

# GENOCIDE

## IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURIES



### *Teacher Guide*

**FPES**

FLORIDA PRESS  
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES INC.

[FPESNIE.ORG](http://FPESNIE.ORG)

Tampa Bay  
**Times**  
**NIE**  
newspaper in education  
[tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie)

## **Civic education and your newspaper**

**By Jodi Pushkin, *President Florida Press Educational Services (FPES)***

According to the Louis Frey Institute, research shows when students engage in simulated civic actions, they are prone to develop a positive political efficacy that contributes to lifelong engagement.

The local newspaper is a great teaching tool to engage your students in civics education. Did you know that more than 60 percent of people with high exposure to newspapers in childhood are regular readers of newspapers as adults, according to a study conducted for the News Media Alliance, former Newspaper Association of America Foundation? That percentage is significant because statistically people who read the newspaper daily are more engaged citizens. Engaged citizens participate in their communities by voting and practicing good citizenship.

The goal of NIE programs is to create a generation of critical readers, engaged citizens and consumers. John F. Kennedy said, “Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.” The goal of NIE is to engage and develop that resource.

The newspaper is both a primary and secondary source for informational text. According to Scholastic magazine, “Informational text is a type of nonfiction — a very important type. Nonfiction includes any text that is factual. (Or, by some definitions, any type of literature that is factual, which would exclude texts such as menus and street signs.) Informational text differs from other types of nonfiction in purpose, features, and format.”

The newspaper meets these specific characteristics of informational text. It is a logical resource for information about the natural, social and political world. The newspaper conveys information about the natural or social world. The articles are written from someone who knows information to someone who doesn't. The newspaper has specialized features such as headings and technical vocabulary.

### **Florida's Holocaust Mandate**

In 1994, the Florida Legislature passed the Holocaust Education Bill (SB 660) which amends Section 233.061 of the Florida Statutes (Chapter 94-14, Laws of Florida), relating to required instruction. The law requires all school districts to incorporate lessons on the Holocaust as part of public school instruction. The statute reads as follows:

#### *Florida Statute 1003.42(f)*

The history of the Holocaust (1933-1945), the systematic planned annihilation of European Jews and other groups by Nazi Germany, a watershed event in the history of humanity, to be taught in a manner that leads to an investigation of human behavior, an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping, and an examination of what it means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the purposes of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions.

Join FPES in promoting Holocaust Remembrance Week by using some of the activities and lessons in this packet. If you have other lessons to share or would like to provide feedback, please email [jpushkin@tampabay.com](mailto:jpushkin@tampabay.com).

To learn more about Florida's NIE programs, visit the Florida Press Educational Services (FPES) Web site at [www.fpesnie.org](http://www.fpesnie.org).

**Jodi Pushkin**, the President of Florida Press Educational Services, is the manager for the Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program. Pushkin holds an M.A. in English Education and a B.A. in writing and literature. She has worked in NIE since 2000. Pushkin is a former high school teacher. In addition to her work with NIE, Pushkin is an adjunct instructor at Saint Leo University and Hillsborough Community College.

Contact Pushkin via e-mail at [jpushkin@tampabay.com](mailto:jpushkin@tampabay.com).

# Florida Standards

The Florida Department of Education defines that the Florida Standards provide a robust set of goals for every grade. Emphasizing analytical thinking rather than rote memorization, the Florida Standards will prepare our students for success in college, career and life. The Florida Standards will reflect the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

Building on the foundation of success that has made Florida a national model, The Florida Standards provide a clear set of goals for every student, parent, and teacher.

For more information on Florida Standards, go to the CPALMS website. CPALMS is the State of Florida's official source for standards information and course descriptions: [cpalms.org](http://cpalms.org).

The activities in this packet applies to the following Florida Standards for high school students. twelve.

**Social Studies:** SS.912.C.4.1; SS.912.CG.3.1; SS.912.CG.4.4; SS.912.H.1.2; SS.912.H.1.3; SS.912.HE.1.1; SS.912.HE.1.2; SS.912.HE.1.4; SS.912.HE.1.5; SS.912.HE.2.1; SS.912.HE.2.5 SS.912.HE.2.6; SS.912.HE.2.7; SS.912.HE.2.9; SS.912.HE.2.10; SS.912.HE.2.11; SS.912.HE.2.13; SS.912.HE.2.14; SS.912.HE.2.15; SS.912.HE.3.4; SS.912.HE.3.5; SS.912.S.1.4; SS.912.S.1.7; SS.912.S.1.8; SS.912.S.2.3; SS.912.S.2.9; SS.912.S.3.1; SS.912.S.3.2; SS.912.S.3.3; SS.912.S.4.; SS.912.S.4.5; SS.912.S.5.2; SS.912.S.5.5; SS.912.S.5.9; SS.912.S.7.1; SS.912.S.7.5; SS.912.S.8.2; SS.912.S.8.3; SS.912.S.8.7; SS.912.S.8.9; SS.912.W.1.1; SS.912.W.1.3; SS.912.W.1.5; SS.912.W.1.6; SS.912.W.7.5; SS.912.W.7.6; SS.912.W.7.8; SS.912.W.9.3; SS.912.W.9.4; SS.912.W.9.5 **BEST:** ELA.912.C.1.2; ELA.912.C.1.3; ELA.912.C.1.4; ELA.912.C.1.5; ELA.912.C.2.1; ELA.912.C.3.1; ELA.912.C.4.1; ELA.912.R.2.1; ELA.912.R.2.2; ELA.912.R.3.1; ELA.912..R.3.2; ELA.912.R.3.4; ELA.912.V.1.1; ELA.912.V.1.3

## Newspaper in Education

The Newspaper in Education (NIE) program is a cooperative effort between schools and local newspapers to promote the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources. Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text.

Informational text is a type of nonfiction text. The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world. Florida NIE programs provide schools with class sets of informational text in the form of the daily newspaper and original curriculum. NIE teaching materials cover a variety of subjects and are consistent with Florida's education standards.

Florida Press Educational Services, Inc. (FPES) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of newspaper professionals that promotes literacy, particularly for young people. FPES members consist of daily and weekly newspapers throughout the state of Florida. Through its member newspapers, FPES serves educators, students and families in all 67 Florida counties. For more information about FPES, visit [fpesnie.org](http://fpesnie.org), or email [ktower@flpress.com](mailto:ktower@flpress.com) or [jpushkin@tampabay.com](mailto:jpushkin@tampabay.com). Follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/nie\\_fpes](https://twitter.com/nie_fpes)

Activities written by Jodi Pushkin, Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education., for more information, contact [ordernie@tampabay.com](mailto:ordernie@tampabay.com).

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# Going Beyond the Text

## Self Discovery

In 1942, On Anne Frank's 13th birthday, she receives a diary. It is her favorite gift. She begins writing in it immediately: "I hope I will be able to confide everything to you...and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support." Naming the diary Kitty, Anne begins a journey of self discovery with these words.

Fifty-two years later and hundreds of miles away, a classroom of students in inner city Long Beach, California, embark on that same journey. With the help of a new teacher, Erin Gruell, the students in room 203 of Woodrow Wilson High School find a new lease on life. "We felt like Anne Frank, trapped in a cage, and identified with the violence in Zlata Filipovic's life. We were so inspired by the stories of Anne and Zlata, that we wrote letters to Miep Gies, and to Zlata, in hopes that they would come to Long Beach and share their stories with us. When Miep visited us, she challenged us to keep Anne's memory alive and 'passed the baton' to us. It was then that we decided to begin chronicling our lives." And with those words, the Freedom Writers were born.

The high school students begin writing anonymous journal entries about the adversities that they face in their everyday lives: gangs, immigration, drugs, violence, abuse, death, anorexia, dyslexia, teenage love, weight issues, divorce, suicide and all the other issues they experience. The journals prove to be life changing.

Now it is your turn, using a composition notebook, start your own diary this month and record your thoughts and feelings about the events going on around you. To learn about things going on in the world around you, use your local newspaper as a resource. To begin your diary, write about something that you have read that directly effects your life and community.

For more information about the Freedom Writers, log on to [freedomwritersfoundation.org](http://freedomwritersfoundation.org)

# Going Beyond the Text

## Never again

From the perspective of someone living in the United States in 2023, the actions that took place during the Holocaust seem outrageous. Looking at the history of the Holocaust from the perspective of time, one can confidently utter the words “never again.” You may think that the factors that allowed the Holocaust to happen were unique to that time in history and to that part of the world. They are not.

