

Objectives: Give students a deeper understanding of Concentration Camps through the lens of Auschwitz and the importance of learning about what happened in the Holocaust

Outcome: Students will know what Auschwitz was, what happened within camps like Auschwitz, and how those events affect the world today

Pre-lesson reflections: can be used to get the students ready to learn about the topic

Question to pose: What is a concentration camp?

Question to pose: What have you heard already about some of the treatments in a camp like Auschwitz?

The Lesson:

Introduction / Background information on the topic: used to set up the lesson but also help instructor teach it

- **Key points:** information/content that should be provided
 - **Supplemental information:** at the discretion of the educator. Can be things such as primary and secondary texts, images, audio or video recordings, etc.
- Auschwitz was the largest and most infamous of all the Nazi camps, where approximately 1.1 million people were murdered.
- Auschwitz was a unique camp during the war as it combined both the extermination of Jews and forced slave labor on the Jewish people
- There was Auschwitz-I located in Oświęcim in German-occupied Poland which was the main camp and there was Auschwitz-II near the Polish village Brzezinka, about 2 miles from the main camp
- 3 “purposes” of concentration camps
 - To incarcerate real and perceived enemies of the Nazi regime and the German occupation authorities in Poland for an indefinite period of time
 - To provide a supply of forced laborers for deployment in SS-owned construction-related enterprises (and, later, armaments and other war-related production)
 - To serve as a site to kill small, targeted groups of the population whose death was determined by the SS and police authorities to be essential to the security of Nazi Germany.

Whole-group activity:

Watch Brief History video on What Auschwitz Was - (1:46)

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/27/auschwitz-short-history-liberation-concentration-camp-holocaust>

Older students are able to grasp individual stories more of holocaust survivors, and use those stories to deepen their understanding on the realities of the Holocaust. Using this student-made documentary on the life of Auschwitz Survivor Betty Cohen, students will be able to see another perspective on the horrors of this camp.

<https://vimeo.com/297757613>

Discussion Questions:

Has Betty's outlook on the world been affected by her experiences in the holocaust?

What were the tattoos' significance in a place like Auschwitz? What does that tell us about the essence of the Holocaust?

The smell. The building material. The soldiers. How does Betty remember every piece of the camp, despite the trauma it brings for her?

Who did they perform experiments on? What was it women that were in block 10?

What were the different experiences that men and women faced in these camps, like the story of Betty and Al?

What is Betty's piece of advice to everyone whenever you walk away from your family? How does that resonate with you?

Concluding the lesson:

Although this lesson plan provides a small bit of insight into the conditions of Auschwitz and concentration camps in general, how has your outlook and understanding of the topic changed?

Do hearing these individual stories on a person's life make the nature of the Holocaust feel more jarring to you, and why?