

'After the War' History lesson 1: What was life like for 'The Boys' before the war?

Jewish life in Poland before the Second World War

Lesson objective: To secure knowledge and understanding about the long history of Jewish life in Poland, the diversity of pre-war Jewish life in Poland and anti-Jewish prejudice and discrimination.	
Starter / stimulus: photograph	<p>Use the image in slide 2 as a stimulus. Discuss the question 'Who were 'The Boys'?' What can students infer from this photograph about 'The Boys'? What impression does this photograph create?</p> <p>Use slide 3 to introduce the focus of this series of lessons: 'The main characters in Tom Palmer's novel 'After the War' are fictional characters. Their experiences are based upon the real-life experiences of a group of child Holocaust survivors known as 'The Boys'. In these lessons you will secure your knowledge and understanding of what happened to 'The Boys', who inspired the novel and upon whom the characters of Yossi, Mordecai and Leo are based.'</p>
Extracts from 'After the War'	<p>The extracts in this lesson (slide 5 & 6) contain Yossi's memories of his home and his family before the war. These could be read through together as a whole class or individually. Encourage students to consider the following question as they read this extract: 'What can we infer from these extracts about Jewish life in Poland before the war?'</p> <p>*Throughout the lesson encourage student enquiry. It is likely that students will have lots of questions as they work through this lesson / these lessons: 'What questions do you have?' These can be shared with the class as they progress through the lesson and / or recorded to return to and reflect upon at the end of the lesson/s. Reassure students that these questions will be explored and revisited and that they are going to find out more about what life was like for Jewish people in Poland before the war.</p>
Stimuli: photographs	<p>The three photographs (slides 8 – 10) all show Jewish children in Poland before the outbreak of the Second World War. These children would have been a similar age to 'The Boys'. The images could be viewed individually, in pairs and smaller groups to encourage discussion, or as a whole class.</p> <p>As students look through the images encourage them to answer the following questions: 'What can you see? Who is in the photographs? What are they doing? What can we infer from these photographs about Jewish life in Poland before the Second World War? What questions do you have?'</p>
Organising emerging knowledge	<p>Students are beginning to gain knowledge about what life was like for Jewish people in Poland before the war. Encourage students to organise their emerging knowledge in a word cloud (slide 12). This can be added to as knowledge and understanding increases throughout the lesson.</p>

<p>Testimony of 'The Boys'</p>	<p>Testimony is a spoken or written statement describing an event or experience. Here students will use a selection of short written testimony from 'The Boys', the child Holocaust survivors upon whom the central characters in the novel 'After the War' were based upon (slides 13 – 16).</p> <p>Students could work through the testimonies in small groups, each student reporting back upon one of the testimonies. As they work through them students should be encouraged to answer the following and to develop their word clouds: 'What can we learn from this testimony about what life was like for 'The Boys' in Poland before the war? Does the testimony support or challenge your initial ideas (revisit your word cloud)? (slide 17)</p>
<p>Historical context: context card 1 'Jewish Life in Poland before the war.'</p>	<p>Share context card 1: 'Jewish Life in Poland before the war.' with your students. This can be read together as a class or independently. Student should write or discuss their responses to the following questions (slide 18):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many Jewish people lived in Poland before the war? 2. When had Jewish people settled in Poland? 3. Where did Jewish people live? 4. What type of jobs did Jewish people have? 5. How would you describe relations between Jews and non-Jews in Poland?
<p>Applying knowledge and understanding</p>	<p>Drawing upon all of the knowledge and understanding gained throughout the lesson students should write a paragraph in response to the following question (slide 18) :</p> <p>What was life like for 'The Boys' before the war?</p>