

Centropa Lesson Plan

Alena Chal /Алена Чал

School No.4 of Novogrudok, Belarus /ДУА “Сярэдняя школа №4 г.Навагрудка”,
Рэспубліка Беларусь

Lesson title: English Language

Subject: The Holocaust: History and Memory

Target audience: Recommended for grade 11, Language level: Intermediate (B1) –
Upper Intermediate (B2)

Number and length of unit: 90 minutes (extensions available)

Abstract/ Summary:

The purpose of the 1st lesson is to introduce students to the enormity of the crimes committed during the Holocaust. In this lesson students will learn what the Holocaust was, how and why it happened?

The next lesson focuses on the Jewish life in pre-war Minsk. The material in this lesson is to help students bear witness to the experiences of Elena Drapkina, a former prisoner of Minsk ghetto, during the Holocaust.

Centropa films/ materials used:

Elena Drapkina. Standin up. Fighting back (13:50) <https://pamjat.centropa.org/by/film-by/alena-drapkina-blr/>

Elena Drapkina. Biography <https://www.centropa.org/biography/elena-drapkina>

Jewish life in Minsk before the Holocaust Photos
<http://www.eilatgordinlevitan.com/minsk/minsk.html>

Supplies/ resources required:

— Video:

<https://pamjat.centropa.org/film/elena-drapkina/>

Step by Step: Phases of the Holocaust (06:47) <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/step-step-phases-holocaust>

— Reading “Phases of the Holocaust”

Content-related objectives:

At the end of this lesson,:

- students will understand what the Holocaust was, how and why it happened;
- through an analysis of images and film, students will recognize that Jewish life before WWII was characterized by great variety in religious practice, culture, national affiliation, occupation, wealth, and status.
- bear witness to Elena Drapkina’s experiences during the Holocaust

Skill-related objectives:

- To develop students' ability to talk within the topic of the lesson
- To develop students' ability to listen for the main ideas in the videos
- To develop students' ability to read for the main ideas in the text

Teaching methods/ Educational technologies:

- Game "I.N.I.T.I.A.L.S."
- Gallery Walk
- Graffiti Board
- Mind-Mapping
- Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World
- Connect, Extend, Challenge
- Think, Pair, Share
- 3-2-1 Prompt

Lesson details:

Part I

**On the desks there are "I can" checklists. Students are to write down the mark they'll give themselves for doing this or that task.*

1. Lead in 4 mins

Aims: to set the context for the lesson and generate interest in the topic and develop speaking for fluency

Procedure: Game "I.N.I.T.I.A.L.S." Students are shown different pictures and they need to take the first letter from each picture to form the mystery word. ([Appendix, p. 1-2](#))

2. Identifying the topic of the lesson. Goal-setting. 5 mins

Aims: to identify the topic and the goals that should be achieved by a student at the end of a lesson

Procedure:

2.1 Ask students to identify the topic of the lesson

2.2 Explain that in this lesson, students will address two essential questions:

- What was the Holocaust?
- How and why did the Holocaust happen?

2.3 Tell them they are to watch a video and read some information to understand this process better

2.4 Ask students to set goals that they want to achieve by the end of the lesson.

The A.B.C.D. Method.

A-Audience: Determine who will achieve the objective.

B-Behavior: Use action verbs (Bloom's taxonomy) to write observable and measurable behavior that shows mastery of the objective.

C-Condition: If any, state the condition under which behavior is to be performed. (Optional)

D-Degree: If possible, state the criterion for acceptable performance, speed, accuracy, quality, etc. (Optional)

(Possible goals: we/students will learn what the Holocaust was and why it happened; we'll be practicing our oral speech skills while discussing the Holocaust, watching a short movie and reading an article, etc.)

3. Gallery Walk 14 min

Aim: To define terms, activate students' background knowledge, to form a general idea of the topic of conversation.

Procedure:

3.1 Ask students to create a working definition of the Holocaust.

3.2. Provide the following USHMM definition of the Holocaust and post for reference.

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million European Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators in the years leading up to and during World War II. During the era of the Holocaust (1933-1945), German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), disabled persons, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.

3.3 Ask students:

- Were there elements missing in the definition you created?
- What parts of this Museum definition do you have questions about?

3.4 Set up a gallery walk by placing the following resources on tables or hanging them around the room ([Appendix 1, p. 3-14](#))

Ask students to silently "tour" the gallery. Give them eight minutes (or longer if you have more time) to view or read as many of the resources as they can. For each one they view, ask them to do the following in their journals:

- Record the name of the slide.
- If it is a text-based resource: Record a sentence, phrase, or detail you think is striking or significant.
- If it is an image: Describe a part of the image that provokes a question, observation, or emotional response from you.
- When students are finished, rather than return to their desks, ask them to visit the graffiti board you have set up in advance and write a response to the resources they encountered. They might write a new thought, observation, or feeling they are experiencing after viewing the resources.

4. Watching the video "Step by Step: Phases of the Holocaust" 12 min

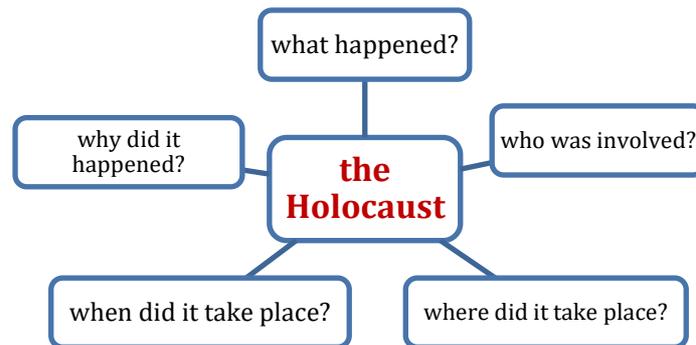
Aims: to provide students with practice listening for general information and allow to speak for fluency; to understand the steps leading to mass murder

Procedure:

4.1 In the video Step by Step: Phases of the Holocaust (06:47), historian Doris Bergen divides the history of the Holocaust into four phases, described on the handout Phases of the Holocaust ([Appendix 2](#)). Pass out the handout and give students a few moments to read through the information. Then show the video so that students can hear Bergen’s description of the four phases.

