

Short Lesson 3: 'We knew nothing about what was going on'? (Part 1)

What does the evidence suggest that ordinary Germans knew about the Nazi concentration camps?

Lesson 3 overview



Hi! Good to see you again! In this 30-minute lesson you are going to;

- 3 a) Start to think about the extent to which ordinary Germans knew about the concentration camps. (5 mins.)
- 3 b) Start to look at sources on the Nazi concentration camps website to find out what ordinary Germans knew about the camps. In doing so, you will complete 3 record cards for 3 different sources. (20 mins.)
- 3 c) To take a short quiz to see what you have learned so far from the sources. (5 mins.)



Lesson 3 Historical key words

this may help when looking at historical sources this lesson

Helpful vocabulary for this is given at the end of this Powerpoint, on slides 17 and 18.

You will not necessarily use all the words given, but they are provided for help if you do.



3 a) Your first thoughts...

How much did ordinary people actually know about what was going on inside the concentration camps?

Take a minute just to think about this. What do you think? How certain can you be?

Write a sentence to record your initial answer to this question.

3 a) What do other students think?



In 2016, UCL Centre for Holocaust Education surveyed students from a variety of schools from all over England to find out about their knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust. **6,897 students from all around England gave an answer to the question**

'Who was responsible for the Holocaust?'

- **Almost 8 out of every 10 students (79.4%) mentioned 'Hitler' as responsible.**
- **Less than 1 out of every 10 students (3.9%) mentioned 'Germans'**

So how much did ordinary people actually know about what was going on inside the camps? The next 2 lessons you are going to be finding out.

3 b) Enquiry



You are going to investigate the question
'What did ordinary Germans know about the concentration camps?'

We know that very few (3.9%) of secondary school students think ordinary Germans had no responsibility for the Holocaust. Does the evidence support this?



3 b) Enquiry: Looking at evidence

You are going to read 3 pieces of evidence from the Nazi concentration camps website www.camps.bbk.ac.uk. For each one, complete a record card, which you will later use to help respond to the enquiry question. The cards are given to you in the next 3 slides.

- Click on the 'Documents' tab, or alternatively click this icon here 
- Scroll down to the 10 documents in the 'Public' section
- Click on and read each of these 3, and complete a record card for each of them;

094 – Buchenwald survivor Eugen Kogon on popular knowledge about the camps

097 – A German teacher on popular knowledge of the camps

100 – A German civilian recalls wartime encounters with prisoners

What does the evidence suggest about the relationship between the wider German public and the Nazi concentration camps?

Date	Description	Evidence of the relationship between the wider German public and the Nazi concentration camps	Implications	Any further questions?
1946	Ordinary Germans	<i>What does Eugen Kogon say about popular German knowledge of the concentration camps?</i>	<i>What does this say about what ordinary Germans knew? Were ordinary Germans in any way responsible for the camps?</i>	<i>If time you could look at some of the Films and Testimony on the website. e.g. the first 2 minutes of Christa M's testimony</i>

What does the evidence suggest about the relationship between the wider German public and the Nazi concentration camps?

Date	Description	Evidence of the relationship between the wider German public and the Nazi concentration camps	Implications	Any further questions?
After the war	German witnesses	<i>What does the teacher say 'everyone' knew about in Nordhausen, even if they later denied this?</i>	<i>What does this say about what ordinary Germans knew? Were ordinary Germans in any way responsible for the camps?</i>	<i>If time you could look at some of the Films and Testimony on the website. e.g. the first 2 minutes of Christa M's testimony</i>

What does the evidence suggest about the relationship between the wider German public and the Nazi concentration camps?

Date	Description	Evidence of the relationship between the wider German public and the Nazi concentration camps	Implications	Any further questions?
After the war / 1944	Looking Away	<p><i>What did a civilian in Danzig see every morning?</i></p> <p><i>How did she react?</i></p>	<p><i>What does this say about what ordinary Germans knew? Were ordinary Germans in any way responsible for the camps?</i></p>	<p><i>If time you could look at some of the Films and Testimony on the website. e.g. the first 2 minutes of Christa M's testimony</i></p>



3 c) End of lesson quiz

You will be given 3 multiple-choice questions to see how your knowledge and understanding of Nazi concentration camps is developing.

Use a pen and paper to record you answers.

At the end of the quiz are the answers. You can use this to see how you've done.

3 c) End of short lesson quiz

Question 1

Which of the following is not a way that Eugen Kogon mentions that ordinary Germans had knowledge of the concentration camps?

