

## The Holocaust and Wales

### Liberation

#### Teachers' Notes

This resource examines the perpetration of the Holocaust by the Nazis and their collaborators and the liberation of the Nazi camps and ghettos by the Allies.

It is not intended as a stand-alone lesson and should be studied alongside other lessons exploring pre-war Jewish life and the rise of antisemitism in Europe. Learners may understandably find the themes discussed upsetting so teachers should consider allowing them time for reflection during and after the lesson.

It contains:

- Background information on the Nazi camp and ghetto systems and where to find out more
- Map: Spaces of Nazi persecution and murder
- Short biographies of William Richard Williams, Leslie Hardman and Manfred Gans
- Links to audio clips of oral history recordings of William Richard Williams and Leslie Hardman
- Extract from Manfred Gans' war diary, 1945
- Transcripts of the audio clips

The resource assumes a basic understanding of the Holocaust. You may wish to cover the Holocaust Educational Trust's (HET) worksheet ['Defining the Holocaust'](#) before exploring these resources. See also the HET's ['General Principles for Teaching the Holocaust'](#).

Learning aims:

- To better understand the scale and inner workings of the Nazi camps and ghettos and their role in the Holocaust
- To consider the meaning of the word 'liberation'
- To explore the impact of the liberation of the Nazi camps and ghettos on those who liberated them and those who were liberated
- To develop critical thinking and a sense of empathy with those who have experienced suffering in the past
- To explore the importance of this story on Wales and the wider world and its connections to contemporary issues, including refugees, antisemitism, prejudice and racism

## Curriculum links

### The Four Purposes

Ambitious, capable learners who:

- are building up a body of knowledge and have the skills to connect and apply that knowledge in different contexts
- can communicate effectively in different forms and settings
- can explain the ideas and concepts they are learning about
- undertake research and evaluate critically what they find

Enterprising, creative contributors who:

- connect and apply their knowledge and skills to create ideas and products
- think creatively to reframe and solve problems
- express ideas and emotions through different media

Ethical, informed citizens who:

- find, evaluate and use evidence in forming views
- engage with contemporary issues based upon their knowledge and values
- understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights
- understand and consider the impact of their actions when making choices and acting
- are knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world, now and in the past
- respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society

Healthy, confident individuals who:

- have secure values and are establishing their spiritual and ethical beliefs
- are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy
- have the confidence to participate in performance

### Statements of What Matters

Main Area of Learning and Experience: Humanities

Progression Step: 4

- Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future
- Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways
- Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs

- Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action

#### Other Areas of Learning and Experience:

##### Health and Well-being

- How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being
- How we engage with social influences shapes who we are and affects our health and well-being

##### Languages, Literacy and Communication

- Expressing ourselves through languages is key to communication

#### **Cross curricular skills and integral skills**

##### Literacy

- Developing oracy through discussion, role play, questioning and presentations, and adapting oracy skills for audience and purpose while listening to and debating different viewpoints
- Developing all styles of writing, e.g. describing, explaining, discussing, evaluating and creative writing, combined with the use of disciplinary-specific terminology and vocabulary
- Accessing and exploring a range of texts from a variety of places and times to analyse evidence, to think critically, to infer meaning, and to evaluate interpretations and viewpoints

##### Creativity and innovation

- Encouraging openness to different ideas and ways of thinking, enabling the expression of reasoned opinions about these differences

##### Critical thinking and problem-solving

- Developing the ability to think analytically and understand the past and present as well as to imagine possible futures
- Collecting, reflecting and critically evaluating the use of sources and evidence

##### Personal effectiveness

- Evaluating, justifying and expressing considered responses in a variety of ways

#### **Cross-cutting themes**

##### Relationship and sexuality education (RSE):

- The material offers learners opportunities to explore human rights, values, ethics, philosophies, and religious views relating to relationships

- It supports learners to engage critically with local, national, and global RSE issues in both the past and present, helping them to become ethical, informed citizens

Human rights education and diversity (e.g., discrimination, racism, antisemitism, refugees)

- Learners develop an understanding of the importance of democratic values and human rights and reflect on their civic responsibilities

### Cynefin – supporting learning in local contexts

The Holocaust is a large topic that can seem distant to learners in Wales. These resources allow learners to hear the stories of people who were directly affected by the Holocaust, and who lived in Wales. These are the stories of people who contributed to and were part of their local Welsh communities. They settled and had families here and their history is part of the story of Wales.

Learning about the Holocaust through local examples allows learners to discover their heritage and develop a sense of place and cynefin. It also removes the idea of ‘otherness’ – that this happened to other people in another place and time – and instead creates feelings of connection and empathy. These local examples can help learners to understand the link between Welsh history and global events like the Second World War and the Holocaust.

