

6 things you should know about the Holocaust

5. What were Nazi concentration camps like?

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

Short lesson 5 overview



Hello – great to see you again. This is the fifth 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;

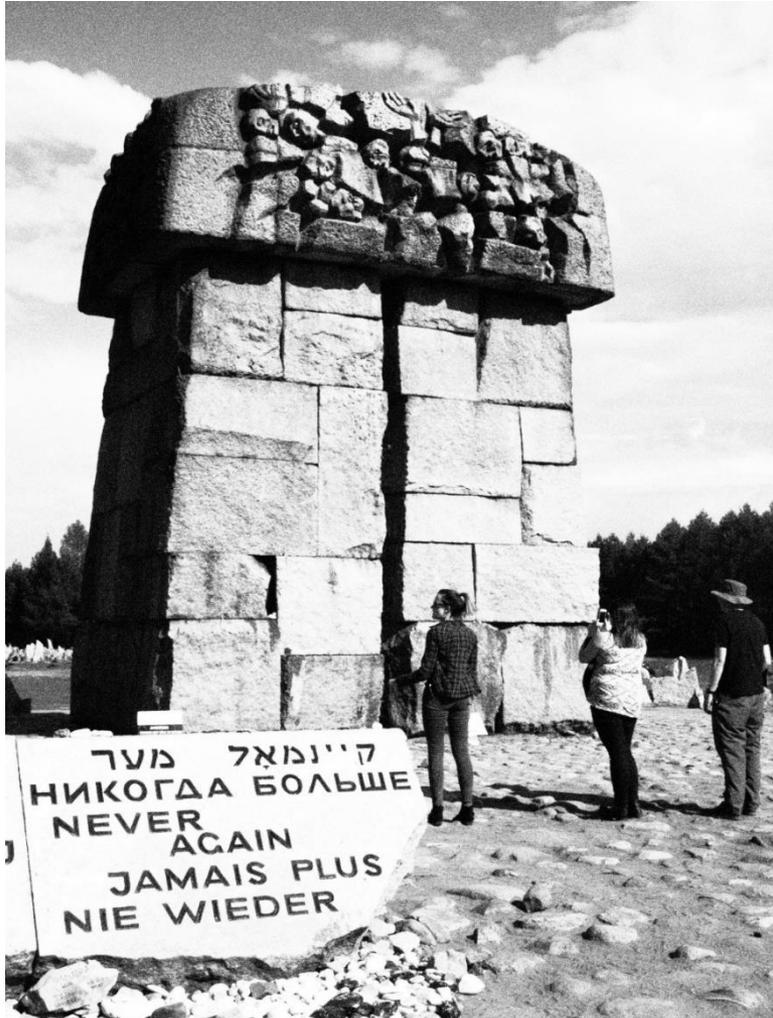
- 5 a) Reflect on what you think Nazi concentration camps were like (5 mins.)
- 5 b) Explore three descriptions of Nazi camps (10 mins.)
- 5 c) Reflect on the implications of this in a quiz (5 mins.)



Key terms for this lesson

| Key term | Meaning |
|--------------|---|
| amiable | Friendly |
| asocial | Someone who doesn't fit in to 'normal' society |
| barracks | Huts where the inmates (prisoners) stayed |
| derelict | Left empty and abandoned |
| dilapidated | Something that's run-down and uncared for |
| infested | Large numbers of insects, such as lice, that then cause disease |
| meticulously | Very carefully and thoroughly |
| munitions | Weapons used by an army |

