

GERMANY

& THE HOLOCAUST



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Cover image:

Germany, A sign on a Jewish store - 'Protect Yourselves, Germans, Do Not Buy From Jews.'

Credit Yad Vashem

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST

TEACHING ETHOS: SAFELY IN, SAFELY OUT

Truly understanding the events of the Holocaust can be a very confronting and emotional experience for people, so we believe it is important for educators to take care of students' emotional wellbeing while working through these topics. This is why our approach to Holocaust education is about leading students safely in and out of learning about the Holocaust. It is not about shock-value or showing students the most horrific imagery you can find. It instead focuses on the ways in which individual lives were impacted. The aim is to give a deep understanding of the grief that was caused to the communities involved while also acknowledging the extent of how many lives were lost.

Our lessons and units focus on safely introducing the events of the Holocaust and safely taking them out of the learning by giving these atrocities some context and allowing reflection.

Although the numbers are important to understand in terms of the sheer magnitude of Nazi Germany's attempt to exterminate the Jewish people, simply focusing on that often takes away from truly understanding how individual lives were impacted. What these units aim to do is focus on the individual stories of Jews, specifically those that survived the Holocaust and migrated to New Zealand. They will introduce the lives of these survivors prior to Nazi occupation and finish with how they were able to live on after it.



LESSON STRUCTURE

There are three parts to each unit: life before, life during and life after the war. Each lesson is approximately 60mins, so will equate to about one week of classes.

Lesson 1 - Life Before

An insight into Jewish life prior to the Holocaust/what European life was like for Jews.

Lesson 2 & 3 - During the Holocaust

Thematic case studies of individuals' experiences throughout the Holocaust. It explores different aspects of Jewish experiences throughout the Holocaust with antisemitic law changes, ghettos, living in hiding, partisans and an acknowledgement of mass executions.

Lesson 4 - Life After the Holocaust

What Jews faced immediately after the Holocaust and their return to life and to New Zealand.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

‘Choiceless choices’

Each unit will include ‘Choiceless Choices’ discussions. Students will be split into groups where they are given a certain time allocation to make the decision on what each person's next action will be. If they do not make a decision in time, their decision will be made for them.

The reality of the Holocaust was that people were constantly having to make difficult choices, often life or death choices where you didn't know whether you were choosing the option that would give you a better chance at life or not. The time limit helps to illustrate that often these decisions had to be made with little information and in small time frames.

Learning activities

Each unit has a range of activities that include the following material:

- Case studies of Jewish experiences
- Testimony - written and video
- Activities and worksheets
- ‘Choiceless choices’ discussion
- New Zealand survivor stories/testimony
- Literature analysis
- Use of maps

NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

Each unit aligns with the following New Zealand curriculum Learning Objectives:

	Social Sciences	English
LEVEL 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Understand that events have causes and effects.- Understand how formal and informal groups make decisions that impact on communities.- Understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.	PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES Integrate sources of information, processes, and strategies purposefully and confidently to identify, form, and express increasingly sophisticated ideas. Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- recognises, understands, and considers the connections between oral, written, and visual language;- integrates sources of information and prior knowledge purposefully and confidently to make sense of increasingly

**LEVEL
5**

- Understand how the ideas and actions of people in the past have had a significant impact on people's lives.

- varied and complex texts;
- thinks critically about texts with understanding and confidence;

IDEAS

Show an understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts. Indicators:

- makes meaning by understanding increasingly comprehensive ideas in texts and the links between them
- makes and supports inferences from texts independently.

GERMANY AND THE HOLOCAUST

TEACHING RESOURCE

PREPARING TO TEACH THIS UNIT

Germany was the epicentre of the antisemitism and the political forces that caused the Holocaust. Therefore, a key part of understanding the Holocaust involves gaining an understanding of the political and social climate that was throughout Germany and the experiences of those that lived through it. Through this unit there is acknowledgement of the deception and propaganda tools that the Nazis used in order to fulfill their eventual 'Final Solution' of exterminating all Jews.

ABOUT THIS UNIT

This unit centres around the lives of a Jewish family living in Eschwege, Germany. It explores the ways in which Hitler's rule over Germany and throughout Europe started well before World War II officially began. It explores the life of the Narewczewitz family and how their life was turned upside down through the introduction of a range of anti-Jewish policies, getting sent to Theresienstadt concentration camp and, those from the family that survived, immigrating to New Zealand.

1.

LESSON 1 LIFE BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST

Lesson Objectives:

- To be able to explain what life was like for Jewish people living in Germany prior to and in the early years of the Nazi Party taking control.

1. DRAW A JEWISH PERSON

5-10 mins

Begin the lesson by asking students to 'Draw a Jewish person' in their book or printed worksheet.

Before exploring what life was like for Jewish people prior to WWII, it's important to start with what knowledge students have of Jewish culture. Without any guidance or prior discussion, give students a few minutes to draw what they think a Jewish person looks like.

Discussion: Once they have all drawn something, discuss what they have drawn.

- What religious symbols did they include? Or stereotypes? Talk about how we may think of the racial, antisemitic stereotypes such as big noses. Or religious clothing such as a head scarf, a kippah, payot (side curls worn by orthodox Jewish men) or the clothing worn by ultra orthodox Jewish men.
- Did any just draw a stick person with no identifying features?
- Explain the difference between Judaism as a religion and Jews as an ethnic group.

Jews vs Judaism explanatory notes:

- Jews are members of one of the oldest monotheistic (single god) religions, the religion of Moses. The line between being a member of the religion and being of the Jewish "race" seems to be difficult even for Jews to define; however most Jews consider Judaism a religion, rather than a race.
- The Torah is a partial history of the Jewish people. Today, Judaism is effectively divided into three sub-sects but some claim that the number is higher. Mostly, the three groups differ on how strictly they follow ancient Jewish tradition.
- Jews as an ethnic group are considered to be descendents from the Israelites, a group of Semitic-speaking tribes who in the Iron Age inhabited what is now Israel/Palestine.
- Many Jews, particularly since the Holocaust, still practise many of the traditions of Jewish religion without actually being religious. As survivor Clare Galambos Winter expresses: "[She] follows these rituals for a God she doesn't believe in, but her observance is an act of solidarity with world Jewry. She declares, 'I was born Jewish and will never be anything but Jewish.'"