5. Making up a mind-map "The Holocaust". 10 min

Aim: to help to structure, better analyze and comprehend the information received



Part II

6. Analyze Photos of Pre-War Jewish Life in Minsk 13 min

Aim: Students will learn about pre-war Jewish life in Minsk by examining a series of photographs from the period.

Procedure: Students will need to see the entire Pre-War Jewish Life in Minsk gallery of eleven photographs, from which they will choose one to examine more closely. ([Appendix 3](#))

6.1 Tell students that they are about to look at photographs depicting scenes from “everyday” Jewish life in Minsk in the pre-war period. Before introducing the photographs, ask students to think for a moment about what they expect they might see.

6.2 Then give students a few minutes to browse through all of the photographs in the collection. As they browse, instruct them to choose one photo that resonates with them for some reason. For instance, the photograph might remind them of a moment or experience in their own lives, or there might be something about the photograph that surprises or captivates them.

6.3 Pass out the handout Photo Analysis ([Appendix 4](#)). This handout includes a version of the Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World strategy modified for use with photographs.

6.4 Ask at least half of the group to share with the class their response to one of the questions on the Photo Analysis handout.

6.5 Then ask students to think for a moment about the entire set of images. Have them respond to the following question:

- What do these pictures tell you about the lives of Minsk Jews during the period before World War II?
- What stories might be missing from this collection of pictures?
- What questions do the images leave unanswered?

7. Watching the video “Elena Drapkina. Standing up. Fighting back 24 min

Aims: to provide students with practice listening for general information and allow to speak for fluency; to reflect on and bear witness to a Elena Drapkina’s story and experience during the Holocaust.

Procedure:

7.1 Now when students have drawn some preliminary conclusions from their investigation of Jewish life in Minsk before World War II, they will watch the 1st part of the video with testimony from a Holocaust survivor from the city of Minsk. Pause the video at 02:51

7.2 After showing this part of the film, have students respond to the following questions:

- Looking at the film, what is your overall impression of life in pre-war Minsk?
- Based on what you’ve seen in this film, what opportunities do you think were available for Jews in Minsk during this time period?
- Which of the photographs from the previous activity seem to connect most closely to this film clip? What answers does this film provide to questions raised from the photograph activity? What new questions does it raise?

7.3 Before watching the continuation of the video, share the information: The Jews of Minsk were forced into ghetto after the German invasion in 1941. On March 2-3, 1942, a big pogrom took place in the Minsk ghetto, five thousand Jews, including children from the orphanage, were killed. Show the class the 2nd and 3rd parts of the video “Standing up. Fighting back”. Pause at 08:42.

7.4 Use the Connect, Extend, Challenge teaching strategy to help students analyze how what they learned from the film relates to what they learned from the previous activities in this lesson.

Connect: How do the ideas and information in this part of the video connect to what you already know about the Holocaust?

Extend: How does this video extend or broaden your thinking about the Holocaust?

Challenge: Does this video challenge or complicate your understanding of Holocaust? What new questions does it raise for you?

7.5 Show the last part of the video. After the video is over, use Think, Pair, Share strategy to have students share their reflections.

- Why do you think it is important to study how and why the Holocaust happened?
- What do you think people can learn from it?

8. Sum up 5 mins

Aims: to get a quick feedback on students' learning progress

Procedure: the 3-2-1 Prompt

Three things that they have learned from this lesson or from this text.

Two questions that they still have.

One aspect of class or the video that they enjoyed.

Summarize the lesson and tell student(s) what results they have achieved. Analyze students' "I can" checklists.

Homework (optional) 3 mins

Aim: To reinforce what was taught in class

Procedure:

- 1) Create a Found Poem ([Appendix 5](#))
- 2) Write a Short Essay: Edmund Burke (1729-1797), a British political philosopher, said that "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." How does this apply to the Holocaust?

Evidence of student learning:

"I can" checklist

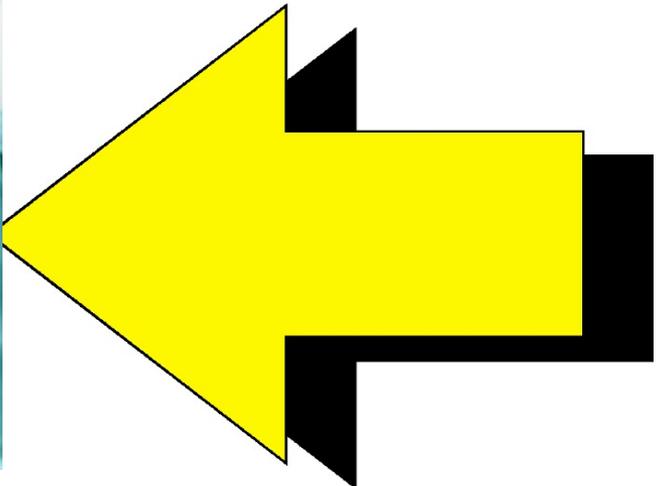
Activity at the lesson	Self-assessment		
	I have no idea how to do it – 3	I can do it with some prompts – 6	I can do it – 9
I can define the Holocaust			
I work independently while "touring" the gallery			
I know 4 Phases of the Holocaust			
I make up the mind-map			
I can do Photo Analysis			
I watch the video and share with others about watching.			
Total :			

The group consists of 9 students. Advanced level of English. 3 girls were aware of the topic the Holocaust. They took part in the [The Global Partisans' Song Project](#) . The rest of the class knew very little about the Holocaust. Students' checklists showed that aims of the lessons were achieved and students were given good and excellent marks.

