

World War II**Lesson 3**

The Holocaust

Key Terms and People

Aryans to the Nazis, Germanic peoples who formed a “master race”

Holocaust systematic mass killing of Jews and other groups considered inferior by Nazis

Kristallnacht “Night of Broken Glass,” when Nazis attacked Jews throughout Germany on November 9, 1939

ghettos neighborhoods in which European Jews were forced to live

“Final Solution” Hitler’s plan to kill as many Jews as possible

genocide systematic killing of an entire people

Before You Read

In the last lesson, you read about World War II battles in the Pacific.

In this lesson, you will read about Hitler’s “Final Solution” in Europe.

As You Read

Use a chart to organize ideas and details about the Holocaust.

THE HOLOCAUST BEGINS

What was the Holocaust?

Part of Hitler’s new order for Europe included getting rid of “inferior” people. Hitler believed that the **Aryans**, or German peoples, were a “master race.” He had a deep-seated hatred of people who were not German. He particularly hated Jews. This led to the **Holocaust**, the killing of millions of Jews and other civilians.

During the 1930s, Hitler passed laws that took away the rights of German Jews. One night in November 1938, Nazi mobs attacked Jews throughout Germany. They destroyed homes and businesses and killed or beat many

people. This night became known as **Kristallnacht**, or “Night of Broken Glass.”

Kristallnacht was a major step-up in the Nazi policy of persecuting the Jews. The future for the Jews in Germany looked grim. Thousands of Jews tried to leave Germany. Other countries accepted a large number but were unwilling to take all those who wished to leave.

Hitler ordered all Jews in Germany and his conquered lands to live in certain parts of cities called **ghettos**. The Nazis then sealed off the ghettos with barbed wire and stone walls. They wanted the Jews inside to starve or die

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of disease. Even under these horrible conditions, the Jews hung on.

1. How did the Holocaust begin?

THE “FINAL SOLUTION”

What was the Final Solution?

Hitler soon got tired of waiting for the Jews to starve or die of disease in the ghettos. He decided to take more direct action. He was going to kill as many Jews as possible.

Hitler’s plan was the “**Final Solution**” to what the Nazis called the “Jewish problem.” It was **genocide**, the systematic killing of an entire people. The Nazis also wanted to wipe out many other people to protect the “purity” of the Aryan race. These people included Roma (gypsies), Poles,

Russians, and those who were mentally or physically disabled. The Germans paid the most attention to Jews, however.

Thousands of Jews were shot to death by “killing squads.” Millions were gathered and placed in concentration camps. These prisons used the inmates as slave workers. Many in the camps died of starvation or disease.

Starting in 1942, the Nazis built “death camps.” At these camps, thousands of Jews were gassed to death in huge gas chambers. In the end, 6 million Jews were killed by the Nazis. Fewer than 4 million European Jews survived.

2. How was the Final Solution carried out?

Lesson 3, *continued*

As you read about the Holocaust, use the following questions to help summarize information in this section.

1. Who? Who were the victims of the Holocaust? Who were members of the “master race”?	
2. What? What were the Nuremberg Laws? What happened on the night of November 9, 1938? What was Hitler’s “Final Solution”?	
3. Where? Where did German Jews try to migrate to find safety from Nazi terror? Where were Jews forced to live in German-controlled cities? Where were the concentration camps?	
4. Why? Why did Hitler believe that Jews and other “subhumans” had to be exterminated? Why did the Germans build extermination camps?	
5. When? When did the final stage of the Final Solution begin?	
6. How? How did non-Jewish people try to save Jews from the horrors of Nazism? How many Jews died in the Holocaust?	