



**Eyewitness to History:
A Holocaust Survivor Speaks**

Living Lessons of the Holocaust

Teacher Lesson Plans & Materials



Acknowledgements

The following curriculum materials were arranged by the Mizel Museum Education Department under the supervision of Georgina Kolber, Managing Director, and Penny Nisson, Director of Education.

This curriculum unit was developed by Joie Norby Lê in partnership with the University of Denver. Dr. Lê is a Ph.D. graduate of the Morgridge College of Education's Teaching and Learning Studies Department with an emphasis in Curriculum, Instruction, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

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Eyewitness to History: A Survivor Speaks

Living Lessons of the Holocaust

Museum Introduction:

The Mizel Museum, an educational, nonprofit organization, is Denver's only museum that addresses today's social justice issues through the lens of Jewish history and values. We encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to celebrate diversity and equality and to combat discrimination and hatred. Our programs, events, and exhibits address these and other social issues and encourage positive change in our communities. Our museum is dedicated to fostering cross-cultural understanding, combatting racism, and promoting social justice. We achieve our mission through educational programming, events, and exhibits that connect universal Jewish values to the larger world.

Unit Background:

The Holocaust provides one of the most profound historical events for examining basic moral issues and teaching critical lessons about human behavior and the destructive forces of hatred and bigotry. It also addresses one of the central mandates of education in the United States, which is to examine what it means to be a responsible citizen.

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators that took place between 1933-1945. "Holocaust" is a word of Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire." The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.

During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority". These included [Roma](#) (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples ([Poles](#), Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, [Jehovah's Witnesses](#), and [homosexuals](#).

During this time period, millions were murdered, communities were shattered, and cities destroyed. Behind each loss was a person whose life ended tragically and prematurely. For those who survived, haunting memories of loved ones lost and the destruction of their lives and communities prior to the Holocaust would accompany their lives from that point forward.

Implications for Unit Study:

The Mizel Museum's goal is to provide you with a cohesive, educational experience that puts into context the human story of the Holocaust, including developing both understanding and empathy for others as well as the devastating impacts of racism and anti-Semitism. The aim is

to spark a motivation to act, and, ultimately, to help mold a responsible participant in civil society who is empowered to speak out against hate. Critical elements of this unit study center on three key concepts:

- An understanding of the roots and ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping in any society.
- Develop an awareness of the value of pluralism and an acceptance of diversity.
- Explore the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic, and indifferent to the oppression of others.

Key Terms:

Victim	<i>Someone who has been harmed or killed by some adverse act.</i>
Identity	<i>A set of personal characteristics both physical and emotion by which an individual can be recognized.</i>
Religion	<i>A set of beliefs, values, and practices based on the teaching of a spiritual figure.</i>
Persecution	<i>The act of singling out an individual or a group and directing physical or emotion abuse on them.</i>
Holocaust	<i>A Greek term meaning “Sacrifice by Fire” used to describe the key event in world history that saw the extermination of 6 million Jewish and other people during World War II.</i>
Threat	<i>A person or thing that is regarded as dangerous or likely to inflict harm.</i>
Propaganda	<i>Biased or misleading information used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view.</i>
Stigmatized	<i>To describe, label, or identify something or someone in a way that shows strong disapproval or disgrace.</i>
Nazi	<i>A member of the National Socialist German Worker’s Party founded in 1919 and became a political power under Adolf Hitler in 1933. The word Nazi is often associated with brutality, racism, and tyranny.</i>
Hitler	<i>Adolf Hitler was president of the Nazi party and Chancellor of Germany from 1934-1945. His policies lead to WW2 and the extermination of 6 million Jews.</i>
Refugee	<i>A person who has fled a given area due to dangerous conditions whether physical or political.</i>
Refuge	<i>A place of shelter or protection.</i>
Righteous	<i>A periodic celebration (usually annual) or program of cultural events often Acting in an upright, moral, virtuous way</i>
Genocide	<i>The systemic destruction of all or a significant part of a racial, ethnic religious or national group.</i>

Complacency	<i>Having or showing a lack of interest or concern.</i>
Up-stander	<i>A person who stands up for his or her beliefs and does the right thing even if they are alone and facing danger.</i>
Bystander	<i>A person who is present but not taking part; watching but not offering help to a victim.</i>
Trauma	<i>An extremely distressing experience that causes severe emotional and/or physical shock and may have long lasting effects.</i>
Collective Memories	<i>Refers to the shared pool of information held in the memories of two or more members of a group.</i>
Jewish	<i>A person belonging to a continuation through descent or conversion of the ancient Jewish people.</i>
Resilience	<i>The ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens.</i>
Pluralism	<i>A situation in which people of different social classes, religions, races, etc., are together in a society but continue to have their different traditions and interests.</i>
Systematic	<i>Using a careful system or method or done according to a system.</i>
Epithet	<i>An offensive word or name that is used as a way of abusing or insulting someone.</i>
Liquidated	<i>To destroy (something) or kill (someone) (as it pertains to the Holocaust).</i>
Liberation	<i>The act or process of freeing someone or something from another's control; the act of liberating someone or something.</i>
Ghetto	<i>A part of a city in which members of a particular group or race live usually in poor conditions.</i>
Totalitarian	<i>Controlling the people of a country in a very strict way with complete power that cannot be opposed.</i>
Vigilant	<i>Carefully noticing problems or signs of danger.</i>
Sanctity	<i>The quality or state of being holy, very important, or valuable.</i>
Gestapo	<i>A secret-police organization employing underhanded and terrorist methods against persons suspected of disloyalty.</i>
Aryanized	<i>The allocation of businesses from Jewish to non-Jewish people.</i>
Anti-Semitism	<i>Hostility towards or prejudice against Jews.</i>
Peril	<i>Serious and immediate danger.</i>
Gentile	<i>A person who is not Jewish.</i>

Colorado Academic Unit Standards

Content Area	Grade Level	6 th Grade	
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)		GLE Code
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze and interpret historical sources to ask and research historical questions Human and physical systems vary and interact Compare multiple systems of government 		SS09-GR.6-S.1-GLE.1 SS09-GR.6-S.2-GLE.2 SS09-GR.6-S.4-GLE.2
Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the thinking of self and others is a disciplined way to maintain awareness Assumptions can be concealed, and require identification and evaluation 		RWC10-GR.6-S.4-GLE.3 RWC10-GR.6-S.4-GLE.2
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual displays and summary statistics of one-variable data condense the information in data sets into usable knowledge 		MA10-GR.6-S.3-GLE.1

Content Area	Grade Level	7 th Grade	
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)		GLE Code
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas and themes within regions of the Eastern Hemisphere and their relationships with one another Compare how various nations define the rights, responsibilities, and roles of citizens Regions have different issues and perspectives Different forms of government and international organizations and their influence in the world community 		SS09-GR.7-S.1-GLE.2 SS09-GR.7-S.4-GLE.1 SS09-GR.7-S.2-GLE.2 SS09-GR.7-S.4-GLE.2
Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose, tone, and meaning in word choices influence literary, persuasive, and informational texts 		RWC10-GR.7-S.2-GLE.3

Content Area	Grade Level	8 th Grade	
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)		GLE Code
Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A variety of response strategies clarifies meaning or messages Quality reasoning relies on supporting evidence in media 		RWC10-GR.8-S.1-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.8-S.4-GLE.3
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual displays and summary statistics of two-variable data condense the information in data sets into usable knowledge 		MA10-GR.8-S.3-GLE.1

Content Area	Grade Level	High School	
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)		GLE Code
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the historical method of inquiry to ask questions, evaluate primary and secondary sources, critically analyze and interpret data, and develop interpretations defended by evidence The key concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, complexity, unity and diversity over time The significance of ideas as powerful forces throughout history 		SS09-GR.HS-S.1-GLE.1 SS09-GR.HS-S.1-GLE.2 SS09-GR.HS-S.1-GLE.3 SS09-GR.HS-S.2-GLE.3 SS09-GR.HS-S.4-GLE.2 SS09-GR.HS-S.4-GLE.3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interconnected nature of the world, its people and places • Purposes of and limitations on the foundations, structures, and functions of government • Analyze how public policy – domestic and foreign – is developed at the local, state, and national levels and compare how policy-making occurs in other forms of government 	
Language Arts	<p>Validity of a message is determined by its accuracy and relevance</p> <p>Listening critically to comprehend a speaker’s message requires mental and physical strategies to direct and maintain attention</p> <p>Logical arguments distinguish facts from opinions; and evidence defines reasoned judgment</p> <p>Complex situations require critical thinking across multiple disciplines</p>	<p>RWC10-GR.11-S.1-GLE.2</p> <p>RWC10-GR.9-S.1-GLE.2</p> <p>RWC10-GR.12-S.4-GLE.2</p> <p>RWC10-GR.11-S.4-GLE.2</p>
Math	<p>Visual displays and summary statistics condense the information in data sets into usable knowledge</p>	<p>MA10-GR.HS-S.3-GLE.1</p>

PRE-LESSONS

Grades: 6-12

Vocabulary Study

Overview

As a preface to the Mizel Museum's *Eyewitness to History or Living Lessons of the Holocaust* presentation or throughout your unit study, use the key terms to introduce new vocabulary to the students. See Supplement for handout.

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Use language appropriate for purpose and audience
2. Interpret how the structure of written English contributes to the pronunciation and meaning of complex vocabulary
3. Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone, and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes

Notes

Cornell Notes Study

Overview

One of the [AVID](#) strategies developed for students' success is Cornell Notes. Studies suggest that one of the successful outcomes of using Cornell Notes as a note-taking method is its focus on student engagement. Have students practice taking Cornell Notes using a current class lecture or related reading. Once the Holocaust Survivor Narratives are introduced, the "Living Lessons of the Holocaust Note Catcher" can be utilized to have students jot down their thoughts as the videos are being shown. At the end of the session, have students summarize their final thoughts on the Holocaust Survivor Narratives. Use the link provided for further information on how Cornell Notes are utilized in the classroom: [Cornell Notes Guide](#)

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Demonstrate skill in inferential and evaluative listening
2. Demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational, literary, and persuasive texts
3. Seek feedback, self-assess, and reflect on personal learning while engaging with increasingly more difficult texts
4. Engage in a wide range of nonfiction and real-life reading experiences to solve problems, judge the quality of ideas, or complete daily tasks
5. Write with a clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail

Notes

Stereotypes & Assumptions

Overview

While students may gain stronger understanding of cultural similarities and differences through this program or unit of study, many students harbor stereotypes and assumptions about countries, cultures, and traditions prior to unit study. Use the following Discovery Education Resource to guide students in understanding (and debunking) stereotypes, making assumptions, and how bias affects our lives.

- [Understanding Stereotypes](#)

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
2. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
3. Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others, and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective
4. Demonstrate skill in inferential and evaluative listening

Notes

- Additional resource: [Breaking the Prejudice Habit](#). Created by students at Ball State University, these activities center on acknowledging and understanding prejudice, tolerance, and stereotypes.

Global Citizenship

Overview

Explore the concept of citizenship with students. Discuss how our interconnectedness with others promotes a need for global citizenship. How does this foster student agency in learning about current events and/or participating in activities that serve others worldwide? What does it mean to be a good global citizen? Use the following resource link to shape a daily lesson:

- [10 Tips to Promote Global Citizenship in the Classroom](#)

As a follow-up, students could generate a reflective writing piece or create a Class Citizen Roles & Responsibilities Poster in which the class can collaborate on what it would mean to be a good class, community, and global citizen. Post this in the class for the year.

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
2. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
3. Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others, and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective
4. Demonstrate skill in inferential and evaluative listening

Notes

Understanding Anti-Semitism

Overview

In this day and age students are exposed to a variety of resources, education, and initiatives to combat bullying. These broad programs highlight the need to create more inclusive, empathetic, and action-oriented student citizens. One of the key areas of focus in Holocaust study is the importance of how and why anti-Semitic ideology was perpetuated and encouraged on such a mass scale. However, this is an area that is often understudied and is an important issue to address in order to understand and reflect upon some of the root causes of the Holocaust. Use the presentation slides provided to teach an overview of anti-Semitism. This can be paired with practice in taking Cornell Notes. For further study, please take the time to visit the [Anti-Defamation League's \(ADL\)](#) resources to address and include this important aspect into your unit plan.

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
3. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
4. Examine places and regions and the connections among them

Notes

Lessons in Annotation: Poetry Study

Overview

Poetry study is a useful to understand and learn about figurative language in addition to exposing students to types of literary methods. While the poetry written during and after the Holocaust describes the profound experiences of struggle, survival, and despair, the poems produced by these poets teach students about literature as well as experience. The famous poems of Pavel Friedman, Alexander Kimel, and Martin Niemöller are each powerful poetry selections to use as illustrations of the Holocaust experience. Using one or all of these poems, have students annotate for figurative language. In this exercise, students can begin to understand the power of words and lessons of the Holocaust in poetry form while employing a learning strategy that helps students break down challenging concepts and language. Likewise, students could create artwork from these poems as a depiction of their understanding. Example: Tile Art Project (see handout). Useful link:

[Lessons in Annotation](#)

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Interpret how the structure of written English contributes to the pronunciation and meaning of complex vocabulary
3. Demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational, literary, and persuasive texts
4. Evaluate how an author uses words to create mental imagery, suggest mood, and set tone
5. Engage in a wide range of nonfiction and real-life reading experiences to solve problems, judge the quality of ideas, or complete daily tasks
6. Demonstrate the use of a range of strategies, research techniques, and persistence when engaging with difficult texts or examining complex problems or issues

Notes

A World Without Hate

Overview

On a daily basis, students are flooded with news stories, images, and social media accounts that describe the negative aspects occurring in our global society. If a World Without Hate is possible, what do we need to do, as individuals, as classrooms, as schools, as communities or even as countries, to diminish the message that the world is not immune to what we see? What does a world without hate truly look like? How does hate begin? How does it end? Create an individual or group poster project, YouTube video, website, or other creative project to share student ideas on how we can (and will) move towards a world without hate.

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
3. Examine places and regions and the connections among them
4. Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
5. Recognize, articulate, and implement critical thinking in the visual arts by synthesizing, evaluating, and analyzing visual information
6. Recognize, interpret, and validate that the creative process builds on the development of ideas through a process of inquiry, discovery, and research
7. Create works of art that articulate more sophisticated ideas, feelings, emotions, and points of view about art and design through an expanded use of media and technologies
8. Transfer the value of visual arts to lifelong learning and the human experience

Notes

So Much More: Positive Labels

Overview

Students confront the reality of labeling in nearly every facet of life, whether positive or negative. During the Holocaust, the label of otherness was a literal means of identifying what others sought to reject. While the Star of David remains a symbol of pride and faith, at the time of the Holocaust, it represented the potential for death. Today, we continue to see this type of harmful labeling, whether directed towards religious belief, ethnic groups, socioeconomic status, sexuality, ability, social group, or even the clothes students wear. In this activity, have students write down 4-5 words to identify themselves (these could be written on a paper, Post-it Notes, or address labels). These identifiers could be simple, such as “daughter” or “musician” or “caring”, or something more complex, such as “Asian” or “Muslim” or “Diabetic.” Ask the students to consider which marker of identity they would feel safe to wear if they had to wear that label for a day. Discuss the implications of wearing one or more of these labels. Consider the following: Are we proud of who we are? Are we afraid of what others might think? Do we feel fear or worry when others reduce us to one or more of these labels?

Each individual is so much more than one or even several of these markers of identity. In our private lives we often feel a sense of pride for who we are, what we believe in, or the traditions of our families, yet in society at large, especially for students, that pride can quickly turn to shame. How do we instill acceptance for *all* that we represent when society is constantly diminishing the value of one or more of these identities? How do we reclaim pride in self without fear of being castigated for our otherness?

This activity is useful for a whole class discussion or [Fishbowl](#) discussion. To close the activity, consider having students write 3-5 positive comments about their classmates, using address labels or Post-it Notes (these could be general or specific). Have students give these out to one another, making sure that every student receives the same amount of positive labels (3-5 per person). Examples could be, “Stay awesome” or “Thank you for being kind.” Once everyone has received positive labels, remind the students that they are so much more than what others might perceive them to be and to consider the dangers of reducing others to a single label or identity.

So Much More: Positive Labels

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
3. Examine places and regions and the connections among them
4. Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
5. Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others, and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective
6. Demonstrate skill in inferential and evaluative listening
7. Discriminate and justify a position using traditional lines of rhetorical argument and reasoning

Notes

POST-LESSONS

Grade: 6-12

Mapping the Narrative Experience

Overview

Using the plot outline (see Supplement for handout), map the storied experience of one of the Holocaust survivors. Make sure to include all of the elements of the plot including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution. Use the presentation slides provided to teach an overview of Elements of a Story. This can be paired with practice in taking Cornell Notes.

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
2. Demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational, literary, and persuasive texts
3. Read a wide range of literature (American and world literature) to understand important universal themes and the human experience
4. Engage in a wide range of nonfiction and real-life reading experiences to solve problems, judge the quality of ideas, or complete daily tasks
5. Demonstrate the use of a range of strategies, research techniques, and persistence when engaging with difficult texts or examining complex problems or issues

Notes

Living Lessons of the Holocaust: Conflict Reflection

Overview

Consider the most crucial elements of conflict. How do one or more of these conflicts characterize the stories of the Holocaust survivors and their families? Write a reflection that utilizes the narrative experiences of the Holocaust Survivors, their families, society, or populations as a whole, and the way they experience types of conflict as a result of the Holocaust.

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
3. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
4. Examine places and regions and the connections among them
5. Analyze origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens
6. Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic

Notes

Lessons in Annotation: Theme Study

Overview

Use one or several of the Survivor Narratives. Annotate the text for themes (one word ideas) or other elements that are most apparent in the narrative. Have students look for unfamiliar vocabulary and try to discern the best possible meaning from context clues. Use the annotation in a written response exercise that focuses on one or more of the narrative themes.

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
3. Demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational, literary, and persuasive texts
4. Read a wide range of literature (American and world literature) to understand important universal themes and the human experience
5. Engage in a wide range of nonfiction and real-life reading experiences to solve problems, judge the quality of ideas, or complete daily tasks
6. Write with a clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail
7. Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone, and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes
8. Apply standard English conventions to effectively communicate with written language

Notes

Jewish Population Infographic

Overview

Using the handout for the population numbers. Create an infographic that depicts the decline in the Jewish population from the start of the war in 1933 to the post-war era, 1950. Similarly, create an infographic that depicts the migration of Jewish around Europe based upon the rise or the population in select European countries. Use 21st century technology to develop the infographic, such as [Canva](#) or [Venngage](#).

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
2. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
3. Examine places and regions and the connections among them
4. Analyze origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens
5. Understand the structure and properties of our number system. At the most basic level numbers are abstract symbols that represent real-world quantities
6. Use critical thinking to recognize problematic aspects of situations, create mathematical models, and present and defend solutions

Notes

Living Lessons of the Holocaust: Found Poetry

Overview

Use one of the selected Survivor Narratives and have students take 5-10 minutes to highlight key words, ideas, or concepts that stand out to them in the narrative. Once students have done this, have them develop a found poem (a poem that uses only the words from the text) to reshape the narrative into poetry form. This could be a complimentary pairing to follow the poetry study from the pre-lesson resources.

