



TEACHER'S GUIDE

THE JEWISH FOUNDATION *for the righteous*

How Was it Possible?

A HOLOCAUST CURRICULUM
FOR AND BY TEACHERS™

Teacher's Guide

The Teacher's Guide is comprised of three sections. The first section provides an overview of the guide. The second section provides resources for each of the 16 lessons. The third section contains the appendices.

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Section 1 – Introduction

About The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous

During the Holocaust, there were thousands of non-Jews who refused to be passive in the face of the evil they witnessed, rescuing Jews, often at risk to their own lives and the lives of their families. The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) was established in the late 1980s to fulfill the traditional Jewish commitment to *hakarat hatov*, the searching out and recognition of goodness. To this end, the JFR is committed to assisting those Righteous Gentiles who are in need. They are often reluctant to ask for help; they acted without expecting reward then or now.

To pass on the legacy of the rescuers, the Foundation's multi-faceted teacher education program seeks to educate middle and high school teachers about the history of the Holocaust. The JFR accomplishes this through seminars, workshops, and study-abroad programs, as well as the resources it publishes for teachers and students, including books, poster sets, newsletters, and an educational website. The JFR has worked with teachers across the United States and abroad, distributing materials internationally.

The goal of the JFR's education program is to educate middle and high school teachers about the history of the Holocaust and antisemitism and to provide them with the resources to integrate this knowledge into their classrooms.

What was the Holocaust?

The Holocaust is an unprecedented chapter in the long history of genocide. The Nazis (National Socialist German Workers' Party) intended to murder every European Jew: men and women, young and old, observant and secular, rich and poor. They made no distinctions.

Never before had a government condemned to death every member of a group it defined based on "race" (a classification of human beings based on supposedly distinctive genetic differences). All levels of German society participated in the systematic discrimination against and the exploitation and mass murder of the Jews. This plan extended far beyond Germany. As Germany conquered Europe, collaborators and bystanders in other countries helped realize the Nazis' destructive aims. The result: the murder of approximately six million Jewish men, women, and children.

The campaign to murder the Jews was rooted in Nazi ideology, developed by Adolf Hitler in the early 1920s. Followers of these ideas claimed that humankind is divided into "races" – some of the so-called races were destructive and inferior, others productive and superior. The Nazis declared the Jews a "subhuman," dangerous race in contrast to "Aryan" Germans, the "master race." Because the Nazis believed that Jews were the cause of most that was wrong in the world, they wanted to remove them from society.

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In 1933, Hitler came to power and created a brutal dictatorship, under which the Jews suffered severe discrimination. At first, in the prewar years, the Nazis' main goal was to eliminate the Jews from Germany's economic, social, and cultural life and then force them to leave Germany itself. After Germany launched World War II by invading Poland on September 1, 1939, and as Germany conquered more and more territory, greater numbers of Jews came under its control. A territorial "solution" to the Jewish "problem" through forced emigration was no longer practical. The Nazi Party turned to the annihilation of the Jewish people.

Within months of Germany's conquest of Poland, Polish Jews were forced into ghettos, which, because of massive overcrowding, lack of medicine, poor sanitation, and meager food rations, became places of mass murder. After Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, special death squads, called *Einsatzgruppen*, combed the conquered territory to kill Jews. Entire Jewish populations of towns and villages were rounded up, stripped of their belongings, marched into nearby woods or other deserted areas, shot, and buried in mass graves often dug by the victims themselves. Some 2 million Jews were murdered in this way.

However, this method of murder proved too inefficient. In addition to concentration camps, which had existed for incarcerating so-called "enemies of the state" since 1933, killing centers were created – camps established for the sole purpose of murdering Jews. Auschwitz-Birkenau, a German camp complex located in occupied Poland, included industrial plants, where inmates performed slave labor in terrible conditions, and was also a killing center where mass murder was committed in gas chambers especially designed for this purpose. The Nazis' web of ghettos and concentration camps stretched across all areas of Europe under German control. Jews were murdered in the death camps, and hundreds of thousands more died in the concentration camps from hunger, disease, terrible sanitary conditions, and the brutality of the guards.