2. LIFE FOR JEWS PRIOR TO 1939

20 mins

A.Photo task: Are these photos from the 1930s or modern day?

- Students will be given a selection of black & white photos. In groups, they need to decide which photos are from the 1930s and which are from the present day.
- In order to categorise each photo, students can consider the following questions:
 1. What do you see in this photo? Look closely to see if there are any details that might tell us when this photo was taken.
 2. Are there people in the photo? What are they doing?
 3. What objects are in the photo?
 4. What does the photo tell us about life during that time period?

Use these images to unpack the following:

- The comparison of modern and older photos highlights some of the similarities in how people lived in the 1930s compared with now.
- Prior to the Holocaust, Jewish people had varied lives. Some were very religious, others had assimilated to the countries where they lived and barely thought of themselves as Jewish. Others lived tough lives in poverty where they struggled to survive. Most Jews in Germany had assimilated to German society and considered themselves more German than Jewish. They had lives where they went to the beach, played sports, went to school etc.
- Also highlight how this is still relatively modern history.

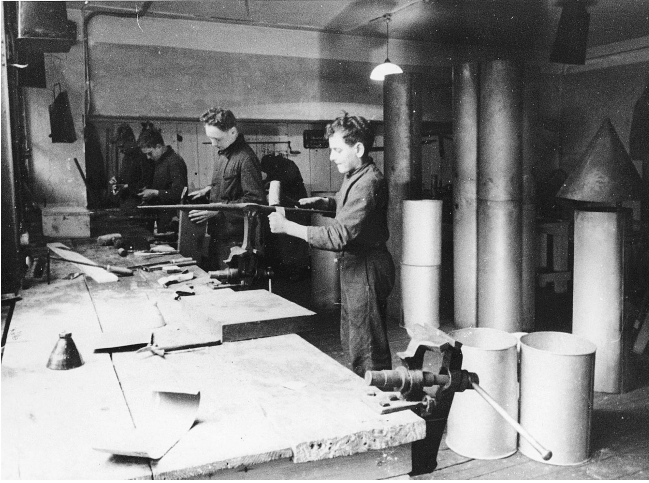
Photos and brief notes about each image:



Berlin, German
A physics lesson at the Adass Jisroel school, 1935
Credit Juedisches Museum Berlin



Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Prewar, A school class
Photo credit Yad Vashem



Frankfurt Am Main, Germany
The Jewish community's school for metal-works, Prewar
Credit Yad Vashem - Item ID 49818



Spangdahlem Middle School students receive talk from US Air Force, October 2018
Credit Airman 1st Class Branden Rae



Frankfurt, Germany, Three young women of the Waller family sitting on the beach, before the war.
Photo Credit Yad Vashem - Item ID 4766214



Berlin, Germany, 1935, Franz Orgler, a track and field athlete at the Maccabi Berlin International Sports Day.
Credit Juedisches Museum Berlin - Yad Vashem Item ID 91946



A crew member welds together metal on the pin pedestal for the new Folsom Dam auxiliary spillway Nov. 28, 2012, at the Oregon Iron Works' Clackamas.
Credit U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District



Summer sun vacation time on the Baltic Sea in Germany, August 2015
Credit dicau58

3. THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM IN EUROPE

10 mins

A. Put the word 'antisemitism' up on the board.

Task: Think-Pair-Share

Students write their initial thoughts on what they think 'antisemitism' means.

In pairs, they share what they each came up with and then the pairs share with the class what they think it means.

Share the definition:

/anti'sɛmətɪzəm/

noun

hostility to or prejudice against Jews.

B. Briefly explain the rise of Adolf Hitler to power

Talk through the brief summary of the rise of Adolf Hitler and how the Nazi Party came to power in Germany. This is important to understand as a background to the rising antisemitism and eventual attempted extermination of the Jewish people.

- 1923 -- Hitler attempted a coup in Munich and was imprisoned.
- 1925 -- Published his manifesto Mein Kampf and gained popular support by promoting Nazi ideology including ideas around Pan-Germanism, antisemitism and anti-communism.
- 1932 -- By November, the Nazi Party held most seats in German Reichstag (parliament), but not majority.
- 1933 -- 30 January, Adolf Hitler appointed as Chancellor of Germany.
 - 23 March, The Enabling Act of 1933 passed, letting Hitler sign legislation into law without involving the Reichstag

Throughout this time, there was an increase in antisemitism throughout German society. Although Jewish people made up only about 1% of the German population, they were accused of being the reason for all of Germany's hardships during the Great Depression and following the fallout from WWI. Antisemitic attitudes already existed but were fueled even further by Hitler's ongoing antisemitic rhetoric. Once Hitler gained control over Germany and was able to make decisions without involving the Reichstag (the German parliament), it enabled him to gradually increase the severity of Nazi anti-Jewish policies.

4. ANTISEMITIC RESTRICTIONS IN GERMANY

20 mins

In order to help students understand the severe impact of the introduction of anti-Jewish laws in Germany, you want to get them to consider what decisions and freedoms they currently value.

A. Task: What rights are most important to me?

Directions: Rank the following in order of importance to you, with #1 being most important and #9 being least important.

- Date/Marry whomever you choose?
- Go to a public school close to home?
- Live in a neighborhood of your choice?
- Swim and play in a public swimming pool or park?
- Eat what you want, according to taste, culture, and religious custom?
- Be able to own a pet?
- Leave your house whenever you choose?
- Shop at stores and businesses of your choosing?
- Vote?

B. Read about the introduction of Jewish restrictions and antisemitic laws (see timeline on following page).

C. Students to highlight which anti-Jewish laws would impact the human right(s) they consider to be most important.

NAZI GERMANY AND ANTI-JEWISH POLICY

The **anti-Jewish policy** between **1933 and 1938** focused on using **racial theory** and isolating German Jews from German society. However, from 1938 onwards more force was used to get rid of German Jews from German controlled areas.



