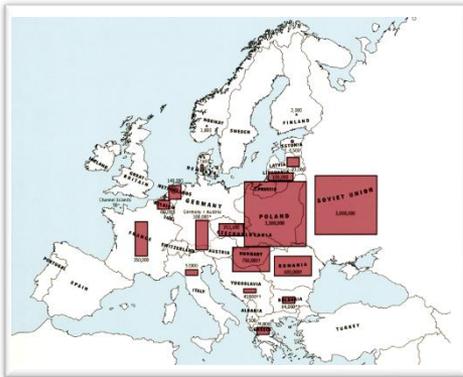

6 things you should know about the Holocaust



4. How did the British government respond to the Holocaust?

The fourth in a series of 6, 20-minute self-study short lessons for KS3

Short lesson 4 overview



Hello again, and welcome to the fourth of six short, 20-minute lessons that I've put together for you to help address some of the common misunderstandings many students have about the Holocaust.

In this 20 minute lesson you are going to;

- 4 a) Reflect on how the British government responded when they learned about the Holocaust (5 mins.)
- 4 b) Explore two historical sources that explore what the British government knew (10 mins.)
- 4 c) Reflect on the implications of this in a quiz (5 mins.)



Key terms for this lesson

Key term	Meaning
degradation	Becoming worse
exterminate	To destroy completely
indignation	Anger about something that's not fair
liberation	Setting free
massacre	A large-scale killing
perverted	Something that isn't normal and is strange or unpleasant
retribution	Revenge
slaughter	The brutal killing of large numbers of human beings

4 a) What happened when the British government knew about the mass murder of Jews?



- A. Declare war on Germany
- B. Develop rescue plans to save Jewish people
- C. Punish the killers after the war
- D. Bomb Auschwitz
- E. Attack Jews in Britain
- F. Ignore it
- G. None of the above – the government knew nothing until the end of the war

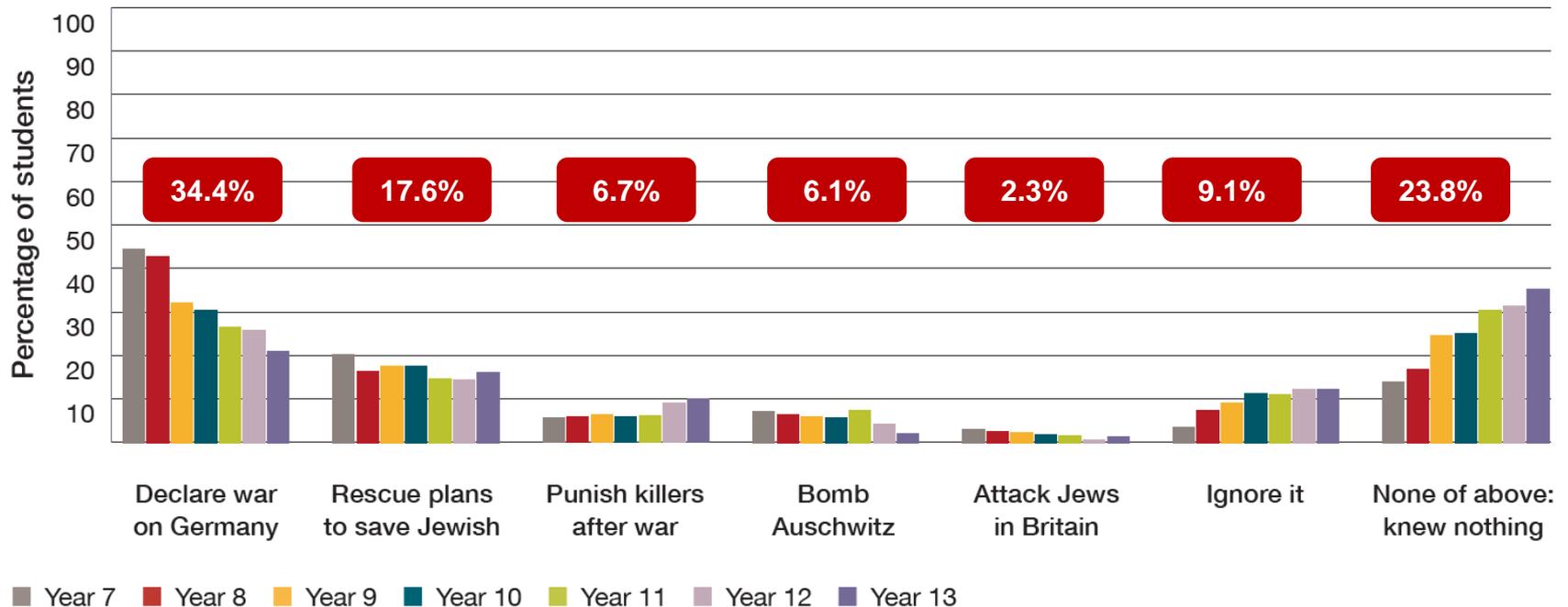
Choose one option that you think is the best answer and write it down

