



Holocaust Memorial Day at Highlands School

Holocaust Memorial Day

- 27 January marks the 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.



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**.

What do these mean?

Concentration camps

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

Ghetto

A Jewish quarter of a city with intent of segregation.

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.

Extermination camps

Camps designed for mass murder.

A Jewish person

A person who follow the faith of Judaism.



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.

Students at Highlands learn about the Holocaust after Easter in year 9 history lessons.



Sites of Nazi concentration camps.



Why is it important to learn about the Holocaust?

It is important that we learn the facts about the Holocaust, and other historical events, because there are many sources of incorrect information. For example, 'Holocaust deniers' spread the incorrect idea that the Holocaust did not happen.

Holocaust denial and distortion often feeds other forms of denial and conspiracy thinking, such as climate denial, anti-vaccine movements, and claims of fake news.

To have knowledge about the past enables us to spot fake information, and to question what we are being told by certain sources.

What other genocides are remembered on Holocaust Memorial Day?

As well as the Holocaust and the Nazi persecution of Jewish people and other minorities (1933-45), the other genocides that we remember are:

- Cambodia, 1975-79
- Rwanda, 1994
- Bosnia, 1995

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

Genocides do not happen out of nowhere. 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 as developed by Gregory H Stanton, President of Genocide Watch.

- Stage 1: Classification
- Stage 2: Symbolisation
- Stage 3: Discrimination
- Stage 4: Dehumanisation
- Stage 5: Organisation
- Stage 6: Polarisation
- Stage 7: Preparation
- Stage 8: Persecution
- Stage 9: Extermination
- Stage 10: Denial



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.

At the end of the Second World War, Martin Niemoller, a German priest, wrote a poem about what he did to stop hatred and discrimination in Nazi Germany.

As you read the poem, ask yourself what he is saying about what he did to stop hatred and discrimination.

“First They Came...”

By Martin Niemoller, 1946

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me— and there was no one left to speak for me.

Niemoller initially supported the Nazis. He did not speak out. In time he came to oppose Hitler. He was arrested by the Nazis and spent eight years in a concentration camp until he was freed by the allies in 1945.



Reflections

It is important to continue to have conversations about the Holocaust, so that we can all do our parts in making sure history does not repeat itself.

All the victims had individual lives and families who are still feeling the effects of the holocaust today.

The world must never let this happen again.

Why does the Holocaust matter today?

Since the 2020 lockdowns, there has been a rise in hate crimes reported in London.

More than one million members of the Muslim Uyghur community in China have been unjustly forced into 're-education' camps. This shows that persecution of groups of people based on race or religion is still happening today.

Anti-semitism, a form of racism and discrimination, still exists today. All forms of racism, discrimination and hate crimes are unacceptable and has a significantly negative impact on the lives of victims.





Core DARE values within our school community

Determination

To have the determination to challenge views and behaviours. To overcome obstacles and reach new heights to create a brighter future for ourselves and our community.

Aspiration

To be aspirational students by believing in our own and each other's abilities to overcome challenges.

Respect

As a community, we strive to break any stereotypes and respect all others, as we all come from different backgrounds, and we all deserve equal chances.

Equality

It is important to treat others equally, inside and outside of school, to allow us to combat all forms of discrimination.



**Without memory there is no culture.
Without memory, there would be no civilization,
no society, no future.**

Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor

