

Holocaust Memorial Day at Highlands School

Holocaust Memorial Day

27 January marks the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. It was liberated on 27th January 1945.

Holocaust Memorial Day encourages the importance of remembrance by a world scarred by genocide. This means the deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group. By raising awareness we can prevent ignorance which leads to the repetition of flawed historical events.



What is Holocaust Memorial Day?

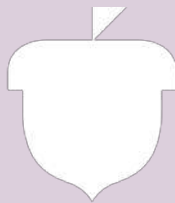
On Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) we remember the six million Jewish people who were murdered by the Nazis, and all victims of Nazi persecution, including Roma, gay and disabled people.

The Holocaust threatened the fabric of civilization, and the world said, 'never again'. But genocides have continued to take place across the world.

Genocide does not just happen. It starts with divisive language and people being targeted because of their identity. We cannot be complacent, prejudice must be challenged by us all.

On Holocaust Memorial Day, people come together to learn from genocide and create a better future.





Key terms pivotal to the Holocaust

Collaborator

Nazi collaborators were individuals or groups who cooperated with Nazi Germany during World War II, either willingly or under coercion, to further Nazi goals and policies.

Persecution

Subject someone/ a group of people to hostility and abuse, especially because of their race or political or religious beliefs.

Concentration camps

Camps created by the Nazis for the persecution of Jewish people and other prisoners.

Genocide

The deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group.

Ghetto

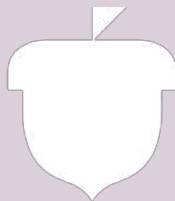
Part of a city where a specific group of people, often based on race, religion, or income level, live. Historically, it was a place where people were forced to live because of discrimination, like Jewish ghettos in Europe during World War II.

Extermination camps

Camps designed for mass murder.

A Jewish person

A person who follow the faith of Judaism.



The Holocaust

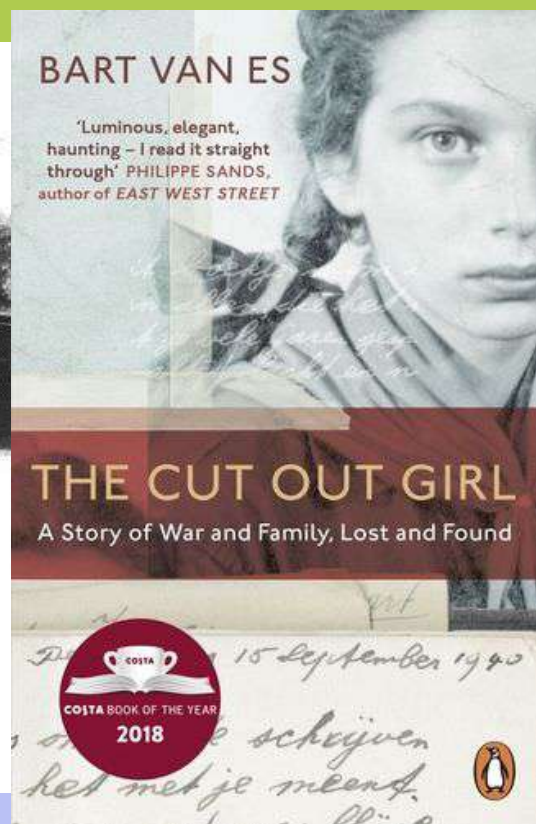
The Holocaust was the attempt by the Nazis and their collaborators to murder all the Jews in Europe.

Six million Jewish men, women and children were killed in ghettos, mass-shootings, concentration camps and extermination camps.

Students learn about the Holocaust in the summer term in year 9.



Terrified Jewish people in the Warsaw Ghetto, and Nazi guards with guns.



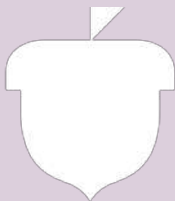
Nazi Germany's role in the Holocaust

The Nazis were a political party voted into Germany from 1933 to 1945, ruling as a dictatorship.