- A. From foreign radio broadcasts
- B. From films made by inmates to show camp conditions
- C. From seeing inmates working
- D. From seeing processions of inmates pass by
- E. From business people selling things to camps

3 c) End of lesson quiz

Question 2

A German teacher talking about popular knowledge of the camps said all the following apart from one. Which is it?

- A. Everyone saw the Zebra (prisoner) columns marching
- B. There were always heavily armed SS with them
- C. There were vehicles full of dead bodies that were easily seen
- D. Everyone who says they didn't know what was happening in Dora camp is telling the truth
- E. Ordinary Germans worked with the inmates in factories

3 c) End of lesson quiz

Question 3

A German civilian who saw female inmates from Stutthof at a factory mentioned all of the following apart from which one?

- A. She saw them every morning
- B. They were being ‘hounded to work’
- C. There were SS women in uniforms and whips with them
- D. The inmates were Dutch communists
- E. The inmates were described as ‘miserable’

3 c) End of lesson quiz

Answers

All the statements in the 3 sources are true, apart from the following;

1. B. From films made by inmates to show camp conditions
2. D. Everyone who says they didn't know what was happening in Dora camp is telling the truth
3. D. The inmates were Dutch communists

End of mini-lesson 3

Well done!

You have now completed the third of six short lessons about the Nazi concentration camps.

We look forward to seeing you soon for lesson 4, where you will get to use the Nazi concentration camps website to continue to explore some of the sources to help you decide... **How much did ordinary people actually know about what was going on inside the concentration camps?**



Lesson 3 Historical key words

this may help when looking at historical sources this lesson

Auschwitz	The largest and deadliest concentration camp, located in Nazi-occupied Poland
Buchenwald	One of the first and largest concentration camps, established in 1937 near Weimar in Germany
concentration camp	SS camp used to confine and persecute Nazi prisoners
death march	A forced march from evacuated concentration camps to prevent prisoners from falling into Allied hands
Dachau	The first concentration camp opened by Himmler near Munich in 1933, originally set up for political prisoners
Dora	A concentration camp in central Germany, built in 1943 as a satellite camp of Buchenwald for the underground production of V2 rockets
Flossenbürg	A concentration camp built in 1938 by the SS near quarries in Bavaria, Germany
Himmler	Chief of the SS and German police who oversaw the Holocaust
Hitler Youth (HJ)	Nazi youth organisation, with compulsory membership for German boys and girls from 1939 onwards
Mauthausen	Concentration camp set up near quarries in Austria in 1938
satellite camps	Smaller <u>subcamps</u> for forced labour linked to the larger main concentration camps
SS	The SS (Schutzstaffel, or "Protection Squad"), a paramilitary Nazi formation, in charge of guarding the concentration camps
V2 rockets	The world's first long range guided ballistic missile, used by Germany towards the end of the war
Zebras	Nickname given to prisoners on account of their striped uniforms



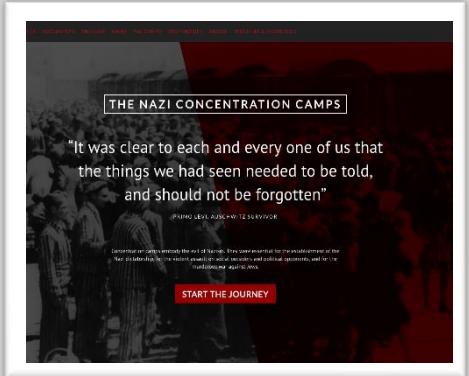
Lesson 3 General key words

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apathetic	Not being interested in or caring about something (see indifference)
asocial	Living according to different rules; social outsiders
blaspheme	To speak badly about God or sacred things
collaboration	Working together
diligence	Being careful and thorough
discreet	Being careful about what you say to other people. Not saying too much
émigrés	People who have left their country to live in another one, often for political reasons
fugitive	An escaped prisoner
indifference	Not being interested in or caring about something (see apathetic)
inmates	Prisoners
massacre	The killing of a large number of often defenceless people
mendacious	Lying
parasite	Something that lives off something else; used as a propaganda term by the Nazis to denigrate the Jews and other social outsiders
propaganda	Misleading information used to persuade somebody
recidivist	A convicted criminal who keeps reoffending
remnant	Something 'left over'
sanatoria	Places to medically treat people with a chronic illness
sobriety	Not drinking alcohol
solidarity	People supporting each other and standing up for others
unpalatable	Difficult to put up with or accept
vagabond	A homeless person with no job

'We knew nothing about what was going on'

**What does the evidence suggest ordinary
Germans knew about the Nazi concentration
camps?**



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