



Introduction to the Holocaust

This is the Museum's flagship 100-minute education program, providing a succinct survey of the course and causes of the Holocaust, followed by exploration of the experiences of South Australian Holocaust Survivors.

Important context (as at Term 1, 2026)

The Andrew Steiner Education Centre officially opened in February 2026 and is open for school bookings. The Museum building itself has undergone extensive renovations and is not currently open to the public. Installation of the permanent exhibitions is in progress and therefore they are not available to school groups yet. The former galleries are no longer available.

Globally, Holocaust education is adjusting from young people engaging directly with our precious remaining Survivors, towards new models of learning through testimony. While every effort is made for a Holocaust Survivor to attend our school programs, this is not guaranteed and must not be assumed.

We are busy adapting to on-site delivery in our new purpose-built Centre and installation of new galleries will occur later this year. The Museum's Education Program will continue to evolve in the coming months and years. We look forward to you and your students coming with us on this journey.

Curricular Context

Primarily designed to address **compulsory learning about the Holocaust in the Australian Curriculum**:

AC v9 > HASS > **History > Year 10** > Knowledge and Understanding > World War II

Content Descriptor AC9HH10K03

the significant events and turning points of the Second World War, including the Holocaust and use of the atomic bomb

Learning design is guided by the following **premises**:

1. Students have limited time to engage with learning about the Holocaust at school (i.e. many Year 10 History courses are one semester long, with one term to learn about World War II)
2. Students have limited time to engage with learning about the Holocaust while at AHMSEC (i.e. programs are currently 100 minutes long)
3. Year 10 History is a compulsory course for all students, with only some electing to pursue History at senior secondary level (i.e. the program needs to differentiate for all learners)
4. AHMSEC is inclusive but has limited access to contextual information about individual learners (i.e. the program needs to cater for all literacy levels, other learning needs, potential trauma backgrounds, and be culturally safe)
5. There is 'an emphasis on Australia in its global context' in the Australian Curriculum [History Year 10 level description] (i.e. the students learn about the Holocaust from an Australian perspective)

This program is **also suitable** for Year 12 Modern History students:

Modern Nations

Topic 3: Germany 1918-48

Background Study:

- The aftermath of defeat

Focus Areas:

- The liberal experiment;
- The creation and consolidation of a dictatorship; and
- Germany in war and defeat

It can provide an opportunity for consolidating and refreshing learning from Year 10 and/or revision of learning about the Holocaust in Year 12. The first half of the program can be condensed to allow more time for Variations 1, 2 or 3 (see 'Adaptable Content' below). An alternative program providing 'extension' for Year 12 Modern History students is in development.

Learning Intentions

1. Students understand the basic scope of the Holocaust, focussing on Jews as the primary victims.
2. Students can access learning about the Holocaust by familiarising with relevant vocabulary.
3. Students gain a sense of the 'steps of descent' towards the Final Solution, including antisemitism.
4. Students empathise with the experiences of at least one South Australian Holocaust Survivor.
5. Students recognise that there were diverse Jewish experiences of the Holocaust.
6. Students begin to make meaning of the Holocaust, including contemporary relevance.

Existing Knowledge

We have a no shame/no judgement philosophy for students and teachers on what participants bring to this program. The Learning Intentions are designed to be achievable for allcomers.

Helpful but unassumed knowledge includes:

- At least some exposure to the overall 'causes, outbreak and course of the Second World War', particularly in Europe, as per the Australian Curriculum
- Rough geographic knowledge of Europe so students can approximately place the nations mentioned in the program

Please speak to the Education Manager for advice on resources that can support this preparation.

At the other end of the spectrum, the program provides multiple entry points for all activities, encouraging academic stretch for those who are seeking it.

The Education Manager also seeks information from each school regarding how the excursion fits into your overall Learning and Assessment Plan, so the program can be pitched accordingly.

Child Safety

Please access our Child Safe Environments Policy at <https://ahmsec.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/AHMSEC-Child-Safe-Environments-Policy.pdf>

Overall, trauma-informed practices inform AHMSEC’s work for the benefit of all visitors. More specifically, the Education Program follows the global Holocaust Education best practice approach of ‘Safely In, Safely Out’. This is well-articulated by our colleagues at the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand / Te Pūtahi Urupatu o Aoeteroa as follows:

“Safely in...Safely Out” is a key philosophical concept of teaching the Holocaust. It means that when you teach the topic, you need to focus on the stories and peoples’ journeys. Avoid the numbers, the gore and a ‘shock and awe’ approach.