They were anti-semitic, which meant they targeted the Jewish community, and blamed them for problems in society.

During the 1930s and in WWII (1939-1945), the Nazis invaded many European countries, such as Czechoslovakia, Austria and Poland.

They inhumanely sentenced Jewish people to ghettos and concentration camps.



Why is 27th January Holocaust Memorial Day?

During the Second World War, Nazi Germany, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, attempted to murder all of the Jewish people living under their control in Europe.

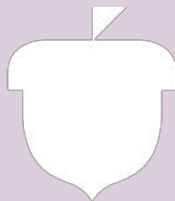
These Jewish people were not part of armies, they were innocent civilians.

About three million Jewish people living in Europe were shot and about three million were taken to concentration or extermination camps.

The camp where more Jewish people were killed than any other was called Auschwitz-Birkenau.

On 27th January 1945 Russian soldiers found the camp and freed the few prisoners left alive there. The 27th January is Holocaust Memorial Day because this is the day the largest death camp was liberated.





What is Auschwitz-Birkenau?

Auschwitz Concentration Camp, located near Krakow, Poland, was the largest under Nazi Germany, comprising a prison camp, extermination camp, and labour camp. Operating from March 1942, it claimed the lives of approximately 1.1 to 1.5 million individuals, 90% of whom were Jewish. Others sent to the camp included Roma and Sinti people, political prisoners, homosexuals, and various minority groups. Upon arrival, prisoners' belongings were confiscated, and they were sorted, with able-bodied individuals assigned to labour and others, including children and the elderly, sent to gas chambers disguised as showers. Conditions were brutal, with overcrowding, inadequate shelter, poor sanitation, and minimal food.



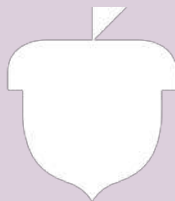
This was a concentration camp which opened in 1942 in Poland (by which time Poland was under Nazi control). It was the largest concentration camp of the Nazi regime.

'Arbeit macht frei' - 'Work will set you free' was a sign used at the gate of Auschwitz.



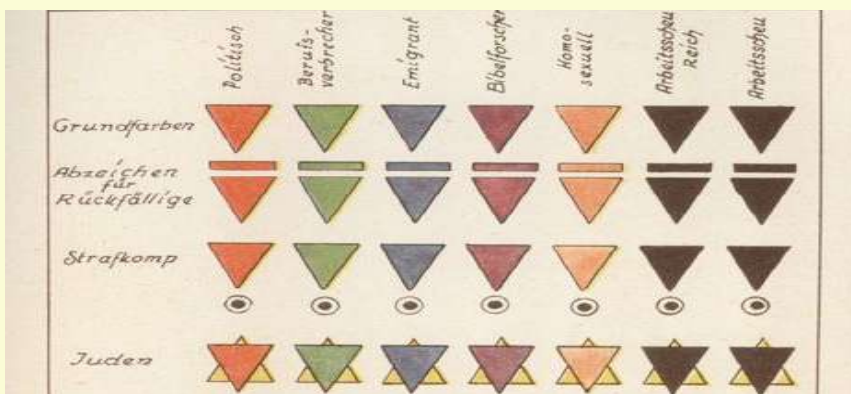
The photograph depicts part of the Auschwitz Museum today - where they have displayed some of the shoes that were taken off the prisoners.

Despite partial destruction in 1945, Auschwitz remains preserved today as a museum and memorial, highlighting the Holocaust's horrors.



Nazi persecution

Different groups of people were given different coloured badges in concentration camps. On Holocaust Memorial Day, we also remember other groups of people who were, persecuted and murdered by the Nazis. These include: Roma and Sinti people, disabled people, Jehovah's Witnesses, political opponents and many others.



Genocides around the world

After the Holocaust, the world said 'Never Again'. But humanity has failed to learn lessons from the Holocaust, and genocides continue to happen around the world, to this day.

