

ACTIVITY: Behind Every Name: Stories from the Holocaust

GRADE LEVEL: Adaptable for grades 7–12

SUBJECT: Multidisciplinary

SUGGESTED TIME: 20 min

This is a short activity adaptable as a bellringer or extension to a lesson.

Note: The paired artifact extension will lengthen the activity and could also be used before the animation activity.

RATIONALE:

By examining true personal stories, told through short animations, students learn about unique individual experiences within the historical context of the Holocaust. This activity contains an extension to examine the role of artifacts in understanding history.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How does an individual's experience help us better understand the Holocaust?

RESOURCES

- [Animated Video Series: Behind Every Name](#)
- [Student handout with questions](#) (optional)

LEARNER VARIABILITY MODIFICATIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

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

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

- Provide students with choices as to how they access information throughout lessons, i.e. read print alone, read print with a partner, read along while the teacher reads aloud, etc.
- Define terms that would clarify understanding for students.
- Utilize closed captions provided for videos.
- Incorporate strategies such as think-pair-share and jigsaw to enhance student engagement.

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:

1. Begin with an introductory question about the significance of individual stories in understanding history. Ask the students:

- Why is it important to highlight individual experiences during the Holocaust?

2. Next, select **one** animation for students to watch. Students **watch** selected animations:

- [Gretel: An Olympian's Dream](#) (5:48)

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- Jewish athlete who was not allowed to participate in the 1936 Olympics
- [Franz: A Professor's Plea](#) (5:18)
 - Jewish professor who wrote letters to strangers asking for help escaping Nazi oppression
- [Eleanor & Gilbert: A Couple's Mission](#) (5:48)
 - A Jewish-American couple who traveled to Vienna to rescue 50 Jewish children
- [Marianne & Jane: A Pen Pal's Story](#) (4:42)
 - Two teenage penpals whose friendship had life-saving consequences
- [Tony: A Soldier's Journey](#) (6:51)
 - US Army medic who kept a secret diary to honor his fellow soldiers and keep their memory alive

3. Following the video, students will answer the following questions via class discussion or [optional student handout](#):

- What challenges did the individual(s) face?
- Were they able to overcome these challenges? If so, how? If not, why not?
- What did you learn about the Holocaust from the story?
- What role did Americans play in the story?
- What surprised you in the story?
- What part of their story would you like to know more about?

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Extension: Artifact Exploration

20 Minutes

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

By examining personal stories connected to related artifacts students learn about unique individual experiences within the historical context of the Holocaust.

- What can we learn about the Holocaust from artifacts and material culture, the physical evidence of human experience?
- How might the meaning of an artifact change over time?
- How can an artifact help us understand an individual's experiences during the Holocaust?

RESOURCES:

- Videos and Artifacts:
 - Video: [Gretel: An Olympian's Dream](#) /Artifact: [Running shoes](#)
 - Video: [Franz: A Professor's Plea](#)/Artifact: [Scissors for cap making](#)
 - Video: [Eleanor & Gilbert: A Couple's Mission](#)/Artifact: [Harmonica](#)
 - Video: [Marianne & Jane: A Pen Pal's Story](#)/Artifact: [Marianne Winter's School Notebook](#)
 - Video: [Tony: A Soldier's Journey](#) /Artifact: [Diary Pages](#)
- [Student Handout](#)

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:

1. Begin with an introductory discussion about the significance of artifacts in understanding history. Ask the students:

- Explain:
 - Material culture is the evidence of human experience. Examples include written documents, letters, diaries, clothing, jewelry, toys, etc.
 - Historical artifacts are an example of material culture that can deepen our understanding of personal experiences.
- Ask:
 - What special objects do people save and why?
 - What kinds of objects are in museums?
 - Why would a museum keep an ordinary object?

2. Next, students **re-watch** the selected animation. Ask them to look for examples of two artifacts that help us understand the story.

- [Gretel: An Olympian's Dream](#)
- [Franz: A Professor's Plea](#)
- [Eleanor & Gilbert: A Couple's Mission](#)

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- [Marianne & Jane: A Pen Pal's Story](#)
- [Tony: A Soldier's Journey](#)

3. Students discuss the following question as a group:

- Name two artifacts you noticed in the clip. What information did these provide?