- Research the history of the genocides that have taken place in the world since 1945. Find out the causes of the genocides and the number and type of people affected. Acts of hate and intolerance persist throughout the world and within our communities today.
- Look through the newspaper for an article focusing on prejudice and hate. Briefly summarize the article. In small groups, share your articles. As a group, decide how the negative events in the article could have been prevented.
- In *Diary 94*, a Freedom Writer argues that people should “rock the boat” and “speak out” when they witness an injustice. Have you observed an unjust action or behavior? What did you do? If you could go back in time and revisit that moment, would you handle it differently? Why, do you believe, is it sometimes difficult for people to speak out or act against wrongdoing?

Source: Freedom Writers Foundation

## Repeating the past

Author George Santayana wrote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” What does this phrase mean? Discuss this idea with your class. Using words and pictures from the newspaper, create a collage to make a connection between “then” and “now.” Images and metaphors should express feelings and attitudes as well as behaviors and events. The overall effect should reflect your viewpoint on whether the present world has learned the lessons of history. You may focus on only one theme or on several issues that you find particularly relevant to your own life. In your journal, discuss your thoughts about the class discussion.

# Going Beyond the Text

## **Indifference**

Author Cynthia Ozick writes, “Indifference is not so much a gesture of looking away – of choosing to be passive – as it is an active disinclination to feel.” A bystander is someone who sees an act but turns away from helping. During Hitler’s reign of terror many residents living near concentration camps and killing centers claimed to not be aware of what was happening. There were many bystanders who saw the smoke from the crematoriums and who saw innocent men, women and children gunned down in the streets by the police killing squads. Do you know what is happening in your neighborhood? Look for articles of crimes in different towns and counties in the newspaper. You can check the police logs in the newspaper regional sections. In your journal, list the name of the town and county and what crimes have occurred. Update this list daily for two weeks. Were there bystanders to these events? What would you have done if you had witnessed these actions?

## **Racism**

According to the British Broadcasting Company, “The Nazis, obsessed with the notion of creating a ‘biologically pure, Aryan’ society, deliberately targeted Jewish children for destruction, in order to prevent the growth of a new generation of Jews in Europe.” One of the reasons the Holocaust happened because Hitler and the Nazis were racist. They believed the German people were a “master race” who were superior to others. Racism, stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice go hand in hand and are prevalent in present society. Look through the regional, national and international sections of the newspaper. Find articles depicting stereotypes, discrimination or prejudice. Choose one of these articles and summarize it in your notebook. Also, include your reaction and opinion of the story and what you could do to prevent the situation in the story. Share the article and your views with your class.

## **The light at the end of the tunnel**

Genocide presents a perfect example of man’s inhumanity to man. It also presents the opportunity to see humanity shine through the evil. Throughout World War II, citizens of Europe rescued Jews and others from Nazi persecution. In Denmark, most of the Jewish community was boated to Sweden where diplomat Raoul Wallenberg led an effort that saved thousands of Hungarian Jews. Underground efforts led many Jews to safety, and countless individuals protected Jews in hiding. In the war-torn region of Darfur, humanitarians such as actress Angelina Jolie have risked their lives to help innocent children dying of starvation. Look in the newspaper to find an article about a humanitarian or modern hero. Read the article. Think about the main ideas and points in the article. Explain, in a well-developed paragraph, the main ideas of the article. Be sure to include the qualities that make the person a humanitarian or hero. Share the information with your class.

# Going Beyond the Text

## Heroes and heroism

A hero is a person noted for feats of courage or nobility of purpose, especially one who has risked or sacrificed his or her life. Author Ervin Staub wrote, “Heroes evolve; they aren’t born.” Peter Garrett, lead singer for Australia’s Midnight Oil defines a hero as having a “core set of values which include thinking about and doing things for others; self belief without boasting; the capacity to accept setbacks without giving; in and a sense of humility.”

What is a hero? On a piece of paper, define what a hero is to you. Look for examples of everyday heroes in the newspaper. Create a chart listing the heroes and their attributes. Share your thoughts and what you have learned with your class.

## Hidden biases

Studies show people can be consciously committed to democracy and deliberately work to behave without prejudice, yet still possess hidden negative prejudices or stereotypes. So even though we believe we see and treat people as equals, hidden biases still may influence our perceptions and actions. Discuss bias with your class. What does the word mean? With your class, make a list of biases in society. Where do you think these biases come from? Look for examples of biased ideas and language in the newspaper Cut out or write down the words, phrases or pictures you find. Paste the words onto a piece of construction paper. On the back of the paper, explain the bias behind these words, phrases or pictures. Share your project with your class.

**Extension activity:** With your class, complete the **Analyzing How Words Communicate Bias** lesson from Teaching Tolerance - <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/analyzing-how-words-communicate-bias>. Use your newspaper to compare to the sources noted in the lesson.

## What Is a Human Right?

Ask students to define what a *human right* using the **Graffiti Board** teaching strategy. On a whiteboard or large paper, write Article I of the UDHR: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” and write the following prompt:

I think a human right is . . .

Encourage students to silently jot down or draw as many responses they feel are appropriate and assure them that repetition is allowed.

Direct students to examine the graffiti board and consider:

- What is a right, as opposed to a privilege?
- What ideas were repeated by more than one class member? Why might students in your community value this?
- What ideas pertain to basic necessities (food, shelter, health care, clean water)?
- What ideas relate to the US Constitution (freedom of the press, political participation, nationality, other protections in the Bill of Rights), or to foundational documents in the country where you live?
- What ideas reflect notions of a good quality of life (access to education and healthcare)?

Then, ask students to privately define what *universal human rights* means to them in their notebooks.

## RELATED MATERIALS

Ask your students to explore the connections between different human rights and current news stories. If your students have access to either the internet or print editions of a newspaper, you can ask them to work together in small groups to find an article that connects to at least one human right.

Alternatively, you can print a few different news articles that connect to human rights and give each group a different news story. The topics of the articles you use might include:

- Women’s rights protests in Iran (see for example the *Washington Post* article **What’s behind the protests in Iran?** or the *BBC* article **Iran: A really simple guide to the protests**)
- The rights of asylum seekers or refugees (see for example the *New York Times* article **How New Yorkers Are Stepping In to Help Asylum Seekers**)
- The treatment of the Uyghur minority group in China (see for example *The Atlantic* article **Saving Uighur Culture from Genocide**)
- Different groups’ access to environmental resources (see for example the NPR piece **Many Native Americans Can’t Get Clean Water, Report Finds**)

Ask your students to analyze and share their articles using the **Jigsaw** teaching strategy. Students can meet in initial “expert” groups to discuss a single article and determine which rights people are fighting to have recognized or upheld in the story.

Then, you re-organize students into “teaching” groups where each member shares a different article from their previous group.



Finish by leading a brief class discussion in which students discuss the patterns that they notice across the articles. In the discussion, you might ask students to name things they learned that are surprising, interesting, and troubling (**S-I-T**) from the patterns they noticed.

Source: Facing History and Ourselves

### **Going beyond the text: Journaling and current events**

Keeping a journal is a great way to learn more about what you are studying, the world around you and yourself. How do conflict and war affect you and your family? Why do you do what you do? Do the actions of people in foreign countries affect you? Do you have strong convictions? Are you able to stand up to others when your ideas are questioned? In your journal, record your general thoughts as well as your thoughts about the information you read in the Genocide in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries publication. Next, look for an example of a genocide that happened before the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and write about the details in your journal. Share what you have learned with your classmates and teacher.

### **Going beyond the text: Risk factors**

Read about the risk factors and warning signs of genocide on page 2 of Genocide in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries. Choose one of the genocides in the publication and list the risk factors and warning signs that are described. Next, look for an article in the newspaper that focuses on a genocide or potential genocide and list the risk factors described in that article. Share what you have learned with your classmates and teacher.

### **Going beyond the text: Studying editorial cartoons**

#### **Essential Questions**

- How are editorial cartoons different from other kinds of art and media?
- Why do artists create editorial cartoons?
- How can images and text work together to deliver a message?
- How do I interpret an editorial cartoon?
- What are the important elements that many artists use in editorial cartoons?

The following chart and questions are from the Library of Congress Cartoon Analysis Guide. Have your students use this chart and the questions to interpret the cartoons.

## Cartoon Analysis Guide

Use this guide to identify the persuasive techniques used in political cartoons.