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational, literary, and persuasive texts
2. Read a wide range of literature (American and world literature) to understand important universal themes and the human experience
3. Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone, and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes

Notes

Living Lessons of the Holocaust: Close-Reading Jigsaw

Overview

If students did not have a chance to hear or view all of the Survivor Narratives, study the remaining narratives in a [close-reading](#) jigsaw. (Or, if a Survivor visited the classroom, study the Survivor Narratives as well.) Small groups can be assigned one of the additional transcribed Survivor Narratives (Choose 4 or 5 narratives). Once students have taken notes (Cornell Notes suggested) and feel comfortable sharing the story, have them move to tables to discuss their readings. This exercise calls upon the reliability of the narrator, in particular, that of a 2nd or 3rd person narrator. How do we preserve the importance and genuine aspects of the narration in this manner? How do we entrust others to carry on the stories so that we may learn from them? What should students be responsible for in learning from other students' narration? In passing them on?

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
3. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
4. Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others, and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective
5. Deliver organized and effective oral presentations for diverse audiences and varied purposes
6. Use language appropriate for purpose and audience
7. Demonstrate skill in inferential and evaluative listening
8. Engage in a wide range of nonfiction and real-life reading experiences to solve problems, judge the quality of ideas, or complete daily tasks

Notes

Living Lessons of the Holocaust: Gallery Walk Presentation

Overview

The focus of this activity is to view the wide-range of Holocaust experiences and the collective impact they have on how we understand its significance. What lessons can students take away from a Holocaust unit, so that it preserves the continuity of sharing this critical time period in history? Have students create poster presentations, timelines, geography mappings, or even narrative plot outlines of each of the Survivor Narratives. Students can work in small groups or individually. Have students orally present their work about the narratives and then have students do a gallery walk of all of the final, visual pieces. Students can respond to the gallery as a whole in either a class discussion, individual written responses, or through a creative project (See the Tile Art Project handout).

Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
3. Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others, and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective
4. Deliver organized and effective oral presentations for diverse audiences and varied purposes
5. Use language appropriate for purpose and audience
6. Demonstrate skill in inferential and evaluative listening
7. Transfer the value of visual arts to lifelong learning and the human experience

Notes

Resources

"AVID's Mission Is to Close the Achievement Gap by Preparing All Students for College Readiness and Success in a Global Society." *AVID*. n.d. <<http://www.avid.org/>>.

"Anti-Semitism." *ADL*. Anti-Defamation League, n.d. <<http://www.adl.org/anti-semitism/anti-semitism.html>>.

By Studying the Dilemmas Facing Individuals, Groups, and Nations in Response to Genocide, Students Deepen Their Understanding of the Range of Choices Made during the Armenian Genocide. "Fishbowl." *Facing History and Ourselves*. n.d. <<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/fishbowl>>.

"The Bielski Partisans." *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 02 July 2016. <<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007563%22>>.

Brown, Matthew D. "Teaching Student Annotation: Constructing Meaning Through Connections - ReadWriteThink." *Readwritethink.org*. n.d. <<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/teaching-student-annotation-constructing-1132.html>>.

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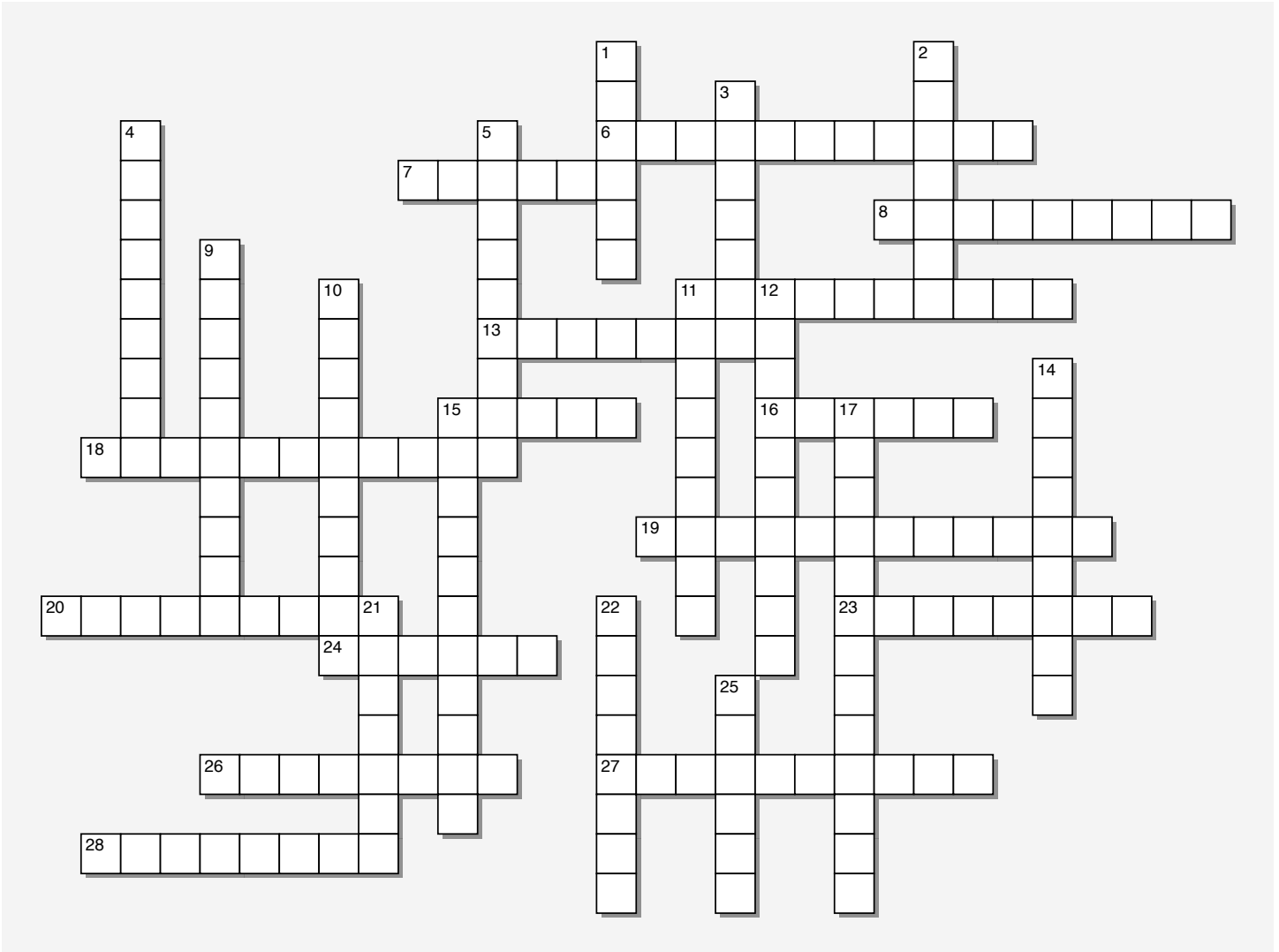
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SUPPLEMENT
Lesson Plan Materials

Eyewitness to History Living Lessons of the Holocaust



Across

- 6. Having or showing a lack of interest or concern.
- 7. A person or thing that is regarded as dangerous or likely to inflict harm.
- 8. To destroy (something) or kill (someone) (as it pertains to the Holocaust).
- 11. The ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens.
- 13. A set of personal characteristics both physical and emotion by which an individual can be recognized.
- 15. Serious and immediate danger.
- 16. An extremely distressing experience that causes severe emotional and/or physical shock and may have long lasting effects.

Down

- 1. Someone who has been harmed or killed by some adverse act.
- 2. A person who is not Jewish.
- 3. An offensive word or name that is used as a way of abusing or insulting someone.
- 4. A Greek term meaning "Sacrifice by Fire" used to describe the key event in world history that saw the extermination of 6 million Jewish and other people during World War II.
- 5. The allocation of businesses from Jewish to non-Jewish people.
- 9. Biased or misleading information used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view.

Across

18. To describe, label, or identify something or someone in a way that shows strong disapproval or disgrace.
19. Controlling the people of a country in a very strict way with complete power that cannot be opposed.
20. A person who is present but not taking part; watching but not offering help to a victim
23. The quality or state of being holy, very important, or valuable.
24. A place of shelter or protection.
26. A set of beliefs, values, and practices based on the teaching of a spiritual figure.
27. The act or process of freeing someone or something from another's control; the act of liberating someone or something.
28. The systemic destruction of all or a significant part of a racial, ethnic religious or national group.

Down

10. A person who stands up for his or her beliefs and does the right thing even if they are alone and facing danger.
11. A periodic celebration (usually annual) or program of cultural events often Acting in an upright, moral, virtuous way
12. Using a careful system or method or done according to a system.
14. A situation in which people of different social classes, religions, races, etc., are together in a society but continue to have their different traditions and interests.
15. The act of singling out an individual or a group and directing physical or emotion abuse on them.
17. Hostility towards or prejudice against Jews
21. A person who has fled a given area due to dangerous conditions whether physical or political.
22. Carefully noticing problems or signs of danger.
25. A part of a city in which members of a particular group or race live usually in poor conditions.

anti-Semitism

complacency

gentile

identity

peril

propaganda

religion

sanctity

threat

up-stander

Aryanized

epithet

ghetto

liberation

persecution

refuge

resilience

stigmatized

totalitarian

victim

bystander

genocide

Holocaust

liquidate

pluralism

refugee

righteous

systematic

trauma

vigilant

The Decline and Migration of the Jewish Population Throughout Europe During and After the Holocaust

Jewish Population in European Countries		
	1933-1945	Post-1950
Albania	200	
Austria	250,000	18,000
Belgium	60,000	
Bulgaria	50,000	6,500
Czechoslovakia	357	17,000
Denmark	6,000	
East Prussia	9,000	
Estonia	5,000	
Finland	18,000	
France	225,000	
Germany	565,000	37,000
Great Britain	300,000	
Greece	100,000	7,000
Hungary	445,000	190,000
Italy	48,000	35,000
Latvia	95,000	
Lithuania	155,000	
Luxembourg	2,200	
Netherlands		160,000
Norway	1,500	
Poland	3,000,000	45,000
Portugal	1,000	
Romania	980,000	280,000
Soviet Union	2,525,000	2,000,000
Spain	4,000	
Sweden	6,500	
Switzerland	18,000	
Turkey	56,000	
Yugoslavia	70,000	3,500

There were 9.5 million Jews living in Continental Europe at the beginning of 1933. By the end of the decade, between 1933 to 1945, 2 out of 3 Jews were dead.