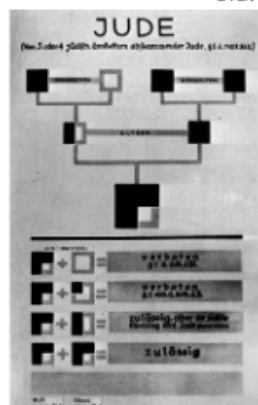
1935

NUREMBERG LAWS

Citizenship Law granted citizenship rights only to individuals who were classified as being "German or related blood", which **excluded Jews from all citizenship rights**. This basically made them foreigners in their own country

Reich Flag Law changed the national flag of Germany to the swastika flag and the national colours stated as black, red and white. Jews were forbidden from being able to raise this new German flag.

The Law for the Defense of German Blood and Honour **forbade marriage** and any intimate extramarital relations **between Jews and non-Jewish German citizens**. It also **prohibited Jews from employing non-Jewish German women** who were under 45 years old.



1933

BOYCOTTS AGAINST JEWS AND RESTRICTIONS OF JEWS WITHIN SOCIETY

Non-"Aryans" dismissed from government held jobs, including doctors, teachers, lawyers, engineers etc. Non-"Aryans" were defined as Jews, children of Jews and grandchildren of Jews.

Jewish-owned businesses were boycotted. Officially it was for one day, 1 April, but lasted significantly longer.

Jews membership in the newly created Reich Chamber of Culture was prohibited, meaning they couldn't have jobs in radio, theatres, sell paintings or sculptures.

Books written by Jews and anti-Nazis were burned in mass bonfires all around Germany.

Jews were prohibited from owning land.

Jewish lawyers and judges removed from their positions.

Jewish doctors couldn't treat any "Aryan" patients.

The number of **Jewish students** enrolled in German schools **limited to 1.5% of the total enrollment**.

Anyone given citizenship by the previous government **deemed "undesirable"** and Nazi-led **government could take away their citizenship**.

1936

HITLER TEMPORARILY RELAXES ANTI-SEMITIC PROPAGANDA

Germany held the **Summer Olympic Games** in Berlin, so **relaxed the antisemitic propaganda** and **other measures against Jews** to avoid criticism from foreign visitors.

1938

INCREASED ANTI-JEWISH VIOLENCE

Reich Supreme Court declares that **being a Jew** was a **reason for dismissal from a job**.

Nuremberg Laws extended to Austria after it was annexed in the Anschluss.

All **Jews forced to add the names "Israel" and "Sarah"** to their **identification papers** and **Jewish passports** were **marked with the red letter J for Jude** (Jew).

Jews banned from cultural society. No longer allowed to attend plays, concerts, own phones, have driver's licences, car registrations etc.

Kristallnacht Pogrom: approx 1,400 **synagogues burned** and 7,000 Jewish **stores, community centres** and hundreds of **homes were damaged and looted**.

30,000 Jews, most of them Jewish leaders, **sent to concentration camps**. Many were offered the chance to leave the camps as long as they could prove they had arranged to leave Germany.

Very few Jewish children remained in German schools.

Jews had to abide by a **curfew**.

All **Jewish shops forced to close** by December 31, 1938

1937

"ARYANIZATION"

The "Aryanisation" of businesses and properties intensified. This resulted in **Jewish businesses and properties being confiscated** and handed over to German citizens.



1939 - Sept 1

GERMANY INVADES POLAND WWII BEGINS

2.

LESSON 2 LIFE DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Lesson Objectives:

- To continue to understand how the Nazi Party gradually increased restrictions for Jews in Germany.
- To understand how Jews reacted in different ways to the restrictions and attempted extermination of the Jewish people imposed by Nazi Germany.

1. CHOICELESS CHOICES

5 min

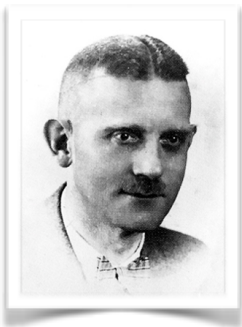
A. Put the phrase 'Choiceless choices' up on the board.

Ask students to write down what they think the phrase means and discuss their answers.

Answer: Choiceless choices, in the context of this unit, is about when families and individuals were forced into situations where they had to make life altering decisions. Often they would have to make these decisions with very little information and wouldn't know whether their decision could result in someone living or dying. Sometimes these choices had to be made very quickly too.

CASE STUDY: THE NAREWCZEWITZ FAMILY

10 min



Erich Narewczewitz

Born in 1893 in Eschwege, Germany

Son of Nathan and Emma, German Jews of Polish ancestry, who ran a small business. He fought in the German Army for four years and was awarded the Iron Cross Second Class. Post WWI, he qualified as a High School Teacher of Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics. He returned to the Friedrich-Wilhelm School in Eschwege as a teacher in 1926.

Pronunciation:

Narewczewitz:

Naa-rev-che-vitz



Gertrud Narewczewitz (nee Dalberg)

Born in 1903 in Kassel, Germany

The youngest daughter of Moritz Dalberg, a merchant in Kassel, and his wife Agnes. The Dalberg family had been in Germany for several generations and considered themselves as German as any of their non-Jewish neighbours. She was very social and loved life but was also very career focused. She trained at the Conservatorium of Music in Frankfurt, going on to perform with the Frankfurt Opera while Jews were still able to work.



Robert Narewczewitz

Born Oct 6 1935 in Eschwege, Germany

Robert was born into turbulent times in Germany with the Nuremberg Laws having been passed on September 15, 1935, as well as increasing antisemitic tensions with the rise of the Nazi Party. Had a close relationship with both of his grandmothers.

B. Give students the following scenario:

Split students into groups of 3. They have 5 minutes to decide what option their family will choose and why. If they haven't made a decision after the allotted time, their decision will be made for them.

By the end of 1935, the establishment of the Nuremberg laws and ongoing restrictions for Jews working in Germany meant that Erich was no longer permitted to work at the government run school. His military service had let him keep his government job longer than most and entitled him to a pension, but the town of Eschwege grew more reluctant to pay him as time went on. With no job in Eschwege and unreliable finances, what should the Narewczewitz family do?

- Move to a bigger city like Frankfurt in the hopes of better work opportunities?
- Try to find any form of work in Eschwege, even if it means being paid less?
- Try to leave Germany?

If they haven't made a decision/what actually happened: Early in 1936 the family moved to Frankfurt, where Erich was able to acquire a position at a Jewish High School, the Philanthropin.

2. LIFE UNDER NAZI RULE IN FRANKFURT

20min

Watch Robert's testimony (5mins) about what it was like for him to live in Frankfurt as a child under Nazi rule and as anti-Jewish policy became more restrictive.