### Cartoonists' Persuasive Techniques

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Symbolism</b>    | <p>Cartoonists use simple objects, or <b>symbols</b>, to stand for larger concepts or ideas.</p> <p>After you identify the symbols in a cartoon, think about what the cartoonist means each symbol to stand for.</p>   |
| <b>Exaggeration</b> | <p>Sometimes cartoonists overdo, or <b>exaggerate</b>, the physical characteristics of people or things in order to make a point.</p> <p>When you study a cartoon, look for any characteristics that seem overdone or overblown. (Facial characteristics and clothing are some of the most commonly exaggerated characteristics.) Then, try to decide what point the cartoonist was trying to make by exaggerating them.</p>   |
| <b>Labeling</b>     | <p>Cartoonists often <b>label</b> objects or people to make it clear exactly what they stand for.</p> <p>Watch out for the different labels that appear in a cartoon, and ask yourself why the cartoonist chose to label that particular person or object. Does the label make the meaning of the object more clear?</p>   |
| <b>Analogy</b>      | <p>An <b>analogy</b> is a comparison between two unlike things. By comparing a complex issue or situation with a more familiar one, cartoonists can help their readers see it in a different light.</p> <p>After you've studied a cartoon for a while, try to decide what the cartoon's main analogy is. What two situations does the cartoon compare? Once you understand the main analogy, decide if this comparison makes the cartoonist's point more clear to you.</p>         |
| <b>Irony</b>        | <p><b>Irony</b> is the difference between the ways things are and the way things should be, or the way things are expected to be. Cartoonists often use <b>irony</b> to express their opinion on an issue.</p> <p>When you look at a cartoon, see if you can find any irony in the situation the cartoon depicts. If you can, think about what point the irony might be intended to emphasize. Does the irony help the cartoonist express his or her opinion more effectively?</p> |

Once you've identified the **persuasive techniques** that the cartoonist used, ask yourself these questions:

What issue is this political cartoon about?

What do you think is the cartoonist's opinion on this issue?

What other opinion can you imagine another person having on this issue?

Did you find this cartoon persuasive? Why or why not?

What other techniques could the cartoonist have used to make this cartoon more persuasive?

# WORKSHEET I

## Analyze a Cartoon

### Meet the cartoon.

Quickly scan the cartoon. What do you notice first?

What is the title or caption?

### Observe its parts.

#### WORDS

Are there labels, descriptions, thoughts, or dialogue?

#### VISUALS

List the people, objects, and places in the cartoon.

List the actions or activities.

### Try to make sense of it.

#### WORDS

Which words or phrases are the most significant?

List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed.

Who drew this cartoon?

What was happening at the time in history it was created?

What is the message? List evidence from the cartoon or your knowledge about the cartoonist that led you to your conclusion.

#### VISUALS

Which of the visuals are symbols?

What do they stand for?

When is it from?

### Use it as historical evidence.

What did you find out from this cartoon that you might not learn anywhere else?

What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic?



# WORKSHEET 2

## Discuss Cartoons as Primary Sources

### Discuss Cartoons as Primary Sources

Respond to the following statements and questions to discuss how political cartoons illustrate history.

1. Which cartoon best embodies the phrase “a picture is worth a thousand words”?
2. What insight does the cartoon you selected provide about an important issue facing America when the cartoon was published?
3. Which cartoon best presents a social issue?
4. Which cartoon best presents a political issue?
5. Which cartoon best presents a foreign policy issue?



Fred Packer in the *New York Daily Mirror* - June 6, 1939



International  
Justice

Cambodia

Khmer Rouge  
Justice

CHIAPPATTE  
Int'l Herald Tribune

Ottoman  
Empire  
1915



DON'T  
WORRY:  
THE WORD  
"GENOCIDE"  
DOESN'T  
EXIST  
YET!

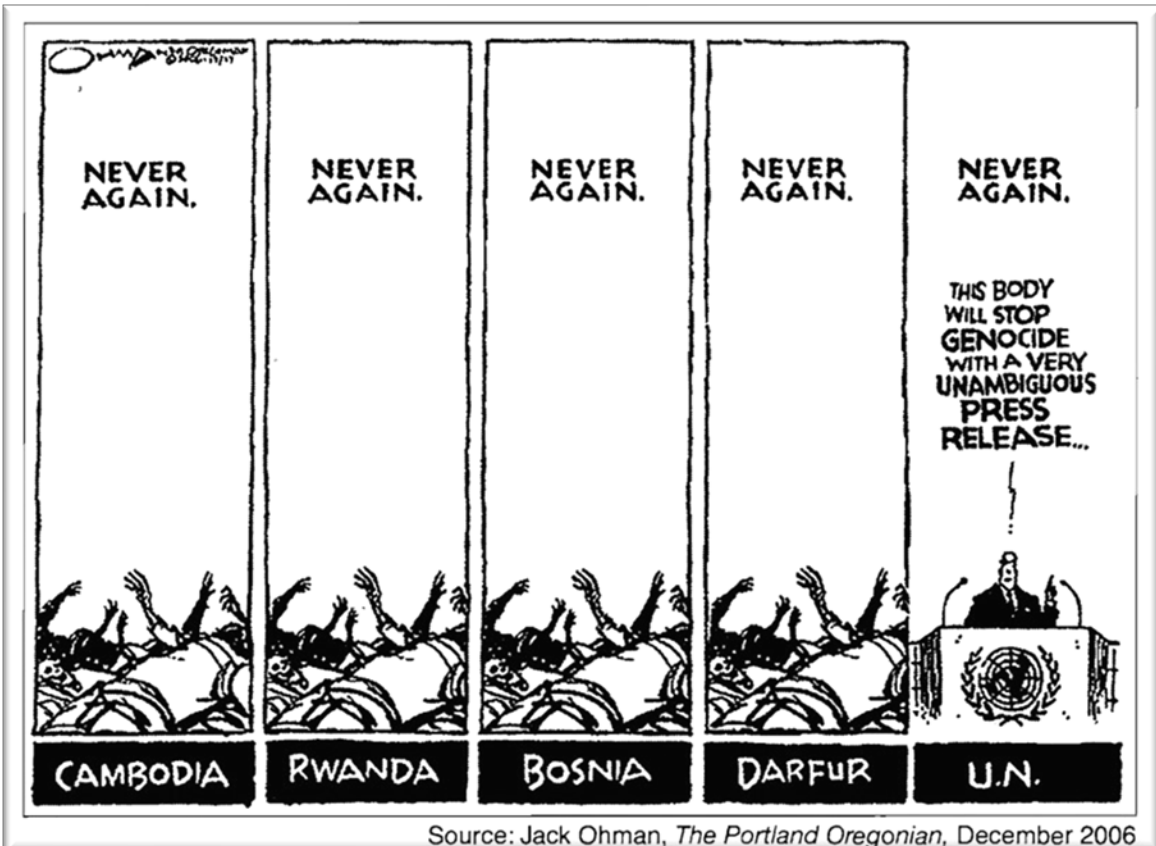


OF COURSE  
WE CARE!  
I'LL GO GET  
A FLAG!

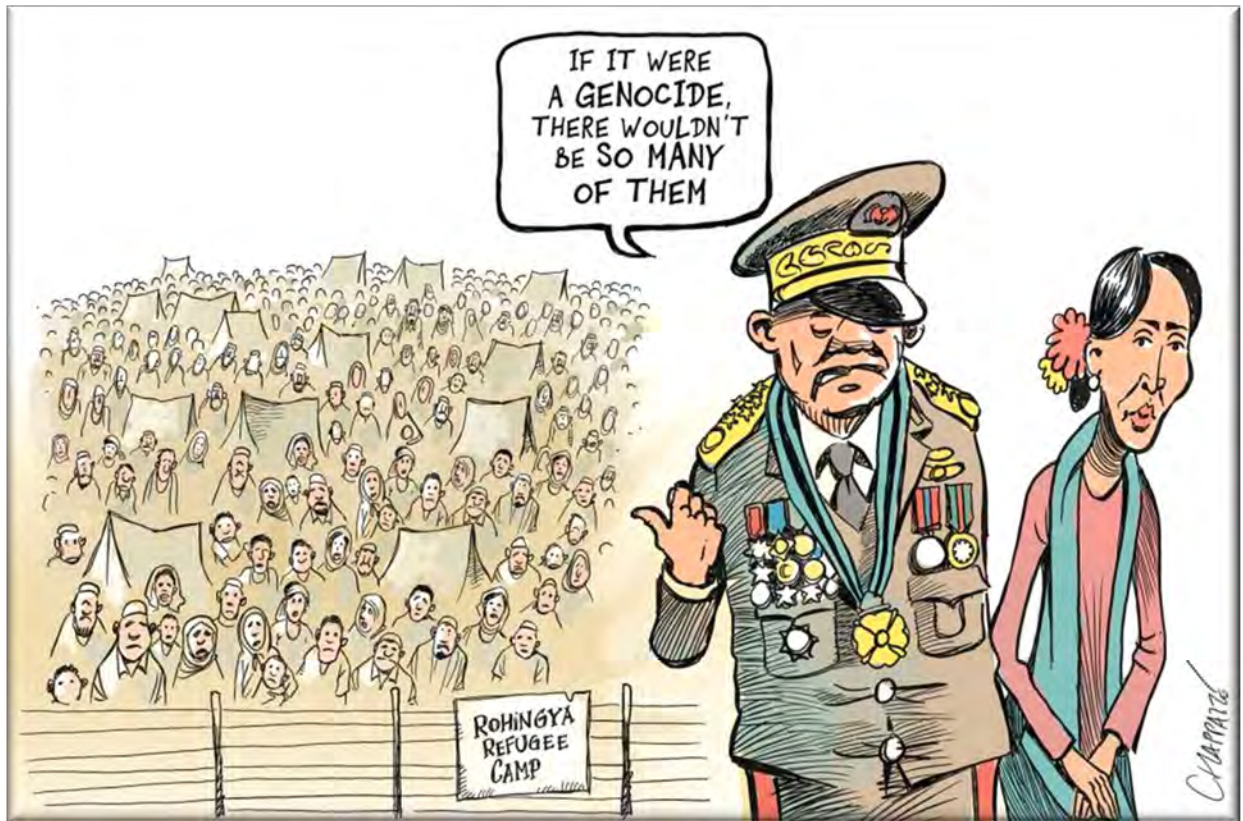
Copyright by Signe Wilkinson







Source: Jack Ohman, *The Portland Oregonian*, December 2006









## Genocide Handout

### **Your Name:**

*View the linked article and videos and respond to the related questions. When you have completed your work, save it and submit it to your teacher.*

