

# Holocaust essay



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1. Research Paper ROUGH DRAFT due: Monday, June 6th -4 pages -Complete in homework notebook A. Choose a topic that you're interested in and want to know more about. B. Choose a thesis statement C. Research topic D. Create an outline E. List your sources F. Write your information in your homework notebook G. Check all the links listed HOLOCAUST The Nazi's deliberately chose dehumanizing ways to kill, and used torture, to intimidate and terrify the Jews. Following the " Great War," Adolph Hitler blamed Germany's downfalls on the country's Jewish population causing discrimination, violent action, and a mass exodus of European Jews.

Six million people died just because of their religion compared it to 911, when thousands of people died due to a terrorist attack. The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. " Holocaust" is a word of Greek origin meaning " sacrifice by fire. " The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were " racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed " inferior," were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.

During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived " racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals. WHAT WAS THE HOLOCAUST? In 1933, the Jewish population of Europe stood at over nine million. Most European Jews lived in countries that Nazi Germany would occupy or influence during World War II.

By 1945, the Germans and their collaborators killed nearly two out of every three European Jews as part of the “ Final Solution,” the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe. Although Jews, whom the Nazis deemed a priority danger to Germany, were the primary victims of Nazi racism, other victims included some 200, 000 Roma (Gypsies). At least 200, 000 mentally or physically disabled patients, mainly Germans, living in institutional settings, were murdered in the so-called Euthanasia Program.

As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe, the Germans and their collaborators persecuted and murdered millions of other people. Between two and three million Soviet prisoners of war were murdered or died of starvation, disease, neglect, or maltreatment. The Germans targeted the non-Jewish Polish intelligentsia for killing, and deported millions of Polish and Soviet civilians for forced labor in Germany or in occupied Poland, where these individuals worked and often died under deplorable conditions.

From the earliest years of the Nazi regime, German authorities persecuted homosexuals and others whose behavior did not match prescribed social norms. German police officials targeted thousands of political opponents (including Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists) and religious dissidents (such as Jehovah’s Witnesses). Many of these individuals died as a result of incarceration and maltreatment. ADMINISTRATION OF THE “ FINAL SOLUTION” In the early years of the Nazi regime, the National Socialist government established concentration camps to detain real and imagined political and ideological opponents.

Increasingly in the years before the outbreak of war, SS and police officials incarcerated Jews, Roma, and other victims of ethnic and racial hatred in these camps. To concentrate and monitor the Jewish population as well as to facilitate later deportation of the Jews, the Germans and their collaborators created ghettos, transit camps, and forced-labor camps for Jews during the war years. The German authorities also established numerous forced-labor camps, both in the so-called Greater German Reich and in German-occupied territory, for non-Jews whose labor the Germans sought to exploit.

Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) and, later, militarized battalions of Order Police officials, moved behind German lines to carry out mass-murder operations against Jews, Roma, and Soviet state and Communist Party officials. German SS and police units, supported by units of the Wehrmacht and the Waffen SS, murdered more than a million Jewish men, women, and children, and hundreds of thousands of others.

Between 1941 and 1944, Nazi German authorities deported millions of Jews from Germany, from occupied territories, and from the countries of many of its Axis allies to ghettos and to killing centers, often called extermination camps, where they were murdered in specially developed gassing facilities.

**THE END OF THE HOLOCAUST** In the final months of the war, SS guards moved camp inmates by train or on forced marches, often called “ death marches,” in an attempt to prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners.

