

Learning about the Holocaust

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- On January 27, 2025 ceremonies will be held in several countries to mark the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. With each passing anniversary there are fewer persons alive that bore witness to the murder of six million Jews (representing more than one-third of the World's Jewish population) and countless others. Holocaust survivor testimonies serve as crucial reminders of the atrocities committed by the Nazis and their collaborators.
- Surveys conducted in May 2024 by Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies reveal that nearly one in five Canadians between the ages of 18 and 24 think that the Holocaust is exaggerated and that an increasing percentage of Canadians are able to identify six million Jews as the number that were murdered during the Holocaust
- As educators and others face the challenge of moving from lived memories to learned ones in knowledge transmission about the Holocaust what information sources will become prevalent and what might this imply for the importance of stemming the rise in distortion and disinformation about the Holocaust as there are ever fewer witnesses?
- The survey results shared here seek to provide insight into these critical questions

Methodology

Surveys were conducted by Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies with some 1578 Canadians surveyed over the period January 17 and 19, 2025 and 1519 Canadians surveyed between May 17 and 20, 2024. A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey for comparison purposes. A probability sample of 1578 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.

Over a relatively short period the degree to which Canadians believe the Holocaust is exaggerated climbed up across all nearly all age cohorts

I think the Holocaust is exaggerated- Canada	Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
February 23-26, 2024	5%	16%	8%	5%	4%	3%	2%
May 17-20, 2024	9%	18%	15%	8%	11%	8%	2%

Significant increases amongst the younger cohorts in the extent to which Canadians feel that less than six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust

Approximately how many Jews were killed during the second World War/the Holocaust/Shoah?	Less than 6 million (nb)	
	November 2019	May 2024
Between 18 and 24	11%	27%
Between 25 and 34	22%	31%
Between 35 and 44	23%	21%
Between 45 and 54	16%	23%
Between 55 and 64	15%	21%
Between 65 and 74	16%	21%
Total	17%	24%
Nb There were changes in the questionnaire options between the 2019 and 2024 surveys		

Relatively Few of those who believe that the Holocaust is exaggerated believe that six million

How many Jews died during the Holocaust / Shoah? May 2024	I think the Holocaust is exaggerated - Please respond YES or NO to the following:	
	Yes	No
Less than one million	7.9%	1.1%
One million to three million	26.4%	8.9%
Three million to five million	15.0%	11.0%
Six million or more	16.4%	50.1%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	34.3%	28.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Holocaust Learning: Where will we go when learned memories displace live ones (January 2025)



Just under half of Canadians say they would be interested in learning more about the Holocaust

I would be interested in learning more about the Holocaust January 2025	Total	Between 18 and 24	Between 25 and 34	Between 35 and 44	Between 45 and 54	Between 55 and 64	65+
Yes	46%	54%	53%	50%	40%	46%	40%
No	39%	30%	35%	34%	41%	42%	45%
I don't know	15%	16%	13%	16%	19%	12%	15%

Films and documentaries would be the number one source for information about the Holocaust amongst those who say that they want to learn more about the Holocaust; For the 18-24 cohort there would be a much greater tendency to go to online sources than for those over the age of 25

- Since you indicated that you were interested in learning more about the Holocaust, please rank in order from which of the following source you would go to get information about it? Top 1	Total	Between 18 and 24	Between 25 and 34	Between 35 and 44	Between 45 and 54	Between 55 and 64	65+
Family or friends	6%	4%	5%	6%	10%	6%	4%
Books	22%	22%	22%	15%	23%	20%	30%
Films or documentaries	34%	23%	29%	42%	26%	48%	29%
Museums	14%	6%	17%	20%	18%	9%	12%
School or other educational settings	10%	22%	13%	6%	5%	10%	9%
Wikipedia or other online encyclopedias (e.g., The Canadian Encyclopedia, Britannica)	7%	14%	7%	3%	13%	3%	6%
Social Media (e.g., Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube)	5%	8%	7%	6%	3%	3%	4%
On Line (cumulative)	12%	22%	14%	9%	16%	6%	10%

When considering the top 3 sources of information combined amongst those who want to learn more about the Holocaust, amongst the 18-24 cohort, on line sources rival films and documentaries

Since you indicated that you were interested in learning more about the Holocaust, please rank in order from which of the following sources you would go to get information about it? Top 3 combined January 2025	Total	Between 18 and 24	Between 25 and 34	Between 35 and 44	Between 45 and 54	Between 55 and 64	65+
Family or friends	19%	14%	25%	22%	22%	17%	11%
Books	64%	51%	62%	64%	69%	68%	68%
Films or documentaries	79%	71%	64%	84%	80%	89%	83%
Museums	52%	44%	49%	57%	53%	48%	56%
School or other educational settings	28%	45%	34%	19%	16%	33%	27%
Wikipedia or other online encyclopedias (e.g., The Canadian Encyclopedia, Britannica)	31%	35%	35%	23%	35%	30%	28%
Social Media (e.g., Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube)	22%	36%	28%	26%	23%	12%	14%
On Line (cumulative)	53%	71%	63%	49%	58%	42%	42%

Eliminating racism is most cited when Canadians are asked to share what the most important lesson the Holocaust conveys

In one sentence, what do you believe is the most important lesson we can learn from the Holocaust? January 2025	Total
Don't let bigoted people become leaders / be vigilant against authoritarians	7%
Don't follow bad leaders / society is capable of evil under a populist leader	6%
Don't remain inactive / complacency is harmful / intervene	5%
Eliminate all forms of racism/discrimination / be inclusive / we are all humans	15%
Genocide can happen, we must prevent it	5%
Extremism/fascism is destructive/dangerous/can lead to genocide	4%
History repeats itself / It can happen anywhere	1%
We must fight for our democracy / don't allow racist policies	6%
Hate (is inhumane, is a terrible weapon, etc.)	5%
How cruel/inhumane people are	2%
Too many people suffered/were affected by the tragedy / it was terrible	6%
People are easily influenced to do terrible things / how propaganda can spread hatred	4%
War is not the answer / war benefits no one / do not kill	4%
Every life is valuable	2%
Tolerance between people of different religions	4%
Other	5%
Don't know / refusal	13%