Holocaust

Holocaust: The persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime.

“Holocaust” is a word of Greek origin meaning “sacrifice by fire.”
The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" & that the Jews were "unworthy of life."
During the Holocaust, the Nazis also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority":

- Gypsies
- The handicapped
- Slavic people (Poles, Russians)
- Communists
- Socialists
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Homosexuals
In 1933, the Jewish population of Europe stood at over nine million.

By 1945, almost two out of every three European Jews had been killed.
How did this happen?

- The leader of the German National Socialist (Nazi) Party, Adolf Hitler, came to power in 1933, using campaign propaganda that blamed the Jews for Germany’s depression after World War I.
Germany embraced Hitler’s argument for the superiority of the Nordic peoples, which Hitler called the *Aryan race*. 
Germany soon implemented a set of laws, including the infamous Nuremberg Laws of 1935, designed to dehumanize German Jews and subject them to violence and prejudice.
As World War II continued, Hitler and his followers developed the “Final Solution” - the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe.
Soon after Hitler was appointed chancellor in 1933, the Nazis established concentration camps to imprison Jews, and other victims of ethnic and racial hatred.
Dachau was the first concentration camp, located on the grounds of an abandoned factory.
The term “concentration camp” was a form of propaganda to hide the extermination and forced labor of the prisoners. The prisoners were “concentrated” or placed in a camp; they were sometimes told it was for their safety during the war.
During the war years, the Nazis created ghettos, transit camps, and forced-labor camps.
Between 1942 and 1944, Nazi Germany deported millions more Jews to extermination camps, where they were murdered in specially developed killing facilities.
In the final months of war, SS guards forced camp inmates on death marches in an attempt to prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners.
As Allied forces moved across Europe, they found and liberated concentration camp prisoners, many of whom had survived the death marches.
World War II ended in Europe in 1945.
The Allies were advancing to the heart of Germany, liberating camps as they went. Hitler and his bride, Eva Braun, killed themselves on April 30, 1945.
Germany officially surrendered on May 7, 1945.
After the Holocaust, many of the survivors found shelter in displaced persons (DP) camps set up by the Allied powers.
Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700,000 Jews emigrated to Palestine; others came to America.
The crimes committed during the Holocaust devastated most of the European Jewish communities.