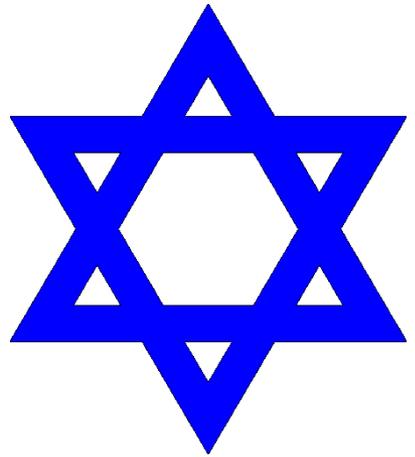
[Samples of student work](#)

Teacher's reflective comments on lesson:

In these lessons, students will encounter emotionally challenging content. There can be a variety of responses from students. Students can react to the Holocaust with sadness, anger, or frustration, yet it is also the case that many students do not have an immediate public response to learning about the Holocaust. There can also be lack of emotion during a lesson on the Holocaust. It can take time before students are able and ready to make sense of this material. If such a situation occurs we recommend students to write in their journals at many points throughout this lesson.



people.
anti-Semitic; also spelt
one or something that is
to or prejudiced against Jew
Semitic beliefs were well-kno
anti-Semitism /ænti
Semitism is hostility to
Jewish people. The extre
Front promoted anti-semi
antisemitik!

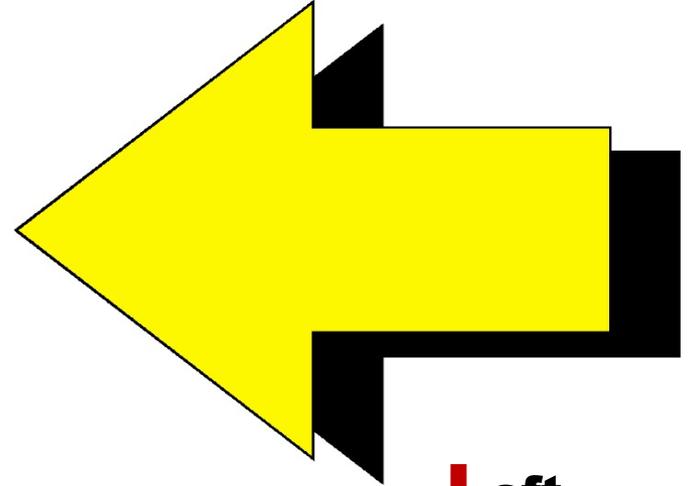




Hitler



Operation



Left



Oswiecim



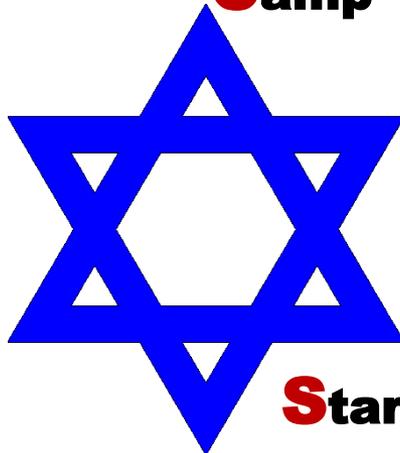
Camp



Antisemitism



Uniform



Star of David



Torah

Hitler, Adolf (1889-1945)

Leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party ([NSDAP](#)) from 1920. In November 1923, he was unsuccessful in his attempt to forcibly bring Germany under Nationalist control, in what is referred to as the [Beer Hall Putsch](#). Hitler was put in jail and released after nine months. It was during this time that he began to write [Mein Kampf](#). This book expressed [antisemitic](#) views and called for the Jews to be removed from Germany society. After his release, he re-entered politics and in 1933 was appointed Chancellor by [von Hindenburg](#). He pursued an aggressive foreign policy, the aim of which was the acquisition of [Lebensraum](#). After annexing Austria ([Anschluss](#)), the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia, in September 1939 he invaded Poland. This resulted in the outbreak of World War II. In addition to attempting to gain territory, a key [Nazi](#) social policy was that of racial hygiene. This resulted in the [Eugenics](#) programme, [Aktion T-4](#) and ultimately in the [Final Solution](#). Once he realised the war was obviously lost in April 1945, Hitler committed suicide rather than be captured alive.



Adolf Hitler

I remember at the beginning of the school day we had to stand up and raise our arms in the Hitler salute; and instead of a prayer, we had to thank the *Führer* for giving us such a nice day. Loyalty was expected, loyalty was instilled, there was nothing *other* than loyalty. I remember the schoolbooks; because the Nazi designers were so good at their job, the indoctrination didn't strike one as aggressive, or abrasive, or alien. You opened your first alphabet book, or school book and the very first picture would be of the *Führer*, kindly, in civilian clothes. I think he could have been in *Alpenhosen* standing on a flower-strewn mountainside holding two children, a boy and a girl, by the hand. And the inscription in the frontispiece, as I remember it was, 'Two things the *Führer* loves best: children and flowers.' At the same time it seemed a very pleasant thing for the *Führer* to be busy with, so that put one at ease.

On their part my parents kept quiet, a sort of *dull* silence. When I brought home cheerful reverberations of Nazism they didn't say, 'Nonsense, don't you ever talk like that in this home of ours,' but nor did they say, 'Lovely that you learnt all these marvellous things at school.' There was some sort of in-between, neutral position which they had adopted for fear of repercussions; and repercussions could have been severe.

© **Sergei Hackel** *German Jewish schoolboy, Berlin* [4644]

Aktion / Operation

A term used for any non-military campaign to further [Nazi](#) ideals of race. This term was mostly used to refer to the assembly and deportation of Jews to [concentration](#) or death camps. The word means “action” and is also used in the names of specific operations such as [Aktion Reinhard](#), [Aktion T-4](#) and Aktion Erntefest (Harvest Festival) which was the code name for the operation in November 1943 to kill all the remaining Jews in the Lublin district of Poland controlled by the [Generalgouvernement](#).

