Your Shortcut to... Remembering the Holocaust

It was one of the darkest moments in modern history, it happened less than 100 years ago and to this day, it is held up as a reminder of why tolerance of others is so important and why commemorating bad things that have happened in history is an important way of helping to ensure they don't happen again ... This is your Squiz Kids Shortcut to Remembering the Holocaust — the podcast where we dive into the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the big news stories. I'm Christie Kijurina.

And I'm Bryce Corbett ...

Now Bryce, today is January 27 ... an important day around the world as its Holocaust Memorial Day ... and this year, 2026, marks the 81st anniversary of this important day - so today we're going to explain to Squiz Kids WHAT the Holocaust was, WHO the Holocaust impacted and WHY it's important to stop every year and think about big and often dark moments of human history like this one.

Listen carefully. There's a S'Quiz at the end.

WHO

The Holocaust is something that happened to the Jewish people during World War II, about 85 years ago. But before we talk about the Holocaust, I think we need to start with a really important question. Who are Jewish people?

Yeah, because sometimes people hear the word "Jewish" and might think it means just one thing.

Exactly. Jewish people are connected by a shared history, culture, and a religion called Judaism. And Judaism is one of the oldest religions in the world.

But being Jewish isn't just about religion, right?

No, it's much more than that. Some Jewish people are religious, some aren't. But they may still share traditions, stories, food, language, or a sense of community. In the same way you might be part of a Christian or Muslim or Buddhist or Hindu community because you were born into it - even if you don't go to church or the mosque or the temple.

And just like Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus - Jewish families live in many different countries around the world, speak lots of different languages, and live very different lives to one another. Just like any group of people, they're not all the same. So where did the misunderstandings start?

For thousands of years, Jewish communities often lived as minorities. Which is to say, they were a smaller group within often much larger ones. And during times of fear or

hardship, people sometimes looked for someone to blame. Throughout history, Jewish people have often been unfairly blamed for problems they didn't cause.

And that's where false stories and stereotypes about Jewish people came to exist. False ideas were passed down over time, even though they weren't true. And when lies are repeated often enough, they can start to feel normal, which is dangerous.

So it's really important to say this clearly. Jewish people aren't defined by those lies. And they're definitely not defined by what happened later in history. Jewish people existed long before the Holocaust, and they continue to live full, rich and wonderfully varied lives today.

And remembering that helps us understand that what happened next wasn't about who Jewish people were... it was about the people who mistreated them. So, Christie, what was The Holocaust?

WHAT

The Holocaust was a time when Nazi leaders targeted Jewish people and some other groups of people they believed were "unacceptable".

This happened during World War Two. The Nazis were a political group who took control of Germany in the 1930s led by a man called Adolf Hitler. The Jewish people were persecuted by the Nazis - which is to say they were singled out and started to be bullied by them -- with words and with action. And what's important to understand is that this didn't start with violence.

That's right, It started with words and the spreading of lies. The Nazis used speeches, posters, newspapers, and radio to spread lies about Jewish people. They blamed them for problems in Germany that they didn't cause and made it seem like Jewish people had no place in German society.

Those lies were built on an idea called antisemitism, which is hatred or unfair treatment of Jewish people. And, as we said earlier, when lies are repeated again and again, they can start to feel normal, even if they're completely untrue.

Over time, those words turned into actions. Jewish people were slowly stripped of their rights. Jewish mums and dads were banned from certain jobs, Jewish children were excluded from schools, synagogues - which are Jewish places of worship, like a mosque or church - were burnt down, Jewish businesses were targeted by vandals, Jewish people were subjected to random acts of violence and generally, as a people, they were treated as if they mattered less.

And then things became worse. Much, much worse. During the Holocaust, millions of Jewish people were forced from their homes, separated from their families, often taken to concentration camps and killed.

Historians estimate that around six million Jewish people were killed during the Holocaust. Six million .... And remember: every one of those numbers represents a real person like you and me.

Many people were imprisoned in places called concentration camps. These were essentially a series of jails where Jewish people were forced into slave labor, living in inhuman conditions. Many died of starvation and disease. Many others were killed in the most barbaric ways. It's incredibly hard to understand, but explaining it honestly helps us see just how dangerous hatred and misinformation can become. How important tolerance of others is. And it sets us up to understand why remembering this history still matters very much today.

WHY

So after hearing about that terrible time the big question becomes: why do we still remember the Holocaust? And one reason has to do with today's date. On January 27, 1945, just 81 years ago, soldiers liberated Auschwitz, one of the worst concentration camps.

And when we say "liberated", we mean that soldiers arrived and freed the people who were being held there. The guards were gone, and the prisoners were no longer trapped.

It was the first time the outside world really saw what had been happening inside Nazi concentration camps. And thanks to journalists who sent back photos and reports from the camps - the world was shocked and ashamed. That's why January 27 is now International Holocaust Remembrance Day. It's a day to remember the millions of people who were killed, and to honour the survivors who lived through it and later shared, and are still sharing, their stories.

And remembering isn't just about the past. It matters today because hatred, lies, and misinformation still exist. And when people are targeted because of who they are, history shows us how serious that can become.

Especially after events like the violent attack on Jewish people in Bondi last December. It reminds us that antisemitism didn't disappear after World War Two.

At the heart of it, people everywhere want the same things: to live safely, to be treated fairly, and to belong to a community.

And remembering the Holocaust helps us notice warning signs early. Things like bullying, discrimination, or lies being spread about a particular group of people, a race or a religion. It reminds us that words matter. Speaking up matters. And kindness matters.

So remembering doesn't mean living in fear. It means choosing kindness, appreciating difference, standing up for others, and helping make sure that something like the Holocaust never happens again. That's why we remember.

THE S'QUIZ

"This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening...

1. True or False. The Holocaust happened more than 500 years ago. (False)"

"2 Which word describes hatred or unfair treatment of Jewish people?

a) antisocialism

b) antisemitism

c) antibiotics

((b) antisemitism)"

3 What does it mean when a place like Auschwitz was "liberated"? (Soldiers arrived and freed the people who were being held there.)

That's all we have time for today. Thanks for joining us as we explored the who, what, how, where, when, and why of Remembering the Holocaust.

Now get out there, and have a most excellent day!

Over and out.