



Lesson Plan (Grade 6 Social Studies)

Lesson: Introduction to the Holocaust

Objective:

- To introduce the concept of the Holocaust
- To place it in its historical context
- To develop empathy
- To develop critical thinking skills using a variety of sources

Materials: Map of Europe (inter-war and now), timeline from WWI-WWII, document with two words World War II and Holocaust with space to copy definitions, Power Point on the development of the Holocaust.

Procedure:

1. Clarify that this will be a difficult and sensitive topic that may make them sad and that must be treated with respect.
2. Ask the students what they know about World War II. Accept answers and clarify, expand as necessary. Be sure that they know timing, length, location, key countries. Put key words/information on the board.
3. Ask if anyone has heard of the word “*Holocaust*” and accept answers. Expand and clarify as necessary. Write key words on the board or project them for the class to see. Remember: students come from different backgrounds. Some will have heard of the Holocaust, while others may not know the word. Some may know it as the “*Shoah*”. Explain that *Shoah* is a Hebrew word meaning *catastrophe*. Students may use either word to refer to this **systematic persecution and murder**.
4. Use a modified version of the USHMM definition that is age appropriate. Clarify any vocabulary. ([Link A](#))
5. Have this written so it can be projected or write it on the board.
6. Have the students copy this definition OR distribute it electronically or in hard copy (See definition above).
7. Clarify that WWII and the Holocaust are related, but not the same event. The Holocaust can be seen as a “war within a war.”
8. Show maps of Europe. Show a map of [inter-war Europe](#). And show [a map of Europe now](#). Ask if they see any changes, what they are and ask why maps may change. This is partly a bonus of looking at how and why maps may change, but it’s also just

a good time to begin introducing the timing that we are discussing. Look specifically at Germany, where it is, do they know anything about it, etc.

9. Bring up a timeline of this period.

Timeline of events affecting Germany between 1918 and 1933.



10. Simplify the inter-war period in Germany but clarify the problems and issues facing Germany between 1918 and 1933, to give context for Hitler's rise to power.

11. Ask if they have heard of Hitler and/or what they about know. (This may have come up earlier; elaborate here.) Make sure they leave the class knowing that he was evil.

Homework: Write down two questions that you want to ask about these topics next class. If there is time, they can do this in class.

If there is still time, continue with the following; if not continue the next part as Day 2.

1. [Power Point on timeline](#) of Hitler coming to power and the major events/laws that impacted German Jews (propaganda, boycotts, laws, the Nuremberg Laws, the Night of Broken Glass, etc.) Ask why it was ratcheted up this way. Lead them towards the ideas of gradualism/incrementalism and why this worked.
2. Briefly mention the war beginning and what this means for European Jews (back to map) and how the Holocaust develops into ghettoization, camps and mass murder. (Again, optional re: depth on ghettos, camps and murder.) Use pictures in the PPT, avoiding graphic visuals.
3. Use [video testimonials](#) here.
4. You can incorporate testimony from children who were saved by the *Kindertransport*. There are also video testimonies by child survivors on the CHES website [here](#).
5. Include stories of the those who stood up and saved Jews (You can use the story of Denmark saving virtually all its Jews and/or people such as [Irene Sendler](#) who specifically helped children, and/or [Raoul Wallenberg](#)).
6. You can then discuss what happens when it's over: go home? Leave? Where? How? This can be a good segue into the lesson plan on Ted's Story and the Jewish War Orphans Project in Canada.