

LESSON PLAN

The Beginning of the End

Watch a video on World War II and the Holocaust by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. Students will gain an understanding over how World War II started and how the Holocaust evolved from it.

 30-60 min  Grades 9-12

DOMAIN
Nazi Germany

SUBJECT
Actions

TOPIC
World War II

Enduring Understanding

World War II was complicated, countries were constantly being occupied, counter-attacking, or joining forces with Nazi Germany. Despite this, the organization of the 'Final Solution' still took priority.

Essential Question

1. How did World War II provide a cover for the persecution and murder of Jews? Have we seen this before?

Readiness

 5 min

Explain to students that World War II involved two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis. The main countries making up the Allies were France, Poland, and the United Kingdom. The Axis powers consisted of Germany, Italy, and Japan. Tell students that the video they will watch will help to explain the actions taken by these countries during the war.

Input

 15 min

Give out the questions below prior to starting the [video](#) (6.5 min) by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Answers to the questions can be found in the intervals shown above.

Beginning - 1:30

What groups of people were targeted by Nazis and their allies and collaborators? What was their reasoning?

1:30 - 4:40

Which country did Germany invade first? What did they do there?

End of video

How did the war end?

Output

 20 min

In small groups, or as a class, ask students if they are able to list the roles in which major countries played in the war? Write a header for 'Allies' (those that fought Germany), 'Occupied Territories', 'Allied with Germany', and 'Neutral'. You may want to provide the list of the countries. You can tell them to focus on German aggression, not the attacks done by the Soviet Union. Give students 10 minutes for this activity. If you would like, you can return to the video and have students try to correct their answers.

The answer guide can be found [here](#).

It is okay if students can't remember all of them from the video (most will not be able to), the exercise is meant to show how much was going on at that time. It is important to remind students that the murders of 6 million Jews and 5 million non-Jews were taking place under the cover of war.

When you explain how the Holocaust was perpetrated under the cover of World War II, you should also mention that this is not the first instance of this happening. The genocide against the Armenians took place under the cover of World War I.

Ask students, why do they think atrocities, such as genocide, take place in conjunction with war?