

**Institute for Curriculum Services (ICS) Review on behalf of
the Community Relations Council of Richmond,
the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater, and
the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington
Pearson, *Virginia and United States History*, by
Emma J. Lapsansky-Werner, Peter B. Levy, Randy Roberts, and Alan Taylor
For high school
February 2018**

General Comments:

This is a well-written and informative social studies text. ICS commends Pearson for its coverage of Jewish history and culture, and its recognition of the Jewish identity of many important historical figures. Coverage of the place and historical importance of anti-Semitism is especially good. Discussion of the Holocaust offers students deep understanding of the events and their impact in ways that are appropriate for a high school textbook. Coverage of Israel and conflict in the Middle East is presented in a neutral and nuanced manner that will benefit students.

Though excellent, there are some issues Pearson should consider addressing. For example, ICS recommends that future editions include discussion of Jewish Virginians who contributed to the history and development of the state. While the text provides students with good detail on other groups targeted by the Nazis, it should go further in differentiating between the Holocaust, which refers specifically to genocide of the Jews, and other acts of Nazi mass murder. The word “exterminate,” a Nazi term that equates Jews and other victims with vermin, should be avoided in discussions of the Holocaust. Annihilate or murder are good substitutes. ICS recommends the word “pogrom” be added as a reference term. It is an important concept for understanding Jewish immigration history, the history of Zionism, and the Holocaust.

Additionally, the text is not as comprehensive in its coverage of Israel as other Pearson texts (see Pearson *United States History 1865 to Present*). Specific examples are noted in the recommended edits below.

All in all, this is a skillfully crafted, first-rate text that will serve students well. ICS appreciates Pearson’s continued efforts to ensure accuracy in its instructional materials and to keep them informative and up-to-date for Virginia’s students and teachers.

Navigation notes:

1. Go to **pearsonrealize.com**
2. Enter User Name **VA_SS_Reviewer_2017**
3. Enter Password: **Pearson17**
4. Select **programs**
5. Select **Virginia and United States History**
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Review Legend:

~~Strikethrough~~ = Recommended deletion

Underline = Recommended addition

Comments = Explanation and rationale provided to support recommendations

Recommended Edits:

Topic 11: America Comes of Age, Lesson 2: Women Gain Rights, Expanding Opportunities for Women, p. 340, paragraph 6, line 4. **Add:** "Jewish American ~~L~~awyer Louis D. Brandeis argued ..."

Comments: Virginia standards of learning encourage identifying diversity in historical figures and immigrant groups is important.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 1: Rise of Aggressive Dictators, Germany and Japan Change Leadership, p. 473, paragraph 3, lines 4-6. **Delete:** "The son of a minor Austrian civil servant, Hitler was a failed artist, and a wounded and decorated World War I soldier, ~~and a person who teetered on the brink of madness.~~"

Comments: Students should understand the centrality of Hitler's leadership to Nazism and the Nazi regime. Writing that Hitler "teetered on the brink of madness" could suggest that he was not in control of his actions because of mental illness. There is no evidence that Hitler's actions were the result physical or psychological illness.

Describing Hitler as "mad" also reinforces unfounded negative stereotypes of people with mental illness as violent or possibly homicidal.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 1: Rise of Aggressive Dictators, Biography: Adolf Hitler, paragraph 2, lines 2-3. **Delete:** "It is not known if he blamed his mother's Jewish doctor for her death."

Comments: This is an oft repeated myth for which there is no historical evidence so it should be removed from the text (see Kirsch, Adam. "A New Biography of Hitler Separates the Man From the Myths." *New York Times*. October 14, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/16/books/review/hitler-ascent-volker-ullrich.html>. Accessed 5th February 2018).

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 6: The Allies Win World War II, The War Comes to an End, p. 506, paragraph 5, line 1. Reference: Albert Einstein. **Add:** "German-born, Jewish physicist Albert Einstein (1875-1955) developed..."

Comments: Virginia standards of learning highlight the importance of identifying diversity in historical figures and immigrant groups. In addition, the current text references Einstein's Judaism on page 509, so it should be reflected in this entry for consistency and accuracy.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Roots of the Holocaust, p. 509, paragraph 1, line 5. Reference: Holocaust. **Change:** "The Nazi attempt to ~~kill~~ systematically murder all Jews under their control"

Comments: Students should understand the systematic and premeditated nature of the Nazi mass murder of two-thirds of the European Jewish population. The term ‘kill’ in this context is an understatement.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler’s “Final Solution”, p, 510, paragraph 1, lines 5-6. **Change:** “Today, we use the word genocide to describe ~~such willful annihilation of racial, political, or cultural group~~ acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.”