Telling the stories before, during and after the Holocaust helps students live the event and better understand the victims, by-standers and perpetrators.

What it means, in practice, is guiding students through a challenging topic and ensuring they come out safely on the other side with understanding, compassion and knowing they’ve had their questions answered on the topic.

<https://www.holocaustcentre.org.nz/teaching-guide.html>

We encourage you to actively consider how you will help us deliver on this with adequate pre- and post-excursion learning (see above).

Careful consideration is given to ensuring materials and content are age appropriate for 15-16 year olds. We may be more conservative in our choice of sources than you might feel comfortable sharing in your classroom, to minimise the risk of harm across all school visits.

Adaptable Content

‘Introduction to the Holocaust’ is delivered in two halves:

- 1) a succinct survey of the course and causes of the Holocaust
[main AC History 7-10 Concepts: *Change and Continuity; Cause (Effect follows)*]
- 2) exploration of the experiences of South Australian Holocaust Survivors
[main AC History 7-10 Concepts: *Perspectives; Effect (following Causes)*]

The program is sequenced for Gradual Release of Responsibility (also known as ‘I do/we do/you do’). It is also “chunked” into 5-20 minute activities to promote student engagement across the 100 minutes.

Adjustments are made on the day to allow for the timing of your visit and students’ engagement with the different components. Please speak to the Education Manager in advance if you would like to discuss specific changes to the content or pedagogy to meet the needs of your cohort.

Topic	Purpose	Educator will	Students will	Safely In/ Safely Out	Literacy demand
Immediate safety and comfort briefing	WHS Wellbeing	Invac/Evac First Aid Toilet access Three strategies for learning about the Holocaust	Listen and consider personal relevance of the strategies	Explicitly centre SI/SO Give 3 practical strategies, including option of withdrawing if needed	Low
Acknowledgement of Country	Pay respect to Kurna nation	Give a contextualised Acknowledgement for the land on which AHMSEC stands	Learn an Aboriginal perspective about Tartanyangga/ Victoria Square	Explicit welcome to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visitors	Low
William Cooper and Kristallnacht <i>IDO</i> <i>(with a hook)</i>	Establishing ‘the why’ – what we hope students get out of the program Providing Kristallnacht as an ‘anchor’ we refer back to during the program	Share the story of Yorta Yorta man William Cooper’s protest against Kristallnacht Link to Compassion, Critical Thinking, and Active Citizenship	Close observation of photographic source Familiarise with the basics of this turning point in the Holocaust Pause to consider the purpose of today’s visit	Frame the introduction to Kristallnacht through the response of an Australian human rights activist Only voluntary student contributions at this early point	Low
Introduction to AHMSEC staff and volunteers	Establishing ethos	Describe why we work/volunteer here	Understand there may be descendants of Holocaust survivors and members of the Jewish community in the room	Introduction to the new educators	Low

Topic	Purpose	Educator will	Students will	Safely In/ Safely Out	Literacy demand
Defining the indefinable Gentle shift to <i>WE DO</i>	Set basic boundaries on the 'facts' of the Holocaust Loose diagnostic assessment of the group's pre-existing knowledge	Read through the definition from USHMM with whole group Afterwards, briefly highlight the 3 numbers mentioned	Participate in Klose exercise to engage with the two paragraphs Try to process this information (hook onto at least one key idea)	Low stakes entry to active participation in the session Activity undertaken individually or with a friend; no sharing required	Moderate A 'jeopardy' style word bank provides multiple entry points Students can read along with the presenter if comfortable
Definition continued	Acknowledge other victims of the Holocaust	Read first sentence of second half of USHMM definition	Students consider the other groups highlighted in yellow	Focussing on Jews as the 'primary', but not only, victims	Moderate Presenter recaps the content
The Holocaust in 9 terms – introduction <i>Increased level of WE DO</i>	Quick diagnostic assessment of the group's pre-existing knowledge Build or refresh vocabulary relating to the Holocaust	Demonstrate example using Kristallnacht All adults offer support to small groups as needed Answers provided (no elaboration at this stage)	Thumb poll of how familiar the terms are to the students Work in small groups on matching each term with a definition and picture	Socio-cultural learning environment Teacher/s responsible for establishing the groups Answers provided to check understanding before proceeding	Moderate Pictures to assist students to visualise the vocabulary Adults available to read writing aloud and comprehend words and images as needed
The Holocaust in 9 terms – timeline <i>Greater level of WE DO</i>	Establish a rough timeline of the Holocaust Demonstrate the long descent to the Final Solution	Give context with social media post concluding 'Auschwitz took time' Provide instructions and clues Reveal answers with succinct message about each of the events/developments/phenomena	Work in small groups to place the 9 terms in a sequence Debate the order with peers Seek further information from adults as needed	Opportunity for students to engage with these 9 concepts in a broad chronological sense Begin to understand prejudice and antisemitism as the foundation for 1933-1945 Context for Survivor stories to follow	Lower Students can call on peers and adults to make meaning of the new language

