

Unit of Learning No. 1
Pre-war Jewish life and the impact of Nazi Antisemitism

Learning Outcomes in Focus

Students will:

- develop the key skills of senior cycle through their learning and assessment tasks (LO 1)
- develop an understanding of the vocabulary and terminology associated with the Holocaust (LO 2)
- investigate aspects of Jewish life before the Holocaust and develop a contextualised chronology of pre-War Nazi actions against Jewish people and other 'enemies' (LO 7)

Resources (applicable to Core (in bold) and Extended Learning)

HETI Pack (*Holocaust Studies for Senior Students*)

- 1. Background information and pre-teaching of key words (Handout 1.1)**
- 2. The Way We Lived (YouTube link)**
- 3. Things start changing (Nuremberg Laws) (Handout 1.3); Three Memoirs (Handout 1.5)**

4. Handout 2.8 (The November Pogrom)
 5. Survivor Accounts (Handout 1.2 and 1.4)
 6. Images of Jewish Life (Available in Lesson 1 PPT)
 7. The Evian Conference, St. Louis story, Kindertransports (Handout 2.6, 2.7, 2.9)
- Also: Links given for Imperial War Museum, Yad Vashem, Wiener Library and BBC web resources

Core Learning: Jewish life - *The Way We Lived* and the Nuremberg Laws

Possible Enquiry questions

- What was the impact of Nazi anti-Semitism on pre-war Jewish life?
- What were the key features of the Nuremberg Laws?

1. Jewish life - *The Way We Lived*

[Chapters 1-5 of the video](#), viewing time approx. 40 minutes (if showing full content).

In order to encourage students to watch for key information, present some of the questions beforehand.

Students should also be encouraged to discern what is relevant to answering these questions while they watch, and to make notes for themselves.

Key questions on *The Way We Lived* could be selected from:

- What evidence have you found of Jews being assimilated into their European homelands?
- What evidence have you found of Jews challenging political systems in their homelands?
- Were German Jews less discriminated against than Jews in Eastern Europe?
- Were the reasons for antisemitism (a) Racial, (b) Religious, (c) Economic and/or (d) Political?

2. Nuremberg Laws

In small groups, students could reflect on, discuss and assess the impact of the laws, as gleaned from the sources in Handouts 1.3, 1.5. Each group would appoint a spokesperson to identify key findings (c.25 minutes).

For a recapitulation task students could be asked to discuss and identify five key Nuremberg laws and reach consensus around which laws had most impact on Jewish daily life in Germany during the 1930s.

Reflection Activity

The following question may be used to support reflection and self-assessment as students evaluate and justify their views with historical evidence:

- What was the impact of the Nuremberg Laws on German Jews?

Extended Learning (depending on the time available examples of further areas of enquiry)

Possible Enquiry Questions

- To what extent were Jews living 'normal' lives in Pre-War Europe?
- How did antisemitism manifest itself in Europe between 1933 and 1939?

1. Kristallnacht (The November Pogrom)

HETI [Handout 2.8 \(The November Pogrom\)](#) provides some good background information. There are some short witness testimonies that students could listen to, on [Kristallnacht from Yad Vashem](#). This Israel-based World Holocaust Remembrance Center makes comprehensive archival material available with no subscription required. This is a good opportunity for students to engage with a digital archive. Ensuring that students listen 'for' key learning points is important, for example what, when, where things happened, and also the why and with what result.

2. Deepening understanding of Pre-War Jewish Life

Students can be allocated individual pictures or documents and asked to identify what they tell about Jewish life.

- [PPT showing Images of Jewish Life](#) could be given to a pair/group asked to identify Orthodox Jews.
- Survivor accounts from Steven Frank and Janine Ingram in [Handout 1.2](#) (and others in [Handout 1.4](#)), could be used to get students to identify what Jewish assimilation into European life meant in practice.
- If required, other documentary and visual sources, focused on individual Jewish lives before the War, can be accessed and examined at the [Wiener Library of London website](#).

3. International reaction to the rise of Nazi Antisemitism

This was mixed and generally unhelpful to those being persecuted. It is undeniable that the rest of the world was aware of Nazi racial policies by the mid-1930s, most spectacularly in the way the black American athlete, Jesse Owens, was responded to by the Nazis at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games (a more complex story than it may at first appear).

Students can be given copies of HETI resources relating to [The Evian Conference \(Handout 2.6\)](#), [The St. Louis story \(Handout 2.7\)](#) and [Kindertransports \(Handout 2.9\)](#)

- It is advisable to provide time for independent and group research to ascertain from students via rapporteurs what the material tells us about international reaction to the Jews under Nazism.
- A 3-minute video from a Kindertransport survivor from CBBC is [here](#).

Sample Reflection Activity while watching the video students:

- Reflect on and describe the emotions Feodor must have felt on the journey.

4. Consolidation of Learning - sample task

Using a whiteboard or digital tool students are asked what they feel is an important phrase or word about Jewish Life or antisemitism in that period. This task builds on students' responses to create a type of word cloud but challenging them to look at what has been written and, when it is their turn to come up with information that has not been put on the board as yet. Round the lesson off with a walking debate, asking students to stand on a position (reflecting a scale from 1 to 10) showing how worried they would have been, as Jews in Germany in 1939, and be prepared to explain the position selected.