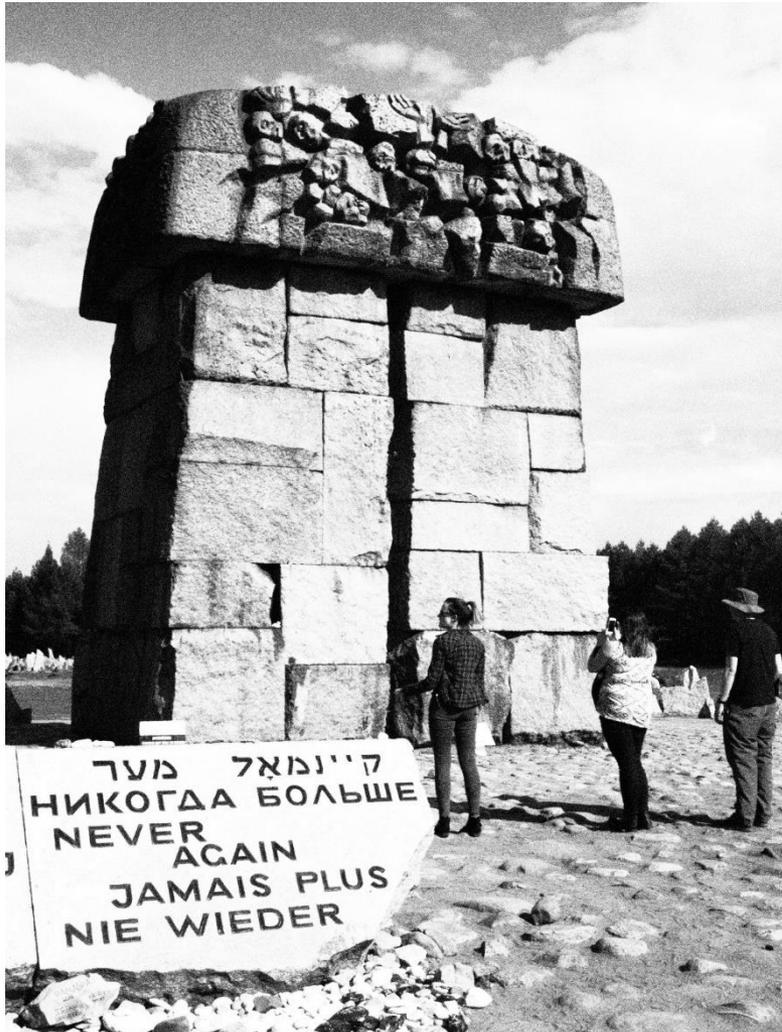
5 a) What were Nazi concentration camps like?



Look carefully at the photo.

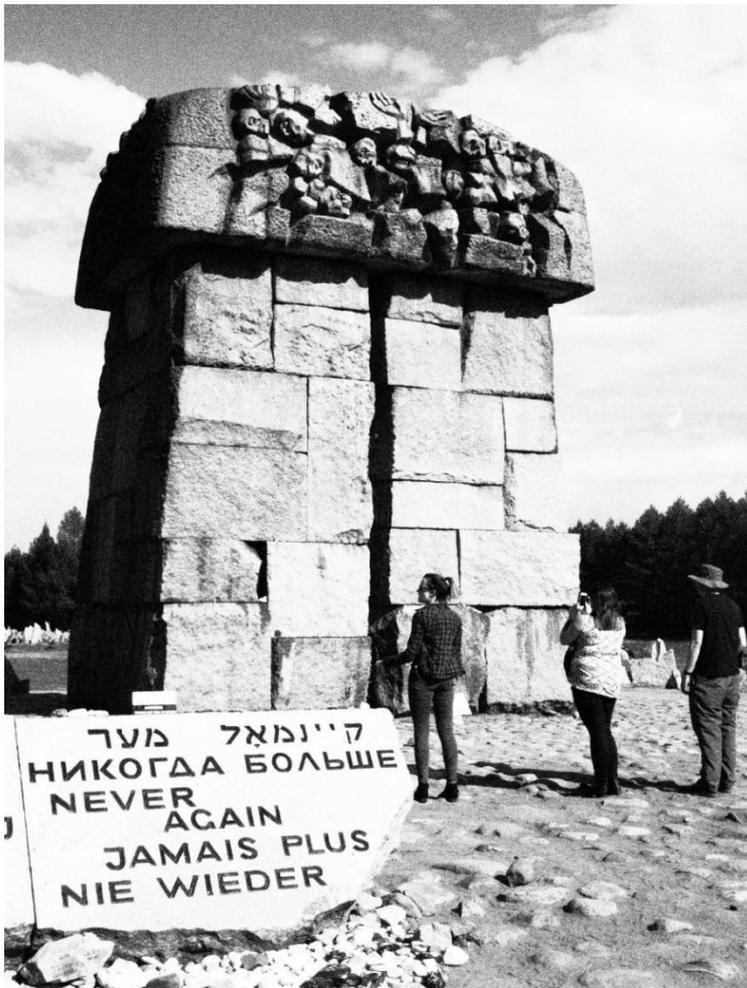
- What do you think it is showing?
- Where has it been taken?
- How can you tell?