There were approximately 3.5 million Jews left in Europe by 1950. Many of the surviving Jews immigrated to US, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, South America and South Africa.

Source: "Jewish Population of Europe in 1933: Population Data by Country." *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 02 July 2016.

Current Map of Europe



Jack Adler

Jack Adler was born in Pabianice, Poland in 1929. He witnessed the decay of humanity while enduring life in two ghettos and the horrors of three concentration camps. His two younger sisters were killed at Auschwitz, his brother and mother died in the Lodz ghetto in Poland, and his father in Dachau. At 16, he was liberated by American soldiers and moved to the U.S. as a war orphan. Jack now speaks all over the United States and internationally to spread his message of living without hate. Though his entire family was murdered by the Nazis, he still has hope for the human race and emphasizes the importance of respecting others. Jack's take on hatred, racism, bigotry, and misused religious beliefs challenges audiences to analyze their own beliefs and adhere to the principles of the Golden Rule: treat others as we ourselves want to be treated.



Jack Adler: It Starts with Hate

Got created man, men created evil. Hate is a learned experience and no group of people has a monopoly on good or bad. We all belong to one race: the human race. My first encounter with hate was when I was about seven years of age. I thought the kids in school were my friends but our friendship came to a close as they learned to hate. One Sunday, I was playing outside the churchyard. As people began to exit the morning service, a young boy, a few years older, approached me. He was dressed in his best clothing and was wearing a big smile. I thought he would say hello. He did not. He recognized me and knowing I was Jewish, he shouted a dirty epithet for Jew and pointed at me a slim, accusing finger. I looked around. He must be talking to someone else, I thought, but I was the only one in front of him. He approached me and I tensed. I was wearing a fashionable jacket with bright, beautiful buttons that gleamed in the morning sun. The boy reached for the top button; he wrapped his finger around it and yanked, tearing the fabric and freeing the button. He tossed it in the dusty street, the smile still painted across his face. I was in shock as if I had just broken a bone. He went after the next button and I couldn't move; I was frozen with the combination of fear and surprise. He tore off each of the buttons and threw them to the ground. The boy laughed and turned to his parents who were nearby. I waited for them to berate his son, but I discovered that his smile was inherited. His parents grinned, took his hand, and turned their backs and walked away.

For me the Holocaust began September 8, 1939. The first year my brother died of malnutrition and disease in the Pabianice Ghetto. My mother died shortly afterward of a broken heart. The Pabianice Ghetto was liquidated on May 16, 1942, and we were divided into two groups: A and B. The A group were workers that became slave laborers, and the B group were the useless—the young, the old, and the sick. People in group B all died the same day at the Chelmno extermination camp. I was in group A; my father, two sisters and I were transferred to be Lodz Ghetto. When the Lodz Ghetto was liquidated in the summer of 1944, my father and I and the two sisters were sent to Auschwitz Bierkenhau extermination camp. My younger sister, who was 11 and a half years of age, died in the gas chamber. My older sister was murdered at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. My father and I were sent to the Kaufering Concentration Camp to perform slave labor. My father died at Kaufering; I was sent to Dachau. At liberation I was 16 and as I was checked into the hospital. I weighed 65 pounds. I alone survived my immediate family. I am one of five, that includes my extended family, who survived. It's difficult for me even to comprehend how I survived. I don't blame people if they don't believe it; it's beyond comprehension. I tell my story to children because they are the future, and I tell my story to open people's eyes to what hate can do when it turns to evil. Not all bullies grow up to be evil hate mongers, but all hate mongers are bullies. When the good people don't speak out, hate breeds unchecked. All I can do is take metaphoric revenge. My family is my revenge; the generation stopped Hitler and the Nazis couldn't kill. Speaking is my revenge. These words, here, are my revenge.

Tom Berl

Tom's story starts in Prague where his parents were married in 1938. Once they realized what was happening under German occupation, they left for France when the reality of Hitler's domination of Europe was apparent. Because Tom's father had studied in France and was fluent in the language, it was the first stop of many in their efforts to remove their family from certain danger. Once France was no longer an option, they traveled to Haiti but found the country difficult to live within. Finally, they applied for immigration and was accepted by Ecuador and moved to the capital city, Quito. In this country, the family thrived along with other Jews fleeing the Nazis. After the war the family first went back to the Czech Republic, then to Israel and finally back to Ecuador. In 1950, when Tom was 17, he came to the U.S. to study. His fond memories of growing up in Quito stayed with him even as he made a new life in America. He lives in Denver today.



Tom Berl: Wandering Jews

My family's immigration story, like that of countless others, began with the threat of Nazis in Europe. My father, a promising, young attorney, and my mother, an accomplished beautician, were married in 1938. They had, by all accounts, a bright future ahead of them. However, the events of history were to derail their hopes and plans. The day Hitler entered Prague on March 15, 1939, my father foresaw the ominous events that followed and took the first train to France. My father had studied there and was fluent in the language. However, it soon became obvious that the threat was not limited to Czechoslovakia, and he decided to seek refuge in the New World. France's colony, Haiti, was the most accessible, available destination. They found life on this island almost unbearable as they suffered various bouts of malaria. Visas to the United States were limited, but Ecuador provided them with one. It is so that in 1940, they reached the country where four years later I was to be born and that ultimately became my mother's home for the rest of her life. This was a completely underdeveloped country but three to four thousand Jews who found refuge in this country were fortunate because its people were not only welcoming but also very kind. As one of the recent immigrants stated, "I would rather live among people who have lice, than people who have become beasts." These Jews soon established community organizations that handled their cultural and religious affairs. They formed the *Chevra Kadisha*, the Jewish Cemetery, a Women's League, a Youth Club, a Zionist Organization, and *Bet Din* to adjudicate disputes within the community, and even a Maccabi Athletic Group. They also created a bank and opened a kosher restaurant all under the umbrella entity designated as *Beneficence Israelita de Quito*. In its social hall, cultural events were held almost a hundred nights per year. These Jews, thankful for their miraculous escape from Europe, were committed to maintaining their Jewish traditions and to defy Hitler's goals. So this is the world in which I was born, but it was not to be for long.

Once the war came to an end, many of these immigrants sought other shores more in keeping with their culture and educational backgrounds. In this vein, my father orchestrated our return to Czechoslovakia in 1947. However, the winds of change were moving that country into the Soviet bloc, and thus our attempt to return proved to be short-lived. In 1948 we moved to Israel just a few months after the new nation was created and as the War of Independence still raged on. After two challenging years in this pioneering adventure, my parents opted to return to Ecuador where we arrived at the end of 1950. Thus, before I had turned seven, I had lived in three different continents. We were truly the prototypes of the "Wandering Jews." What followed was 11 years of geographic stability that comprised my personal experience in Ecuador: the years of my youth. These were years filled with joy and sweet memories. While we lived in a larger Ecuadorian community and went to school with them, my personal and social life was entirely segregated and fully centered under *Organizacion Juvenil Israelita de Quito (OJIQ)*. The Jewish Community brought Madrihim every two years to teach us and inculcating us both Jewish and Zionist values ideologically around the movement, HaShomer HaTzair. And so it was that when this phase of my life ended, as I finished high school, and I had to pursue higher education, that with great sadness I left those years and memories behind. The sharp pain I experienced when the airport loudspeaker said, "Your attention please, Air France announces its flight to Bogota, Port au Prince, and Paris" remains among the most painful moments of my life. I knew that this was a one-way trip; 11 years would elapse before I returned.

Paula Burger

Born in 1934 in Novogrudok (formerly a part of Poland but today is known as Belarus), Paula and her family were sent to the Vilna ghetto when she was eight years old. Her father escaped to join the famed [Bielski Partisans](#) with plans to get his family out as well. Before he could, Paula's mother was taken and killed. Paula's father then arranged for her and her brother to be smuggled out of the ghetto, and they survived the Holocaust with the Bielski Partisans in the Naliboki Forest. Paula immigrated to the U.S. in 1949 and regularly speaks to students and organizations about how she was able to survive. Paula's hope is that her story will help people become more compassionate and inspire them to reach out to those suffering pain and loss. "There was no rhyme or reason why we should have survived, except to tell the story," says Paula.



Paula Burger: Paula's Window

It took me seventy years to be able to write the book, *Paula's Window*, about the depravation and brutality we suffered at the hand of the Nazis. I was born in 1934 in Novogrudok, Poland and for seven years I was a happy, carefree child adored by my parents and extended family. The Nazis invaded Novogrudok on July 3, 1941. Anti-Jewish laws took effect immediately. As Jews we lost all our citizenship rights. We had to sew the yellow star of David on our outer garments, so that we were easily identified as Jews. Nazi death squads conducted roundups to hunt down and kill Jews. My father began making plans. In the spring of 1942, my parents, my younger brother, Isaac, and I were forced to leave our home and move into the Novogrudok Ghetto. Despite the curfew and many guards, my father moved secretly in and out of the ghetto. He warned us of massacres and selections. Our first escape occurred at night. My mother handed us over the ghetto fence to our father. We walked for hours that night and hid in the underbrush during the day. We lay in silence for hours while my father searched for food. It was days before we returned to my mother who had stayed behind in the ghetto. While we had been in hiding hundreds of children had been taken brutally from the ghetto and killed. Papa joined the Partisans and would often be gone for long periods of time. My mother was the source of our stability. She was the wheel of my life. Isaac and I were outside playing the day the Nazis came for my father. We had not heard from him for months by then. When the Nazis couldn't arrest my father they took my mother; they tore her from my life and my world stopped turning. She was murdered on Yom Kippur, 1942. My father joined the Bielski Brothers Partisans Group in the Naliboki forest and engineered our elaborate escape from the ghetto. Isaac and I were put into an empty water barrel. The lid was sealed and the barrel was placed on a horse-drawn carriage. After many hours of travel in this damp cask, we arrived at the farmhouse. We were reunited with my father the evening of the second day.