Comments: The definition is not explicit enough, and is inaccurate, as genocide is not defined by attempts to annihilate political groups. The UN definition states: “In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, ...” (see “Genocide.” The United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. Accessed 4 February 2018.

<http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.html>).

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler’s “Final Solution”, p, 510, paragraph 1, line 5. Reference: genocide. **Change:** “~~Willful annihilation of a racial, political, or cultural group~~ acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.”

Comments: The definition is not explicit enough, and is inaccurate, as genocide is not defined by attempts to annihilate political groups. See previous note. Please also note that this paragraph is repeated in the Editable Presentation available for this unit, and changes should be made there also (see “Genocide.” The United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. Accessed 4 February 2018.

<http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.html>).

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler’s “Final Solution”, p, 510, paragraph 2, line 2. Reference: concentration camps. **Add:** “Camps used by the Nazis to imprison Jews and other ‘undesirable’ members of society.”

Comment: It is important to specify that Jews were the main targets of Nazi concentration camps.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler’s “Final Solution”, p, 510, paragraph 2, lines 2-3. **Change:** “Hitler opened the first Nazi concentration camps, ~~areas~~ camps where “undesirable” members of ~~specially designated groups~~ society were ~~confined~~ imprisoned. ...”

Comments: Should be consistent with the glossary definition, which is far more specific, and worded much better. “Specially designated groups” is particularly vague, and “confined” is not an adequate description.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler’s “Final Solution”, p, 510, paragraph 3, line 1. **Change:** “In theory, the camps were designed not to ~~kill~~ murder prisoners ...”

Comments: “Kill” is a mild term to summarize what should appropriately be termed murder.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler's "Final Solution", p, 510, paragraph 3, lines 6-7. **Change:** "Other groups targeted as "undesirable" included ~~Gypsies~~ Roma ("Gypsies"), Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals (gay men), beggars, drunkards,"

Comments: As used in the 2018 Pearson World History and Geography: 1500 to the Present VA, p. 459, and on the National Holocaust website, Roma ("Gypsies") is a more appropriate descriptor of the ethnic group. The Roma people consider the term "gypsy" to be a slur.

The text should also specify that it was gay men that were targeted by the Nazis, as the term homosexual is ambiguous, and could refer to lesbian women also.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler's "Final Solution", p, 510, paragraph 4, line 5-6. **Change:** "They tortured and ~~even killed~~ murdered prisoners with no fear of reprisals from their superiors."

Comments: "Killed" is a mild term to summarize what should appropriately be termed murdered.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler's "Final Solution", p, 510, paragraph 7, lines 4-5. **Change:** "Heydrich, an SS leader known as "the man with an iron heart," outlined a plan to ~~exterminate~~ murder about 11,000,000 Jews. ..."

Comments: Exterminate was a term used by the Nazis, and reflects their view of Jews as rodents or vermin. Murder or annihilate is a more appropriate term to use.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler's "Final Solution", p, 510, paragraph 7, line 5-7. **Change:** "Although the minutes of the meeting do not use the word 'kill,' everyone there understood that ~~killing~~ murder was their goal."

Comments: "Killing" is a mild word to summarize what should appropriately be termed murder.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler's "Final Solution", p, 510, paragraph 8, lines 1-2. **Change:** "Many concentration camps, especially in Poland, were designated as death camps, camps where prisoners were systematically ~~exterminated~~ murdered."

Comments: "Exterminated" was a term used by the Nazis, and reflects their view of Jews as rodents or vermin. Murdered is a more appropriate term to use.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler's "Final Solution", p, 510, paragraph 8, lines 1-2. Reference: death camps. **Change:** "Nazi camp designed for the ~~extermination~~ murder of Jews and other "undesirable" prisoners."

Comments: Extermination was a term used by the Nazis, and reflects their view of Jews as rodents or vermin. Murder is a more appropriate term to use.

In addition, it is important to specify that Jews were the main targets of Nazi death camps.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler's "Final Solution", p, 510, paragraph 10, lines 2-3. **Delete:** "~~Human fat was turned into soap; h~~Human hair was woven into ~~wigs, slippers, and mattresses~~; cash, gold fillings, wedding rings, and other valuables were stripped off the victims."

