

Nazi-Germany's concentration camps

Lesson Map: <http://esriaustralia.com.au/education/SpatialActivity76>

Engage

Who was involved in World War II?

- Click on the map URL above to open the lesson map. A map showing the world is evident. Under the 'Details' pane, select 'Content' and turn on the *Major Ally powers* and *Major Axis powers* layers. Ensure all other layers are off.
- Under the 'Details' pane, click on 'Legend' to identify what the symbols represent.
- ? List the main Allied powers and main Axis powers, as well as the year they entered the war by completing the table below. Hint: You can read additional information by clicking on one of the countries involved.

Allied Power	Year entered the war	Axis Power	Year entered the war
<i>Britain</i>	<i>1939</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>1939</i>
<i>France</i>	<i>1939</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>1939</i>
<i>United States of America</i>	<i>1941</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>1941</i>
<i>Soviet Union (Russia)</i>	<i>1941</i>		
<i>China</i>	<i>1941</i>		

- Under the 'Details' pane, click on 'Content' and add the following layers: *Minor ally powers* and *Minor axis powers*. Click on 'Legend' to see what each colour/symbol represents.
- ? Based on the four layers evident, why do you think this war was referred to as World War II? *[The four layers show that many countries across the globe were affected in some way by the events transpiring in Europe and later, the Pacific. This war can be justified as a World War as fighting occurred on various fronts across the globe, including in Europe, in South-East Asia and in the Pacific.]*
- Under the 'Details' pane, click on 'Content' and add the following layer: *Countries annexed by Germany*. Click on 'Legend' to see what each colour/symbol represents.

Download student worksheet [here](#).

Time
30 minutes

Activity

Investigate the horrors of Nazi-Germany's concentration camps.

Learning Outcome

Students will be able to:

- Investigate the evolution of Nazi concentration camps as WWII progressed
- Examine living conditions, working conditions and mistreatment that occurred in concentration camps
- Examine the role concentration camps played in Adolf Hitler's 'Final Solution'
- Identify countries aligned with the Ally and Axis powers

ACARA Curriculum Link

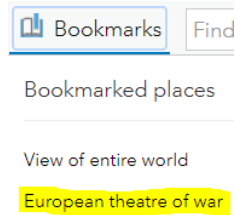
Year 10 History: World War II (1939-45)

[ACDSEH107](#) | [ACHHS182](#) | [ACHHS183](#) | [ACHHS193](#)

Teacher Feedback:

To share your feedback on this, or any Spatial Activity, please contact education@esriaustralia.com.au

- Click on the 'Bookmarks' tab. Select *European theatre of war* to refocus the map extent on Europe.



- At the commencement of WWII, Germany quickly expanded into Poland, taking control of much of its land and people. The Soviet Union annexed some of the eastern areas of Poland however, Germany had been swift in its annexation and gained control of Western and Central Poland.

Explore

Why did Hitler first establish concentration camps?

- Click on the 'Bookmarks' tab. Select *Concentration camps* to tighten the map extent on Germany and countries that it borders.
- Under the 'Details' pane, click on 'Content' and add the following layer: *Holding centre concentration camps*. Click on 'Legend' to see what each colour/symbol represents.
- ? Out of the three concentration camps displayed, identify the name, location and year of the one that was set up the earliest. Hint: You can click on each camp to bring up additional information. [*Name: Oranienburg; Location: north of Berlin, capital city of Germany; Year that camp was established: 1933.*]
- Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933. He quickly turned Germany into a one-party state and established the Gestapo, a state police comprised entirely of Nazis.
- ? Considering what you know about Hitler's immediate actions after becoming leader of Germany, explain why Oranienburg holding centre would have been established in March 1933. Consider its proximity to Berlin in your response. [*It is evident that the creation of Oranienburg holding centre was primarily to contain and incarcerate Hitler's – and the Nazi party's – political opponents. By incarcerating any political activists or opposition, Hitler could ensure that his plans for Germany went unchallenged. The fact that this holding center was established just north of the capital city suggests that Hitler may have wished to keep a close eye on these opponents, at least while he was strengthening his position.*]

Explain

What was the purpose of concentration camps in the earlier years of WWII?

