

**SYDNEY  
JEWISH  
MUSEUM**  
WHERE HISTORY HAS A VOICE

# KRISTALLNACHT

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A Turning Point in the German war against Jews

# KRISTALLNACHT

What do you think  
this word means?

Teacher Notes:

Teacher leads discussion to unpack the word:

*kristall*, meaning crystal or glass + *nacht*, meaning night = night of the broken glass (see next slide)

Use these three images to explain why it might be known as the night of broken glass



Image A

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Teacher notes:

Teacher explains all three images relate to the event known as Kristallnacht.

Students discuss what types of glass were broken on this night

Image A – Destruction of Men's Clothing fabric store of Moritz Granek, located on Jakobstrasse 2 in Magdeburg, Germany. Teacher may need to provide a hint: this store was owned by Jews

Use these three images to explain why it might be known as the night of broken glass



Image B

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Teacher notes:

Students discuss what types of glass were broken on this night

Image B – synagogue on fire in Siegen, Germany. Hints: the Star of David in the burning window; point out this is a public or ceremonial building.

Use these three images to explain why it might be known as the night of broken glass



Image C

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Teacher notes:

Students discuss what types of glass were broken on this night

Image C – This is a private home in Vienna, vandalised on Kristallnacht

## Record this explanation of Kristallnacht in your notes:

On November 9–10, 1938, Nazi leaders unleashed a night of violence against the Jewish population in Germany and German-controlled territories. It involved the vandalism and destruction of Jewish-owned businesses, synagogues, and homes. This event has called *Kristallnacht* (The Night of Broken Glass) because of the shattered glass that littered the streets afterwards. It is now known as the November Pogrom.

Teacher notes:

Students write the information in their notes.

## Joseph Goebbels, Minister for Propaganda

November 9, 1938, public speech:

**“the Führer has decided that ... demonstrations should not be prepared or organized by the Party, but insofar as they erupt spontaneously, they are not to be hampered.”**

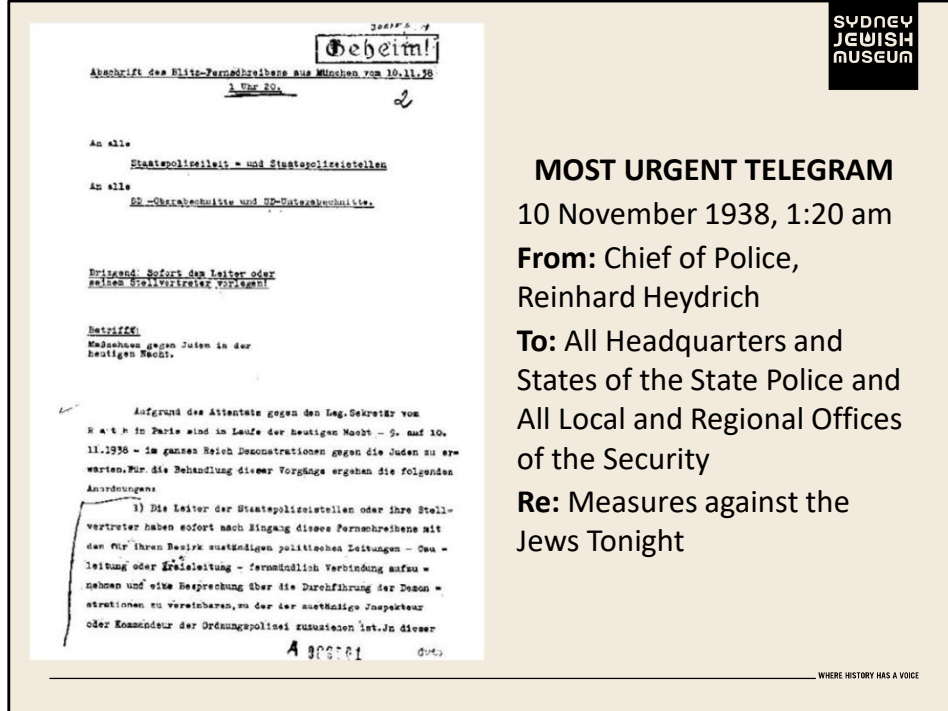


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Teachers notes:

**Discuss** the impact this would have. In fact, it was interpreted as a command to organize a pogrom, and gave the green light for widespread violence, destruction, and terror against Jews. (<https://www.claimscon.org/kristallnacht-history/>)

**Inform** students the pogrom was carried out by the Nazi party's SA and SS paramilitary forces, as well as Hitler Youth, and some German civilians. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kristallnacht>)



Teacher notes:

This is the first page of a telegram sent by SS-Obergruppenführer and General der Polizei, Reinhard Heydrich.

