

Lessons from Auschwitz 2018

“Just after reaching the entrance of Auschwitz-Birkenau you knew you were in a place different from any other. The imposing buildings almost invited curiosity, as we stood under the gate inscribed with the lie, *‘Arbeit macht frei’*, (*‘Work sets you free’*). I had to stop and think what would be the mind-set of a prisoner stood in the very spot I was, over three quarters of a century before, naïve to the events that would unfold within the walls. However, on the visit, I noticed something that almost took away the grief I was feeling, staring at the evidence of mass genocide, the evidence of how one group persecuted so many. I looked around at the people. Firstly, a group of over 200 teenagers who took on the challenge they did because they wanted a better future for themselves and others. Around us on just a regular Thursday in Poland, there were hundreds of other adults, children, and people of all races, religions and cultures. All of which had their own stories and reasons for being there.

That’s what matters. It matters that there’s people who keep the stories of those lost alive, and it matters that there’s people who want a better future, free of hatred and oppression, a future that unfortunately seems an insurmountable undertaking for humanity.

Morgan Skett, Year 12