

The struggle to survive: resilience and resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto.

This self-directed lesson will enable students to learn about the difficulty of conditions in the Warsaw Ghetto and use primary material to understand how people struggled to survive in those conditions. This lesson is intended for students of Year 9 and above to be completed independently, following introductory study of the Holocaust and after completing the lesson [‘What was lost? Jewish life in Poland before the Holocaust.’](#)

This lesson explores the experience of Jewish life whilst resident in the Ghetto, how Jews struggled to meet the basic needs of survival and how cultural life and mutual aid continued throughout the term of the ghetto. It does not address deportations or the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (1943), which are explored in the lesson [‘The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: exploring history, meaning and significance.’](#)

Learning Objectives	Curriculum Links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To develop an understanding of the conditions in the Warsaw Ghetto. ▪ To develop an understanding of how victims in the Warsaw Ghetto struggled to survive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This lesson will support KS3 or KS4 study of the Holocaust in History. ▪ The moral and ethical questions explored in the sources could serve as a case study or discussion for Religious Studies or Citizenship.

Slide	
1-3	Students read through the opening slides with the title, lesson objectives and information for the lesson.
4	Students complete a min-map, answer the question “What is needed to survive?” to focus them on what was removed to make life difficult for those in the Warsaw Ghetto.
5	Students read through Slide 5, which introduces them briefly to the context of the Warsaw Ghetto.
6	<p>Students use the document ‘Conditions in the Warsaw Ghetto’ and their pre-existing knowledge to produce a mind-map describing conditions in the Warsaw Ghetto, in order to answer the question “How was survival made nearly impossible in the Warsaw Ghetto?”.</p> <p>This language of the question is to foreground that forcing Polish Jews into ghettos was a deliberate choice, and that survival was extremely difficult.</p> <p>The mind map will focus on these four subheadings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did people have to eat? - How was the ghetto established? How were Jews forced to go there? - What were the living conditions like? How were they made nearly impossible? - What were the biggest risks and dangers?

Slide	
7	<p>Students read through the introduction to the enquiry “How did people in the Warsaw Ghetto struggle to survive?”</p> <p>Students then read through the Source Cards in order to answer the enquiry question, taking additional notes on their mind-map to answer the enquiry question. There are questions to consider on each of the context cards to deepen student thinking and understanding. The answers to these should also be added to their mind-map.</p>
8	<p>Students return to their “What is needed to survive?” mind-map as many of the sources describe actions that do not address the immediate needs of human survival. In light of those sources, then they consider the question:</p> <p>“What can we learn from the fact that, in the horrific conditions of the Warsaw Ghetto, people continued to take part in religion, learn, help one another and tell jokes? What meaning does that have?”</p> <p>This can either be a written response or form part of a discussion with their class teacher.</p>
9	<p>A number of reflection questions are posed by this slide, which could be used to assess progress in the lesson, dependent on your school context and subject discipline.</p>
10	<p>Your student can learn more about ghettos during the Holocaust by following these links.</p>

Strategies to engage all learners	Assessment opportunities	Extension suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Glossary pdf offers definitions of all the words in bold in the lesson material to support student literacy and allow students to access more complex sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On Slide 9 are a number of questions which could function as an assessment of progress made in this self-directed lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On Slide 10 are opportunities for further research into life in ghettos during the Second World War.