

'After the War' History lesson 4: How and why did the Holocaust end?

The end of the Second World War

Lesson objective: To secure knowledge and understanding about how and why the Holocaust ended. To explore the experiences of some of 'The Boys' at the end of the Holocaust.

Starter / Stimuli: photographs

Use the images in slides 3 & 4 as stimuli. Students can examine these as a class or in smaller groups. Encourage them to consider the following questions: What can you see? Who is in the photographs? What are they doing? What do you think is happening in these photographs? Who might have taken these photographs? Why might they have been taken?

Discuss student responses to these photographs as a class. Then share the contextual information about them (slide 5). Encourage students to answer the following questions (slide 6): 'What can we learn from these photographs about what happened to Jewish people at the end of the Holocaust? What questions do you have?'

*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 how and why the Holocaust ended.

Extracts from 'After the War'

These extracts (slides 7 - 9) contain the central characters memories of the end of the war. Students could read these independently or as a class. Encourage students to answer the following questions (slide 10): 'What can we infer from these extracts about the conditions on the death marches? What can we infer from these extracts about what happened when survivors tried to return to their homes in Poland? What questions do you have?'

Testimony of 'The Boys'

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 11 - 16).

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 (slide 17): 'What can we learn from this testimony about what conditions were like on the death marches? Write a list of the difficulties that 'The Boys' faced in these conditions. What can we learn from this testimony about how survivors were sometimes treated when they tried to return home? What questions do you still have?'

Historical context: context card 4 ‘The end of the Second World War.’	Share context card 4: ‘The end of the Second World 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): <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How and why did the Holocaust end?2. What were the ‘death marches’?3. What were conditions like on the death marches? Why did they deserve the name?4. The word ‘liberation’ means setting someone free from imprisonment. Why do you think liberation was not always celebrated by Holocaust survivors?
Applying knowledge and understanding	Drawing upon all of the knowledge and understanding gained throughout the lesson students should respond to the following question (slide 18) : Drawing upon your knowledge of the experiences of ‘The Boys’ why is it important that you learn about what happened to them?