The full list of 20 resources about The Holocaust and Wales are:

- [Kindertransport 1: Jewish Life in Central Europe before the Second World War](#)
- [Kindertransport 2: The Journey to Britain](#)
- [Kindertransport 3: Arrival in Wales](#)
- [Kindertransport 4: Life in Wales](#)
- [Kristallnacht 1: Memories of Kristallnacht](#)
- [Kristallnacht 2: The last bar mitzvah](#)
- [Jewish Artists in Wales 1: Josef Herman](#)
- [Jewish Artists in Wales 2: Heinz Koppel](#)
- [Aero Zipp Fasteners at Treforest Trading Estate](#)
- [General Paper and Box Manufacturing Company at Treforest Trading Estate](#)
- [Internment of ‘enemy aliens’ 1](#)
- [Internment of ‘enemy aliens’ 2](#)
- [Jewish Refugees as Domestic Servants](#)
- [Jewish Refugee Doctors, Dentists and Nurses in Wales](#)
- [Jewish Refugees in the British Army during the Second World War](#)
- [Religious Life of Jewish Refugees in Wales](#)
- [The Welsh Language](#)
- [Liberation](#)



- [Identity](#)
- [Remembering the Holocaust](#)

## Ideas for activities

### Activity 1

The resource could be used to better understand the scale and inner workings of the Nazi camps and ghettos and their role in the Holocaust. Ask learners to read the **background information** on the Nazi camp system and ghettos and look at the **map**.

What were the major differences between the Nazi camps (concentration, transit, forced labour, prisoner of war, extermination) and the ghettos?

NB – it should be noted that some camps had many different functions e.g. Majdanek was initially a concentration/forced labour camp before it was converted to an extermination camp.

Ask learners if they can name any Nazi camps and identify what type of camp they were. e.g. Auschwitz-Birkenau (extermination camp); Dachau (concentration camp); Ravensbrück (concentration camp for female inmates); Treblinka (extermination camp); Drancy (transit camp); Stalag Luft III (prisoner-of-war camp and site of the 'Great Escape').

#### **Some useful questions:**

- Why did the prisoner population of Bergen-Belsen rise so rapidly between 1944 and 1945? What effects did this have on those imprisoned there?
- Why did the Nazis describe Theresienstadt as a 'spa town'?

### Activity 2

The resource could be used to highlight the geography of the Holocaust. Ask learners to read the **background information** on the Nazi camp system and ghettos and look at the **map**.

#### **Some useful questions:**

- Where were most concentration camps located?
- Why were most centres in Western Europe transit camps?
- Where were death/extermination camps located?
- Why were most of the mass murder sites in Eastern Europe?

What does the location of the various camps/ghettos/killing sites tell us about Nazi policy towards the Jews during the Second World War?

### Activity 3

The resource could be used to consider the meaning of the word 'liberation'. Ask learners to consider this word and write a sentence beginning with, 'To me, liberation means...' Then, create a word cloud from the significant words that they used in their sentences. What are the most common words? Why?

Ask learners to read the **short biography** of William Richard Williams and listen to [Audio Clip: William Richard Williams entering Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp](#).

#### **Some useful questions:**

- What was William Richard Williams' initial reaction to arriving at Bergen-Belsen?
- What details does he remember most?
- How might this have affected him?
- Why were soldiers asked to refer to inmates as 'Displaced Persons'?

Ask learners to read the **short biography** of Leslie Hardman and listen to [Audio Clip: Leslie Hardman entering Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp](#).

#### **Some useful questions:**

- What was the reaction of the women to their liberation?
- What did they want from Rev. Hardman when he arrived?
- Was it important to the women that he was Jewish? Why?

### Activity 4

The resource could be used to interrogate the use of war diaries as historical sources. Ask learners to read the **short biography** of Manfred Gans and his **war diary**. What is their initial impression of Manfred's account? How does Manfred describe the ghetto in Theresienstadt?

#### **Some useful questions:**

- How did conditions in Theresienstadt Ghetto differ from those at Bergen-Belsen? Why do you think the conditions were different?
- What was the response of other survivors to the reunion between Manfred and his parents? Why might this have been the case?
- What are the benefits of using war diaries as historical sources? What are some of the potential problems?

Ask learners to write an analysis of Manfred's diary as a source. It should be approximately one page long and include a discussion of the source's significance, context, author, content, intended audience, and how it adds to our understanding of the Holocaust.

## Activity 5

The resource could be used to consider the impact of liberation on liberators and liberated. Ask learners to listen to [Audio Clip: William Richard Williams entering Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp](#) and [Audio Clip: Leslie Hardman entering Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp](#), and read Manfred Gans' **war diary**.

Based on their testimonies and **biographies**, ask learners to consider the impact that liberation had on both the liberators and liberated. They should then write their responses in two columns. For example:

### **Liberated**

Freedom from immediate threat of Nazi persecution

### **Liberators**

In-depth knowledge of the scale of Nazi atrocities

### **Some useful questions:**

- Could liberation mean different things to different people? Why?
- What challenges might liberators and liberated have faced after the war?