

Worksheet – Babyn Yar Site Study Guided Inquiry

Follow the steps provided in **bold** type to answer the given questions.

Part One – Where is Babyn Yar?

View this Image: <https://share.google/images/IKOXPAdbCv3twXMg>

This is a picture of the ravine known as Babyn Yar (or Babi Yar).

Visit this Site: <https://www.google.com/maps>

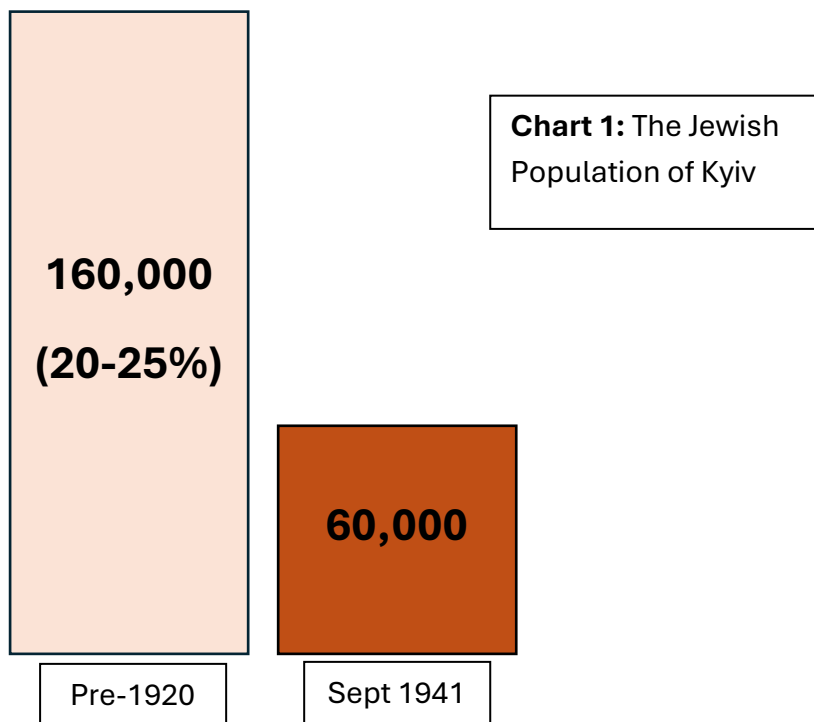
Instructions: enter ‘Babyn Yar’ into the search box in Google Maps

Questions:

1. On what continent is Babyn Yar?
2. In which country is Babyn Yar?
3. In which city is Babyn Yar?
4. Which country lies to the east of Babyn Yar?
5. Where is Germany in relation to Babyn Yar?

Part Two – Life Under the Soviets

After World War 1, Ukraine became its own country. However, by 1922, it was incorporated into the Soviet Union, and was under the control of the Communist Party in Moscow.	Russia applies a policy of Indigenisation or Ukrainisation , allowing Ukrainian culture, religion and language to blossom. Minority cultures, including Jews, flourished.	Stalinisation/ Russification Under this policy, Russia imposed their own culture and brutally repressed Ukrainian and minority cultures. Traditional Jewish cultural life was destroyed.	Russia (under Stalin) and Germany (under Hitler) signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, dividing Poland between them. Ukraine remained under Soviet occupation.
1921-1922	1920s and early 1930s	From 1932-33	1939



Questions:

1. How did the two policies of Ukrainisation and Russification affect Ukrainians differently?
2. Which policy do you think Ukrainians preferred?
3. How do you explain the information in Chart 1?

Extension 1: watch this video about Soviet Ukraine <https://youtu.be/KAW85BCsoRg> (7mins 32 secs). Write a one-paragraph summary.

Extension 2: Consider Russia's approach to the Ukrainian people in lands occupied since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Do you see any similarities with the policy of Russification in the 1930s?

Part Three - What Happened to Kyiv's Jews at Babyn Yar?

Read: On 19 September, 1941, **Germany** captured Kyiv. It became part of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine. In retreat, the Soviets had laid mines which destroyed German headquarters and killed Germans. Germans used this as a pretext to murder Jews. 1,600 Jews were arrested and shot as 'reprisal'.

Visit this Site: <https://hmd.org.uk/resource/the-babi-yar-massacre/> (Start reading from the heading “Babi Yar: more than 33,000 Jewish people murdered)

Questions:

1. Read the announcement that was pasted all over Kyiv from September 26 onwards. What were all the Jews being ordered to do?
2. Why did the Jews obey the order? Give evidence from the text.
3. Read the witness account beginning “I watched what happened...”
 - a. What happened to the Jews when they arrived at Babyn Yar?
4. How many Jews were murdered at Babyn Yar?
5. Who took part in the murders? What does this tell you about the attitudes of local Ukrainians towards the Jews among the population?
6. How are the murders of Jews at Babyn Yar different to what you know about the murder of Poland’s Jews?

Part Four – Commemoration and Memorialisation at Babyn Yar

Visit this Site: <https://mjhnyc.org/blog/the-long-and-uncertain-journey-of-the-babyn-yar-memorial/>

Read: from the heading “Struggling with Antisemitism”

Questions:

1. Why was no memorial erected at the site of massacres in the years after World War II ended?
2. How did a poem help lead to official commemoration at Babyn Yar?
3. What was erected in 1976?
4. What circumstances allowed for the erection of the first monument at Babyn Yar?
5. Conduct a Google Image search with the term ‘Babyn Yar memorial’. What different forms of memorial do you see?
You can explore another recent memorial here:
<https://www.manuelherz.com/babyn-yar>
6. Why is it important to maintain such monuments at important sites like Babyn Yar?

Part Five – Babyn Yar today

Read: In 2019, an Austrian firm won the competition to build a new memorial and museum on the site at Babyn Yar. You can see the plans at this link:

<https://www.theplan.it/eng/award-2022-Culture/hmc-babyn-yar-holocaust-memorial-centre-a-wide-dramaturgical-arc-querkraft-architects>

The new structure has not yet been built, because in 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine, and the region is embroiled in war once again.

Visit this site: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60588885>

Questions:

1. What happened at Babyn Yar in early 2022?
2. What was the significance of this event?
3. How does the history of the site at Babyn Yar reflect the history of the wider region?