

Steps Toward Genocide

Trace how prejudice escalated into state-sponsored persecution.

SS.68.HE.1 "Foundations of Holocaust Education"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one example in each paragraph that shows antisemitism escalating from prejudice to government action to persecution. Number your underlined examples 1, 2, and 3 to show the sequence.

From Prejudice to Persecution

- ① Before the Holocaust, antisemitism, prejudice against Jewish people, had existed in Europe for centuries. In Germany after World War I, economic hardship and political conflict made many people fearful and angry. The Nazi Party used antisemitic lies to blame Jews for problems they did not cause. These claims were false, but repeated speeches, posters, newspapers, and classroom lessons made them seem believable to some people. Prejudice became more dangerous when leaders used it to gain support and when neighbors accepted or repeated it.
- ② After Adolf Hitler became chancellor in 1933, the Nazi government turned hateful ideas into official policy. Jewish Germans lost jobs in public service, and the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 stripped them of German citizenship and banned marriage between Jews and non-Jews. Nazi officials then expanded restrictions, encouraged boycotts, and used police power and violence. Kristallnacht, a coordinated attack in November 1938, damaged synagogues and Jewish businesses, killed people, and led to arrests. Each action narrowed Jewish people's rights and safety.
- ③ During World War II, Nazi Germany and its collaborators carried out the Holocaust, the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million European Jews. The Nazis also targeted Roma and Sinti people, disabled people, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war, gay men, Jehovah's Witnesses, and political opponents. Victims faced ghettos, deportations, forced labor, shootings, and killing centers. Studying this history means noticing how words, laws, and actions escalated. It also means recognizing choices: some people participated, some benefited or remained silent, and some resisted or helped victims despite serious danger.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What made Nazi antisemitic claims seem believable to some people, even though the claims were false?

2 How did the Nuremberg Laws move antisemitism from prejudice into official discrimination? Use two details from the passage.

3 How did Kristallnacht escalate the earlier restrictions against Jewish people?

4 How does paragraph 3 show the final stage of escalation? Give one action against victims and one outcome.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a four-sentence explanation for a younger student about how antisemitism escalated in Nazi Germany. Use one detail from each paragraph in your first three sentences, then explain in the fourth sentence why noticing this sequence matters.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one example in each paragraph that shows antisemitism escalating from prejudice to government action to persecution. Number your underlined examples 1, 2, and 3 to show the sequence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What made Nazi antisemitic claims seem believable to some people, even though the claims were false?	Economic hardship and conflict made people fearful and angry, while repeated propaganda in speeches, posters, newspapers, and lessons made false claims seem believable.
2	How did the Nuremberg Laws move antisemitism from prejudice into official discrimination? Use two details from the passage.	The laws stripped Jewish Germans of citizenship and banned marriage between Jews and non-Jews. They were government policy, not only personal prejudice.
3	How did Kristallnacht escalate the earlier restrictions against Jewish people?	It went beyond restrictions and boycotts to coordinated violence, damaging synagogues and businesses, killing people, and leading to arrests.
4	How does paragraph 3 show the final stage of escalation? Give one action against victims and one outcome.	Victims were deported, forced into labor, shot, or sent to killing centers. The outcome was the systematic persecution and murder of six million European Jews.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Antisemitic lies blamed Jewish people for problems and encouraged prejudice. After Hitler took power, laws took away rights, including citizenship. Later, the Nazis and their collaborators deported and murdered Jews during the Holocaust. Learning this sequence matters because hateful words and unfair actions can grow more dangerous when people accept them.

Accept equivalent details that accurately trace the progression from propaganda and prejudice to discriminatory laws and violent persecution. For the open response, check for four sentences, one accurate detail from each paragraph, and a reasonable explanation of why recognizing escalation matters.