

## LESSON: Understanding Nazi Symbols

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### WORKSHEET: History of the Swastika

#### Key Facts

- The swastika was long used as a symbol of well-being in ancient societies, including those in India, China, Africa, America, and Europe.
- Adolf Hitler designed the Nazi flag in 1920. He combined the swastika with the three colors of the German Imperial flag (red, black, and white).
- As a symbol, it became associated with the idea of a racially “pure” state. By the time the Nazis gained control of Germany, the connotations of the swastika had forever changed.
- Nazi symbols, including the swastika flag, are banned in a number of countries today, including Germany.

#### Questions for group research:

1. The swastika was the official symbol of Nazi Germany, representative of Nazi ideas. What did Nazi Germany stand for?

2. What rights did the Nazis revoke during the Third Reich?

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3. How is the swastika connected to Nazi ideas and beliefs? Can it be separated from it?

4. How does learning this historical context change how you view swastikas?

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#### Transcript for Helen Goldkind clip

Interviewer: You were talking about what sights or sounds or smells trigger your memories of the war and when you see a chimney that brings back memories. Anything else?

Helen: You know, it just depends, it just depends. A swastika. You know, when I see a swastika I feel I'm in danger. Its—it sounds crazy to other people because other people are not affected at all by a swastika. That swastika cannot hurt you. But what [it] represents to me is something else.

*Interview with Helen Goldkind, February 21, 2001*

**Answer the following using evidence from today's discussion. Answers require a clear assertion and reasoning, supported by evidence from today's readings and discussions:**

- Why do symbols carry so much power in societies and cultures?
- Why is the history of a symbol important?
- How can we examine modern-day symbols from a critical viewpoint?
- How did the meaning of the swastika change in the 20th century?