4 a) What happened when the British government knew about the mass murder of Jews?



In a large survey conducted by UCL in 2016, this is how secondary school students from all over England in a variety of different schools answered the question.

- What are the most popular answers?
- Do you agree or disagree with the most popular answers? Why?



4 b) What happened when the British government knew about the mass murder of Jews?



The next two slides show two sources;

- **Source A** is from the newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*, from June 1942.
- **Source B** is from the notes of end of a speech given by Prime Minister Winston Churchill in parliament in September 1942.

Read them both and think about what they are saying about what people knew about the mass murder of Jews, and when. Also, what was the British government's plan when they found out?



GERMANS MURDER 700,000 JEWS IN POLAND

TRAVELLING GAS CHAMBERS

DAILY TELEGRAPH REPORTER

More than 700,000 Polish Jews have been slaughtered by the Germans in the greatest massacre in the world's history. In addition, a system of starvation is being carried out in which the number of deaths, on the admission of the Germans themselves, bids fair to be almost as large.

The most gruesome details of mass killing, even to the use of poison gas, are revealed in a report sent secretly to Mr. S. Zygielboim, Jewish representative on the Polish National Council in London, by an active group in Poland. It is strongly felt that action should be taken to prevent Hitler from carrying out his threat that five minutes before the war ends, however it may end, he will exterminate all Jews in Europe.

It was the avowed intention of the Germans from the early days of the war to exterminate the Jewish population on Polish territory.

In a 1940 New Year message Gauleiter Greiser said that the only use to be made of the Poles was as slaves for Germany, but for the Jews there was no future.

trace of them has been lost. About 3,000 more were put into barracks in a Lublin suburb. Now there is not a single Jew there.

In Cracow during March 50 men on a proscribed list were shot outside their homes. A similar number of men and women were killed outside their street doors during an arranged night of terror in the Warsaw ghetto. All social groups in the ghetto were affected. More such nights are expected.

The Warsaw ghetto, actually an extensive concentration camp, houses

Source A

from the newspaper
The Daily Telegraph,
from June 1942.

(You don't need to read the whole of this. Just the headlines and the first paragraph or two is fine.)



Source A

from the newspaper
The Daily Telegraph,
from June 1942.



© Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

This comes from The Daily Telegraph, June 1942.

This newspaper is a British national newspaper that was read widely round the whole country. The Second World War started in 1939 and ended in 1945, which means that this newspaper comes from the mid-point of the war.

It clearly shows that at this time the government knew something about the mass killings of Jews, and so too did the British public.

It therefore shows that Option D in the survey – that the British government didn't know anything about what was happening - is false.



58.

This tragedy fills one with astonishment
as well as with indignation,

and illustrates as nothing else can do,
the utter degradation of the Nazi nature
and of all who lend themselves
to its unnatural and perverted passions.

When the hour of liberation strikes in Europe,
as strike it will,
it will also be the hour of retribution.



In this speech the 'tragedy' Churchill is
talking about is the 'mass deportation of
Jews from France' to Nazi camps in the east.

