

HOLOCAUST TEXT: SUGGESTED ANSWERS AND DISCUSSION POINTS

1) Which word in the first 10 lines refers to the Jewish world outside Israel? Research the origin of this word. How was it used in the book of Deuteronomy?

DIASPORA – a Greek word meaning 'scatter, sow, disperse, spread around'.

Deuteronomy states that the Jewish people will be scattered across all nations of the earth.

2) Why do you think the exhibition organisers tried to avoid an excessive focus on the Holocaust and Jewish people as victims of discrimination and persecution?

It is important to avoid falling into stereotypes of Jewish people as victims. The aim is to portray the Jewish community as a group like any other, not one defined by persecution. Many British Jews have roots that go back much further than the recent wave of Holocaust refugees. The community is well-established with a diverse ancestry and a varied array of jobs, experiences and family histories. They represent a full spectrum of religious observance, from the orthodox to the secular.

3) Find the word (in para 3) that means 'leaving, departure'. It is also a book of the bible.

Exodus. Another Greek word.

4) Explain the phrase: 'Anti-Semitism is the ghost that stalks many of the stories'. (Para 3)

The history of the Jewish people is inseparable from stories of discrimination and persecution. It has defined their character, identity and destiny. A sense of belonging is very much a feature of the lives of those featured in these stories. However, there may also be an underlying feeling that integration is fragile. We never know what is round the corner.

5) Para 5: In what ways is a tattooed number an example of de-humanisation and industrialisation? Think about other contexts where people are given numbers.

The number branded on peoples' arms reminds us of cows or sheep that have marks on them to show which herd they belong to. Soldiers and prisoners are given numbers and this becomes their identity. It is rather like giving someone a barcode instead of a name. A number makes it easier to de-humanize people, to deprive them of their individuality. This is a common way for soldiers to view 'the enemy'.

6) Para 5: What do Jewish people call the yellow badge star they were forced to wear. Research when the Nazis required it to be worn and reactions to the edict.

The Star of David, also called Magen David (the shield of David). On September 1, 1941, the Nazis decreed that all Jews over the age of six were required to wear a yellow Star of David on their outer clothing in public at all times. Jewish residents obeyed as they had no choice. The sight of neighbours forced to wear the yellow badge often elicited sympathy from non-Jewish Germans. This response was widespread enough that Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister, issued pamphlets instructing Germans on how they should respond when encountering people wearing the yellow star.

7) Para 5: The author uses the phrase 'death camps'. How are these normally referred to? Why are phrases like this more effective?

The original term was 'Concentration camp' but this does not convey the full horror of the mass gassing of innocent people. 'Death camp', 'extermination camp' or 'killing centres' are much more shocking and accurate terms. There were different types of camps –labour camps, prison camps and death camps, purpose-built killing factories set up to carry out the Nazis' programme of mass annihilation.

8) In para 5, the events of the Holocaust are described in terms of which feature (it's found in town or the countryside). Answer: A road, or path

THE REMAINING QUESTIONS ARE JUST FOR DISCUSSION.