Aktionen (round-ups for deportations) usually happened at night. I remember the hiding place we had behind the wardrobe and how we would sit together through the night. They would come into the room shouting and shooting, there would be flames all around. I cannot describe to you Imagine, winter nights, suddenly you hear noises, voices, you hear shooting, the fear is *indescribable* and the running, everyone scrambling. The human behaviour in such a situation is to preserve your own life, so you don't look at what you're doing, you *run*, maybe you're running over other people, but you don't care. And this is the terrible thing – you lose all human dignity, that was terrible.

Adam Adams *Polish Jewish youth, Lublin Ghetto [18275]*

Aktion Reinhard (or Operation Reinhard)

The code name for the destruction of European Jews within the area controlled by the [Generalgouvernement](#). It began in March 1942 with the deportation of Jews from ghettos to extermination camps and concluded in November 1943. The name *Aktion Reinhard* was adopted after the assassination of Reinhard [Heydrich](#) in May 1942. The three extermination camps established under Aktion Reinhard were [Belzec](#), [Sobibór](#), and [Treblinka](#). 1.7 million Jews were murdered as a result of this operation.

Aktion T-4 (Tiergarten Strasse 4)

A code name for the [Euthanasia](#) programme. Between 1939 and 1941, this resulted in the killing of between 200,000 and 250,000 people who suffered from intellectual or physical impairment. It was named T4 as an abbreviation of the address of number 4 Tiergarten Strasse which was the headquarters of the General Foundation for Welfare and Institutional Care.



Beginning in 1941, the incoming prisoners in [Auschwitz](#) were officially registered. This registration consisted of a tattoo, which was placed on the **left** breast of the prisoner; later, the tattoo location was moved to the **left** inner forearm. It was not only Jews who were marked: all prisoners other than ethnic Germans and police prisoners were tattooed. These tattoos were just one of the ways in which the Nazis dehumanized their prisoners. Despite the perception that all Holocaust prisoners were given tattoos, it was only the prisoners of Auschwitz after 1941 who were branded this way.

Starting in September 1941, Jews in Germany were stigmatized by having to wear the Yellow Star. It had been introduced earlier in the territories occupied by Nazi Germany.

The star had to be visible on the upper **left** chest side of the clothing. In the Warsaw ghetto, Jews wore a white armband with a blue Star of David on their **left** arm. In some ghettos, even babies in prams had to wear the armbands or stars.



Oswiecim

A city in southern Poland near Krakow. The largest [Nazi concentration camp](#) complex known as [Auschwitz](#) was situated near here. Before the Second World War, half the population of this town were Jews. They were moved out and the bricks and stones of their homes were used to build Auschwitz I.

Gravestones in the Jewish cemetery in Oswiecim. These stones were used in the Nazi era as paving slabs and for other uses and the cemetery was reconstructed after the war. It is unlikely that many of the gravestones are in their correct positions. There are no Jews living in Oswiecim today.



My mother's family lived in Oswiecim for well over three hundred years. They had a very large estate and when pictures were first shown on television I saw my family name – Jakob Gross & Sons – crossed out in black paint, at the railway sidings. Almost the whole of that estate was used for the concentration camp as well as Birkenau and all the others that were attached. Oswiecim was a lovely town, a beautiful little place with a river running through it. Every year around Christmas time we used to go there. My uncle was a very generous man and he always fitted us out with a sleigh and Shetland ponies. The last year we were there was December 1937. He said, 'Look at the house, it's so big, why don't you come. Hitler is going to march into Austria any day now, come and live here.' Thank God we didn't. My uncle was mayor of Auschwitz and although a secular Jew, the leader of the Jewish community there. He went to the gas chamber – almost the last man to go in; he refused to give hiding places away, so they took him.

John Lawrence *Austrian Jewish schoolboy, Vienna [20998]*

Concentration camp (*Konzentrationslager*, KZ)

Established at the beginning of the [Nazi](#) regime, these camps were for the imprisonment and forced-labour of “enemies” of the [Reich](#), including those expressing different political views, Jews and those regarded as asocial. Disease, maltreatment and starvation led to many deaths, as did direct executions. These prisons were an essential part of [Nazi](#) systematic oppression. Initially (1933-36), they were used mainly for political prisoners. Later (1936-42), the camps were expanded and non-political prisoners including Jews, [Roma](#) and [Sinti](#) people, homosexuals, and Poles were also imprisoned. In the last period of the [Nazi](#) regime (1942-45), prisoners of concentration camps were forced to work in the armament industry, as more and more Germans were fighting in the war.

Camps were set for a range of purposes. This included internment camps, forced [labour camps](#), [transit camps](#), which served as temporary holding stations from which prisoners would be sent on to other destinations and extermination camps built specifically for mass murder.



Striped uniforms (sometimes referred to as pyjamas) worn in concentration camps

When we arrived at Auschwitz, we were seasoned, experienced concentration camp people, already in our striped uniform, I was a *big* child, I looked about nineteen or twenty, and I decided in order to stay alive, I would volunteer for everything. If they wanted volunteers, I was there: whether to fetch food, carry bodies, whatever, I was there. The thing was that you couldn't show yourself for long; if you were too exposed, you didn't last. Just imagine: you are walking along and you're sticking in the mud, then you lose your shoes! If you lose your shoes, you lose your *life*. I can't begin to explain the *fear*, the heart-beating, the gauntlet we had to run.

Josef Perl *Czech Jewish youth, Auschwitz-Birkenau [17883]*

Antisemitism

Opposition to, [prejudice](#) of, or [discrimination](#) against Jews. The word Semitic refers to the family of languages that included Hebrew and Arabic. Therefore because Jews used Hebrew, they were Semites. There is no such a term as “semitism”. Antisemitism was a term coined in the late 19th century and referred to all types of racially based hatred of Jews.

