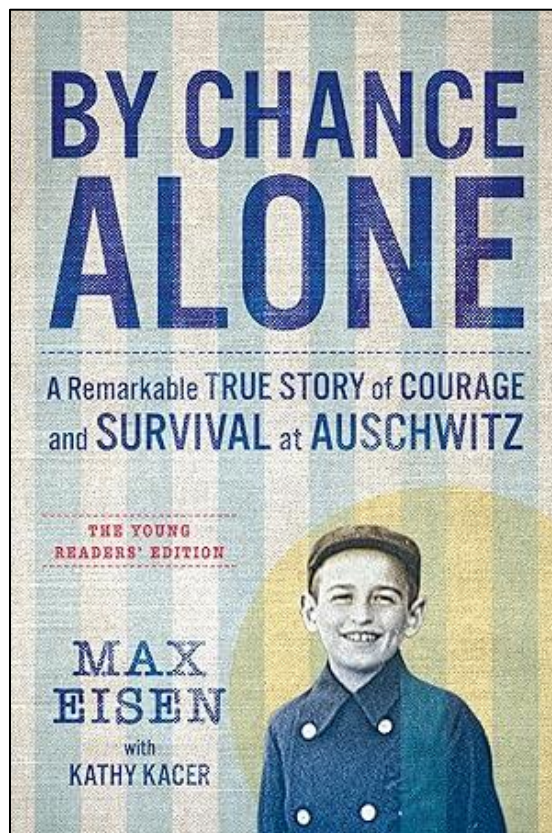


Holocaust & Genocide
Education Network presents

a complete Holocaust literature unit
with extensive historical background
featuring

***By Chance Alone: A Remarkable True Story of Courage and Survival at Auschwitz,
Young Readers' Edition***

by Max Eisen with Kathy Kacer



with optional connections to a field trip to
a Holocaust museum or to the exhibition,
Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.

in Cincinnati 18 October 2025-13 April 2026

in Washington, D.C.,
at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
January 2027-spring 2029



Introduction and Unit Overview

This Grade 6 unit with anchor text, *By Chance Alone: A Remarkable True Story of Courage and Survival at Auschwitz, The Young Readers' Edition* by Max Eisen, was designed to include a field trip to the exhibition, *Auschwitz. Not long Ago. Not far away*. While this unit builds background knowledge for students to be able to appreciate the artifacts, art, photographs, text, and video clips they see in the exhibit—and to understand well the audioguide provided to every visitor—the unit can stand alone as a quality English Language Arts unit that develops learners' understanding of the Holocaust as they master ELA concepts and skills.

This unit can be adapted for Grade 7 or Grade 8. The book takes about 3½ hours to read. Page number references are from ISBN 978-1-4434-6942-5.

Sources for standards:

- Ohio Department of Education. [*Ohio's Learning Standards: English Language Arts*](#), 2017.
- Ohio Department of Education. [*Ohio's K-12 Social and Emotional Learning Standards*](#), 2019.

This unit addresses the following Ohio standards:

ELA.RI.6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, and 6.8

ELA.RL.6.4, 6.6, and 8.6

ELA.SL.6.1, 6.2, 6.4, and 6.6

ELA.W.6.6 and 6.7

SEL.MG.C3.3.c

An important starting point for teachers is the [Guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust](#) from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Suggested Lesson and Reading Sequence

All lessons take about 45 minutes unless otherwise noted.

Overview: *The Path to Nazi Genocide* (USHMM film; 90 minutes, if possible, but can be done in 45)

Prewar Jewish Life

Historical Antisemitism and Nazi Racism

Read prologue, chapters 1-2

Max's Family Life

Read chapters 3-5

Nazism comes to Moldava nad Bodvou

Read chapters 6-7

Anti-Jewish Laws

Nazi Camps (90 minutes)

Read chapters 8-9

Selection at Auschwitz: Imagery and Tone

Train Tracks Photo Analysis (90 minutes)

This lesson also is appropriate after the Death Marches Lesson (after reading chapters 24-29), at the end of the unit, or upon return from the field trip.

Read chapters 10-13

Irony

Read chapters 14-16

Kanada and Prisoners Help Fellow Prisoners

Read chapters 17-20

Resistance

Read chapters 21-23

Death Marches

Read chapters 24-29

Liberation and Survivors

Read chapter 30, epilogue, and “What happened to Max after the war?”

Dimensions in Testimony: Interviewing Max Directly (90 minutes)

Socratic Seminar (90 minutes)

If taking a field trip to Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. or to a Holocaust museum, add these two lessons:

1) Artifacts and Conservation (90 minutes. Etiquette for this exhibition is discussed in the Closing of this lesson.)

About a week before this lesson, take about 10 minutes to present the first segment of the lesson.

(If you decide not to complete the Artifacts and Conservation Lesson before the field trip, it’s important that you prepare students with your own lesson in advance. Upon return, complete a debrief with students, giving them the opportunity to process and to reflect on what they saw.)

2) Field trip artifact reflection poster

Suggested unit assessment:

Students write an argument supporting the claim of a theme/central idea, specifically of the role of chance and/or help from others in Max’s survival.

Overview: The Path to Nazi Genocide

Introduce the Holocaust through USHMM's 38-minute film, [*The Path to Nazi Genocide*](#). The version on the USHMM website includes a few graphic images that such as dead bodies, likely not appropriate for most 6th-grade audiences. USHMM has posted a [youtube version of *The Path to Nazi Genocide*](#) that eliminates these graphic images.

The film takes most of a 45-minute block and can stand alone, if that is all the time you can spare for an overview. If you have another 45-minute block available, combine the film with USHMM's [Discussion Questions](#), pausing after each film chapter for students to write their answers and to discuss whole class.

Prewar Jewish Life

We cannot begin to grasp what was lost in the Holocaust without some understanding of the vitality of Jewish life before World War II or the Holocaust began. This lesson helps students understand that not only was Jewish life thriving across Europe but also that those teens and families shared values, interests, motivations, and activities in common with families and teens today. This serves as background information for readers to begin to understand the society in which the protagonist lived before the Holocaust.

Approximate time: 45 minutes

Objectives

- Using visual and print information from primary and secondary sources, students will identify activities of and interests held by Jews in prewar Europe.
- Students will compare and contrast those interests and activities with those of teens and families today.

Standards

ELA.SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

ELA.SL.7.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 7 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

c. Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.

d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

ELA.SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 8 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

ELA.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

SEL (MG) C1.3.c Demonstrate empathy through understanding of others' feelings and acknowledgement of their perspective

Procedures	Materials, Resources
10 minutes Project or pass out the Map of Jewish Communities before the Nazis Rise to Power from Echoes & Reflections, Unit I. Go over with students the key so they can analyze the data. Ask students: <i>What do you notice?</i> Possible student responses: • Countries and borders are not the same as today • In Germany where Nazism originated, Jews made up less than 1% of the population If not already discovered, prompt students with these questions: • <i>Which countries had the highest percentage of Jews?</i> [Poland, USSR] • <i>Relative to Germany where did most Jews live?</i> [east] ◦ Point out that Germany wanted to force all the Jews to leave the country, but soon the Nazis will want more territory, so they looked east. When Germany starts WWII, it first attacks Poland. <i>What does that mean for Nazi goals to make their territory Judenfrei (“free of Jews”)?</i> ◦ <i>Later, Germany attacks the Soviet Union. How might that complicate Nazi plans?</i> • <i>Did Jews make up a big portion of the population in Czechoslovakia? In Hungary?</i>	Map of Jewish Communities before the Nazis Rise to Power from Echoes & Reflections Map of Jewish Communities before the Nazi Rise to Power (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections
10 minutes Explain that we can’t fully understand the effects of the Holocaust without understanding what Jewish life was like before WWII, so we will look at some primary and secondary sources to understand. Present to students this guiding question: • <i>As you watch this 5-minute video, identify a few things that Jewish families and teens before the war had in common with families and teens today.</i> Play the Yad Vashem video, Glimpses of Jewish Life before the Holocaust (4:30). Ask students to share examples in response to the guiding question.	Glimpses of Jewish Life before the Holocaust from Yad Vashem

20 minutes To differentiate for learning preference and interest for the compare and contrast activity, put students into groups of about 5 students each, with each group falling into one of three sections described below. Pass out the Alike and Different handout (below), directing students to fill in the center column with aspects of Jewish family or teen life described in their source, and then complete at least one other cell on the same row, describing how life for families and/or teens today is alike or different.			Alike and Different handout
Section 1: students whose learning preference is auditory or who may struggle to read	Section 2: students who have an interest in the visual arts, creative writing, and journalism	Section 3: students interested in athletics	
These students watch two testimonies from Echoes & Reflections: Penina Bowman and Vera Gissing. Encourage students to use the closed captioning and to replay segments as needed.	These students read about Petr Ginz on pages 14-16 of Profiles of Teenagers in Prewar Europe from Echoes & Reflections.	These students read about Victor “Young” Perez on pages 17-19 of Profiles of Teenagers in Prewar Europe from Echoes & Reflections.	Penina Bowman testimony Vera Gissing testimony Profiles of Teenagers in Prewar Europe from Echoes & Reflections Profiles of Teenagers in Prewar Europe (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections
5 minutes Closing Project the USHMM photo of Berta Rosenheim onto the board and read the caption. Explain: <i>This is a primary source. When we are looking at historical photographs, we have to consider carefully not only what we see but what we don’t see. Let’s start with what you see. This is from the</i>			photo of Berta Rosenheim from USHMM

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which is an impeccable source, so we can believe the information in the caption.

Possible student responses:

- A girl
- She is smiling.
- She seems to be wearing a backpack or book bag, since it is the first day of school.
- She is holding a big cone, which the caption leads us to believe has sweets and stationery.
- A tall building in the background—perhaps an apartment building

With photographs, always ask yourself, who is the photographer?

- Given the age of the girl and that it's the first day of school, the photographer likely is a parent.

What do you infer about the feelings or emotions of both the subject and her photographer?

- The girl looks very happy. She likely is excited to start school.
- The parent likely is proud.

Is this a tradition or ritual that families perform today?

- Yes, facebook is full of first-day-of-school pictures every fall.

Whether prewar or now, what do children dream of as they start school?

What do parents typically hope for their children as they start school?

Hitler and the Nazis will come to power in less than four years, so events for the Rosenheim family, as Jews in Germany, likely will not play out as dreamed.

Name _____

Alike and Different

Using the source assigned by your teacher, collaborate with your teammates to identify at least four aspects (interests, traditions, values, religious practices, activities, etc.) of life for prewar Jewish families or teens, listing one aspect per cell in the center column. Then compare and contrast their prewar experiences to today's families and teens and note those in the left column. Where possible, compare and/or contrast with yourself in the right column. The first row has been completed as an example.

[illegible]

Historical Antisemitism and Nazi Racism

Students learn that antisemitic myths resurface throughout history, often molded by the events of the day. They read and summarize an article that explains how the Nazis used their racist ideology to take antisemitism to the extreme of systematic mass murder. Finally, they view a testimony clip that shows up the falsehood of the racist theory.

Approximate time: 45 minutes, plus about 20-25 minutes to read prologue, chapters 1, 2 for homework or in class, if time permits

Objectives:

- Students will develop an understanding of antisemitism as a persistent prejudice through history and connect it to the Nazi racist ideology that led to genocide.
- Students will collaborate to identify a central idea and to write an objective summary of an informational text.

Standards:

ELA.RI.6.2 Analyze informational text development.

- a. Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details.
- b. Provide an objective summary of the text that includes the central idea and relevant details.

ELA.RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

ELA.SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

ELA. SL.6.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study

ELA. RH.6-8.2 Analyze content-area-specific text development.

- a. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source.
- b. Provide an accurate summary that includes the central ideas of the source.

ELA. RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
5 minutes Introduction Divide students into eight mixed-ability groups Explain: <i>Today we are going to examine antisemitism through history before studying how the Nazis built upon it with their own racist ideology that led to the murder of six million Jews and millions of others.</i> Project on the board the definition of antisemitism from the USHMM Glossary and ask groups to determine the three most important words in the definition and why. After a few minutes of group discussion, invite a few groups to share out their choices and reasoning.	definition of antisemitism from the USHMM Glossary
5 minutes Ask students: <i>As you watch this four-minute video clip on antisemitism, look for antisemitic myths or tropes or elements that have been repeated at different times in history.</i> Play the segment on antisemitism from 1:58-5:30 of the <i>Video Toolbox: Antisemitism</i> video from Echoes & Reflections. Ask students to share within their groups what antisemitic myths or tropes or elements have been repeated at different times in history. Possible student responses: • Jews are in league with the devil • Jews were falsely blamed for disasters like the Black Death by poisoning wells • Jews are accused of using the blood on non-Jewish victims in religious rituals • Jews are accused of treason and treachery or being unpatriotic • Jews were accused of being a demonic force, poisoning the world with conflicting ideas • Jews care only about money • Jews are accused of conspiracy • Jews are accused of plotting to take over the world	Echoes & Reflections Video Toolbox: <i>Antisemitism</i> segment on antisemitism 1:58-5:30
10 minutes Point out to students: <i>These historical antisemitic myths all involved accusations of <u>actions</u> on the part of the Jews. As inaccurate as these beliefs were, a person can stop an action. The Nazis exacerbated</i>	USHMM article on Nazi racism

<i>antisemitism with another falsehood that Jews would be powerless to change. Read this USHMM article on Nazi racism independently to identify the element that Hitler and the Nazis added with their ideology.</i> Scaffold for learners who need support in reading by encouraging them to play the audio recording at the top of the page. Ask: <i>What element did the Nazis add that was impossible for Jews to change?</i> [Nazis said Jews were a race, and an inferior race.]	with audio recording linked at top of page
5 minutes Ask students to work within their groups to write a sentence that identifies a central idea just of this written text, Nazi Racism from USHMM. (The “Media Essay” sidebar is important, related knowledge, but it is separate from this text.) Invite volunteer groups to share out and together, whole group, revise and determine a sentence that identifies a central idea.	
5 minutes Explain that our next task is to write an objective summary of the article. Review what a summary is [a shorter restatement of the most important information] and what it means to be objective [free of opinion or judgment]. Tell students: <i>Before we start, let’s give some examples of things that we would NOT put in an objective summary—either something that is not objective or the detail is too minor to be in a summary.</i> Possible student responses: • The Nazis were idiots. This stupid idea... • “Adolph Hitler had brown hair and was average height.” • “In his book <i>Mein Kampf</i> (<i>My Struggle</i>, published in 1925), Hitler explained his racist worldview.”	
5 minutes Assign each group a different section of the text, including the untitled section before “Introduction.” Ask each group to write a one-sentence summary of its section in support of the class statement of the central idea, writing it either on a sentence strip or on a shared document. Post them sequentially,	Optional: sentence strips

explaining that you are following the structure of the original text, and read aloud the finished summary paragraph.	
10 minutes Closing Project on the board page 4 of Nazi Propaganda Examples from Echoes & Reflections. Make sure students understand that Nazis would visit German classrooms to explain, among other things, the false theory of the inferior physical characteristics of Jews and other so-called “inferior” races and how those differ from the “superior” characteristics of Aryans. Read the introduction to Judith Becker and play her 3-minute testimony. Ask students what Judith’s bother’s experience says about Nazi racial theory. [It’s false.] Start a collaborative class list of questions for Max, either posted in the classroom or as a shared digital document. Encourage students to add to the list over the course of the unit as they read Max’s memoir. Remove questions that get answered by the memoir or other lesson activities. Students will refer to the final list in the lesson, Dimensions in Testimony: Interviewing Max Directly.	Echoes & Reflections Nazi Propaganda Examples page 4 Nazi Propaganda Examples (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections Judith Becker’s testimony

Homework or in class, if time available:

Read prologue, chapters 1, 2 (pages 1-15 in ISBN 978-1-4434-6942-5)

Max's Family Life

After reading prologue and chapters 1, 2

After reading the prologue and chapters 1-2, students consider multiple meanings of two words to understand the title. Learners are introduced to brief information about Auschwitz to understand both the subtitle and the cover design. Students rotate through stations to analyze the text to determine character traits as well as to analyze Max's relationship with his father and his grandfather.

Approximate time: 45 minutes, plus about 25-30 minutes to read chapters 3-5 (pages 17-35) for homework or in class, if time permits

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. connection:

- Oswiencim section
- War (WWI) and Aftermath section

Objectives:

- Students will consider multiple meanings of common words to determine the intent in the title.
- Students will cite textual evidence in support of both inferences they make from the text and of a claim stated directly in the text.

