



## Lesson 2: Historical Context



This lesson provides context for the letters and stories that are told in *Adventurers Against Their Will*. The lesson focuses on the rise of the Nazi Party and the impact of Hitler's expansionist goals on Europe. The lesson begins by asking students to reflect on what they have read in the first two

chapters. Then, students work in small groups to create a timeline of events. Following small-group presentations of key events, students reflect on what they have learned.

### Learning Objectives

Students will learn about the context in which the Holocaust took place, with a focus on the progression of events in Nazi Germany. Students will also consider the broader implications, including other genocides, as well as the smaller ways in which people perpetuate stereotypes or prejudices, discriminate against other groups, or are discriminated against. The lesson engages students in critical thinking to analyze the causes and effects of Hitler's rise to power.

Students will be able to:

- Identify ways that the rights of Jews and other groups were restricted in Germany and German-controlled territories in the 1930s and 1940s.
- Discuss factors contributing to the persecution of Jews and other groups in Germany.
- Discuss events of the period including 1933-45.
- Identify countries and areas directly affected by Germany's expansionist policies.

### Florida Social Studies Standards:

SS.912.W.1.1: Utilize historical inquiry skills and analytical processes. Use timelines to establish cause-and-effect relationships of historical events.

SS.912.A.6.8/SS.912.W.7.8: Explain the causes, events, and effects of the Holocaust (1933-1945) including its roots in the long tradition of anti-Semitism, 19th century ideas about race and nation, and Nazi dehumanization of the Jews and other victims.

SS.912.A.6.3: Analyze the impact of the Holocaust during World War II on Jews as well as other groups.

SS.912.W.7.6: Analyze the restriction of individual rights and the use of mass terror against populations in the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and occupied territories.

SS.912.W.6: Understand the development of Western and non-Western nationalism, industrialization and imperialism, and the significant processes and consequences of each.

SS.912.G4.9: Use political maps to describe the change in boundaries and governments within continents over time.

### **Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies:**

ELA-RH.11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

ELA- RH.11-12.3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

ELA-RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### **National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Standards:**

D2.Civ.3.9-12. Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order.

D2.Civ.5.9-12. Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.

D2.Civ.6.9-12. Critique relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets.

D2.Civ.12.9-12. Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.

D2.His.3.9-12. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

D2.His.5.9-12. Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

D2.His.6.9-12. Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.

D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D4.2.9-12. Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical).

D4.6.9-12. Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

D4.7.9-12. Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.

## **Preparation**

### *Materials Required*

Map of Europe 1935-1940

Chalkboard/chalk or whiteboard/markers

Access to the Internet or research materials for small groups

Poster board and markers for small groups

## **Lesson Procedure**

### **Build Background**

**5 minutes**

**DOK 1-3**

1. Begin the lesson by asking for general impressions of what students have read. Ask students to record at least one thing they have learned on their K-W-L chart. Allow a few minutes for students to do so, and then ask what facts stood out in the reading.
2. Lead a brief discussion of the first two chapters. Ask:
  - Why do you think her father kept the letters? Why do you think he never shared the letters with his family? Do you think he looked at the letters? Why or why not?
  - What obstacles did the author face in conducting her research? What do you think drove her to push past these obstacles?

Encourage students to identify specific or concrete obstacles, such as having the letters from so many different people, having to translate them, etc. Encourage students to discuss the emotional aspects of research. Guide students to understand that some people shy away from the truth when it is difficult. Ignoring difficult truths perpetuates the problem.

3. Next, turn attention to the historical context of the letters. Set the stage by telling students that there were over nine million Jews in Europe in 1933, accounting for roughly 1.7 percent of the total population. German Jews numbered about 500,000, or less than one percent of the population.
4. Focus on the relationship between the Holocaust and World War II. To make this connection, show one or more maps of Europe to demonstrate Nazi Germany's territorial aggression, such as the one [here](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/images/Map_1_english_for_bh-edit.jpg) ([http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/images/Map\\_1\\_english\\_for\\_bh-edit.jpg](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/images/Map_1_english_for_bh-edit.jpg)). Have students also view the maps in *Adventurers Against Their Will* (after Chapter 2).

