

LESSON PLAN

# LOCAL HISTORY:

What happened in your area during  
National Socialism?



English



Germany



Perpetrators



14-18



130+ min

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### Local history:

What happened in your area during National Socialism?

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### National Curriculum:

#### Topics in the curricula of the German States:

Visibility of National Socialist crimes; National Socialism – temptation to violence; A nation of yes-sayers – conviction or conformity?; Support and resistance of the German population; Creating regional connections to National Socialism; (virtual) memorial site visits; history culture; historical storytelling through sources; public handling of history in transition; coming to terms with the past; forced labor during National Socialism; crimes in the final phase (death marches)

## OBJECTIVES

1. Students interpret and analyze the historical contexts of the visibility of National Socialist crimes for the German population by evaluating various historical sources and current interpretations in the learning module Suspicious. (Promotion of interpretation and analysis skills)
2. Students present their results regarding the visibility of National Socialist crimes, categorize, and interpret them. (Promotion of methodological skills)
3. Students take action themselves by questioning passers-by about their perspectives on the remembrance of National Socialist crimes in their own region. Through engaging with these perspectives, they can position themselves within the discourse. This supports individual identity formation. (Promotion of orientation skills)
4. Students independently develop a connection to regional history and deal with forced labor or other Nazi crimes in their environment. They recognize that Nazi crimes also took place in their surroundings and were visible to the population. (Creating regional relevance)
5. Students make a critical value judgment regarding remembrance in Germany or their region and the responsibility of today's generations. (Promotion of critical judgment skills)

## LESSON PLAN

### Opening

 20 min

### Introductory Short Video:

"Are you familiar with the Ohrdruf concentration camp?"

[ArolsenArchives \(@arolsenarchives\) Official | TikTok](#)

In the classroom, the short video is watched together, or it can be shared digitally for individual viewing.

### Class Discussion:

Students briefly summarize what the video is about and make guesses about what the population might have known regarding Nazi crimes during that time.

Questions:

- What is the video about?
- Make some guesses: What might the people have known about Ohrdruf concentration camp during the Nazi era?

### Background Information:

A street survey was conducted with passers-by in Gotha, carried out by young people as part of the "Memory Walk" project by the Friedenstein Foundation Gotha. The passers-by share whether they have heard of Ohrdruf concentration camp nearby and discuss whether and why they think it is important to remember it.

Ohrdruf was one of over 130 subcamps of Buchenwald and was the first to be liberated by the U.S. Army in 1945. In American remembrance of Nazi crimes, Ohrdruf is featured, for example, in the first room of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's exhibition. In Germany, however, the camp is relatively unknown. Photos from the liberated camp today symbolize Nazi crimes in the U.S.

Between November 1944 and April 1945, around 20,000 prisoners from various European countries were forced to endure brutal labor in Ohrdruf. They worked up to 12 hours daily, digging tunnels into a rock face in the nearby Jonastal. About 7,000 prisoners died during this time.

### Optional:

Additional short videos for contextualization:

[Befreiung des KZ-Außenlagers Ohrdruf | 79 Jahre Erinnerung | TikTok](#)

## Main Activity I

 40 min

### Self-Exploration of the Learning Module *Suspicious*:

Students are presented with the learning task. In individual or group work, they explore the learning module *Suspicious: Landscape of Crimes* from the Arolsen School educational platform. They should focus primarily on the landscapes "Tents in Winter" and "An Inconspicuous Mass Grave" as well as the tour "Crimes in Full view" to answer the learning task.

English: <https://school.arolsen-archives.org/minigame/suspicious/>

German: [Suspekt | Arolsen Archives – die Bildungsplattform](#)

### Learning Task:

Find out and make notes about what the local population could have perceived regarding the crimes of the Nazi era nearby./ Find out and take notes on what the local population was able to witness about the Nazi crimes in the area?

### Note:

*Suspekt* was funded by the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media as part of the project *Open Friedenstein!* by the Friedenstein Foundation Gotha. The educational offering was developed by the Arolsen Archives with support from the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation.

### Results Documentation:

The results of the learning task regarding the visibility of Nazi crimes in the Ohrdruf region will be compiled on a poster. For structuring, students can help sort the findings into the themes of visibility of persecution, forced labor, and crimes of the final phase (death marches). These themes can be addressed and explained.

### Suggested Solution (to be added):

Visibility of Persecution:

Visibility of Forced Labor:

Visibility of Final Phase Crimes (Death Marches)

## Main Activity II

 50+ min

### Class Discussion:

Using the Smartboard or similar, a first collection of types of crimes in the local area is recorded with the students.

**Question I:** What types of crimes in your surroundings are you aware of?

**Alternatively:** What places that played a role during National Socialism do you know in your area? Are there any informational signs, memorial plaques, or commemorative markers nearby?

**Question II:** What might the local population have known about the Nazi crimes in the region?

### Independent Research and Creative Task:

Students will independently research in pre-assigned groups the visibility of National Socialist crimes in their vicinity. Impulse questions for their research will be displayed visibly in the classroom as a board or posted in the virtual classroom. The tools (see below) for independent research will be provided to them as much as possible in the virtual classroom. They are given the task to research independently within their groups.

