

Holocaust Education Lesson Plan Template

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Topic/Era: Holocaust

Lesson Title: Understanding Kristallnacht

Subject: United States History

Grade Level: 7

Length of Lesson:

This lesson will take 2- 50 minute class periods

Day 1- In groups, students read the executive order for Kristallnacht. Answer the questions posed. After discussion, begin looking at pictures and making observations.

Day 2- Sharing and discussing as a class- Students individually write the significance of Kristallnacht. Students may complete the writing assignment for homework if necessary.

Introduction:

On November 9, 1938, the Nazis unleashed a wave of pogroms against Germany's Jews. In the space of a few hours, thousands of synagogues and Jewish businesses and homes were damaged or destroyed. This event came to be called Kristallnacht ("Night of Broken Glass") for the shattered store windowpanes that carpeted German streets.

The pretext for this violence was the November 7 assassination of a German diplomat in Paris, Ernst vom Rath, by Herschel Grynszpan, a Jewish teenager whose parents, along with 17,000 other Polish Jews, had been recently expelled from the Reich. Though portrayed as spontaneous outbursts of popular outrage, these pogroms were calculated acts of retaliation carried out by the SA, SS, and local Nazi party organizations.

Stormtroopers killed at least 91 Jews and injured many others. For the first time, Jews were arrested on a massive scale and were transported to Nazi concentration camps. About 30,000 Jews were sent to Buchenwald, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen, where hundreds died within weeks of arrival. Release came only after the prisoners arranged to emigrate and agreed to transfer their property to "Aryans."

Kristallnacht culminated the escalating violence against Jews that began during the incorporation of Austria into the Reich in March 1938. It also signaled the fateful transfer of responsibility for "solving" the "Jewish Question" to the SS.

Introduction from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Objectives:

Students will be able to define Kristallnacht

Students will be able to identify characteristics that marked the days of Kristallnacht

Students will be able to explain why this is the beginning of the end for many European Jews

Standards:

History Standard 8.8.7- Identify key elements of the Holocaust, including: “Aryan supremacy”, Kristallnacht, Final Solution, concentration and death camps.

Materials List:

For Kristallnacht Order by Nazis

www.mcckc.org/PDFFiles/Coterie/Kristallnacht.pdf

For Photograph packets, print pictures of people and places from the following three websites:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/kristalpics.html>

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~1930s2/Time/1938/kristallnacht.jpg>

<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/kristallnacht/photo/>

Survivor of Kristallnacht stories

<http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=1158>

<http://www.michigandaily.com/content/kristallnacht-remembered-survivor>

In Class Activities:

1. Students are placed in groups and given the executive order about Kristallnacht
 - a. Answer the following questions: (No incorrect answers)
 - i. What is different about Kristallnacht from previous actions against Jews?
 - ii. What do the guidelines in the order tell you about Kristallnacht?

- iii. Why do you think Germans are told to seize all records about the Jewish community during the raids?
 - iv. After completion and discussion move on the activity 2
 2. Students continue working in groups and given a packet of pictures from Kristallnacht
 3. Within groups, students develop questions from the pictures and write down any observations from the pictures
 - a. In the pictures of people, describe body language and expressions.
 - b. In pictures of buildings or businesses, students write down what they see or they believe is happening.
 - c. Make all observations on paper.
 4. Pictures are placed on LCD- students share their observations and questions with the class
 5. Students give ideas of what they believe happened during Kristallnacht.
 6. Read a survivor's prospective of Kristallnacht.
 7. Students write concluding paragraph to evaluate understanding. (See evaluation)

Evaluation/Assessment:

Students will be evaluated through discussion participation. Teacher monitors groups and participates in parts of their discussions. Additionally, each student will write a paragraph on the significance of Kristallnacht. Paragraphs must include the definition of Kristallnacht, at least 3 things that happened, evidence as supported by pictures, and why they believe Kristallnacht was the beginning of the end for Jews in Europe.

Bibliography/Citations:

For Photographs:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/kristalpics.html>

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~1930s2/Time/1938/kristallnacht.jpg>

<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/kristallnacht/photo/>

Kristallnacht



Destroyed Zerrennerstrasse synagogue –
USHMM photo 97574

Kristallnacht (the “Night of Broken Glass”), an anti-Jewish pogrom devised by Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, was carried out by the Gestapo, the SS, and other national police on November 9 and 10, 1938. Alleged to be a spontaneous uprising of the German people in response to the assassination of Ernst vom Rath, a German Embassy official in Paris, by a young Jewish man, the pogrom was in fact an orchestrated violent action against German and Austrian Jews.

Jewish businesses were vandalized and homes ransacked and burned. One hundred Jews were murdered and thirty thousand Jewish men were imprisoned in concentration camps.

Kristallnacht ended the illusion that normal Jewish life in Germany and

Primary Source Activity –

1. Have students read the *Kristallnacht* Order sent by SS officer Reinhard Heydrich.
2. View the attached picture of the burning of the Graz synagogue as a class
3. Discussion:
 - What was fundamentally different about *Kristallnacht* compared to previous Nazi discriminatory actions in the 1930s?
 - What to the guidelines outlined in Heydrich's telegram tell you about the spontenity of *Kristallnacht*?
 - Why are German police supposed to sieze all synagogue and Jewish Community records?
 - What does the order, coupled with the photograph, tell you about the public response to *Kristallnacht*? How might that have impacted the decisions of German Jews about emigration?



Destroyed glass in Berlin – USHMM photo 86838

Kristallnacht Order

Message from SS-Gruppenführer Heydrich to all State Police Main Offices and Field Offices:

Secret

Copy of Most Urgent telegram from Munich, of November 10, 1938, 1:20 A.M.