As Allied forces moved across Europe in a series of offensives against Germany, they began to encounter and liberate concentration camp prisoners, as well as prisoners en route by forced march from one camp to another. The marches continued until May 7, 1945, the day the German armed forces surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. For the western Allies, World War II officially ended in Europe on the next day, May 8 (V-E Day), while Soviet forces announced their “ Victory Day” on May 9, 1945.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, many of the survivors found shelter in displaced persons (DP) camps administered by the Allied powers. Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700, 000 Jews emigrated to Israel, including 136, 000 Jewish displaced persons from Europe. Other Jewish DPs emigrated to the United States and other nations. The last DP camp closed in 1957. The crimes committed during the Holocaust devastated most European Jewish communities and eliminated hundreds of Jewish communities in occupied eastern Europe entirely. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005143> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust) The Holocaust (from the Greek ?????????? holokaustos: holos, “ whole” and kaustos, “ burnt”),[2] also known as The Shoah (Hebrew: ?????? , HaShoah, “ calamity”; Yiddish: ?????? , Churban or Hurban,[3] from the Hebrew for “ destruction”), was the genocide of approximately six million European Jews during World War II, a programme of systematic state-sponsored extermination by Nazi Germany throughout Nazi-occupied territory. [4] Of the nine million Jews who had resided in Europe before the Holocaust, approximately two-thirds perished. 5] Some scholars maintain that the definition of the Holocaust should also include the Nazis’ genocide of millions

of people in other groups, including Romani (more commonly known in English by the exonym “Gypsies”), Soviet prisoners of war, Polish and Soviet civilians, homosexuals, people with disabilities, Jehovah’s Witnesses and other political and religious opponents, which occurred regardless of whether they were of German or non-German ethnic origin. [6] Using this definition, the total number of Holocaust victims is between 11 million and 17 million people. 7] The persecution and genocide were carried out in stages. Various legislation to remove the Jews from civil society, predominantly the Nuremberg Laws, was enacted in Nazi Germany years before the outbreak of World War II. Concentration camps were established in which inmates were used as slave labor until they died of exhaustion or disease. Where the Third Reich conquered new territory in eastern Europe, specialized units called Einsatzgruppen murdered Jews and political opponents in mass shootings. The Third Reich required Jews and Romani to be confined in overcrowded ghettos before being transported by freight train to extermination camps where, if they survived the journey, the majority of them were systematically killed in gas chambers. Every arm of Nazi Germany’s bureaucracy was involved in the logistics that led to the genocides, turning the Third Reich into what one Holocaust scholar has called “a genocidal state”. [8] Opinions differ on how much the civilian population of Germany knew about the government conspiracy against the Jewish population.

Most historians claim that the civilian population was not aware of the atrocities that were carried out, especially in the extermination camps, which were located outside of Germany in Nazi-occupied Europe. The historian Robert Gellately, however, claims that the government openly announced

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the conspiracy through the media, and that civilians were aware of every aspect of the conspiracy except for the use of gas chambers. [9] Significant historical evidence points to the idea that the vast majority of Holocaust victims, prior to their deportation to concentration camps, were either unaware of the fate that awaited them, or were in disbelief of the information that they had received; they honestly believed that they were to be resettled. IMAGINE (Volume 4, Number 2) Nov. /Dec. 1996, pp. 12-13 “The U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum” by Lesley Mackay, IMAGINE, Volume 4, Number 2, (c)November/December 1996. Reprinted by permission of the Johns Hopkins University Press. THE U. S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM by Lesley Mackay Can a museum help us to explore the worst examples of human behavior? Can a museum challenge us to experience times in human history that many of us might prefer to forget?

Finally, can such a museum educate its visitors in a soft-spoken, rational way that elicits compassion and resolve? Yes, said the designers of the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Founded in April 1993, the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D. C. , engages both the intellect and the emotions. While providing a tremendous amount of information, this institution also deliberately sends visitors on a painful historical journey. Then it encourages them to emerge from that journey more knowledgeable, courageous, and humane.

THE HOLOCAUST MUSEUM: INFORMATION.... The Holocaust refers to the systematic, state-sponsored extermination by the Nazis and their collaborators of approximately eleven million victims, roughly six million of whom were Jews. The museum thoroughly investigates this terrible event, <https://assignbuster.com/holocaust-essay/>

perpetrated by thousands and ignored by millions. It is impossible to learn about the Holocaust without reflecting on its significance. The museum itself thinks aloud as we pass through it, offering insights and meditations integrated into its exhibits.

