

LESSON: Nazi Racism

Definition Card #1

Ideology is a system of ideas and ideals that rely on basic **assumptions** about **reality** that may or may not have any **factual** basis.

Racists believe that **innate**, **inherited** characteristics **biologically** determine human **behavior**. In the early twentieth century, many leading scientists across the world promoted these ideas about race. **In fact**, **race** is not biologically based, it is a **cultural classification** of groups.

The **Census Bureau** defines **race** as a person's **self-identification** with one or more social groups. An individual can report as White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race.

The term **race** refers to groups of people who have differences and similarities in **biological traits** deemed by society to be **socially significant**, meaning that people treat other people differently because of them. For instance, while differences and similarities in eye color have not been treated as socially significant in the United States, differences and similarities in skin color have been.

Ethnicity refers to shared **cultural practices**, **perspectives**, and **distinctions** that set apart one **group of people from another**. That is, ethnicity is a shared cultural **heritage**. The most common characteristics distinguishing various ethnic groups are **ancestry**, a sense of history, language, religion, and forms of dress. Ethnic differences are not inherited; they are *learned*.

Source: [Houghton Mifflin Harcourt](#)

Definition Card #2

Pseudo: not genuine; sham. Fake or false.

Science is the study of the nature and behavior of natural things and the knowledge that we obtain about them.

This knowledge is obtained by the systematic study of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment. A systematically organized body of knowledge on a particular subject.

Definition Card #3

According to **Nazi theories of race**, Germans and certain other Europeans had perceived superior physical and mental traits.

They considered European peoples to be “Aryans,” descended from the ancient Indo-Europeans who settled throughout the European continent as well as in Iran and India.

The word **antisemitism** means prejudice against or hatred of Jews. The Holocaust, the state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945, is history’s most extreme example of antisemitism.

Racial antisemitism is the prejudice against or hatred of Jews based on **false scientific theories**. This aspect of racism was always an integral part of Nazism.