

Holocaust Remembrance Week

Micro Lessons

The below micro lessons are designed to be presented in under ten minutes and are an ideal way to start your class during a Holocaust unit or Holocaust Remembrance Week. For the full experience, complete all five lessons. Or pick and choose one or more lessons. Each micro lesson includes primary source analysis.

For full-length lessons and to dig deeper into the subject, visit our website: <https://hmh.org/education/lesson-plans/>. Holocaust Museum Houston also offers virtual tours and opportunities to bring a museum educator to your class virtually: <https://hmh.org/education/programs-and-curriculum/educator-in-motion/>.

Whenever you teach about the Holocaust, keep in mind the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Guidelines for Teaching the Holocaust: <https://www.ushmm.org/teach/fundamentals/guidelines-for-teaching-the-holocaust>.

1. The Nazi Rise to Power

Show your students Figure 1 (below) titled "The Nazi Rise to Power." Tell them that this is a picture from 1933 when the Nazis were coming to power in Germany.

Have students use the POSERS image analysis strategy to examine the image. This can be done as a group discussion or individually.

P: People. What are the people doing? What can we tell from their body language? Clothing?

O: Objects. What objects do you see? What is their function? What objects seem to be missing?

S: Setting. Where and when was the picture taken? What do the buildings tell you?

E: Engagement/Action. What do you see happening? Does it seem staged or natural? Is there any emotion?

R: Relationships. How are the people, objects, or animals interacting? What connections do you see?

S: Summary. Using the answers to your questions and your observations, what are two or three things that you can share about this image? Why might this image be important? What have we learned?

Then tell your students the details of the picture:

Title: SS troops enter the Kroll Opera House

This photo was taken in Berlin, Germany on March 23rd, 1933, the day the German Reichstag (parliament) voted on a bill called the Law to Remedy the Distress of the People and the Reich, also known as the Enabling Act. This allowed the German government, led by Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, to make laws without consulting Germany's parliament. Basically, the Nazis were asking

parliament to vote away all of their own power. When the Reichstag voted yes on this bill, it was the beginning of Germany's transformation from a democracy to a dictatorship. In the photo, SS troops (originally Hitler's private bodyguard) march into the Reichstag building where parliament will vote on the Enabling Act to intimidate other political parties into voting yes. The vote was held at the Kroll Opera House because the Reichstag building had burned down.

Discuss with your students (or have them write a reflection) on what this picture and story tells us about how the Nazis came to power in Germany.

2. The Nazis in Power

Background: After the Nazis came to power in Germany, they passed hundreds of laws that restricted the lives of German Jews. Jews were ejected from certain professions (medicine, the law, schools and universities). A system similar to segregation in the United States meant Jews had limited access to or were forbidden from using public spaces and services like swimming pools or park benches. These measures were meant to socially isolate German Jews and convince them to emigrate from (leave) Germany.

After you discuss the background, show your students Figure 2 (below) "The Nazis in Power."

Have students discuss the following questions as a group or through writing:

1. How do you think these measures would have made German Jews feel?
2. What impact would this have had on the lives of German Jews?
3. What impact would this have had on the lives of non-Jewish Germans?

3. Ghettos

Background: While it has changed meaning over time, the word "ghetto" originally comes from the name of the segregated neighborhood where Jewish people in Venice, Italy lived starting in 1516. When the Nazis invaded Eastern Europe during WWII, they forced Jewish people in countries such as Poland, Russia, and Hungary into what they called ghettos. Whole neighborhoods became prisons for Jewish people.

Nazi-created ghettos were terrible places. Residents were at the mercy of the Nazis, who rounded up people for forced labor or deportation to concentration camps or killing centers. Jews were forced to live in crowded, cramped conditions with little food. A daily ration might be about 300 calories. Despite the horrible conditions, Jewish people in ghettos across Eastern Europe tried to support each other.

After you provide background, watch the video from CNN "Hand-drawn 'Ghetto' Monopoly": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnHMPfWacQ> (3:22).