Standards:

ELA.RI.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELA.L.6.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

ELA.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
10 minutes multiple-meaning words Ask students to turn to 2-3 shoulder partners and come up with as many definitions of the words "chance" and "alone" as they can.	picture of prisoner uniform from <i>Auschwitz. Not</i>

As groups report out, keep a list on the board. Ask students which definitions they believe fit the title, <i>By Chance Alone</i>. After students read the subtitle, <i>A Remarkable True Story of Courage and Survival at Auschwitz</i>, explain basic, introductory facts about Auschwitz: <i>Auschwitz was a system of camps used to imprison and to force into slave labor and to murder Jews, Roma, Soviet prisoners of war, non-Jewish Poles, and others the Nazis deemed “inferior” or opposed to their rule. Approximately 1.3 million people were sent to Auschwitz, and only about 200,000 survived. The rest were murdered or worked to death.</i> Students should have previously determined a definition of chance that is similar to luck. Prompt students to consider: <i>What type of luck would you expect to come up for Max?</i> [Answers will vary.] <u>Direct students to dedicate a spot in their notes where they record instances of luck for Max as they read the book.</u> (Students will refer to this list in the Socratic Seminar lesson and if they complete the suggested essay assessment.) Ask if students know why there are blue and gray vertical stripes on the cover. • If anyone does, discuss, showing a picture and mentioning that these uniforms are artifacts in the upcoming field trip to the <i>Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.</i> exhibition. • If students don’t yet understand the significance of the stripes, advise them to be on the lookout for an explanation as they read. (Max is issued his uniform in chapter 10.) Ask if students know why the color yellow was chosen to surround Max on the cover. • If anyone does, discuss the yellow star, showing a Yad Vashem picture of a Hungarian yellow star and mentioning that these are artifacts in the upcoming field trip to the <i>Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.</i> exhibit. • If students don’t yet understand the significance of yellow, advise them to be on the lookout for an explanation as they read. (Max discusses the yellow star in chapter 6, on page 37.)	<i>long ago. Not far away.</i> Yad Vashem picture of a Hungarian yellow star
25 minutes stations Post half-sheets with station instructions (below) at different points around the room, directing students to respond in their notebooks or on their own paper. If you prefer not to have students move or collaborate, you can pass out copies of the half-sheets to students. Otherwise, group students or allow students to rotate among the stations independently. Go over responses whole group or collect and provide individualized feedback.	Stations A-E and Keys

5 minutes Closing (an anticipatory set activity for the Anti-Jewish Laws lesson in two days) Ask students, in preparation for the reading they are about to do and learning in a future lesson, to complete the ranking on What Rights are Most Important to Me? from Echoes & Reflections.	What Rights are Most Important to Me? from Echoes & Reflections What Rights are Most Important to Me? (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections
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For homework or, if time permits, in class:
Read chapters 3-5 (pages 17-35, about 25-30 minutes)

Station A

On page 7, Max states, “My grandfather was strong and smart.”

Give at least two details or examples from pages 7-8 to support this claim about his grandfather.

Max shows his grandfather is... (circle one)	With...	On page...
strong smart		
strong smart		
strong smart		
strong smart		

Station B

Read the end of page 9 and the first full paragraph on page 15. How would you describe Max’s relationship with his father?

Quote a phrase or sentence from page 9 and another from page 15 to support your analysis of their relationship:

p. 9

p. 15

Station C

- *Fiction* is not true, a made up story.
- *Nonfiction* is true, a documentation of something that actually happened.
- *Literary nonfiction* is a true story that uses the devices of fictional literature to read like an interesting, engaging story rather than a straightforward recitation of facts. *By Chance Alone* is a work of literary nonfiction.

As with fiction, we can look at “characters” in the book—even though they were real people—and determine their character *traits*, aspects or qualities of their personalities. For example, one character trait of Max’s father is that he is *strict* or *stern*.

1. What is a character trait of Max’s mother? (Look on page 12.)
2. List at least four examples Max gives on page 12 that help the reader determine this trait of his mother.

Station D

- *Fiction* is not true, a made up story.
- *Nonfiction* is true, a documentation of something that actually happened.
- *Literary nonfiction* is a true story that uses the devices of fictional literature to read like an interesting, engaging story rather than a straightforward recitation of facts. *By Chance Alone* is a work of literary nonfiction.

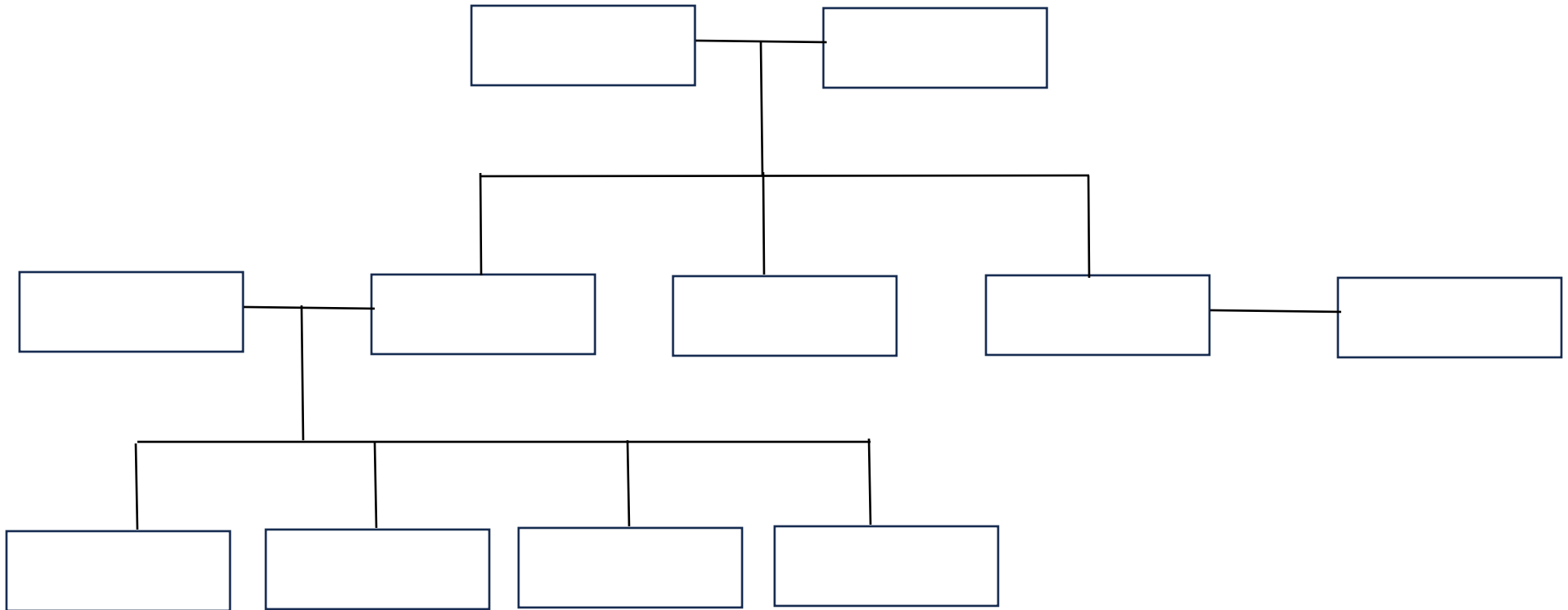
As with fiction, we can look at “characters” in the book—even though they were real people—and determine their character *traits*, aspects or qualities of their personalities. For example, one character trait of Max’s father is that he is *strict* or *stern*.

1. What is a character trait of Max’s Aunt Bella? (Look on page 12.)
2. List at least two examples Max gives on page 12 that help the reader determine this trait of Aunt Bella.

Station E—if you have time

Fill in the family tree diagram for Max's family. Use chapter 2 for help.

Eisen Family (all are Jewish)



Station A (RI.6.1) KEY

On page 7, Max states, “My grandfather was strong and smart.”

Give at least two details or examples from pages 7-8 to support this claim about his grandfather.

Possible student responses:

Max shows his grandfather is... (circle one)	With...	On page...
strong smart	<i>“Grandfather explains how to use the position of the sun in the sky and the shadows cast by the trees to know his position in the forest.”</i>	8 [12]
strong smart	<i>“Grandfather explains how to tell a poisonous mushroom from an edible one.”</i>	8 [15]
strong smart	<i>“Grandfather worked in the lumberyard”</i>	7 [11]
strong smart	<i>“Student may infer Max’s grandfather is smart because he could assess “the perfect trees.”</i>	7 [13]

Station B (RI.6.1) KEY

Look at the end of page 9 and the first full paragraph on page 15. How would you describe Max’s relationship with his father?

Possible student response:

Max feels like he does not meet his father’s expectations of him, although he tries to do well both in his work and his behavior.

Quote a phrase or sentence from page 9 and another from page 15 to support your analysis of their relationship:

p. 9

“My father was strict and demanded that I work hard and do a good job.”

p. 15

“My face burned with shame, and I wanted the floor to swallow me up, especially when I saw the look of disappointment on my father’s face.”

Station C (RI.6.1) KEY

- *Fiction* is not true, a made up story.
- *Nonfiction* is true, a documentation of something that actually happened.
- *Literary nonfiction* is a true story that uses the devices of fictional literature to read like an interesting, engaging story rather than a straightforward recitation of facts. *By Chance Alone* is a work of literary nonfiction.

As with fiction, we can look at “characters” in the book—even though they were real people—and determine their character *traits*, aspects or qualities of their personalities. For example, one character trait of Max’s father is that he is *strict* or *stern*.

1. What is a character trait of Max’s mother? (Look on page 12.)

Possible response: hard-working

2. List at least four examples Max gives on page 12 that help the reader determine this trait of his mother.

Cooks nutritious meals from scratch

Makes clothes

Picks plums from the orchard and makes dozens of jars of plum jam

Does crafts for the synagogue

Helps the poor

Knits dresses for herself

--all done with no running water in the home, no washing machine

Station D (RI.6.1) KEY

- *Fiction* is not true, a made up story.
- *Nonfiction* is true, a documentation of something that actually happened.
- *Literary nonfiction* is a true story that uses the devices of fictional literature to read like an interesting, engaging story rather than a straightforward recitation of facts. *By Chance Alone* is a work of literary nonfiction.

As with fiction, we can look at “characters” in the book—even though they were real people—and determine their character *traits*, aspects or qualities of their personalities. For example, one character trait of Max’s father is that he is *strict* or *stern*.

1. What is a character trait of Max’s Aunt Bella? (Look on page 12.)

Bella loves stories.

OR *Bella depends on help from others.*

2. List at least two examples Max gives on page 13 that help the reader determine this trait of Aunt Bella.

“She loved to read.”

“She read aloud to me.”

Children all sit at her feet, listening to her tell stories.

“Grandfather had to help her out of bed”

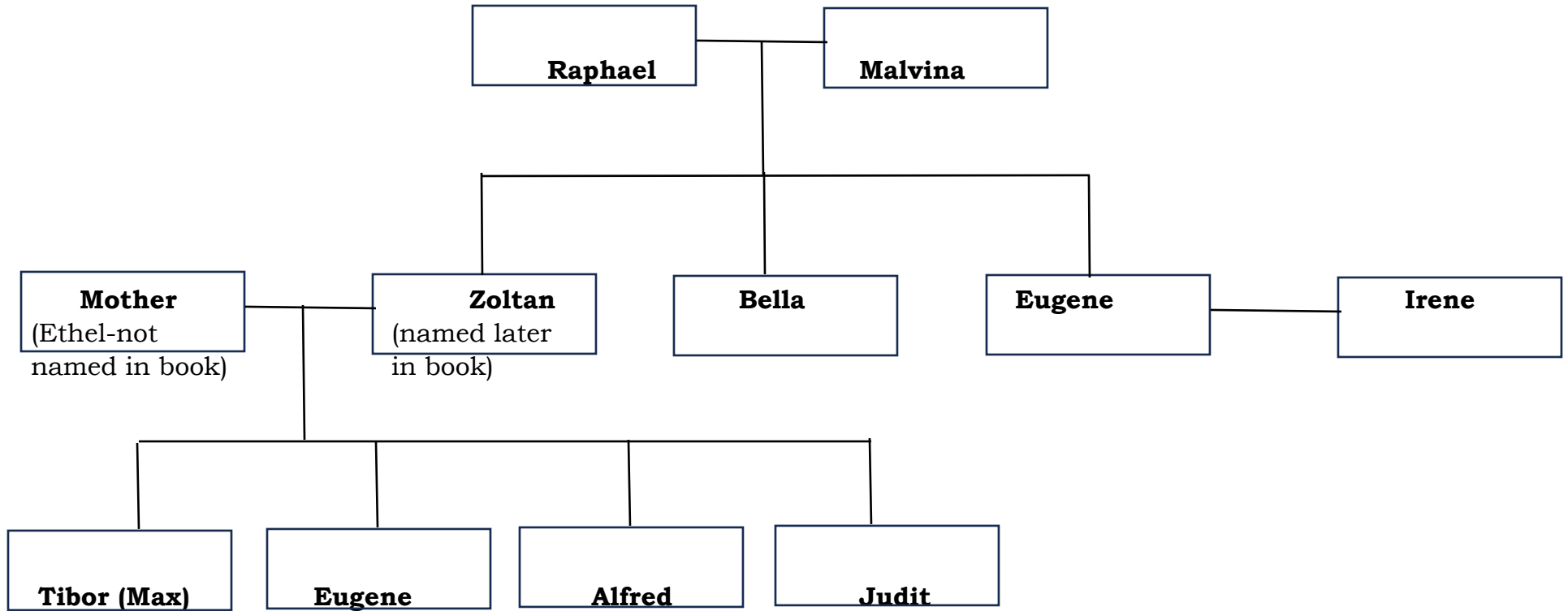
“Grandmother washed and dressed her.”

Grandmother does her hair.

Station E—if you have time KEY

Fill in the family tree diagram for Max's family. Use page 5 and chapter 2 for help.

Eisen Family



Nazism comes to Moldava nad Bodvou

After reading chapters 3-5

Students will survey a set of maps to help them understand the territorial changes Max describes and to situate the action in the larger European context. Students will begin to gather examples of good “chance” that Max experiences, developing a sense of theme from the title.

Approximate time: 45 minutes, plus about 20 minutes to read chapters 6-7 for homework or in class, if time permits

Objectives:

- Students will develop their understanding of the territorial changes that affect Max by using maps alongside the memoir.
- Students will recognize an example of good chance/luck in the reading.

Standards:

ELA. RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

ELA. RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
10 minutes Ask students to sketch relative positions of: • Max’s home country of Czechoslovakia as well as • adjacent regions of its three neighbors: ○ Germany (Austria had been absorbed by Germany at the time) ○ Hungary ○ Poland • Include on the sketch changes to Czechoslovakia’s territory, as Max describes at the bottom of page 17 through the first two full paragraphs on page 18. Do not let students consult resources; this is just a check for their current understanding, which may be very limited.	
5 minutes	

Explain: <i>Historians, geographers, and other social scientists often use multiple maps to gain different pieces of information to develop a full understanding. Today we are taking on the role of social scientists.</i> Project a close-up map of Max's hometown of Moldava nad Bodvou (in current-day Slovakia): Direct students: <i>Note that the town is close to the regional capital of Kosice. Max's hometown is so small that it won't be noted on other maps we view, so keep this approximation in mind.</i> Gradually zoom out until most of Europe is visible. Point out current-day Czech Republic (that was also part of Czechoslovakia when Max was a kid) as well as Hungary to the south and Poland to the north. Make sure students recognize that, even today, Moldava nad Bodvou sits on the border with Hungary.	Google map zoomed in on Moldava nad Bodvou
10 minutes Using the first three of USHMM's Czechoslovakia maps, remind students that Moldava is just southwest of Kosice, which is visible in all of these maps. Explain that Max's country of Czechoslovakia was carved up when Germany took over first the Sudetenland, then Bohemia and Moravia, while giving a section to its close ally, Hungary. Zoom in a bit on USHMM's Major deportations to Auschwitz map so learners see Auschwitz and that Kosice was not only close but a site of deportations to Auschwitz. Refer back to the book's subtitle to remind students that Max will eventually be taken to Auschwitz.	USHMM's Czechoslovakia maps USHMM's Major deportations to Auschwitz map
10 minutes Ask students to revise or redo their sketches (just rough sketches, not clearly delineated maps). This time, show Moldava and Bodvou along with: • Max's home country of Czechoslovakia as well as • adjacent regions of its three neighbors: ○ Germany (Austria had been absorbed by Germany at the time) ○ Hungary ○ Poland • Include on the sketch changes to Czechoslovakia's territory	
10 minutes Closing	Teacher resource: The

Ask students if they noted any examples in the reading of “chance’s” working in Max’s favor. [He was in the only group of trucks originally destined for a “workplace”—or so they were told—who instead were told to go home. Everyone else in that transport was killed by the Einsatzgruppen.] Ask a volunteer to read aloud the last two paragraphs of chapter 5. Then project Yahad-In Unum’s map while you read to students the three paragraphs in the “Einsatzgruppen” section on pages 2-3 of The “Final Solution” from Echoes & Reflections. (Most 6th-grade teachers will not want to share the handout with students, as it includes a photograph of victims at gunpoint.) Explain that Yahad-In Unum continues to investigate killing sites of the mobile killing squads and has documented each site it has discovered with a dot on this map. Remind students to note this example of Max’s good “chance” on the list in their notes.	“Final Solution” from Echoes & Reflections Yahad-In Unum’s map
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Homework or in class, if time permits:
read chapters 6-7 (about 20 minutes)

Anti-Jewish Laws

After chapters 6-7

Students analyze how Max shows the erosion of Jewish rights, and they do the same for a secondary source about Hungary. They watch testimonies of two survivors with experiences like Max's and compare the presentations.

