

ARTHUR AND ROCHELLE BELFER

Exemplary LESSONS

i n i t i a t i v e

ORGANIZING THE HISTORY

PREPARING FOR THE LESSON

Overview and Background

Museum staff designed this lesson in 2004 to assist student groups who had recently visited our Permanent Exhibition in thinking about and learning from the history of the Holocaust. Whether they encounter this history in a museum or in a classroom, students are often overwhelmed by the emotional content as well as the sheer volume and complexity of information. A lesson like this one can help them organize and synthesize what they have learned from this challenging subject.

Purpose of Lesson

- Provide students with an opportunity to sort and organize the complex events of the Holocaust in a clear format that they generate.
- Review the events of the Holocaust at the conclusion of a semester or unit approach or as an introductory lesson.
- Utilize higher-level strategies of critical thinking.
- Reinforce the definition of the Holocaust.
- Give students tools for organizing and synthesizing large volumes of information.

Goals for Student Understanding

- Be able to define the Holocaust.
- Develop an understanding of the chronological sequence of the events of the Holocaust.
- Associate visual images with the events of the Holocaust.
- Improve visual literacy skills.
- Develop or refine the ability to analyze primary sources.

LESSON BY

STAFF MEMBERS OF
THE UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL
MUSEUM

GRADE LEVEL

7–12

GRADE-LEVEL APPLICABILITY

7–12

SUBJECT

WORLD HISTORY,
AMERICAN HISTORY,
HOLOCAUST ELECTIVE

TIME REQUIRED

1–2 CLASS PERIOD(S)

What Students Will Do to Increase Their Understanding

- Review the events of the Holocaust.
- Sift through, analyze, and organize, either chronologically or conceptually, a large volume of information.
- Analyze photographs and consider their place in the historical sequence of the Holocaust.

Resources and Handouts: Background Materials

General: www.ushmm.org

Historical Overview and Chronology: www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/teachabo/part2_.pdf

Resources and Handouts: Materials Used

Student Handout: Definition of the Holocaust

Teacher Resource: Photo Captions (with dates)

Student Resource: Photo Captions (without dates)

Teacher Resource: Suggested Chronological Order of Photos

Interpreting Historical Images: Photo Analysis Worksheet

LESSON

Narrative

Introduction

Each of the students will have an opportunity to reflect on the history and definition of the Holocaust, ask questions, and organize photographs into a timeline or visual history of the Holocaust. Depending on the size of the class, the photographs may be distributed to individuals or groups.

Part I: Reinforcing the Definition of the Holocaust

To provide historical context for students, assign "Introduction to the Holocaust" in the Holocaust Encyclopedia (www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005143) and/or view the animated map "The Holocaust" (www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/maps/).

If the lesson is to be used as an introduction, have students brainstorm about how they would define the Holocaust.

If the lesson is to be used for review purposes, lead discussion on the definition of the Holocaust. Example: "If you went home tonight and your best friend asked you what the Holocaust was, how would you answer him or her?"

Distribute the Holocaust definition sheet. Confirm that students understand all terms.

Distribute photographs to the class. (Teachers may either cut the captions from the student list without dates and glue each to the reverse side of each photo, or they may distribute the list without dates for students to refer to throughout the exercise. Do not distribute the list with dates to the students.)

Explain that these photographs are from the Museum's collections. Each photograph is in the Museum or its collections because it uniquely tells a part of the story. It does not necessarily tell the whole story, but the photographs are really witnesses or evidence of part of Holocaust history.

Ask each student to write an answer to any of these questions:

"How does this photograph fit into the definition of the Holocaust?"

"Why do you suppose the curators of the Museum included this particular image, or one like it, in the exhibition?"

"What story does it tell about the Holocaust?"

"If in 100 years, this photograph were one of the few pieces of evidence left about the Holocaust, what part of the story would it tell?"

Give the students three to four minutes to work on this. Tell them that their answers should only be a sentence or two.