Reference: CHAR 9/156 A
Image © The Sir Winston Churchill Archive Trust
& content © the copyright owner. 2001 8x

Source B

from the notes of end of a
speech given by Prime Minister
Winston Churchill in parliament
in September 1942.



© The Imperial War Museum

Source B

from the notes of end of a speech given by Prime Minister Winston Churchill in parliament in September 1942.



This comes from Churchill's speech in parliament, three months after Source A was published.

Churchill says that;

'When the hour of liberation strikes in Europe, as strike it will, it will also be the hour of retribution.'



Retribution means getting revenge. Churchill is clearly saying that once the war has been won, then the killers will be punished. This was the policy of the British government, which means the correct answer in the survey is C – **to punish the killers after the war.**

4 b) What happened when the British government knew about the mass murder of Jews?



- For each source, A and B, can you explain whether they support your answer in slide 4. If so, how, and if not, why not?

**GERMANS MURDER 700,000
JEWS IN POLAND**

TRAVELLING GAS CHAMBERS

DAILY TELEGRAPH REPORTER

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Source A

58.

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and illustrates as nothing else can do, the utter degradation of the Nazi nature and of all who lend themselves to its unnatural and perverted passions.

When the hour of liberation strikes in Europe, as strike it will, it will also be the hour of retribution.

THE CHARITABLE TRUST

Source B

4 b) What happened when the British government knew about the mass murder of Jews?



So, the British government decided the best way to help the Jews was to win the war as quickly as possible, but it did not declare war explicitly to save them.

You may have heard about rescue plans to save Jewish children. This was known as **kindertransport**. But these plans were made by British individuals, like Nicholas Winton, and were not the actions of the government. Also, kindertransport happened mostly before the war started, and therefore before the mass killing of Jews had started. The evidence shows, therefore, that option B in the survey - the British government developed rescue plans to save Jews - is not true.



Nicholas Winton © USHMM

4 c) End of lesson quiz



Now you've completed this short lesson, if you were now asked ***What happened when the British government knew about the mass murder of Jews?*** what would you say, and why?

- A. Declare war on Germany
- B. Develop rescue plans to save Jewish people
- C. Punish the killers after the war
- D. Bomb Auschwitz
- E. Attack Jews in Britain
- F. Ignore it
- G. None of the above, the government knew nothing until the end of the war

4 c) End of lesson quiz

Answer

What happened when the British government knew about the mass murder of Jews?

C – Punish the killers after the war.

The most popular answer among all secondary school students surveyed in 2016 was **A – Declare war on Germany**. But at the start of the war, in 1939, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain said Britain was declaring war on Germany because it had invaded Poland. Britain had signed a treaty with Poland to come to her aid if she was invaded. There was no mention of going to war on behalf of the Jews, and the Holocaust hadn't started in 1939.

End of short lesson 4

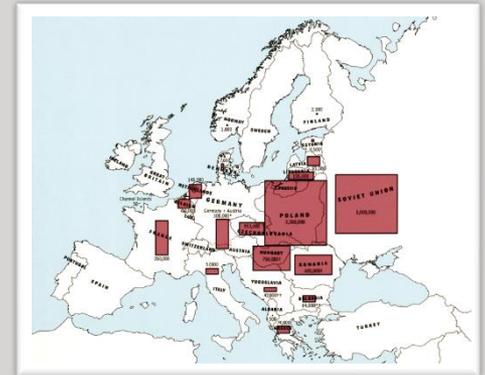
Well done!

You have now completed the fourth of six short lessons about important things you should know about the Holocaust. Now you are starting to understand that **The British government decided the best way to help the Jews was to win the war as quickly as possible, but it did not declare war explicitly to save them.**

We look forward to seeing you soon for short lesson 5, where you will explore what Nazi concentration camps were like.

6 things you should know about the Holocaust

4. The British government decided the best way to help the Jews was to win the war as quickly as possible, but it did not declare war explicitly to save them.



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