### **Small Group Activity**

**20 minutes**

**DOK 2-3**

1. Break students into small groups of equal size. Provide the groups with books and documents about World War II and the events of the period (1933–1945). (Alternatively, have groups conduct research online.) Assign each group one a number of years of the period (1933–1945). Groups are to read through the reference materials and look for information about Hitler's rise to power, the laws and events that restricted the rights of Jews and other groups of people, and other events that they believe contributed to the Holocaust.

**Note:** Depending on the depth and quality of the information and the size of the class, some of these years can be combined. You may also want to assign a group, the time period before 1933 or after 1943.

2. Explain to students that they will make a presentation about the year that they have been assigned. As part of this presentation, students should make a timeline with the major events that took place that year. Distribute poster board and markers to each small group for their part of the timeline.

### **Large Group Activity**

**30 minutes**

**DOK 1-3**

1. Have students post their year on the wall to create a timeline. Then, have each small group make a 3-5-minute presentation of the findings from the research, beginning with 1933 (or pre-1933) and going through each year in succession. Encourage students to ask questions of each group. If the groups are unable to answer the questions, make a note of the questions for students to research as part of their homework assignment. Although students should take ownership of their particular year, make sure they have addressed the key events on their timelines. (See the timeline that follows the rubric and/or the timeline at the back of *Adventurers Against Their Will*.)

2. After all groups have made their presentations, lead a discussion of the events. Emphasize the fact that the restriction of rights happened gradually over a period of time.
3. Focus attention on the fact that most of these events show things happening *to* Jews and other groups of people. They show little about how these groups of people responded. Write the word *resistance* on the board. Ask students what the word means to them. Make a word web of responses.
4. Turn attention to historical examples of resistance. Many students may mention examples of violent resistance; fighting physically in some way. Acknowledge these examples, but guide students to recognize other, less obvious forms of resistance, such as continuing to practicing one's faith, attending school, refusing to abide by laws, or even just continuing to have hope. Writing can also be a form of resistance such as producing underground newspapers, keeping diaries, and letter writing.
5. Explain that in *Adventurers Against Their Will*, students will come across many forms of resistance. Writing letters is the most obvious form of resistance in the book, but encourage students to look within the letters to note specific ways that the people in the book engage in resistance.

### **Individual Activity**

**5 minutes**

**DOK 3**

1. Have students return to their K-W-L charts and add at least one thing to the "L" column. Ask them also to add a question to the "W" column, preferably something that they think they will learn from *Adventurers Against Their Will*.
2. Conclude by asking students to reflect on the day's lesson. Ask them to write and record the following questions:
  - Of everything you learned today, what did you find the most surprising or upsetting? Why?
  - What do you think it takes for people who are persecuted to persevere?

**Note:** If students do not have enough time to complete the K-W-L and reflection in class, one or both of these may be assigned as homework. Remind students to bring their K-W-L sheets and journal to class each period, as they will add to them for the duration of the unit.

### **Homework**

Assign as homework Chapters 3-4 of *Adventurers Against Their Will*. Ask students to take notes on what they read and to come to the next class prepared to discuss the title. Students should also prepare answers to any of the questions asked of their small group that they were unable to answer.

## Assessment

Consider students' participation in large-group discussions to assess their ability to define terms and make connections among ideas. Use small group work and presentations to assess students' ability to research and identify relevant information. Review the responses to the reflection questions to assess whether students recognize the complexity of the factors that contribute to persecution and discrimination.

## Scoring Rubric

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 6 | The student has shown a rigorous comprehension of the applicable concepts. The responses indicate a strong cognitive association between the topical concepts and their practical application. The student has offered a full and accurate answer to all relevant sections. The appropriate subject-related vocabulary or terms are used correctly. There are no major errors, although some minor errors may be present.           |
| 5 | The student has shown a full comprehension of the applicable concepts. The responses indicate a cognitive association between the between the topical concepts and their practical application. The student has offered a full and accurate answer to all relevant sections. The appropriate subject-related vocabulary or terms are used. There are no major errors, although some minor errors may be present.                    |
| 4 | The student has shown an acceptable comprehension of the applicable concepts. The responses may indicate a cognitive association between the topical concepts and their practical application. The student provided a full and accurate answer to most relevant sections. There are minor errors in the use of subject-related vocabulary or terms. There are minor conceptual errors or omissions.                                 |
| 3 | The student has shown a minimal comprehension of the applicable concepts. The responses indicate a narrow attempt to associate links between the topical concepts and their practical application. The student made an effort to answer two or more relevant sections. There is limited use of subject-related vocabulary or terms. The response contains some major errors or omissions. The response shows minimal comprehension. |
| 2 | The student has shown some comprehension of the applicable concepts. The responses do not indicate an effort to associate links between the topical concepts and their practical application. The student made an effort to answer one or more relevant sections. The use of subject-related vocabulary or terms may be absent. The response contains many major errors and omissions. The response shows limited comprehension.    |
| 1 | The student's response is inadequate. Subject-related vocabulary or terms are absent. The answer(s) contains many substantial errors or omissions. The response shows little to no comprehension.   |
| 0 | The student has shown no comprehension of the concepts and/or the response is impossible to understand.   |