Comments: Many of these are myths. No Soap was made out of human fat, and hair was used in the textiles industries, and in mattresses, but not for wigs or slippers (see "Jewish Victims of the Holocaust: The Soap Myth. Jewish Virtual Library: A Project of Aice. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-soap-myth>. Accessed February 6, 2018; and Bush, Lawrence. "January 4: Human Hair." Jewish Currents: Activist Politics and Art. 3 January 2015. <http://jewishcurrents.org/january-4-human-hair/>. Accessed February 6, 2018.).

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Hitler's "Final Solution", p, 510, paragraph 11, lines 3-7. **Change:** "While many survivors lived with constant nightmares of the experience, or with the sorrow and guilt of being the last members of their families, ~~many others they were~~ determined to rebuild their lives and families in the United States, Israel, ~~or and~~ elsewhere ~~and continue to be productive citizens.~~"

Comments: The phrase "continue to be productive citizens" is an unnecessary addition. It is insensitive to imply that some survivors were able to move on while others were "unproductive citizens."

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Allied Response, p. 511, paragraph 11, line 3. **Change:** "In 1948, when the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine proclaimed the State of Israel, President Truman ~~immediately~~ de facto recognized the new nation."

Comments: The proper terminology for the region under British rule is "Mandatory Palestine" or "the Palestine Mandate."

The US did not officially recognize Israel until later. The initial recognition was de facto.

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 7: The Holocaust, Allied Response, p. 511, paragraph 14. **Delete:** "~~Classify. Do you think the U.S. military made the right decision or the wrong decision when they decided not to bomb railway lines leading to the death camps?~~"

Comments: ICS recommends replacing this question. It is not good pedagogy to ask students to speculate on the right or wrong of American military actions in this case. Students would benefit more from a question that looks at why the decision not to bomb the tracks was made or how outcomes might have been different if different decisions had been taken. The Flipped Video that accompanies this section offers a better question: "Do you think that the United States, or any other country, could have done anything to prevent [the Holocaust]?"

Topic 14: World War II, Lesson 8: Impact of World War II, International Organizations and Treaties, p. 517, paragraph 11, line 1-2. **Change:** "helped to create the Jewish sState of Israel"

Comment: The official name is the State of Israel, therefore state should always be capitalized.

Topic 17: The Vietnam War Era, Lesson 3: The Anti War Movement, The 1968 Presidential Race, p. 621, paragraph 3, lines 7-9. **Change:** “Sirhan ~~may have wanted revenge for~~ claimed that the assassination was an act of protest against America’s support for Israel in that country’s war with Egypt the year before of the State of Israel.”

Comments: Court documents from Sirhan’s trial indicate that his primary motivation to protest U.S. support for Israel in general not limited to the war with Egypt (see “People v. Sirhan, 7 Cal.3d 710.” Supreme Court of California.

<https://scocal.stanford.edu/opinion/people-v-sirhan-22773>. Accessed February 5, 2018.

“May have” is too ambiguous, as Sirhan’s opposition to the State of Israel was his main motive. His motivation was not limited to Israel’s then recent actions in Egypt, but rather the founding of the State of Israel itself.

Topic 18: An Era of Change, Lesson 6: Ford and Carter Struggle, Success and Setback in the Middle East, p. 666, paragraph 3, line 5. **Change:** “Egypt formally recognized the ~~nation~~-State of Israel...”

Comments: The official name is “the State of Israel”, not “the nation”.

Topic 19: America in the 1980s and 1990s, Lesson 4: A New Era in Foreign Policy, America and the Middle East in the 1990s, p. 694, map, Israel and the Palestinian Territories, **Add:** Golan Heights to Israel

Comments: The map should indicate the status of the Golan Heights.

Currently, the map gives the impression that the Golan Heights are part of Syria. Israel captured the Golan Heights in 1967.

Topic 19: America in the 1980s and 1990s, Lesson 4: A New Era in Foreign Policy, America and the Middle East in the 1990s, p. 694, paragraph 4, line 4-5. **Delete:** “Back in Israel, Barak was replaced as prime minister by Ariel Sharon, a ~~hawk~~” who once opposed any concessions to the Palestinians.”

Comments: The usage of “hawk” is confusing in this context since the only definition of the term appears in a previous chapter where it is applied to people who supported U.S. military intervention in the Vietnam War.