It doesn't think for us, though. Visitors are given ample time and space to forge their own responses. Marcia Sabol, first coordinator of teacher training at the museum, offers her own sense of the Holocaust's significance: " This event has often been regarded as a Jewish tragedy because of the number of Jews who died. It is also a human tragedy that a group would single out Jews, Gypsies, the handicapped, homosexuals, Poles, and Slavs on the grounds that they were unworthy of life. This isn't simply intolerance: it's mass murder.

While focusing on the systematic, murderous agenda of the Holocaust and on its terrible consequences, the museum also raises and explores related topics of great importance. Visitors can learn through a prism of issues and events. Anti-Semitism, book burning, World War II, media bias, immigration policies, and the 1936 Olympic Games are but a handful of the many topics raised and carefully explored at the museum.... AND

IDENTIFICATION Balanced against facts, figures, documentation, and analysis are powerful emotional reminders that Holocaust victims were real people.

Here are some of the ways in which the museum emphasizes their humanity.

- Each visitor receives, upon entry, a bound beige booklet that looks a little like a passport. On the first page is the name and photograph of a real person who lived during the Holocaust, along with the information about his



or her family. On subsequent pages is information to be read as the visitor reaches the end of each of the museum's three floors; these individual short readings reveal what occurred in the life of the visitor's "companion" during the events covered on the respective level.

Thus, the visitor's journey through the museum parallels the individual's experience of the Holocaust. – Visitors walk through The Tower of Faces, a three-story glass tower. The tower exhibits 1, 000 prewar photographs of Jewish inhabitants from the Lithuanian town of Eiszyszki. The myriad photographs on the cylindrical transparent walls are varied, often beautiful, seeming to capture spiritual and artistic qualities in their subjects. However, we soon learn that, except for 29 survivors, this town's entire Jewish population of 3, 500 was slaughtered in two days.

The visitor passes through the tower once before learning about the campaigns of extermination that brought about this mass homicide—then passes through the tower again at another level after understanding what happened to the people who live in black-and-white film on the wall. – At the end of the museum tour, visitors can sit in an amphitheater and watch a film in which Holocaust survivors talk about their past. The survivors, now elderly people, recall the despair and hope of this period, the relationships that sustained them, and the terrible losses they suffered.

The visitor's last experience of the exhibit, then, is one of the quiet words of speakers who could be his or her grandparents. ANSWERS AND MORE QUESTIONS Rather than providing conclusive answers, the Holocaust Museum leads visitors from question to question. Who was responsible for

the Holocaust? The museum teaches about the evil initiatives of Nazi leaders. Who else? The museum documents collaboration with and enthusiastic support for those leaders throughout much of Europe. Who else? The museum investigates the roles of the hundreds of thousands of people who carried out the directives of Nazi leaders.

Who else? The museum returns again and again to the critical role of bystanders—those millions of Europeans who neither supported nor resisted the Holocaust. Who else? The museum reveals the silence and passivity of governments around the world who did not act on what they knew about the Holocaust—who even declined to open their borders to refugees fleeing for their lives. **EXAMPLES OF COMPLICITY AT HOME**In thinking about complicity, visitors to this American museum are asked to confront the role of the United States. U. S. soldiers played an important part in freeing inmates from concentration camps at the end of World War II. But prior to liberation, the U. S. consistently refused to become involved in rescue activities and severely restricted access to its shores by refugees from Nazi-occupied territories.

One of the most affecting exhibits explains the fate of a ship and its passengers. In 1939, the German steamer “ S. S. St. Louis” carried more than 900 Jewish refugees to Havana, Cuba. Upon arrival, the refugees were refused entry into Cuba; they were then also denied visas to land on the U.

S. shore. The ship returned to Europe, where many of its passengers eventually were murdered. **THINKING ABOUT VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS**By posing question after difficult question, the museum constantly restates the problem of moral responsibility for the Holocaust.

Although naming its criminal leaders may be easy, defining responsibility

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among the general population is more difficult. And so, visitors are asked to identify not only with the victims but also with bystanders who silently condoned this calculated, gross inhumanity. The museum encourages each visitor to ask, ‘ What would I have done? ’” says Marcia Sabol. “ It pushes us to think about our own response to evil. “ WHAT A MUSEUM CAN BE How does the Holocaust Museum accomplish so much? To answer this question, one has to refer to its impressive and complex architectural design. The multi-story building is stark, somber, and cool. Throughout, it integrates features we might associate with oppression and captivity: large towers designed to resemble watchtowers, red brick walls, buttresses and railings of dark gray steel.