Germans were not the only perpetrators of genocide during the Holocaust. Antisemitic institutions, authorities, and individuals participated in genocide across Europe: Romanian, Hungarian, Slovakian, and Croatian military and law enforcement bodies massacred hundreds of thousands of Jews; Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish, and Ukrainian collaborators claimed many victims; and Hungarian, Dutch, and French authorities aided deportations, without which the Nazis' efforts might have been crippled. Most people simply stood by, indifferent to the plight of their neighbors, coworkers, and friends.

But there were others...

A small minority, when confronted with the disappearance of their Jewish neighbors, or upon witnessing the brutal treatment of Jewish children in the streets, chose to help. Thousands of people from all walks of life stepped forward. Despite the risk to their lives and the lives of their loved ones, in the midst of overwhelming indifference, these precious few acted against the Nazi goals to murder every Jew. They saved lives.

It is in their honor that this educational program has been created.

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Background

“How was it possible?”

This is a question that has been asked since the Holocaust began. It is also our overarching essential question. This question cannot be answered in a few sentences or even a full-length essay. Peter Hayes’s *How Was It Possible? A Holocaust Reader* is going to guide how we study the Holocaust, from anti-Judaism to antisemitism, beginning more than 2000 years ago, to the aftermath of the Holocaust. *How Was It Possible? A Holocaust Reader* is the recommended companion text for this curriculum and can be obtained online. The question of how it was possible is addressed in each learning unit.

How Was It Possible? A Holocaust Reader, is a scholarly anthology for teachers and students. The book focuses on key issues that made the Holocaust possible, including antisemitism, the rise of the Nazi state, obstacles that prevented Jews and others from escaping Nazi Germany, death camps, and how survivors struggled with loss and rebuilding their lives after liberation.

The COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to a number of challenges that teachers had to deal with. Due to absenteeism, school closures, and the need for fully or hybrid online classes, teachers found it difficult to teach their units on the Holocaust. It was also difficult to find professional development to meet their goals. The JFR brought together teachers from around the country and asked them to identify ways to get the materials to teachers in a manageable way. They were concerned about time; not all schools and certainly not all students had access to a semester-long or year-long course. Teachers needed to be able to easily access and share the materials with their students. And again, it came back to time: time in the classroom, time after school, time with technology, time with grading, and time lost due to classroom interruptions.

This online curriculum is the result of these discussions. It offers a complete and ready to use program for teachers of secondary school students (grades 6 through 12). The videos and educational materials within this resource will help you align your teaching to national and state standards. And because the JFR recognized the urgency of the need, we are making *How Was It Possible? A Holocaust Curriculum For and By Teachers™*, a comprehensive and easily accessible program, available to teachers and students at no cost. The study of the Holocaust and historical and contemporary antisemitism is both important and timely.

Videos

A series of 16 video-based lessons have been prepared. Video running times range from 11:27 minutes for lesson 5.2 to 20:43 minutes for lesson 2.2. The videos can be used in a variety of ways. Since the videos are short, this is an excellent supplement to what you may currently be teaching. There is a five-question multiple-choice quiz and a note-taking guide for each video lesson. The teacher can print the guide for the students. We encourage students to use the note-taking guide when they answer the questions on the quiz.

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The videos are also a great support if it is your first-time teaching about the Holocaust. Using each video as a lesson starter can provide background as you dive into your lessons. It can also be used at the end of a lesson as review. If you have the opportunity for an in-depth study, this can frame your curriculum as you begin each segment of your unit plans.

Flexibility was another concern for the teachers. Teachers and students can go back to the videos as often as they need while they are in your class. A teacher can assign all or specific units for students to complete depending upon time and the content they are expected to teach. The course was developed to use in several different ways including asynchronous and/or classroom-guided, and use of the whole-program or just specific units.