Approximate time: 45 minutes

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. connection:

- Expulsion of the Jews section
- Nuremberg Laws

Objectives:

- Students will identify examples of steps in the erosion of Jewish rights in both a secondary and primary source (memoir).
- Students will compare Max's written testimony with a survivor's video testimony and analyze each source to identify the emotions provoked in the speaker and author by similar situations.

Standards:

ELA.RI.6.3 Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

ELA.RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

ELA.SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

ELA. RH.6-8.3 Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

ELA.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

ELA.RH.6-8.9 Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

SEL.MG.C3.3.c Demonstrate respect for human dignity virtually and in-person

Procedures	Materials, Resources
10 minutes Group students into pairs by readiness level. Ask students to retrieve their completed handout, What Rights are Most Important to Me? from Echoes & Reflections. Direct students: <i>Explain to your partner who you chose the right you marked as #1.</i> Explain: <i>We are going to consider how authors show Jewish rights were taken away over time, first in Nazi Germany, then in Hungary, where Max lives. We will read a secondary source and then use Max's memoir, a primary source.</i> Pass out Nazi Germany and Anti-Jewish Policy from Echoes & Reflections. Ask for volunteers each to read a section on page 1. Ask questions to help clarify students' understanding. Verify that students understand the bullet points make up a tool of historians called a <i>timeline</i>. • Ask: <i>What is the organizational structure of a timeline—its whole purpose is to put things in what order?</i> [chronological] • Ask: <i>What type/category of items are enumerated on this timeline?</i> [examples of anti-Jewish policies in Nazi Germany] Ask for a volunteer to read the last paragraph on page 3 and clarify any sources of confusion for students.	What Rights are Most Important to Me? from Echoes & Reflections What Rights are Most Important to Me? (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections Nazi Germany and Anti-Jewish Policy from Echoes & Reflections Nazi Germany and Anti-Jewish Policy (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections
20 minutes:	

Scaffolded Activity for Pairs who benefit from support	On-Grade Level Pairs	Advanced Learner Pairs	Materials
Ask students to read the text, German Occupation and Alliances: Hungary: Oppression (below) from The Wiener Holocaust Library. Direct students to collaborate with their partners to complete the segmented timeline handout with years indicated (below).	Ask students to read the text, German Occupation and Alliances: Hungary: Oppression (below) from The Wiener Holocaust Library. Direct students to collaborate with their partners to complete the open timeline handout (below).	Ask students to read the text, German Occupation and Alliances: Hungary: Oppression (below) from The Wiener Holocaust Library. Direct students to collaborate with their partners to complete the Examples and Anecdotes T-chart handout (below).	German Occupation and Alliances: Hungary: Oppression segmented timeline handout with years indicated and KEY open timeline handout and KEY Examples and Anecdotes T-chart and KEY
*If students did not know why yellow was used on the cover, ask if they can make a conjecture now. [yellow Star of David that many European Jews were forced to wear.] Point out the yellow star was not required in Germany until 1941, which is why it doesn't appear on the Nazi Germany timeline that goes through 1938.			Yad Vashem picture of a Hungarian yellow star
15 min Closing Pass out the Testimony Reflection Sheet from Echoes & Reflections to each student. Ask students to write Max's name as the first "interviewee" and read page 43 and to the first paragraph break at the top of page 44. Then complete each of the three cells in Max's row. Note that for the second cell you won't see any body language but that Max certainly tells us his emotions. As a scaffold for students who may have difficulty with some of the accents, enable closed captioning on the testimony videos. Tell students the next interviewee is named Barbara and read her bio to students. <i>Ask students to listen for similarities between bystander behavior that Barbara witnessed and Max did.</i> Play the video (3:00) and ask the students to complete her row. Ask: What did she have in common with Max?			Testimony Reflection Sheet from Echoes & Reflections Testimony Reflection Sheet (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections

○ Possible student responses: ▪ Marched with her family ▪ She seems angry too. ▪ Enumerates the examples of the close relationship she had with the neighbors (They were guests at my mother's dining room table. People had "tipped their hat," greeted her mother respectfully, pinched her cheek.) and that they stood and watched stony-faced. ▪ People peeked through the window. ▪ "It was so shameful, so humiliating." Tell students the next interviewee is named Ibolya and read her bio to students. <i>Ask students to listen for similarities between bystander behavior that Ibolya witnessed and Max did.</i> Play the video (2:30) and ask the students to complete her row. • Ask: What did she have in common with Max? ○ Possible student responses: ▪ <i>People spat on them, said ugly words.</i> <i>Ask: What do we get from the video testimonies that we cannot get from the written? What do we get from the written that we do not get from the videos?</i> Remind students that these testimonies were recorded about 60 or 70 years after the events these women described. Likewise, Max was writing that much later too. Ask: • <i>What stayed with Max, all those years later?</i> [responses will vary] • <i>What stayed with Barabara, all those years later?</i> [responses will vary] • <i>What stayed with Ibolya, all those years later?</i> [responses will vary] • <i>Is there anything in common to all of them?</i> ○ Possible student response: a common sense of betrayal If students don't mention it, ask who Ibolya mentioned last. • <i>Who was she still thinking about 70 years later?</i> [The one person who spoke up.] • <i>Do you think it's important for people to know that one person can do something good that stays with a victim for 70 years? Ibolya didn't get her blanket back, but did that person still make a difference for her?</i> [Yes, the upstander let her know she was valued.]	Testimonies from Echoes & Reflections: Barbara and Ibolya
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German Occupation and Alliances

Hungary: Oppression

Although the Hungarian authorities did not actively deport Hungarian Jews until the occupation of Hungary in 1944, harsh antisemitic policies were in place. Between 1920 and 1944, over 300 antisemitic laws were passed.

From 1938, the persecution of Jews increased significantly as Hungary strengthened its ties with Nazi Germany. The law known as the First Jewish Law was passed on 29 May 1938. This law limited the number of Jews in many professions and companies to a maximum of 20%.

In 1939, a law forced all Jewish men of military age to join the Hungarian Labour Service.

On 5 May 1939, the Second Jewish Law passed. This law defined Jews as a race rather than a religion: any person with two or more Jewish grandparents was regarded as a Jew. The law also banned Jews from working for the government and further restricted their employment in other areas.

On 8 August 1941, the Hungarian government passed the Third Jewish Law. This law prohibited marriages between Jews and non-Jews.

Following the Nazi occupation in 1944, the persecution of the Jews turned actively murderous. Almost immediately, Jews had to wear a Star of David on their clothes, and their movement was restricted. Telephones and radios were confiscated, and Jewish property and businesses were seized. During April, the Jews of Hungary were forced into ghettos, where they were soon deported to extermination camps in the east.

Hungary was liberated by the Soviet army during April 1945. By this time, approximately 568,000 Hungarian Jews had perished during the Holocaust.

Name _____

Read “German Occupation and Alliances: Hungary: Oppression.” Use examples from the text to build a timeline to illustrate the text’s central idea that “from 1938, the persecution of Jews increased significantly.”

Then look on pages 23, 24, and 37 of *By Chance Alone* to find at least two of these policies that Max tells about in an anecdote (a short event in the story). Circle those policies.

Anti-Jewish Policy in Hungary by Year

1938

1939

1941

1944

Name _____

Read “German Occupation and Alliances: Hungary: Oppression.” Use examples from the text to build a timeline to illustrate the text’s central idea that “from 1938, the persecution of Jews increased significantly.”

Then look on pages 23, 24, and 37 of *By Chance Alone* to find at least two of these policies that Max tells about in an anecdote (a short event in the story). Circle those policies.

Anti-Jewish Policy in Hungary by Year

Name _____

Read “German Occupation and Alliances: Hungary: Oppression.”

Use the article and pages 23-24, 37, and 45 to complete the table. Draw lines connecting identical or similar examples used in the texts.

Examples of erosion of Jewish rights
shown in “Oppression”

Anecdotes showing erosion of Jewish rights in
By Chance Alone (include page numbers)

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Name ____KEY____

Read “German Occupation and Alliances: Hungary: Oppression.” Use examples from the text to build a timeline to illustrate the text’s central idea that “from 1938, the persecution of Jews increased significantly.”

Then look on pages 23, 24, and 37 of *By Chance Alone* to find at least two of these policies that Max tells about in an anecdote (a short event in the story). Circle those policies.

Anti-Jewish Policy in Hungary by Year

1938

- limited the number of Jews in many professions and companies to a maximum of 20%

1939

- all Jewish men of military age had to join the Hungarian Labour Service
 - On page 24, Max describes his father’s and uncle’s departure to work.
- defined Jews as a race rather than a religion: any person with two or more Jewish grandparents was regarded as a Jew
- banned Jews from working for the government and further restricted their employment in other areas

1941

- prohibited marriages between Jews and non-Jews

1944

- Jews had to wear a Star of David on their clothes
 - On page 37, Max discusses the irony of being ashamed of a symbol of his faith.
- the movement of Jews was restricted
- Jews had to give up telephones and radios
 - On page 23, the family had to turn in their radios.
- Jewish property and businesses were seized
 - On page 24, Max’s father has to turn over the keys to the Cellar.
- Jews were forced into ghettos
 - (Max recounts this on page 45 without using the term *ghetto*, so this page number is not provided to on-level learners, although some may make the connection.)

Name ____KEY(responses may vary for imperfect matches) _____

Read “German Occupation and Alliances: Hungary: Oppression.”

Use the article and pages 23-24, 37, and 45 to complete the table. Draw lines connecting identical or similar examples used in the texts.

Examples of erosion of Jewish rights shown in “Oppression”	Anecdotes showing erosion of Jewish rights in <i>By Chance Alone</i> (include page numbers)
limited the number of Jews in many professions and companies to a maximum of 20%	
defined Jews as a race rather than a religion: any person with two or more Jewish grandparents was regarded as a Jew	
banned Jews from working for the government and further restricted their employment in other areas	
prohibited marriages between Jews and non-Jews	
Telephones and radios were confiscated	Had to give radio to government (23)
	Jewish families had to be photographed by the police (23)
	Jewish families could not employ non-Jews (24)
Jewish property and businesses were seized	Jews could not sell alcohol (24)
all Jewish men of military age to join the Hungarian Labour Service	All Jewish males age 18-45 sent away to work in mines, forests, and military installations on the Eastern Front (24)
	Jewish students had to sit in the back of the classroom (rule rather than law) (37)
	Food and material for clothing were severely limited for Jews (37)
Jews had to wear a Star of David on their clothes	Jews had to wear yellow six-pointed star of David (37)
Jews’ movement was restricted	
Jews were forced into ghettos	Max’s family and others from his hometown were sent to Kassa, where they had to stay with other Jewish families in one area of the city (45)

Nazi Camps

Before chapters 8-9

Students do a jigsaw to learn about and share with classmates information about the Nazi camp system and groups within. They also learn about selection.

Approximate time: 90 minutes, plus about 10 minutes to read chapters 8-9 for homework or in class, if time permits

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. connections:

- Arrival section
- Artifacts: camp uniforms, colored triangles, Roma artifacts

Objectives:

- Students will use their speaking and listening skills to collaborate on the elements of an objective summary and to share the information they learn with a group of classmates.
- Students will develop initial understanding of types of Nazi camps, the prisoners held there, and the selection process done there.

Standards:

ELA.RI.6.2 Analyze informational text development.

- a. Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details.
- b. Provide an objective summary of the text that includes the central idea and relevant details.

ELA.SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

ELA.RH.6-8.2 Analyze content-area-specific text development.

- a. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source.
- b. Provide an accurate summary that includes the central ideas of the source.

Teacher note:

While selection may have occurred in very small numbers at the other killing centers of Chelmno, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Belzec to get a few workers to help perform the functions of the camp, Auschwitz was in the unique position of being both

a forced-labor camp and a killing center, so there was a need for workers, although, in the worst months of the Hungarian transports, about 90% were sent straight to the gas chambers. [USHMM recently reclassified Majdanek as a concentration camp for forced labor rather than a killing center, even though it had gas chambers and crematoria: “In the past, many scholars counted the Majdanek camp (located just outside the city of Lublin) as a sixth killing center. However, based on newer research, Lublin-Majdanek is usually classified as a concentration camp. According to this research, German authorities used Majdanek primarily as a place to concentrate Jews who were being temporarily spared for use as forced laborers. Occasionally, especially after Belzec ceased operating in late 1942, Jews were sent to Majdanek as part of Operation Reinhard to undergo selection. Jews selected as unfit for labor were murdered at Lublin-Majdanek either by shooting or in the camp's gas chambers.” USHMM, [Killing Centers in German-Occupied Poland, 1942](#)]

Procedures	Materials, Resources
5 minutes Review with students what goes into an objective summary—and what does not.	
10 minutes Map Give each student a copy of Echoes & Reflections map from USHMM, Major Nazi Camps in Europe, 1944. Explain that there were more than 40,000 camps and ghettos, so it would be impossible to mark them all on this map. Ask students to share what they notice and what they wonder. Invite students to compare country outlines from their previous map, Jewish communities in Europe before the Nazis rise to power. Explain: <i>Our next job, as we follow Max’s story, is to learn about these camps, who was in them, and a process used at the camps called selection.</i> If students don’t know how a jigsaw works, explain they will join an expert group to learn about one of these topics and to write an objective summary of the article they read. Later we will mix up the groups so there is at least one expert for each topic in each group, and the experts will teach the rest of their group about their topics.	Major Nazi Camps in Europe, 1944 map from USHMM and Echoes & Reflections Major Nazi Camps in Europe, 1944 (Spanish) map from USMM and Echoes & Reflections Map Jewish communities in Europe before the Nazis rise to power from Echoes & Reflections Map of Jewish Communities before the Nazi Rise to Power (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections

30 minutes Jigsaw Expert Groups				Jigsaw strategy at Facing History & Ourselves
Divide students into four or more expert groups based on readiness. There are four texts, but you can have more than one group work on the same text. One text has no scaffolding, and there are three levels of scaffolding across the other three. Each student should write their own objective summary. Encourage students to make a plan for what they will share with classmates about their topic. (They will get five minutes.) If their group still has work time, they can trade within their group to peer edit.				
Learners in need of support	On-level Learners	On-level Learners	Advanced Learners	
Most scaffolding	More scaffolding	Minimal scaffolding	No scaffolding	
Read USHMM's Nazi Camp System and provided central idea on handout . Select, from a list, points to include in objective summary.	Read USHMM's " Enemies of the State " and provided central idea on handout . Select, from a list, points to include in objective summary. Add any points missing from the list.	Read USHMM's Prisoners of the Camps and write central idea on handout . Select, from a list, points to include in objective summary. Add any points missing from the list.	Write central idea and objective summary of The Arrival about selection.	USHMM's Nazi Camp System and handout and KEY USHMM's "Enemies of the State" and handout and KEY USHMM's Prisoners of the Camps and handout and KEY The Arrival from <i>Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.</i>
25 minutes Jigsaw Teaching Groups				
Reconstitute groups so there is at least one expert for each of the four topics in each home group. Give experts each 5 minutes to teach their teammates about their topic and to answer any questions.				
10 minutes				
Explain that Max soon will be arriving in Auschwitz, so we need to know some specifics about that camp—or camp system. This is tough content, so read aloud to the whole group USHMM's Auschwitz Camp Complex . From the key dates, consider also reading the section for October 8, 1941, since Max is at Birkenau for a time.				USHMM's Auschwitz Camp Complex
10 Minutes Closing				Leo Bretholz's

Explain to students that escapes from Auschwitz were extraordinarily rare, as were escapes from the deportation trains carrying people there. But we have testimony from a man who succeeded. Read Leo Bretholz's bio to the students and play his USHMM [testimony](#) (4:14). Debrief with students.

[testimony](#)
(4:14) from
USHMM

Homework or in class, if time permits:
Read chapters 8-9 (about 10 minutes)

Read “[Nazi Camp System](#).” You do not have to read “key dates” at the end.

Central idea of “Nazi Camp System”

Nazi camps started as a way to imprison political opponents, but they grew in number, purpose, and population either to force millions of Jews and members other groups into labor or to murder them.