### **Introduction:**

*Look at the Genocide Convention and reasons for involvement to consider at which point the United States considers humanitarian intervention.*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Review the <a href="#">Genocide Convention</a> .  |  |
| What qualifies an event as a genocide?  |  |
| How does the international community decide whether to be involved?   |  |
| Video Clip <a href="#">Reasons for Humanitarian Intervention</a> (2:49)                                     |  |
| What are factors to consider when the US decides to intervene in another country for humanitarian purposes? |  |

### **Exploration:**

Pick one crisis to learn about and teach your group. Take notes on each of the following categories using the linked videos. Feel free to do more outside research to complete the table or answer your questions about the event.

| <i>Crisis</i>   | <i>Background</i> | <i>Events of Crisis (does it qualify as a 'genocide' according to the the Genocide Convention? why/why not?)</i> | <i>International Response</i> |
|---|-------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Video Clip <a href="#">The Armenian Genocide</a> (4:17)       |                   |  |                               |
| Video Clip <a href="#">Cambodian Genocide</a> (9:56)          |                   |  |                               |
| Video <a href="#">Ethnic Cleansing in Sudan</a> (11:13)       |                   |  |                               |
| Video <a href="#">Humanitarian Conflict in Somalia</a> (9:22) |                   |  |                               |
| Video <a href="#">Causes of Rwanda Genocide</a> (11:25)       |                   |  |                               |
| Video <a href="#">Rohingya in Myanmar (aka Burma)</a> (6:00)  |                   |  |                               |
| Video <a href="#">Tigray Conflict in Ethiopia</a> (6:13)      |                   |  |                               |

Video [Ugyhur Labor Camps](#) (1:55)

**Application:**

*Discuss with your group what you learned about the event you studied and take notes on the other events that are discussed in your group. Together, compare the events in each place using the T-chart below.*

| <b>Similarities among the events</b> | <b>Differences</b> |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                      |                    |

***Using your notes of similarities and differences, work with your group to develop your own definition of 'genocide'.***

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|



**What criteria should Congress use to intervene in a humanitarian conflict?**

***Research a current humanitarian crisis and use the criteria you developed for US involvement to make a case for whether or not Congress should intervene. Remember to address one of your members of Congress.***

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

**GRADE LEVEL:** Adaptable for grades 7–12

**SUBJECT:** Multidisciplinary

**TIME REQUIRED:** This resource includes several options for using survivor testimony. The length of time needed for activities within each section varies, but an estimate of 60 minutes per section is reasonable. Individual activities may be completed in class or as assessments.

60 minutes SECTION I: Why Testimony?

30 minutes SECTION II: Sources & Perspectives

60 minutes SECTION III: Providing Context

60 minutes SECTION IV: Making Meaning

60 minutes SECTION V: Bearing Witness

Section I functions as the introduction. Other sections may be selected and completed independently based on desired educational outcomes.

**This is a *thematic* resource that builds on fundamental knowledge and provides in-depth exploration of a topic.**

## RATIONALE

Students will examine Holocaust survivor testimonies as both personal memories and as deliberately-created historical records, and will evaluate how the Holocaust affected the lives of individuals, as well as the role of memory in our understanding of history.

## OVERVIEW

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is the purpose of oral histories (such as Holocaust survivor testimonies) and what role do they play in our understanding of history?
- How are oral histories (eyewitness testimonies) different from other primary sources? What can we learn about individual experiences, actions, and choices from testimonies?
- Why is it important to bear witness to history (and the Holocaust, specifically)?

### EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

At the end of this lesson, students will:

- Understand the Holocaust as an event that affected individuals differently

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

- Consider how time, memory, and contemporary context shape our understanding of historical events
- Recognize that Holocaust survivors make choices when sharing their own experiences
- Enhance active listening skills and ability to identify context clues

## TEACHER PREPARATION

- [Guidelines for Teaching with Survivor Testimony](#)
- [Oral History Interview Guidelines](#) (optional)
- [USC Visual History Foundation iWitness project](#) (optional, external resource)
- [USC Shoah Foundation guidelines and strategies for using testimonies](#) (optional, external resource)
- A basic understanding of how and why the Holocaust happened is required to make the most of these activities. [Foundational resources and introductory lessons](#) are available on the Museum website.

## STUDENT MATERIALS

- [Venn Diagram](#) (testimonies and secondary sources)
- [Testimony Clips Organized by Topic](#)
- [Worksheet: Gerda Weissmann Klein’s testimony](#)
- [Worksheet: Primary Source Analysis](#) (liberation of the camps)
- [Worksheet: Analyzing Survivor Testimony](#)
- [Venn Diagram](#) (multiple testimonies)
- [Map of Europe, 1939](#)
- [Basic Timeline](#)
- [Artist Statement](#)

## LEARNER VARIABILITY MODIFICATIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

**The lesson is intentionally flexible to allow for individual teacher modifications to achieve educational outcomes.** Technology and teaching strategies are suggested in the instructional sequence; please use other options if they support the learning needs of your students. Consider utilizing graphic organizers, note-taking strategies, reading choices, and online engagement tools.

Educators may choose to use learner variability modifications specific to this lesson:

- Teachers can provide students with choices as to how they access information throughout lessons, i.e. read print alone, read print with a partner, read along while the teacher reads aloud, etc.
- Define terms that would clarify understanding for students.
- Use online discussion or engagement tools that work best in your classroom, such as Padlet.
- *Holocaust Encyclopedia* articles are available in various languages; refer to the word “Language” and select the Globe icon available on the lefthand side of the article.
- *The Path to Nazi Genocide* is subtitled in 12 languages. Scroll below the video to see the options.
- Incorporate strategies such as think-pair-share and jigsaw to enhance student engagement.

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

- Although this lesson includes a [timeline](#), which has been shortened from the USHMM foundational [Timeline Activity](#) lesson, teachers may opt to print and post relevant timeline cards from the larger activity as reminders for students.

This lesson is available as an [online, asynchronous experience for students](#), which can be accessed through a web browser or LMS files. The online lessons are accessible for all students for in-person and virtual learning, and they provide specific support for students using screen readers.

Teachers can also create their own lesson, utilizing USHMM oral testimonies as a resource or use any of these activities as introductions to using Holocaust survivor testimonies in the classroom.

## 60 min. SECTION ONE: WHY TESTIMONY?

This section should be completed as the lesson introduction. Other sections may be completed independently based on desired educational outcomes.

### KEY QUESTIONS

- What is the purpose of oral histories, and what role do they play in our understanding of the Holocaust?
- How are oral histories (eyewitness testimonies) different from other primary sources?
- What can we learn about individual experiences, actions, and choices from testimonies?

### EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME

- Students understand the unique value of survivor testimonies as both personal memories and as deliberately-created historical records, and
- Students learn that they can critically evaluate testimonies as historical sources

### TEACHER PREPARATION

- Review the [Guidelines for Teaching with Survivor Testimony](#).

This activity is intended for use toward the beginning of a unit on the Holocaust. It prepares students to critically analyze primary source materials and evaluate the unique role of eyewitness testimony as historical sources.

### 15 min. DEFINING KEY TERMS

1. Explain to students that one of the ways that they will be learning about the Holocaust is through testimonies provided by Holocaust survivors themselves -- that is, people who experienced the history and were interviewed years after the events in order to preserve their memories.

Before getting started, it is good to make sure everyone understands the terms being used.

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

## 2. Define: **Holocaust Survivor**.

Different people and organizations define who is a Holocaust survivor differently. Not even all survivors agree about the definition.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum acknowledges as Holocaust survivors, Jews who experienced the persecution and survived the mass murder that was carried out by the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945. This included those who were in concentration camps, killing centers, ghettos, and prisons, as well as refugees or those in hiding. Holocaust survivors also include people who did not self-identify as Jewish, but were categorized as such by the perpetrators.