Robert talks about not having any friends or toys, but living in an otherwise middle-class neighbourhood until they moved to an apartment, most likely in the Jewish area of Frankfurt.

Answer and discuss the following questions:

- **How do you think it would feel to be born into a world where you are instantly hated?**
- **How does this compare to your childhood memories?**

Consider how Robert can't remember playing with toys or any other children. He didn't go to kindergarten and was verbally abused and had rocks thrown at him for being Jewish.

Read through the notes on Nazi rule in Frankfurt.

Frankfurt Am Main, a major city in the State of Hesse, faced harsh changes with the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party. By 1933, there were over 26,000 Jews living in the centre of Frankfurt, making it one of the largest Jewish centres in Germany. It even had a Jewish mayor, Ludwig Landmann. However, with the Nazi's rise to power on 30 January 1933, Jews in Frankfurt were subjected to physical assaults as the local Nazis did not wait until the official anti-Jewish boycott on 1 April 1933 to publicly shame the city's Jews.

All of the government and public institutions gradually dismissed Jews from their jobs at hospitals, law-courts, schools, universities and institutes of culture and the arts. The Nuremberg Laws that came into effect in 1935 increased job losses, with Jews who had fought for Germany in WWI losing their exemptions and dismissed as well as most Jews who worked for privately owned commercial establishments. Many Jews faced financial hardship and around 4,500 needed welfare support, almost 20% of the remaining Jewish population of Frankfurt. This was organised by the local Jewish community given in the form of financial assistance, clothing and food supply, and a vocational training programme set up for the retraining of hundreds of youth for trade and agriculture. As many Jews around Germany did, the Jews of Frankfurt reacted to being excluded from society and cultural life by establishing their own activities, too. A Jewish symphony orchestra, musical and theatrical groups, and sports programmes were established.

However, by the late 1930s, life for Jews had become even more severe with the start of expulsions and deportations of Jews from Germany. Among the first Polish Jews to be deported on 26 October 1938, 2,000 were from Frankfurt. On 9-10 November 1938, the Kristallnacht pogroms occurred throughout Germany and Austria. Kristallnacht, or the Night of the Broken Glass, was a series of attacks on Jewish homes, businesses, museums, community buildings and synagogues. Almost all of the Jewish synagogues in Frankfurt were burned down, so were Jewish Community buildings and the Jewish Museum. Jewish stores were looted by gangs of rioters roaming the streets, and some lives were lost. Thousands of Jews were arrested in the days that followed, held in a large public hall for several days and then deported to Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps.

Understandably, Jews started to flee Frankfurt, with 618 leaving in November 1938 alone. In May 1939, 13,751 Jews remained in Frankfurt and only 10,592 remained by September 1941. In February 1940, a Gestapo officer, Ernst Holland, was put in charge of "Jewish welfare", representing both the Gestapo and the city of Frankfurt. This position only existed in Frankfurt and it made him responsible for handling all affairs relating to Jews in the city, supervising all Jewish property and the operations of Jewish institutions that still existed.

Holland mandated that Jewish activities must be reduced and to save all costs involved. He also mandated for Jewish property and financial assets to be transferred to "Aryans". This involved forcing Jews from their apartments and forcing them to move in with others or finding

accommodation in Jewish Community buildings. This resulted in hundreds of Jewish apartments being transferred to Germans.

Forced labour was also ordered. On March 4 1941, Jews were ordered to perform forced labour under the Gestapo's supervision. Hundreds of Jews committed suicide in Frankfurt because of the pressure from all of these restrictive measures. From 20 October 1941, a programme of mass deportations began, with almost all of the Jews of Frankfurt having been deported to one of the concentration or extermination camps throughout Europe by September 1942.

pogrom: a violent riot aiming to persecute or massacre an ethnic or religious group, particularly Jewish people.

Gestapo: the secret police of Nazi Germany.

Students to answer the following questions:

– How does this account compare to Robert's childhood memory?

Robert's childhood memories are largely centred around his parents and grandmothers. He has memories of some antisemitism and vague memories of the war and soldiers. However, he doesn't remember anything of the really restrictive law changes, Kristallnacht pogrom or ongoing deportations. The historical account makes the economic, social and physical impacts on Jews so much clearer. Jews faced incredible hardship, but things like Robert not having toys (for example) only show the symptoms of financial difficulties.

– Why do you think the experiences were so different?

This makes it clear that Robert's parents likely sheltered him from a lot of the hardships and antisemitism that they faced throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s. It also highlights the fortunate position (if it can be called that) of Erich Narewczewitz having served on the front line in WWI as well as being able to get a teaching position at the Jewish high school because it meant that he was able to earn money when many Jews were unable to earn a living.

3. CHOICELESS CHOICES

10min

Divide the class into groups of 3 and have each group member choose a family member to represent.

Give students the following scenario. They have 5 minutes to decide what the Narewczewitz family will choose to do and why. If they haven't made a decision after the allotted time, their decision will be made for them.

Once they have decided, their group/'family' needs to move to the side of the room that represents their answer. Then you can discuss as a class why people made their decisions.

Scenario: Life throughout Germany has really started to become quite dangerous for Jews. Thousands of Jews have already fled the city or have been deported since the Kristallnacht pogrom on 9-10 November 1938. With increasing fears for their safety, Erich, Gertrud and little Robert must consider the best way forward for their small family.

What do you do:

- Stay at home, continue life as usual and hope that Hitler and the Nazi Party rule will blow over and life can return back to normal.
- Try and find the money to cover the high emigration taxes and apply for a visa to a country that is taking in Jewish refugees.

If the group doesn't make a decision, they get the decision that was actually made by the Narewczewitz family:

According to Robert, "[Erich and Gertrud] rather belatedly started to make attempts to leave Germany but unfortunately were not successful and I believe they finally obtained the permit for Uruguay a matter of days before the war broke out and by then it was too late."

4. DEPORTATIONS

15 mins

After the outbreak of the war, the Narewczewitz Family were deported from Frankfurt on 19 August 1942.

A. Watch Robert's testimony with images of deportations from nearby towns of what it was like during the deportation process.