Have students discuss the following questions as a group or through writing:

1. What does the video tell you about life in Nazi-created ghettos?
2. How did the hand-drawn Monopoly game make a difference in the brothers' lives?
3. Why did the brothers donate their game to a museum?

The monopoly board is currently on show at Holocaust Museum Houston and is included in our virtual tour, which is free for school groups. You can register for a virtual tour here:

<https://hmh.org/visit/schedule-virtual-tour/>.

4. Concentration Camps and Killing Centers

Background: During WWII, the Nazis created a vast network of concentration camps and killing centers where Jewish people and other groups (including Poles, gay men, Soviet prisoners of war, Jehovah's witnesses, members of non-Nazi political parties, and people from across Europe who resisted) seen as enemies by the Nazis were murdered or forced to work as slaves. One of the largest of these camps was Auschwitz in Poland. It had several subcamps, including a factory complex called Buna run by the German company I.G. Farben. One of the prisoners forced to work there was an Italian Jewish man named Primo Levi. A chemist by profession, Levi wrote extensively about life in the camp.

After you discuss the background, have students read Reading 1 (below), the poem "Buna" by Primo Levi. This can be done individually or as a group.

Discussion questions:

1. What words or images from the poem stand out to you? Why?
2. What does the poem tell you about life at Buna?
3. This poem was written after the end of the Holocaust. What does the poem have to say about the future?

5. Aftermath

Have students read Reading 2 as a group or individually. The passage is from *But You Did Not Come Back: A Memoir* by Marceline Loridan-Ivens, a French Holocaust survivor. The memoir is written as a letter to her father, who was deported with her to Auschwitz-Birkenau and murdered during the Holocaust.

Have a group discussion or have students complete a written reflection on the following student response question: Based on the text, what impact did the Holocaust have on survivors after it ended?