Roma and Sinti, Poles and other Slavic peoples, Soviet prisoners of war, persons with disabilities, political prisoners, trade union leaders, “subversive” artists, those Catholic and Lutheran clergy who were seen as opponents of the regime, resisters, Jehovah’s Witnesses, male homosexuals, and criminal offenders, among others were also victims of Nazi persecution.

## 3. Discuss the word **testimony**. How have students heard it used before? In what context? Review the word’s meanings.

A **testimony** has:

- Legal meanings: a) all such declarations, spoken or written, offered in a legal case or deliberative hearing; and b) something that serves as evidence.
- Meanings related to authentication that do not necessarily have a legal connection: a) an assertion that offers first-hand authentication of a fact; and b) evidence or proof in support of a fact or an assertion.<sup>1</sup>

Let students know that in the context of the Holocaust, the phrase **oral history** is often used interchangeably with **testimony**. Typically, these are audio or video recordings of interviews with individuals having personal knowledge of a past event -- in this case, the Holocaust.

TEACHER NOTE: Rather than simply presenting these definitions, some teachers may wish to project and fill in a Frayer model to assist students with these definitions.

## 15 min. **DISCUSSION**

4. Ask students what they think is the biggest difference between learning about an event from someone who experienced it versus learning from a history book or other secondary source. What is the benefit of learning about an event from someone who experienced it directly? This may be done as a class discussion, or if time

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<sup>1</sup> *Using Testimony in Holocaust Education*. Yad Vashem.

<https://www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/lesson-plans/use-of-testimony.html>

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

permits, students may individually fill out a [Venn diagram](#) illustrating unique and shared qualities of the different sources, and discuss in pairs or small groups their answers to the questions.

5. Brainstorm as a class (or in small groups): Now scaffold students' consideration that even between testimonies, there may be differences.
  - a. How might two people describe the same event differently? Why?
  - b. Does the intended audience (i.e., family, friends, public) of this testimony have an impact on the details that an individual chooses to share or omit?
  - c. Does it make a difference whether someone is recording or recalling experiences as an event is happening, right after the event, or years later?

*(Answers do not have to be comprehensive. The objective is for students to think about these questions. Answers may include: in a record created contemporaneously with or immediately following an event (such as a diary), the author doesn't know what will happen next; in a survivor testimony, memoir or autobiography, they can identify important things that might not have seemed important at the time, but now they know how things turned out. Survivors of traumatic events may choose to selectively include or omit details depending on when they share their testimony, to whom, and for what reason.)*

**Teacher Note:** It may be easiest for students to begin by applying these questions to a well-known current event or example from their own lives. **Be alert for sensitive and emotional personal topics that may get raised.**

## 30 min. ACTIVITY: EVALUATING TESTIMONY AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

6. Explain to students that they will examine an oral history excerpt recorded by a Holocaust survivor approximately 45 years after the events she describes.

As a class, watch the following testimony clip of [Gerda Weissmann Klein](#) (02:52 min) describing her liberation; while watching the video, students should fill out the provided [worksheet](#).

**Teacher Note:** To maximize efficient use of classroom time, students may do this for homework the night before the lesson.

7. Assign students to think/pair/share discussing their worksheet answers. Briefly synthesize their conclusions as a class.
8. Now, in small groups, ask students to use the [primary source analysis worksheet](#) to examine each of the sources below and investigate more about the liberation of other Nazi camps.
  - [Liberated prisoners at Ebensee](#) (photo) and [Survivors of the death march to Volary, Czechoslovakia](#) (photo)
  - [Liberation of Ohrdruf](#) (film 01:21)
  - [Aaron Eiferman letter](#) to his wife re: liberation (5 pages, handwritten in cursive; [transcription](#))

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

- [Ghastly Nazi Extermination Camp Seized](#), Portland Press Herald (newspaper article; [PDF 1.46 MB download](#))

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (for small groups, as a jigsaw, or whole class discussion)

- Was there anything that you learned from the testimony that would have been difficult or impossible to discover from any of the other sources?
- Were there things you learned from the other sources that would have been difficult to learn from a survivor's testimony?
- Describe the difference between learning from a primary versus a secondary source?
- What might explain differences in the information that each source chose to record or emphasize? (Take into account, the people who produced the source, the different camps described in each source, the time in which it was recorded, and the purpose of the source)
- How do these sources complement each other and provide a fuller understanding of what liberation of the camps was like?

OPTIONAL: Conclude this activity by watching [Gerda and Kurt Klein's combined testimonies](#) (YouTube video, 03:44 min). If you do not have access to YouTube, [Kurt Klein's description of liberation](#) is available on the Museum's website. Discuss how the pairing of Gerda's and Kurt's different perspectives changes one's understanding of the liberation experience.

\*Teachers and students who wish to further explore Gerda Weissmann Klein's experiences may access for free the Academy Award-winning documentary, [One Survivor Remembers](#) (41:30 min) based on her written memoir, *All But My Life*.

\*\*To learn more about the death march that Gerda endured from Gruenberg camp to Volary, Czechoslovakia, see Yad Vashem's online feature [The Death March to Volary](#).

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

## 30 min. SECTION TWO: SOURCES AND PERSPECTIVES

This section helps students to understand and evaluate oral testimonies as purposefully created sources that reveal the unique impact of the Holocaust on each individual.

### KEY QUESTIONS

- What role do oral histories play in our understanding of the Holocaust?
- What can we learn about individual experiences, actions, and choices from testimonies?
- Why is it important to seek out multiple perspectives when using eyewitness testimonies to study history?

### EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME

- Students understand the Holocaust as an event that affected individuals differently
- Recognize that Holocaust survivors make choices when sharing about their own experiences

## 30 min. ACTIVITY: ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING THROUGH MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Assign to students in pairs or ask students to choose the testimonies of two eyewitnesses (survivors, liberators, or rescuers) describing the same event from the list below. While listening to the testimonies, students should take notes on each testimony clip using the provided [worksheet](#).

Examples:

- 1936 Olympics: [Gary Bigus](#) (01:09), [John Woodruff](#) (02:03), and [Gretel Bergmann](#) (07:45)
- Kristallnacht: [Survivors Remember Kristallnacht](#) (Students may be assigned options from eight different survivor testimony clips averaging 5-9 minutes each.)
- Hidden Children: [Sarah \(Sheila\) Peretz Etons](#) (01:37), Fred Deutsch ([01:56](#) & [01:42](#)), [Freya \(Alice\) Lang Rosen](#) (02:06), [Anita Magnus Frank](#) (1:27), [Jerry Von Halle](#) (01:34)
- Deportations: [Cecily Klein-Pollack](#) (02:23), [Leo Schneiderman](#) (02:31), [Selma \(Wijnberg\) Engel](#) (01:51), [Bart Stern](#) (02:54), and [Vladka Meed](#) (01:54)
- Warsaw ghetto uprising: [Estelle Laughlin](#) (06:28) and [Vladka Meed](#) (01:53)
- Mobile killing squad massacres: Frima L. ([02:49](#) and [03:27](#)) and [Martin Spett](#) (02:42)
- Rescue in Denmark: [Leif Donde](#) (01:26), Preben Munch-Nielsen ([01:02](#) and [01:22](#))
- Liberation: [Gerda Weissmann Klein](#) (02:52), [Norbert Wollheim](#) (02:13), [Kurt Klein](#) (03:35), [Pat Lynch](#) (01:02), [James Rose](#) (01:12)

Invite students to think/pair/share information from their worksheets and answer the question, “How do the two interviewees describe the same experience from different perspectives?” Teachers may choose to provide a [Venn diagram](#) or organizer of your choice for students to organize their thoughts about similarities and differences in the testimonies.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What emotions do they convey?



# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

- How does their choice of words and description of events contribute to the tone of their narrative?
- What is the same in each testimony and what is different?
- Did you learn anything by listening to more than one perspective?
- What questions do the different testimonies raise for you about the event that they describe?

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

## 60 min. SECTION THREE: PROVIDING CONTEXT

This section helps students place survivors' testimony about personal experiences and events in historical context.

### KEY QUESTIONS

- What role do oral histories play in our understanding of the Holocaust?
- What can we learn about individual experiences, actions, and choices from testimonies?

### EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME

- Students understand the Holocaust as an event that affected individuals differently
- Students recognize that Holocaust survivors make choices when sharing about their own experiences
- Students understand the unique value of survivor testimony as personal memories and as deliberately-constructed historical records, and they can critically evaluate testimonies as historical sources

## 60 min. ACTIVITY: PLACING SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

PRE-CLASS HOMEWORK: Assign students to listen to testimonies of survivors from [the provided collection of testimony clips](#) that reflect multiple perspectives of the varying experiences, events, and geographies of the Holocaust. Have students fill out the [Analyzing Survivor Testimony worksheet](#) as they listen to the testimonies.