Hundreds of authentic artifacts intensify the realism of the atmosphere: a milk can in which residents of the Warsaw Ghetto hid documents that recounted their struggles, a huge pile of victims’ shoes, blue-and-white-striped uniforms of concentration camp inmates. By creating a desolate physical space and presenting affecting historical objects, the museum provides a flickering emotional sense of the reality of the Holocaust experience. According to principal designer Jeshajahu Weinberg, the Holocaust Museum has a narrative structure—it is organized around a story line.

The strength of its design elements allows visitors to experience the Holocaust’s unique and terrible power. The story draws each visitor in, partly by arousing compassion and many uncomfortable emotions, but primarily by presenting information and encouraging understanding. The millions of Holocaust victims stand at the center of this understanding. The departing

visitor is prominent, too, challenged never to comply with a repetition of this terrible event. \* \* \*THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONTEMPORARY MUSEUM” How far we have traveled during the span of only a single lifetime in our understanding of what a museum can be! –Chaim Potok, on the opening of the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

Not long ago, the primary goal of most museums was to serve as repositories–of artifacts, aesthetic objects, exotica. Museums housed collections of items usually identified one by one in display panels on walls. Background for a particular collection might also be provided: the facts of an artist’s life, for example, or details of a relevant historical event. For the most part, though, museums pursued limited educational goals and did not actively reach out to visitors. But in the last few decades, museums have evolved.

Many have adopted ambitious educational programs, and some have taken the possibilities of education to the limit. In San Francisco in 1968, Dr. Frank Oppenheimer founded the Exploratorium, one of the world’s first participatory learning centers. This innovative museum was designed to facilitate hands- on learning about nature, science, and technology. Today, visitors to the Exploratorium may choose from among 650 interactive sites to set up and conduct their own scientific experiments. Interactive museum sites differ greatly, depending on each museum’s intent and design.

But their general purpose is to provide participatory opportunities that are shaped by the visitors’ own curiosity and by their intellectual and even emotional responses. With stunning architectural designs and multimedia communication strategies, some of today’s museums offer visitors learning experiences that are in a class by themselves. | | | <http://discoverer.prod.>

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%3BART%3B0000029641 SCHOLASTIC SCOPE Oct. 7, 1994, pp. 19-22

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**ANNE’S DIARY** This is Anne Frank’s diary. \* It is one of the most famous journals in the world. Find out how this book was saved from the Nazis in World War II. Anne Frank was a young Jewish girl living in Amsterdam when Nazi Germany invaded Holland in 1940. Eventually her entire family went into hiding to escape the Nazi terror. She kept a diary during those two years (1942-1944). It is one of the most important documents of World War II because it gives us a personal understanding of the Holocaust—the mass slaughter by the Nazis of 6 million Jews and millions of other Europeans.

But we would never have read the diary of Anne Frank if it were not for the tremendous courage of the Franks’ good friend Miep Gies. She saved the diary from the Nazis, but that’s only one of the brave things she did to fight injustice during the war. Miep, now 86, still lives in Amsterdam and travels around the world telling young people about her experiences. Recently she sat down with SCOPE and told us her story. Miep Gies was born in Vienna, Austria, but was sent to Amsterdam in Holland as a little girl during World War I, when Vienna was too dangerous for children.

One of the things she enjoyed in Amsterdam was that city’s tradition of tolerance of different races and cultures. “ The Jews were our friends, our neighbors,” she told us. “ There was no problem. ” In 1940, when the Nazis invaded Holland, everything changed. “ The first thing the Germans did was

to enforce laws against the Jews that became stronger and stronger,” said Miep. Soon, Jews could not own radios, could not hold most jobs, could not shop in most stores. They weren’t even allowed out on the street at most times of the day.

