

Worksheet: Jack Adler

TEACHER KEY

Answer the following questions. Answers do not need to be in complete sentences.

Life in Pabianice Before the War

1. Where is Pabianice? Poland
2. In what year was Jack born? 1929
3. Write two sentences on Pabianice.

Pabianice is a city that dates back to the 11th century. Jews settled there in the early 19th century. The development of the textile industry around Lodz (nearby) caused the Jewish population to grow. Up until WWII, many of the mills and workshops were run by Jewish manufacturers and businessmen, and Jews are represented in all aspects of industry. In 1938, Jews made up 16% (about 9,000 people) of the city's population of 55,000.

4. Who were the members of Jack's immediate family?
Cemach (father), Faiga (mother), Chaim (older brother), Ester (older sister), and Pema (younger sister)
5. Watch the video testimony. How was Jack rebellious?
He did not follow the Hasidic Jewish traditions of his family.

School Years

6. Read this section and watch the video testimony. Write a one-sentence reflection about what stood out to you in this section.

Jack started attending school in the mid-1930s. He attended public school in the morning and Jewish school in the afternoons. His family vacationed in the summer. He had Jewish and non-Jewish friends and loved soccer. Although antisemitism was prevalent in Polish society during his youth before the war, Jack didn't experience a lot, but he and his Jewish classmates were called "Christ killers" around Eastertime. Jewish students were allowed to stay in Polish public schools (unlike in Germany).

Germany Invades Poland, Initiating Global Conflict

7. Read this section or watch the video testimony. Describe what happens in 1939 to
Jack: He sensed anxiety and tension. He saw concrete signs of his country preparing for war. His parents and older relatives did not include him in the conversation.
Jack's family: One of his uncles and his uncle's family fled to the Soviet Union. Two of Jack's cousins were drafted into the Polish army. Jack's brother was only 16 so he was not drafted.
Poland: The country prepared for invasion and was defeated by the Germans from the west and the Soviets from the east. Poland surrendered by the end of September 1939.

Nazis Occupy Pabianice

8. *Watch the video testimony.* What happens when the Germans arrive?
Initially Jack could not believe the kindness of his neighbors and of the Germans. He was shocked at how nice the Germans were, but then everything changed. The Germans publicly humiliated Jews, and if there was resistance or complaint, the noncompliant individual was shot.
9. *Read this section.* What is Rosh Hashana and what happens on Rosh Hashana?
Rosh Hashana is one of the most important holidays in the Jewish calendar. It refers to the Jewish new year. This two-day festival is considered as a time of celebration and introspection. On Rosh Hashana of 1939 the Pabianice synagogue was ransacked by the local population on German orders and was turned into stables.
10. What did Jack's brother and father do, and what was the result of their decision?
They try to leave Pabianice but are turned back by the Russians.

Into the Pabianice Ghetto

11. *Read the excerpt from Jack's memoir.* Write a one-sentence summary on Jack's experience in the ghetto.
They were not fenced into the ghetto, but they were too scared to leave. Christians who had been living in the area relocated to nicer houses, some of which had belonged to Jews. Jack's whole family had to share one room, and they lacked privacy and space. They had many rules that restricted the Jews' movement like curfews. Jews were used for slave labor to serve the war effort outside the ghetto.
12. *Watch the first video testimony.* How does Jack save his father from being selected for slave labor by the Nazis?
Jack hid his father in a laundry hamper.
13. *Watch the second video testimony.* What happens to Jack's older brother Chaim and his mother Faiga?
Chaim dies of double pneumonia and tuberculosis. Faiga dies of a broken heart.

The Lodz Ghetto

14. *Watch the video testimony.* How does Jack save his little sister, Pema? What would her fate have been had he not saved her?

Jack volunteered to clean up the items left behind by Group A. He used a baby carriage. Pema was still there, and so she climbed inside the carriage and Jack covered her. He brought her over to their father. If it weren't for Jack, she would have been sent with the rest of Group A to a death camp like Majdanek or Treblinka.

15. *Read this section.* How long were Jack, his father, and his two sisters in the Lodz Ghetto? 2 years

16. *Read the excerpt from Jack's memoir.* Write a one-sentence reflection.