1. Begin class with a discussion of what stood out the most for students from the testimonies they watched. What questions did the testimonies raise?
2. Using the Museum's [Timeline Activity](#), provide historical context for the testimony clips by asking students to place [testimony interviewee cards](#) on the timeline (in lieu of the regular individual profile cards). This activity culminates in a gallery walk and class discussion.
3. Alternatively, or as homework, teachers may ask students to use the [Holocaust Encyclopedia](#) to research the event or experience described by "their" survivor and answer the following questions (see the [Testimonies Organized by Topic](#) document for suggestions on which encyclopedia articles correspond to each testimony).
  - Does the survivor describe experiences or details that are also included in the encyclopedia article?
  - What details does the survivor describe that aren't in the encyclopedia article?
  - What historical details are in the encyclopedia article that the survivor might not have known when they personally experienced the events described (or even when they were interviewed years later)?
  - Based on the [timeline\\*](#), what sorts of events might the survivor have excluded from their testimony intentionally? Why would someone choose not to include some information in their testimony?

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

For additional context, students may read the biographical paragraphs provided with each testimony, and using the [Holocaust Encyclopedia](#), research how the Holocaust occurred in the country where “their” survivor was living at the time.

Using the [Map of Europe 1939](#) or an online resource, pin locations with descriptive information (name, date, event/experience) for each testimony. Students can also trace a person’s movement, if any is indicated in the testimony.

Ask students:

- How did the person’s location--what country they were in, whether they were in an urban or rural setting--affect their experiences at different points in time during the Holocaust?

Teachers may opt to have students create presentations to share the results of their research with the rest of the class.

\*If teachers have used the [Timeline Activity](#) prior to this, then they may refer to that timeline instead.

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

## 30-60 min. SECTION IV: MAKING MEANING

This section asks students to reflect upon the personal meaning of survivor testimonies through an examination of elements such as words, tone, and mood.

### KEY QUESTIONS

- What role do oral histories play in our understanding of the Holocaust?
- What can we learn about individual experiences, actions, and choices from testimonies?
- How do the words and imagery conveyed through testimony illustrate the impact that the Holocaust had on individuals and their communities?

### EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME

- Students understand the unique value of survivor testimony as personal memories and as deliberately-created historical records, and they can critically evaluate testimonies as narrative structures as well as historical sources
- Consider how time, memory, and contemporary context shape understanding of historical events
- Students recognize that Holocaust survivors make choices about language to use and what to share and omit from their experiences when they provide testimony
- Students engage in active listening and identify context clues

## 30-60 min. ACTIVITY: DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING THROUGH POETRY AND ART

1. Create a “found poem.” (This activity has been adapted from the [Densho project](#).) Have students select a phrase that struck them as meaningful or important and one word that was significant or powerful, selecting either from different survivor testimonies or from a single testimony. Ask them to write the phrase and word each on different strips of paper (for in-person classrooms) or on a shared platform, like Jamboard (for remote learning).

Students will take turns constructing a “found poem.” Each student will have two turns. In the first round, each one places their phrase or word somewhere into the poem. In the second round, they can move a phrase or word within the poem. After the turns are complete, make sure everyone can see the finished poem and ask for a volunteer to read the poem aloud to the class.

Note: this task can also be done individually where each student finds a minimum of ten words/phrases and arranges them to create a poem. Before students submit, they can find an image to pair with their poem and post both in the classroom/digital space to share with others.

Discuss:

- Why did you choose your particular phrase or word?
- How did you choose where to place a phrase or word in the poem? What guided your decisions?

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

- What themes from the testimonies are evident in the poem?
  - What is included in the testimonies that are missing from the poem?
  - What does the poem reveal about the *tone* (the survivor’s voice and expression in their testimonies)?
  - What *mood* (the emotions you feel as you read) does the poem evoke?
  - Are themes in this poem specific only to the Holocaust or are they universal? Explain.
  - What title would you give this poem to express what it means to you?
2. Create a collage, image, or work of art that illustrates or is inspired by the survivor testimony or testimonies that have been assigned or chosen.

This activity may be used alone or as an extension of the “found poem” activity above -- reflecting the words, tone, and mood of the poem that students created. Or it may be done as a stand-alone activity, using the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website](#) or [collection](#) to find images that are descriptive of events, geography, or themes related to a specific survivor’s experiences to include in or inspire the artwork. Each student should produce an [“Artist Statement”](#) to explain in their own words their creative process, including motivations, inspirations, and their methods of approach.

Gather the works together, do a gallery walk and conclude with a moment of silence to honor the lives and words of the survivors and their families.

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

## 30-60 min. SECTION V: BEARING WITNESS

This section functions well as an opportunity for student reflection or as a “concluding activity” toward the end of a unit on the Holocaust.

### KEY QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to bear witness to the Holocaust?
- Why is it important to bear witness to history?

### EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME

- Students reflect upon their responsibilities bearing witness to Holocaust survivor testimonies
- Students understand that bearing witness is an active process of “doing.”

### PRE-CLASS HOMEWORK:

Students listen to the [final episode](#) (15:01) of the podcast series, *First Person: Conversations with Holocaust Survivors*, and identify two meaningful statements and record the timestamps to access later, or highlight statements on [transcript](#).

1. Discuss the following definitions with students:

**Bearing witness** is:

- To show that something exists or is true.
  - To make a statement saying or otherwise communicate that one saw or knows something
2. Ask students to share which word(s) they think are the most important in each definition and explain why. It is particularly effective to visually display these words in front of the class (or in a word cloud if online). Typically, students will identify the words: **show, true, communicate, saw, know**. Explain that bearing witness involves demonstrating or communicating the truth or reality of an event, often one that the “truth bearer” saw with his or her own eyes.
  3. Share the following two quotations from Elie Wiesel:  
“I believe firmly and profoundly that whoever listens to a witness becomes a witness, so those who hear us, those who read us must continue to bear witness for us. Until now, they’re doing it with us. At a certain point in time, they will do it for all of us.” - [The Many Legacies of Elie Wiesel](#)

“‘For the dead and the living, we must bear witness.’ For not only are we responsible for the memories of the dead, we are also responsible for what we are doing with those memories.” - [Remarks at the Dedication Ceremonies for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, April 22, 1993](#)

Ask students:

- How does Wiesel describe people who listen to survivor testimonies?

# LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

- In each of the two quotes above, Wiesel asserts that those who bear witness to the Holocaust, and specifically to survivor testimonies, have certain responsibilities. According to Wiesel, what are those responsibilities?
4. In small groups or pairs, students discuss which passages resonated the most for them from the First Person podcast episode and why they chose their particular passage.
  5. As a class, discuss the reasons that survivors themselves give for why they share their experiences. Return to Wiesel's quotes about bearing witness. What might Wiesel mean when he says, "... not only are we responsible for the memories of the dead, we are also responsible for what we are doing with those memories?" What can students do to honor this call to action?

Through creative writing, artwork, or a formal presentation students reflect on the aspects of learning about the Holocaust that speak most strongly to them, and address Wiesel's call to bear witness for both the dead and the living.

NOTE: The "found poem" and art collage activity from section 4 can also be used as a means to synthesize student reflections here.

## EXTENSIONS

1. Review the [Guidelines for Recording Oral History Interviews](#). Ask students to interview an elder in their family or community and record their own oral history interviews.

# LESSON: Analyzing Memes

**GRADE LEVEL:** Adaptable for grades 7–12

**SUBJECT:** Multidisciplinary

**TIME REQUIRED:** Approximately 60 minutes

**This is a *foundational* lesson that introduces key concepts and information to students.**

## RATIONALE

Memes—attention-grabbing images with clever captions that pepper social media feeds—permeate our cultural discourse. While memes have the potential to replace thoughtful conversation and impede connections between different opinions, with proper scaffolding they can be the entry point for critical thinking.

**NOTE:** Remember that memes are a way to construct collective identity and students can strongly identify with a meme. Acknowledge the negative *and* positive power of the medium and refrain from a personal response to memes students choose, giving the task of critically analyzing the meme back to the students.

## OVERVIEW

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is the difference between opinion, fact, and belief?
- What are memes and how are they important in our culture today?
- What is an assertion? Reasoning? Evidence?

### EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

**At the end of this lesson, students understand:**

- How to distinguish between opinion, fact, and belief
- That memes are an important cultural phenomenon that require critical thinking analysis
- How to determine what a meme is asserting and if there's evidence to support the claim

### TEACHER PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with memes if necessary
- Decide if you will provide examples of memes to analyze or let students select examples
- If students bring examples provide appropriate guidelines that align with your classroom needs
- Remember that memes are a way to construct collective identity and students can strongly identify with a meme. Acknowledge the negative *and* positive power of the medium and refrain from a personal response to memes students choose, giving the task of critically analyzing the meme back to the students.
- [Student interactive](#)



# LESSON: Analyzing Memes

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Ask students to name some of their favorite social media sites. How does social media shape their identities? Do they feel like the person they are IRL (in real life) is the same as the image they present on social media? How do they feel about the accuracy of information they see on social media?
2. Ask students to articulate the differences between belief, opinion, and fact. Responses can be recorded on the board/ chart paper or you can use Menti or Padlet.
3. Share these definitions:

### DEFINITIONS:

- A **fact** is verifiable. We can determine whether it is true by researching the evidence.
- An **opinion** is a judgment based on facts, an honest attempt to draw a reasonable conclusion from factual evidence.
- Unlike an opinion, a **belief** is a conviction based on cultural or personal faith, morality, or values.

4. Ask students which one of these three (belief, opinion, fact) social media is the best at expressing.
5. Ask students if they are familiar with memes. What are they? Do they think they are influential? What do memes convey? After students have supplied answers ask if memes convey facts, opinions, or beliefs.
6. Share this information with students:

### DEFINITION:

- **Memes**—attention-grabbing images with clever captions that pepper social media feeds—permeate our cultural discourse. The word “meme” was first coined by Richard Dawkins in 1976; he believed that cultural ideas, like genes, can spread and mutate. Their magnetism is scientific: a surge of dopamine is released when we see or share them because of the emotional responses they provoke<sup>1</sup>.

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/mar/04/has-dopamine-got-us-hooked-on-tech-facebook-apps-addiction>

# LESSON: Analyzing Memes

7. After briefly discussing the power of memes, share with students that they will be analyzing memes. Either provide a sample meme or students bring a meme to analyze. Share the [student interactive](#).
8. For a meme to provoke critical thinking it should make a good argument, not simply express an opinion or belief. It should make an **assertion that is backed by reason and evidence (ARE)**.

## DEFINITIONS:

- **Assertions (A)** are statements about what is true or good or about what should be done or believed.
- Assertions are backed by **reasons (R)**
  - **Reasons (R)** are statements of support for assertions, making those claims something more than mere opinions. Reasons can be linked to assertions with the word *because*.
- Assertions and reasons are supported by **evidence (E)**
  - **Evidence (E)** supports the reasons offered and helps compel audiences to accept the assertion. Evidence answers challenge to the reasons given and can include examples, case studies, narratives, statistics, testimony, eyewitness accounts, and expert opinions<sup>2</sup>.

9. Ask students to identify the assertion they think the meme is proposing.
10. Next, students construct the reason why the creator of the meme would make this assertion.
11. Students then conduct research to see if they can uncover credible evidence to support the message of the meme. Cite all sources.
12. Once completed, ask students what is the opposite message of the assertion? Ask them to try and find evidence to support the opposite message of the original assertion. Can it be done?

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.comm.pitt.edu/argument-claims-reasons-evidence>

## LESSON: Exploring Nazi Propaganda

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### WORKSHEET: Exploring *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda* Online Exhibition

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the exhibition title page and introduction, followed by the definition of propaganda page. In your assigned group, research the key questions below from your assigned exhibition section.

#### GROUP:

Read the entire section and look at all the images. Then answer these questions by drawing on that information.

1. What was happening politically, socially, and economically in Germany during this time period? What form of government was in power? Was there free speech or opportunities to express dissenting viewpoints?

2. What were the range of messages spread through Nazi propaganda? What vehicles of communication were used?

3. How did the context of the time influence propaganda messages and the ways in which they resonated with German citizens?

4. What were the consequences of the messages during this period?

# LESSON: Exploring Nazi Propaganda

**GRADE LEVEL:** Adaptable for grades 7–12

**SUBJECT:** Multidisciplinary

**TIME REQUIRED:** Approximately 60–75 minutes (extensions available)

## RATIONALE

This lesson is an opportunity for students to dialogue and reflect on the ways in which propaganda affected society during the Holocaust and how it continues to affect people today. Students will be asked to connect these reflections to their own roles and responsibilities in a democratic society. Students will consider options for ways to respond to dangerous propaganda.

## OVERVIEW

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did propaganda help the Nazis advance their political, racial, and genocidal goals?

### EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

At the end of this lesson, students understand:

- The definition of propaganda
- Common techniques of propaganda
- Factors that influence the success of propaganda (audience receptivity, choice of message and means of communication, the context in which it is spread).
- That propaganda was an essential tool used by the Nazi Party to win votes in a democratic Germany, to win support for their vision of a “National Community,” and to create a climate of indifference (or even support) as Jews experienced persecution, segregation, deportation, and eventually genocide.

### TEACHER PREPARATION

- Explore [State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda](#) online exhibition. The exhibition covers the role of propaganda in four distinct contexts and time periods:
  - Selling Nazism in a Democracy (1918-1933)
  - Propaganda and Persecution in a Dictatorship (1933-1939)
  - Propaganda for War and Mass Murder (1939-1945)
  - Propaganda on Trial (1945-1948)
- Read Holocaust Encyclopedia article [Nazi Propaganda](#) and special series (optional)
- Students will work in groups to explore the online exhibition content. You may wish to pre-select groups.
- Distribute [graphic organizers](#) to students.

### MODIFICATIONS

Technology and teaching strategies are suggested in the instructional sequence, however, the lesson is intentionally flexible to allow for individual teacher modifications for recording student responses.

# LESSON: Exploring Nazi Propaganda

## LEARNER VARIABILITY MODIFICATIONS

- Additional terms can be definitional work
- Exhibition sections can be assigned as pre-work to allow for additional time
- The Holocaust Encyclopedia article and series *Nazi Propaganda* is available in additional languages
- Students can share answers to discussion question in written form
- Survivor Testimony video provides captions
- Students can view similar content from the online exhibition in the Holocaust Encyclopedia series [Nazi Propaganda](#) or in the *State of Deception* [Poster Set](#)

## PART ONE: INTRODUCING PROPAGANDA AND EXPLORING THE ONLINE EXHIBITION IN GROUPS (30 MINUTES)

### INTRODUCING PROPAGANDA

1. Ask students to define the term **propaganda**

#### ASK THE STUDENTS

- What is propaganda? How would you define it?

Provide the Museum's definition of propaganda:

- Biased information spread to shape public opinion and behavior
2. Explain that this lesson will explore **how propaganda helped the Nazis to advance their political, racial, and genocidal goals.**
  3. We will see how propaganda was a critical tool for the Nazis, and how their messages, means of communication, and the context in which the messages were spread were essential to their propaganda success.

# LESSON: Exploring Nazi Propaganda

## EXPLORING THE ONLINE EXHIBITION IN GROUPS

1. To dig in further, we will explore the online exhibition, [State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda](#) in four groups. Each group is responsible for research focused on one of the four time periods.
  - a. A democratic Germany to win votes and political support (1918-1933)
  - b. A dictatorship to implement racial persecution (1933-1939)
  - c. A climate of war to justify fighting and mass murder (1939-1945)
  - d. A post-war climate in which Allies were challenged to purge German society of Nazism and to hold propagandists to account in post-war trials (1945-1948)
2. Students use their [graphic organizers](#) to research answers to the key questions using information and examples of propaganda from the exhibition. Instruct students to read their entire assigned section, examining images and reading text, before responding to questions on their graphic organizer.
  - a. What was happening politically, socially, and economically during this time period? What form of government was in power? Was there free speech or opportunities to express dissenting viewpoints?
  - b. What were the range of messages spread through Nazi propaganda? What types of communication were used?
  - c. How did the context of the time influence propaganda messages and the ways in which they resonated with German citizens?
  - d. What were the consequences of the messages?
3. When they finish reading, groups will discuss the propaganda in their section, and answer the key questions. They should prepare a summary of their section to share with the rest of the class.

## PART TWO: SHARING AND DISCUSSION

### Sharing Research

1. Students share their research from the online exhibition with the other groups. This can be done either as a jigsaw (in small groups of one student from each research group) or as groups reporting to the whole class. Students should share examples of propaganda from their exhibition section to illustrate what they learned about the Nazis' messages, vehicles of communication, and context in which messages were spread.

*Option: Students can prepare a slideshow using images from the online exhibition to share with the class.*

### Discussion

1. Either back in small groups, or in a whole class discussion, return to the key questions. Compare and contrast conclusions drawn about each time period. Consider the following additional questions:
  - How did the context change over time, and what did that mean for propaganda?
  - How did new communication technologies amplify the Nazis' messages?
  - How and why were youth targeted by Nazi propaganda? Why were youth more vulnerable to Nazi messages?