Our new home was deep in the forest with over a thousand other Jews. Every adult in the camp adhered to the Partisan's code to ensure the groups survival. Partisans had to be able to run at a moment's notice, and young children slowed the group. One night my father didn't arrive with the others in his band. I heard people talking. If he didn't return, no one would care for us. I was horrified. How could this be? The answer was logical: If he lived, we lived. If he died, we died. My father understood this and soon after he took a companion, a woman named Hannah. In all the years that she and my father were together, first in the Forest and years later after she and my father were married, she never once hugged or kissed me. Soviet soldiers liberated our compound in 1944. Tuva Bielski commanded that the forest encampment be destroyed by being blown up. Over 1200 residents of the camp were suddenly homeless. Papa knew there were many Poles eager to kill Jews in Novogrudok, and he turned us in the direction of Lida. After many moves, my family arrived at the displaced persons' camps at Föhrenwald, Germany in January of 1946. I was 11 years old. I loved being in school. All my classmates were Jewish, and I had many friends. We studied the history of Israel and the Hebrew Bible. I loved the Bible stories, and I loved the Hebrew language. My friends and I joined the Zionist group, *Betar*. When Israel won its statehood, I was chosen to carry the new, blue and white flag at a student assembly. I was so proud. A representative of *Histadrut* visited our school to tell us about the new state. I desperately wanted to go. After all we have been through, it was my dream to see Israel and fight for the land. I felt it would be an honor to die

for Israel. I was so passionate about going that the *Histadrut* representative, Leya, agreed to take me. After school, I ran to tell my father; I was so excited. His answer was deeply disappointing. “No! I didn’t save you just to send you away somewhere.” I was 39 when I went to Israel for the first time. I got off the plane and kissed the ground.

Rudi Florian:

Born to devout Catholics in 1935 in Schneidemühl, Germany, Rudi Florian’s parents opposed the Nazis but didn’t dare to do so openly. As a child, Rudi’s teachers were Nazis and his schoolbooks contained Nazi propaganda. When he was 10 years old, he briefly served in the Hitler Youth until his mother came up with an excuse to have him released. When Russian troops invaded Germany, Rudi’s family was displaced to Poland. Eventually, they moved to East Berlin, where Rudi encountered Communist propaganda. Later in life, Rudi made a pledge to “join those who warned that genocide can happen again to any group of people, anywhere...” and served in the United States Air Force for 30 years. Now retired, Rudi educates others about the importance of remembering the Holocaust, the value of human rights and the sanctity of life.



Rudi Florian: Sanctity of Life

I was born in 1934 in the town of Schneidemühl on the eastern border of Germany near Poland. My parents, Leo and Marie Florian, owned the largest butcher shop in town. They were devout Catholics, and I became an altar boy at age 6. My parents opposed the Nazis, but they did not dare to do so openly. They demonstrated their dislike of the regime in quiet ways. They refused to speak out against the Jews. My mother refused to apply for the Bronze Mother Cross, which she became eligible at my younger sister's birth in 1940. In a totalitarian society, there are many secrets. Even before I started school I understood that there was a difference between what is spoken outside the home and what is shared inside. Adults who disagree with the government cannot speak freely. By age 5, it was already clear to me that there were two value systems: the outside and the inside. School was my introduction to Nazism. Our teachers were Nazis; our curriculum was Nazism, and our school books were Nazi propaganda. There were no Jewish children in our school. They weren't allowed to attend German schools by then. We were taught the Jews were bad and children should stay away from them. I knew only one Jew, our family doctor, who escaped England before the war. Every boy had to join the Hitler youth at age 10. When I became 10, I joined the Wandervögel. My brother, who was three years older than I, had joined three years before. We were relieved when my mother made an excuse, so that neither of us had to participate.

In January 1945, Russian troops closer to Germany in my family made plans to leave. My father, along with all German men, was required to stay and defend the Fatherland. We boarded the train, but before it left the station, Russian planes attacked. Many people were injured and killed. I loudly blamed the Nazis for this awful, chaotic situation. My mother held my mouth shut, so I didn't put my whole family in peril. We grabbed our luggage and returned home. A few weeks later, the Russian army marched into our town. I saw much death and destruction; our family fled across the border to Poland. The Russians took my father and other able-bodied, German men to the east to do hard labor. After several months he returned. After the war, in a decision made by the four powers, our town became a part of Poland; 14 million people were displaced. We were given just a few days to leave; we could take only what we could carry. We were loaded on boxcars. The cold and the lack of food and water took its toll; many of the old, the young, and ill did not survive the relocation. In Poland were forced to wear an "N" for "Nemiec." In 1945, we moved to East Berlin where we had relatives. In East Berlin, I went back to school. I now got a taste of communist propaganda. I witnessed the workers uprising in June, 1953, which was brutally put down by the communist regime in East Berlin with the help of Russian tanks. In 1947, I saw a documentary on the Holocaust in a movie theater in Berlin. I was shocked. How could my people have done such a horrible crime? I felt betrayed by those I had looked up to as my mentors and role models. I was deeply ashamed. I was really angry at the conspiracy of silence which had kept me ignorant. I made a pledge to join those who warn that genocide can happen again to any group of people—anywhere—if we forget and cease to be vigilant for the rights and dignity of all men and women and the sanctity of our life.

Estelle Nadel

Estelle's story is told through a series of paintings depicting her life. She was born in 1934 in Borek, Poland. She was the youngest of 5 children with the oldest being her sister and three brothers in between. The invasion of Poland by the Germans brought sweeping changes to their lives. They had to wear yellow stars and were not allowed to attend school. During a round up her father and sister were killed by the Gestapo. Estelle and her remaining family went into hiding in a family friend's attic. Because they were so poor and had nothing, her mother would leave to find food at night for the family. While she was out one night, she was found, jailed, and shot by the Gestapo. Estelle and a brother were eventually found hiding and taken to jail where they were able to escape through the bars in the window. Although they lost track of one another in the escape, they eventually both found their way to their aunt's and were reunited. They lived there for two years before eventually being liberated (by the Russians).



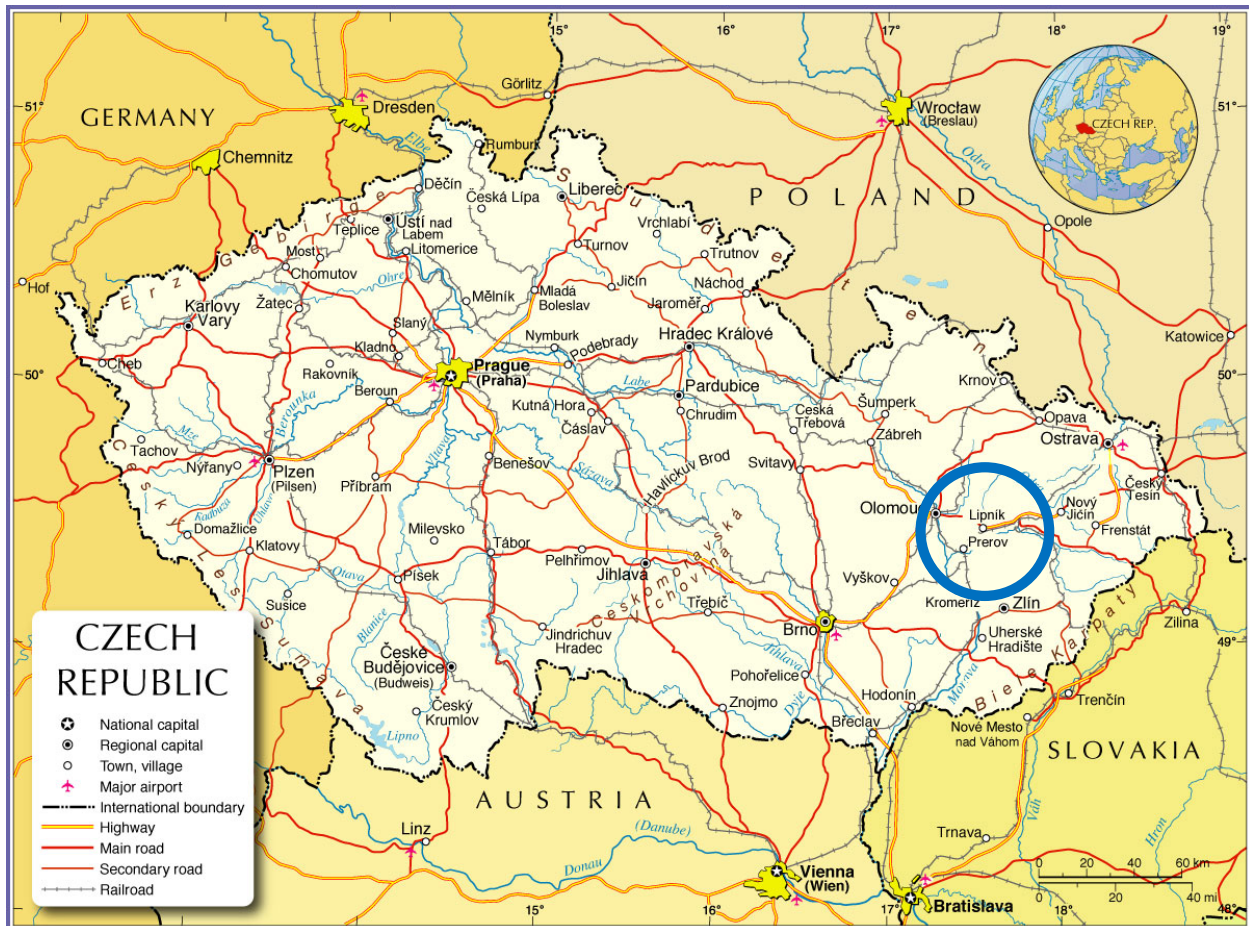
Estelle Nadel:

I was born in Poland in 1934 to Reuben and Chaya Feld in a small village of Borek. I was the youngest of five children. My sister Sonya was the oldest, and I had three brothers in between: Moishe, Shia, and Yashik. We were very religious and very poor. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, we had to wear yellow stars and we were not allowed to go to school. By 1942 things were really bad. One day, the Gestapo ransacked our house looking for weapons and valuable things. We had neither. My father always said that God would save us. My father and Sonia had to go to work at the oil refinery in our village. One day Sonya ran home to tell us to go into the fields for the day. The Germans had surrounded the refinery and she thought something was going to happen. My mother begged her not to go back to the refinery. Sonia said she would be safe, that she knew some of the Gestapo, and nothing would happen to her. The Nazis made two lines of the workers in the refinery. Sonya saw that my father was in the line to the right, and she ran to join him. Everyone in the right line was shot.

