

# PERSECUTION OF THE GERMAN-JEWS: THE EARLY YEARS - 1933-1939

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## LESSON

### Target Audience:

Grades: 9-12  
Language Arts

### Time Requirement:

Lesson Time = Approximately 3 class periods, 52 minutes each class

### Content Standards Addressed:

California Language Arts

- 2.3 Generate relevant questions about readings on issues that can be researched
- 2.5 Extend ideas presented in primary or secondary sources through analysis, evaluation and elaboration

### Lesson Goal/Concept

Many students are familiar with the term or concept of the "Final Solution," which was the Nazi plan to annihilate the European Jews; however, students may not be aware of the increasingly severe discriminatory measures that led up to and culminated in genocide of the Jews in Europe. This lesson via the testimony clips highlights this lesser-known topic.

Note: This lesson works well in conjunction with the Reader's Theater play *No Way Out* by Susan Prinz Shear. The play, which served as the inspiration for this lesson, explores one family's struggle to survive the anti-Jewish laws and measures in Nazi Germany, while at the same time trying to find ways to legally emigrate from Nazi Germany. In their own words – through actual letters written – the play portrays the Deutsch family's attempt to understand their circumstances amid deception and confusion while simultaneously making decisions based on little information. The testimony clips coincide nicely with the actual events in the play. (For more information on *No Way Out*, visit <http://nowayoutproject.com/index.html> .)

### Student Objectives

- To examine the chronology of decrees that revoked the rights of the German-Jewish population between 1933 and 1939
- To show through videotaped survivor testimony how escalating anti-Jewish laws and measures in Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1939 affected the individuals featured in the clips
- To list discriminatory measures and/or events and determine approximate dates of events via the testimony of survivors
- To choose for study an additional term, concept, or event from each testimony clip and/or biographical profile

*In conjunction with No Way Out:*

- To examine additional primary documents (original letters and photos) evidencing the Deutsch family's attempt to escape Nazi Germany
- To discuss the impact of the video clips as they relate to the play

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### Materials

- Edith Abrahams' testimony clip describing the boycott of stores (3:00)
- Erika Gold's testimony clip describing *Kristallnacht* (7:00)
- Doris Agatston's testimony clip describing *Kristallnacht* (4:30)
- Judith Becker's testimony clip describing Nazi racism taught in public schools (3:00)
- Kurt Baum's testimony clip describing signs prohibiting Jews from entering stores, villages, and owning businesses, as well as mandatory reporting of bank accounts (3:00)
- Ilse Jacobson's testimony clip describing changes within her father's medical practice and loss of non-Jewish patients and friends (2:00)
- Arnold Blum's testimony clip describing passports stamped with the identifying letter "J" (2:29)
- [USHMM Encyclopedia Contextual Article: Anti-Jewish Legislation in Prewar Germany](#)
- [USHMM Encyclopedia Contextual Article: Examples of Antisemitic Legislation, 1933-1939](#)
- *Rights and Freedoms Important to Me* handout
- Biographical profiles of all interviewees
- Student graphic organizer
- LCD projector/computer

### Procedures

1. Distribute the *Rights and Freedoms Important to Me* handout to students, instructing them to choose and rank rights and freedoms. (10 minutes)
2. When students have finished this lead-in activity, begin a discussion based on their answers. (20 minutes)
3. Inform the students that when Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, the German-Jews (adults and children alike) started to lose their most basic and fundamental rights – the very rights the students have just discussed, thus beginning the dehumanization process that escalated into physical and emotional violence as time passed, eventually leading to the “Final Solution.”

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### Procedures (cont'd)

4. As a class read the contextual article “Anti-Jewish Legislation in Prewar Germany.” This article will define antisemitism and Aryanization, and break down what rights and freedoms were taken from the German-Jewish population in 1933-1934, 1935, 1936, and 1937-1938.
5. Pass out the second contextual article: “Examples of Antisemitic Legislation, 1933-1939.” Explain that this information is similar to what they have just read but in a different format. They will utilize this handout to help create their graphic organizers in conjunction with the video clips to be viewed.
6. Show testimony clips one at a time giving students time to fill in their graphic organizer individually or working with a partner utilizing the contextual articles for further information.

### Closure Activities

1. Students will undoubtedly want to know more about each individual’s story beyond the short testimony clip. Pass out the brief biographical profiles, allowing each student to read a little more about each interviewee’s experiences to fill in the last column in the graphic organizer.
2. Using their completed graphic organizers as guides, students can further research a topic and/or event of interest to them.
3. Students can refer to their *Rights and Freedoms Important to Me* handout and decide at what point they would have wanted to leave Germany. Have students research the amount of money necessary to leave Nazi Germany and what documents were needed for immigration/emigration purposes and whether or not at that point in time it was even possible to leave. This activity will answer the often-asked student question, “Why didn’t the Jews just leave?” by helping students understand the extreme difficulties involved in getting out of Nazi Germany during the Holocaust. Additionally, teachers can share with students the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s PDFs titled [“Documentation Required for Immigration Visas to Enter the United States”](#) and [“Documentation Required for Emigration from Germany.”](#)
4. Hitler used the law to effectively remove Jews from public life. Research a contemporary issue in which a country’s legal system has been used to isolate or ostracize a group of people within their own country.