There are pieces of content such as the Nuremberg Laws of September 15, 1935, and the Political Parties in the Weimar Republic (1918 – 1933) that are in several lessons. This is done intentionally as their impact and content is necessary to the specific lessons.

Due to copyright of the images in the videos, the videos cannot be downloaded. The videos can only be accessed from the JFR website, but they can be accessed at any time.

Photographs

The thematic photograph used throughout this curriculum is of a Hungarian Jewish couple taken immediately after the Soviet army liberated Budapest in January 1945. The photographer, Yevgeny Khaldei, was a Soviet officer, and Jewish.

The second slide in each unit contains an image that encapsulates the thematic focus of the lesson. Teachers might want to discuss this slide with their students before discussing the lesson or at the end of the lesson to hear their students thoughts.

Asynchronous Use

The course can be used in a classroom, for homework as a preview (flip classroom) for the next day or review, or as an asynchronous course. Teachers will provide students with login information, so each student can have their own password, and they can access the program outside of school on multiple mobile devices, including cell phones. (We know it can be difficult to have a class set of computers or access to a computer lab, never mind earbuds/phones!) Teachers can assign the units to be completed outside of class providing students with background on the Holocaust and how it happened.

Length of Holocaust Study

Semester course

If you are teaching a semester course in the Holocaust, this resource can be a template for each unit. The 9 units will provide students with background information and/or a review at the end of each unit. The topics for further study as well as the embedded primary and secondary sources in the videos provide an opportunity for you and your students to delve into your program of study.

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You have the time to dive deeply into the content and grapple with the essential question, “How Was It Possible?”

Unit of Study (4 – 9 weeks)

With a shorter length of time to teach your unit, time may be a challenge. If you have 4 weeks and plan to use the entire resource you will have to cover about 2 – 3 units per week. The topics for further study provide opportunities for choice as you identify the best focus for you and your students. If you are teaching a marking period course (approximately 9 weeks), you would be teaching one unit per week. The primary and secondary resources in the videos can be used with your students to support the information necessary to teach a comprehensive unit on the Holocaust.

I only have 1-5 class periods to teach the Holocaust

We know that in some classes there is only a short time to teach the Holocaust. Depending upon where and what you teach, there may be specific standards within courses such as United States History. Some curriculums focus on topics such as the United States response to the Holocaust. We recommend teaching the lessons below as background, even as asynchronous, and then focusing on the standards you are expected to teach.

- Lesson 1.1 Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism
- Lesson 2.1 Hitler’s Rise to Power
- Lesson 2.2 “The Jewish Question”
- Lesson 5.1 Ghettos in the East and/or Lesson 6.1 The Nazi Camp System
- Lesson 9.1 Liberation/Afterwards

Regardless of how much time you have to teach the Holocaust, it is strongly recommended that you start with antisemitism and anti-Judaism and that your students understand the difference between the two.

Lesson Resources

This guide provides specific resources to accompany each of the 16 videos. The format for each lesson is the same, so it is easy to decide how you are going to use these resources. We have prepared short backgrounds for each lesson. While we have identified goals and expectations, there are many lessons and foci within each unit and each district has different language for goals, expectations, and assessment. Please feel free to modify to meet your school/district expectations.

Some lesson resources can be found in two different locations. The first is in the specific lesson and the second is by resource category and can be found in the appendix. Lesson resources include the following:

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1. Video Note-taking Guide – two versions have been provided, with and without the answer key
2. Lesson Script – we are making the scripts available should the teacher want to use their own voice with the video or if there is a hearing-impaired student in the class.
3. Lesson Quiz – two versions have been provided, with and without the answer key.
4. Lesson Image Sources

Other resources appear only once, within the context of the lesson itself, these include the following.

Video Running Times

Video running times range from 11:22 minutes for lesson 5.2 to 20:43 minutes for lesson 2.2. Classroom time is precious, and this allows the teacher to show the video, have time to debrief the content and extend topics within the segment to meet your standards and expectations. Some students who do not have computers and/or the internet at home will be able to view the videos on their cell phone. For those students, it is recommended that the teacher provide a paper copy of the Video Note-taking Guide.

