



#WeRemember: Learn from the Past to Protect the Future
January 27th, International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD)
Lesson plan prepared by Mina Cohn, Chair of CHES

What is International Holocaust Remembrance Day?

In 2005, The United Nations General Assembly designated January 27, the day Allied troops arrived at the gates of Auschwitz-Birkenau, as International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD). A day to honour the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and the genocide of European Jews by Nazi Germany between 1941 and 1945.

The Holocaust - the murder of 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators did not occur in a vacuum. It was the product of unchecked hatred and collective silence.

January 27, 2024, marks 79 years since the liberation of the camp. **The United Nations theme for International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD) this year is: Recognizing the Extraordinary Courage of Victims and Survivors of the Holocaust.**

For further background about International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD):

<https://www.un.org/en/outreach-programme-holocaust/page/2024>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/international-holocaust-remembrance-day>

<https://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/observance>

#WeRemember Campaign

The **#WeRemember Campaign** started several years ago. It started by asking the public to carry out a simple, yet meaningful task: Write the words “#WeRemember” on a sheet of paper, take a picture holding the sign, and post it to social media using the hashtag **#WeRemember**.

A short video (2017) explaining the project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBAAb3iPsM>



Your class can participate. Contributions submitted to social media on January 27th will be posted on a screen at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Now, more than ever, we must join to protect the future by remembering the past.

How can you support the #WeRemember campaign?

You can make a significant difference through a simple task that can be done virtually. Create posters using the hashtag **#WeRemember** and take a picture of the signs or a screenshot. Then post the Picture/screenshot to social media. If you or your students are not active on social media, feel free to send images of your students holding their posters to us and we will post them on CHES social media. If your students appear on the screen at Auschwitz-Birkenau you are also welcome to share those images with us.

You can email them to us at info@chesatottawa.ca or send via facebook @CHESATOTTAWA

Activities for Students

1. Discuss with your students why this date was chosen as International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD).

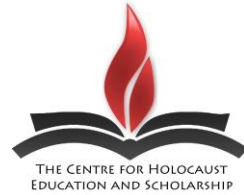
<https://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/observance/>

<https://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/>

2. Discuss what Auschwitz-Birkenau was:

The largest of the death camps where about 1,100,000 Jews were murdered, Auschwitz-Birkenau was both a labor camp and a center for the rapid murder of Jews by means of Zyklon B gas. It was equipped with several extermination facilities and crematoria.

3. When was Auschwitz-Birkenau established?



Located in the southeast of Poland it was established in 1940 following Nazi German occupation. Initially as a concentration camp for Poles - Political prisoners, it soon became a prison for a number of other nationalities. Between the years 1942-1944 it became the main mass extermination camp and labor camp where Jews were killed for their so-called racial origins.

4. When was Auschwitz-Birkenau liberated?

The Auschwitz-Birkenau camp complex was liberated by the Soviet Red Army on 27 January 1945. Tragically, by then approximately 1,100,000 Jews, 70,000 Poles, 25,000 Sinti and Roma, and some 15,000 prisoners of war from the USSR and other countries had been murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

5. What does Auschwitz-Birkenau serve as now?

Today, Auschwitz-Birkenau is open to the public as the [Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum](#). It tells the story of the [largest mass murder site in history](#) and acts as a reminder of the horrors of genocide.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/auschwitz>
<https://www.auschwitz.org/en/>

6. **#WeRemember** activity

- Have students write the words “**#WeRemember**” on a sheet of paper.
- Ask students to take a picture on their phone holding the sign.
- Students should post their picture with the sign to social media using the hashtag **#WeRemember**.
- Students who have a family connection to the Holocaust are invited to use a photo of their relatives on the poster (see page 6).

Contributions submitted to social media will be posted on a screen at Auschwitz-Birkenau on January 27th.

See below examples of signs with **#WeRemember** and a featured student project.



#WeRemember



#WeRemember



Artwork by a student of Irv Osterer at Merivale High School displayed at Auschwitz-Birkenau as part of the #WeRemember campaign.

