

# INSIDE THE GLASS CASE

Lesson Plan:  
*Hans Weinmann and  
the Kindertransport*

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- Recommended grade levels** • Grades 9-12
- Suggested timeframe** • 1 class period

## Historical Context

### Nazi Germany

- When Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, racial [antisemitism](#) and [Nazi ideology](#) became the official policy of the regime.
- Life, therefore, began to look very different for the 500,000 Jewish people that lived in Germany and made up 0.8% of the population.
- For instance, in April 1933 a general [boycott of Jewish businesses](#) was instituted.

### Nuremberg Laws

- In 1935, the Nazi government instituted the [Nuremberg Laws](#) which were a series of laws that codified many of the elements of racial antisemitism and Nazi ideology.
- According to these laws, Jewish people were no longer citizens of Germany and deprived them of most political rights.
- These laws defined a Jewish person as someone who had three or four Jewish grandparents.

### Kristallnacht

- On November 9 and 10, 1938, Nazi leaders unleashed a series of pogroms against the Jewish population throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and in areas of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, which were recently occupied by German troops.
- This event is commonly referred to as Kristallnacht, meaning the Night of Broken Glass, and the November Pogrom.
- This event marks a turning point where legal restrictions against Jewish people escalated into violence.
- Jews were freely attacked in the street, in their homes, and at their places of work and worship. Around 30,000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Hundreds were injured, and almost 100 were murdered. Approximately 7,000 Jewish businesses and homes were damaged and looted, 1,400 synagogues were burned, many cemeteries and schools were vandalized.



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## The Kindertransport

- After Kristallnacht, the British government eased immigration restrictions and allowed an unspecified number of children under the age of 17 to [immigrate from Nazi-occupied territory](#).
- Approximately [10,000 children](#) were sent to live with foster families or in group establishments. Many never saw their parents again.

## Emigration

- By September 1939, approximately 282,000 Jews had emigrated from Germany and approximately 117,000 had emigrated from Austria.
- Many Jewish people thought that what was happening would eventually come to an end, or were not able to leave because they did not have a place to go.
- Further, many could not afford the journey, or were not successful in their efforts to leave. They needed citizenship papers, immigrant and travel visas, and often needed a sponsor that would be financially responsible.
- Countries had immigration quotas and only allowed a certain number of immigrants per year. For example, the United States' quota allowed 25,957 German immigrants. Only 2,372 German Jews were actually admitted in 1933.

## Goals & Objectives

Students will know:

- Nazi policies toward Jews during the 1930s, efforts to expel Jews, efforts of Jews to leave, Kindertransport, immigration restrictions in Allied countries.

Students will understand:

- Compelling Question: Why didn't more Jews leave Germany after Hitler came to power and especially after violent actions (i.e., Kristallnacht) began to occur?

Students will be able to:

- Use evidence from the Hans Weimann Artifacts to explain why more Jewish families didn't leave Germany during the Holocaust. Students will also be able to have an understanding for what life was like for Jews in Nazi Germany.

ELL Language Objective

- Students will be able to listen and discuss in small groups about the impact the artifacts had on Jewish families in Nazi Germany.
- Students will be able to choose the artifact that best answers each question in the graphic organizer and write an explanation for why they chose it.



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## Procedure

Warm-Up: In a journal, discussion board, whiteboard, or similar have students respond to the following compelling question, then share out as a class:

- Why didn't more Jews leave Germany after Hitler came to power and especially after violent actions (i.e., Kristallnacht) began to occur?

Step 1: Continue class discussion by asking students to suggest supporting questions. Close with sharing the following list of supporting questions with them:

- What was life like in Nazi Germany?
- Why might some people have felt compelled to leave, and some to stay?
- How easy was it to leave? What difficulties did they face?
- What emotions might people have felt? What did they fear? What did they hope?

Step 2: Tell students that they will learn about one person who did leave. Distribute copies of Hans Weinmann's [biographical summary](#) and instruct students to read it quietly. Discuss the details as a class and review necessary historical context.

Step 3: Distribute the "[Graphic Organizer: Hans Weinmann & Family Documents](#)" handout as well as copies of the four accompanying primary source documents. Explain to students that they will work together in small groups to review different documents that belong to Hans Weinmann and to answer several supporting questions.

Step 4: Break students into small groups (3-4 students per group) and instruct them to review each document, and complete the graphic organizer. Assure students that it is okay to speculate and use their prior knowledge. Walk around as needed to help students.

Step 5: As a class, review the groups' responses to the supporting questions.

Step 6: Lead a discussion based on the following questions:

- How does Hans' life fit into the discussion of the experience of Jews in Nazi Germany?
- How do the artifacts support or provide evidence for the experience of Jewish families during this time period?



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## Procedure (continued)

### Step 7:

- Close discussion by emphasizing that the Weinmann family's experience was not typical. Generally speaking, it was not easy to leave and we cannot judge people or say they were "wrong" for staying in Germany. Review statistics pertaining to emigration of Jews from Nazi Germany, as well as policies in place that made leaving difficult. As a possible extension, review restrictions that were placed on immigration to countries like Great Britain and the United States.

Closing: Go back to the question asked during the warm-up. Ask students to add to their original statement. (They can explain how their understanding has changed, write additional questions they still have, reflect on anything surprising they learned, etc.)

## Resources

### Nuremberg Laws

- <https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-6/nuremberg-laws>

### Kristallnacht

- <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/kristallnacht>

### Kindertransport

- <https://www.kindertransport.org/history.htm>

### Final Solution

- <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-of-the-quot-final-solution-quot>

### Nazi restrictions of emigration of Jews (early 1940s)

- <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/german-jewish-refugees-1933-1939>

### Immigration policies for U.S., Great Britain

- <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-united-states-and-the-refugee-crisis-1938-41>

### Holocaust timeline

- <https://timelineoftheholocaust.org/>



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## Content Standards

- Michigan K-12 Standards for Social Studies
  - World History / U.S. History
    - 7.1.3 Genocide in the 20th Century – differentiate genocide from other atrocities and forms of mass killing and explain its extent, causes, and consequences in the 20th century and to the present.
    - 7.2.4 World War II - Responses to Genocide – investigate the responses to Hitler’s Final Solution policy by the Allies, the U.S. government, international organizations, and individuals.
    - 7.2.6 Case Studies of Genocide – analyze the development, enactment, and consequences of, as well as the international community’s responses to, the Holocaust (or Shoah), Armenian Genocide, and at least one other genocide.
- C3 Framework
  - D1.5.9-12. Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.
  - D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
  - D2.His.6.9-12. Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.
  - D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.