

Heroic actions during the Holocaust

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Curriculum Links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To recognise what unites and divides communities. ▪ To explore the role of rescuers and resisters actions during the Holocaust. ▪ To understand the potential for all human beings to choose to act for the care of others even when it poses personal risk. ▪ To appreciate the significance of the few acts of rescue during the Holocaust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To understand the qualities, values and motivations of rescuers and resisters during the Holocaust. ▪ Create a mantra for our time – a guiding principle to inspire individuals and groups to build compassionate communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This relates directly to your studies in Religious Education, Citizenship, and History. ▪ It will develop literacy and self-study skills as well as critical thinking. ▪ It will support SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) understanding.

Introduction for students:

You may have learned about the Holocaust in class, read about it in books or possibly seen a film but by the end of this lesson you will have gained more knowledge about how people responded to the persecution and murder of Jewish people at the hands of the Nazis and those who assisted. You may be surprised to hear that only a small number of the population under Nazi occupation helped or protected Jewish people in this dangerous situation – not even neighbours or friends. In fact, a considerable number did nothing to help and were silent bystanders to the horrors that was happening around them. A few outstanding individuals however acted with great compassion – risking their lives to help or hide Jewish people. Found assisting a Jew escape or concealing Jews from the Nazi killers carried dangerous consequences.

This lesson will examine case studies of individuals and communities who reached out in spite of the danger and you will wrestle with questions about why so few helped their Jewish neighbours and why the actions of the few that had the courage to care, were so extraordinary? Finally, you will attempt to figure out how this new understanding of the Holocaust can help you in your life today and the problems faced by many in our communities.

Instructions for student self-directed home study (can be cut/pasted to 'Show my homework', sent to student email or by other platforms of school communication for remote/home learning)

1. Open the 'Heroic actions during the Holocaust' PowerPoint and have the case study document and glossary ready to use.
2. Read the session objectives and outcomes carefully – write a title in your book (slide 2)
3. Make a note, list or mindmap of what you already know about the Holocaust (slide 3). Think about prompts like *what* was it, *when* was it, *who* was involved, *where* did it happen, *how* and *why* it happened. You might know some names, keywords, dates, or places that you can add.
4. Create two further mindmaps or lists; one to consider what it is that might keep communities or societies together, and another to explore what it is that drives communities or societies apart today. We need to be thinking about what unites people and what forces or factors divide people. There are some examples already. Aim to add at least 5 more ideas to each mindmap/list (slide 4)
5. Looking back at your mindmaps and lists – why do you think so few people helped Jewish victims during the Holocaust? Try to list at least 3 reasons or explanations (slide 4)
6. Then suggest, in 2-3 sentences, what you think we might be able to learn from the extraordinary few that did hide, help or rescue Jews during the Holocaust (slide 4)
7. Open the case study document – read all carefully, use the glossary to help you. There are five examples of individuals or communities who did hide, help or rescue Jews during the Holocaust.
8. Having read all the case studies carefully, pick one to focus on. Draw a large gingerbread style character, big heart, thinking bubble and box (as on slide 5). Take up a full A4 page for your diagram and make the heart, thinking bubble and box big enough to write 2-3 sentences or bullet points in. Follow the instructions on the slide to fill in the three sections.
9. Think carefully about your chosen case study and how it relates to the other 4 you read earlier. Talk to your parents/carers about the case study and ask yourselves, why do you think this individual/community did what they did, against all the odds, despite all the dangers and difficulties of that time. What was it, do you think, that drove them to action when others didn't? (slide 5) Sum up your case study in 3 adjectives/descriptive words and explain why you chose those words to describe the individual or community in your case study.
10. Now think back to those things which unite and divide us today – and then to your Holocaust case study. What have you learned? Look back at the 2-3 sentences you wrote earlier about what you thought we might be able to learn from the extraordinary few that did hide, help or rescue Jews during the Holocaust – were you correct? Add any other additional ideas in a different colour (see how your learning has progressed and developed during the session since point 6).
11. Read slide 6 carefully – religion or belief systems of various sorts, unite and divide people. Sometimes different religions or beliefs can share core ideas – like the importance of saving a life. To sum up your learning from this session, these case studies and this history, write your own mantra (*a mantra is a word or phrase that is often repeated and that expresses something that people believe in, like 'Think global, act local'*), based on the values and experiences of your chosen case study to help people live a more tolerant, more united and compassionate life today. You can design and present this in any format or media you wish, poster, word art, calligraphy or other IT or creative format.
12. UCL Centre for Holocaust Education invite you or your teacher to send us a photo or tweet of your mantras via **@UCL_Holocaust**. The most powerful, thoughtful and creatively designed will also be showcased on its website: <https://www.holocausteducation.org.uk/>

For Teachers:

Guidance for teacher-directed home study (via teams, zoom or other online forums)

Slide	
1/2	Before the lesson begins, introduce the students to the objectives and outcomes for the lesson and that they will be looking at the experiences of individuals or communities whose actions during the Holocaust might be described or considered 'heroic'. You should explicitly link this work to your student's previous study of the Holocaust.
3	Students should reflect on their existing knowledge of the Holocaust in this stage, making a note of their existing knowledge.
4	Students reflect on the questions in the slide, producing a mind map to bring together their thoughts. 1) What keeps communities together? 2) What drives communities apart? Students then consider the following prompt questions: 1) Why did few people help Jewish victims during the Holocaust? 2) What can we then learn from the extraordinary few that did?
5	Students then read the Case Studies and draw/fill in the Gingerbread Man structure to reflect on the information in the Case Study, following this succession of tasks on the PowerPoint. 1) Outline what the individual knew/thought (head) 2) Use empathy to think about their feelings and emotions (heart) 3) Explain/bullet point their actions – what did they do? (arm and leg boxes) Why do you think this individual/community did what they did, against odds of the prevailing time? What was it that drove them to act when others didn't? What 3 words you would use to describe the person/community's actions.
5	Students then feedback either verbally, or in written form if remotely, on one of the case studies, using the questions from Slide 4 to structure their responses
6	Students read through the mantras from various religious and non-religious belief systems, and then use the values and motivations of one of the case studies to develop their own.

Strategies to engage all learners	Assessment opportunities	Extension suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the Glossary to support reading the Case Studies. ▪ Enabling student choice to focus on specific case study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All students will have the opportunity to reflect upon their case study selection. ▪ They will be able to demonstrate their reflections and analysis of the case study in mindmaps, annotations and home discussion. ▪ Those that have exceeded their learning expectation can be sent to UCL Centre for Holocaust Education via @UCL_Holocaust. The submission will be warmly acknowledged and showcased on its website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a storyboard to demonstrate their understanding of the case study ▪ Use 2-3 of the case studies to create a Venn diagram – what have the cases got in common/what is unique to each example? ▪ Annotate a timeline with reference to one of the cases ▪ Consider a ‘heroic action’ today in their own community – what is it that makes it heroic? Produce a poster or write a short article about the person or community. ▪ Create a word cloud of a chosen case study, or what characteristics/attributes of heroic might be.