

GENOCIDE AND THE HOLOCAUST

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Paper Topics for Genocide and the Holocaust

1. Oral histories with survivors or their children. Tell the story of the Holocaust through these histories, compare them, look at the similarities and dissimilarities, analyze how they help our understanding of the Holocaust.
2. Deniers of the Holocaust. Who are they? What are they denying? What is their purported evidence? Why are they so bent on denying the Holocaust? Critique their arguments.
3. Literature. Read at least two memoirs, novels, diaries, or collections of short stories about the Holocaust. Analyze how the stories deepen your understanding of the Holocaust. Show what kind of techniques and approaches the authors use to reach their audience.
4. Academics. Study and analyze the role of the universities and of university-trained graduates in the perpetuation of the Holocaust.
5. Rescuers. Who were the rescuers? Why did they rescue Jews? What are the characteristics of rescuers? What are the commonalities? Why were there so few rescuers?
6. Ordinary people. What was the role of ordinary people in the perpetration of the Holocaust? Was the Holocaust directed above all by elite groups of specially chosen troops or did ordinary soldiers and police play a significant role?
7. Churches. Examine the role of either the Protestant or the Roman Catholic churches during the period of the Holocaust. How did they act and what were their motivations?
8. Genocides. Investigate another mass genocide of the twentieth century like the Armenians or the Khmer-Rouge. Look at the causes, the roles of perpetrators, victims, bystanders, and rescuers.
9. Atomic weapons. Investigate the morality of the arguments for and against the use of atomic weapons in the past and the future.
10. "Desk-killers." Who were they? What was their role in the Holocaust? What motivated them? Show how their actions relate to issues in contemporary society. Look at people like Adolf Eichmann and Heinrich Himmler to gain insight into these kinds of people.
11. Hitler. Study Hitler with a view toward trying to understand what motivated the man and what permitted him to become such an incredible force in this century.
12. Films. Study a major film about the Holocaust and analyze the cinematographic techniques used to convey the film's message. Analyze and explain the film's impact on you.
13. Liberators. Read several first-person accounts of the liberation of the camps. Compare these accounts to the versions of the liberation in standard texts about the Holocaust.

14. Countries. Study the history of the Holocaust in a particular country. Investigate the specific conditions of the Holocaust in this country and compare it with the general picture of the Holocaust we get from our text.

15. Israel. Investigate the role of the Jews in Palestine during the period of the Holocaust and show the relationship of the Holocaust to the establishment of the state of Israel.

16. Resistance. Study the types of resistance and explore the reasons for putting up resistance or failing to resist the Nazis.

17. Holocaust Museum. Visit the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. Describe the purpose of the museum and analyze its effectiveness on reaching people of many different backgrounds. Show the impact of the museum on you.

18. Analyze the U.S. response to the Holocaust? How much did the U.S. know and could it have done more to aid the victims?

19. Study the Nazi euthanasia program. Show how this program was prepared and what consequences it had for the development of the Holocaust.

20. Study the reentry of Jews into life after the Holocaust. Analyze what life was like during liberation and in the first 2-3 years after liberation.

21. Analyze the effectiveness of the multimedia program about the Holocaust.

22. There are many things about the Holocaust on the Internet. Choose a topic like the hate groups who deny the Holocaust occur and analyze their arguments and their approach to mass communication of their ideas.

23. Investigate why ordinary Germans supported Hitler. There are several recent provocative books on this topic.

24. Do a simulation of the Nuremberg Trials in class. This would need to be a group project.

25. The language of National socialism. Show how the use of a specialized language played a crucial role in the success of Nazism in Germany. If you do this topic, begin with the book by Victor Klemperer.

26. Investigate the role of prejudice and stereotyping in recent death sentences in the Illinois courts.

Each one of these topics requires reading, inquiry, analysis, comparison and contrast, and evaluation. It is not a report about what you have read or watched, but it is a serious discussion and assessment of what you have learned. It is not a summary like you will do for some of the chapters in Bauer. Rather, you must deal critically with the works by writing about what is good and bad in them. You should tell what kind of an impact the materials had on you and why. In summary, you are to write a reflective piece about what you have read. **Your paper must be printed and be 7-10 pages in length.**

You must provide a bibliography and footnote your sources whether you used a book, articles, films or the Internet. For Internet sites, you must give the address and the date of use. Be very careful when using Internet sources that they are reliable. Plagiarism is strictly forbidden, and you are expected to show clearly what is your own work and what you are summarizing, paraphrasing or quoting from another source. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please speak with me. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic responsibility and could cause you to fail the course.