Check any information you would include in an objective summary of “Nazi Camp System”:

- ☐ First camps were prisons for Communists and Socialists.
- ☐ Regime added other populations in 1935.
- ☐ Later added people deemed racially or biologically “inferior,” especially Jews
- ☐ This racist mentality was based in Nazis’ cruelty.
- ☐ When war began, camp functions changed from imprisonment to forced labor and murder.
- ☐ Forced labor camps meant prisoners worked to death.
- ☐ Number of camps and prisoners grew a lot during the war.
- ☐ This was a stupid approach because it ruined Germany’s chance of winning the war.
- ☐ Prisoners quadrupled three years after start of war to 100,000.
- ☐ Prisoners from almost every European nation
- ☐ Extermination camps (killing centers) were in Poland.
- ☐ Several hundred thousand Roma and Soviet prisoners of war were killed.
- ☐ More than 700,000 prisoners were registered in the concentration camps in January 1945.
- ☐ Nazis should have been sent to their own concentration camps after the war.

Is there anything else that should be included?

Read **“Enemies of the State”**. You do not have to read “key dates” at the end.

Central idea of “Enemies of the State”

While Jews were the Nazis’ primary target, Roma, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and gay men were considered “asocials” and subjected to various types of persecution from early in the Holocaust.

Check any information you would include in an objective summary of “Enemies of the State”:

- ☐ Roma were considered racially inferior.
- ☐ By believing that, the Nazis showed how unintelligent they were.
- ☐ Roma had been in Germany since 1400.
- ☐ Roma had been victims of official discrimination long before 1933.
- ☐ Romani families were rounded up and forced to live in special camps under police guard.
- ☐ Jehovah’s Witnesses’ religious beliefs meant they couldn’t join the army or do the “Heil Hitler” salute.
- ☐ It makes no sense that the Nazis, who hated the Jews, also persecuted a Christian group like the Jehovah’s Witnesses.
- ☐ If Witnesses weren’t sent to concentration camps, they lost their jobs, social welfare benefits, and civil rights.
- ☐ Paragraph 175 was a statute criminalizing sexual relations between men.
- ☐ Gay men had to wear a pink triangle on their camp uniforms.

What else is necessary to include?

Read “[Prisoners of the Camps](#).” You do not have to read “key dates” at the end.

State the central idea of “Prisoners of the Camps” in one sentence:

Check any information you would include in an objective summary of “Prisoners of the Camps”:

- ☐ What the Germans did to prisoners in their camps was disgusting.
- ☐ Victims of the killing centers were overwhelmingly Jewish.
- ☐ People from other backgrounds were in forced labor and concentration camps.
- ☐ These were the camps without gassing facilities.
- ☐ These prisoners had it easy.
- ☐ People wore colored triangles to identify the groups they were from.
- ☐ Those markings made it easy for officers to know what group a prisoner was in.
- ☐ Political prisoners (like Socialists, Communists, trade unionists)—red
- ☐ Common criminals (like thieves and murders)—green
- ☐ Roma and “asocials”—black
- ☐ Jehovah’s Witnesses—purple
- ☐ Gay men—pink
- ☐ Letters on the triangles indicated nationality
- ☐ P=Pole
- ☐ SU=Soviet prisoner of war
- ☐ F=French
- ☐ 3,000,000 captured Soviet prisoners of war were forced to work and died from maltreatment or execution.
- ☐ Political prisoners, Jehovah's Witnesses, and gay men were not targeted like Jews and Roma were, and they were sent to concentration camps as punishment.
- ☐ Many died there from starvation, disease, exhaustion, and brutal treatment.
- ☐ Starvation was the worst way to die.

What else is necessary to include?

KEY: Suggested responses are in bold, although students may make valid arguments for different choices. Statements that are “not objective” should not be included.

Central idea of “Nazi Camp System”:

Nazi camps started as a way to imprison political opponents, but they grew in number, purpose, and population either to force millions of Jews and members other groups into labor or to murder them.

Check any information you would include in an objective summary of “Nazi Camp System”:

- ☐ **First camps were prisons for Communists and Socialists.**
- ☐ Regime added other populations in 1935.
- ☐ **Later added people deemed racially or biologically “inferior,” especially Jews**
- ☐ This racist mentality was based in Nazis’ cruelty. ***Not objective.***
- ☐ **When war began, camp functions changed from imprisonment to forced labor and murder.**
- ☐ **Forced labor camps meant prisoners worked to death.**
- ☐ Number of camps and prisoners grew a lot during the war.
- ☐ This was a stupid approach because it ruined Germany’s chance of winning the war.
- ☐ **Prisoners quadrupled three years after start of war to 100,000. (or the bullet two prior)**
- ☐ **Prisoners from almost every European nation**
- ☐ **Extermination camps (killing centers) were in Poland.**
- ☐ **Several hundred thousand Roma and Soviet prisoners of war were killed.**
- ☐ More than 700,000 prisoners were registered in the concentration camps in January 1945.
- ☐ Nazis should have been sent to their own concentration camps after the war. ***Not objective.***

Is there anything else that should be included?

KEY: Suggested responses are in bold, although students may make valid arguments for different choices. Statements that are “not objective” should not be included.

Central idea of “Enemies of the State”:

While Jews were the Nazis’ primary target, Roma, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and gay men were considered “asocials” and subjected to various types of persecution from early in the Holocaust.

Check any information you would include in an objective summary of “Enemies of the State”:

- ☐ **Roma were considered racially inferior.**
- ☐ By believing that, the Nazis showed how unintelligent they were. ***Not objective.***
- ☐ Roma had been in Germany since 1400.
- ☐ Roma had been victims of official discrimination long before 1933.
- ☐ **Romani families were rounded up and forced to live in special camps under police guard.**
- ☐ **Jehovah’s Witnesses’ religious beliefs meant they couldn’t join the army or do the “Heil Hitler” salute.**
- ☐ It makes no sense that the Nazis, who hated the Jews, also persecuted a Christian group like the Jehovah’s Witnesses. ***Not objective.***
- ☐ **If Witnesses weren’t sent to concentration camps, they lost their jobs, social welfare benefits, and civil rights.**
- ☐ **Paragraph 175 was a statute criminalizing sexual relations between men.**
- ☐ Gay men had to wear a pink triangle on their camp uniforms. ?

What else is necessary to include?

Nazis arrested and tried gay men.

Between 5,000 and 15,000 of these “homosexual” offenders were sent to concentration camps.

KEY: Suggested responses are in bold, although students may make valid arguments for different choices. Statements that are “not objective” should not be included.

State the central idea of “Prisoners of the Camps” in one sentence:

Check any information you would include in an objective summary of “Prisoners of the Camps”:

- ☐ What the Germans did to prisoners in their camps was disgusting. ***Not objective.***
- ☐ **Victims of the killing centers were overwhelmingly Jewish.**
- ☐ **People from other backgrounds were in forced labor and concentration camps.**
- ☐ These were the camps without gassing facilities. ?
- ☐ These prisoners had it easy. ***Not objective.***
- ☐ **People wore colored triangles to identify the groups they were from.**
- ☐ **Those markings made it easy for officers to know what group a prisoner was in**
Students may make an argument for including the colors:
- ☐ Political prisoners (like Socialists, Communists, trade unionists)—red
- ☐ Common criminals (like thieves and murders)—green
- ☐ Roma and “asocials”—black
- ☐ Jehovah’s Witnesses—purple
- ☐ Gay men—pink
- ☐ **Letters on the triangles indicated nationality**
- ☐ P=Pole
- ☐ SU=Soviet prisoner of war
- ☐ F=French
- ☐ **3,000,000 captured Soviet prisoners of war were forced to work and died from maltreatment or execution.**
- ☐ **Political prisoners, Jehovah's Witnesses, and gay men were not targeted like Jews and Roma were, and they were sent to concentration camps as punishment.**
- ☐ **Many died there from starvation, disease, exhaustion, and brutal treatment.**
- ☐ Starvation was the worst way to die. ***Not objective.***

What else is necessary to include?

Information about Roma

Selection: Imagery and Tone

After chapters 8-9

Students apply their knowledge of the selection process to analyze a photo from the Auschwitz Album. They compare the photo's communication with the imagery in Max's description of his family's selection and determine his tone. Finally, they compare and contrast video testimony with the memoir and the photograph.

Approximate time: 45 minutes, plus about 25-30 minutes to read chapters 10-13 for homework or in class, if time permits

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. connections:

The exhibit displays several wall-sized versions of photographs from the Auschwitz Album.

Objectives:

- Students will analyze a photograph to apply background knowledge recently gained through reading and listening.
- Students will recognize the limitations of historical photography.
- Students will analyze memoir text for imagery and tone.
- Students will determine how video testimony can corroborate accounts in other forms (memoir, photograph) but can reveal tone and emotion in both verbal and nonverbal ways, where the other two formats use just one of the two.

Standards:

ELA.RL.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices, including sensory language, on meaning and tone.

ELA.RI.6.6 Determine an author's perspective or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

ELA.RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

ELA.SL.6.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

ELA.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources. (with a visual text, in this case)

ELA.RH.6-8.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's perspective or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

ELA.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
25 minutes Photo Analysis Project the second of the four Auschwitz Album pictures from Echoes & Reflections. Try to keep the title/caption from showing so students are forced to use a visual clue (if they know it) that the location is Auschwitz. Give 10 minutes of quiet time for students to study the photograph and complete the National Archives and Records Administration's Analyze a Photograph handout (below). The online version is a fillable pdf you can share with students. Discuss the photo, bringing in all the knowledge that students have from yesterday's jigsaw and from Max's memoir. Explain that generally photography was forbidden at the camp. This photo comes from what is now called the Auschwitz album, that, with a few exceptions, is the only set of photos from Auschwitz. Remind students with Holocaust photography, in particular, we almost always get photographs only from the perpetrators' perspective. Ask students to discuss with a shoulder partner how this event might have been photographed differently by: • A Jew on the ramp • A journalist • A member of the International Red Cross	Auschwitz Album pictures from Echoes & Reflections Auschwitz Album (Spanish) pictures from Echoes & Reflections National Archives and Records Administration's Analyze a Photograph or download from NARA's website
10 minutes Imagery and Tone Ask: • <i>Which of our five senses does this photograph satisfy?</i> [sight] • <i>Can we tell from this photograph what it sounded like? Smelled like? Felt like? Tasted like?</i> • <i>Does Max reveal any of that?</i> ○ "I heard the doors of the other cattle cars being opened." (51) ○ "yelled, 'Raus! Schnell!'" (51) ○ "My legs could hardly hold me up." (52) ○ "We were all numb" (52) ○ "harsh orders that were being barked at us" (52)	

○ “the smell of smoke nearly overwhelmed me” (52) Explain: Imagery is the author’s use of vivid description that appeals to any of the five senses. Are there also examples of Max’s imagery that appeal to the sense of sight? • “bright, harsh light flooded into our cattle car” (51) • “a man wearing striped cap, jacket, and pants” (51) • “confused by the lights” (52) • “SS officers and soldiers dressed in sharp and shiny uniforms” (52) Explain: Imagery helps convey the author’s tone, or his attitude toward his subject. With these phrases, what attitude does Max convey? [Answers will vary. Bewilderment, confusion, resentment.]	
8 minutes Explain: Video testimony can report the same events while showing emotion in a different way. Ask students, as they watch, to: 1. jot down at least one experience he reports that matches either the photograph or Max’s experience 2. watch for at least one way he creates tone—conveying his attitude and feelings toward the situation and the Nazis. Tone and emotion can be communicated verbally (word choice) and nonverbally. Read the bio from Echoes & Reflections: <i>“Ellis Lewin was born on May 22, 1932, in Lodz, Poland. He was forced to live in the Lodz ghetto and later incarcerated in the Augsburg, Dachau, München-Allach, and Kaufbeuren concentration camps. Ellis was also imprisoned in the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. When the war began, Ellis was seven years old.”</i> Play Ellis Lewin’s testimony (3:15) from Echoes & Reflections. Debrief with students.	Ellis Lewin’s testimony (3:15) from Echoes & Reflections
2 minutes Anticipatory Set Ask students to look at the title for chapter 10: “Will we see our families today?” Explain: Max and his father and uncle don’t know the answer to that question, but do you? As historians who have studied the selection process, you know the answer to that even though Max and his father and uncle don’t yet at this point of the story. This creates a sense of tension for us, as we	

<i>know they will have to learn the answer at some point. We are left wondering how they will cope with such devastating news in such terrible circumstances themselves.</i>	
--	--

Remind students to make note of any luck Max experiences.

Homework or in class, if time permits:

Read chapters 10-13 (about 25-30 minutes)

Analyze a Photograph



Meet the photo.

What do you see?

Is the photo?

☐ BLACK
AND
WHITE

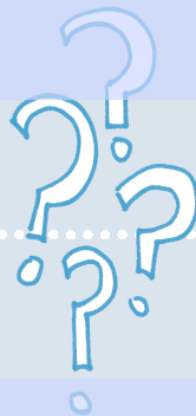
☐ COLOR

Is there a caption?

☐ YES

☐ NO

If so, what does the caption tell you?



Observe its parts.

Circle what you see in the photo.



PEOPLE



OBJECTS



BOTH

What are the people doing in the photo?

What are the objects used for in the photo?

Write two words that describe the photo.

Try to make sense of it.

Who do you think took this photo?

Where do you think this photo was taken?

List something that helps you prove where it was taken.

Why do you think the photo was taken?

How does this photo compare to modern times?

Use it as historical evidence.

Where do you think you could find out more information about the people or objects in the photo?



Train Tracks Photo Analysis

This lesson also is appropriate after the [Death Marches lesson](#) (after reading chapters 24-29), at the end of the unit, or upon return from the field trip.

In this lesson, students analyze the photograph that is the motif of the exhibition, in the form of the exhibition's catalog book cover. Likewise, they analyze a primary source photograph and compare/contrast it with the first, drawing upon their understanding of Auschwitz and starting a new life after liberation. (Superman fans likely will appreciate the information on Union Terminal, the model for the site of the Justice League in the recent film as well as TV shows and comics from decades past. Since the lesson follows an inquiry method, don't discuss Superman until the end of the lesson, when Union Terminal is identified after an inquiry activity.)

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. connection:

- Birkenau gate used in exhibition promotion
- Wheelset at start of exhibition
- Deportation section

The exhibition is housed in Cincinnati Museum Center at the breathtaking Union Terminal, which used to be a train station and the site where many local Holocaust survivors first set foot in Cincinnati. Likewise, many liberators went through Union Terminal in their military travels. Today it is the permanent home of the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center. The primary source picture in the lesson is of Union Terminal during the time it operated exclusively as a train station.

Approximate time: 90 minutes, plus optional extensions

Background Resource for Teachers:

[Union Terminal and Superman](#)

Objectives:

- Students will apply their understanding of Auschwitz and the Holocaust to analyze, to compare, and to contrast two photographs, one a primary source and one a contemporary image.
- Students will consider the competing symbolism of trains and tracks for survivors of Auschwitz settling in Ohio.

Standards:

ELA.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

ELA.RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

ELA.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

SEL.MG.C1.3.c Demonstrate empathy through understanding of others' feelings and acknowledgement of their perspective

SEL.MG.C3.2.c Participate in cross-cultural activities and demonstrate respect for individuals from different social and cultural groups

SEL.MG.C4.3.c Recognize that personal and group needs can differ and identify positive actions to balance the needs of all

Procedures	Materials, Resources
5 minutes Explain to students that this image is used most often when publicity of exhibition calls for a visual element. Ask students to think individually, <i>What mood does this photograph create?</i> Discuss briefly whole group, noting a few of the mood words on the board.	Auschwitz exhibit image click on the image to enlarge it
15 minutes Divide students into groups of 3-5. Pass out the Photo Analysis T-chart (below) and model a Think-Aloud to start entries in the left column, Mood-creating elements in Photo 1: <i>For example, I notice that there are no people visible. This helps create an ominous/sad/frightening/etc. mood because it seems like a place where no one wants to be.</i> List: <i>no people</i> under the heading on the board Give groups 10 minutes to create their lists. As you circulate, scaffold with questions like: <i>What choices has the photographer made about color? Lines? Size? Foreground? Background? Perspective?</i>	Photo Analysis T-chart student handout and key of possible responses.
5 minutes Ask each group to determine which of the elements MOST contributes to the mood and why.	