B. Students answer the following questions:

- **Many of these photos were taken by Nazis or paid to be taken by Nazis. Why is this important to consider when viewing these images?**

It is important to note that many of these images were taken by Gestapo photographers. This is important to understand because they had a significantly distinct perception of the subjects within these photographs. There must be consideration of how this perspective may slant the nature of these photos and whether they attempted to photograph Jews in a way that belittles them or, in contrast, makes everything appear not quite as severe as it really was.

- **What was in Erich Narewczewitz's pocket that made the soldier hit him in the head?**

The equivalent of 5c

- **How do you think it would have felt to experience this as a 6 year old?**

Robert was sheltered from a lot of the realities of the deportation, but was still able to sense the fear and concern felt by all of those around him.

■ **How do you think the adults' experiences were different from Robert's?**

Although the adults won't have really known where they were being sent or what awaited them at the end of this train ride, they probably couldn't have truly prepared for the reality. Obviously, conditions in Frankfurt had become increasingly dire for Jews and they would have been aware that concentration camps existed. So there would have been some insight to where they may have been going. But the reality was that they just didn't know. So there would have been a lot of fear and concern as well as a lot of speculation.



3.

LESSON 3 LIFE DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Lesson Objectives:

- To understand what life was like for Jews in concentration camps
- To understand how Theresienstadt was used as a propaganda tool.

1. THERESIENSTADT - PHOTO COMPARISON

20 mins

How do the propaganda photos compare to the artworks by Jewish prisoners. What life was really like in Theresienstadt?

A. Students describe what they see in a series of photos of Theresienstadt.

These photos are from Nazi propaganda about Theresienstadt. Students need to describe what they see and what they think life was like in Theresienstadt.



Theresienstadt, Czechoslovakia, Children playing in the playground, 1944 - Credit ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross - Yad Vashem Item ID 10566



Theresienstadt, Czechoslovakia, Food distribution scene from the movie "The Terezin Paradise". - Credit Czech National Film Archive - Yad Vashem Item ID 77042



Theresienstadt, Czechoslovakia, 1944, People in a barrack, from a propaganda film. Credit Chronos - Yad Vashem Item ID 30250



Theresienstadt, Czechoslovakia, 1944, A soccer match, taken from a propaganda film. Credit Chronos - Yad Vashem Item ID 28475

Then reveal to students that these photos are the result of Nazi propaganda and deception.

“Elaborate measures were taken to disguise conditions in the ghetto and to portray an atmosphere of normalcy. The SS engaged the Council of Jewish Elders and the camp-ghetto "residents" in a "beautification" program. Prisoners planted gardens, painted housing complexes, renovated barracks, and developed and practiced cultural programs for the entertainment of the visiting dignitaries to convince them that the "Seniors' Settlement" was real. The SS authorities intensified deportations of Jews from the ghetto to alleviate overcrowding, and as part of the preparations in the camp-ghetto, 7,503 people were deported to Auschwitz between May 16 and May 18, 1944.

On June 23, 1944, as planned, two delegates from the International Red Cross and one from the Danish Red Cross visited the ghetto, accompanied by Theresienstadt commandant SS First Lieutenant Karl Rahm and one of his deputies. The facility had been "cleaned up" and rearranged as a model village. Hints that all was not well included a bruise under the eye of the "mayor" of the "town," a part played by Paul Eppstein, the Elders' Council member representing German Jews. Despite these hints, the International Red Cross inspectors were taken in. This was in part because they expected to see ghetto conditions like those in occupied Poland with people starving in the streets and armed policemen on the perimeter.”¹

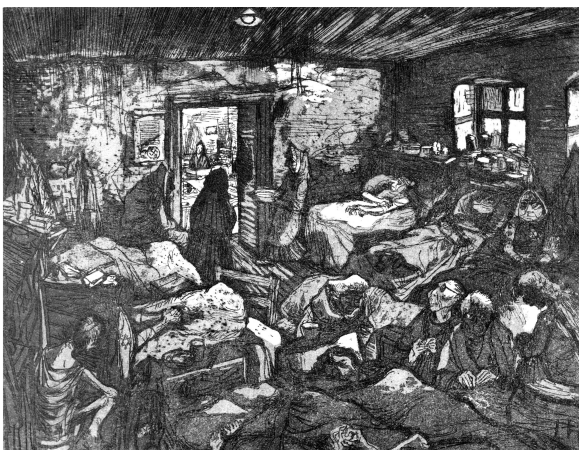
Discuss the following questions:

1. **How does that impact how you view these photos?**
2. **Why do you think they wanted to portray this perspective of Theresienstadt?**

The reality for Jews in Theresienstadt was far more grim than what was depicted by the propaganda images.

B. Students then compare the photographs to artwork by a range of Jewish artists depicting life in Theresienstadt.

“Conditions in the camp were harsh. Potatoes were as valuable as diamonds. I was hungry, scared and sick most of the time. For my eighth birthday, my parents gave me a tiny potato cake with a hint of sugar; for my ninth birthday, an outfit sewn from rags for my doll; and for my tenth birthday, a poem written by my mother.”
—Inge Auerbacher



A drawing of the Theresienstadt Ghetto by Leo Haas



Facades for the International Commission
Artwork from the Theresienstadt ghetto Date between 1943 and 1944 - Author Bedřich Fritta - Credit Jewish Museum Berlin

¹ <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content>



In the Living Quarters - Drawing from the Theresienstadt ghetto by Bedřich Fritta



A drawing of the Theresienstadt Ghetto by Karel Fleischmann, 1942

- How do these images compare with the previous photos?
- Why do you think these images are so different?
- What do you think life was really like for Jews in Theresienstadt?

2. CHOICELESS CHOICES

5mins

A. Put the two options up on opposite sides of the classroom and students need to decide which option Erich should choose.

Give students the following scenario. They have 2 minutes to decide what Erich Narewczewitz will choose to do and why. If they haven't made a decision after the allotted time, their decision will be made for them.

Then you can discuss as a class why people made their decisions.

Scenario: It's mid-1943 and Erich has become quite ill. He was suffering with a great deal of pain from his prostate. There are some Jewish doctors in the Theresienstadt infirmary that can operate on him, however there is absolutely no pain relief or medication available for during the operation or recovery after it. The medical conditions are terrible so there's an increased risk that Erich will not survive the operation.

What should Erich do?