4. Ask the students:

- How might the meaning of an object change over time?

5. Students examine the artifact and record answers on the [handout](#). These answers will vary, as students will have different ideas about what these objects meant to their owners.

- Explain:
 - The artifact(s) you will examine today might not have belonged to the individual in the video, but rather to someone who had similar experiences.
 - Remind students to consider that under extraordinary circumstances, these individuals carefully chose these objects to save.
- Artifact: [Olympian's Dream: Running shoes](#)
- Artifact: [A Professor's Plea: Capmaker's scissors](#)
- Artifact: [A Couple's Mission: Harmonica](#)
- Artifact: [A Pen Pal's Story: Marianne Winter's School Notebook](#)
- Artifact: [A Soldier's Journey: Diary Pages](#)

6. Students discuss in small groups and share out *or* discuss the following questions as a class: (optional: students can answer on page 2 of the [handout](#))

- How might the meaning of this object change over time?
 - What might this object have meant to the original owner?
 - Why might the original owner have kept this object later?
 - Why is this object something important to keep in a museum now?
- How does this artifact deepen our understanding of individual experiences during the Holocaust?

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FOR FURTHER LEARNING:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: GRETEL: AN OLYMPIAN'S DREAM

- *Holocaust Encyclopedia*: [The Nazi Olympics - 1936 Berlin Olympic Games](#)
- Podcast: [Voices on Antisemitism: Margaret Lambert](#)
- Video: [Oral history interview with Margaret Lambert](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: FRANZ: A PROFESSOR'S PLEA

- Personal Story: [Franz Goldberger](#)
- Artifact: [Franz Goldberger Letter and CV](#)
- *Holocaust Encyclopedia*: [The German Annexation of Austria](#)
- Video: [Curator's Corner: Friends Indeed: The American Friends Service Committee Collection](#) (4:16 min)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: COUPLE'S MISSION

- *Holocaust Encyclopedia*: [The Rescue Mission of Gilbert and Eleanor Kraus](#)
- *Holocaust Encyclopedia*: [Anti-Jewish Legislation in Prewar Germany](#)
- Personal Story: [Eleanor and Gilbert Kraus](#)
- Artifact: [Eleanor Kraus Memoir](#)
- Artifacts: [Identification Papers and Photographs of the "50 Children"](#)
- Videos: [Oral History Interviews](#) Conducted for the Documentary Film "50 Children: The Rescue Mission of Mr. and Mrs. Kraus"

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: A PEN PAL'S STORY

- Video: [Oral history interview with Marianne \(Winter\) Selinger](#)
- Video: [Staying Connected: Friendships That Saved Lives during the Holocaust](#)
- Video: [Curator's Corner: Friends Indeed: The American Friends Service Committee Collection](#) (4:16 min)
- Artifact: [Marianne and Jane's Letter](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: TONY: A SOLDIER'S JOURNEY

- *Holocaust Encyclopedia*: [Mannschafts-Stammlager \(Stalag\) IX B](#)
- Video: [Oral history interview with Anthony Acevedo](#)
- Artifacts: [Anthony Acevedo Collection](#)
- Video: [Anthony Acevedo Donates Artifacts to Museum](#)
- Video: [Animated Map: Where Were the Allied Troops During the Holocaust?](#)

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ADDITIONAL RELATED RESOURCES AND LESSONS:

- Lesson: [Challenges of Escape, 1938–1941](#)
- Lesson: [Black Americans and the Nazi Olympics](#)
- Lesson: [Understanding Nazi Symbols](#)
- Lessons: [Teaching Materials on Americans and the Holocaust](#)
- Online Exhibition: [Americans and the Holocaust](#)
- *Holocaust Encyclopedia*: [How did the United States government and American people respond to Nazism?](#)
- Article: [What Refugees Needed to Obtain a US Visa](#)
- FAQ: [Did Americans know about the Holocaust and what did they do?](#)