Optional Activities for Part I

1. Photograph analysis: Teachers may choose to have the whole class look at one photograph first to develop a common approach and vocabulary. The image could be a historical one from the Holocaust or from any other period.

A Museum worksheet is included for image analysis.

2. Have students, individually or in groups, rewrite the definition in their own words.

3. Discuss what "deliberate, calculated" means in this context. Later, ask which photographs help illustrate the systematic nature of this event.

Part II Human Timeline

Introduce the next part of the lesson by explaining that by itself each photograph tells only part of the history, but all of the pictures taken together tell a more complete story. It is a visual story, and essentially that is what the creators of the Museum did when they developed the Permanent Exhibition. They used photographs, moving images, artifacts, and text to visualize the stated definition of the Holocaust.

Tell the students that they are next going to create their own picture or visual history of the Holocaust using all of the photographs. One approach would be to suggest to the class that in a few minutes several people who know very little about the Holocaust or who cannot read English will walk through the doors. The task is to create a history of the Holocaust using these photographs.

Have the students stand with their photographs. Begin to form a human timeline or pictorial history of the Holocaust using the pictures. Have the students determine the order, individually and through discussion.

If appropriate or necessary, assist the students with organizing by providing thematic groupings. For example, direct those students who have photographs that focus on life in Germany before the war to organize themselves in one area. Then, those with photographs that show life in the ghettos should organize themselves in a second area. Finally, ask those who have photographs that show life in the concentration camps and afterwards to move to a third area.

Some of the photographs have no specific date attached to them and thus can be placed in numerous spots. Help the students think about where such pictures work best in order to tell the history.

Once the photographs are arranged, have each student show his or hers, and then have every other student or so read out loud what he or she has written.

If there is time, ask the students questions about the images and what messages they reveal about the history.

Ask the group if the order of the photographs is correct.

Summarize what has just happened; relate that what the students just did is what historians and museums do when they create exhibitions and history books—using the facts and primary sources, they create a version or an account of the history.

Options for Part II

1. Teachers have the option of using a smaller selection of the photos. However, careful thought should be given to what images are left out. An excellent lesson will include photographs that relate to key topics listed at Topics to Teach.
2. Rearrange images to provoke discussion or clarification.

Assessment

Review student's written description of how his or her particular picture fit into the definition of the Holocaust.

Consider student's commentary in a homework assignment on how the timeline materialized, what he or she may have learned, and what images were difficult to place.

Observe student's ability to link previously discussed testimony with a particular image or artifact.

Evaluate student's ability to participate in the group activity.

Supplementary Activity

Provide brief accounts from survivor testimonies.

The Museum's Memory Project is a convenient source of testimonies:

www.ushmm.org/remembrance/survivoraffairs/memory/#top

Have students discuss how each testimony fits into the definition of the Holocaust. Match the testimony with one or more photos from the timeline.

Related Links

Holocaust Encyclopedia: www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/

Web links: www.ushmm.org/research/library/weblinks/

Museum Library: www.ushmm.org/research/library/

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STUDENT HANDOUT

DEFINITION OF THE HOLOCAUST

Definition of the Holocaust from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

Between 1933 and 1945, Germany's government, led by Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist (Nazi) party, carried out a deliberate, calculated attack on European Jewry. Basing their actions on antisemitic ideology and using World War II as a primary means to achieve their goals, they targeted Jews as their main enemy, killing six million Jewish men, women, and children by the time the war ended in 1945. This act of genocide is now known as the Holocaust. As part of their wide-reaching efforts to remove from German territory all those whom they considered racially, biologically, or socially unfit, the Nazis terrorized many other groups as well, including political opponents, Roma (also known as Gypsies), Germans with mental and physical disabilities, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Poles, and Soviet prisoners of war. In the course of state-sponsored tyranny, the Nazis left countless lives shattered and millions dead.

TEACHER RESOURCE

PHOTO CAPTIONS (WITH DATES)

Each image on the list is accompanied by a caption, date, and credit. To download the images, click on the link <http://www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/prodev/beli/2003/staff01/images/>.