## Timeline

- 1933: Adolf Hitler is appointed chancellor of Germany. This marks the end of the Weimer Republic. The regime arrests political opponents and others classified as “dangerous” and imprisons them at Dachau. Laws bar Jews from holding positions in the civil service, legal and medical professions, and teaching positions. Jews are barred from sports and athletic clubs.
- 1934: Hitler executes SA leaders and increases the power of the SS, his own military unit. Hitler declares himself Fuhrer, further increasing his own power.
- 1935: The Nuremberg Laws strip Jews of their rights as German citizens. They are defined as a separate race, determined by ancestry. Marriage between Jews and Aryans are forbidden. In many places Jews are banned from parks, restaurants, and other public places. Jewish newspapers are suspended, and Rabbis are forbidden from preaching.
- 1936: Berlin hosts the Olympics and uses it as an opportunity to spread propaganda to the rest of the world. Berlin’s Sinti and Roma (gypsy) populations were forced to move to temporary camps. Jews were not allowed to own electrical or optical equipment, bicycles, or typewriters.
- 1937: Second Sino-Japanese War begins. Jews were prohibited from the pharmacy profession. Sinti and Roma were registered.
- 1938: *March 12*: Germany takes over Austria. *September 30*: The Munich Agreement, signed by Great Britain, France, and Italy, allows Germany to take control of the Sudetenland (part of Czechoslovakia). *November 9*: Kristallnacht: synagogues are set on fire; Jewish businesses and homes are looted and destroyed; Jews are harassed, beaten, and killed. Nuremberg laws increase restrictions on Jews: Jewish passports are stamped with a J; some have passports confiscated to keep them from leaving the country. Jewish children are banned from German schools. Jews are forbidden from owning businesses and are excluded from cinemas, theaters, concerts, beaches, and many other places. Jewish bookshops are closed.
- 1939: *March 15*: Germany invades and occupies the Czech provinces of Bohemia and Moravia; in June, anti-Jewish laws, based on the Nuremberg Laws, are extended to the occupied Czech lands. September: Germany invades Poland. Anti-Semitic laws escalate: German officials confiscate Jewish property and herd them into all Jewish neighborhoods (ghettos). In many places, Jews are required to wear armbands. A curfew was imposed requiring Jews to be home by 8:00 pm. Jews could be evicted without reason or notice. *September 1*: Hitler invades Poland.
- 1940: Jews are given just one hour per day to shop. They are forbidden from having telephones.
- 1941: Mass deportations of German Jews to other Nazi-occupied countries. Jews are forbidden to emigrate.

- 1942: All Jewish homes are marked by the Star of David. Jews are not allowed to buy newspapers or books, to use public transport, or to have pets. Sinti and Roma are deported to Auschwitz.
- 1943: German Jews are deported east. Berlin is declared free of Jews. Jews in Germany and Austria were required to report to the Gestapo.

**A more comprehensive Holocaust timeline is available from the website of the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. On its web page, there is also a link to enable the timeline to be downloaded as a pdf document.**

[http://www.museumoftolerance.com/site/c.tmL6KfNVLtH/b.5879251/k.72C8/Timeline\\_of\\_the\\_Holocaust.htm](http://www.museumoftolerance.com/site/c.tmL6KfNVLtH/b.5879251/k.72C8/Timeline_of_the_Holocaust.htm)

Prepared by APass Educational Group [www.apasseducation.com/](http://www.apasseducation.com/)

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