Figure 1: The Nazi Rise to Power

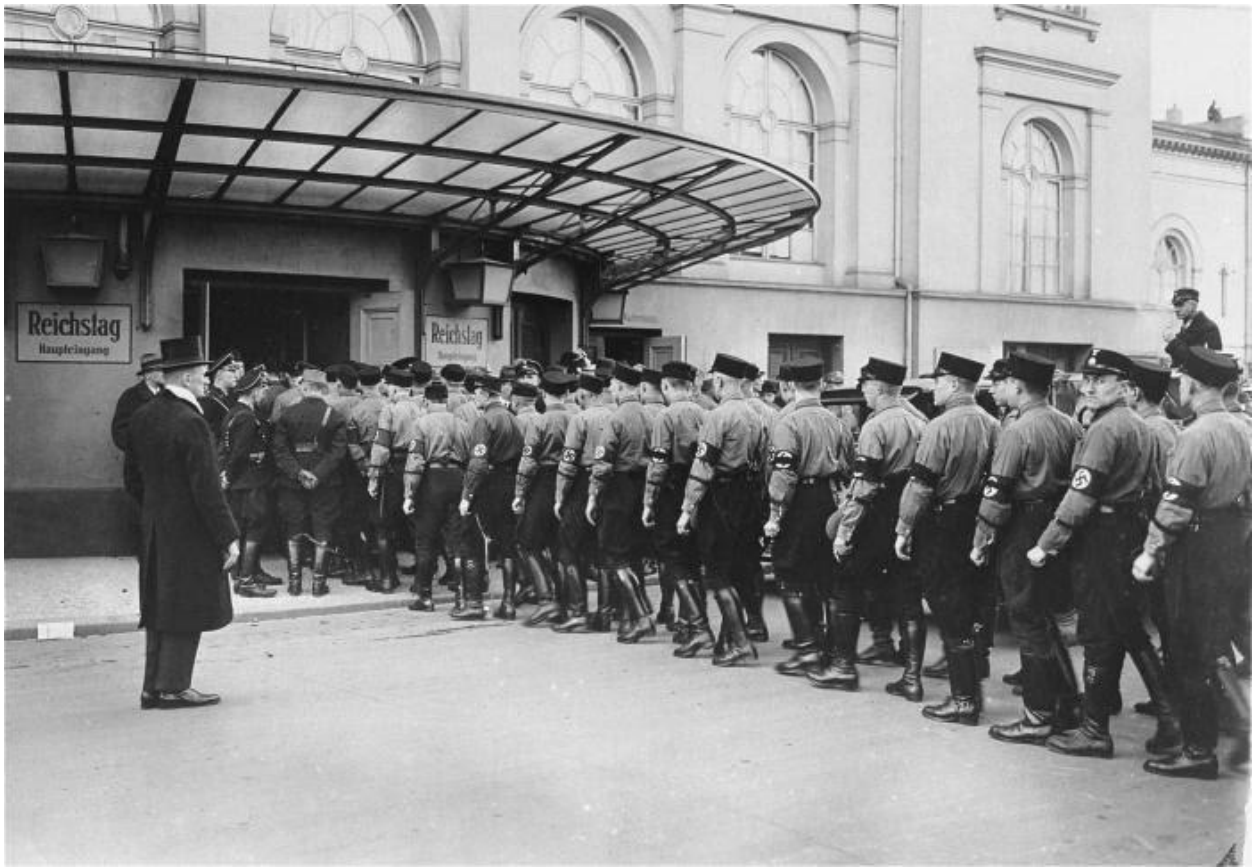


Image credit: Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie via United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Figure 2: The Nazis in Power



^ The sign from Bad-Harzburg in Germany says: “Jews are not desired! The shop on the opposite side belongs to the Jew David Boas!”

Image credit: Yad Vashem



^ A woman stands at the entrance to a public swimming pool in Blaubeuren in Germany. Behind her, one sign says Jews are not allowed to enter. The other says dogs are not allowed to enter.

Image credit: “Für Juden [und Hunde] keinen Zutritt.” From the Leo Baeck Institute.

Reading 1: Buna

Buna

By Primo Levi

Translated by Jonathan Galassi

Wounded feet and cursed earth,
The line long in the gray mornings.
Buna's thousand chimneys smoke,
A day like every other day awaits us.
The sirens are terrific in the dawn:
"You, multitude with wasted faces,
Another day of suffering begins
On the monotonous horror of the mud."

I see you in my heart, exhausted comrade;
Suffering comrade, I can read your eyes.
In your breast you have cold hunger nothing
The last courage has been broken in you.
Gray companion, you were a strong man,
A woman traveled next to you.

Empty comrade who has no more name,
A desert who has no more tears,

So poor that you have no more pain,
So exhausted you have no more fear,
Spent man who was a strong man once:
If we were to meet again
Up in the sweet world under the sun,
With what face would we confront each other?

December 28, 1945

From: *The Complete Works of Primo Levi* volume 3, edited by Ann Goldstein (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015).

Reading 2: But You Did Not Come Back

The following passage is from *But You Did Not Come Back: A Memoir* by Marceline Loridan-Ivens, a French Holocaust survivor. The memoir is written as a letter to her father, who was deported with her to Auschwitz-Birkenau and murdered during the Holocaust.

“I’m eighty-six years old, twice the age you were when you died. I’m an elderly lady now. I’m not afraid to die, I don’t panic. I don’t believe in God, or that there’s anything after death. I’m one of the 160 still alive out of the 2,500 who came back - 76,500 French Jews were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Six million Jews died: in the camps, killed and thrown into mass graves, gassed, shot at point-blank range, massacred in the ghettos. Once a month, I have dinner with some friends who survived, we laugh together, even about the camp, in our own way. And I see Simone too. I’ve watched her take teaspoons in cafes and restaurants and slip them into her handbag; she’d been a minister, an important woman in France, an imposing person, but she still hoards worthless teaspoons so she doesn’t have to lap up the terrible soup of Birkenau. If you only knew, all of you, how the camp remains permanently within us. It remains in all our minds, and will until we die.”

From *But You Did Not Come Back: A Memoir* by Marceline Loridan-Ivens (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2016).