

Oskar Schindler (1908-1974) was a German industrialist who became a hero of World War II when he saved hundreds of **Jews** from death in Nazi concentration camps.

Oskar Schindler was born in 1908 in Moravia, which is now in the Czech Republic. His family was Catholic and his father had a small factory. When Oskar finished school, he worked in the family business.

He married Emilie in 1928 and did a lot of different jobs, but he was never very successful. In 1938, the Czech police arrested him because he was working as a **spy** for the Nazi party, but they freed him from prison as part of the Munich Agreement. He joined the Nazi party in 1939. After the German invasion and occupation of Poland, Schindler bought a factory in Krakow which made cooking equipment. He called the factory 'Emalia' and **employed** workers from the large Jewish community of the city.

Schindler became friendly with some Nazi officers to protect the Jewish workers in his factory. In 1944, Schindler had to move his factory to Brunnlitz, near his hometown. He made a list of all the workers he needed for his new factory. There were 700 Jewish men, 300 women from his factory and 200 workers from another factory. In this way he saved them from the Nazi concentration camps. The new factory produced arms for the Nazis, but Schindler made sure they were **useless**.

The day after the war ended, in May 1945, Schindler and his wife escaped to Argentina because he was afraid of arrest for war **crimes**.

The Jewish community was very **grateful** to Schindler: they helped him when he had financial problems and they gave him the honour of **Righteous Gentile in Israel**, where he was buried when he died in 1974.

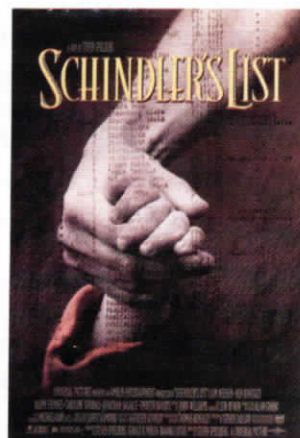
In 1993, Steven Spielberg made a film about him, called *Schindler's List*.



A scene from *Schindler's List* (1993)

The Holocaust

The Holocaust or Shoah was the **planned** killing of certain groups of people in Nazi Germany from 1933 to the end of World War II, in 1945. The Nazi regime put these people in ghettos and concentration camps before killing them. Eleven million men, women and children died during the Holocaust. Six million of them were Jews.



Glossary

Jews ebrei
spy spia
employed assunse
useless inutilizzabili
crimes crimini
grateful riconoscente
righteous retto, onesto
planned programmato

Reading comprehension

- 1  Read and listen to the text. Then answer the questions.

- 1 Who was Oskar Schindler?
- 2 What did he do?
- 3 What was his family background?
- 4 What did he do after the German occupation of Poland?
- 5 Why did he become friendly with Nazi officers?
- 6 How did he save the lives of his Jewish workers?
- 7 What did he do after the war?
- 8 How did the Jewish community show they were grateful?
- 9 What was the Holocaust?
- 10 Do you think films about people like Schindler help us to understand history? Why / Why not?

Guided dialogue

- 2 Use the instructions to write the dialogue.

Maisie chiede a Adam se è libero domani pomeriggio.

1

Adam risponde di sì e chiede perché.

2

Maisie dice che c'è un film club a scuola.

3

Adam chiede il nome del film.

4

Maisie risponde che si chiama *Schindler's List*.

5

Adam chiede di che cosa si tratta.

6

Maisie dice che è la storia di un uomo che ha salvato la vita a molti ebrei durante la seconda guerra mondiale.

7

Adam dice che è interessante, perché sta studiando la seconda guerra mondiale in storia.

8

Maisie dice che il film inizia alle 4.

9

Adam propone di incontrarsi davanti alla scuola dieci minuti prima dell'inizio del film.

10

Letter writing

- 3 Imagine you have been to see the film *Schindler's List*. Write an email to your friend Joe and tell him about it. Include this information:

- a brief summary of the story of what Schindler did;
- some information about Oskar Schindler's life;
- why you think he was / wasn't a hero of the Second World War.

Speaking

Presentation: My hero

- 4 Make notes about your hero. Then use them to give a brief presentation. Include this information:

- 1 name;
- 2 when he / she lived (age now, if still alive);
- 3 background information: family, education, interests;
- 4 what he / she does / did;
- 5 why you think he / she is a hero.

Questions about History

- 5 In pairs, ask and answer the questions.

- 1 What happened to Jewish people in Italy during World War II?
- 2 Who do you think were the heroes of World War II in Italy?
- 3 What happened in your town / region during World War II?
- 4 Do you think it's important for school students to study History? Why / Why not?