

HOLOCAUST & HUMAN RIGHTS
ART & WRITING CONTEST
MIDDLE SCHOOL ESSAY
FIRST PLACE

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My great grandparents' childhood was lost, their families were killed, their life as they knew it was destroyed. Never again! Never again means what happened to my two Holocaust survivor great grandparents and so many others should never happen to anyone again, no matter your race, your culture, your religion, or what you believe in. It also means that we need to be accepting of each other because no matter our differences, we are all humans. My great grandfather was a teenager when he was taken away and he is 95 now. It is imperative that we hear all their stories and listen and learn from them now more than ever because they won't be with us for much longer. My job is to ensure the phrase never again becomes a reality. By telling their stories, we can serve as dutiful upstanders. To be an upstander, we have the duty to teach people about what happened to the Jews so that everyone will be able to act together to prevent it from happening again. To be an upstander, we have a responsibility to help people learn not to make fun of other people or say mean things to each other just because they may look or sound different or have a different religion or race. We need to stop hateful acts before they become acceptable. When you see someone doing something wrong, you should not be silent and you should act.

My great grandfather was kidnapped on the side of the road as a kid in 1940 by Nazi soldiers. He was then brought to a room where he waved his last goodbye to his dad as they took him to various death camps including Auschwitz. Upon his arrival, he was put

in the gas chambers line, but his dad's friend who worked there moved him to the other line and saved his life. In the camp, his dad's friend helped him and got him more jobs which got him more food, so he was lucky enough to survive such harsh adversities. Toward the end of the War, they were forced to march for months but then the Russians came and saved them. My great grandfather went back to his hometown where he could find no one. He then went to a displaced persons camp where he met his future wife. Once they had their first baby, they went on a boat to the USA where they settled in New York. I have been sharing their stories with other people to ensure they know why it is important to stop hate. The hardships, adversities, and ordeals the Holocaust Survivors endured must be told and retold so no one has to go through them ever again.

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THIRD PLACE

RACHEL CHEN

A recent study by the Claims Conference stated that 58% of Americans believe something like the Holocaust will happen again. Why is it important to know about the Holocaust? Where did you learn about the Holocaust? What lessons have you drawn from what you have learned about the Holocaust?

The Holocaust, also known as the Shoah, was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews organized by the Nazi state and its allies. The Holocaust was one of the worst events in history, and it can serve as a reminder to society of how prejudice, discrimination, and dehumanization can lead to such a horrific event. It is important to know why the Holocaust happened and how it has affected the world we live in today. It has taught me to act and speak out against injustice, as indifference and inaction can lead to disastrous consequences.

I first learned about the Holocaust around the time between elementary and middle school. I remember going to the library and checking out *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry. At the time, I did not know what the Holocaust was and why it happened. This book piqued my interest and encouraged me to research it more deeply.

World War II, or more specifically, the Holocaust, teaches a critical lesson. The quote, "If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it..." is attributed to Joseph Goebbels, a German Nazi politician and head of the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, from 1933 to 1945. When World War I ended, about 3 million Germans were killed. Germany lost 13% of its land and 12% of its population to the Allies, and was thrown into economic and social disorder. Adolph Hitler took advantage of the already negative attitude toward Jews and

convinced people, through political propaganda and segregation, that Jews were responsible for Germany's economic state. Art, music, theater, films, books, radio, educational materials, and the press all spread Nazi ideology. Millions of bystanders were convinced by the Nazi regime, and propaganda motivated those who wanted to carry out the mass murder of European Jews. These actions played a key role in disseminating racial antisemitism and the beginning of the Holocaust. It is crucial to be alert and to think critically about information from the news, social media, and other sources.

In summary, to ensure that something like the Holocaust won't happen again, we should remember that differences in race or religion should not stop us from treating others with dignity and respect. Take the Righteous Among Nations, for example - they were non-Jewish individuals who have been honored by Yad Vashem. Despite risking their lives, they saved Jews from extermination by the Nazis. Everyone has the responsibility to prevent, and not to remain silent. More people should be educated about the Holocaust to prevent other atrocities from happening in the future.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL ESSAY
HONORABLE MENTION

CASEY BARON

Casey Baron

As another year goes by and we commemorate Holocaust remembrance there is a temptation to remember it a little less as it fades further into the past. As it becomes easier to forget this terrible event it also becomes more important to remember it. The Holocaust is arguably one of the absolute worst events in history that ended up with millions of Jewish men, women, and children murdered. To allow an event like that to ever happen again would be a true tragedy. The words "Never Again" is a warning to never let anything like the Holocaust happen again. While that is a simplified meaning of the words "Never Again". What the words "Never Again" actually means to me is a whole different explanation. As a Jewish, half Israeli girl who had great grandparents on my father's side in Europe during the Holocaust I obviously have a strong connection to it. My great grandparents had escaped the Holocaust but with very few other relatives left alive. As somebody whose family was directly impacted by the Holocaust, I know it is my job to make sure absolutely anything like the Holocaust to happen again. The country of Israel represents "Never Again" as in Israel provides what Jews did not have during the Holocaust. Safety. Israel is an important country to me as my father was born there but it is also important to me because of what it is for Jews. It is the result of the Holocaust and it provides protection to Jews who can now practice Judaism freely. It is important to stand by Israel if we never want something like the Holocaust to happen again because Israel has already been working towards that for over seventy years. To me "Never Again" is what humanity needs to work towards to save the world. We need to remember every last detail of the Holocaust the best we can. No matter how terrible the memories and stories are we cannot forget them or else something like the Holocaust can and will happen again.