- In the 'Details' pane, under the heading 'Content', add the following layers to the map: *Forced labour concentration camps* and *Transit camps*. Click on 'Legend' to see what the symbols represent.
- As evident on the map, forced labour camps could be found in Germany, Poland, France, Latvia and Austria.
- Take some time to explore some of the forced labour camps. Click on a forced labour camp symbol to bring up additional information on the camp, including a small summary of each camp's purpose.
- ? After learning about some of the forced labour camps, identify the types of people they were built to imprison. *[Although some forced labour camps were designed to accommodate specific types of people, they generally accommodated groups from society that Nazi Germany had labelled as undesirable. These groups included Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, political opponents, Jehovah's Witnesses, criminals and convicts, educators and artists, and prisoners of war.]*
- ? Although concentration camps allowed Nazi Germany to confine certain groups in society, they also served another purpose. What secondary purpose did they serve and how did this manifest in different labour camps? *[Concentration camps also contributed to Germany's war effort. Those that were forcefully interned at these camps were forced to build ammunition and armaments (Dora-Mittelbau), work in factories, farms and mines (Kaiserwald) or work in quarries (Natzweiler-Struthof). The raw materials or production of goods would contribute to Germany's war effort.]*
- ? Not including execution or extermination, what were some of the main reasons prisoners perished in concentration camps? *[Concentration camps were overcrowded, unsanitary and often had poor living conditions. This resulted in people dying from diseases, physical overexertion and a lack of food and water. Other causes of deaths included torture, beatings and medical experiments.]*

Extend

How did Hitler's 'Final solution' change concentration camps in the later years of the war?

- After the start of WWII, Adolf Hitler implemented a policy that came to be known as the "Final Solution." At first, the solution sought to isolate Jews in Germany and

countries annexed by the Nazis, and then subject them to dehumanizing regulations and forced labour.

- As the war continued, Hitler became convinced that his “Jewish problem” could only be solved by eliminating every Jew under Nazi Germany’s reach. In 1944 and 1945, when Germany began to lose ground to the Allied forces, he began to order the mass extermination of all Jews – and other prisoners – in concentration camps.
- In the ‘Details’ pane, under the heading ‘Content’, add the final layer: *Extermination camps*. Visit the ‘Legend’ to see what the symbols represent.
- ? What do you notice about the location of Nazi extermination camps? [*The Nazi extermination camps were all established in German-annexed Poland.*]
- Although many deaths occurred in forced labour camps, this appears small in scale in comparison to the sheer number of deaths that occurred in extermination camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka and Belzec.
- Take some time to explore some of the extermination camps. Click on an extermination camp symbol to bring up additional information on the camp, including a small summary of each camp’s purpose.
- ? What motivations may Adolf Hitler have had for setting up extermination camps outside of the German borders? [*Hitler may have intentionally established the extermination camps outside of German borders for several reasons. Firstly, Poland had a high Jewish population and it may have simply been out of an “efficiency” that these locations were identified. Secondly, although Hitler and the Nazi party had control of the German citizenry, he most likely wanted to keep his plans for extermination out of sight and out of mind. This would ensure that many Germans could remain – or feign – ignorance and lessen chances of open revolt or disagreement with his plans for the Jewish population.*]
- As the war began to draw to a close, and whenever an Allied contingent closed in on a concentration camp, Nazi troops would forcibly evacuate all prisoners towards either the nearest execution camp or the interior of the Reich. These evacuations became known as “Death marches”. Weak from mistreatment, physical labour and poor nutrition, many prisoners would perish along the way or were shot when they couldn’t keep up.
- At the conclusion of WWII, it became apparent that Hitler, Nazi Germany and its collaborators were responsible for the systematic murder of approximately six million Jews, equating to two-thirds of Europe’s Jewish population. This event was an attempt of genocide and is now referred to, and commemorated as, the

Holocaust.

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