15 minutes Share out whole group, asking groups to defend their evaluation of the most powerful element when it comes to mood. Then discuss other elements that were noticed and have groups add to their list what others have but they don't. Possible student responses: • Black-and-white ◦ Probing question: <i>Is this a design choice or unavoidable?</i> (Color photos are available now, so it likely is a design choice.) • The iconic Auschwitz-Birkenau gate ◦ For those who recognize the gate, this symbol carries the horrors of the Holocaust. • The sky is full of gray ◦ Are they clouds? Or could they suggest smoke? • The clouds/smoke take up 2/3 of the photo ◦ The gate falls on the rule of thirds line. ◦ However, it is symmetrical, left to right. • There are multiple train tracks, but they all lead inside. • Isolation: no trains, no animals (in addition to no people) • No trees. Minimal, if any, vegetation (maybe some grass by the train tracks) suggest it is a place where it is difficult to sustain life • Something showing through openings in the gate, but it's hard to identify • Perspective is from ground level, maybe eye level ◦ Train tracks almost seem to "loom" more than the gates. The leading lines give a sense of movement in that can't be stopped.	
5 minutes If elements still are missing from student responses, consider asking the scaffolding questions whole group: <i>What choices has the photographer made about color? Lines? Size? Foreground? Background? Perspective?</i> If students are missing <i>the rule of thirds, leading lines, and/or symmetry</i>, play the Cooperative of Photography's 3-minute video, "9 photo composition tips" to define those terms and show examples. Then ask students to apply those definitions to the exhibition catalog cover photo.	Cooperative of Photography's video, "9 photo composition tips" (3:00)

Review the rule of thirds with students. Does this photo follow that “rule”? How would the photo be different if the photographer placed the gate one-third of the way from the top instead of from the bottom? Would that affect the mood? Would it affect the viewer’s response?	
10 minutes Show Historical train tracks photo full screen (so there is no text). [Don’t tell students yet, but this image is of Cincinnati Union Terminal from the south side. Opened in 1933, Union Terminal now is the home to Cincinnati Museum Center, which hosted the exhibition in 2025-26. The Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center is housed in Union Terminal too. This is the only Holocaust museum in the country with an authentic connection to its subject, as many survivors arrived in Cincinnati (and liberators returned home) on trains coming in on the tracks (now defunct, except for one Amtrak train thrice weekly in the dead of night) seen in this photo, moving through the (now demolished) concourse above the tracks into the majestic domed rotunda, whose exterior south side this photo shows. Union Terminal is iconic, but even many Cincinnati natives may not recognize it from the perspective shown in this photo.] Ask students, in their groups, to compare and to contrast each item on their list with elements in the second photo, writing those in the right column of the T-chart.	Historical train tracks photo Date unknown From Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library https://digital.cincinnatilibrary.org/digital/collection/p16998coll2/id/608/rec/26
10 minutes Share out whole group: <i>What was similar? What was different?</i> Possible student responses: • Black-and-white, likely by necessity, before color film was widely available • The iconic Union Terminal dome, although not from a widely recognized perspective ◦ For those who recognize the dome in contemporary times, the symbol represents fun, learning, beauty, and Cincinnati pride • The sky is full of clouds • The clouds take up 1/2 of the photo, with the skyline falling dead center but not providing symmetry, so this image is more abrupt and “newsy” than “artistic” • There are multiple train tracks, and they all lead inside. • A train coming toward the viewer suggests at least one person must be on it • No trees. Minimal, if any, vegetation (an industrial city) • Perspective is from ground level, maybe eye level	

Lines from all the train tracks are busy, disorienting and seem to contrast with other lines in the photo. Explain that this photo is a <i>primary source</i> (define that term). Ask if anyone knows or recognizes the setting. Fill in information for students (see note above), pointing out that, while this photo is undated, it has to be later than 1933, when Union Terminal opened.	
10 minutes Discuss as a class whether this photo is as effective at portraying mood. What is the photo's mood? - Listen to student responses and pose questions if they respond solely from their own 2025 teenage perspectives. Prompt them: <i>Try to imagine you were in the time of this photo. What is your reaction as a viewer who lives in Cincinnati in the 1940s?</i> <i>What might be the reaction of someone who had been deported to Auschwitz, rode in a cattle car to and through the gate we saw in the first photograph. Someone who may have been sent on a death march that included a segment on a train in a coal car. Think of what those train tracks led to in their lives. Now imagine how they feel coming to Union Terminal in Cincinnati, Ohio on a train again, seeing train tracks again leading...</i> - Ask students to discuss in their small groups possible reactions of Holocaust survivors to seeing the scene in the photo, their first moments in Cincinnati, a place unknown to them. (Like at Auschwitz, they likely don't know the language spoken there—or on the train.)	
15 minutes Writing assessment: Poem <i>As you compose, consider what trains might mean to survivors who were deported to Auschwitz in cattle cars, as well as survivors who were forced into cattle cars or open-top train cars in the winter on a death march out of Auschwitz.</i>	
Extensions: Art teachers may choose to offer instruction or to guide students to research the Art Deco design and details of Union Terminal, its mosaics, and Rookwood pottery. Completing these activities before your visit will help learners appreciate and analyze the space when they are in	Dan Pagis's poem, "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Freightcar"

it for a field trip to the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center, but these activities can be completed after the visit too.

Offer instruction or guide students to research Union Terminal's [history and recent renovation](#).

Guide students to analyze [Dan Pagis's poem, "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Freightcar"](#)

Name _____

Student handout

Photo Analysis

1. Look at the first photograph, of Auschwitz-Birkenau. What is its **mood**, the atmosphere it creates or the emotion it creates in the viewer?
2. Fill in the left column with elements in the photograph that help create that mood.

Mood-creating elements in Photo 1	Compare/Contrast with similar elements in Photo 2

Name Key of possible responses

Photo Analysis

3. Look at the first photograph, of Auschwitz-Birkenau. What is its **mood**, the atmosphere it creates or the emotion it creates in the viewer?

4. Fill in the left column with elements in the photograph that help create that mood.

Mood-creating elements in Photo 1	Compare/Contrast with similar elements in Photo 2
No people	No people visible, but presumably there is at least one in the train coming toward the viewer
Black-and-white, likely by choice	Black-and-white, likely by necessity, before color film was widely available
The iconic Auschwitz gate	The iconic Union Terminal dome, although not from a widely recognized perspective
The sky is full of gray (clouds are not pure white)	The sky is full of clouds
The clouds (smoke?) take up 2/3 of the photo	The clouds take up 1/2 of the photo, with the skyline falling dead center but not providing symmetry, so this image is more abrupt and “newsy” than “artistic”
There are multiple train tracks, and they all lead inside.	There are multiple train tracks, and they all lead inside.
Isolation: no trains, no animals (in addition to no people)	A train coming toward the viewer suggests at least one person must be on it
No trees. Minimal, if any, vegetation (maybe some grass by the train tracks)	No trees. Minimal, if any, vegetation (an industrial city)
Perspective is from ground level, maybe eye level	Perspective is from ground level, maybe eye level
Lines from all the train tracks loom	Lines from all the train tracks are busy, disorienting and seem to contrast with other lines in the photo.

Irony

After chapters 10-13

With their newly developed background knowledge, students now can recognize dramatic irony. They watch a brief video that introduces the three types of irony, and students identify and explain examples of irony from the first 13 chapters of the memoir.

Approximate time: 45 minutes, plus about 20-25 minutes to read chapters 14-16 for homework or in class, if time permits

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. Connections:

- *Briefaktion* [Operation Postcard] section text
- encoded postcard sent by a prisoner at Auschwitz

Objectives:

- Students will develop an understanding of the three types of irony and identify and justify examples of each in text.

Standards:

ELA.RL.8.6 Analyze how differences in the points of view and perspectives of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create effects such as suspense or humor.

ELA.SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
15 minutes <i>Yesterday I hinted at something you know that Max did not. What was that?</i> [Max didn't know when he would see his family again, and we know he will not.] <i>There is a name for that in literature, so watch this 10-minute video to learn about this literary device.</i> Play Mr. Williams's video, Irony & Its Purpose (with Examples and Practice) to teach students about dramatic, situational, and verbal irony.	Irony & Its Purpose (with Examples and Practice) video

5 minutes Ask: <i>Which type of irony were we talking about, where we knew about Max's family and he did not?</i> [dramatic irony] <i>You can imagine that not all young people reading this book have learned about selection, yet Max and Kathy Kacer still want to create that suspense from dramatic irony, so they add, "I had no chance to say goodbye." (p. 52) It's implied to the reader what happens to Max's family even though Max himself doesn't know. Max's ignorance is confirmed with the title of chapter 10, "Will we see our families today?"</i>	
20 minutes Pair students, asking them to work together to complete the Examples of Irony handout, finding examples of irony through the first 13 chapters of the memoir. Remind them that the video showed some examples can fall into two categories of irony, so consider if any of these could do double duty.	Examples of Irony handout Teacher Key for Examples of Irony Handout
10 minutes Ask for volunteers to share out. Students likely will not recognize the example from page 47, but it's an opportunity to show that the more you know about a subject like history, the more you recognize dramatic irony—and the more you can understand what you read. Explain that you recognized this example of dramatic irony right away because you had read a passage (below) from another book. (Do not encourage students to read the book, as it is too graphic for students this young.) Either summarize or read the excerpts. You can also project the example, Postcard from Auschwitz, from the Wiener Library. Note for students that this never is explained in Max's memoir; you have to possess that knowledge of history to understand this piece in Max's memoir.	excerpts from Macadam, Heather Dune. 999: The Extraordinary Young Women of the First Official Jewish Transport to Auschwitz. Citadel Press, 2019. Postcard from Auschwitz, from the

	Wiener Library
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Homework or in class, if time permits:
Read chapters 14-16 (about 20-25 minutes). Remind students to record any times Max is lucky.

Name _____

Examples of Irony in *By Chance Alone* (Young Reader's Edition)

(*The example on page 47 is hard to find. It's okay if you can't.)

Page	Quote	Type(s)	Explanation
52	"I glanced over at my grandparents, my aunt, my mother, and my siblings in the other group. Both groups were marched away. Everything happened so fast."	Dramatic	Max does not know where his family is going. The reader who knows about selection knows that they are going to the gas chamber.
19			
37			
41			

Page	Quote	Type(s)	Explanation
52			
74			
47*			
others			

Name _____KEY_____

Examples of irony in *By Chance Alone* (Young Reader's Edition)

(*The example on page 47 is hard to find. It's okay if you can't.)

Page	Quote	Type(s)	Explanation (answers may vary)
52	"I glanced over at my grandparents, my aunt, my mother, and my siblings in the other group. Both groups were marched away. Everything happened so fast."	Dramatic	Max does not know where his family is going. The reader who knows about selection knows that they are going to the gas chamber.
19	"Grandfather joined all the other Jewish veterans at the welcoming gate to greet the Hungarian troops."	Situational (could make the argument for dramatic)	Grandfather was a soldier just like the Hungarians entering town. He may have been of even higher stature than the Hungarians because he had medals. Yet as he welcomed them, the Hungarians hated Jews and planned to mistreat them.
37	"That star was an important symbol of my faith. But now, I felt ashamed to have to wear it wherever I went."	Situational	A symbol that should be a source of pride becomes a source of shame.
41	"Hours earlier we had been enjoying our Passover Seder, retelling the story of Jews being freed from slavery in Egypt. And now, we were being forced to leave our home."	Situational Dramatic	They are taken into captivity on a day (or the next day after) celebrating Jews' release from captivity. Not all readers will know until reading further in the book, but readers who know the history of the Holocaust can see the irony that Max is being taken on this day celebrating freedom from slavery to do slave labor at Auschwitz.
52	"the smell of smoke nearly overwhelmed me. I had no idea what that was."	Dramatic	The reader knows the smoke is from prisoners' bodies burning in the crematoria.
74	"...the relationship I'd had with my father all my life, a relationship that had been strained by his strict discipline and high expectations of me—expectations I had not always been able to meet. But here in Auschwitz, I was beginning to realize that my father's	Situational	Max had resented his father's demands of him, but that approach would help Max survive the forced labor and other conditions in Auschwitz.

	disciplined approach would be the key to helping me stay focused and determined.”		
47*	“Maybe we’d even see some of my mother’s relatives who had been deported a couple of years earlier. They had written postcards to us saying that they were all together and eagerly waiting for us to arrive.	Dramatic	Max thinks the postcards indicate that the relatives are doing well, but a knowledgeable reader knows staff at Auschwitz and other camps required prisoners to write out postcards of lies to their families to convince the families that the prisoners were happy and healthy and that the camp is a place they would want to come to. They also had prisoners postdate the postcards to mail them after the prisoner died so they family believed the prisoner was still alive.

Students may find other examples.

Students may give the example from page 43 of the townspeople with whom they had gotten along so well now turning on the Jews. It could be counterproductive to call this irony. It’s cruelty.

Similarly, don’t let students confuse the multitude of Nazi lies for irony.

**Excerpts to provide background knowledge
to recognize dramatic irony of postcards from Auschwitz in the memoir**

Macadam, Heather Dune. 999: *The Extraordinary Young Women of the First Official Jewish Transport to Auschwitz*. Citadel Press, 2019.

The excerpts below, quoted directly, describe encoded postcards sent from Auschwitz by Jewish teen girls and young women to their families, who thought they would be taken east, from Slovakia, for three months to work in a shoe factory and then sent back home. Their parents had no idea they would be sent to Auschwitz. Indeed, since these young women were the first Jewish transport sent to Auschwitz, none of their parents had heard of Auschwitz, let alone knew of the conditions there.

From pages 167-168:

In the enclosed space of a locked cattle car on its way to Lublin, Rudolph Vrba, who would eventually become famous for escaping from Auschwitz, was listening to his neighbors talk about the postcards they had received from the girls in Auschwitz. Zachar, who ran a small vegetable stand, was sitting next to his teenage daughter, who was busily buffing her nails. Looking up from her manicure, Zachar's daughter said, "My cousin went on the first transport and she wrote to me the other day, saying everything was fine. The food was good, and they weren't working too hard." A shadow crossed her freckled face. "There was only one thing I couldn't understand. She said her mother sent me her love. And her mother died three years ago."

A woman nursing her infant looked up. "There was something funny in the letter I got from my sister, too," she said. "She told me old Jakob Rakow was in fine form. But Jakob was killed in a car crash years ago."

"A gossamer web of doubt descended on the conversation," writes Vrba.

The passengers began to open their bags and shuffle through cards that had been sent from girls performing work service in some camp in Poland. Sure enough, there were other odd comments, "references to people who were dead or to events which could not possibly have happened." Why would their daughters, sisters, or cousins write such nonsense? To a single family, the postscripts were simple oddities, but now that other families were producing cards with similar comments, a sense of foreboding descended. As the postcards were read out loud, people began to reconsider the coded messages.

Mr. and Mrs. Hartmann's daughter, Magduska, and niece, Nusi, had been on the transport, and the Hartmanns were repeatedly annoyed that the girls had not sent them postcards, as other girls had sent to their families. They asked friends to include in their replies to their daughters a plea asking Magduska and Nusi to write, to no avail and to the Hartmanns' great consternation.

Kaddish is the Jewish mourner's prayer.

From page 278:

It was December when a postcard card [sic] from Ellie and Kornelia Mandel, the sisters who had traveled with Nusi and Magduksa, arrived in Rožkovany at the Hartmanns' farm. It is one of the few cards that there is no copy of, but Magduska's brother, Eugene, remembers every word:

Dear Mr. Hartmann,

Thank you for your little package that I received from you. We are well off. I received mail from your daughter, Magduska, and niece, Nusi, in *gan* 'edn.* They are well off. They ask you to visit Uncle Kaddish often.

Magduska was dead...

* גן עדן *gan* heaven in Hebrew

Kanada and Prisoners Helping Fellow Prisoners

After chapters 14-16

Students find examples in the memoir of people's risking their own health and safety to help others in Auschwitz, including a girl working in Kanada when she recognizes Max's father. Through testimony and photographs, students develop their understanding of Kanada, including an example of resistance in Kanada.

Approximate time: 45 minutes, plus about 20-25 minutes to read chapters 17-20 for homework or in class, if time permits

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. connections:

- SS jackboots
- A major portion of the exhibit includes personal items from Kanada.
- Most of the photographs in this lesson come from the [Auschwitz Album](#), the source of many of the photos reproduced larger than life on exhibit walls.

*People featured in exhibit videos

**One photo from this lesson is reproduced wall-size in the Kanada section of the exhibition.

Objectives:

- Students will analyze three types of primary sources (memoir, testimony, and photographs) to develop an understanding of Kanada's role at Auschwitz.
- Students will begin to recognize different possibilities and forms of resistance at Auschwitz, particularly those where a prisoner helps a fellow prisoner, despite the risk to himself.