As a second task, they should develop a street survey to find out whether passers-by are aware of the specific crime sites in the area and what their opinion is on whether these should be more strongly remembered. The videos of the street survey can be filmed and edited in the style of TikTok videos but should only be presented in the classroom. Alternatively, they can upload the videos to a newly created private TikTok account solely for the lesson context, without sharing them with their personal accounts. This should be clarified and agreed upon with the students beforehand. The street survey can be assigned as homework or, if more time is available, carried out directly.

### Impulse questions:

- What types of Nazi crimes are present in your vicinity?
- Who was persecuted in your immediate environment?
- What could the local population have known about persecution, forced labor, concentration camps, the conditions of prisoners, or other Nazi crimes?

### Learning Task:

First, research independently using the provided tools to assess the visibility of Nazi persecution and crimes in your area. Then, plan a street survey similar to the one in the video. Come up with three questions you want to find out through the survey. Think about how to approach passers-by, what to say to start the conversation, and ask for their consent to be filmed. Conduct the street survey as homework, making sure to follow the agreed-upon guidelines.

## Tools for local history research/internet:

Gedenkstättenportal. Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas:

[Memorialmuseums](#)

Konzentrationslager und Vernichtungslager und größere „Euthanasie“-Zentren: [GHDI - Map](#)

Liste der Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslager auf Wikipedia: [Liste der Konzentrationslager des Deutschen Reichs - Wikipedia](#)

Datenbank Stolpersteine (noch nicht Online): [Datenbank: STOLPERSTEINE by Gunter Demnig | Stolpersteine](#)

Datenbank Stolpersteine NRW: [Datenbank: STOLPERSTEINE by Gunter Demnig | Stolpersteine](#)

Zentrale Datenbank der Namen der Holocaustopfer. Yad Vashem: [Über die Zentrale Datenbank der Namen der Holocaustopfer](#)

Digitaler Atlas NS-Verbrechen. (noch nicht online): [NaziCrimesAtlas – Digitaler Atlas NS-Verbrechen](#)

#lastseen. Bildatlas. Im Bildatlas finden sich Fotos der Deportationen aus dem Reichsgebiet von 1938 bis 1945: [#lastseen Bildatlas](#)

Interview-Archiv „Zwangsarbeit 1939-1945“. Karte: [Karte | Interview-Archiv „Zwangsarbeit 1939-1945“](#)

Verzeichnis der KZ-ähnlichen Lager und Haftstätten sowie von Institutionen und Betrieben, in denen Zwangsarbeit geleistet wurde (ehemals Haftstättenverzeichnis der Stiftung EVZ): [Haftstättenverzeichnis der Stiftung EVZ](#)

Der Krieg und seine Opfer. Karte: [Karte der NS-Verbrechen – work in progress | Info | Dekoder](#)

## Tools for local history reserche/books:

Benz, Wolfgang / Distel, Barbara (Hg.): Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager, Band 1 bis 9, München 2005 bis 2009.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933-1945, Volume I, Part A, Bloomington 2009.

Weinmann, Martin (Hg.): Das nationalsozialistische Lagersystem (Catalogue of Camps and Prisons in Germany and German-Occupied Territories 1939-1945 (CCP)), Frankfurt am Main 1990.

International Tracing Service (ITS) (Arolsen Archives) (Hg.): Verzeichnis der Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer-SS (1933-1945), Konzentrationslager und deren Außenkommandos sowie andere Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer-SS in Deutschland und deutsch besetzten Gebieten, Bad Arolsen 1979.

Schwarz, Gudrun: Die nationalsozialistischen Lager, Frankfurt am Main 1996.

Drobisch, Klaus u. Wieland, Günther: System der NS-Konzentrationslager: 1933-1939, Berlin 1993.

**Presantaion of results:**

The groups present their videos and share what they have taken away from them.

**Possible questions:**

- What particularly stood out to you when conducting the street surveys?
- What different perspectives on the remembrance of Nazi crimes did you encounter in society during the surveys?/ What different opinions about remembering Nazi crimes did you see in society during the surveys?
- Which statement from the passers-by do you agree with most and why?

## Closing



20 min

### **Final discussion:**

Students are given a possible controversial statement about the culture of memory in the present. They should form their own value judgment regarding the statement and argue their position. Alternatively, students can use the statement to position themselves on a scale and then justify their opinion.

**Possible statement:** "We already have too many memorial sites in Germany," or another statement from the street interviews can be chosen.

### **Optional conclusion:**

In a class discussion, they could consider together what forms of remembrance for Nazi victims could look like in their local area. What ideas do the students have about this?

**Learning task:** Develop ideas on how an appropriate commemoration could look in the local area.



## LINKS: SHORT FORM VIDEO

1. [ArolsenArchives \(@arolsenarchives\) Official | TikTok](#)
2. [Befreiung des KZ-Außenlagers Ohrdruf | 79 Jahre Erinnerung | TikTok](#)