren’t the only ones who lost their rights, freedoms, and lives on account of the Nuremberg Laws. In 1935, the laws were extended to other groups, including Romas (Gypsies), blacks, homosexuals, and the disabled. The goal of the Nazis was to **purify** the German race.

#### C. Questions

Work together with your partner to answer the following questions.

1. What rights did German Jews lose on account of the Nuremberg Laws?
2. What did the Nazi regime do to classify the population in Germany?
3. Besides Jews, what other groups were targeted by the Nazis?
4. Why were the Nazi war crime trials held in Nuremberg?
5. Why wasn’t Adolf Hitler tried in Nuremberg?

Write an example sentence related to the Holocaust using one of the words that your partner taught you.

#### B. Sharing

Teach your partner a few new words from your reading:

**anti-Semitic** (adjective):  
*discriminatory against Jewish people*

**rally** (noun):  
*a gathering of people to show support for someone or something*

**purify** (verb):  
*to cleanse*

## Pair Work (Student B)

### NUREMBERG

You and your partner each have a short reading passage about Nuremberg. Your passage is about the discriminatory Nuremberg Laws. Read your passage and then summarize your information for your partner (orally). Work together to complete the questions that follow (orally).

#### A. Reading

Nuremberg is a city in central Germany. It was chosen as the location for major Nazi rallies. The Nuremberg Laws were a set of discriminatory laws that took away the rights and freedoms of Jews and other non-German races. They were the **precursor** to the Holocaust.

Following the outbreak of World War II, Jews and others lost much more than their citizenships and marriage rights. Millions of people were exterminated.

After the war, **trials** against the Nazis were held in Nuremberg. Nuremberg was chosen for a few reasons. First, it was largely undamaged from the war. Second, it was a symbolic way to put an end to **the Third Reich**. Some of the Nazi leaders were tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Many received punishment, including the death penalty or life imprisonment. Nazi leader Adolf Hitler had already committed suicide

#### C. Questions

Work together with your partner to answer the following questions.

1. What rights did German Jews lose on account of the Nuremberg Laws?
2. What did the Nazi regime do to classify the population in Germany?
3. Besides Jews, what other groups were targeted by the Nazis?
4. Why were the Nazi war crime trials held in Nuremberg?
5. Why wasn't Adolf Hitler tried in Nuremberg?

Write an example sentence related to the Holocaust using one of the words that your partner taught you.

---



---

#### B. Sharing

Teach your partner a few new words from your reading:

**precursor** (noun):  
*something related that comes before*

**trial** (noun):  
*a court case that is decided with a judge and jury*

**the Third Reich** (noun):  
*a common name used for Hitler's Nazi regime*

## Discussing Sensitive Subjects

Talking about sensitive subjects or periods in history is difficult in one's own language. It is even more difficult in a language that is not your native language. In a classroom full of people from many different countries, cultures, and religions, it can be very difficult to discuss sensitive subjects such as the Holocaust.

### WORDS AND VOCABULARY

Here are some useful word forms and vocabulary for discussing the Holocaust.

WORD	PART OF SPEECH
discriminate	<i>verb</i>
discrimination	<i>noun</i>
racist	<i>adjective</i>
racism	<i>noun</i>
anti-Semitic	<i>adjective</i>
anti-Semitism	<i>noun</i>
prejudice	<i>noun</i>
prejudiced	<i>adjective</i>
a Nazi/the Nazi regime	<i>noun</i>
Nazi	<i>adjective</i>
German	<i>adjective</i>
Jewish	<i>adjective</i>
a German	<i>noun</i>
a Jew	<i>noun</i>
liberate	<i>verb</i>
liberation	<i>noun</i>

### EXPRESSIONS

Here are some useful English expressions to use when you're discussing any sensitive subject.

- Do you mind if I ask you something?
- Are you comfortable talking about this?
- Don't take this the wrong way, but...
- It's hard for me to say this, but...
- I know where you're coming from, but...
- I don't mean to be rude, but...
- You might not like what I have to say, but...
- This might be hard to hear, but...
- I can't imagine what it's like for you...
- In my culture...
- The way I was brought up...
- In my religion...
- We were always taught that...
- From a personal standpoint...