1. German soldiers march into Warsaw carrying bayonets. October 5, 1939. USHMM, COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



2. On the morning after *Kristallnacht*, local residents watch as the synagogue in Ober Ramstadt, Germany, is destroyed by fire. The local fire department tries to prevent the fire from spreading to a nearby home. November 10, 1938. USHMM, COURTESY OF TRUDY ISENBERG



3. Jewish mothers with baby carriages at the Landsberg Displaced Persons camp. January 1, 1947. USHMM, COURTESY OF AVIVA KEMPNER



4. One of the three milk cans in which Emmanuel Ringelblum saved the "Oneg Shabbat" archives chronicling the history of the Warsaw ghetto. 1939–1943. USHMM, COURTESY OF ŻYDOWSKI HISTORYCZNY INSTYTUT NAUKOWO-BADAWCZY



5. U.S. soldiers view the charred remains of victims of the Ohrdruf concentration camp. April 1945. USHMM, COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



6. German soldiers execute Piotr Sosnowski, a priest from Tuchola. Piasnica Wielka, Poland, fall 1939. USHMM, COURTESY OF INSTYTUT PAMIĘCI NARODOWEJ



7. Mauthausen camp survivors cheer American soldiers soon after their liberation. May 1945. USHMM, COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



8. Women inmates in Auschwitz sort through a huge pile of shoes from a transport of Hungarian Jews. May 1944. USHMM, COURTESY OF YAD VASHEM



9. Bystanders watch as a Jewish student is paraded over the Wiedenhaser Bridge in Marburg carrying a sign that reads, "I have defiled a Christian maiden." An SA fife-and-drum band marches ahead drawing attention to the man who is dressed in a suit and bow tie. Germany, 1933–1939 (similar photos available: enter "public humiliation" in Photo Archives search bar). USHMM, COURTESY OF AMT FÜR PRESS-UND-OFFENTLICHKEITSARBEIT, MARBURG



10. A Jewish woman walks toward the gas chambers with three young children after going through the selection process on the ramp at Aushwitz-Birkenau. May 1944. USHMM, COURTESY OF YAD VASHEM



11. German Jewish children in Berlin prior to the Nazi seizure of power. January 1929. USHMM, COURTESY OF GEORGE FOGELSON



12. Wilhem Beiglboeck, a consulting physician for the Luftwaffe, pleads "not guilty" to the charges against him at the Doctors trial. November 1945. USHMM, COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



13. Execution of a Ukrainian Jew by a member of an Einsatzgruppe (mobile killing squad). Vinnitsa, Soviet Union, 1942. USHMM, COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



14. A German Jewish refugee family poses on the deck of the *St. Louis* while en route to Cuba. May–June 1939. USHMM, COURTESY OF JOHN MEYERSTEIN



15. Roma (Gypsy) prisoners in the Belzec forced-labor camp. Poland, 1940. USHMM, COURTESY OF ARCHIWUM DOKUMENTACJI MECHANICZNEJ, WARSAW



16. Mug shot of prisoner accused of homosexuality, in Auschwitz concentration camp. 1940–1944. USHMM, COURTESY OF KARL GORATH



17. Under SS guard, prisoners carry stones up the “staircase of death,” in the Mauthausen concentration camp. Austria, 1942. USHMM, COURTESY OF ARCHIV DER KZ-GEDENKSTÄTTE MAUTHAUSEN



18. Prisoners stand at roll call at Buchenwald camp. 1938–1941. USHMM, COURTESY OF ROBERT A. SCHMUHL



19. Danish rescuers on board a boat. 1943. USHMM, COURTESY OF FRIHEDSMUSEET



20. Jewish partisans in the forests of Lithuania. 1941–1944. USHMM, COURTESY OF MOSHE KAGANOVICH



21. A Hollerith machine of the type used to tabulate national census data in Nazi Germany in the 1930s. USHMM, COURTESY OF TECHNISCHES MUSEUM DRESDEN



