


Head of School: Mr Kevin Minnott


Deputy Headteacher: Mr Robin Entwistle


Assistant Headteachers: Mrs Sam Salisbury
& Mrs Tara Treleven



 James Dixon Primary School, William Booth Road, SE20 8BW

 jdpoffice@swale.at

 020 87786101

 jamesdixon.org.uk

James Dixon Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: Upcoming History Topic – World War II and the Holocaust

As we start this term, we are writing to inform you about the upcoming History curriculum for our Year 6 pupils. This term, our history topic will be World War II.

This is a fascinating and crucial period of modern history, and the children will be exploring various aspects of the war, including the home front, evacuation, and the impact of the conflict on everyday life.

Important Lesson Information

As part of this topic, and in line with the National Curriculum, the children will also be learning about the Holocaust. We believe it is vital to teach this history to help pupils understand the importance of tolerance, diversity, and the consequences of prejudice.

We understand that this is a sensitive and challenging subject. Please be assured that we will approach this lesson with the utmost care, age-appropriate resources, and sensitivity. Our focus will be on human rights, resilience, and the lessons we can learn for the future, rather than focusing on distressing or graphic details.

For further information about the specific lesson, please see the plan below.

We welcome open communication with our families. If you have any questions, concerns, or if you feel your child might find this topic particularly upsetting due to personal or family histories, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher.

Thank you for your continued support in your child's learning and development.

Warm regards,

The Year 6 Team



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Executive Headteacher: Mrs Michelle Aldred



Teacher Knowledge

Please consider the content of this lesson carefully. During World War Two Hitler commanded that all Jewish people should be killed. Hitler used ghettos (neighbourhoods where Jews were forced to live), mass shootings, concentration camps and extermination camps and he succeeded in killing over six-million Jews. This deliberate killing, or murder, of so many people is called genocide. Nazi Germany began building concentration camps in 1933, the first, intended as a place to hold political opponents and other leaders that were perceived as a threat to the Nazi regime, was Dachau, near Munich. It was the longest running camp until its liberation in 1945. The aims of the concentration camps were to imprison any people perceived to be a threat, to force prisoners to work and exploit their labour. As a result of appalling conditions many people died without attention of the public or any system of law. People who were prisoners in concentration camps needed to be fit for work, otherwise they would be killed. Many people who were sent to concentration camps were killed immediately because they were not useful for forced labour, this included women, children, disabled people and the elderly. Hitler also established extermination camps; their purpose was to kill large numbers of people in gas chambers. At Auschwitz-Birkenau, in Nazi-occupied Poland, there was a network of forced-labour and extermination camps. Over 1.1 million people were killed at this camp, 90% of them were Jewish. The Holocaust is remembered on Monday 27th January, the day marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau by Soviet soldiers.

Knowledge Objective

To know the Holocaust was a time during WW2 when millions of people were killed by the Nazis

Knowledge Goals

The Nazis established camps where people were forced to work, kept in appalling conditions and killed.

Many people, including millions of Jews, were killed in gas chambers.

At the end of the war, the camps were liberated, but many people died after liberation due to their ill treatment.

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: *What is the Aryan Race? How did the Nazis treat Jewish people before WW2? Was the Nazis hatred limited to Jewish people only? (previously learned in the Rise of Hitler unit)*

Vocabulary: Introduce and explain the following terms; Ghettos; neighbourhoods in Poland where Jewish people were forced to live, conditions were appalling many people died from malnutrition and disease. Concentration Camp: A camp established by the Nazis to hold political opponents and people perceived to be a threat. The focus of these camps was initially forced labour, however the appalling conditions and ill-treatment of the people held there led to many people dying. Extermination camps: camps established by the Nazis for mass killing in gas chambers. Death March: The Nazis forced prisoners to walk long distances between camps instead of transporting via train or vehicle. Many people died on these marches. Genocide: Deliberate killing, or murder, of many people. Antisemitism—a hatred towards Jewish people

Teach: After introducing the vocabulary, read one the testimony of Susan Pollack from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/susan-pollack/>) This is a simpler text of a different account, that of Renee Bornstein. (<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/renee-bornstein-easy-to-read-life-story/>)

Talk task: Give pupils space to talk, draw or write their responses to the testimonies.

Task: *What happened during the Holocaust? Written response if appropriate. This could also be a discussion.*

Step for Depth: Using your knowledge from this unit and the Rise of Hitler, what factors may have led to the Holocaust? (e.g. Nazi ideology, including antisemitism, racial superiority and nationalism, and the harsh penalties placed on Germany following World War I leading to radicalisation and anger amongst the German population)

Plenary: Watch Lily Ebert's Story (<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/lily-eberts-journey/>) - Why is important for pupils learn about the holocaust?

Vocabulary

- Ghetto
- Concentration camp
- Extermination Camp
- Death March
- Genocide
- Antisemitism