



# Background Information

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For "All the Light We Cannot See" and "The Book Thief"

# Adolf Hitler

1. He was a German Politician and Nazi Party Leader around the 1930's.
2. He rose to power as the chancellor of Germany in 1933 and then as Führer in 1934.
3. During his dictatorship from 1933 to 1945, he initiated World War II in Europe by invading Poland on 1 September 1939.
4. He was closely involved in military operations throughout the war and was central to the perpetration of The Holocaust.

# Adolf Hitler? (cont...)

5. Hitler aimed to eliminate Jews from Germany and establish a New Order to counter what he saw as the injustice of the post-World War I international order dominated by Britain and France.

6. Under Hitler's leadership and radically motivated ideology, the Nazi regime was responsible for the genocide of at least 5.5 million Jews, an estimated 19.3 million civilians and prisoners of war, and 28.7 million soldiers and civilians died as a result of military action in the European theatre.

7. In 1903, Hitler's father died suddenly. Two years later, Adolf's mother allowed her son to drop out of school. After her death in December 1907, Hitler moved to Vienna and worked as a casual laborer and watercolor painter. He applied to the Academy of Fine Arts twice and was rejected both times.

8. In 1913, Hitler relocated to Munich. At the outbreak of World War I, he applied to serve in the German army. He was accepted in August 1914, though he was still an Austrian citizen. He was decorated for bravery, receiving the Iron Cross First Class and the Black Wound Badge.

# Life when France was occupied by the Nazis during WWII

1. The city was dark, silent and constricted
2. Jews in Paris were forced to wear the yellow Star of David badge, and were barred from certain professions and public places.
3. On 22 June 1940, the French surrendered and signed an armistice with the Nazis. France was then divided in two zones. The French Government moved to Vichy, and Paris was governed by the German military and by French officials approved by the Germans.
4. The French rail network had largely been destroyed by allied bombing so getting food into Paris had become a problem

# Life when France was occupied by the Nazis during WWII (cont...)

5. By the time that the Germans arrived in Paris, two-thirds of the Parisians, had fled to the countryside and the south of France, in what is known as the *exode de 1940*

6. "We had to [...] be told where we could be billeted. [We] were housed at a large manor where we were allocated two large rooms to share with another six persons, two men, one couple with baby and a very old and sick lady with her 12-year-old grandson." - Henriette Dodd

7. Apartments, shops, subway trains, bookstores, buses, parks, cafes, streets and sidewalks, restaurants, even brothels were taken over by foreign soldiers and bureaucrats as well as by smug French collaborators.

8. Propaganda was present in education to train the young people with the ideas of the new Vichy regime

# Anti-Semitism

1. Definition: the hostility, prejudice, or discrimination against Jews
2. It was first used in print in Germany in 1879 as a scientific-sounding term for *Judenhass* ("Jew-hatred")
3. Among the most common manifestations of antisemitism throughout the history were pogroms, violent riots launched against the Jewish people, frequently encouraged by government authorities.
4. The Nazi Party gained popularity by disseminating anti-Jewish propaganda

# Anti-Semitism (cont...)

5. While the rise of power of the Nazi Party, they ordered anti-Jewish economic boycotts, staged book burnings, and enacted discriminatory anti-Jewish legislation
6. Lacking money outside of an orphan's pension and funds from selling postcards, Hitler stayed in homeless shelters. He later pointed to these years as the time when he first cultivated his anti-Semitism.
7. Nazi anti-Semitism culminated in the Holocaust, had a racist dimension in that it targeted Jewish people because of their supposed biological characteristics
8. The Nazis regarded the Jewish people as members of a subhuman race as well as a dangerous cancer that would destroy the German people – leading to the Final Solution (elimination of all Jewish people)

# Sources

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