On Holocaust Memorial Day we remember the millions of men, women and children, who have been murdered in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.



Cambodia, 1975 - 1979



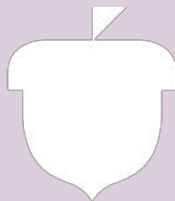
Rwanda, 1994



Bosnia, 1995



Darfur, 2003 - present

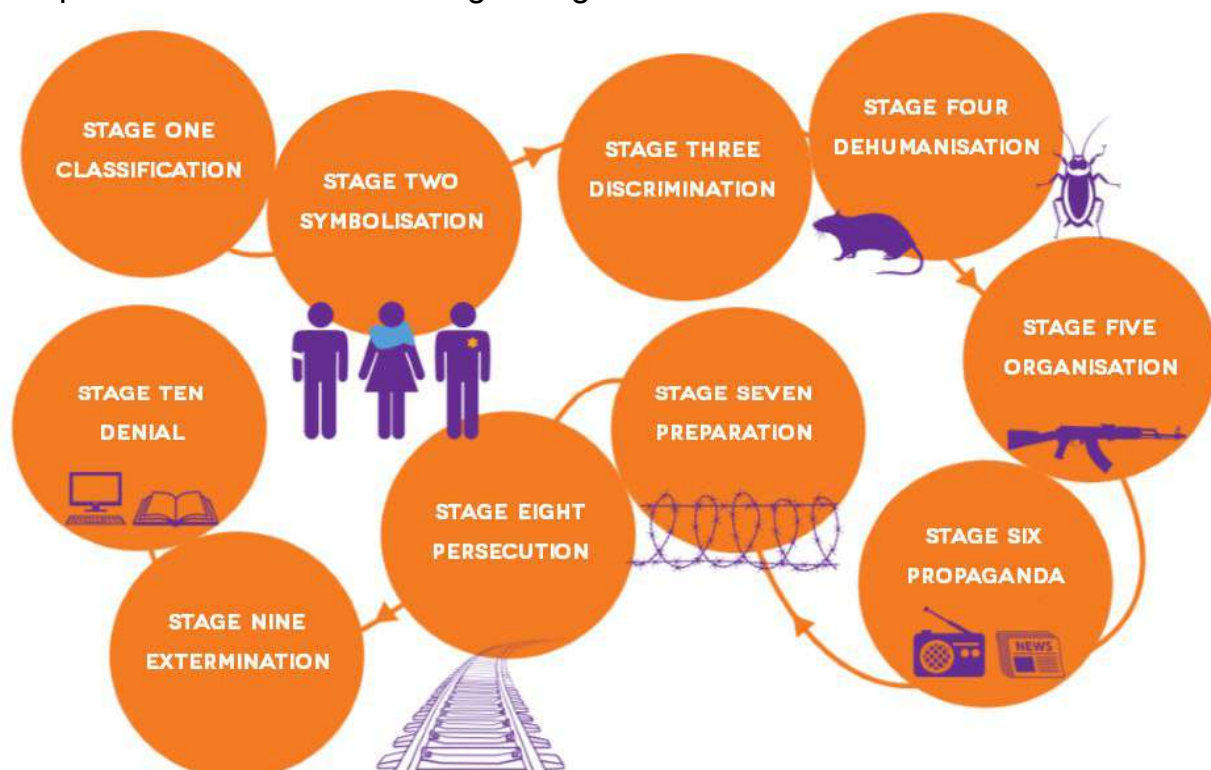


Why is it important to remember the Holocaust and other genocides?

Genocide does not happen out of the blue – it is the result of prejudice and persecution which sees a group treated differently from the rest of society.

They come about gradually and often there are similarities in the way they come about.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website suggests that there is always a set of circumstances which occur or which are created to build the climate in which genocide can take place. Here are the ten stages of genocide.



What can we do as a school community?

If we challenge discrimination and hatred as soon as it occurs, we do not give it the chance to grow.

Speak out when you see somebody doing the wrong thing.

Do not become a bystander.