



Varying Perspectives and Ranges of Responses

There are a variety of ways to use the information and resources in the National Days of Remembrance kit and the resources online at <http://www.ushmm.org/educators> in your classroom. In addition to a full Holocaust commemoration or as a starting point for educating about the Holocaust, you can use classroom activities that support your curriculum and provide a meaningful lesson. The following plan has been designed to help you use United States Holocaust Memorial Museum resources.

Activity Applicable to: English/Language Arts and Social Studies/History

Purpose/Rationale: The events of the Holocaust are so complicated that students often have difficulty accessing related information. This lesson allows students to consider various perspectives of the time and work with materials that informed different groups about the pressing issues of the day. Exploring various perspectives and responses to the events of the Holocaust illustrates the very real motivations and pressures that led ordinary people to act/not act in response to the events around them. Such a study can lend insight into how and why an event such as the Holocaust could occur.

Selected Common Core Standards:

- W8.2.b Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- W8.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- RI8.9 Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
- SL8.2 Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g. visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g. social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
- W11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- W11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Note: Other standards may apply in your state or district



Lesson Instructions

Part I – Activation of Prior Knowledge

Activating prior knowledge helps both the teacher and the students to identify what is already known by the students and to recognize opportunities for making connections, clarifying misconceptions, and increasing readiness for new material.

Give students the word association page (attached) and tell them that they will have 90 seconds to write as many words as they can that are related to the initial word you will give them (“Holocaust”). Students should try to write continuously for the entire 90 seconds without worrying about word organization, explanation, right/wrong items, or spelling.

The teacher should collect the pages, noting an occasional word and inviting the student to explain the association. Alternatively, the teacher can invite students to volunteer a word association and the explanation.

This is an optimal time to incorporate the [Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust](#).

Part II – Contextualization/Connections

Select a recent event from school life.

Explain to students that events from the past are sometimes hard to grasp fully and that it can be helpful to connect to experiences that are familiar. In this part of the lesson, begin by asking students to carefully consider the selected event. This can be done in several ways: as a full class, individually, in pairs, or in groups. Ask student to think about each of the people/groups involved in the event and answer the following questions:

- How did each person/group become aware of the event?
- What would each person/group do to get more information about the event?
- How does each person/group feel about the event?
- What will each person/group do about the event?
- Are there any long-term implication related to this event for each person/group?

During discussion, use student contributions to emphasize that there are different ways of perceiving the same event and complicated interpretations of the same event. Show that different people are often given different types of information about an event.

Part III – New Material

As a class, watch the 38-minute film Path to Nazi Genocide featured on the 2015 Days of Remembrance DVD resource. Following each chapter, pause the video to ask the following visual discovery reflection questions:

- What are you noticing?
- What do you think it means?
- What questions do you have?
- What more would you like to know in order to understand better?



Film chapters:

- Aftermath of World War I and the Rise of Nazism, 1918-1933 (Starts at 0:58)
- Building a National Community, 1933-1936 (Starts at 12:22)
- From Citizens to Outcasts, 1933-1938 (Starts at 18:12)
- World War II and the Holocaust, 1939-1945 (Starts at 24:34)

Introduce the R.A.F.T.

Using students' previous experiences with different points of view related to the school event you selected and informed by the viewing of Path to Nazi Genocide, this lesson explores events of the Holocaust. Students will use resources from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum www.ushmm.org to inform their work. To begin, students will choose or be assigned to a RAFT set (noted with horizontal shading in the table below). The RAFT sets have been aligned to inform maximum factuality and logical chronology.

You can modify the R.A.F.T. elements to align with your particular curriculum or learning objectives.

ROLE This is the point of view that you take when creating your assignment	AUDIENCE This is the person or people to whom you are writing or speaking	FORMAT This is what you are producing or making	TOPIC This is the subject you are investigating and addressing

Instructional Suggestions:

Determine the appropriate amount of time your students will need for this assignment. Consider in-class and out-of-class work time, access to resources, and opportunities for peer-review.

Provide a gallery walk for students to see everyone's work and prepare a place for peer-to-peer feedback (adhesive notes work well). Students can be grouped to take the gallery walk so that a group is presenting while another is touring.

If you have technology resources, consider uploading the assignments as files or as images and allowing students to post comments on a teacher-monitored forum. Invite students to post feedback as themselves or as one of the roles from the table.

Sharing these assignments is essential for helping students to recognize different perspectives.

Recommended Resources:

<https://www.ushmm.org/educators>



Part IV - Feedback

Recommendation for Assessment:

In evaluating your students' work, use a rubric that includes the elements of the aligned standards. Rubrics are most effective when they are given out alongside the assignment directions.

Incorporate the [Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust](#) into your feedback to the students.

For example:

Element	Expected High Quality	Acceptable	Needs improvement
Four chosen elements /40	Each element is reflected with detailed support. Up to 40 points	Not all elements are reflected and/or are not reflected with detailed support. Up to 30 points	Insufficient evidence that elements were considered during assignment. Up to 20 points
Writing /40	Writing is clear and coherent; writing is consistently appropriate for task, purpose, and audience. Up to 40 points	Writing is mostly clear and coherent; writing is somewhat appropriate for task, purpose, and audience. Up to 30 points	Clarity and coherence of writing impedes understandability; writing does not show consideration of task, purpose, and/or audience. Up to 20 points
Resources /20	Effective use of two or more resources; resources differ in facts and/or interpretation. Up to 20 points	Two or more resources may have been used; resources do not provide differing facts and/or interpretation. Up to 15 points	Assignment does not show evidence of use of multiple resources. Up to 10 points
Total points earned /100			

Variation suggestion:

Students can use this rubric to give peer feedback prior to submission of the assignment.

(See following page for student brainstorm handout.)



Student Handout:

90-SECOND THINK TANK!

You've got lots of ideas and thoughts. Let's see what you think of when you hear... oh, wait—let's not start the countdown yet! When the starting word is given, let your ideas flow onto this page. Write as many words as possible—nothing is wrong, everything is right, and spelling doesn't count. You will have 90 seconds. Get ready!

STARTING WORD:

