

The **Holocaust** was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators.

The **Permanent Exhibition spans three floors and is a chronological narrative of the Holocaust. This handout will guide you through the exhibition, helping you think about how and why the Holocaust happened.**

- There is a highlighted stop or section for each floor. Find this stop, and answer the question below.
- On each floor, select an artifact or photograph from each floor that is meaningful for you, and helps you understand how and why the Holocaust happened

Fourth Floor: Nazi Assault: 1933-1939

The fourth floor explores the factors that led to the Holocaust. You’ll learn about the period from the rise to power of the Nazi party in Germany in 1933 to the outbreak of World War II in September 1939. The Nazi Party used propaganda, terror, violence, and state-sponsored racism to target Jews and other Nazi victims.

<p>Featured stop: THE “SCIENCE” OF RACE</p>	<p>How does this section help you understand how and why the Holocaust happened?</p>	
<p>Item you chose</p>	<p>Why did you choose this item? How does this item help you understand how and why the Holocaust happened?</p>	

Third Floor: The Final Solution: 1940-1945

The third floor examines the evolution of Nazi policy towards the Jews during World War II, from persecution to mass murder. In 1941, with the invasion of the Soviet Union, Germany embarked on the path of genocide (the physical annihilation of an entire group of people). The Nazis called this the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question.” When World War II ended in 1945, the Nazis and their collaborators had killed some six million Jews in Europe, representing two-thirds of the Jewish population in prewar Europe.

<p>Featured stop: DOCUMENTING LIFE AND DEATH IN THE WARSAW GHETTO</p>	<p>What did nineteen-year-old David Graber say about the task of creating the archive?</p>	
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Item you chose	Why did you choose this item? How does this item help you understand how and why the Holocaust happened?	
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Second Floor: Last Chapter

The second floor of the Permanent Exhibition addresses the liberation of the Nazi camps and the Allied victory over Nazi Germany in 1945, rescue and resistance efforts, and the aftermath of the Holocaust. The issue of individual responsibility toward fellow human beings in danger is a recurring theme.

Featured stop: SURVIVOR TESTIMONY THEATRE	Listen to survivor experiences in their own words. Who did you hear?	
Item you chose	Why did you choose this item? How does this item help you understand how and why the Holocaust happened?	

Reflect on your visit to the Museum:

- How and why did the Holocaust happen?
- What questions remain unanswered? For more information, visit the [Holocaust Encyclopedia: encyclopedia.ushmm.org](http://encyclopedia.ushmm.org)
- How will learning about the history of the Holocaust inform the choices you make in your own life today?