A banner hung in village of [Goering's](#) birth proclaiming “Jews not wanted”



When the Hungarians came in after they annexed our part of Czechoslovakia in late 1938, they immediately got rid of our teachers and put in German trained antisemitic Hungarian teachers. The first day we went to school. After that, they told the Christian children not to associate with us any more; even they couldn't understand why one moment we were playing together and friendly, and all of a sudden, we were different. I didn't realise how easy it was to turn somebody's mind, because within days, a friend I used to play with, kick balls with, eat with in each other's houses, all of a sudden called me 'Dirty Jew'. My pony was confiscated when the Hungarians came in and one day I was walking home from school and saw there were lots of soldiers resting in the gutter. As a religious Jewish child I used to have ringlets hanging down over my shoulders, and one of the soldiers got up, came over to me, took out his bayonet and cut off my ringlets. I came home, I was shaking; I felt that I had lost part of my body. I refused to go to school after that – under the age of nine years, my education stopped, finished.

Josef Perl *Czech Jewish schoolboy, Veliky Bochkov [17883]*

Auschwitz – Birkenau

Located in Upper Silesia 37 miles west of Krakow, the largest [Nazi concentration camp](#). Operated by the [SS](#), its first commandant was Rudolf [Hoess](#) ([Höss](#)). Auschwitz was a complex consisting of [concentration](#), extermination, and [labour](#) camps. It comprised three large camps housing gas chambers and [crematoria](#) and around forty sub camps. Auschwitz I was the main camp and administrative centre. Auschwitz II was known as Birkenau and construction began in October 1941. It was divided into sections separated by electrified barbed wire. After a series of trial [gas chambers](#), four [crematorium](#) buildings, each comprising an undressing area, a [gas chamber](#) and [crematorium](#) oven were constructed between March and June 1943. In April 1944, two Slovak prisoners - Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler escaped from Auschwitz. They reported to Hungarian church officials and Jewish leaders that Auschwitz was a death camp. This report was taken to Switzerland, but nothing happened. Later that year, members of the [Sonderkommando](#) staged an uprising in Crematorium IV. To give an example of the scale of extermination at this camp, between late April and early July 1944, 426,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz. 320,000 were sent directly to the [gas chambers](#) of Birkenau. Auschwitz III (Monowitz) was the [I.G. Farben labour](#) camp and also known as Buna. 1.3 million people were deported to the Auschwitz complex. An estimated 1.1 million were killed including almost a million Jews, nearly 75,000 Poles, more than 20,000 [Roma](#) and [Sinti](#), 15,000 Russian [PoWs](#) and more than 10,000 people of other nationalities.



Barrack blocks at Birkenau. Built to stable 52 horses each, a block housed more than 400 prisoners.

The next part was getting my number tattooed. Two young slaves – I would describe them that way – came along; one of them had a book, a typical German book, nineteenth century type, nothing in it but numbers. And the other one took a pen and a bottle of ink and with this, very quickly and adroitly, tattooed us. In Terezin nobody asked you your name but the boys and other people knew who I was. But in Auschwitz you became a number, you didn't know anybody. The only person I knew was my brother, we stuck together.

Jan Hartman *Czech Jewish youth, Auschwitz-Birkenau* [18557]



In most camps, prisoners were stripped of their own civilian clothing and forced to wear a uniform. Typically, this uniform was patterned with blue stripes, although this wasn't always the case.

Men were given a cap, trousers and jacket to wear. Women wore a dress or skirt with a jacket and kerchief for their head. On their feet, prisoners wore wooden or leather clogs. Socks were not supplied, and as a result many prisoners suffered with sores from rubbing. This could be very dangerous in the poor and unhygienic conditions of most of the camps.

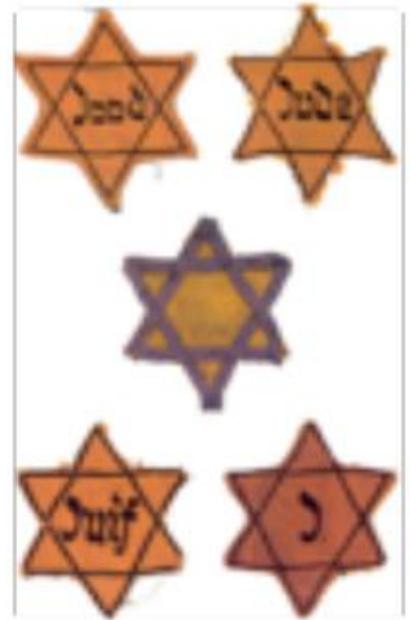
The uniforms usually had each prisoner's number stitched onto front left hand side of the uniform, as well as a triangle to show the category of prisoner to which they had been classified.

Star of David/Yellow Star

The six-pointed star and symbol of Judaism. During the [Holocaust](#), Jews in various parts of occupied Europe were required to wear a star of David on their clothing. Often, the letter “J” or the word for Jew was written in the language of the occupied country.