## Discussion Questions

1. Would the Holocaust have happened without Hitler in charge?
2. Why do you think the discriminatory Nuremberg laws were introduced gradually?
3. Why was political resistance more difficult in the '30s and '40s than it is today?
4. What's the best way to learn about historic events such as the Holocaust?
5. Do you find the subject of the Holocaust to be too difficult to talk about? What other subjects or periods in history do you consider "sensitive"?

## Answer Key

*These activities are designed for intermediate-level adult ESL learners, but they may also be suitable for junior and senior high school ESL students. This lesson plan contains sensitive subject matter. Please review the content before you try it in class.*

### LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students learn some brief history about the Holocaust. The lesson includes a reading, a pair activity, vocabulary review, and useful expressions for discussing sensitive subject matter in English.

**LEVEL:** Intermediate–Advanced

**TIME:** 2 hours

**TAGS:** global issues, history, holidays and events, remembrance, Jewish, German, Holocaust, racism, discussion

### Vocabulary Preview

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. d | 3. g | 5. i | 7. h | 9. f  |
| 2. a | 4. e | 6. c | 8. b | 10. j |

### Reading

You may choose to have the students read the passage silently, or have the students take turns reading aloud in order to monitor pronunciation. After reading the passage, break the students into pairs and have them practice asking and answering the comprehension questions. At the end of the oral practice, have the students write the answers. Review again orally with the whole class.

### Comprehension

- The date of Holocaust Remembrance Day is sometimes adjusted slightly if it falls on the day of rest.
- The Hebrew word “Shoah” means devastation.
- The Holocaust occurred during World War II.
- Adolf Hitler was the leader of the Nazi regime (The Third Reich) during the Holocaust.
- Jewish families had to display a Star of David on their clothing.
- In the early days of Hitler’s leadership, Jewish-Germans lost the rights to do business, to marry non-Jews, and to be in some public places.
- At the concentration camps, Jews were forced into hard labor. Many starved to death or were killed.
- The Nazi soldiers led prisoners away from the camps at the end of the war because they wanted to try to hide what went on in the camps.
- The State of Israel was created as a homeland for displaced Jewish survivors of the Holocaust.
- Many Jewish high school students participate in “the March of the Living”. The walk at the location of the largest death camp contrasts the death march of their ancestors.

### Vocabulary Review

#### A. CHOOSE THE WORD CLOSEST IN MEANING

- |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. a | 2. c | 3. b | 4. a | 5. a | 6. b |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|

#### B. CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD

- |                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. concentration camps | 4. discrimination |
| 2. commemorates        | 5. pledged        |
| 3. devastation         | 6. boycotting     |

### Pair Work

Divide the class into pairs. Each student has a different reading about Nuremberg. Have the students read their paragraphs silently and then share the information with their partner. They should complete the comprehension questions together and teach each other the vocabulary beside their reading.

- German Jews lost their rights to marry or have sexual relations with non-Jews. They also lost the ability do business, to raise the German flag, and to be considered German citizens.
- The Nazi regime made charts to classify the different categories of “Jews” and Germans.
- Blacks, Romas, disabled people, and homosexuals were also targeted.
- The Nazi war crime trials were held in Nuremberg because this part of Germany was not destroyed. This is also where the large Nazi rallies were held.
- Adolf Hitler wasn’t tried in Nuremberg because he had already committed suicide.

Individual answers for the example sentence.

### Discussion Questions

Are your students comfortable discussing this topic? What about other sensitive topics? Practice using some of these useful phrases that can be used in the discussion. Allow them to keep the vocabulary out to use as you discuss the questions. Every group of students is different. If you think your students won’t be comfortable discussing the questions as a class, you could put them in small groups or pairs, or assign a question for a writing task.

#### SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Honor, Favored, and Labor*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Honour, Favoured, and Labour*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.

#### IMAGE NOTE:

This image features the Hebrew word “Yom Ha’Shoah”. This translates to “Day of (remembrance of) the Holocaust and the Heroism”.