- Live with the pain and possibility of his illness getting worse?
- Risk surgery and suffer through the recovery without pain relief and risk dying from infection?

If the student haven't made a decision, they get the decisions that was actually made by Erich Narewczewitz: Erich ended up having some of the Jewish doctors operate on him and faced insufferable pain from the recovery. Robert was able to visit his father during this recovery where Erich kept it together to protect his son from how bad his condition was. Gertrud later shared with Robert how Erich would scream from the pain. Due to the pain and complications from the surgery, Erich died in December 1943. Robert was able to visit his father several times after this operation and before he passed.

3. POEM: *TRANSPORT TO POLAND*

15 min

As a class, read the poem 'Transport to Poland' and answer the following questions:

Transport to Poland

By Ilse Weber

The transport to Poland is announced²,
a nightmare, deadly pall.
The Council Elders³ snoop here and there,
their indifference doesn't fool us at all.

We shrink from their glances, fear in our eyes.
"Can it be me?" we shudder in dread.
One wishes to get far away
and leave the fateful paper unread.

Calamity stalks the fort
on quiet muffled paws,
we have such a fear of Poland
without really knowing the cause.

If misery or death is there,
no one will attest.
Going to Poland is worse than death;
at least the dead have rest.

A neighbour goes today, your turn tomorrow.
Stripped of rights, of anything to lose,
We're Ahasuerus⁴ kin,
eternal wandering Jews.

² *Transport to Poland*: "Transport" in camp dialect refers to the mass deportation to extermination camps in Poland. The Council of Elders and the camp's administration decided who would be deported. "Announced" (Austragen) in camp dialect, refers to the distribution of the deportees' names.

³ *Council of Elders* (Jewish Elders): Jewish administrative directors of the barracks.

⁴ *Ahasuerus*: King of Persia in the Purim story (Book of Esther). Known to the Greeks as Xerxes. His successor, Cyrus, restored Jerusalem to the Jewish exiles in Babylon. In some versions of the 'Wandering Jew,' his name is Ahasuerus. 'The Wandering Jew' is a mythical immortal man whose legend began to spread in Europe in the 13th century. The original legend is of a Jew who taunted Jesus on the way to the Crucifixion and was then cursed to walk the earth until the Second Coming.

1. What does the poem tell us about what Jews feared in Poland?

Although most of the Jewish inmates at Theresienstadt didn't understand that extermination camps existed where Jews (as well as other persecuted groups) were sent to be gassed in the gas chambers and then cremated, they did hear stories of horrendous treatment towards Jews. It would seem unthinkable to actually believe the truth, that Hitler and Germany were attempting to completely eradicate the Jewish people. However, the stories they did hear of starvation, horrendous treatment of Jews and work camps were much worse than their already terrible conditions in Theresienstadt.

2. Why do you think they feared going on another transport so much?

The unknown of what another transport might bring. Their first transport brought them to Theresienstadt where they faced horrible conditions. When Jews were rounded up in the deportations, they were never told where they would be going. They were simply ordered to report for a transport at a certain date and time with minimal luggage, so it only seems logical that another transport could take them somewhere worse than they already were.

4. GOING ON A TRAIN RIDE

10 min

In February of 1945, it was announced that there would be a transport to Switzerland and Jews were asked to volunteer for the journey. Gertrud and Robert were chosen for the transport and would have received transport orders such as the one below that Vera Alice Mayer received.

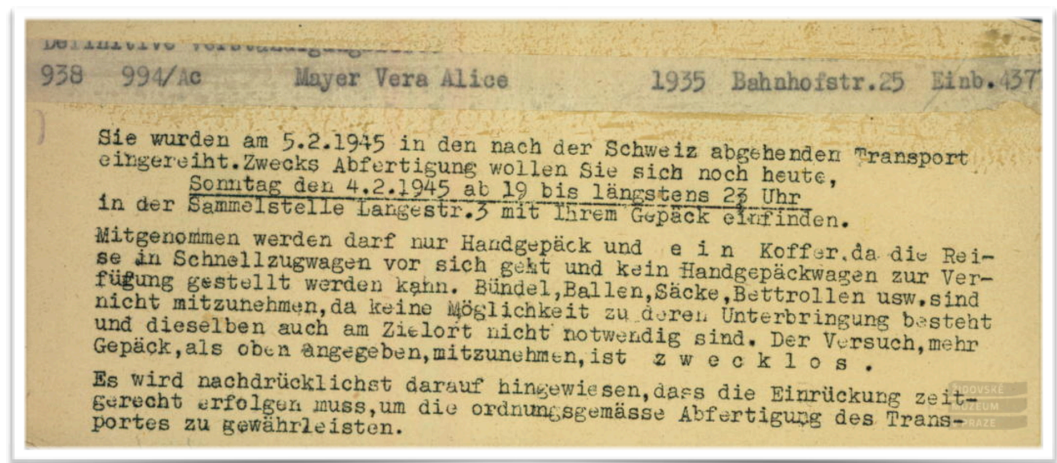
A. Discussion: How do you think they would have felt about this order?

TRANSLATION:

You have been selected for the outbound transport to Switzerland on 5.2.1945. For the purpose of processing, you must arrive with your luggage at the Langestrasse

[Lange Street] collection point today, Sunday 4.2.1945, between 7pm and 11pm at the latest.

Only hand luggage and one suitcase should be taken, as the trip takes place via the express train and no luggage cars are provided. Bundles, bales, bags, bed



rolls, etc are not to be taken along as there is no possibility of accommodating them, and also they are unnecessary at the destination. An attempt to bring more luggage than specified above is pointless.

It is strongly emphasized that the boarding of the train must occur on time to ensure the handling of the transport in accordance with the rules.

Student question:

Gertrud had some anxiety about this train ride. What do we know about the Holocaust and treatment of Jews that would have made Gertrud anxious about another train ride?

Although Robert was very excited about the prospect of going on a train ride, Gertrud would have been very aware of previous deceptions and lies by the Germans. Life in Theresienstadt would have shown Gertrud that Germans had complete disregard for Jewish lives with the over-crowding and starvation. She would have seen that thousands had been sent away, never to be seen again. There would have been speculation about whether the Germans were telling the truth or lying about this transport actually going to Switzerland as well as what they would face when they got there.



4.