Overarching Goal for Each Lesson

Each lesson has an overarching goal to help identify the content in the video. This goal can be written as a question and is a good way to embed a writing assignment. This is an opportunity for students to practice the writing standards within the curriculum as well as preparation for state assessments.

Essential Questions

These questions help identify specific topics of importance in the video and unit. These questions can be used to guide discussions, help focus writing, and support the learning goals.

Learning Goals

This is what your students will be expected to know at the completion of the unit.

Success Criteria

These statements help students understand the specific skills and content that they will need to know that they understand and have mastered the content. These are assessment foci, either formative or summative, that let students know how they can demonstrate (do, write, say) that they have achieved the goals of the lesson (learning goals).

Video Note-taking Guide

We have provided video note-taking guides for each lesson. They can be found in each lesson and in the appendix. You can email these guides to your students or print copies to distribute in class. These guides are designed to help your students process the content, regardless of the teaching time available. These guides will effectively prepare your students if you're conducting a short unit and using selected videos.

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Students can use these video note-taking guides while watching the videos to enhance their understanding and retention of the material. These guides are especially valuable if videos are not being used in the classroom with discussion.

Students can use them to:

- Aid in taking quizzes at the end of each lesson;
- Earn extra grades;
- Review notes prior to classroom discussions; and
- Support group work.

These versatile tools can enhance learning in many ways!

Lesson Quizzes

Following each video is a five-question multiple choice quiz. The quiz can be found in each lesson and in the appendix. We have provided two versions of each quiz, one without answers and one with answers. The quiz without answers can be printed and given to students. Each quiz is also available as a Google Form quiz. Teachers whose students use the Google Form will receive a raw score for each student completing a quiz. A link to the Google Form quiz can be found in each lesson at the bottom of the quiz with answers. Instructions on how to use the link can be found in the Quizzes and Answer Keys appendix.

Pre-Assessment

A pre-assessment has been provided for your use. The pre-assessment can be found in the appendix.

State Standards

We have reached out to JFR Alfred Lerner Fellows (teachers who have attended the JFR Summer Institute for Teachers) to align *How Was it Possible? A Holocaust Curriculum For and By Teachers™* to their state standards for the appropriate subjects. In addition to providing national standards, the following states are included: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Additional states will be added.

Image Sources

The images used in *How Was it Possible? A Holocaust Curriculum For and By Teachers™* come from a variety of sources. For each image, we have provided the source as required by the archive. For those images where the repository required that a link to the image be provided, we have done so. As of August 8, 2024, each link was active and correct. You can find the image sources in two places, at the end of each lesson resource in Section 2 and in Section 3.

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Goldsmith Student Scholars of the Holocaust Signature Badge

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous will provide teachers, who request it for their students, a badge for the student's email signature line. Students who complete the introduction, all 16 lessons, the CODA, and score 80% on the quizzes will be eligible to receive a badge. Lesson quizzes are available through the Learning Management System (LMS) and via Google Forms. The student will be known as a Goldsmith Student Scholar of the Holocaust. Additional information can be obtained by contacting The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous at hwip@jfr.org.



Goldsmith Holocaust Fellowship Program

The Goldsmith Holocaust Fellowship Program is being offered to teachers who complete the program and who utilize *How Was it Possible? A Holocaust Curriculum For and By Teachers™* in their classrooms. Teachers who complete the introduction, all 16 lessons, the CODA, and score 80% on the Teacher Quiz will be eligible to receive a badge. The teacher quiz is available through the Learning Management System (LMS) and via Google Forms. Teachers will be known as Goldsmith Holocaust Fellows. Additional information can be obtained by contacting The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous at hwip@jfr.org.



