Holocaust Remembrance Unit

The title of this unit "Holocaust Remembrance" is meant to signify that we, as members of humanity, must engage our collective memory and "remember" the Holocaust. I say this because in many realms of life, both children and adults are taught to conveniently forget the Holocaust. I feel it is my responsibility as an educator to promote learning about the Holocaust and to plant that knowledge within the memories of my students.

I envision this unit as being taught on a continuum and not to be broken apart into small pieces; this unit should exist as a whole. As a language Arts teacher, I would devote a minimum of two weeks for this unit. If allowed more curricular flexibility, I would extend that time and utilize many additional resources. The plans that follow reflect the minimal unit.
INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Subject: Language Arts                      Date: Day One
Topic: Identifying the Holocaust        Grade Level: 7th Grade

LEARNING GOALS/OBJECTIVES
Using knowledge of content, methods, and my students, what are my goals for student learning for this lesson? What do I intend for students to learn?

My goal is for students to leave the classroom on this first day with a beginning understanding of the events that took place during the Holocaust. For some, this may be the first time they are identifying (naming, talking about, thinking about) the Holocaust at all. I intend for students to gain some introductory historical background information and a sense of the reality and magnitude of the Holocaust.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
How will the physical space be organized? How will students be grouped? Are there specific considerations for behavior management, and engaging ALL learners?

Today students will be seated in their usual arrangement. Today emphasis will be placed on individual response.

INSTRUCTION
A series of learning activities, logically sequenced, that engage students in meaningful work. Choose materials and methods, plan specific questions/discussion, allocate time segments, and provide feedback to learners.

Intro: The class will begin by answering the question: "What is the Holocaust?" They will answer individually and anonymously on a slip of paper, which will be put into a box. Students will be instructed to be thoughtful about their answer and to respond sincerely. When all students have turned in their responses, I will begin the lesson by addressing the question of "What is the Holocaust?" I will pull out a handful of responses (responses will be short, probably one or two sentences) and read them to the class. I will ask the class if they agree or disagree with the response. We will briefly talk about each one, setting a tone for discussion and letting the students know that we will be correcting our misinformation and learning factual information (10 minutes).
Middle: I will first read a passage from the text, *Witness to the Holocaust*. (The passage will be a survivor memoir.) I will explain to students that we are not going to talk about the passage at the present time, but we will later. I will do this to allow them some personal reaction time to absorb what they have heard and are about to learn about. Next, I will show Seth Kramer's "Untitled" short film (15 minutes). After the film is over, I will ask students to take out their writing notebooks (journals) and to write their response to the film and the personal narrative from *Witness* (10 minutes).

Closure: I will pass out a packet of FAQ's about the Holocaust (from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum). This packet is meant simply to provide an introduction to learning the historical context of the Holocaust. I will assign reading of the packet for homework and explain that tomorrow we will discuss this information. There may be a quiz tomorrow at the beginning of the hour.
Day Two-Identifying and Locating the Holocaust:
- Today's lesson would consist of going through the introductory FAQ's with students and using maps. I would begin with a "quiz" (ungraded) on the FAQ's, that were assigned as home reading.
- After students complete the quiz, we would go over the correct answers. The quiz would lead into discussion of the FAQ's and clarification of the basic facts. We would also discuss the unit plan for the next two weeks and why it is important for students.
- I would distribute maps indicating important locations. I would go over the maps with students, using the overhead.
- I would close the hour by reading to students another survivor story from *Witness to the Holocaust*. The purpose of this is to leave students with a sense of hope and survival to counter the weight of the material they are learning.

Days Three and Four-Expanding our Knowledge of the Holocaust:
- I would devote the next two class periods to the reading and discussion of the more in-depth historical information.
- On day three, I would distribute the historical summary provided by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (found in the educational resource book).
- I would spend the class period reading the first half of the summary material as a large group, with students reading and taking turns. I would assign the remainder of the reading for homework.
- On day four, I would review all of the historical material with students. I would do this in a large group discussion format.
- If time allowed, I would read a third survivor story from *Witness to the Holocaust*.
- By day four, students should be developing a much better sense of the history and events of the Holocaust.