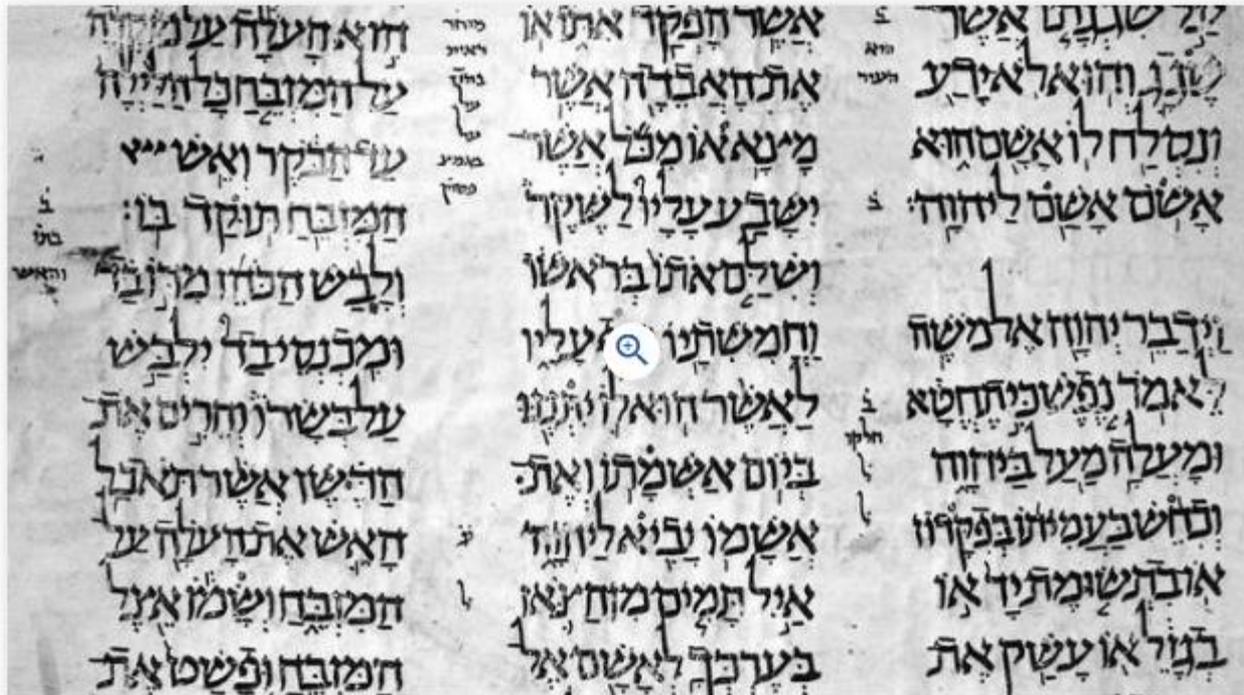
Later on we had to wear the Star. I am an obstinate and proud person and to me wearing the Star of David was a challenge, so rather than wear it and lower my head, I wore it proudly. I didn't feel there was anything wrong with being Jewish. I didn't particularly want to be Jewish because I didn't know the meaning of it because I am not a religious person, but I was born Jewish, I may as well be one. So I wasn't affected by that Star, and probably I didn't realise the danger – that the Star was the only way of getting us where they wanted us.

Janine Ingram *Jewish woman, Thessaloniki [18671]*



Yellow stars worn in countries of [Nazi](#) occupied Europe

Torah, in Judaism, in the broadest sense, the substance of divine revelation to Israel, the Jewish people: God's revealed teaching or guidance for humankind. The meaning of "Torah" is often restricted to signify the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), also called the Law (or the Pentateuch, in Christianity). These are the books traditionally ascribed to Moses, the recipient of the original revelation from God on Mount Sinai. Jewish, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant canons all agree on their order: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.



Part of the fifth chapter of Leviticus from an early 10th-century Torah; in the British Museum

Image: Courtesy of the trustees of the British Museum

THE TORAH

חמשה חומשי תורה





The Holocaust



-  Extermination camp
-  Concentration camp*
-  City with ghetto
-  Major massacre
-  Major deportation route

Regions:

German name (PRESENT COUNTRY)

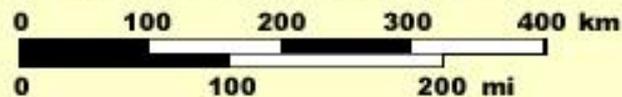
-  Axis country/annexed by Axis
-  Occupied by Axis
-  Allied country (1939)

* Includes labor-, prison- & transit camps.

Note: Not all camps & ghettos are shown.

Borders are at the height of Axis domination (1942).

Dotted borders are present (2007) borders.



Phases of the Holocaust

In the video Step by Step: Phases of the Holocaust, historian Doris Bergen divides the history of the Holocaust into four phases:

1. Planning and Propaganda: 1933-1939

Key events:

- German Jews and other so-called inferior races and people are isolated from the rest of the population.
- Germany rebuilds military in violation of Treaty of Versailles.
- German government attacks Jewish property and lives on Kristallnacht.
- Nazi government prepares German public for war.

2. Expansion and Violence: September 1939 - June 1941

Key events:

- World War II begins with German invasion of Poland.
- Nazi violence expands into Poland and across Europe.
- Nazis establish ghettos and new concentration camps to imprison millions of Jews.
- Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) murder millions of Jews and other targeted groups in mass shootings in eastern Europe.
- Germany invades Soviet Union.

3. Dedication to Mass Killing: 1941-1944

Key events:

- Decision is made by Hitler and his advisors to annihilate all of the Jews in Europe.
- Six killing centers are established, where millions of Jews, Sinti and Roma, and other targeted groups are murdered in gas chambers. The most infamous killing center is Auschwitz.

4. Death Marches: January 1945 - May 1945

- As Germany is losing the war, and the Soviets are pushing the German military west, killing centers and camps are closed or liberated.
- Nazis force prisoners from camps to march from eastern Europe toward Germany. Hundreds of thousands die along the way.



Studio portrait of actors and actresses from the "Intimate" Theater, a Jewish troupe under the direction of L. Likhterman located at Adler Street. 1922.



At a parade celebrating the tenth anniversary of the October revolution: Jewish members of the "Pioneer" Communist youth organization pose with banners and drums on a street lined with shops.

19 Минскъ - Видъ отъ Соборной
площади на синагогу.