About the Goldsmith Family

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous has named this fellowship in honor of and in memory of members of Mark Goldsmith's family. Mark Goldsmith is the JFR's Secretary/Treasurer and legal counsel. Mark's family came from Germany and his family's story provides an example of what happened to many Jewish families living in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. Many members of Mark's family were murdered by the Germans, some survived the camps, several were rescued, one crossed the alps from Vichy France into Switzerland, two participated in the Danish boat lift to Sweden, one was in charge of British agents infiltrating Germany to assassinate high-ranking Nazis, one was aboard the St. Louis when it was turned back from landing in the United States and returned to Europe, several were hidden in French homes in Vichy France and one by a Dutch family, two were killed aboard the German passenger liner SS Cap Arcona when the Royal Airforce mistakenly bombed the ship, and many managed to emigrate from Germany to the United States or to Mandatory Palestine (now Israel).

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Acknowledgements

Programs like *How Was it Possible? A Holocaust Curriculum For and By Teachers?*[™] do not just happen, and this program is no different. We were fortunate to have the help, advice, and involvement of many individuals.

To our nine Alfred Lerner Fellows who developed the sixteen lessons, we would not have this program without their commitment and dedication. In alphabetical order: Tawny Anderson, Maureen Carter, Doug Cervi, Marie-Amalie Farris, Logan Greene, Amy McDonald, Jill Tejada, Mindy Walker, and Bradd Weinberg. For additional information on these outstanding educators, please see the appendix.

Dr. Christine Schmidt vetted the lessons. Dr. Peter Hayes and Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt were kind enough to clarify specific historical events. Pawel Sawicki reviewed the lessons on the “Nazi Camp System” and “Life in Camps” and the Timeline as it related to dates associated with Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Kimberly Coombs, from Palm Beach County School District, was instrumental in taking the program into the classroom. Kimberly, along with inSIGHT Through Education, one of the JFR’s Holocaust Centers of Excellence, piloted the program in Palm Beach County, Florida. Kimberly worked with JFR staff to both field test and operationalize the program.

Judy Cohen graciously gave her time to assist with the sourcing of photographs. We would like to thank the archives that permitted The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous to use their photographic images and/or political cartoons and those repositories who reduced their image rental fee.

Bernadette Bennett organized the Teacher’s Guide, developed the professional development component for teachers, and was instrumental in aligning individual state standards with *How Was it Possible? A Holocaust Curriculum For and By Teachers?*[™] Ann Mollengarden proof-read the lessons and provided feedback.

Michael D. Hobbs and Emily Newcomer provided legal advice. Frank Borsa and Jeff Wallace provided the graphic design for the entire program. Paul Allman turned our lessons into videos and E.J. Smith did the narration for each video.

Mark Goldsmith, JFR Secretary-Treasurer and attorney provided the impetus for the program. The JFR education committee, under the leadership of Abby Crisses and with committee members Hannah Waldman and Steven Field, provided support and encouragement.

We would like to thank our Lerner Fellows who aligned *How Was it Possible? A Holocaust Curriculum For and By Teachers?*[™] with their state standards. Alabama – Logan Greene; Florida – Bernadette Bennett; Georgia – Bernadette Bennett; Kansas – Bernadette Bennett; Minnesota – Steven Ricard; New Jersey – Jill Tejada; Pennsylvania – Megan Pankiewicz; South

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Carolina – Sadie Rogers; Tennessee – Tawny Anderson and Marie-Amalie Farris; Texas – Katie Batenhorst; Virginia - Tawny Anderson and Marie-Amalie Farris; and West Virginia - Tawny Anderson and Marie-Amalie Farris.

Dara Zadikow, JFR Director of Development, spent hundreds of hours reviewing the lessons, scripts, images, and formatting. Her critical eye made for a polished end product. And we are so appreciative!

To my partner on this project, Steven Field, a huge thank you for his commitment and dedication to seeing this project through to the end. From deciding on copy, to sourcing photographic images, to selecting the best person to record the narration, Steven was always there and supportive and made the curriculum better!

We enjoyed working on this project, which at times we wondered if it would actually be finished. We hope that those who avail themselves of the lessons and the resources in the Teacher's Guide, will find this an essential curriculum for understanding what many consider to be one of the seminal events of the last century, the Holocaust.

Steven Field, MD
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