The Nazis were trying to make everyone hate the Jews, to make them look ridiculous to their neighbors, so that when they finally sent them to concentration camps, nobody would care. Miep and her husband, Henk, did care. They were good friends with Anne’s parents, the Franks. Miep worked in Otto Frank’s small business, and they often went to the Franks’ house for dinner. Miep and Henk watched in horror while their friends were persecuted. Soon, the Franks were not even allowed to invite them over for dinner. Miep couldn’t bear to watch any longer. “ You could not watch what the Germans did to them.

It was terrible. You had to act, you must help,” she said. In 1941 Otto Frank called Miep into his office. He told her that the Franks and another family were going into hiding, and asked her if she would help. She said yes without hesitation. She knew if she got caught she would probably be killed, but that was better than standing by and doing nothing. The Frank family moved into a storage space behind the office where Miep and Otto worked. The business was made up of about 10 people, and only four of them knew about the hiding place. So the first job was to keep their secret from the other workers.

During the day, the family had to be absolutely silent. They couldn’t use the sink or flush the toilet. They had to whisper, and couldn’t wear shoes or even walk around much in their socks. Every day, Miep had to find food for the

eight people hiding in the annex. This was an enormous job, because food was very scarce then, and you couldn't buy any without Nazi-issued ration coupons. Since the Franks had no coupons, Miep had to buy them on the black market, and then go from store to store making up stories to explain why she needed so much food. Sometime I must be an actress, an artist, to get my food," she said. She had to be suspicious of everyone, even the grocers, because the Nazis were paying good money for information about people in hiding. " In the war," said Miep, " you didn't speak often with your neighbors, you were always only with yourself. You didn't speak. " Each day, Miep would hide her groceries in the office until the last worker had left. Then she would lock the door, and climb up the secret stairs to tell the family that it was OK to move around. She would help with dinner, and visit for as long as she could.

That, said Miep, was the most important job of all. " They longed for us to come up as often as possible. " Whenever Miep went into the annex, she would find Anne writing in a little red diary her father had given her for her 13th birthday in 1942. As the months and eventually years passed in the annex, the diary became more important to Anne. " She was in hiding," Miep said. " She could not do anything, only learn, read, and write. She was confined. " No one was allowed to read Anne's diary because it contained her most private thoughts.

Living in such close quarters with so many people, her writing was the only privacy she had. " More and more," said Miep, " the diary had become her life. " On August 4, 1944, just seven months before the end of the war, the Franks were discovered. They were arrested and sent to a concentration

camp. No one ever found out who had betrayed them to the Nazis. After the arrest, Miep stole back into the hiding place. She saw Anne's diary on the floor, picked it up and hid it in her file drawer. She was afraid it might be dangerous for her friends if the Nazis read it.

Also, it was Anne's most prized possession, and in some ways, it had been her best friend in captivity. "I wanted to keep it for Anne until she came back," said Miep. Sometimes people in the office would ask to see the diary, but Miep would never show it to anyone. Even when Otto Frank did come back from the concentration camps, she didn't tell him about Anne's diary. "It was not for him," she said, "it was for Anne. I wanted to give it to her." Later, when Miep and Otto received a letter confirming that Mrs. Frank, Anne, and Margot had all died, Miep gave Otto the diary.

Now the diary was all that was left of his entire family. After the diary was published in 1947, Miep was afraid reading it would make her too sad. Finally, Otto convinced her to read it, and she was surprised at her own reaction. "I was happy because all the people returned to me." It took a while for Otto and Miep to get used to the fact that Anne's most private thoughts were being read all over the world, but now Miep thinks it's a great way to "keep the story alive. With the diary I can show how it was," she said.

Miep knows that Anne Frank's diary is not just a girl's journal, it's an important part of history. "If you forget the history," she told SCOPE, "you have no right for the future. No meaning." Fifty years after the war, Miep says she cannot explain why some people risked everything to help their



neighbors and others did not. " One either helped or one didn't," she says. " I felt so strongly for justice that I just had to do it and I did it. " That does not, she says, make her a hero. " No, no," she says, " I was a normal person. I am not an exceptional one. " \* \* \*