Pulena, a woman my mother knew, hid us in her attic. She was very poor, so every night my mother went out to different gentile homes and begged for food. One night my mother did not return. We knew something terrible had happened. The next morning, we learned that she was taken to the jail in Yedlicha and shot by the Gestapo. I was I was 7 years old; Yashik was 14; Shia was 15. Yashik could pass for a non-Jew and found work on a farm. Shia and I were in Pulena's attic for six months. He went out at night to get food for us. One day from our peep-holes in the attic, we saw five motorcycles approaching. We didn't know what to do—it was daylight; we couldn't run outside. We ran downstairs and hid under Pulena's bed. That was one of the first places they looked. They took us to the Yedlicha jail. There the police jailer told the guard take them downstairs. "But there's somebody else in that cell." The jailer said, "Move him out and put them in there." It was a small cell, a wooden bed against one wall. There was a high window with bars but no glass. It was nighttime and we were very cold. Shia asked me to help move the bed. I begged him not to do it. He said, "Don't be a baby." He stood on the bed and saw the window was level with the sidewalk. He said he was going to try to get out through the bars. I wouldn't have any trouble because I was so small. I begged, "Don't leave me." Shia said, "Watch for the guard and wait until he turns the corner. Then, climb out. Run across the street and climb that tall fence. I'll be waiting there." The first time he tried he got stuck. I was hysterical, pulling on him. The second time, he made it. I was crying and frightened, but I was able to get out, run, and climb the fence. I tore myself up. It was pitch black, and I couldn't see anything. I kept whispering his name, "Shia." I started crying and yelling for him. A woman came out of the house and said, "Who's crying?" When I answered she said, "Who are you?" I said, "I am Jewish and I escaped from the jail." I asked if she could hide me; she said, "No, my husband is a guard at the jail. If he found you, he'd just take you right back and shoot you." She told me to come into the house. I remembered the public showers in my village where my mother and I went on Fridays. If I could get there, I could find my way. The woman walked me all the way from Yedlicha through the fields to Borek to the public showers. She left me there, and I watched to make sure that she was long gone before I headed towards the Korefsky's where my aunt and cousin were hiding. Shia arrived there around dawn. We hid in that attic for two more years. After years of inactivity I was literally unable to walk when the Russian Army liberated us. We were reunited with Yashik but never learned what happened to Moishe or other family members.

Osi Sladek:

Osi Sladek was born in Presov, Czechoslovakia in 1935. In 1938, Slovakia seceded from Czechoslovakia and became an ally of Nazi Germany. Almost immediately, Jews were subjected to persecution and oppression. As Jews were being rounded up and killed, Osi’s family lived in hiding, posing as gentiles. As the search for Jews intensified, Osi’s family ventured into the mountains and lived there with little food and shelter until they were liberated by the Russian army in 1945. In 1949, his family moved to Israel, and eventually, Osi settled in the United States. Though he lived in constant fear during the Holocaust, he never lost his faith. His message is one of good overcoming evil. As he tells audiences, “Goodness goes much further than evil in life. Never lose faith. Go on and live a good life.”



Osi Sladek:

I was born in Presov, Czechoslovakia in March, 1935. My parents owned a store that specialized in musical instruments and fine leather goods. My father was a talented musician and composer who played at musical events across the city—my mother, a phenomenal salesperson. In 1938, the Slovak people seceded from the Czechs and became allies of Nazi Germany. Almost overnight the Jews of Presov were subjected to persecution and oppression. I was seven when I was forced to wear the yellow star of David. I became a target and laughing stock of bullies who called me “dirty Jew” and threatened to kill me. I was forced to drop out of public school and second grade. My parents’ business was Aryanized, and we were ordered to leave our apartment. Our bank accounts were seized and travel out of the area required a special permit. Kind, Christian friends risked their own lives by hiding us in their homes. A Nazi soldier was a customer in my parents’ store that winter. He described to my mother atrocities committed against the Jews in Poland. This encounter convinced her to have me smuggled across the border to Kassa, Hungary, where my aunt and her family lived freely. My mother bought me a new winter coat for the journey. She advised me to pose as an orphan and to lie as needed without fear of punishment by God. A man my parents hired, a complete stranger to me, picked me up one day in March, 1943. I was eight years old. We walked country roads and snow-covered fields in freezing temperatures from early morning into night, until we reach the border. At the Slovak side of the border, the man made me crawl like a rabbit across a large meadow, and he disappeared into the woods. I was terrified to be alone. I cried and trembled as I made my way across the field. After a while, he reappeared and consoled me with the news that I had crossed the border without being detected. I spent the night at a farmhouse and the next morning, the smuggler drove me to a street corner in Kassa and left me there. I was picked up by police and questioned the entire day at police headquarters by Police Chief, Chattari. He couldn’t understand how I’d been able to cross the border on my own. I told lie after lie until I was finally released to the care of my aunt Ella. I lived an entire year with aunt Ella and her family until March 19, 1944, when the Nazi’s occupied Hungary. I was determined to return to my parents and at age nine, I was smuggled back into Slovakia.

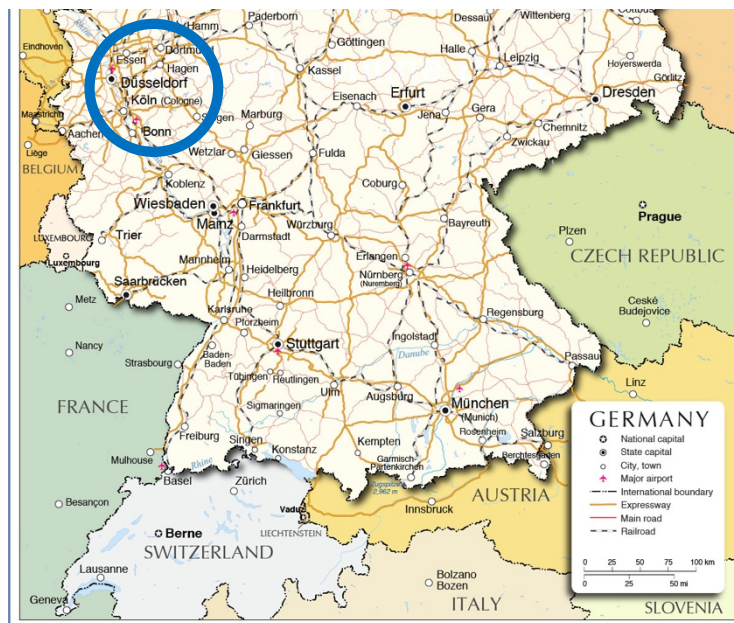
Following our reunion, we moved to Mikulas near the Tatra mountains. We lived as gentiles with false baptismal birth certificates. The search for Jews intensified and with the help of a young peasant, we walked into the mountains. After several days of walking in winter weather, we came across a small cabin used by shepherds in the summer. The tiny cabin was already occupied by a number of Jews in hiding. They reluctantly made space for us. A pot-belly stove heated the structure. I was bored and volunteered to collect firewood and tend the fire. It burned around the clock. It also became my job to erase footprints in the snow when people left the cabin for certain tasks. This could literally save our lives as it prevented detection by hunters and Nazi spotter planes. On Christmas 1944, a Partisan warned us that a large contingent of Nazi soldiers was headed in our direction. Six of us left for a cave my mother had seen high in the mountains. I was the last to enter and leaned two large pine branches to disguise the entrance. A couple of hours later, we heard gunshots and Germans shouting, “Out, Jews!”, then screams of young mothers, “Don’t shoot! There are children here!” The Nazis then set the cabin on fire and rounded up our companions. They searched the area around the cave. The branches concealing the cave saved us. We constructed a

temporary dwelling higher up in the mountains. Our meager food supplies were exhausted by mid-February, 1945. The miraculous appearance of a Slovak Partisan with a huge chunk of raw beef saved our lives. We were liberated a month later by the Russian Army. When we returned to Presov, we found out that nearly half of our family had perished in concentration camps.

Joan Wallis

Joan was raised by three Holocaust survivors in a small apartment. Her grandmother became a strong and loving presence in her life as her mother was consumed by memories of Auschwitz, where she had been taken at the age of nineteen and had lost her own mother there. Her parents loved her deeply but were emotionally distant, especially her mother who felt perpetually haunted by Hitler. Her father would say, “Everything will be alright,” to counterbalance her mother’s despair. This became the family proverb. Today, Joan lives with her husband and two sons, passing on the story of her family’s experiences through public speaking engagements.

Joan’s father, Alex Katz, was born in Cologne, Germany.



Joan’s mother, Rose Mausner Katz, was born in Vienna, Austria.

They met in New York City after the war and were married in 1949.

