

Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 Postcard Project

Primary lesson plan - Renee Bornstein



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This lesson plan is aimed at primary school students aged seven and over. The lesson plan works alongside a PowerPoint presentation. It allows students to practice reading, writing and comprehension. Students will be introduced to Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) in an age-appropriate way and will have the chance to take part in a national postcard writing project.

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 is **Torn from home**. Students will read the life story of a French Jewish girl who was forced to leave her home behind during the Holocaust. Students will have the opportunity to write to her and receive a reply.

This is one of two lessons for Holocaust Memorial Day Trust's (HMDT's) Postcard Project. You can do them in either order, or just choose one. The other lesson follows a similar structure with a different life story, enabling students to learn about the Genocide in Cambodia.



Learning objectives:

- All students will be able to give examples of what happens when people are forced to leave their homes and analyse the story using written materials
- Most students will discuss the story and draw conclusions about what we can learn from it
- Some students will consider the question of what we can do to welcome people arriving in the UK as refugees today

Notes for teachers:

Please be aware that this lesson plan asks students to consider traumatic events and 'what makes a home'. Some students may find the subject matter difficult, especially if they themselves have experienced trauma or have a challenging home environment.

You will need:

- Postcards – one per person. You can download postcards to print yourself or order printed copies for free (subject to availability) at hmd.org.uk/postcards
- Renee Bornstein easy to read life story (one per pupil or small group)
- Renee Bornstein life story questions worksheet (see differentiation notes - one per pupil or small group)
- The form for returning your postcards to HMDT

Background knowledge:

This activity would work well for a Key Stage 2 (or equivalent) primary school group. No background knowledge is required, although this lesson would be effective alongside our primary school assembly which introduces students to Holocaust Memorial Day.

You can download this, and other resources at hmd.org.uk/education

Slide 1 - Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day is on **27 January** every year.

It is the day when we learn about events in the past when people were treated badly, and sometimes killed, because of who they are. For example, because of their religion or the colour of their skin.

This is called a **genocide**.

The **Holocaust** was a genocide during World War Two when six million Jewish people were murdered because of their religion. Genocides have happened around the world since then, including in Cambodia, a country in Asia. In 2019 we mark the 40th anniversary of the end of the Genocide in Cambodia.

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 is **Torn from home**.

Slide 2 - Starter Activity

Discussion: Think about the ideal home. What words would you use to describe it? Answers might include:

- Safe
- Warm
- Family
- Comfortable
- All my nice things are there
- People come and visit
- There is nice food

When people are forced to leave their homes because they are in danger, they lose all of those things, sometimes for years.

Optional activity – Draw your ideal home. How can you show all of the things we came up with in your drawing?

Slide 3 - Introduce Renee Bornstein

- Today we are going to learn the story of a girl called Renee, who had to leave her home in France and go on a long scary journey, when she was only 8 years old.
- Renee was born in France in 1934. **Question: How many years ago was that?**
- She lived with her mother, father, older sister Helen and younger brother Joe. (Point out family members in the photograph).
- Renee and her family were Jewish. That means that they follow the religion of Judaism.

Slide 5 - Our story today involves lots of different countries in Europe, you can see them here on the map

Question: Can you identify which country we live in? Has anyone visited any of the other countries?

Slide 6 - Talk through the text on the slide about who Hitler and the Nazis were, and the additional facts below:

- In 1939, the Nazis invaded a country called Poland, which started World War Two.
- During World War Two, the Nazis invaded more and more countries, including France. They wanted to be in charge of as many countries as possible.
- The Nazis believed German people were better than lots of other groups of people, especially Jewish people like Renee and her family.
- They made laws so that Jewish people couldn't own businesses or go to school.
- They started planning to get rid of all the Jewish people in Europe.

Extension activity:

For higher ability groups, or if you have more time. Talk through the following questions and discuss as a group:

What is discrimination?

When you treat a group of people badly and say mean and unfair things about them because of their race, religion or part of their identity, this is called discrimination.

What is antisemitism?

Antisemitism is discrimination specifically towards Jewish people. There has been antisemitism in Europe for centuries, and the Nazis used this to help them persuade people that Jewish people were a problem in Germany.

Slide 7 - Life story and questions worksheets:

1. Hand out the easy to read life story. As a class, read and discuss Renee Bornstein's story.
2. Hand out the *Life story questions* worksheet.

Differentiation:

This activity requires reading skills. Students are encouraged to read the life story to find the answers.

Lower ability: For lower ability students you could do this all together as a group or focus on fewer questions.