# LESSON: Exploring Nazi Propaganda

- What examples of propaganda made the strongest impression on you and why?

## CONCLUSION

### ASSESSMENT

Return to this essential question and reflect on some additional themes raised by the exhibition.

- How did propaganda help the Nazis advance their political, racial, and genocidal goals?

### Reflection (discussion or writing assignment)

Students may reflect on one or more of the questions below, using both historical content discovered in the online exhibition and their own lived experiences and observations about the use of propaganda.

- How did Nazi propaganda create a climate of indifference to the plight of the Jewish people?
- How do the themes and questions connect to your experiences with propaganda?
- What can we take away and apply when we encounter propaganda today?
- What makes communities vulnerable to extreme messages?
- How can we identify problematic propaganda as a “warning sign” of a potentially dangerous situation?
- What might be the consequences of harmful propaganda unchecked? What can individuals in communities do to respond to problematic propaganda?

### EXTENSION

Before or during class, students watch a [30 minute video](#) featuring Holocaust survivor Bob Behr’s testimony about growing up in Berlin, Germany, and his reflections on Nazi propaganda. This will help to put the history presented in *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda* into a personal context. Bob’s anecdotes reveal the impact of propaganda on young people during the Holocaust.

After watching the video, ask students for their reactions and impressions.

- How do Bob’s stories relate to the broader history presented in the exhibition?
- What does Bob’s testimony reveal about the impact of propaganda on young people in Nazi Germany? Why can propaganda have such a powerful impact on youth?
- What are your takeaways from watching the video and exploring the exhibition?

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Nazi Propaganda [Bibliography](#)
- *State of Deception* [Poster Set](#)
- Holocaust Encyclopedia [articles](#) on Propaganda

# LESSON: Critically Analyzing Propaganda

**GRADE LEVEL:** Adaptable for grades 7–12

**SUBJECT:** Multidisciplinary

**TIME REQUIRED:** Up to 120 minutes  
(extensions available)

## RATIONALE

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to dialogue and reflect on the ways in which propaganda affected society during the Holocaust and how it continues to affect people today. Students will engage in a hands-on activity analyzing examples of propaganda from *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda*. They will synthesize and understand how and why Nazi propaganda worked through an opportunity to practice critical analysis of messages. This lesson reinforces media literacy skills.

## OVERVIEW

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How and why did the Nazis' propaganda messages work? What were the consequences of Nazi propaganda?

### EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

At the end of this lesson, students understand:

- The role propaganda played in the history of the Holocaust
- How propaganda messages were constructed and spread
- How propaganda interplayed with the political, economic, and social context of the time to be effective
- Factors that influence the success of propaganda (audience receptivity, choice of message and means of communication, the context in which it is spread).
- The consequences of Nazi propaganda
- How gaining media literacy tools to analyze propaganda can help them to be more informed

### TEACHER PREPARATION

- Preview [Path to Nazi Genocide](#), noting the role of propaganda during the Holocaust
- Review [State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda](#) online exhibition
- Review timeline of key events that will provide context for student activity. Print [timeline presentation](#) and post on classroom wall(s)
- Review [overview of Nazi propaganda presentation](#) to frame the activity
- Preview examples featured in [propaganda analysis worksheets](#) and [teacher's guide](#)
- Print [propaganda analysis worksheets](#)
- Students will work in six groups, each examining an example of propaganda. You may wish to pre-select groups.



# LESSON: Critically Analyzing Propaganda

## MODIFICATIONS

Technology and teaching strategies are suggested in the instructional sequence, however, the lesson is intentionally flexible to allow for individual teacher modifications for recording student responses.

## LEARNER VARIABILITY MODIFICATIONS

- Additional terms can be definitional work
- Share slides ahead of time for review of propaganda images
- Students can share discussion question answers in written form
- The Holocaust Encyclopedia article and series [Nazi Propaganda](#) are available in additional languages
- Students can view similar content from the online exhibition in the Holocaust Encyclopedia series [Nazi Propaganda](#) or in the *State of Deception* [Poster Set](#)

## PART ONE: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF PROPAGANDA DURING THE HOLOCAUST

### Option 1

Assign students to watch [The Path to Nazi Genocide](#) for homework ahead of class, noting the role of propaganda and the media during the events. In class, ask students to share what they learned and what, if anything, surprised them about the role of propaganda during the Holocaust.

### Option 2

Watch [The Path to Nazi Genocide](#) during class time. Ask students to note where they see the media and propaganda playing a role in the Holocaust. Following the film, ask students what they learned and what, if anything, surprised them about the role of propaganda during the Holocaust.

## PART TWO: INTRODUCING PROPAGANDA AND ITS FEATURES (10 MINUTES)

### INTRODUCING PROPAGANDA

#### ASK THE STUDENTS

- What is propaganda? How would you define it? What are examples of messages you would consider to be propaganda?

Use the [presentation](#) to introduce the concept of propaganda to your students.

1. Provide the Museum's definition of propaganda (slide 2):
  - Biased information spread to shape public opinion and behavior

# LESSON: Critically Analyzing Propaganda

2. Remind students that propaganda is not all-powerful and it does not always work. Show them the factors that influence the success or failure of propaganda (slide 3) including the message, technique, means of communication, the context in which it is spread, and the audience's predisposition to be receptive to the message.
3. Share the facets of propaganda (Slide 4, messages do not need to embody all of these characteristics, but many examples of propaganda use many of these features):
  - It uses truths, half-truths, and lies
  - It omits information selectively
  - It simplifies complex issues or ideas
  - It plays on emotions
  - It advertises a cause
  - It can attack opponents
  - It targets desired audiences

## PART THREE: ANALYZING EXAMPLES OF NAZI PROPAGANDA

1. Divide students into groups. Assign each group an example of propaganda using the [propaganda analysis worksheets](#). You may wish to model analysis of one example with the whole class.
2. As students analyze their example, they should use the timeline on the wall to examine their example in context.
3. When students complete their analysis worksheets, ask each group to share a summary of their responses with the class. Use the [presentation](#) (pages 6-11) to project the larger image to the class.
4. Following each student summary, use the [Teachers Guide](#) to lead students through an in-depth examination of the following questions:
  - a. **Ask students about how the message is communicated:** How are color, line, graphics, depictions of people, words, and symbols used in this example to communicate a message? What is the message?
  - b. **Ask students about the context in which the message was spread:** Given the hopes, fears, and grievances present in society at the time, why might this message have had power?
  - c. **Ask students about the intended audience:** Who is the target audience? What about this message would be appealing to this group? What reactions might different people have had? Could people access and express alternative viewpoints?
  - d. **Ask questions about the propagandist:** Who created this message? What did they hope the audience would think, feel, and do?

# LESSON: Critically Analyzing Propaganda

- e. **Ask students about the impact this message could have on society:** What were the consequences of this propaganda?
5. Ask students to compare and contrast examples in each of the contexts (democracy, dictatorship, and war).
    - a. What stands out about each example? What most captured their attention and why?
    - b. How did propaganda messages change over time?
    - c. When and why does propaganda become problematic? What factors are important to consider in making that assessment?

## CONCLUSION: CONNECTING PAST AND PRESENT

### ASSESSMENT

Return to this essential question and reflect.

- How and why did the Nazis' propaganda messages work? What were the consequences of Nazi propaganda?

### Reflection (discussion or writing assignment)

Propaganda was not invented by the Nazis and it did not go away in 1945. It continues to be present in our lives, on a massive scale, today. Reflect on the following questions to consider how we interact with propaganda today and its potential consequences.

- When is propaganda most dangerous?
- What makes you vulnerable to propaganda?
- How can you guard against harmful propaganda?

### EXTENSION

Explore how propaganda continues to impact our world and practice media literacy skills on the Media Education Lab's site, [Mind over Media](#).

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Nazi Propaganda Bibliography](#)
- [State of Deception poster set](#)
- [Holocaust Encyclopedia articles on propaganda](#)

## Genocide Vocabulary Chart

Define the following terms and phrases before viewing the videos in this lesson. Try searching Google or a dictionary for a definition.

| Term                      | Definition |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Advocate                  |            |
| Agrarian                  |            |
| Appease                   |            |
| Armenia                   |            |
| Atrocity                  |            |
| Autonomous                |            |
| Cambodia                  |            |
| Cessation                 |            |
| Ethnic Cleansing          |            |
| Flashpoint                |            |
| Genocide                  |            |
| Human Rights              |            |
| Human Rights Abuses       |            |
| Humanitarian Intervention |            |
| Labor Camp                |            |
| Marginalize               |            |
| Microcosm                 |            |
| Referendum                |            |
| Refugee                   |            |
| Refugee Camp              |            |
| Sanctuary                 |            |

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Secession</b>  |  |
| <b>Sharia Law</b> |  |
| <b>Somalia</b>    |  |

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