Jack and his sister performed slave labor making straw shoe inserts for German soldiers on the Soviet front. Their daily ration of food was one piece of bread and a bowl of watery soup. Prisoners only received the soup if they worked that day.

Liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto and Deportation to Auschwitz

17. When were the 60,000 Jews of Lodz (including Jack and his family) sent to Auschwitz? August 1944

18. *Read the first excerpt from Jack's memoir about transport and arrival at Auschwitz.* Write a one-paragraph reflection.

(Summary) The Adler family stuck together and was packed onto overcrowded cattle cars where they could only stand. There was a barrel of human waste in the middle of the cattle car. Their journey to Auschwitz took two days. Some people died among them during the trip. They arrived and exited to find Nazi officers screaming in German and prisoners in striped uniforms (Sonderkommando). Those who didn't understand the Germans or didn't obey were shot. The Sonderkommando whispered to them to "look strong."

19. What is the fate of each of Jack's sisters? Be specific.

Ester was selected for labor but died later in Bergen-Belsen.

Pema was sent to the gas chambers after they arrived at Auschwitz.

Forced Labor in Germany: Kaufering

20. *Read or watch testimony.* What types of work did Jack and his father do in Kaufering?

They carried bags of cement for the construction of underground hangars for the German air force.

Dachau: A Lifesaving Promise

21. Watch the three video testimonies and read the excerpt from his memoir. Write a one-paragraph response to all four.

(Summaries) First Video Testimony: Jack is selected to clean Nazi offices. One Nazi officer snuck food to him in the ashes of the wood-burning stove.

Second Video Testimony: Jack received a Red Cross package. A Nazi guard told Jack he would give Jack bread every day in exchange for his sugar from the package. The first day he gave Jack bread as promised. The second day Jack asked for the bread and the Nazi guard hit him with his rifle butt. Jack cried when cleaning the office. The Nazi officer told him to point out the guard and Jack did. The next day, the guard gave Jack a half a loaf of bread. Jack explained that this officer saved his life. When he speaks to children, Jack feels it is important for them to reject the idea of collective guilt.

Third Video Testimony: Jack speaks about the Nazi officer who saved his life; he can't remember the officer's name. He tried to find him after liberation, but he couldn't.

Memoir Excerpt: Jack wonders what happened to the officer.

Last Day of the War: Death March and Liberation

22. Read the section or watch the testimony. When and where is Jack liberated and by whom?

May 1, 1945. Dachau. American tanks & Red Cross

After Liberation

23. How old was Jack at liberation? 16 years old

24. Read the first excerpt from his memoir. Write a two-sentence reflection.

(Summary) He was in the hospital for 90 days. The hospital was in a displaced persons camp, and he lived there until 1946. He didn't feel at home or like he belonged, but he was safe and well-fed. He made some friends, but they had been denied social skills for so long they were not deep friendships.

25. What helped Jack to survive?

Hope and a positive mental attitude that he would be reunited with his family.

26. Watch the final video testimony. What happened to Jack's father?

He died of malnutrition in Dachau.

In Search of a New Beginning

27. *Read the excerpt from Jack's memoir.* Write a two-sentence reflection.

(Summary) Jack talks about his time on the ship and passing the time. He explains that he can finally use all five senses without fear. He also talks about pulling into New York City and being in awe of the buildings.

Chicago: Setting Down New Roots

28. *Read and/or watch the excerpts from this section.* Write a one-sentence reflection.

Jack talks about moving to Chicago with foster parents and not wanting to be adopted because he felt it betrayed his family. He joined the US army during the Korean War and continued his education in the army. He became an accountant in Chicago and met his wife. They have two children: Elliot and Paula. He even hosted a talk show.

Hate is a Disease

29. What happens in Jack's town of Skokie, IL?

The National Socialist Party of America wanted to march through Skokie (home to many Holocaust survivors). A Supreme Court ruling results in questions of free speech.

30. What was it like for Jack to return to Pabianice?

It was surreal and challenging. It brought back wonderful memories and painful memories. He couldn't believe people were still in the buildings he remembered, like his grandfather's apartment building and the ghetto.

Use the Map Feature on the website.

31. *Filter the map to just Jack.* Write a one-sentence reflection on what stands out to you in using this tool.

Answers will vary.