LESSON 4 RETURN TO LIFE

Lesson Objectives:

- To understand how shocking and life altering it was for Jews to discover the real extent of mass murder that occurred during the Holocaust.
- To understand how Jews managed to return to life after such traumatic events.
- To understand how antisemitism and the Holocaust had a significant impact on the lives of Jews worldwide.

1. LEARNING ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE HOLOCAUST

10 min

The Narewczewitz family is just one of millions of Jewish families that were torn apart by the Holocaust. As Europe was liberated by the Allies and as survivors returned home, the full extent of the Holocaust started to become clear.

Students will rank the following statements about the Holocaust from most shocking to least shocking:

- It is estimated that 6 million Jews perished in the Holocaust.
- Hitler and Germany were responsible for the attempted extermination of all Jews in Europe.
- Although millions of others died because of the war and because of Nazi persecution, Jews were the only group that Germany attempted to completely get rid of.
- Of the approximately 144,000 Jews sent to Theresienstadt, some 33,000—almost 1 in 4—died there, and about 88,000 were deported to Auschwitz and other death camps. By the war's end, only 19,000 were alive.
- In 1933, 30,000 Jews lived in Frankfurt; in 1945, only 602 remained.

All of those that survived the Holocaust faced the daunting task of returning back to a new version of normal. But how could they do that when their lives had just been torn apart?

How is it possible that Robert and his mother Gertrud survived?

"For reasons which I will never know, we did not get transported from Theresienstadt," Bob says. A possible explanation is that his mother was a useful member of the work force, and his father served in the German army during World War One and had been decorated with the Iron Cross Second Class for his efforts.

2. GOING ON A TRAIN RIDE - PART II

Gertrud and Robert discovered that they were actually destined for Switzerland after all.

Here's some information about rescue efforts such that led to the transport to Switzerland that saved Gertrud and Robert:

During WWII, the organization Vaad ha-Hatzalah was established to rescue rabbis and yeshiva students from persecution in Europe. They "rescued approximately 635 Polish rabbis and yeshiva students from Lithuania via the Far East." Despite living under extremely harsh conditions under the Japanese in Shanghai, approximately 500 rabbis and yeshiva students survived. However, once the organisation realised the realities of the Final Solution they expanded their mission to assist all Jews. "These efforts led to the release of 1,210 Jews from Theresienstadt..."⁵ through an "agreement between the former Swiss president Jean-Marie Musy and Himmler."⁶

A. Read the following summary of the transport from Theresienstadt:

In February 1945, the Red Cross arranged an exchange of German prisoners-of-war for 1200 inmates of Theresienstadt, mostly children up to adults aged around 50 or so. There was a call for volunteers to go on this transport to Switzerland. Nine year old Robert's enthusiasm for a train ride overcame the doubts of his mother, who knew only too well the dangers of a long journey to an uncertain destination. They stopped not long from Theresienstadt, which caused some alarm, and then continued on uninterrupted to the Swiss border. They were received with kindness by the Swiss authorities and then taken to a school in Sankt Gallen where they were given food and continued kind treatment. Along with some others, Gertrud and Robert were then sent on to Montreux and given accommodation in a hotel. Robert then spent the next two years in an orthodox orphanage near Vevey. In September 1947, travelled from Montreux, Switzerland to Marseille, France before departing by sea in the Tidewater, a converted troop carrier for Auckland. This was a long boat ride via Suez, Aden, Colombo, Melbourne and Sydney. With them they took two young orphans, who were safely delivered to their adoptive families in Australia. New Zealand was as far as one could go before coming back.

B. Map Activity

Students draw the approximate journey Gertrud and Robert would have taken to get from Theresienstadt to where they departed for New Zealand. Students could record this journey using Google Maps, or find it on a map printout.

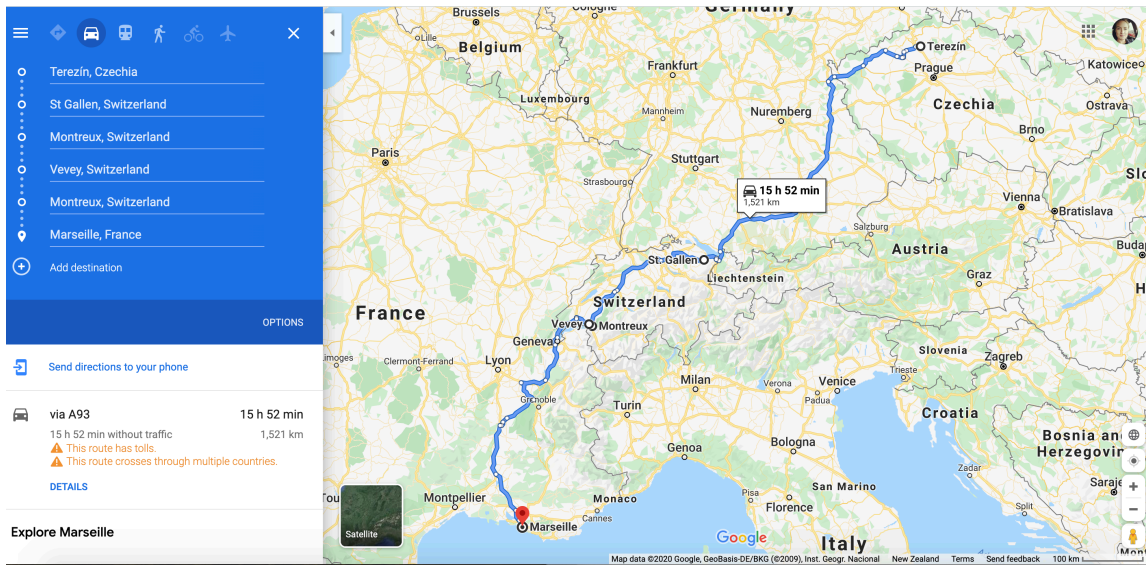
- Theresienstadt / Terezín, Czechia
- Sankt Gallen, Switzerland
- Montreux, Switzerland
- Vevey, Switzerland

⁵ *The Response of the Orthodox Jewry in the United States to the Holocaust* by Efraim Zuroff

⁶ *Theresienstadt 1941-1945: The Face of a Coerced Community* by H. G. Adler, Jeremy Adler

- Montreux, Switzerland
- Marseille, France

What their final map should look like:



3. GROWING UP IN NEW ZEALAND

5 min

Read the brief summary of Gertrud and Robert’s life in New Zealand

“To make life easier for both themselves and locals, speedy name surgery reduced Narewczewitz to Narev, as Gertrud and Robert found their first New Zealand home on the chicken farm owned by Ernst and Alice Rothschild at Howick.