22. Spectators give the Nazi salute as they attend a rally in Nuremberg. September 1938. USHMM



23. View of the Jewish-owned Eisenstaedt clothing store in Berlin. 1930–1938. USHMM, COURTESY OF INGE EISENSTAEDT



24. Germans read a poster affixed to a pillar in a busy Berlin street warning them not to buy from Jews. April 1933. USHMM, COURTESY OF KZ GEDENKSTÄTTE DACHAU



25. A view of concentration camp prisoners marching through a village while on a death march from Dachau to Wolfratshausen. April 1945. USHMM, COURTESY OF KZ GEDENKSTÄTTE DACHAU



26. An aerial reconnaissance photograph of the Auschwitz concentration camp showing the Auschwitz II (Birkenau) killing center. Poland, September 1944. USHMM, COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



27. The Hadamar Institute was one of six hospitals and sanatoria in Germany and Austria in which the Nazi “euthanasia” program was carried out. Spring 1945. USHMM, COURTESY OF ROSANNE BASS FULTON



28. Vendors and buyers at the market in the Lodz ghetto. Circa 1941. USHMM, COURTESY OF ROBERT ADAMS



29. Two young boys wearing Jewish badges in the Kovno ghetto shortly before their round-up in the “Children’s Action.” 1944. USHMM, COURTESY OF SHRAGA WAINER



30. Concentration camp badges bearing purple triangles worn by Jehovah's Witnesses. 1940–1945. USHMM, COURTESY OF ANNEMARIE AND WALTRAUD KUESSEROW



31. Some of the thousands of shoes confiscated from arriving prisoners at the Majdanek concentration camp. ARCHIWUM PAŃSTWOWEGO MUZEUM NA MAJDANKU



STUDENT RESOURCE

PHOTO CAPTIONS

(For distribution or mounting on reverse of photos)

1. German soldiers march into Warsaw carrying bayonets.
2. On the morning after *Kristallnacht*, local residents watch as the synagogue in Ober Ramstadt is destroyed by fire. The local fire department tries to prevent the fire from spreading to a nearby home.
3. Jewish mothers with baby carriages at the Landsberg Displaced Persons camp.
4. One of the three milk cans in which Emmanuel Ringelblum saved the "Oneg Shabbat" archives chronicling the history of the Warsaw ghetto.
5. U.S. soldiers view the charred remains of victims of the Ohrdruf concentration camp.
6. German soldiers execute Piotr Sosnowski, a priest from Tuchola. Piasnica Wielka, Poland.
7. Mauthausen camp survivors cheer American soldiers soon after their liberation.
8. Women inmates in Auschwitz sort through a huge pile of shoes from the transport of Hungarian Jews.
9. Bystanders watch a Jewish student is paraded over the Wiedenhaser Bridge in Marburg carrying a sign that reads, "I have defiled a Christian maiden." An SA fife and drum band marches ahead drawing attention to the man who is dressed in a suit and bow tie.
10. A Jewish woman walks toward the gas chambers with three young children after going through the selection process on the ramp at Aushwitz-Birkenau.
11. German Jewish children in Berlin prior to the Nazi seizure of power.
12. Wilhem Beiglboeck, a consulting physician for the Luftwaffe, pleads "not guilty" to the charges against him at the Doctors trial.
13. Execution of a Ukrainian Jew by a member of an Einsatzgruppe (mobile killing squad). Vinnitsa, Soviet Union.
14. A German Jewish refugee family poses on the deck of the *St. Louis* while en route to Cuba.