Standards:

ELA.RI.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas

ELA.RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

ELA.SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

ELA.SL.6.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

ELA.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

ELA.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
15 minutes Ask students if they can find examples on pages 88-90 of one person's risking his or her health or safety by helping another. • Max brings the egg for his father and uncle (88) • Girl in Kanada gives Father bacon (90) • Father gives Max bacon (90) Ask students to share what they understand about Kanada and fill in any gaps. Explain that we will watch three one-minute testimony clips of Jewish survivors. Make sure you are signed in to your free teacher account at IWitness before clicking these links. • Eva Davis* at IWitness ○ Tell students: <i>Max's uncle helps him. Watch for how Eva helped her uncle.</i> Play 7:10-8:13 (1:00) ○ Ask students to watch for the items other prisoners wanted Eva to sneak out for them. Play 3:15-4:08 (1:00) • Irene Zisblatt at IWitness. ○ Ask students: <i>How does Irene say she and others working in Kanada helped fellow prisoners?</i> [They would wear the wooden shoes to work and "leave them in the mud" and wear back a pair of shoes to give to one of their fellow prisoners.] ○ Play 9:52-10:41 (1:00) Project remember.org's photo of the clogs or "wooden shoes" Irene talks about. Ask why these might be problematic, at the least. If needed, prompt students: • <i>Do all of those look like matched-size pairs?</i> • <i>Do you think prisoners were asked their shoes size when they were handed clogs? What if a prisoner's clogs were too small? What if they were too big?</i> • <i>Do those look comfortable?</i> • <i>How about without socks? Prisoners weren't issued socks.</i>	Kanada IWitness testimonies: Eva Davis* 7:10-8:13 3:25-4:08 Irene Zisblatt 9:52-10:41 remember.org's photo of clogs clip from Sophie's Choice

• <i>Can you picture what Irene describes about her shoe's getting stuck in the mud?</i> • Ask: <i>Do Max and his father have shoes like this?</i> [No, Max's father told him to be careful to hold onto his boots in the shower. And Max used his boots as a pillow, tying them to his wrist.] <i>Can you imagine what a difference having boots made for Max?</i> <i>His boots likely weren't the tall jackboots the guard in this movie clip is wearing. Members of the SS wore tall jackboots, like the guard in this movie clip is wearing. You will see a pair of SS jackboots in the exhibit. Watch how even the guard struggles to walk in the mud, let alone the prisoner. The prisoner in this scene does not even have the wooden clogs; she wears her own lace-up shoes that fit her. A survivor advised for this film to accurately depict what it was like to walk across unpaved Auschwitz, with only dirt walkways that turned to mud whenever it rained.</i> • Play an 18-second clip from Sophie's Choice on mute and without closed captions: 1:30:22-1:30:40. (The narration does not add anything to the instruction and serves as a distraction.) If you can, preload it so the screen with the film title does not show, as the whole film is not appropriate for students this young. Consider playing the clip a second time, prompting students to watch one woman on each play.	
25 minutes <i>Photography was almost completely forbidden at Auschwitz, but a few photographs do exist. The photos in this three-minute video were (presumably permitted and) taken by an SS photographer. Watch how Dr. Tritter analyzes the fourth photo, finding individual elements within it—including shoes.</i> • Play 9:07-11:51 clip from HMTC's Curator's Corner: Photograph of the Kanada Warehouse in Auschwitz. (3:00) Ask students to brainstorm and list with a shoulder partner: <i>What items do you think people brought to Auschwitz (and other camps) for "resettlement"? In other words, what might be in the Auschwitz museum now?</i> • Share out. • Point out to students that artifacts in the <i>Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.</i> exhibit come from Kanada and will include exactly some of the personal items they mentioned. Post one of the following pictures from Yad Vashem through USHMM in each of the four corners of the room. Direct students to a corner by heterogeneous grouping, such as students born Jan., Feb., March in this corner, and so on. • USHMM Photograph 77296	HMTC's Curator's Corner: Photograph of the Kanada Warehouse in Auschwitz 9:07-11:51 for students for teacher background: HMTC's Curator's Corner: Photograph of the Kanada Warehouse in Auschwitz (full length)

○ Make sure students can distinguish new arrivals. • USHMM Photograph 77384 ○ Make sure students notice the mountain of bundles in the background and how long the train seems to go—and that there are only prisoners present, at least in frame—no new arrivals any more. • USHMM Photograph 77395 ○ Make sure students notice the fence post in the background—they will see some like this in the exhibit. If you look closely, you can even make out some of the barbed wire. • USHMM Photograph 77396* ○ Make sure students notice the center girl smiling in this photograph. Why could that be? [According to Heather Dune Macadam in <i>999: The Extraordinary Young Women of the First Official Jewish Transport to Auschwitz</i>, “The SS photographer insisted that she smile so that he could show the photo to the Red Cross.” (photo p. 12)] • Direct groups each to analyze their photo and select a recorder to fill in Echoes & Reflections See, Think, Wonder handout with the group’s input. Advise students to look closely for details. Circulate, asking questions to help students to connect to their recent learning. Since these are perpetrator photographs, they should consider what might be happening out of the frame. • Ask groups to share out what is happening in their photo and one thing that stood out to them and one thing they wonder about.	USHMM Photograph 77296 USHMM Photograph 77384 USHMM Photograph 77395 USHMM Photograph 77396 Echoes & Reflections See, Think, Wonder Echoes & Reflections See, Think, Wonder (Spanish)
5 minutes Closing Explain: <i>Jews found many ways to resist against the Nazis during the Holocaust. Going against Nazi rules in Auschwitz by taking needed items from Kanada was but one example of resistance. Many prisoners resisted by helping fellow prisoners, as we have heard in the testimonies we watched today and as we read in Max’s memoir. As you read the rest of By Chance Alone, keep a list of times someone helps Max—or he helps another prisoner. Keep this in addition to your list of times Max is lucky. We will use both lists later.</i> <i>Some forms of resistance did not help other prisoners, at least not directly, but it was worth it to prisoners to take the risk of endangering their own safety to sabotage the Nazis, and women and girls in</i>	Linda Breder testimony from IWitness 8:22-11:25

<i>Kanada even found a way, which we will learn in this three-minute testimony from Linda Breder [from IWitness]. Make sure you are signed in to your free teacher account at IWitness before clicking this link.</i> • Play 8:22-11:25 (3:00) • You may want to point out to students that Linda Breder is the woman they just saw smiling in the foreground of the photo of women sorting goods in Kanada. She states in her testimony that she was told to smile.	
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Homework or in class, if time permits:
read chapters 17-20 (about 20-25 minutes)

Resistance

After chapters 17-20

In preparation for the exhibition as well as for reading Max's account of the Sonderkommando revolt, students listen to and analyze a podcast about the women's role in the revolt. Importantly, students not only develop skills in understanding and analyzing a podcast, but this podcast, in particular, prepares students for the narrative-with-testimony format similar to the audioguide that is provided to every exhibition visitor. Students are reminded of the many more private acts of resistance and are advised to watch for them through the rest of the memoir.

Approximate time: 45 minutes, plus optional extensions, plus about 15-20 minutes to read chapters 21-23 for homework or in class, if time permits

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. connections:

- “Informing the World” section includes:
 - Text about the Sonderkommando revolt, along with prewar photos of the four women hung (which Max recounts in chapter 23) for sneaking gunpowder from their worksite to the Sonderkommando. (The photo of Ester Wajcblum is a childhood photo that includes her sister, Hanka, whose name later became Anna Heilman and whose testimony is included in videos in the exhibition and in the podcast for this lesson.)
 - A pre-revolt photo of crematorium 4, a target of the revolt
 - A photo of the notes of Sonderkommando Zalman Gradowski and the thermos he buried them in
 - Text about and photo of Witold Pilecki, commonly called the “Volunteer of Auschwitz,” a non-Jewish member of the Polish underground, who volunteered for a roundup in 1940 to infiltrate Auschwitz to send out reports about it to the Polish resistance and who escaped from Auschwitz
 - Photos of Jews Rudolph Verba and Alfred Wetzler, who escaped Auschwitz in April 1944 to warn about preparations to gas Hungarian Jews, along with a spread from their report, the Auschwitz Protocols
- Audioguide includes audio of testimony throughout the exhibit

*People featured in exhibition videos

Objectives:

- Students will understand the role of women in the Sonderkommando revolt.
- Students will become familiar with some of the elements common to many podcasts.
- Students will hone their listening skills to analyze the relationship between secondary and primary sources on a topic.

Standards:

ELA.RI.6.3 Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

ELA.RI.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

ELA.L.6.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

ELA.L.6.6 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

ELA.SL.6.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study

ELA.RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

ELA.RH.6-8.9 Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
25 minutes first “read”/listen Remind students of small acts of resistance we learned about yesterday: the girl’s taking the bacon from Kanada, the Kanada girls’ hiding notes in sorted clothes sent to Germany. Explain: <i>Merriam-Webster has two definitions of resist that connect to these actions:</i> 1. “To work to counteract or defeat” [explain the prefix counter-] • <i>German recipients of clothes likely would be grateful to the Nazis, but finding the note could counteract their appreciation of the Nazis.</i> 2. “To withstand the force or effect of” • <i>taking the bacon to help fellow prisoners to withstand the effect of the Nazis’ starvation rations</i> Arrange students into heterogeneous triads. Explain: <i>We are going to listen to a podcast about one of the most famous acts of resistance at Auschwitz. (Pass out the Echoes & Reflections Teaspoons of Gunpowder transcript to students who need written support for or in lieu of listening.)</i>	Merriam-Webster resist Echoes & Reflections Teaspoons of Gunpowder transcript Podcast Analysis handout

Explain briefly some common elements of a podcast: introductory information that is repeated every episode [the first two paragraphs] and usually a “hook” to grab the reader’s attention about the content of this episode [the next two paragraphs] before starting the episode’s content. This podcast has a single host, with guest testimony added at certain points. Sound effects help make it an engaging podcast. Pass out the Podcast Analysis handout (below). Explain: <i>On this first “read”/listen of the 16-minute podcast, we will listen to the whole podcast straight through just to learn this story of the young women who participated in the resistance. Don’t worry yet about any questions on the handout except for the first one. Just listen for when the host defines the term Sonderkommando—about ¾ of the way through—and write that down.</i> Play Echoes & Reflections Teaspoons of Gunpowder podcast. Ask triads to confirm their definition of <i>Sonderkommando</i> together. Ask students to collaborate on the answer to #2.	Podcast analysis KEY Echoes & Reflections Teaspoons of Gunpowder podcast
15 minutes close “read” Explain: <i>The clips of audio from Anna Heilman* and Darrio Gabbai* come from their testimonies—primary sources. Sheryl Ochayon’s storytelling is a secondary source. Let’s examine how these two types of sources interact through the podcast. I will replay segments that each include a clip of testimony, and as I replay, I will include a little bit of Sheryl’s narration both before and after each clip. Listen and then collaborate with your teammates to determine the role the primary source is playing. Is it:</i> • <i>introducing a new idea?</i> • <i>continuing the story Sheryl is narrating?</i> • <i>elaborating on Sheryl’s information?</i> • <i>explaining Sheryl’s information?</i> • <i>giving an example of Sheryl’s information?</i> • <i>showing a similarity or a contrast?</i> • <i>showing a cause or an effect?</i> • <i>bringing a personal perspective?</i> • <i>something else?</i> <i>Be sure to explain how the testimony clip plays the role you identify.</i> Play each of these clips, one at a time, giving triads time to collaborate and then share out after each one.	

3) 3:48-4:44 • “Anna Heilman, born Hanka Wajcblum, was one of these women...” through “The sisters came from Warsaw, Poland, and had been prisoners in the Warsaw ghetto.” 4) 6:03-7:29 • “Talk of the uprising, combined with news from outside the camp, led Anna and the young women to a kind of lightbulb moment...” through “As workers in a munitions factory, the women were closely guarded at every moment.” 5) 8:57-10:14 • “Estusia, whose work station was next to the door of the room, collected the explosives but could not leave the room with them...” through “Often they were halted on their way back to their barracks at Birkenau, another part of Auschwitz, the threat of a search constantly hanging over them.” 6) 12:14-13:05 • “Most of the men were Jewish themselves...” through “And they also decided to revolt.”	
5 minutes Closing There are many examples of resistance at Auschwitz, some famous and many more private. In the next section you read of Max’s memoir, you will read Max’s perspective of the Sonderkommando revolt. As you read, consider how his perspective as a male differs from what you heard from Anna Heilman. Remember, too, the less famous acts of resistance throughout Auschwitz and the Holocaust. As you read the rest of Max’s memoir, watch for examples of those too.	

Extensions:

- Give students resources to learn about the resistance and escape of Witold Pilecki. Or guide them to research the story themselves.
 - [The Story of Witold Pilecki](#) (7:16) by Instytut Pileckiego. All in English
 - [The Man Who Volunteered to be Imprisoned in Auschwitz](#) (10:46) by the BBC. This version includes parts with experts speaking in Polish with English subtitles. NOTE: This includes a few seconds of modern-day footage of the empty gas chamber and crematorium at Auschwitz I.
 - [The Daring Polish Resistance Fighter Who Volunteered to Be Sent to Auschwitz So He Could Sabotage the Nazi Death Camp From the Inside](#) by Smithsonian magazine
- Give students resources to learn about the resistance and escape story of Rudolf Verba and Alfred Wetzler and how they saved perhaps hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews by writing the Auschwitz Protocols. Or guide them to research the story themselves.
 - *Impossible Escape* by Steve Sheinkin recounts the story in literary nonfiction with informational text woven throughout. It is appropriate for middle schoolers.

- An equally engaging adult book, as background for teachers, is *The Escape Artist: The Man Who Broke Out of Auschwitz to Warn the World*. It describes the same important touchpoints in Vrba's story and adds even more detail about his time in Auschwitz and adds information about Vrba's life after the war.
- [Rudolf Vrba's life story](#) from Holocaust Memorial Day Trust
- [Rudolf Vrba's easy-to-read life story](#) from Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

Homework or in class, if time permits:

Read chapters 21-23 (about 15-20 minutes)

Name _____

**Analysis of primary sources used within a secondary source
of a podcast from Echoes & Reflections:**

Teaspoons of Gunpowder: Women Prisoners in Auschwitz and the Armed Resistance

1. Define *Sonderkommando*

2. Sheryl, the host, states, “It was also incredibly dangerous to smuggle the gunpowder out of the isolated gunpowder room.” Later she says, “For reasons of secrecy, the women in the chain of smugglers didn’t know everyone’s identities.”

Using the context in these sentences, what does “smuggle” mean?

For each segment below that your teacher replays, indicate how the testimony contributes to Sheryl’s narration. Is it:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • introducing a new idea? | • giving an example of Sheryl’s information? |
| • continuing the story Sheryl is narrating? | • showing a similarity or a contrast? |
| • elaborating on Sheryl’s information? | • showing a cause or an effect? |
| • explaining Sheryl’s information? | • bringing a personal perspective? |
| | • something else? |

Be sure to explain how the testimony clip plays the role you identify.

3. “Anna Heilman, born Hanka Wajcblum, was one of these women...”

4. "Talk of the uprising, combined with news from outside the camp, led Anna and the young women to a kind of lightbulb moment..."
5. "Estusia, whose work station was next to the door of the room, collected the explosives but could not leave the room with them..."
6. "Most of the men were Jewish themselves..."

Name _____ **KEY Answers will vary.** _____

**Analysis of primary sources used within a secondary source
of a podcast from Echoes & Reflections:**

Teaspoons of Gunpowder: Women Prisoners in Auschwitz and the Armed Resistance

1. Define *Sonderkommando*

prisoners forced by the Germans to facilitate the killing process by working in the gas chambers and crematoria

2. The host states, “It was also incredibly dangerous to smuggle the gunpowder out of the isolated gunpowder room.” Later she says, “For reasons of secrecy, the women in the chain of smugglers didn’t know everyone’s identities.”

Using the context in these sentences, what does “smuggle” mean?

To secretly take something illegally to a different location

For each segment below that your teacher replays, indicate how the testimony contributes to Sheryl’s narration. Is it:

- introducing a new idea?
- continuing the story Sheryl is narrating?
- elaborating on Sheryl’s information?
- explaining Sheryl’s information?
- giving an example of Sheryl’s information?
- showing a similarity or a contrast?
- showing a cause or an effect?
- bringing a personal perspective?
- something else?

Be sure to explain how the testimony clip plays the role you identify.

3. “Anna Heilman, born Hanka Wajcblum, was one of these women...”

Anna’s quote here elaborates on Sheryl’s narration that the women “tried to boost each other’s morale.” She gives examples like telling stories, singing songs, and dreaming of Israel together.

4. “Talk of the uprising, combined with news from outside the camp, led Anna and the young women to a kind of lightbulb moment...”

In this quote, Anna continues Sheryl’s narration, describing the information that came to the women—from the Yugoslavian girl and that the Germans were beginning to lose the war and that the Polish underground was planning a revolt—to show how the women used that information to determine how they were able to help.

5. “Estusia, whose work station was next to the door of the room, collected the explosives but could not leave the room with them...”

In this quote, Anna gives the first example of strategies used by many women, as Sheryl follows with the other women’s tactics.