Joan Wallis: One Generation Removed

I was raised by three Holocaust survivors. My father, Alex, who had perfect faith in God; my mother, Rosie, who had lived through Auschwitz and had little faith in God; and my paternal grandmother, Omi, whose faith was not an issue. In my home where the residue of World War II and the Holocaust was a pervasive tension, Omi filled me with love. She was a big presence, and her body, soft and big-breasted, was perfect for hugging me. Sometimes, I faked being hurt just so she would enfold me in her arms and hold me. She had a great laugh right up from her *kishkas*; her life force emanating through her cooking, her dramatic hats, and through me. My mother was in Auschwitz when she was 19. She and a few other young women were building railroad tracks; it was cold. One of the guards said to them, “Go! Go now!” and they ran. She always blamed her bad feet on Hitler and that wintry run through the forest. I heard her express her pain in a focused way a few years ago when I took her to a podiatrist. He was a young Latino; she was sitting on the examining table when he walked into the room. She pointed to her feet. She said, “Look, look what Hitler did to my feet!” It was irrelevant to her that bunions and hammertoes are hereditary. They had nothing to do with wandering in the forest trying to survive. Hitler was like a computer chip in her brain. He was never far from her every thought. Most of her energy was consumed by the living presence of the Nazis. My mother thought I was the greatest thing on the planet, but she couldn't give much to me. Omi's faith was moving forward. My father, too, believed in moving forward. He always said to my mother, “Everything will be alright.” My mother repeated this to me over and over. It was our family proverb whether we believed it or not. Rosie left me a box. I know and I don't know what's in it. For me the box was always to be avoided; I was afraid of what it contained. It kept me from moving forward. The weight and heaviness I felt from that box was like the weight and heaviness of my mother losing her mother at Auschwitz. I've been to Yad Vashem twice. My two companions are at the exhibits while I sit in the café. It's as close as I need to be. I think: I'm one generation removed from Auschwitz, and I'm sitting in the café. Things change so much from one generation to another. I have two sons—a husband. We live in safety and prosperity. We're not hungry, and we're not scared.

Jack Welner:

Jack is from Lodz, Poland. In 1939 the Germans had occupied Lodz. Jack and his older brother tried to cross into Russia from Warsaw but did not get there. Meanwhile, the entire Jewish population of his town was forced into a ghetto. Fearing for his mother and sisters, they returned to Lodz and the ghetto. They lived with their cousins in a 2-bedroom apartment, seven family members occupying one room. The conditions there were brutal. There was no heat, very little food, no water, and no toilets. For 4 ½ years he was locked away from the world. They were isolated from the rest of the world in the ghetto and had no idea what was happening around them, including no knowledge of Auschwitz or other extermination camps. Hunger was constant and rations were necessary to survive. His brother died in 1944 of starvation. The Lodz Ghetto was liquidated in 1944 (although it was the last to be liquidated because it produced goods for the Germans). Jack made toys for German children because there were no more Jewish children left. Its remaining inhabitants were sent to Auschwitz. Several of Jack's family members died there, including his beloved mother, Esther. Despite everything, Jack's promise to himself and others: "Don't let the past ruin the future."



Jack Welner: The Promise

I made myself a promise. I will tell about it. I will never refuse to answer a question; this is my nature—open and giving. I inherited my nature from my mother, Esther. She was so generous and goodhearted. We lived in the city of Lodz in Poland when the war broke out on September the first, 1939. The Germans moved with such an organized force that by September the eight they had occupied Lodz. That December my brother and I tried to cross into Russia from Warsaw, but we never got there. While we were in Warsaw, we heard the Germans were making a ghetto, and in April, 1940 we returned to Lodz. I didn't want to leave my mother and sisters without a man in the house. That same month the Germans made a ghetto with barbed wire fencing in the most dilapidated part of the city. They moved all the Jews living in Lodz into the ghetto. We moved in with some cousins who were already living in that part of town. They had a two-bedroom apartment on the sixth floor. They lived in one-bedroom, and my family of seven people lived in the other room, which was about 6' x 12'. We were allowed to bring only a single load from our home to our new apartment. In the winter of 1939-40 the pipes froze. For the entire time that we lived in the ghetto we had no running water and no toilets. We walked down six flights of steps to use the outhouse in the Courtyard. For four and a half years we were locked away from the world. Anyone with a radio was shot on the spot. We did not know about Auschwitz; we did not know what's happening in the world. The Germans made animals out of us. We were always hungry; we lost interest in everything except food. Each of us was given an eight-day bread ration. I was always hungry and finished my ration of bread by the fourth or fifth day. Then, I would gather greens from the field and my mother would cook them like spinach. My older brother, Schmulik, was very careful with his ration. Each day he ate one eighth of his ration. He died of starvation on D-Day June 6, 1944.

Lodz was the longest lasting ghetto—liquidated last because it was producing goods for the Germans. Everyone had to work. Who didn't work, didn't live. Factories were set up in the ghetto. I made toys for German children; there were no Jewish children left. They had taken them all away. My brother-in-law, Henech, was the first one to be taken. In March of 1942, my sister, Henia, and my nephew, Sevek, were taken. My sister, Fela, was sent to a labor camp in March of 1944. In August of 1944, my mother, my sister, Hannah, and I were part of a round up. The Nazis were liquidating the ghetto. At first we hid, and then thought better of it. We were transported to Auschwitz by cattle car. We arrived in the middle of the night to bright lights and the Gestapo were screaming at us. "Out! Out!" They separated me from my mother and my sister. The last time I saw my mother she pressed a piece of bread into my hand. She had saved it the entire train ride from Lodz. "Take it," she said, "you'll need it." I made myself a promise whatever happened, happened. Don't let the past ruin the future.

Narrative Comprehension Questions

Jack Adler
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the word, “metaphoric revenge” mean in Jack’s narrative? 2. Why does Jack refer to Auschwitz as an “extermination camp?” (Consider that in history we have learned to refer to them as “concentration camps” or “internment camps?”) 3. Discuss your thoughts on the following: “Not all bullies grow up to be evil hate-mongers, but all hate-mongers are bullies.”
Tom Berl
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does it mean by the term, “Wandering Jew?” 2. Why is it important to retain one’s culture or heritage? 3. What does it mean to feel displaced? How did Tom feel displaced by history? How did he resolve this?
Paula Berger
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do you think it took Paula 70 years to write her story? 2. Why is it significant that Paula’s mother was murdered on Yom Kippur? 3. What do you feel the role of Hannah was in their lives? What did Paula want from her? 4. From the narrative, what do you think the Partisan group was and what was its role during the Holocaust?
Rudi Florian
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did Rudi’s family believe in? 2. Why was it risky that Rudi blame the Germans for the bombing of the train station? 3. What was shocking to Rudi once he went to the movie and saw the Holocaust documentary?
Estelle Nadel
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What would be required to pass for a non-Jew like Estelle’s brother, Yashik? 2. What kind of courage would it take for the guard’s wife to walk a Jewish child to the public showers? What do you believe she was sympathetic towards? 3. What is the importance of family in this narrative?
Osi Sladek
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does it mean to be Aryanized? 2. What kind of relationship did the Nazi soldier and Osi’s mother have before and during the war? 3. In what ways did Osi survive throughout the narrative?

Joan Wallis

1. Why does Joan say that her father had faith and her mother had none?
2. From whom does Joan feel like she receives the most love?
3. What impact does the experiences of Joan's mother, grandmother, and father have on Joan?

Jack Welner

1. Why did Jack feel that he needed to return to his mother and sisters after his attempt to flee to Russia?
2. What does he mean when he says, "The Germans made animals out of us?"
3. What does he mean when he says, "The Nazis were liquidating the Ghetto?"
4. What is the importance of family in this narrative?

LIVING LESSONS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Summary:

“The Butterfly”

The last, the very last,
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing
against a white stone...

Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly 'way up high.
It went away I'm sure because it wished
to kiss the world goodbye.

For seven weeks I've lived in here,
Penned up inside this ghetto
But I have found my people here.
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut candles in the court.
Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.
Butterflies don't live in here,
In the ghetto.

Pavel Freidmann, a Jewish Czechoslovak poet, was taken to Theresienstadt concentration camp on April 26, 1942. He wrote “The Butterfly” on June 4, 1942, which was found when Theresienstadt was liberated. He was deported to Auschwitz on September 29, 1944 where he later died.

Source: “Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.” *The Butterfly*. n.d. <<http://hmd.org.uk/resources/poetry/butterfly-pavel-friedmann>>.

“First They Came”

First they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist
Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist
Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew
Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me

Martin Niemöller, a prominent Protestant pastor, was an outspoken opponent of Adolf Hitler, although he still considered himself a German nationalist. In 1937, he was arrested for treason and incarcerated until his trial. In 1941 he was transferred to Dachau, where he was housed with other Catholic dissenters. He remained there for the next seven years, until his transport to Austria with other political prisoners until their liberation by U.S. troops. Several versions of this poem have been developed which reflect the danger of only being a bystander.

Source: Martin Niemöller: Biography." *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 02 July 2016. <<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007391>>.

"I Cannot Forget"

Do I want to remember?

The peaceful ghetto, before the raid:
Children shaking like leaves in the wind.

Mothers searching for a piece of bread.
Shadows, on swollen legs, moving with fear.

No, I don't want to remember, but how can I forget?

Do I want to remember, the creation of hell?

The shouts of the Raiders, enjoying the hunt.
Cries of the wounded, begging for life.

Faces of mothers carved with pain.
Hiding Children, dripping with fear.

No, I don't want to remember, but how can I forget?

Do I want to remember, my fearful return?

Families vanished in the midst of the day.
The mass grave steaming with vapor of blood.

Mothers searching for children in vain.
The pain of the ghetto, cuts like a knife.

No, I don't want to remember, but how can I forget?

Do I want to remember, the wailing of the night?

The doors kicked ajar, ripped feathers floating the air.
The night scented with snow-melting blood.

While the compassionate moon, is showing the way.
For the faceless shadows, searching for kin.

No, I don't want to remember, but I cannot forget.

Do I want to remember this world upside down?

Where the departed are blessed with an instant death.
While the living condemned to a short wretched life,

And a long tortuous journey into unnamed place,
Converting Living Souls, into ashes and gas.