Day Five-Rescue from the Gestapo:
- Because of the emotional impact of teaching the Holocaust to young adult students, I would plan to end the first week of the unit on as much of a positive note as possible.
- I would show the video "Assignment: Rescue" the story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee.
- Students would have a study guide to work with as they view the film.
**Day Six: The Implications of Nazi Thought:**
- I would distribute the packet "Understanding the Nature of Nazi Thought."
- I would put students into small discussion groups, in which they would read through the packet, taking turns reading aloud.
- I would ask students as they read to choose one or more particular "quotes" from the packet to talk about among their small group.
- At the end of the class period, each group would read one quote to the large group and then each member would comment on the significance and meaning of the "idea."
- I would close the class by offering suggestions for what "we" should take from reading this information and how we can take something positive from our learning about Nazi thought.
- I will send students home with the poetry packet, which they should casually read over in preparation for tomorrow's class.

**Day Seven-Poetry from the Holocaust:**
- Today will be devoted to examining Holocaust poetry.
- My goal for today is for students to gain a sense of poetry as an expression of human experience and how poetry writing can help people to both understand and to heal.
- Students might work with a partner and take turns reading the poems aloud, or we might read them as a large group. I would ask for volunteers to read poems for the class.
- I would focus on one or two poems in the last portion of the class period. I would lead students in a more in-depth analysis of the poem and a discussion of its meaning, conveyance of emotion, expression etc.

**Day Eight-Viewing Holocaust Art:**
- Today would be devoted to viewing Holocaust art.
- The presentation of today's lesson would depend on the available audiovisual technology. If possible, I would have today's class meet in the computer lab; using an LCD Panel and the overhead I would lead the class through Internet sites and we would view various works. (If not possible, I would use slides to show students the works of art.)
- Viewing the artwork is meant to lead in to the cumulative project for the Holocaust Unit, which students would begin the following class day.
Day Nine-Turning our Understanding of the Holocaust into Visual Art:
- Today would begin with my reading of "Light From a Yellow Star." I would read from the book to the class.
- After reading, I would explain the final project to students. The final project consists of students working with a partner and choosing a passage (one of the titled passages as arranged in the book) from the book to represent visually.
- Students would be required to include the title of their passage somewhere on their work. The form of the project would be very open ended - students might choose to create a poster for their passage, using paint or markers. They might create a mosaic using cut papers. They might create a sort of sculpture using found items. They could also create a poem and present it with visual appeal.
- The purpose of the project is for students to synthesize their learning over the course of the unit and to create something representative of that "new" knowledge and understanding.

Day Ten-Creating Art from the Holocaust:
- Today students would have the entire period to work on the final projects.
- I would provide - some basic art materials, students would need to bring anything additional with them to class.

Day Eleven-Sharing Their Learning of the Holocaust:
- Today students would present their works of art to the class. They would need to offer the explanation behind their creation.
- After presentations, students could display their work somewhere in the classroom.

Day Twelve-Meeting a Survivor of the Holocaust:
- As the culmination of the Holocaust Remembrance Unit, I would invite a Holocaust survivor to speak to the class.
- I think that the first hand account from a survivor would really reinforce everything students learned in the unit. I also think that students would gain more from the experience of listening to the speaker after they have explored the background and context of the Holocaust.
Bibliography of Resources for Young Adults

*If possible, after the two-week unit, I would allot additional time for independent reading of a Holocaust memoir. What follows is a list of resources recommended for young adult readers. These memoirs represent varying levels of maturity for a broad range of young adult readers.