15. Roma (Gypsy) prisoners in the Belzec camp. Poland.
16. Mug shot of prisoner accused of homosexuality, in Auschwitz concentration camp.
17. Under SS guard, prisoners carry stones up the "staircase of death," in the Mauthausen concentration camp. Austria.
18. Prisoners stand at roll call at Buchenwald camp.
19. Danish rescuers on board a boat.
20. Jewish partisans in the forests of Lithuania.
21. A Hollerith machine of the type used to tabulate national census data in Nazi Germany.
22. Spectators give the Nazi salute as they attend a rally in Nuremberg.
23. View of the Jewish-owned Eisenstaedt clothing store in Berlin.
24. Germans read a poster affixed to a pillar in a busy Berlin street warning them not to buy from Jews.
25. A view of concentration camp prisoners marching through a village while on a death march from Dachau to Wolfratshausen.
26. An aerial reconnaissance photograph of the Auschwitz concentration camp showing the Auschwitz II (Birkenau) killing center. Poland.
27. The Hadamar Institute was one of six hospitals and sanatoria in Germany and Austria in which the Nazi "euthanasia" program was carried out.
28. Vendors and buyers at the market in the Lodz ghetto.
29. Two young boys wearing Jewish badges in the Kovno ghetto shortly before their round-up in the "Children's Action."
30. Concentration camp badges bearing purple triangles worn by Jehovah's Witnesses. 1940–1945.
31. Some of the thousands of shoes confiscated from arriving prisoners at the Majdanek concentration camp.

TEACHER RESOURCE

SUGGESTED CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF PHOTOS

Pre-1933:

- 11. German Jewish children
- 12. Berlin department store

1933–39:

- 24. Anti-Jewish poster–boycott
- 9. Public humiliation (could be throughout this period)
- 21. Hollerith machine for census
- 22. Nazi rally
- 2. Morning after Kristallnacht
- 14. Passengers on the *St. Louis*
- 1. German conquest of Poland
- 6. Execution of priest
- 18. Buchenwald lineup (could be later)
- 27. Hadamar hospital (could be later)

1940–45:

- 15. Roma at Belzec
- 28. Market in Lodz ghetto
- 13. Einsatzgruppen shooting
- 17. Mauthausen camp stairs
- 4. Warsaw Ghetto milk can
- 19. Danish rescuers
- 31. Shoes (could be later)
- 20. Partisans in forest
- 30. Purple badges
- 8. Prisoners sort clothes in Auschwitz
- 10. Woman and children walk at Auschwitz
- 29. Kovno children with stars
- 26. Aerial photo of Auschwitz
- 25. Death march
- 5. American GIs at Ohrdruf
- 7. Liberation of Mauthausen
- 12. Doctors Trial

After 1945:

- 3. Jewish mothers at DP camp
- 31. Shoes (or earlier)

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OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: STUDENT WORKSHEET

INTERPRETING HISTORICAL IMAGES: PHOTO ANALYSIS

Study the photograph for two minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items; answer the question that follows.

Subject of the Photograph

• Are there people in the photograph? _____

• How many? _____

• Number of boys or men? _____

• Number of girls or women? _____

• Describe the clothing being worn:

• Describe facial expressions:

• Describe what the people are doing:

- Are there objects in the photograph? List them if appropriate:

- Describe in detail the objects in the photograph:

- How are the individuals in the photograph using the objects?

Setting of the Photograph

- Can you tell when or where the photograph was taken?

- Estimated time of day: _____
- Estimated time of year: _____

- Outside or indoors? _____

- Describe as many details as you can identify about the place where the picture was taken:

Consider the eye of the photographer. The photographer, who makes decisions about what will be framed within the camera's lens, predetermines even photographic images that appear to be spontaneous.

- Can you tell anything about the perspective of the photographer by what has been included or omitted in the photograph?

- Does the photograph seem spontaneous or posed?

- What do you think happened after this photograph was taken?

- What do you think might be happening outside the frame of the photograph?

Inferences

- Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from the photograph.

Questions

- What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

Write a caption for the photograph. A caption is a short description or explanation of a photograph or picture. It often includes information about what is happening in the picture, where and when the picture was taken, and who is in the picture. Using the information gathered above, write a caption for the photograph.

- How would the caption be different if it were published in a Nazi newspaper, a Jewish-German newspaper, or in an American newspaper?