

Suggested Answers for Jack's Timeline

1939

Jack lives carefree life with father, mother sister, and brother in Poland 12 miles from the German border

Collects stamps

Family goes on outings

After-school activities include movies, soccer, biking, wrestling, and swimming

Jack watches Hitler newsreels.

Jack is tutored for his bar mitzvah.

Jack thinks of himself more as Polish than Jewish.

June – Jack's Hebrew teacher disappears.

August – Jack's family (except father) goes to live in countryside with grandfather who paints signs for a living.

Jack experiences antisemitism.

September 1 - Germans invade Jack's village.

Prominent citizens in village are arrested

Family receives postcard from father who is in Stutthof Concentration Camp.

November – Jack is forced to wear yellow Star of David on his clothing.

Jack is not allowed to attend school.

Grandfather is forced to change signs from Polish to German.

Neighbors shun Jack's family.

They are worried about food shortage and lack of money.

Jack is separated from sister who goes to live in nearby village on other side of wall the Germans have put up.

Germans impose curfew in Jack's village.

Jews can be shot on sight

Jews cannot use library or attend public events.

A "J" is stamped on ID cards.

Jews are forbidden to travel.

Jews must tip hats to Nazis and step off sidewalk.

Jack loses his fun-loving attitude.

1940

January – Jack works six days a week removing heavy snow from road.

Mother uses money to rent apartment.

Jack digs cisterns, builds roads, hauls bricks, and crushes rocks.

April – Jack turns 13.

1941

Nazis block off streets, round up healthy Jewish workers, and send them deep into German forced-labor camps.

Jack is assigned to help a Catholic electrician rewire a Nazi's home. The electrician gives Jack an official letter with Nazi stamp so he can work every day.

June – One section of Jack’s village is turned into restricted living area for Jews.
Jack’s family is assigned one room in a small house.

1942

June 14, 1942 – Jews in Jack’s village are rounded up. Jack shows his Nazi letter and is sent to the “right” – He is separated from the rest of his family.

Jack goes to Blechhammer Concentration Camp in Germany.

His body hair is shaved; he is disinfected of lice, given a uniform with number 16013, wooden shoes, and sleeps in barracks with bunks with straw.

Jack sees smokestacks.

Jack works in forest cutting down trees for road.

Jack tries to stay well and clean and avoid beatings.

He wears a colored triangle.

Jack does not believe stories he hears of death camps.

Jack learns how to “play the game” – how to stay alive

1943

February - Jack is moved to a worse camp.

Jack catches typhus.

Jack thinks of his family and dreams of how it will be after the war.

He gets used to seeing death.

Spring, 1943 – Jack moves two more times to other camps.

One is Gross-Rosen, which has a sign “Arbeit Macht Frei”.

Many prisoners lose their lives in granite quarry.

Jack finds extra food.

Jack works in chemical plant.

Jack has diarrhea and Kapo helps him until he gets better.

Fall, 1943 – Jack is transferred to another camp in Germany.

Jack meets Moniek and they become great friends.

Jack questions God.

Jack steals butter.

1944

April – Jack turns 17.

There are rumors that American troops are gaining ground in the war.

May – Jack’s camp becomes crowded when Hitler orders all Jews in Hungary to be deported to camps.

Jack grows weaker.

Jack and Moniek are briefly in a camp without a crematorium. Jack and Moniek have to dispose of bodies in a common grave.

1945

Winter 1944/45 – Jack is starving.

Many in camp die of typhus.

Prisoners eat horsemeat.

Jack and Moniek are cooks and are able to get extra food.

Rumors circulate that Russian troops are getting closer.

March – camp is evacuated.

Jack and Moniek go to Doernhau Camp.

Doernhau is very crowded.

Moniek is beaten up by inmates.

Spring – Jack and others don't wait for Russians to arrive. They liberate themselves by walking out the front gate.

May 7, 1945 – Jack walks to another camp and tells the prisoners there that they are free – the war is over.

Jack sees Germans fleeing from a small town. He gets bread from a bakery.

Jack goes into a house decorated with beautiful flowers in pots. He takes food from the cellar, bathes, clothes himself, and feasts.

The Russians arrive and tell Jack to stay where he is.

Jack sleeps on a feather bed.

Jack walks and hitches rides to Frankfurt in the American Zone because he hears they have more food.

He finds a displaced persons camp.

Moniek is reunited with brothers.

Jack moves into a private home and trades food rations for his room and laundry services.

Jack finds a cousin.

Jack makes his way to Munich and has emotional reunion with uncle.

Jack learns his father is dead.

Jack continues to search for family members.

He finds his Aunt Hinda.

Jack searches for his family in Poland.

Jack makes three trips in the next year and returns each time to the American sector of Germany.

Jack finds hostile strangers in his family's old apartment in Gdynia.

Townpeople and the Nazis had looted their belongings.

The Polish government has taken over his father's fish cannery.

In grandfather's town, strangers also occupied the house.

Jack learns that his grandfather was one of 2,000 elderly Jews who had been marched to a ravine outside town and shot, their bodies dumped into a common grave.

He learns that his sister died in a gas chamber.

Jack learns that his mother and brother Jakob were sent to Auschwitz where they died in a gas chamber the first day.

Out of 80 members of Jack's family, only 5 survive the Holocaust.

1946

June – Jack and six hundred other survivors board a U. S. military troop ship to cross the Atlantic.

A Jewish resettlement official suggests that Jack go to Kansas City.

Jack arrives in Kansas City and begins working for a clothing-distribution wholesaler, sweeping floors and moving boxes.

1952

Jack becomes an American citizen