



LESSON PLAN: Anti-Jewish Policy in 1930s Germany

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson students explore how the Nazis used legislation and propaganda to isolate Jews, influence German society, and escalate antisemitism. Students view visual history testimonies to learn how Jewish people were impacted by the Nuremberg Laws and rising antisemitism. They read about anti-Jewish policy and research examples of rights stripped from Jewish people. Students also examine texts on the formation of the Hitler Youth and concentration camps, and analyze Hitler's 1939 Reichstag speech to better understand the extreme ideology that ultimately led to genocide.

PART 1: HOW DID THE NAZIS USE LEGISLATION AND PROPAGANDA TO ISOLATE JEWS AND INFLUENCE SOCIETAL ATTITUDES?

Post the supporting question above for students as you begin this part of the lesson.

- 1** Students watch testimony clips from two individuals who discuss how they were affected by the Nuremberg Laws and growing antisemitism in Nazi Germany: **Herman Cohn (bio)** and **Margaret Lambert (bio)**. As they watch the clips, students take notes on the Testimony Reflections handout.
- 2** After viewing the testimony clips, students journal and/or participate in a whole group discussion in response to some of the following questions:
 - How do Margaret and Herman say things changed in Germany after 1933? What were they forced to give up?
 - What rights were taken from Margaret and Herman? How does this relate to the What Rights Are Most Important to Me? exercise?
 - What is the effect when people who feel very much a part of society are stripped of their rights and citizenship?
 - What does Margaret say motivated people to shun Jews after 1933? What role did the forces of social and peer pressure play during this period?
 - What did you notice about Margaret's emotional response when she described the antisemitism she faced? What personal toll do you think persecution and isolation took on young people like Margaret and Herman?
- 3** Students read the handout, ***Nazi Germany and Anti-Jewish Policy***, and annotate with a focus on the lesson supporting questions. They also view the photographs in the handout, ***Anti-Jewish Signs in Germany***, depicting anti-Jewish signs displayed on roads and in towns. After reading and viewing, students engage in a follow-up activity:
 - a. Sentence strips are posted, each containing a different right taken from Jewish people and noted in the reading (see ***Examples of Anti-Jewish Policy in Nazi Germany, 1933-1938***).
 - b. Pairs or small groups are each assigned one right to research further using the **Echoes & Reflections Timeline of the Holocaust (1933-38)** and other online sources. They take notes on what they learn.

- c. The class reconvenes and pairs/groups each report back on one significant finding. As they do, they pull down the corresponding sentence strip, physically representing the “stripping” or loss of rights for Jewish people.
- d. As students pull down the strips, they reflect on how each right corresponds with the rights they identified during the **What Rights Are Most Important to Me?** exercise.

4. As a whole class, students discuss the effects of anti-Jewish policy and the cumulative stripping of rights of German Jews using some of the following questions:

- What were the main purposes of the Nazi antisemitic laws and policies? How did they evolve over time?
- How was the idea of race infused in the laws and policies?
- How did actions taken by individuals and communities add force to Nazi policies?
- What overall impact do you think these laws had on Jews? On German society more broadly?
- What other system of laws do you know about that has dehumanized people, whether or not it led to genocide (e.g., Jim Crow Laws, apartheid in South Africa)?

PART 2: HOW DID THE NAZIS REINFORCE THEIR ANTISEMITIC IDEOLOGY AND ESCALATE HATE?

Post the supporting question above for students as you begin this part of the lesson.

5 Individually or in pairs, students read and annotate the handouts, **Hitlerjugend** and **Concentration Camps**. They create a one-page summary that captures key ideas in response to the supporting question. The one-page summary includes three elements – a graphic or illustration, a quote, and a question. Students share and discuss their work in small groups or by circulating around the room and engaging in several brief partner shares. As a whole group, students discuss some of the following questions:

- What methods do you think were most effective in conditioning young people to accept antisemitic ideas? Why?
- How did indoctrination in Hitler Youth groups replace or overtake education in schools and homes?
- What groups of people were imprisoned in concentration camps? Why were they targeted?
- How do you think the camps influenced both targeted groups and German society in general?
- Though very different, how did youth groups and concentration camps both reinforce antisemitic ideology and escalate hate? How did they contribute to an environment in which genocide could be possible?

6 Students watch a testimony clip from an individual who discusses her experience with the Hitler Youth: **Julia Lentini (bio)**. As they watch the clip, students take notes on the **Testimony Reflections** handout.

7 After viewing the testimony clip, students journal and/or participate in a whole group discussion in response to some of the following questions:

- Why did Julia Lentini want to be a part of the Hitler Youth? How do you think forces such as group loyalty and peer pressure were used by the Nazis to influence children like Julia?
- Why do you think the Nazis instituted groups like the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls? How did these groups reinforce Nazi antisemitic policies?

- Julia says that it “was no big situation...it’s how it all got started.” What does she mean by this? What does it tell you about the escalation of hate in a society?

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Students receive the handout, *Hitler’s Reichstag Speech*, and review the introduction and directions as a class. In pairs or small groups, they analyze the excerpts and work together to complete the task. As time allows, students share their thinking with the larger group and engage in a class discussion about the things the Nazis did that supported their extreme antisemitic ideology and provided fertile ground for genocide to unfold. (Students can view video of Hitler delivering the speech here: <https://www.ushmm.org/learn/timeline-of-events/1939-1941/hitler-speech-to-german-parliament>.)

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As a summative task, students complete a “quick write or draw,” referring back to the lesson supporting questions. They fold a sheet of paper in half and label one side 1933 and the other 1939. They write or sketch at least three ideas/representations in each column that convey how the situation in Germany changed and escalated for Jewish people during the six-year period. Students should use evidence from lesson sources to arrive at their representations. As time allows, students share their writing/illustrations with a partner. Student work can be collected to check for understanding of concepts.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 120 MINUTES