No. I Have to Remember and Never Let You Forget.

Alexander Kimel moved to the Rohatyn ghetto in the Ukraine to avoid the Red Army in 1940. In his time in the ghetto, he was forced to do hard labor and lived with the constant fear of being rounded up and killed. In 1943, he ran away and lived in the surrounding forest and villages just as the ghetto was liquidated and everyone left within it killed. He immigrated to America where he still lives today.

Source: "'I Cannot Forget', Two Poems by Alexander Kimel |." *"I Cannot Forget", Two Poems by Alexander Kimel* n.d. <<http://remember.org/witness/kimel2>>.

Living Lessons of the Holocaust Narrative Conflicts

There are seven types of narrative conflict that can shape or alter the causes and effects of a plotline. All stories are propelled by one or more of these conflicts whether in fiction or nonfiction work. In the post-lesson, “Living Lessons of the Holocaust: Conflict Reflection”, the objective is to have students reflect upon one or multiple conflicts that arise in the Survivor Narratives with the following question in mind:

- How do one or more narrative conflicts characterize the stories of the Holocaust survivors and their families?

As a follow-up assignment, have students write a reflection that utilizes the narrative experiences of the Holocaust Survivors, their families, society, or populations as a whole, and the way they experience types of conflict as a result of the Holocaust. For reference, the seven types of conflicts are listed below:

Person vs. Person	A person’s struggle with another person or the protagonist’s struggle with another character or person within the story.
Person vs. Self	A person’s struggle with oneself in terms of doubts, prejudice, or character flaws.
Person vs. Nature	A person’s struggle with elements found in nature, whether animal or environment.
Person vs. Society	A person’s struggle to confront institutions, traditions or law within the society of which they are a part.
Person vs. Fate	A person’s struggle with the concept of control and/or who or what truly dictates the outcome of one’s life or actions.
Person vs. Technology	A person’s struggle with the influence of technology and its direct impact of the individual or society.
Person vs. Supernatural	A person’s struggle with elements that are fictional fabrications of a story (monsters or demons). However, this category could also be aligned with Person vs. Self in terms of the struggle against what a person must contend with in the creation of metaphorical demons that arise from oneself.

Of these types of conflicts, the last three are often consider sub-conflicts or sometimes eliminated from the primary four. However, in examining the narratives of the Holocaust Survivors, it is evident that their experiences depict several of these conflicts, and it could be argued that one or more of the sub-conflicts are applicable. As students write their reflections, they may want to focus on a primary conflict overall (which could also relate to a narrative theme) or include several conflicts that could be discussed in multiple paragraphs using text evidence. To extend the exercise, include a text annotation and planning exercise into the activity. The use of a graphic organizer may be useful for student planning.

Creative Comprehension: Ceramic Tile Art

This ceramic tile art project is useful to pair with reading and understanding narratives, poetry, or other types of literature. The objective is to have students think about the work and respond, through color and design, their feelings or thoughts about the work itself. This activity, does take some maturity for students to participate in and does involve purchasing materials.

Materials:

- A collection of thick-tip Sharpies (purchasing two of the large, multi-colored 24 packs usually works well for a large classroom).
- White, ceramic tile (purchase at your local home improvement store). These can be the larger 4x4 squares or any other shape or style within your budget. They can be purchased in bulk if multiple classes are doing the activity (usually 100 tiles in a pack).
- Large bottle of 90% rubbing alcohol (anything below 90% will not work)
- Straws (cut up into 2-3 sections to use as pipettes)
- Plastic containers to hold the alcohol (these can be shared between 2-3 students)
- Paper plates

Process:

1. Pick the literary piece that you are working with. (For the example model, *The Odyssey* is used.) Have students reflect upon their understanding of the work and choose 2 or 3 Sharpies that they feel would best express their ideas.
2. Each student should start with a blank tile placed on the paper plate. Once students have an idea of what they will be expressing through their colors, they can loosely color the tile with the Sharpie (it doesn't have to be heavy or completely filled in).
3. Using the straws, have students place their straw pipette in the alcohol container. Using their fingertip to serve as a vacuum, they can "hold" the alcohol in the straw (not a lot of alcohol is necessary, so the containers do not have to be too deep).
4. Students will drop the alcohol onto the tile and Sharpie and it will start to blur and pool out. They can pick up the tile to move around and change the flow of the alcohol to pick up other colors within the tile or blend it using a variety of techniques. The alcohol will evaporate, leaving patterns of color on the tile. (Caution: Using too alcohol much pulls up the color and will leave very little on the tile. Students will need to repeat the process.) Students can try out different techniques to get their achieved effect.
 - a. There are many ways to play with the medium (using tissues to absorb the alcohol creates a scaling effect or blowing gently through the straw creates lines) Please see examples of student work on the following page.
 - b. If a student wants a "do-over", the tile can be wiped off with wet wipes or bleach wipes.
5. Once all of the Sharpie is blended with the alcohol, they can be left to dry overnight. To permanently "seal" the tile, the tiles can be sprayed with clear polyurethane. Students can take them home after they are sealed.

Purpose:

There are many ways in which we can respond to a piece of literature. Sometimes, the more challenging texts evoke feelings and sentiments that can be beautifully captured in art. This project, while certainly not without its challenges, creates profound illustrations of students' comprehension. While students often get caught up in the activity itself, asking the students what they are trying to achieve or convey in representing the literary piece is the most rewarding aspect of this project. Students truly enjoy this activity and love seeing the work of their peers as well.

The Odyssey Examples:



Odysseus's men are enchanted by The Lotus Eaters.



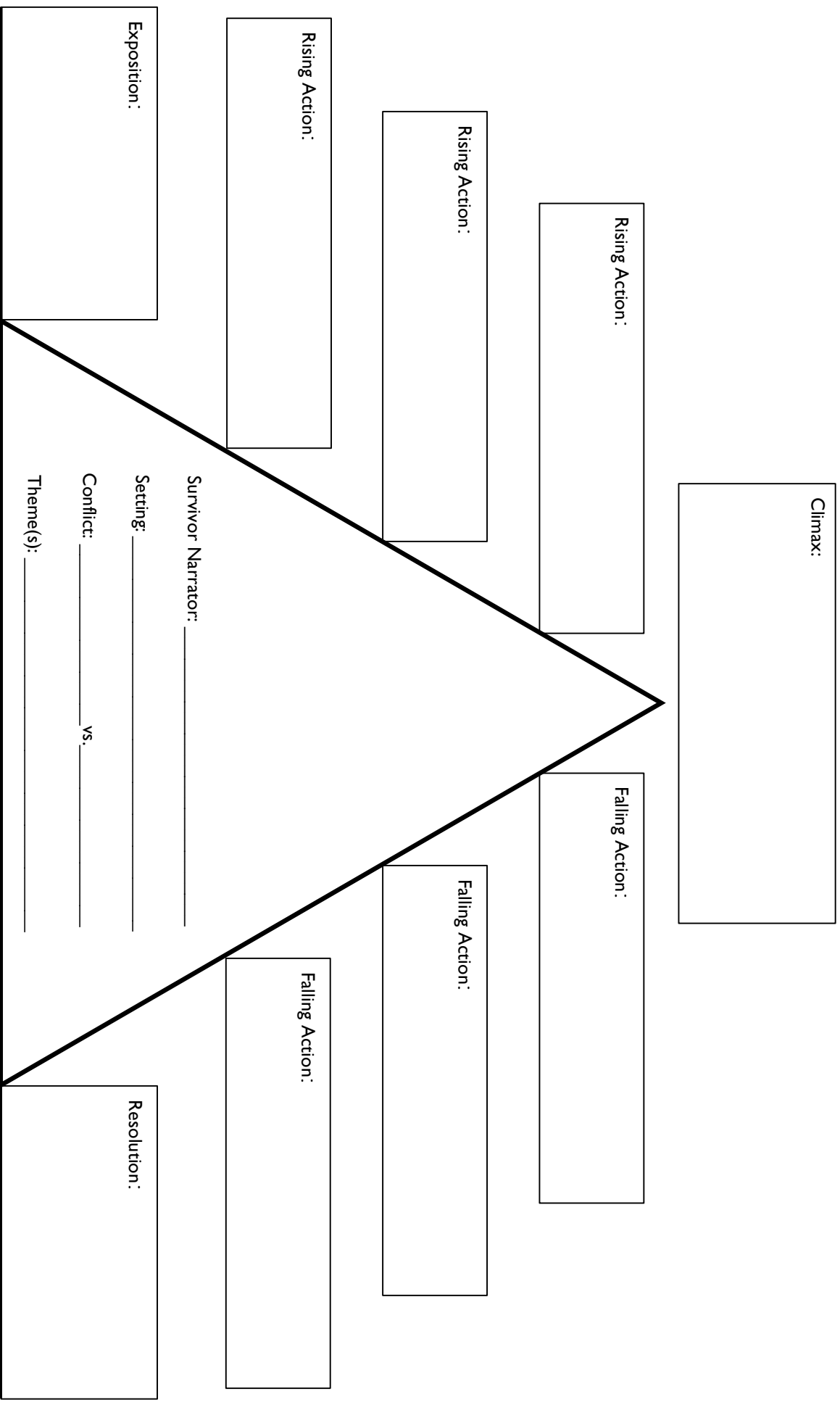
Odysseus and his crew slaughter The Cicones and take their gold.



Odysseus and his men must navigate around Charybdis.



Odysseus pokes out the eye of Polyphemus, The Cyclopes.



Climax:

Rising Action:

Rising Action:

Rising Action:

Falling Action:

Falling Action:

Falling Action:

Exposition:

Survivor Narrator: _____

Setting: _____

Conflict: _____ vs. _____

Theme(s): _____

Resolution:

A plot is a sequence of events that comprise a narrative. One or more characters within the narrative are affected by these events in a relationship between cause and effect. Use the narrative experience of a Holocaust Survivor to map out their story plot.