There are 4 pages in total.

The following slide translates some of the key passages.

The telegram indicates that the pogrom was organised and approved from the top of Nazi power structure.

The telegram noted that 'demonstrations' were expected, and included the following instructions:

- 1a)** Only such actions may be carried out which do not threaten German lives or property (e.g., burning of synagogues only when there is no threat of fire to the surroundings).
- 1b)** Stores and residences of Jews may only be destroyed but not looted.
- 1c)** Special care is to be taken on commercial streets that non-Jewish businesses are completely secured against damage.
- 2)** Demonstrations in progress should not be prevented by the police but only supervised for compliance with the guidelines.

**Teacher Notes:**

This is a translation of the key elements of the Heydrich telegram.  
Allow students time to read.

The telegram noted that 'demonstrations' were expected, and included the following instructions:

5) As soon as the course of events during this night allows the assigned police officers to be used for this purpose, as many Jews as can be accommodated – particularly affluent Jews – are to be arrested in all districts and placed in existing detention facilities. For the time being, only healthy male Jews, whose age is not too advanced, are to be arrested. Immediately after the arrests have been carried out, the appropriate concentration camps should be contacted to place the Jews into camps as quickly as possible. Special care should be taken that Jews arrested on the basis of this instruction are not mistreated.

Teachers notes:

**Questions for discussion:**

1. What were the police being warned about?
2. What instructions were given to police?
3. What effect would this have on the Jewish population of Germany? Families of those arrested?
4. Is there anything that interests or confuses any student?

Based on the last two sources (Goebbels' speech and Heydrich's telegram), answer:

To what extent was the Kristallnacht pogrom ordered by the Nazi leadership?

Teacher Notes:

Allow students time to write a response.

## Holocaust Survivor, Eddie Jaku, OAM

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Click here  
to view  
video on  
YouTube

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Teacher notes:

[https://youtu.be/0\\_TfEsrMn0o?si=2zVKhdUHbgP5aBdL](https://youtu.be/0_TfEsrMn0o?si=2zVKhdUHbgP5aBdL)

1min 55sec long

There is a worksheet to accompany this video and the following one. It includes a transcript of the video, as well as some questions.

Ideally:

1. show the video
2. give students the questions
3. show the video for a second time
4. give students time to answer

### **The questions for this video are:**

Why was Eddie living under a false name at boarding school? What does this reveal about Germany before Kristallnacht?

What did the Nazis do at Eddie's house on Kristallnacht?

What did Eddie lose on Kristallnacht?

Why does Eddie say that Kristallnacht was 'only the beginning of the nightmare'?



Teacher notes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scCvi3vY4jQ> Watch up to 3mins 24secs, after Eddie says “...Buchenwald, where I was kept with another 11,000 Jewish men, for about 5 months.”

There is a worksheet to accompany this video and the previous one. It includes a transcript of the video, as well as some questions.

Ideally:

1. show the video
2. give students the questions
3. show the video for a second time
4. give students time to answer

**The questions for this video are:**

According to Eddie, what was Hitler’s motivation for Kristallnacht?

Why does Eddie consider it is important to keep learning about Kristallnacht?

## Emeritus Professor Konrad Kwiet, SJM



“It took a direct threat to their lives to make most German Jews realise that their ties to Germany could no longer be maintained. This occurred in the form of *Kristallnacht*. After this, most Jews were obliged to give up the notion that they still had any right of domicile in Germany. No longer could they reasonably hope for better times. Their pessimism was justified: in quick succession there followed the measures that destroyed their economic existence through forced labour and ghettoization.

The old debate over whether to leave or stay now ceased. In its place came the imperative: “Get out, at all costs!” A mass panic to flee ensued. Rescue operations began in all the Jewish communities. Priority was given to sending children and young people to the West, particularly to England.”

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### Teacher notes:

Emeritus Professor Konrad Kwiet is an esteemed Holocaust historian, and the resident historian at the Sydney Jewish Museum.

This activity can be omitted if there is insufficient time.

Alternatively, it can be given for homework.

**Discuss:** What impacts of Kristallnacht does Emeritus Professor Kwiet identify here?

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**THANK YOU**