Gertrud initially earned a modest living as a decorator of chocolates at Heards factory, her lack of English severely restricting her initial employment options. As her command of the language improved, she was able to return to her true vocation by teaching piano at St Cuthbert’s College and teaching singing to private pupils, including the now well known operatic contralto Heather Begg. Auditions and performances on radio followed and re-established her reputation as a fine musician.

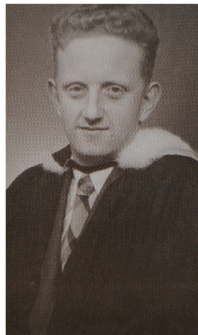
Robert, meanwhile, attended Howick District High School and proceeded to Auckland Grammar... Robert won a University Junior Scholarship, at his first attempt, as well as the school’s Churchill Prize for English. He continued at Auckland University, with a Law and Arts Degrees, including the award of a Senior Scholarship in Languages.”

Robert and Freda Malacki met at Habonim and “In March of 1957 the couple became engaged. Freda was by this stage working as a bacteriologist for the Auckland Hospital Board, while Robert was a law clerk in the legal firm of Glaister Ennor & Kiff, completing his studies part-time. In January 1959 Freda and Robert were married. In 1962, the first of the new Narev generation, daughter Kim, was born on Kreina Malacki’s birthday. Eric, known as Rick, was born in 1964 and Ian in 1966.

The activities of the Narev family in both the Jewish and general communities continued to expand during these years. Robert was at various times President of the Auckland Zionist Society, Treasurer of the Jewish National Fund and B'nai Brith, Treasurer and President of the Zionist Federation of New Zealand, and member for many years of the Board of Management of the Auckland Hebrew Congregation and Treasurer of that body for two terms, as well as serving on the Auckland Hebrew Congregation Trust Board, the Bernard Goldwater Educational Trust Board and the Auckland Jewish Youth Centre Trust Board and acting as Honorary Solicitor for a number of Jewish organisations. He became a partner with Glaister Ennor & Kiff in 1963 and a Notary Public in 1969, later serving on the Executive Committee of the Society of Notaries and also as a Director of various public and private companies."



Robert's 21st - Robert and Gertrud with the Rothschilds



Robert's graduation



Robert and Freda's wedding day - January 22, 1959



Howick District High School - Robert in Form 1 (5th from right, back row)

Discuss the following questions:

- What was life like for Robert and Gertrud when they first arrived in Auckland, New Zealand?
- How have Robert and Gertrud influenced others in New Zealand?
- What significance does Robert's story of survival have for us as New Zealanders?



St. Cuthbert's staff 1951 - where Gertrud (far right) eventually resumed her career as a music teacher



Ian Narev and his family



Robert and Freda with their children Ian, Kim and Rick.



Robert was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit



Family reunion at Okahu Bay



Robert with Torah scroll donated in memory of relatives killed in the Holocaust



Robert's law office



Robert and Freda Narev

4. WHY DOES IT MATTER THAT WE REMEMBER?

25 min

A. Read through quotes about why we must remember the events of the Holocaust:

"The spirits of evil are emerging in a new guise, presenting their anti-Semitic, racist, authoritarian thinking as an answer for the future, a new solution to the problems of our age. And I wish I could say that we Germans have learnt from history once and for all. But I cannot say that when hatred is spreading."

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (2020)

#

"First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Socialists and the Trade Unionists, but I was neither, so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew so I did not speak out. And when they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me."

Martin Niemöller (1946)

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"Where they have burned books, they will end in burning human beings."

Heinrich Heine -- *Almansor: A Tragedy* (1823), p. 142

#

"I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

Elie Wiesel Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, December 10, 1986

#

"Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions."

Primo Levi

Discuss these final words and maybe any other idea around why it matters for us to remember this modern piece of history.

C. Group activity - Students create a video or poster explaining why is it important that we remember what happened in the Holocaust.

Students could get some inspiration from the 'Keeping the Memory Alive' posters on the Yad Vashem website: <https://www.yadvashem.org/education/international-projects/posters/2014.html>

FURTHER READING

Dancing on a Powder Keg: The Intimate Voice of a Young Mother and Author, Her Letters Composed in The Lengthening Shadow of Hitler's Third Reich, Her Poems from the Theresienstadt Ghetto

by Ilse Weber, translated by Michal Schwartz

"Endorsed by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, as a unique document with literary value, Ilse Weber's letters and poems, 1933-1944, record with vivid immediacy the lives of her small family during a time of increasing danger, when Europe descended from peace to the chaos of war and genocide. Ilse wrote to her Swedish friend, Lilian, who lived in London, and from 1939, also to her older son whom the Webers sent to Lilian on a Kindertransport. In 1942, Ilse, her husband and younger son, were deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto. Working there in the children's infirmary, Ilse eased the daily suffering of her patients and fellow inmates with songs she wrote and set to music, accompanying herself on her contraband guitar. These more than 60 songs and poems that trace Ilse's last years, have been performed by various artists and ensembles from around the world, having become symbols of ghetto life under Nazi occupation." - Amazon synopsis

Night by Elie Wiesel

This short book tells the haunting story of Elie Wiesel's personal experience of Auschwitz and Buchenwald from 1944-45.

Testimony of other New Zealand survivors

<https://www.holocaustcentre.org.nz/nz-survivors.html>



GLOSSARY/WORD BANK

There are often a variety of spellings for different words, particularly names and places, depending on the language it has been written in. In bold are the iterations that will be used in this unit as well as the phonetic pronunciation of them.

Deportation: refers to the forced removal of Jews from their home towns where they were transported.

Eschwege (esh-ve-ge): A small town in north eastern Hesse, Germany.

Theresienstadt / Terezin (te-res-ian-shtadt): a hybrid ghetto camp in the fortress town of Terezín, now in Czech Republic.

pogrom: a violent riot aiming to persecute or massacre an ethnic or religious group, particularly Jewish people.

Gestapo: the secret police of Nazi Germany.