Here Anna also offers a personal perspective, detailing her strategy by giving specifics of the process she used: “little rag tied with a string.” Her sister put “it into a box and garbage on the top box.” Anna put it “inside the cuff of my dress.” While the examples of other girls’ tricks are several, Anna’s have more detail, from her personal perspective.

6. “Most of the men were Jewish themselves...”

Dario explains Sheryl’s information, particularly her metaphor, “They knew the Germans would not allow them to live because they had seen the heart of the Holocaust.” He uses his own metaphor, “We knew from A to Z exactly how” people were murdered, which they witnessed. He explains that is why the Germans would not let them live—and they were certain to be murdered.

He also makes it very personal with, “The problem with the Sonderkommando is the inside of your soul.” He is expressing a feeling that accompanies Sheryl’s narration of historical facts.

Death Marches

After chapters 21-23, in preparation for chapters 24-29

Students will be introduced to basic information about death marches in preparation to read about Max's death march. As statistics and poetry are juxtaposed, students will consider how we translate overwhelming statistics into stories of individuals.

Approximate time: 45 minutes, plus about 30-35 minutes to read chapters 24-29 for homework or in class, if time permits

Auschwitz, Not long ago. Not far away. connections:

“Destroying Evidence” section

- Text about the burning of Kanada and heat-damaged artifacts
- Text about the death marches out of Auschwitz

*People featured in exhibit videos

Objectives:

- Students will develop an understanding of death marches, especially using maps to extrapolate circumstances of the marches.
- Students will determine claims in a secondary source that have evidence in primary sources.

Standards:

ELA.RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

ELA.RI.6.8 Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by evidence from claims that are not.

ELA.SL.6.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study

ELA.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

ELA.RH.6-8.9 Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
5 minutes Project USHMM Photograph 58409. Explain: <i>This is a photograph of Kanada on fire at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Even though the Auschwitz Museum holds mounds and mounds of personal belongings from Kanada, that is just a fraction of what was there in early January 1945 because the SS set fire to the warehouses on January 23, and they were still burning when the Soviets got to Auschwitz and took control of it on January 27. Why would the Nazis have set fire to Kanada as the Soviets approached?</i> [to destroy evidence of their crimes] Project photo of Arbeit macht frei gate from Auschwitz I by John Karwoski. (Max mentions this gate on page 64.) <i>By January 18, 1945, tens of thousands of Auschwitz prisoners, including Max, left Auschwitz, just nine days before the Soviets liberated the camp. Unlike what this gate promises, they were not set free. They were sent on death marches. Read this brief informational text, Death marches from the concentration camps from Anne Frank House. Then collaborate with your shoulder partner to determine two things:</i> 1. <i>What was a death march?</i> [Be sure students understand that the death marches were to other camps further west.] 2. <i>What two reasons motivated the Nazis to take thousands of prisoners on death marches?</i> [to continue to force the prisoners to labor for them and to keep the prisoners from being able to tell the Soviets of their crimes]	USHMM Photograph 58409 photo of Arbeit macht frei gate from Auschwitz I by John Karwoski Death marches from the concentration camps from Anne Frank House
15 minutes Maps Project USHMM map, major death marches and evacuations, 1944-1945. Explain: <i>This map shows just some of the many death marches. You will find out in the next section of his memoir that Max's death march runs off the page, as it goes south to Mauthausen in Austria.</i> Guide students in a whole-group analysis of the map. Project USHMM map, major death marches from Auschwitz, January 1945. Explain: • <i>Since this is a political map, it lacks features such as rivers and lakes. There are mountainous regions on this map too. How would that have affected their routes?</i>	USHMM map, major death marches and evacuations, 1944-1945 USHMM map, major death marches from Auschwitz,

• <i>People had to march for miles and miles and miles but that some portion of their march may be by train. However, usually they were not in cattle cars this time but in coal cars—open top (no roof in winter) and metal walls (which conduct cold).</i> • <i>Death marches usually involved thousands of prisoners—even tens of thousands of prisoners. They couldn't bunk for the night with the family living in the house on the corner of the town or village they happened to be marching through. Perhaps there would be a barn, but usually prisoners slept in fields or forests. In January snow.</i> Ask students in small groups to brainstorm a list of everything people would need to bring to march and ride trains in these conditions. Ask groups to share out what is on their lists to get an idea of one master class list. Ask students, <i>What on this list do you think Nazis gave the prisoners or brought for them on the death marches?</i> Don't answer for the students. Tell them they will find out by reading the next section of Max's memoir. Testimonies also can tell us what the death marches were like.	January 1945
15 minutes Testimonies Ask students to look back at Death marches from the concentration camps from Anne Frank House. <i>As you watch these testimonies, determine with your shoulder partner which claims in the article are supported by details given in these testimonies.</i> Fritzie Weiss Fritzshall* <i>was on a death march from Auschwitz also.</i> Play clip (1:30) Tell students: <i>On her death march, Fritzie ran into a forest, where she was later liberated.</i> Lilly Applebaum Malnik*, <i>who also was sent on a death march from Auschwitz, talks about what a risk it was to escape into the forest.</i> Play clip (2:00) Point out to students where Bergen-Belsen is on the map. Steven Springfield <i>was on a march from a different camp, but he was with his brother.</i> Play clip (2:00) <i>Steven and his brother were later liberated by the Soviets.</i> Have pairs share out what claims are supported by the testimonies. [most of the second paragraph]	Testimonies from USHMM: Fritzie Weiss Fritzshall* Lilly Applebaum Malnik* Steven Springfield

10 minutes Closing Tell students: <i>about 200,000-250,000 people died on death marches, and about a fourth of them were Jews, but we can't be sure of exact numbers.</i> <i>We have more reliable statistics on deaths of Jews killed at camps and by the Einsatzgruppen.</i> Pass out to each student a copy of How should we study the “Final Solution”? handout from Echoes & Reflections EXCEPT cover up the right column, the poem, as you make the copies. Also white out the last two paragraphs in black at the top. Ask students: <i>As you look at these statistics, what do you notice? What do you wonder?</i> Then project or pass out a copy with the original version of the handout and ask for a volunteer to read the poem aloud. Ask students to discuss with their shoulder partners the questions from the handout: <i>“How do you interpret the lines from the poem in light of the statistics? What does it say to you about how we should study the Final Solution?”</i> Ask students to share out. Students should recognize that their work in learning individual stories—by listening to testimonies and reading memoirs like Max’s—gives us a window into those “ones.” <i>Several “ones” have their stories told through the exhibition. Be sure to take the time on site to read and grasp these stories.</i>	How should we study the “Final Solution”? handout from Echoes & Reflections How should we study the “Final Solution”? (Spanish) handout from Echoes & Reflections
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Homework or in class, if time permits:
Read chapters 24-29 (about 30-35 minutes)

Extension:

After students read about Max's death march and eventual transfer to Ebensee, challenge students to approximate his path either on Google Maps or on Google My Maps. Ask them to approximate how many miles he likely walked, and encourage them to consult either topographical maps or maps showing land features to consider the additional challenges in those miles.

Liberation and Survivors

After chapters 24-29

Before liberation in chapter 30 and Max's life after in the chapter following the epilogue

Students participate in an inquiry activity with a piece of artwork to develop an understanding of liberation. Two short articles add to their understanding and help students recognize the challenges Jews faced immediately after liberation.

Approximate time: 45 minutes, plus about 20 minutes to read chapter 30, epilogue, and "What happened to Max after the war?" chapter for homework or in class, if time permits

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. connections:

- "The Survivors" text

Objectives:

- Students will apply their understanding of the Holocaust thus far to hypothesize about the conditions of many camps and prisoners upon liberation.
- Students analyze informational text to determine postwar challenges faced by Jews.
- Students analyze testimony, applying prior knowledge about the Holocaust and body language.

Standards:

ELA.RI.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELA.RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

ELA.SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

ELA.SL.6.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study

ELA.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

ELA.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

ELA.RH.6-8.9 Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
15 minutes See Group students into quads by readiness. Try to project Israel Alfred Glück's Liberation from Yad Vashem full screen, without any text showing. Pass out the See-Think-Wonder handout from Echoes & Reflections to all students. Guide students: <i>Look at this artwork like you are students who have never heard of the Holocaust. Collaborate with your teammates to list <u>everything</u> you see. Right now, this is strictly what you see—no interpretation—because you have never heard of the Holocaust.</i> Allow 5-10 minutes of collaboration time. Enlarge sections if students request. Share out to get a complete class list.	Israel Alfred Glück's Liberation from Yad Vashem See-Think-Wonder handout from Echoes & Reflections See-Think-Wonder (Spanish) handout from Echoes & Reflections
15 minutes Think and Wonder <i>Now you are back to yourselves, knowledgeable and inquisitive historians familiar with the Holocaust. Collaborate with your teammates to fill in the Think column. Try to account for everything we saw. Record what you wonder in the last column. Use the back of the page if you need more space.</i> Give students about 5 minutes of collaboration time. Then have them share out what they think, followed by what they wonder. Show the title information to the right of the drawing and ask if that helps answer any “wonder” questions. Scroll down to read the first paragraph, Glück's bio, and the last paragraph about the drawing.	

10 minutes Read this informational text about Liberation from USHMM [That version is for on-level or struggling learners, scaffolded with audio for struggling readers. Differentiate for advanced learners by giving them Liberation of Nazi Camps from USHMM, with audio to support twice-exceptional learners who struggle with reading.] <i>to see if it might answer any more of your questions.</i> <i>Liberation did not immediately restore the third of European Jews still alive each to a full life. They still faced many challenges. Read The Survivors from USHMM to identify at least two. You can stop reading when you get to “key dates.”</i> Share out responses. Possible student responses: • Many Jewish communities no longer existed. • Their homes had been looted or taken over. • Anti-Jewish riots broke out. • Many countries still limited the number of refugees they would take.	Liberation from USHMM Liberation of Nazi Camps from USHMM The Survivors from USHMM
5 minutes Closing Play the testimony from USHMM of Gerda Weissmann Klein with captions turned on, stopping and querying students at these points: • 0:33 ○ <i>What is the “white star”?</i> [It was the U.S. symbol on its army vehicles.] ○ <i>Where have you seen that before?</i> [on the tank in the drawing] ○ <i>What was Gerda’s emotion at the very start of this clip</i> [sadness, she had been crying, sniffing, wiping her nose] <i>and now?</i> [brightly happy, smiling confidently] • 1:04 ○ <i>What feeling is Gerda’s body language communicating now?</i> [almost a childlike bashfulness, like she is back in that moment] • 1:26 ○ <i>Based on what you have read in “The Survivors” article, why did Gerda think she “had” to tell him they are Jewish?</i> [Because antisemitism was so common, she was prepared for him not to want to help them.] ○ <i>What did she mean by, “I didn’t know if he would know what the star means”?</i> [Gerda likely had the two overlapping yellow triangles on her prisoner uniform to indicate she is a Jew, which the Nazis recognize, but she thought a foreigner might not.] ○ <i>What do you think the soldier’s response was?</i> [responses will vary]	Gerda Weissmann Klein Testimony from USHMM

- Play the remainder of the video.

Next you will finish Max's memoir, learning about his liberation and postwar life. Remember to keep track of any examples of luck or of people helping him—or vice versa.

Homework or in class, if time permits:

Read chapter 30, epilogue, and “What happened to Max after the war?” chapter (about 20 minutes)

Dimensions in Testimony: Interviewing Max directly

After finishing the book

Students will learn about Dimensions in Testimony and practice skills in using it by interviewing Max. This lesson plan includes options if the class takes a field trip to the Holocaust & Humanity Center, where there is a Dimensions in Testimony exhibit featuring Al Miller, a survivor who moved to Cincinnati. (Check in advance to ask the staff to load in Al Miller's testimony for your visit—or adapt the lesson for the survivor they currently feature in the Dimensions in Testimony exhibit.) If no such field trip is planned, remove those sections from the lesson and focus on Max, who is always available in Dimensions in Testimony online.

Approximate time: 90 minutes (including portions to prepare to interview Al Miller on a field trip; about 45 minutes if not.)

Objectives:

- Students will develop and refine questioning skills and practice patience in order to learn desired information from the survivor via the Dimensions in Testimony platform.

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. connections:

- Some Auschwitz survivors, like Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, were interviewed for Dimensions in Testimony and who are featured online or at museums like the Holocaust & Humanity Center.

Standards:

ELA.W.6.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others, while demonstrating sufficient command of keyboarding skills.

ELA.W.6.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

ELA.SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

b. Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

ELA.SL.6.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study

ELA.SL.6.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

ELA.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
15 minutes Ask: How old is Max now? [students likely will compute 96 or 97] Is Max still alive? [No. Look at his author bio on the back cover.] Ask students to refer to the list the class has been keeping of questions for Max. <i>There is a way for us to get answers to some of these questions directly from Max.</i> Play :27-13:12 clip from 60 Minutes segment.	:27-13:12 of 60 Minutes segment for students full 60 Minutes segment as background for teachers
25 minutes writing questions for Al Miller Explain: <i>You may have noticed that people have to go to a museum to interview the Dimensions in Testimony biography. But I have arranged for the technology to come here to our classroom for us to be able to interview Max tomorrow (or later, if you have a long block). First we will prepare to interview the survivor we will meet at the HHC museum.</i> <i>When we are at the Holocaust & Humanity center museum, their Dimensions in Testimony exhibit will feature another survivor, Al Miller. He lived in Cincinnati after the war. Let's read Guidelines for students: How to engage with Dimensions in Testimony on IWitness to help us prepare questions to ask Al.</i> <i>NOTE: Al is not on IWitness, only in the museum, like in the 60 Minutes interview—but we won't have to use a microphone. But the tips for preparing questions are the same.</i> Give students a few minutes to read. Ask: <i>What is tip #1?</i> [Know the individual.] Arrange students into small groups and have them read Al Miller's biography from the Holocaust & Humanity Center. Additional information about Al is available at the DiT Interviewees page, and that is also a good source of question topics. NOTE: If you will arrange students into groups for the HHC museum tour, put them in those groups now, as they will be together at the DiT exhibit in the museum. Ask:	Guidelines for students: How to engage with Dimensions in Testimony on IWitness background for teachers: Guidelines for Educators: Teach with Dimensions in Testimony

• <i>What is Tip #2? Have we done that?</i> [be aware of the historical context; yes] If students say they need more context connected to Al's story, advise them that you will come around to help them research resources, such as ◦ Nuremberg Laws and Anti-Jewish Laws ◦ Kristallnacht ◦ UK treatment of German Jewish "enemy aliens" during the war ◦ Ritchie Boys • <i>What is Tip #3?</i> [have a topic of focus] Direct students to collaborate in teams to come up with 2-3 areas of focus for interviewing Al and then write the questions they can ask for each focus area. Have them submit the questions to you in some form so you can have a list of these questions for students to refer to when they are in the DiT exhibit at HHC.	Al Miller's biography from the Holocaust & Humanity Center Al Miller's biography from Dimensions in Testimony
5 minutes Closing of Day 1 of the lesson or transition to Part 2 of a block lesson Ask volunteers to share out topics they selected and questions they wrote. Some tips you may share with students about conversing with Al: • Ask him about interrogating Nazis (when he was in the U.S. army). • To see Al's sense of humor ask him if he had a bar mitzvah and/or ask him if he likes baseball.	
15 minutes sort questions for Max Arrange students into small groups by readiness. Let's look back at the tips in Guidelines for students: How to engage with Dimensions in Testimony on IWitness and consider new answers, now for Max. Ask: • <i>What is tip #1? Have we done that?</i> [know the individual; yes] • <i>What is Tip #2? Have we done that?</i> [be aware of the historical context; yes] • <i>What is Tip #3?</i> [Have a topic of focus.] Pass out copies of the class list of questions for Max. <i>Look at our class list of questions for Max. Cut them apart and collaborate with your teammates to arrange them into topic areas. Consider if there is another topic your group would like to add—and what questions would that include?</i>	Guidelines for students: How to engage with Dimensions in Testimony on IWitness Class list of student questions for Max

Have a few volunteers share out topics they determined.	
25 minutes interview Max in Dimensions in Testimony NOTE: Students, especially younger ones, tend to get giggly when first using this novel technology. This is a chance to get the giggles out before going to the museum. Students need to be patient with the brief lag at the beginning of most answers. They also need to be patient with repetitive answers and practice rephrasing questions, using the suggestions in the article as guides. While the online platform allows typed questions, and that format provides good background for teachers, the oral questioning through the microphone is the better preparation for the HHC exhibit. Determine which format is best for your classroom to interview Max in Dimensions in Testimony at IWitness—whole group or students in small groups or alone on individual devices. (Online Max needs to hear questions, so too much noise in the classroom may not work. Notice in the <i>60 Minutes</i> segment, the students each had earbuds with a mic.) [NOTE: IWitness does not require an account to use Dimensions in Testimony.] • Suggest that students start asking the questions for the topics they have determined. • Ask students to record what they learn from Max that wasn't in his memoir.	Max Eisen Dimensions in Testimony on IWitness
5 minutes Closing Ask students to share out things they learned from Max that were not in his memoir. Explain: <i>Max's testimony is online, so they can always go back and ask him more questions. Al Miller's testimony is not online, though, so your time at the museum is your only chance to learn from him. You can visit the museum year-round, and admission is free in the month of January.</i>	

Socratic Seminar

After reading the whole memoir

Students prepare for and then participate in a Socratic seminar to discuss potential themes in Max's memoir around chance and help from others. They wrestle with the deeper questions of the place of Holocaust education today.