To

All Headquarters and Stations of the State Police

All districts and Sub-districts of the SD

Urgent! For immediate attention of Chief or his deputy!

Re: Measures against Jews tonight

Following the attempt on the life of Secretary of the Legation vom Rath in Paris, demonstrations against the Jews are to be expected in all parts of the Reich in the course of the coming night, November 9/10, 1938. The instructions below are to be applied in dealing with these events:

1. The Chiefs of the State Police, or their deputies, must immediately upon receipt of this telegram contact, by telephone, the political leaders in their areas – *Gauleiter* or *Kreisleiter* – who have jurisdiction in their districts and arrange a joint meeting with the inspector or commander of the Order Police to discuss the arrangements for the demonstrations. At these discussions the political leaders will be informed that the German Police has received instructions, detailed below, from the *Reichsfuehrer* SS and the Chief of the German Police, with which the political leadership is requested to coordinate its own measures:

- a) Only such measures are to be taken as do not endanger German lives or property (i.e., synagogues are to be burned down only where there is no danger of fire in neighboring buildings).
- b) Places of business and apartments belonging to Jews may be destroyed but not looted. The police is instructed to supervise the observance of this order and to arrest looters.
- c) In commercial streets particular care is to be taken that non-Jewish businesses are completely protected against damage.
- d) Foreign citizens – even if they are Jews – are not to be molested.

2. On the assumption that the guidelines detailed under paragraph 1 are observed, the demonstrations are not to be prevented by the Police, which is only to supervise the observance of the guidelines.

3. On receipt of this telegram Police will seize all archives to be found in all synagogues and offices of the Jewish communities so as to prevent their destruction during the demonstrations. This refers only to material of historical value, not to contemporary tax records, etc. The archives are to be handed over to the locally responsible officers of the SD.

4. The control of the measures of the Security Police concerning the demonstrations against the Jews is vested in the organs of the State Police, unless inspectors of the Security Police have given their own instructions. Officials of the Criminal Police, members of the SD, of the Reserves and the SS in general may be used to carry out the measures taken by the Security Police.

5. As soon as the course of events during the night permits the release of the officials required, as many Jews in all districts – especially the rich – as can be accommodated in existing prisons are to be arrested. For the time being only healthy male Jews, who are not too old, are to be detained. After the detentions have been carried out the appropriate concentration camps are to be contacted immediately for the prompt accommodation of the Jews in the camps. Special care is to be taken that the Jews arrested in accordance with these instructions are not ill-treated....

signed Heydrich,
SS Gruppenfuehrer

Source: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/kristallnacht_order.html



A crowd watches as a synagogue burns during the *Kristallnacht Pogrom*, Graz, Austria, November 9/10, 1938 – USHMM photo 04372

Kristallnacht Remembered

By Leni Hoffman (Eckmann)

Sixty-one years after this infamous event occurred, it still lingers in my memory. I was an eight-year-old girl at the time. Hitler declared that anarchy could rule on November 9, 1938. The political violence was specifically aimed at the Jewish population of Germany. The precursor to Kristallnacht was the harassment of Jews for no reason except hatred. Hate crimes against the Jews were sanctioned by the German government.

Our first encounter with the new order of Nazism was when my father was imprisoned, along with thousands of other Jewish males, for a crime allegedly committed by a Jew against a German diplomat. My mother and I visited my father in prison. He had been severely beaten. He was physically hurt and sad. On a subsequent visit, we brought him a basket of food. My father liked sweets. I brought him his favorite chocolate bar hoping it would make him feel better. The prison guard would not allow me to give it to my father. I argued with the guard, as any innocent child would, to no avail. The guard wanted the chocolate. I would not give it to him. I took it home.

LeniMy father returned home after a few weeks of imprisonment. His spirit was crushed. He could not make sense of what had happened to him. He had always been a law-abiding citizen; he was on good terms with the townspeople. Why did the law not protect him? Why were his civil rights violated? Because he was a Jew and Jews no longer had any civil rights in Germany.

Subsequent to my father's incarceration, our windows were smashed on several different occasions. My mother was no longer allowed to have young girls apprentice under her supervision in the art of dressmaking. Neighbors began to shun us. As time went on, harassment became more intense. It culminated in Kristallnacht.

Kristallnacht marked the organized, merciless onslaught on Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues all over Germany. The Nazi thugs never made it to Lendershausen (my town) because they ran out of time and/or were too tired from the mayhem they caused in Hofheim. I guess one could say that we were lucky to be spared the humiliation and pain experienced by the affected families in Hofheim. The day following Kristallnacht, my mother and I went to visit friends in Hofheim where a larger Jewish population resided and where the synagogue was also located. I still recall the wanton and senseless destruction the Nazi thugs had left in their wake. The synagogue, homes and stores lay in shambles. The Jewish victims had to witness the madness without recourse. As history tells us, Kristallnacht was a pivotal point in the violence against the Jews in all of Europe. This was the beginning of the end, so to speak.

Soon after Kristallnacht, prejudiced hostility struck me personally. I was ostracized. I was not allowed to participate in any sport or social activities. All activities were "Hitler Jugend" related. The children joined the Hitler Youth organization and wore the required uniforms. Participation was forbidden to Jewish youths. I was sick at heart. However, the worst was yet to come.

One day, without warning, I was banished from school forever. Jewish children were no longer allowed to attend German schools. My parents made the very difficult decision to send me to Belgium in July 1939 with the last Jewish children's transport (Kindertransport) to leave Germany. My parents perished in the camps. Because of their personal sacrifice, my life was saved and I am here to tell the tale.