5 a) What were Nazi concentration camps like?



This photo is of a Nazi camp called Treblinka, showing what it looks like today. A memorial to those men, women and children who were murdered there, is seen in the foreground. Like Auschwitz, Treblinka was one of only five death camps, from the tens of thousands of other types of camp. Treblinka is in Poland north-east of Warsaw. But not all camps were in Poland; not all camps were death camps; and many Jews murdered in the Holocaust were not in camps at all. It also changed a lot during its short lifetime, from July 1942 to October 1943.

5 a) What were Nazi concentration camps like?

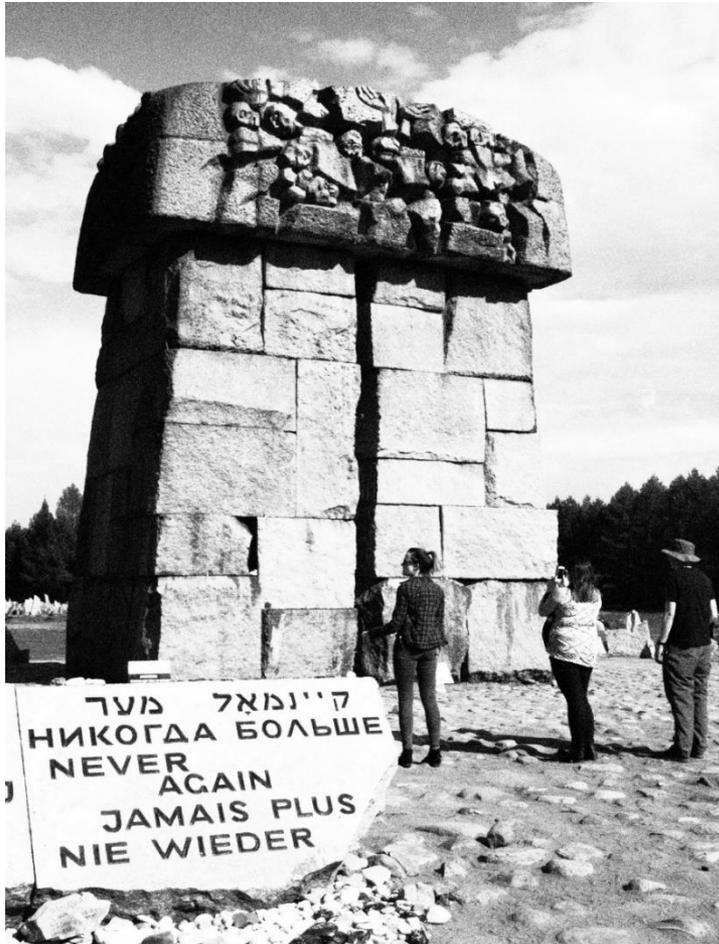


A common misconception is that camps were quite similar and didn't change much over time. In fact, this is untrue. There were many different types of camps. Some you may come across are;

- Concentration camps
- Labour camps
- Transit camps
- Prisoner-of-war camps
- Death camps

Can you say what the difference between them is?

5 a) What were Nazi concentration camps like?



- **Concentration camps** - for civilians seen as enemies of the Nazis
- **Labour camps** – where prisoners were forced to work in poor conditions
- **Transit camps** – temporary accommodation for inmates before being moved, often to a death camp
- **Prisoner-of-war camps** – for Allied prisoners of war, such as Poles, Russians, French and even some British
- **Death camps** – the only purpose of these camps was to murder mostly Jews on their arrival, usually through the use of poison gas. However, many inmates also died in other camps from starvation and murder.

5 a) What were Nazi concentration camps like?



Here is a map of just some of the thousands of camps in Nazi-occupied Europe. Use the key to write down which ones were the death camps. You might notice that there are only 6 of them and they are all in Nazi-occupied Poland.



5 b) What were Nazi concentration camps like?



10 mins.



The next three slides are 3 places labelled A, B and C.

Read each one and think about what similarities and differences there are between them. Make a list of them as you read.

Don't forget the vocabulary list on Slide 3 if you need it.