The Minsk Choral Synagogue, which housed the Belarusian State Jewish Theater in the interwar period
Yad Vashem Photo Collection, YVA, 5961/7

CLOSE X



Minsk 1930 the Kopelovitz family



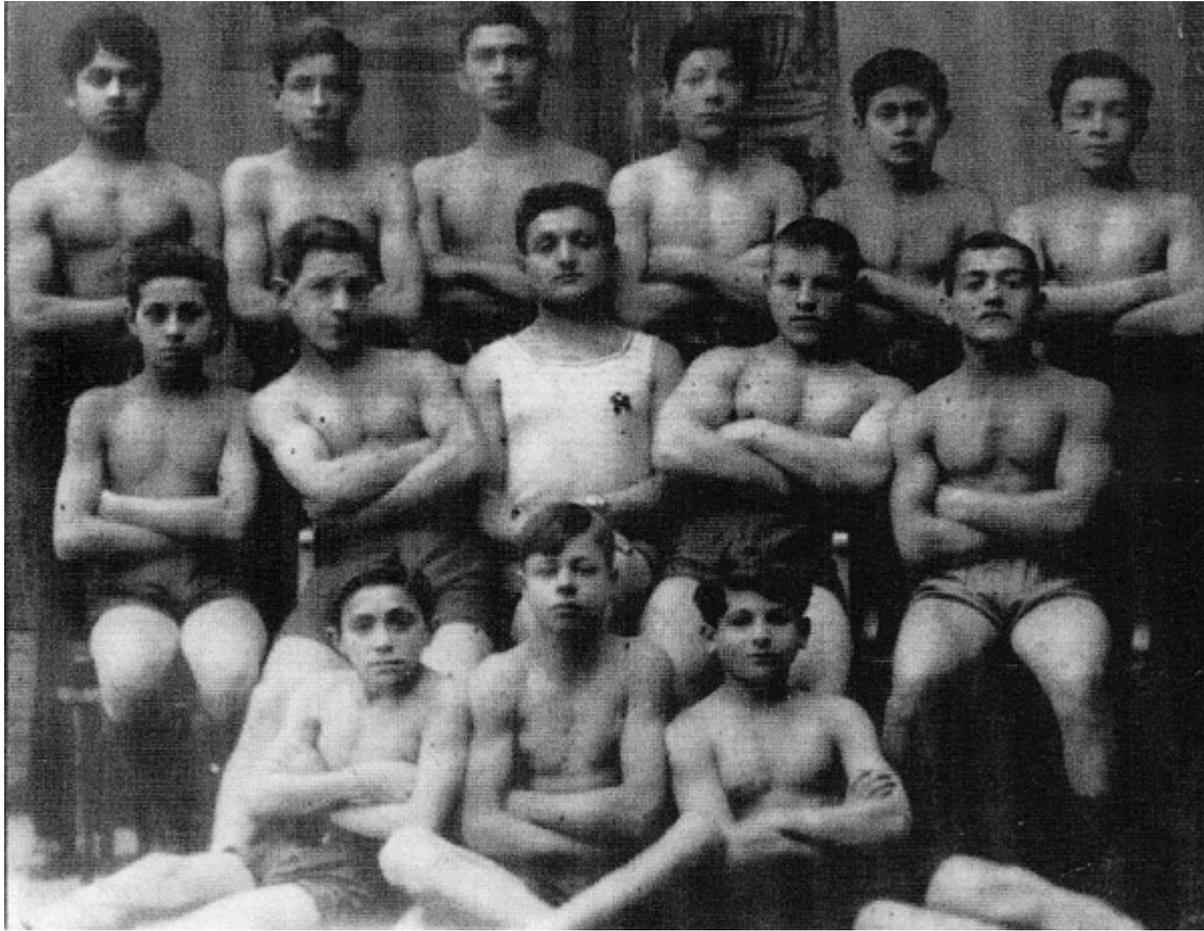
THE FAMILY OF SELIG KANTROWITZ

Ida between parents, Mary, seated, second from right

cir 1906-7



1922 Minsk – Shoemaker course for Jewish boys



Yuri Ilich Taytz, an athletics instructor in a home for Jewish children in Minsk.



Jewish children and teens in a nature club in Minsk, celebrating the holiday of Lag B'Omer (late April 1918)



club in Minsk, celebrating the holiday of Lag
B'Omer (late April 1918)



Members of Ha - Tehiyah, a Zionist youth movement in Minsk. Photographed in December 1925

Photo Analysis

Directions: Spend at least a few minutes studying the image you selected. Look at the image as a whole. Look at specific places: around the corners and edges, in the shadows, behind central figures. Then answer the questions below.

Photo-to-Text

How does this photo remind you of another text (photo, story, book, movie, song, etc.)? Complete the following statement:

What I see reminds me of _____ (story/book/movie/song) because . . .

Photo-to-Self

How does this photo relate to your own life, ideas, and experiences? Complete one of the following statements:

What I see reminds me of the time when I . . .

I identify with this photo because in my life, I have experienced/learned . . .

Photo-to-World

How do the ideas or details in this photo relate to the larger world—past, present, and future? Complete one of the following statements:

What I see makes me think about (event from the past) because . . .

What I see makes me think about (event from today related to my own community, nation, or world) because . . .

What I see makes me wonder about the future because . . .

Creating a Found Poem

Creating a “found poem” from a Holocaust survivor’s testimony can be a way to pay respectful attention to and honor his or her experiences. A found poem is one that is created using only words that have been copied and rearranged from another text.

Use the following steps to create your poem.

1. Read the testimony at least two to three times. If possible, read it aloud at least once.
2. While reading the testimony one additional time, copy down at least 15 to 20 words or phrases from it that you find memorable or powerful.
3. Arrange the words and phrases you have selected into a poem. You might want to copy the words and phrases onto notecards or separate sheets of paper so that you can easily rearrange them. Try to arrange the words in a way that captures what you think is the essence of the testimony, as well as your experience of hearing it.

Here are a few more guidelines for creating your poem:

- ✓ You DON’T have to use all of the words and phrases you chose.
- ✓ You CAN repeat words or phrases.
- ✓ You CAN’T add other words besides those you copied from the testimony.
- ✓ Your poem DOESN’T have to rhyme.

4. When you are satisfied with your poem, give it a title.

Standin up. Fighting back

This is Minsk back when I was a child. A small city by Soviet standards – I think 250 000 people lived there then, and back then there were around 70 000 Jews here. When the Germans invaded in 1941, they marked every Jewish family they could find – for death. And this is the story of my family.

