

Holocaust literature essay

[Literature](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Holocaust Literature Essay The Holocaust genre was a tragic time in the 1930s, during Hitler's reign in Germany and it involved the persecution of the Jewish people. Holocaust literature was developed from this and from testimonies of survivors and fictional writings by authors. John Boyne's 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' is an example of Holocaustic literature; the story follows a young boy who is the son of a Nazi officer during the reign of Hitler. Holocaust literature texts contain conventions common to the genre, e. g. specific vocabulary, historical aspects and themes.

In Holocaust literature, one of the main conventions common to all is specific vocabulary; the vocabulary is not common in everyday English but common to novels in this category. For example, the term 'concentration camp' is the term given to a particular location where particularly Jewish people were held and killed. This term comes up in many or most novels in Holocaust literature as these 'camps' were an infamous part of Hitler's reign over Germany. For example, in the novel 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas', Bruno lives next to a concentration camp and this is a large part of the story. Other examples are words like Holocaust and Genocide.

Most Holocaust literature has historical aspects in common, involving the way in which texts are centred on a particular historical period in time and the events that occurred in this period. As a result of this common time period, many characters in these types of novels are similar, i. e. German soldiers, Hitler and Jewish people. 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' follows this convention because it is based in the 1940's during the Holocaust period and involves typical characters of this time like Bruno's father who is a Nazi, and Jewish people who live at the camp, next door to Bruno's home.

You can tell that this novel is based in this time-period throughout this book, for example when Shmuel, a young Jewish boy, says “ my birthday is April the fifteenth, nineteen thirty-four”. Another convention of this genre is a similarity in storylines and/or plots. Most of the stories contain tragic events, often death. They usually explore the treatment of the Jewish people by the Nazi’s in the concentration camps and often the leader of the Nazi party, Adolf Hitler, will come into the story somewhere.

The book ‘ The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas’ contains this particular convention because it’s based in Germany during the Holocaust. Jewish people and a concentration camp (Auschwitz) are a big part of the story because Bruno ends up living next to the Auschwitz concentration camp and becoming good friends with a young Jewish boy. Also, this book explores tragic events such as the death of Jewish people and Bruno himself. Themes are a further convention common to Holocaustic literature. Themes like intolerance, the discrimination against Jewish people, and the will and strengths that these people had to survive.

Most of this discrimination against the Jewish people came from the Nazi soldiers, but not all Nazi soldiers were ‘ evil’, some were just doing what they were told with fear of being turned against if they didn’t. Some other texts of this genre explore whether or not everyday Germans had a full understanding of what was going on and whether or not they did anything about it. These issues can be seen in ‘ The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas’. We see a lot of hatred towards the Jewish people through characters like Lt.

Kotler and Adolf Hitler, and we also see a lot of evidence of the German people being unaware of what was going on. For example, Bruno asks Shmuel if he played "Football for example. Or exploration". This identifies Bruno's lack of knowledge of what went on in the concentration camps. Evocative stories are also very common in this type of literature. While reading, these books make us think and sympathise with the characters in the book. These books tend to stimulate human emotions such as sadness about what happened to these people, and anger against the Nazi's who committed these horrible crimes. *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* definitely provokes such feelings with events taking place such as the death of the main character, Bruno, with hundreds of other Jewish prisoners at the same time. Holocaust literature is a relatively new genre in writing that has the ability to open the readers mind and expose them to greater knowledge and emotions in the Holocaust period in time and the people that existed then. John Boyne's ' *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*' fulfils all the criteria for a Holocaust text and provokes great thought in the readers mind.