Approximate time: 90 minutes over 2 days

Objectives:

- Students will use provided texts to research support for their ideas in response to overarching questions.
- Students will engage civilly in formal, academic discussion, supporting claims with evidence from texts that include primary and secondary sources.

Standards:

ELA.SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- b. Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
- d. Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

ELA.SL.6.4 Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

ELA.SL.6.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

ELA.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

ELA.RH.6-8.2 Analyze content-area-specific text development.

- a. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source.

Procedures	Materials, Resources
15 minutes Provide a mini lesson on Socratic seminars if students are not familiar with them.	Facing History's Socratic seminar
5 minutes Introduce Texts and Prompts To add complexity for strong students, provide students with one or both of these additional texts for them to read and to use along with Max's memoir as sources during the Socratic seminar: • Martin Niemöeller's They Came For from Echoes & Reflections • Pyramid of Hate from Echoes & Reflections Provide students with the questions to be discussed in the Socratic seminar so they can prepare their responses and arguments and mark references to evidence in the texts. Here are some suggestions for questions. You may think of others more suited to your goals and your learners. • Max titled his memoir, <i>By Chance Alone</i>. Which played a greater role in Max's survival, chance or help from others—or something else entirely? • Which bullet points from the Pyramid of Hate happened in Max's town and life? At what point(s) did society transition from one level to another—and what were those levels? • What is the responsibility of society in the face of these various acts? • What is the responsibility of individuals in the face of these various acts? • What is the value of learning about the Holocaust? • Should all students get the opportunity to learn about the Holocaust in school? Should all students be required to learn about it? • We have read about and heard from a multitude of survivors who are willing to share their stories, even though it is a very emotional experience every time they share their (or their family member's) stories. Why do you think they put themselves through that ordeal over and over again? • Do we have any responsibility to survivors like Max and others whose testimonies we have heard? If so, what is that responsibility? • There are survivors who do not want to talk about their experiences. Why might that be? How can we honor their feelings and experiences even if they have not told them to us?	Martin Niemöeller's They Came For from Echoes & Reflections Martin Niemöeller's They Came For (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections Pyramid of Hate from Echoes & Reflections Pyramid of Hate (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections

What is the possible value of a field trip to a Holocaust museum? What is the possible value of a field trip to the <i>Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.</i> exhibit exhibition—or to a Holocaust museum you will visit on a field trip or that students can visit outside of school?	
25-40 minutes—and homework in the intervening evening, if applicable Provide students with time to prepare their points for the discussion.	
35 minutes Hold the Socratic seminar.	
10 minutes reflect Either hold a whole-group oral reflection or give students a prompt to write a reflection.	

Artifacts and Conservation

This lesson guides students to appreciate the value of everyday objects as artifacts, first by having them identify an item that has special meaning to them. Students begin to consider not only why simple objects were precious to people imprisoned at Auschwitz but also the lengths they went to in order to keep those objects. Finally, in preparation to visit the exhibit, *Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.* (or any Holocaust museum), students examine the mission and the painstaking work of conservators at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

Approximate time: 90 minutes, plus extension, if desired

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. connection:

All of the artifacts

Background Resources for Teachers:

[The Auschwitz Museum](#) film (54 minutes) available on [Apple TV](#) and [amazon Prime Video](#)
[Buttons in the “Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.” Exhibition](#) Play the subtitles to see the correction of grandmother when he misspeaks and says, “mother.”

Objectives:

- Students will define artifact and give examples of artifacts from the Holocaust.
- Students will develop an understanding of the conservation process and describe the conservation challenge unique to Holocaust sites like Auschwitz-Birkenau.
- Students will develop an appreciation for the value of an individual artifact and for the painstaking work by conservators to preserve it, which they will demonstrate through respectful quiet in the exhibit.
- (extension) Students will recognize the potential connection a single artifact may have to multiple areas of an exhibition and will take on the role of curator, applying their Holocaust understanding to classify artifacts into different displays within an exhibit.

Standards:

ELA.RI.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

ELA.RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

ELA.SL.6.4 Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

ELA.RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies

ELA.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts

Procedures	Materials, Resources
10 minutes About a week in advance, ask students to bring in or to post to the class web page an object that has special meaning to them by the date you plan to teach this lesson. Model for them by sharing a photo of an everyday object, perhaps from your childhood, that is important to you. Explain in a few sentences what the object is and why you value it. If it is simple, point out the contrast to the students that it's not worth a lot of money and not something that lots of people would desperately want, but it played an important role for you.	Your photo of a valued object.
10 minutes (or more, depending on how you choose to structure this activity) To start the lesson, students can share their objects in a manner that fits your time constraints and your classroom community. If you have the time, each student can show their picture and explain the object briefly, following your example. If time is more limited, pair students to share with a partner.	
5 minutes Ask each student to write 2-3 sentences describing their object and explaining why it is important. You write too! Ask students to hold onto these descriptions for later in the lesson.	
15 minutes Define <i>artifact</i> using either your own or Merriam-Webster's definition: "a usually simple object (such as a tool or ornament) showing human workmanship or modification as distinguished from a natural object especially : an object remaining from a particular period" Explain the etymology:	artifact from Merriam-Webster

arte- meaning art or craftsmanship fact meaning “to make” (like manufacture) The British spell the word with the e: <i>artefact</i>. Explain: <i>Objects remaining from the time Auschwitz operated as a Nazi camp system that included a concentration camp, labor camp, and killing center are artifacts today, and conservators at the Museum work hard to preserve them.</i> Ask students in their pairs: <i>Brainstorm at least three items that might be artifacts from Auschwitz and at least three factors that might cause artifacts to deteriorate over the 80 years since liberation.</i> Student answers may vary for artifacts but include not only personal objects like a comb or a photograph but also structural items like the barracks and the Arbeit Macht Frei gate. Student answers for deteriorating forces may include temperature, humidity, light, oils on human hands, bugs (like silverfish in books and moths in wool), weather (rain, snow, sun, especially on wooden barracks). Do not underestimate the damage from 2,000,000 visitors a year! Share out whole group and record responses on the board.	
15 minutes Explain: You are about to get a handout describing three artifacts from Auschwitz. With your partner, list two things for each artifact: 1. Why was this item valuable to the person imprisoned at Auschwitz? 2. What was the cost to that person to get and/or to keep the item? Pass out Life in the Shadow of Death handout and give pairs 10 minutes to work then share out.	Life in the Shadow of Death handout from Echoes & Reflections Life in the Shadow of Death handout (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections
Second day or second portion of the block: 10 minutes Ask students to look at Life in the Shadow of Death handout and write out an entrance ticket (an index card or half sheet of paper): <i>How might one of these items have preserved the owner’s humanity, even as the Nazis worked to dehumanize them?</i>	Life in the Shadow of Death handout from Echoes & Reflections Life in the Shadow of Death handout (Spanish) from Echoes & Reflections

5 minutes		
Explain: <i>These items and thousands of other artifacts were precious to victims and survivors of Auschwitz. Even these simple but treasured objects are deteriorating over time and must be preserved. Take a minute and think about the job of a conservator, who works to preserve tiny objects like the teeth on a comb and large structures like the bunks in a barracks. Think of the science involved in preserving all these different materials. Now add another layer to their jobs: what they are conserving are artifacts at Auschwitz, the site of the biggest mass murder in human history. Most of the people who last touched these items were murdered shortly thereafter.</i> Ask: <i>Why might this pose an additional challenge in their jobs?</i>		
20 minutes	Differentiation for gifted learners:	Conservation in Auschwitz: Every Shoe Tells a Story from Der Spiegel
Pass out the handout (below) with questions to accompany the video, Conservation in Auschwitz: Every Shoe Tells a Story , and play the 16:30 video for students. Note that the video is in German, but you can mute the sound and play English subtitles, which you can read aloud to the students.	Have students read the handout (below) excerpt from <i>The Canadian Jewish News</i> and discuss and write responses to questions on the handout .	“Conservation...” handout
For students who need more support and/or guidance, stop the video at the indicated timestamps and cue the students to listen for the answer to the upcoming question on the handout .	Show students PBS’s Museum works to preserve shoes belonging to Auschwitz’s youngest victims , which is 7:49. Stop the video at 7:32 to avoid showing a 2-second clip that includes bodies. Have students work in groups of three to discuss the questions on the handout (below) and then write independent answers.	The Canadian Jewish News handout
Go over the answers whole group, emphasizing the effort that the conservators make and the emotional toll that their work takes.		Museum works to preserve shoes belonging to Auschwitz’s youngest victims :00-7:32
		“Museum works...” handout
5 minutes		
Explain: <i>Now you have a sense of the profound value of the artifacts you are about to see in the exhibition—value first to the victims and survivors, who may have paid a heavy price to get or to</i>		

<i>keep the artifact with them, and second to the conservators, who are developing new methods as they race against time to preserve the artifacts for us to see them.</i>	
5 minutes Closing and Assignment for a field trip to a Holocaust museum or to the exhibition, <i>Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.</i> <i>Explain: This exhibit may be a little different than others you may have visited. We will be in the presence of the artifacts of some of the 1.1 million murdered at Auschwitz, so visitors must be respectfully quiet. You will have your own audioguide to use as you progress through the exhibit. You will press in the number of the station you are at and listen to the information about the artifact you see there. If you must talk briefly to someone, whisper. Nothing in this exhibit should be touched, and it is inappropriate to lean on exhibit walls. Look for a bench if you need to rest.</i> <i>Now take out the description you wrote of your treasured object and write a two-sentence script for a narrator to describe it in an audioguide in an exhibit about you.</i> Assignment: As we go through the exhibition/museum, take a photograph of one artifact that speaks to you, and you will get the chance to reflect on it after we return to school.	
Extension: The Quandary of the Curator 10 minutes <i>Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.</i> brings together more than 500 artifacts and 400 photos. How to situate these objects to tell their stories to the visitor is a challenge. Ask students, as they watch this 3-minute video, “Exhibition Insights: The Journey of an Artifact on View in New York,” with a curator of the exhibition, to note the various different Holocaust stories that this one object connects to. Possible student responses: • The ghetto ◦ The bond of sisters ◦ A nurse tending the sick in the ghetto • The mass killing in Ponar • Smuggling of goods • Escape from the ghetto	Exhibition Insights: The Journey of an Artifact on View in New York From Museum of Jewish Heritage

• Partisans Ask: <i>Where would you place the shirt?</i>	
20 minutes Put students in groups of 3-5, and ask them to look at the Artifacts on Display in the Holocaust History Museum at Yad Vashem, the world Holocaust remembrance center in Jerusalem. Ask groups to select at least 12 of the 40-some artifacts and to group them into separate displays they would create as curators. Give them chart paper to divide in quarters (provide more paper, if needed) where they title each display and list the artifacts to be included in that display. To scaffold for students who need more support, print out and cut out the pictures of objects with their names. Ask students to arrange the objects in groups in which, as curator, they would create as separate displays. Have students put a heading over each collection with that display's name.	Artifacts on Display in the Holocaust History Museum from Yad Vashem Chart paper Markers
10 minutes Groups do a gallery walk and, as a group, put one sticky note, adding one item to one of the displays of each group.	
5 minutes Closing exit ticket In 2-3 sentences, identify one artifact that could have fallen squarely into a different display than where your group (or another group) placed it. Explain the merits of both choices and your individual decision, whether or not it matches the group's.	

Name _____

Answer the following questions as you view "Conservation in Auschwitz: Every Shoe Tells a Story."

(3:34) How long will it take Martha to preserve a suitcase?

(4:50) Why don't the conservators try to fix the shoes and suitcases?

(8:43) What are two reasons why private owners donate artifacts to the Museum?

(10:41) What does Aleksandra Papis mean when she says, "We are pioneers?"

(11:51) Why was the decision made not to preserve the 2 tons of human hair?

Name KEY of possible responses

Answer the following questions as you view "Conservation in Auschwitz: Every Shoe Tells a Story."

(3:34) How long will it take Martha to preserve a suitcase?

A month

(4:50) Why don't the conservators try to fix the shoes and suitcases?

Their philosophy is that they want to preserve things authentically. The dings and damage and wear tell the story of the experiences of the owner.

(8:43) What are two reasons why private owners donate artifacts to the Museum?

- 1) *The artifacts can tell their stories to more people in the Museum.*
- 2) *Private owners don't have the technology, skill, and resources to preserve the artifacts.*

(10:41) What does Aleksandra Papis mean when she says, "We are pioneers?"

No one has ever had to preserve artifacts from concentration camps, labor camps, and killing centers and in these circumstances (many irreverently packed up to head back to Germany or still in piles in "Kanada"). The Auschwitz conservators are figuring out how to do it. Others around the world call them and ask them how to preserve Holocaust artifacts.

(11:51) Why was the decision made not to preserve the 2 tons of human hair?

Since the hair was part of human bodies, staff want to be respectful of the victims, so they will avoid handling the hair and will not change it in any way.

Name _____

Excerpt from “Toronto’s new Auschwitz exhibit presents heart-wrenching evidence—and lets visitors draw their own conclusions”

by Lila Sarick

The Canadian Jewish News January 13, 2025

<https://thecjn.ca/news/rom-auschwitz/>

“...But even in the face of heartbreaking stories, the curators—who are immersed in Holocaust education—aim to let viewers draw their own lessons from the memory-laden artifacts.

“At no point in the exhibition do we moralize, not a single point, not even at the end, there is no point where we said, ‘Bad, bad Germans’ or ‘Never Again,’ or fight antisemitism, or any kind of direction,” says [curator and historian Robert Jan] Van Pelt. “We do not give any direction for people of how to interpret the material, beyond the fact that we want them to pay attention and learn to pay attention.”

...

Van Pelt says the curators did not approach donors with the promise that they would counter Holocaust denial or diminish antisemitism. Rather, they intended to tell a compelling evidence-based story about Auschwitz...”

1. Van Pelt uses the word *evidence*. How would you define it, as he uses the word? What is the word’s connotation in this context?
2. In your own words, describe Van Pelt’s goal in curating the exhibition.
3. How might such a presentation be different from (or similar to) representations of the Holocaust you have seen or heard previously?

Name _____

After you watch “Museum works to preserve shoes belonging to Auschwitz’s youngest victims,” discuss these questions with your group. Then write your individual response.

At 1:21, historian Marcin Noras states, “Basically, we are dealing with evidence of a crime. This is the philosophy adopted by the Museum, that this [artifacts under preservation] is evidence of a crime, one of the largest crimes in world’s history.”

1. Noras uses the word *evidence*. How would you define it, as he uses the word? What is the word’s connotation in this context?
2. Usually at a crime scene, evidence is not to be disturbed; it is preserved just as it is found. While the conservators at Auschwitz are not repairing items, their preservation efforts are changing the objects as they find them. Are these two notions of “preservation” in conflict, or can they be reconciled? How or why?
3. It was extraordinary that Van Pelt and his team got permission from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (where Noras works) to exhibit hundreds of the Museum’s artifacts, most of which conservators at Auschwitz preserved. How does Van Pelt’s work curating the exhibition support the philosophy of the Museum?

4. At 6:44, the interviewer asks historian Marcin Noras if it would be “possible, these days, to be able to eradicate six million people,” suggesting that such a crime could not happen with the prevalence of social media today. Noras responds that it would be possible, that “propaganda is now more potent than it ever was,” and “social media is also the perfect medium for propaganda.” Does social media serve as a guardrail against heinous human activities, or can it be weaponized to sway masses of people to allow such activities? Give at least two examples to support your claim.

Acknowledgements

Many people and organizations supported the background that went into creating this unit. Deep thanks to:

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, especially Pawel Sawicki and the *On Auschwitz* podcast
Musealia

The staff and supporters of the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust and Humanity Center

2G survivors Morry Wiener, Fred Miller, and Steve Coppel

Echoes & Reflections, Yad Vashem, and the USC Shoah Foundation

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Classrooms Without Borders

Seton Hill University's National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education, especially Professor Emeritus Dr. John Spurlock for the idea for the field trip reflection

Ohio Holocaust and Genocide Memorial and Education Commission

Facing History and Ourselves

Holocaust & Genocide Education Network, especially Dr. Mark Cole and Dr. Timothy Murnen