Medium ability: Put students into small groups to answer the questions together.

Higher ability: Students can answer the questions individually and can expand on their answers with their own research.

Slide 8 - Marianne Cohn

Renee, Helen, Joe and lots of other children were helped by a brave woman called Marianne. She was a rescuer.

Class discussion:

Lots of adults made difficult decisions in the story to try and make Renee and her brother and sister safe. What decisions did these people have to make:

- Renee's parents
- The Catholic nuns
- Marianne Cohn

Slide 9 - Postcard writing activity:

Give each student a postcard. Talk through the below guidance before starting the activity.

1. Explain to the class that Renee is still alive today, and that she will receive the postcards.
2. Encourage students to take the activity seriously - sometimes difficult stories like these make us want to make jokes to help us to feel better, but inappropriate postcards will not be sent on. This exercise is about letting someone know their story is being learnt and they are remembered.
3. Ask students not to repeat Renee's story back to her - she knows what happened.

Postcard writing guidance

Give students the following structure to follow when writing their postcards to Renee:

Dear Renee,

I have read your story and...

Lower ability

- This is how it made me feel

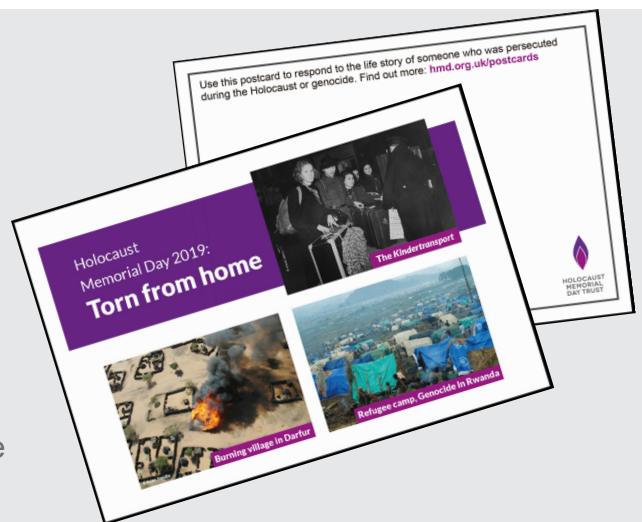
Medium ability

- This is how it made me feel
- This is what I have learnt that I didn't know before

Higher ability

- This is how it made me feel
- This is what I have learnt that I didn't know before
- This is what I have been inspired to change in my own life after hearing your story

**Yours sincerely,
(Student name)**



End by telling the students that they will receive a reply message from Renee.

Take the learning further:

There is another primary school lesson plan available as part of the postcard project featuring the life story of Sokphal Din, a survivor of the Genocide in Cambodia.

Why not explore that next?

Find this, along with other assemblies and lessons at hmd.org.uk/education.

Find more easy to read life stories of survivors, rescuers and people who were murdered during genocide: hmd.org.uk/resources

Important note for teachers - after the lesson:

Please complete the form below and send it to HMDT at the address provided. This will enable us to send you a reply postcard for the class.

You are welcome to send all, or a selection, of the postcards your class has written with the form. You are also welcome to keep them for a display if you would prefer. You will receive a reply message as long as you have completed the form.

As long as the form is fully filled in:

- Our team will review the messages and send all appropriate messages on to Renee. We may display postcards at the UK Commemorative Ceremony for Holocaust Memorial Day.
- You will receive a postcard back from Renee with a message for the class.

Share what you and your students have done to mark HMD on our interactive map and be part of the national picture of how schools and communities are commemorating the day. You can mark your event as private if it is not open to outside visitors.

Visit hmd.org.uk/letusknow to complete the short form.

We would love to see photographs of your displays and hear about any other HMD activities in the school. This helps us to know how our school resources are used, and your school may be featured as a case study when we talk about the range of activities taking place across the UK for HMD.

Feel free to contact us on education@hmd.org.uk if you have any questions.

Find out more...

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust: hmd.org.uk
Order an activity pack or resources: hmd.org.uk/activitypack
Resources for educators: hmd.org.uk/education

Renee Bornstein life story - questions

1. List three facts from paragraph one

-
-
-

2. What was the Nazi Party?

3. In paragraph three the family have to hide. Can you name one of the places they hid?

4. What does the word Jewish mean?

5. What country do Renee and her sister and brother try to escape to?

Renee Bornstein life story - questions

6. Why would they be safer there than in France?

7. Renee has to lie about being Jewish. Why did she have to do this?

8. Marianne could have saved herself from the Nazis. How could she have done this?

9. Describe Marianne and what she does in three words:

-
-
-

10. What do you think about Renee's story? How does it make you feel?

Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 Postcard Project

Schools return form



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Once you and your group have completed the postcard activity, please fill in the form below in order to receive response postcards.