Place A



'It is a cold evening... the... prisoners are having bread, sausage and tea inside the former office of a dilapidated munitions plant... cordoned off from the rest of the deserted factory ground with its crumbling structure, broken concrete foundations, and derelict roads. In all, there are no more than 100 or 120 political prisoners... the guards were... amiable policeman, who chatted with the prisoners, handed out cigarettes, and even slept in the same building.'

What is being described? How can you tell?

Place B



‘Nearly four thousand men with cropped hair stand to attention in striped uniforms, dreading another day of forced labour. Except for a group of Czechs, virtually all the prisoners are German or Austrian, though their common language is often all they share; coloured triangles on their uniforms identify them as political prisoners, asocials, criminals, homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, or Jews.... Each of the thirty four purpose-built huts is around 110 yards long; the floors inside are gleaming and the bunks are meticulously made up. Escape is almost impossible...’

What is being described? How can you tell?

Place C



‘Later that afternoon, they come upon thirty two thousand survivors from many ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds, representing about thirty European nations. Some seem more dead than alive... Many more lie in overcrowded barracks, infested with dirt and disease... dead bodies, sprawled between barracks, dumped in ditches, stacked like logs by the camp’s crematorium...’

What is being described? How can you tell?

5 b) What were Nazi concentration camps like?



So – what did you notice about the 3 places described?

- What was being described?
- What was similar or different about them?

5 b) What were Nazi concentration camps like?



The camp being described is the same place in all 3 descriptions. It is Dachau, a camp close to Munich in Germany. The descriptions are ;

A – from 1934

B – from 1939 (the start of the war)

C – from 1945 (the end of the war)

One of the key learning points here is to show just how much camps changed over time.

- If you want a challenge, think about *why* did camps like Dachau change so much?

(think about, or research, what was going on in the Second World War at the time of each description)

5 b) What were Nazi concentration camps like?



So, Most Nazi camps were not death camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau: they were often quite different and often changed over time.

Auschwitz was not a typical camp. It was actually three camps in one; a concentration camp, a death camp and a labour camp. It also changed a lot; at the beginning of the war it was used for Polish prisoners of war, and only later for Jews, especially in 1944 from Hungary.

Camps were also different to prisons. People who have been sent to prison have usually been tried in a court of law and found guilty. Most inmates in camps were sent straight there and had no trial.

5 c) End of lesson quiz



You will be given **3 multiple-choice questions** to see how your knowledge and understanding of Nazi camps has started to develop.

Use a pen and paper to record your answers.

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

5 c) End of lesson quiz

Question 1

Which statement is true of Nazi concentration camps?

- A. They were the same as prisons
- B. There were 10 of them in continental Europe
- C. They were all in Germany
- D. There were many different types of camp

5 c) End of lesson quiz

Question 2

Which of these is not a type of Nazi camp

- A Prisoner-of-war camp
- B Holiday camp
- C Concentration camp
- D Death camp

5 c) End of lesson quiz

Question 3

The first camp, Dachau, was established in 1933. Who was mostly kept there at the beginning?

- A. Political prisoners
- B. Jews
- C. The Disabled
- D. All of the above

5 c) End of lesson quiz

Answers

1. D

2. B

3. A

End of short lesson 5

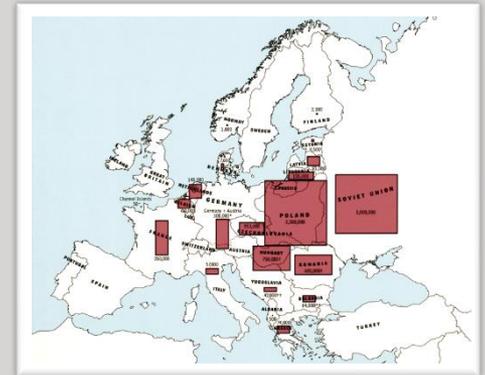
Well done!

You have now completed the fifth of six short lessons about important things you should know about the Holocaust. Now you are starting to understand that **Most Nazi camps were not death camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau: they were quite different and often changed over time.**

We look forward to seeing you soon for short lesson 6, where you will think about how Jews resisted the Holocaust.

6 things you should know about the Holocaust

5. Most Nazi camps were not death camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau: they were diverse and often changed over time.



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