- *I am a Star: Child of the Holocaust* by Inge Auerbacher
- *None of Us Will Survive* by Charlotte Delbo
- *Kindertransport* by Olga Levy Drucker
- *Playing for Time* by Fania Fenelon
- *Genya* by Genya Finkelstein
- *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank
- *The Death Train* by Luba K. Gurdus
- *Clara’s Story* by Joan A. and Clara Isaacman
- *Mischling, Second Degree: My Childhood in Nazi Germany* by Ilse Koehn
- *The Big Lie: A True Story* by Isabella Leitner
- *Fragments of Isabella: A Memoir of Auschwitz* by Isabella Leitner
- *Survival in Auschwitz* by Primo Levi
- *The Lost Childhood* by Yehuda Nir
- *Unbroken Chain* by Henry Oertelt
- *The Upstairs Room* by Johanna Reiss
- *Touch Wood A Girlhood in Occupied France* by Renee Roth-Hano
- *The Cage* by Ruth M. Sender
- *Hannah Senesh: Her Life and Diary* by Hanna Senesh
- *Dry Tears: The Story of a Lost Childhood* by Nechama Tec
- *The Hiding Place* by Corrie TenBoom
- *Behind the Secret Window: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood* by Nelly S. Toll
- *Night* by Elie Wiesel
- *The Shrinking Circle: Memories of Nazi Berlin* by Marion Freyer Wolff
- *In the Mouth of the Wolf* by Rose Zar
Understanding the Nature of Nazi Thought

The following were ideas in Nazi thought which led to war and mass murder:

1. "The state is a racial organism and not an economic organization..."
   - Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 150-153

2. "The folkish state ...must set race in the center of all -life. It must take care to keep it pure ...
...It must see to it that only the healthy beget children; that there is only one disgrace: despite one's own sickness and deficiencies, to bring children into the world; one's highest honor: to renounce doing so. And conversely it must be considered reprehensible to withhold healthy children from the nation."
   - Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 402-404

3. "What happens to Russians, what happens to Czechs, leaves me totally indifferent. Whether other nations prosper or starve to death interests me only as we need them as slaves for our culture: I am interested in nothing else."

4. "The deeper the dictator was originally rooted in the broad masses the better he understands how to treat them psychologically, the less the workers will distrust him, the more supporters he will win among these most energetic ranks of the common people. He himself has nothing in common with the mass; like every great man he is all personality ....When necessity commands, he does not shrink before bloodshed. Great questions are always decided by blood and iron ....In order to reach his goal, he is prepared to trample on his closest friends ....The lawgiver proceeds with terrible hardness ....As the need arises, he can trample [the people] with the boots. of a grenadier."
   - Rudolph Hess, an early follower of Hitler and later a leader just below Hitler, in W.L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, p. 77
5. “The Fuhrer is always right. Obey the Fuhrer.”
   - Minister of Labor Robert Ley in W.L. Shirer, _Berlin Diary_, p. 270

6. “My pedagogy is hard. The weak must be chiseled away ...young people will grow up who will frighten
   the world. I want a violent, arrogant, unafraid youth, who must be able to suffer pain. Nothing weak
   or tender must be left in them. Their eyes must bespeak once again the free, magnificent beast of
   prey ...Thus will I face the pure and noble raw material... I do not want an intellectual education.
   With knowledge I will spoil the young. I would vastly prefer them to learn only what they absorbed
   voluntarily as they followed their play instinct. They shall learn to overcome the fear of death
   through the most arduous tests. This is the [historic] state of heroic youth.”
   - Hitler quoted in _The Burden of Guilt_ by H. Vogt, p. 163

7. “God created the world as a place for work and battle. Whoever doesn't understand the laws of life's
   battles will be counted out, as in the boxing ring. All the good things on this earth are trophy
cups. The strong will win them. The weak will lose them..."
   - Bernard Rust, Nazi Minister of Education in W.L. Shirer, _Berlin Diary_, p. 328