Part one: life in peaceful times

My dad, Levin Osher Girshevich, was born in Minsk in 1891, and worked as a teacher of Yiddish and Russian languages later as a bookkeeper. My mom was born in Minsk in 1895. They had three children but I only have this picture of my older brother Hirsh, who was born in 1920. I don't even have a picture of my younger brother Saul. I was born in 1924. We were not a religious family. We were secular family, a Soviet family. My brothers and I went to kindergarten, the elementary school. As I got older, I had an interest in science, and by the 9th grade, I developed an interest in dentistry. I loved theater when I was young and my friends and I would go to the Yiddish Theater in Minsk, and that's where we saw the plays of Sholem Aleichem. We also went to the "Palace of the Pioneers" and I became friends with Masha Bruskina. In fact, Masha and I would become good friends growing up. But my big passion back then in the times before the world went dark – was swimming. There was a river behind our house and a swimming coach saw me and invited me to swim on his team. Soon I was winning competitions and I even went to swim in all-Union competitions in Kyiv in 1939. So that was my childhood and my youth. And it ended much too soon – when I was 16 years old.

Part two: life in hell

I remember it so well. I had just finished 9th grade when the Germans invaded on 22 June, 1941. My older brother, Hirsh, ran to fight for our country. I never heard from him again. The Germans began bombing Minsk almost immediately, and at the end of June they invaded. Immediately the Germans set up a Jewish ghetto. My whole family was sent into the ghetto in July 1941. If you didn't go into the ghetto, the Germans would just kill you. All our relatives moved together. Jewish men – our brothers and fathers – were worked to death. And that's how my father died. Everyone lived on the edge of life and death. Then the Germans went on manhunts. The first was on 14 August, 1941. The second on 28 August. On 7 November, Grandfather and Aunt Sonya were taken away and murdered. I

don't have a picture of my grandfather but this is Sonya Shelupskaya. Then came 20 November. That is when death came for us. My Uncle Tolya ran in and told us to hide. We rushed under the staircase and we filled it up but there was no room for Mom and Uncle Tolya. The Germans barged into our house. I heard Mom saying "Wait a moment; I'll just put on my coat". Those were the last words I heard her say. Uncle Tolya tried to escape through the second floor. But he fell, broke his leg, and crawled back into the house. When the Germans left, we crawled out and went our separate ways. I would never see any of them again. Then I went to work in a warehouse just outside of the ghetto. I watched as Jews from Hamburg started arriving in the ghetto. The Germans had told them they were going to Palestine. They lied. Most of them would be murdered in Minsk. Things got worse and worse in the ghetto. My friend Masha Bruskina had tried to help someone get out, but they caught her. They hung her. And I knew I had to get out.

Part three: life on the run

Two local men, the electricians Chekhovsky and Victor, worked with me in the warehouse. They hated Germans as much as I did and got me false papers. So, I became Skrotskaya Yadviga, a Pole born in 1920. My Friend, Lena, said she would help, and on 28 July 1942, I went out of the ghetto on my work detail, slipped away from the guards, and we walked and walked until we rested at her parents' house. I then went alone. I came upon a family of farmers. The man's was Pavel Bulakh. He figured I was Jewish, but he didn't turn me in. One day, when Pavel and his wife had gone to a funeral, the partisans suddenly appeared. And I told them: "I have escaped from the ghetto. The Germans murdered my family I am a Jew. And I want revenge. So, I became a member of the Spartak partisan attachment, and that grew into the Bolshevik brigade of Tovarish Morozov. Later, the brigade became a formation. All the time we fought in the same region. Our base was in Stayki village. We harassed the Germans, we killed them. In 1943, I was wounded in a battle. And I became a commandant of the village farthest from the German garrison. Over the months ahead there would be battles and close calls. And we continued to fight and to take back our country from the Germans. In late June, 1944, the First Belorussian Front surrounded the Wehrmacht's Army Group Centre near Minsk. On 3 July 1944, Minsk was liberated.

Part four: starting over

Finally, I could go home. Like everyone else, I wanted to start my life over again. But I just could not walk along the same streets of the town where I had walked with my brothers, my parents, and friends. Minsk was haunted. It was awful. I was alone in the world. I had family in Leningrad and so that is where I went. In Leningrad, I was at my aunt's house one evening. And I met handsome young soldier, Wolf Yakovlevich Drapkin. We got to know one another and Wolf told me that he served with the Army in Central Asia and Iran. Here he is with his brother, Boris. So we went to Wolf's mother and told her we were in love. She said it was fine that we marry – we just had to do it under a chuppah, the traditional Jewish canopy-in a synagogue. We thought that was suicide! After all, Wolf was a member of the Party! On the other hand, there was his mother. So, you know who won that battle. We got married in 1946. On Victory Day, 9 May 1947, I gave birth to my son. As soon as he was born, my mother-in-law said : “ In 13 years, he will have a bar mitzvah!” The Jewish coming-of-age celebration. And he did! But here's the sad thing. His dad didn't live to see it. On 27 June 1949, Wolf was taking the tram to work. Suddenly, he felt bad. And that was it. Left alone, a widow at 25, I threw myself into my work as a dentist and cared for my son. In 1959, ten years after I lost Wolf, I met Leyb Berovich Sverdlin. Leyb's wife had died, and he was raising two sons. We married, and we had almost 20 years together before I lost Leyb in 1988. I continued working as a dentist. In fact, I worked until I was in my seventies; everyone wants to feel useful. These days, now that I am in my eighties, I love coming to the club we made for Jewish front line soldiers. We all lost so much, so many family members, and we fought hard for our country. What do we have in common? Each of our families have suffered great losses. We have our memories. We have our pride in knowing how much we gave our country. That's why I take comfort in going to synagogue. I walk there every single Saturday...so I can remember the lives of those I loved, and those who loved me. And I pray for all of us.