Topic	Purpose	Educator will	Students will	SI/SO	Literacy
Brain break	Trauma-informed practice and managing cognitive load	Provide quote from Anne Frank	Self- or co-regulate as needed	Check in point for teachers/ students	Nil
Why do we learn about how individual Jews experienced the Holocaust? <i>Transition from WE DO</i>	Establishing ‘the why’ for this half of the program	Pose question and invite volunteers to answer Share ‘heart/ human’ and ‘head/historian’ perspectives	Pause to consider own perspective Read statement from Andrew Steiner to self	Establishing importance of individuals over statistics shared in definition at start of program	Moderate for Steiner quote – presenter recaps
Program Variation 1 – Holocaust Survivor in attendance <i>YOU DO with support available</i>	Prepare for meeting the Survivor Make the most of precious time with them	Explain that the museum has discovered >400 SA Survivors Provide kits of 10 cards outlining the Survivor’s story Offer support to tables as needed	Work in small groups to share and process information Collaboratively devise at least one question to pose to the Survivor	Unpacking the sometimes complex context of the person’s Survival, to facilitate deeper questions	High Picture on each card to aid visualisation Optional 5W and 1H scaffold worksheet to support comprehension High degree of support available from staff/volunteers who are familiar with the story
		Facilitate conversation with Survivor in person or online	Demonstrate active audience skills Each table’s nominated volunteer to ask a question	First-hand testimony	Auditory processing If online, live captioning available

Topic	Purpose	Educator will	Students will	Safely In/ Safely Out	Literacy demand
Program Variation 2 – Holocaust Survivor not in attendance <i>YOU DO with support available</i>	Understand the diverse ways that survival became possible	Provide kits of 10 cards outlining the diverse experiences of 6 SA Survivors Offer support to tables as needed	Work in small groups to share and process information	Focus on Survivors who experienced the Holocaust as children	High Picture on each card to aid visualisation Optional 5W and 1H scaffold worksheet to support comprehension High degree of support available from staff/volunteers who are familiar with the stories
		Provide instructions on how to share at least one insight with other groups	Participate as a ‘stayer’ (someone who shares the information) or ‘mover’ (someone who listens to information from other groups)	The ‘speed- dating’ (expert group) style sharing enables students to engage in a way that they feel comfortable	Auditory processing
		Share a quote about childhood experiences from each Survivor to prepare for personal Reflection	Students can volunteer to read the quote from the person they studied	Relatively confronting childhood quotes are only presented at this end of the program	Moderate Students may volunteer to read aloud in front of whole group

Topic	Purpose	Educator will	Students will	Safely In/ Safely Out	Literacy demand
Program Variation 3 – Holocaust Survivor not in attendance (<i>extension option</i>) <i>YOU DO with support available</i>	Higher order Historical Thinking on Perspectives for students with stronger base level knowledge of the Holocaust	Provide 2 kits of 10 cards outlining the two Survivors’ stories Offer support to tables as needed	Work in small groups to share and process information on both Survivors Complete 5W and 1H worksheet, focusing on final compare/contrast question Be ready to debrief in whole class discussion	For cohorts that are seeking extension, including Year 12 Modern History classes	High Picture on each card to aid visualisation High degree of support available from staff/volunteers who are familiar with both stories
Reflection and Farewell	Begin to make personal meaning and consider relevance to today’s world	Establish parameters of very short written reflection	Reflect on a key takeaway from today’s learning	Quiet environment Anonymous and option to sit away from others for privacy Can consult peers/teachers quietly	Can share a verbal comment with an adult as an alterative

Further Information

What other details would assist you and fellow teachers to plan ahead for this Education Program?
 Please reach out to our Education Manager with any queries or feedback on this Teacher Briefing.
 Contact details are available on our website.