You are welcome to include some or all of the postcards written by your group to be passed on to the survivors. However, if you would prefer to keep them for a display or similar, please still complete the form and let us know. Without this information we cannot send you a return message.

Please send your form to:

**Holocaust Memorial Day Trust
PO Box 61074
London
SE1P 5BX**

Your name			
Email address			
Telephone number		Your school, organisation or group	
Address to send return postcard to		Date(s) of postcard activity	
		Age group(s) of students	

Please let us know if you have done any other activities for HMD 2019:

Activity	✓	How many?	Other information (for example dates, age groups)
Assembly			
Lesson plan			
Tutor Time activities (Secondary only)		<i>(There are 5 available)</i>	<i>How many tutor groups in the school did them?</i>
Other activities			

Form continues overleaf

Thank you for marking Holocaust Memorial Day 2019.

Permission to store data and contact you:

- ☐ Please tick if you are happy for the information submitted above to be stored by HMDT on our database.
- ☐ Please tick if you are happy for HMDT to contact you with information about support available for schools for organising HMD activities in the future.

HMDT's full privacy policy can be viewed at www.hmd.org.uk/privacy.

Find out more...

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust: hmd.org.uk
Resources for educators: hmd.org.uk/education

Renee Bornstein

Easy to read life story



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Key terms:

Jewish: People who follow the religion of Judaism.

World War Two: A large war fought in Europe from 1939 – 1945.

Nazi Party: The group who were in power in Germany from 1933 – 1945, led by Adolf Hitler.

Refugee: A person who has to leave their home because they are in danger.

The Holocaust: The attempt by the Nazis to kill all the Jews in Europe.

My name is Renee. I was born in France in 1934. As a child I lived with my parents, my older sister, Helen, and my younger brother, Joe. My family and I are **Jewish**.

During **World War Two**, the German Army took control of France. Germany was led by the **Nazi Party**, who believed that German people were better than lots of other groups, especially Jewish people like my family.

Life became very hard and scary. Jewish people were being taken away and we didn't know where. Whenever the Nazis came to our village, we had to run and hide in barns, farms or cellars.

My parents knew that we were in danger and we couldn't hide forever. They made the hard decision to send us away in June 1944. I was 10 years old, Helen was 13 and Joe was 9.

First we were hidden by Catholic nuns for two weeks. I was very frightened and I missed my parents so much. I refused to eat and could hardly sleep.

We left the nuns and got on a train to the French town of Lyon. There we joined a group of 36 children. We all travelled towards Switzerland. It was a scary journey. Nazi soldiers walked up and down the trains trying to find Jewish people.

When we got off the train we were met by a woman called Marianne Cohn. She was 22 years old. She was going to help us escape to Switzerland. There weren't Nazis there and we would be safe.

A group of German soldiers appeared with barking dogs. Marianne told them we were going to a holiday camp. They kept asking us 'Are you Jewish?' We said no, but they took us to a prison.

We were taken to a big, empty room. A soldier pointed his gun at us and asked 'Are you Jewish?' Again and again I said no. Eventually, he let us go back to our cells.

Every day, Marianne was taken away and beaten. Some people tried to save her, but she didn't escape because she had promised the parents that she would not leave us children alone. The Nazis killed Marianne. I will never forget her, she was a true heroine.

Today, a school in that town is named after her. Because of her bravery, she saved 200 children.

After two weeks the Lord Mayor of the town, Jean Deffaugt, managed to get us out of prison. The Nazis let him send us to a children's home. They came every week to count us. If any children had escaped, they said they would kill all of us and the Lord Mayor. We lived there for three months.

When the Nazis left the town, we were taken to a **refugee** centre in Switzerland, where we lived for another three months. When we saw our parents again we had been apart for over six months.

The Nazis tried to kill all the Jewish people in Europe. This is known as **the Holocaust**. People like me and my family were very lucky to get away. By the end of the war, the Nazis had killed six million Jews.

I grew up to have a happy life. I married Ernst, another Jew who the Nazis had attacked, and we had three children. My family is proud to be Jewish.

When my husband died, we moved to Manchester in the UK. Manchester is my home now.

Find out more...

The Holocaust: hmd.org.uk/holocaust

Other resources for educators: hmd.org.uk/education