

USHMM Definition and Guidelines for Teaching the Holocaust

The Holocaust

The state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.

Jews were the primary victims – six million were murdered; Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), people with mental and physical disabilities, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons.

Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi Germany.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Guidelines for Teaching the Holocaust

1. Define the term Holocaust.
2. Avoid comparisons of pain.
3. Avoid simple answers to complex history.
4. Just because it happened does not mean it was inevitable.
5. Strive for precision of language.
6. Make careful distinctions about sources of information.
7. Try to avoid stereotypical descriptions.
8. Do not romanticize history to engage students' interest.
9. Contextualize the history you are teaching.
10. Translate statistics into people.
11. Be sensitive to appropriate written and audiovisual content.
12. Strive for balance in establishing whose perspective informs your study of the Holocaust.
13. Select appropriate learning activities.
14. Reinforce the objectives of your lesson plan.

For a complete discussion of the above guidelines please visit
http://www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/teachabo/part_2.pdf