8. “Terrorism is an effective political tool. I shall not deprive myself of it merely because these
   simple-minded bourgeois softies take offense ...People will think twice before opposing us, if
   they know what awaits them in the concentration camps.”
   - Hitler quoted in _Burden of Guilt_, H. Vogt, p.172

Religion in Nazi Thought

9. “Whether the German people retained its Jewish faith in Christ, with his soft morality of pity,
or whether it believed strongly and heroically in god in nature, god in the nation, god in
   destiny, god in the blood was a question which would decide., its destiny.”
   - Hitler to Hermann Rauschning, a trusted confidant. By 1936 he had become an
   anti-Nazi and fled to Switzerland.

10. “The new Europe will be a continent restored to barbarism ...Christianity can no longer help us.
    Its aim is to make us meek. The foundations of the new Europe will be laid not by priests and
    diplomats, but by pirates of destiny...”
    - Alfred Rosenberg, philosopher of the Nazi party, _Black Book_, p. 37
11. “A lower race needs less room, less clothing, less food ...than a higher race. ... The German cannot live in the same fashion as the Pole and the Jew ... More bread, more clothing, more living room ... these our race must have or it dies.”

- Minister of Labor Robert Ley, Black Book, p. 203

12. “We have the duty to 'depopulate,' much as we have the duty of caring for the German population. We shall have to develop a technique for 'depopulation.' You will ask what is 'depopulation'? Do I propose to exterminate whole ethnic groups? Yes, it will add up to that. Nature is cruel; therefore we may be cruel too.”

- Hitler in The Burden of Guilt, H. Vogt, p. 146

13. “The Poles are especially born for low labor ... There can be no question of improvement for them .... Priests will preach what we want them to preach. If any priest acts differently, we shall make short work of him. The task of the priest is to keep the Poles quiet, stupid and dullwitted .... There should be one master only for the Poles, the German .... All representatives of the Polish intelligentsia are to be exterminated.”

- Hitler, October 2, 1940 quoted in The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, by William L. Shirer

14. “Anti-Semitism is the same as delousing: getting rid of lice is not a question of ideology, it is a matter of cleanliness.”

- Heinrich Himmler

"German Science"

After the Nazis came to power, “German Science” (a term chosen to distinguish it from science to which Jews contributed) devoted special interest to subjects consistent with the aims of the volkish state.

15. “Reichsleader Bouhler and Doctor Brandt, being responsible, are charged with extending authority to specified doctors that those incurably sick according to human judgment; - after critical examination of the state of their health, can be granted a 'mercy death.'”

- Adolf Hitler, September 1, 1939

The above brief authorization was the legal basis for the National Coordinating Agency for Therapeutic and Medical Establishment to administer what was called the euthanasia (“mercy killing”) program. Its aim was to remove from hospitals and institutions persons deemed unfit to live: mentally retarded, cripples, etc. After families and relatives of children received notice that their children had “died from pneumonia,” a protest was organized by the Catholic Church. Thereafter, the Agency slowed its activities.
"Beyond the borders of perhaps necessary bourgeois laws, customs and views, it will now be the great task, even outside--the marriage bond, for German women and girls of good blood, not in frivolity but in deep moral earnestness, to become mothers of the children of soldiers going off to war ....What the nations can offer in the way of good blood of our type, we will take, if necessary by kidnapping their children and raising them here with us."

- Himmler, October, 1939. This was the Lebensborn program to breed "superior" Aryan children. Thousands of Polish children were also used in this program. Infants born with any "defects" were immediately killed.

The End

16. "If we are going to lose the war, the nation, too, will perish. The outcome is inevitable. It is not necessary to worry about the minimum needs of the people and how they are to live later at subsistence level. On the contrary, it will be better for us to destroy these things ourselves. For this nation will have proved to be the weaker."

- Hitler to Speer in 1945, in The Burden of Guilt by H. Vogt, p. 275