

LESSON: Hanns Lowenbach

Grade Level:

This unit was developed for secondary students. The approach and materials for this unit follow the [Age Appropriate Guidelines from the USHMM](#).

Subject:

History; English/Language Arts; Multi-disciplinary.

Rationale:

The stories of individuals during the Holocaust can help us understand various facets of history through the eyes of those who lived through it. This story helps to broaden understanding about the experience of a young man from Germany whose story illustrates a lesser known path to surviving the Holocaust.

Overview:

Key Question(s):

- Who was Hanns Lowenbach? What was her experience during the Holocaust?
- How did the rise of the Nazi Party affect Hanns and his family?
- How did Hanns attempt to survive then escape Nazi Germany? How did he finally succeed in his efforts?

Educational Outcomes. At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to:

- Define the Holocaust and related terms such as antisemitism, Nazi party, and Gestapo.
- Identify who Hanns Lowenbach was and what his experiences were during the era of the Holocaust.
- Compare and contrast information shared in text and in a podcast.
- Discuss the challenges that faced individuals who were attempting to flee Nazi Germany.
- Locate Shanghai on a map.
- Discuss how relationships formed with individuals can make a difference.

Teacher preparation

It's important for teachers to familiarize themselves with the [Pedagogical Principles for Teaching the Holocaust](#). We encourage teachers to familiarize themselves with background knowledge on the Holocaust by viewing this [site](#) at the USHMM and view the [Introduction to the Holocaust](#). Additional information on teaching about this topic can be gleaned from the full-length version of [The Path to Nazi Genocide](#).

In addition, we suggest:

- Prepare access to handout and student packet.
- Check access to related links.
- Consider having students complete the [What was the Holocaust? Activity](#).
- Identify any terms students may be unfamiliar with in the written text or the podcast.

Materials

- Hanns Lowenbach: [Her Memories - A Panorama of Horrors](#)
- Hanns Lowenbach Podcast
- [Map of Europe & Asia in 1940](#)

Lesson:

INTRODUCTION

1. If students have not previously discussed the Holocaust, begin with an overview of the term, Holocaust, as defined by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored, persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945 across Europe and North Africa. The height of the persecution and murder occurred during World War II. By the end of the war in 1945, the Germans and their collaborators had killed nearly two out of every three European Jews. The Nazis believed that Germans were racially superior.

They believed Jews were a threat to the so-called German racial community. While Jews were the primary victims, the Nazis also targeted other groups for persecution and murder. The Nazis claimed that Roma, people with disabilities, some Slavic peoples (especially Poles and Russians), and Black people were biologically inferior. The regime persecuted other groups because of politics, ideology, or behavior. These groups included Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, gay men, and people the Nazis called "asocials" and "professional criminals."

For younger students, or students previously familiar with this event in history, you can utilize this shortened definition:

The state-sponsored systematic murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators. Sinti-Roma, Poles, people with physical and mental disabilities, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents were also targeted by the Nazis.

2. Share with students that today we will be learning about the story of Hanns Lowenbach. Hanns was a young German Jewish man who survived the Holocaust. Hanns tried desperately to escape Germany following an uptick in Nazi violence, yet it would take an unexpected kindness to finally allow him the opportunity to leave.

Ask students to discuss - what challenges might someone face when trying to leave their native country? During the late 1930s, where might a Jewish individual whose was attempting to flee Nazi Germany attempt to go?

RESEARCH/ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

1. Explain to students that they will be learning about Hanns' experiences in attempting to leave Nazi Germany. They will be assigned one of two ways to learn about Hanns - through a podcast or through a written narrative. Each group will seek to answer the following questions:
 - a. Who was Hanns Lowenbach?
 - b. In 3-5 sentences, describe why Hanns sought to leave Nazi Germany.
 - c. In 3-5 additional sentences, discuss the various ways Hanns tried to escape his circumstances?
 - d. What ultimately happened to allow Hanns to escape Nazi Germany? Where did he go?
 - e. Had you previously heard of Jewish refugees fleeing to Shanghai? What types of challenges do you think faced Hanns in Shanghai?
 - f. What was the fate of Hanns' immediate family?
2. Task students to first review their sources and answers to these questions as individuals; then ask them to discuss the answers to these questions with others who shared their medium (text or podcast).
3. Once this initial period of sharing is complete, place students in heterogeneous pairs or small groups to discuss their answers to the questions. Have students place particular emphasis on discussing how their two mediums varied and what the experience was like for each individual.
4. Have students share out as a whole group discussing the key questions from above and any other observations from their work.

CONCLUSION

1. While Hanns' ultimate destination was unique, the struggles that faced those Jews who wished to escape Nazi Germany were very similar.
2. Ask students to reflect on what they learned during their exploration and how it can connect to today:

- a) How did a pre-war relationship allow Hanns to survive the Holocaust? Were you surprised by this occurrence? Why or why not?
- b) What challenges still face those fleeing persecution and unsafe situations today?
- c) How can we apply what we have learned about the Hanns' experience to the world in the present? What actions can we take based on our learnings?