

LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

HANDOUT: Testimonies Aligned with Topics to Teach

One of the most powerful ways of remembering the Holocaust and honoring its victims is to bring the voices of survivors to your students. Precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims, first-person accounts and memoir literature add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of the statistics.

As you teach about [key historical topics](#), incorporate survivor testimony to personalize the history, to emphasize its impact on individuals, and to highlight the diversity of experiences individuals had during this event. When including survivor testimony, providing context is essential. The museum's [Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust](#) suggest placing events described in survivor testimony into historical context so students can understand the circumstances that led to particular actions or events.

Below are resources to assist you in identifying survivor testimonies to enhance your teaching of Holocaust history.

- [Survivor Testimony Video Clips](#) – short clips taken from interviews with survivors of the Holocaust and persecution by the Nazis and their collaborators
- [Complete Oral Histories](#) - Over 17,000 digitized oral histories are available online via the Museum's collections database.
- [First Person podcast](#) – This audio series features interviews with Holocaust survivors excerpted from the Museums *First Person* program.
- [First Person: Conversations with Holocaust Survivors](#) – This hour long program is offered live via streaming video of Holocaust survivors as they share their remarkable personal stories of hope, tragedy, and survival with visitors at the Museum; recordings of previous years' programs are available to stream via YouTube.
- [Eyewitness to History](#) – This video library features testimonies from Holocaust survivors who volunteer with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- [Behind Every Name a Story](#) – essays written by survivors or their families describing survivors' experiences during the Holocaust
- [The Memory Project](#) – writings by Holocaust survivors who volunteer at the Museum

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SURVIVOR TESTIMONY ILLUSTRATING KEY TOPICS

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has identified [topic areas](#) for you to consider while planning a course of study on the Holocaust. Below are survivor testimonies paired with corresponding encyclopedia articles to help illustrate and personalize each of the topic areas.

1933-1939

Dictatorship under the Third Reich

[Third Reich: An Overview](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Peter Becker describes indoctrination and being in the Hitler Youth](#) (video, 02:10)
- [Guy Stern describes losing a friend to membership in the Hitler Youth](#) (video, 01:42)

Early Stages of Persecution

[Anti-Jewish Legislation in Pre-War Germany](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Frank Liebermann describes changes in Germany after Nazi rise to power](#) (audio, 04:40)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Johanna Gerechter Neumann describes anti-Jewish measures in Hamburg, Germany](#) (video, 01:56)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Survivors Remember Kristallnacht](#) (YouTube Playlist, 9 short videos)

The First Concentration Camps

[Concentration Camps, 1933-1939](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Siegfried Halbreich describes treatment of the prisoners in the Sachsenhausen camp](#) (video, 01:53)

1939-1945

World War II in Europe

[World War II in Europe](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [David Bayer](#) describes life after the German Invasion of Poland (audio, 05:14)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Survivors and Veterans Remember D-Day](#) (YouTube Playlist, 6 short videos)

Murder of People with Disabilities (Euthanasia program)

[Euthanasia Program and Aktion T4](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Robert Wagemann](#) describes fleeing from a clinic where, his mother feared, he was to be put to death by euthanasia (video, 01:09)
- [Antje Kosemund, Paul Eggert, and Elvira Manthey](#) describe the Euthanasia Program (video, 07:55)

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Persecution and Murder of Jews

[Introduction to the Holocaust](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Rabbi Jacob G. Wiener describes his arrest on Kristallnacht](#) (audio, 04:25)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Charlene Schiff describes anti-Jewish decrees and measures following the German invasion of Horochow](#) (video, 03:27), [escaping from the Horochow ghetto](#) (video, 07:50), and [foraging for food in order to survive in forests after escaping from the Horochow ghetto](#) (video, 02:34)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Lily Appelbaum Malnik describes the registration process at Auschwitz](#) (video, 01:04)
- [Sandor \(Shony\) Alex Braun describes the death of his father in Kochendorf, a subcamp of Natzweiler](#) (video, 01:37)

Ghettos

[Ghettos](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Erika Eckstut describes a young girl's experience in the Czernowitz ghetto](#) (audio, 05:06)
 - ["In the Ghetto with My Mother"](#) (written reflection)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Nesse Galperin Godin describes a roundup in the Siauliai ghetto](#) (video, 05:04)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Beno Helmer describes conditions in the Łódź ghetto](#) (video, 01:46)
- [Charlene Schiff describes conditions in the Horochow ghetto](#) (video, 03:41)

Mobile Killing Squads (Einsatzgruppen)

[Einsatzgruppen: An Overview](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Frima L. describes roundup of Jews for mobile killing unit \(Einsatzgruppen\) massacre](#) (video, 02:49) and [her escape from a mobile killing unit massacre](#) (video, 03:27)
- [Martin Spett describes a massacre of Tarnów Jews](#) (02:42)

Expansion of the Concentration Camp System

[Concentration Camps, 1939-1942](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Siegfried Halbreich describes conditions and forced labor in the Gross-Rosen camp](#) (video, 01:58)
- [Julian Noga describes conditions in Flossenbug](#) (video, 2:20)
- [Gerda Weissmann Klein describes the Bolkenhain subcamp of Gross-Rosen and a camp leader there](#) (video, 02:07)
- [Saul Ingber describes forced labor and brutality in the Gusen subcamp of the Mauthausen concentration camp](#) (video, 02:59)

Killing Centers

[Killing Centers: An Overview](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

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- [Martin Weiss](#) describes selection at Auschwitz (audio, 06:58)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Leo Schneiderman describes arrival at Auschwitz, selection, and separation from his family](#) (video, 02:51)
- [Chaim Engel describes arrival in Sobibor](#) (video, 02:30)
- [Abraham Bomba describes the Treblinka gas chambers](#) (video, 03:01)

Additional Victims of Nazi Persecution

[Who Were The Victims?](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Theresia Seible and Rita Prigmore describe research on Sinti twins](#) (video, 3:00)
- [Joseph Stanley Wardzala describes badge worn as forced laborer in Germany](#) (video, 1:14)
- [Robert Wagemann describes surreptitious Jehovah's Witness prayer meetings in Nazi Germany](#) (video, 01:04)

Jewish Resistance and Non-Jewish Resistance

[Jewish Resistance](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

[Non-Jewish Resistance](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Estelle Laughlin](#) describes the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (audio, 06:28)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Vladka \(Fagele\) Peltel Meed describes smuggling activities in the Warsaw ghetto](#) (video, 02:57)
- [Alisa \(Lisa\) Nussbaum Derman describes partisan activities](#) (video, 01:48)
- [Chaim Engel describes his role in the Sobibor uprising](#) (video, 01:41) and [plans for the uprising](#) (video, 02:14)

Rescue

[Rescue](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Gideon Frieder: Safe Harbor Among a Slovak Family](#) (audio, 10:11)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Agnes Mandl Adachi describes rescue activity on the banks of the Danube River and the role of Raoul Wallenberg](#) (video, 01:42)
- [Preben Munch-Nielsen describes the Danish people's responsibility to help their Jewish fellow citizens](#) (video, 01:02)

United States

[The United States and the Holocaust](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Kurt Klein describes difficulties leaving Germany](#) (video, 2:06)
- [Hessy Levinsons Taft describes his father's attempts to obtain visas for the family to emigrate from Nice, in the south of France](#) (video, 01:49)

Death Marches

[Death Marches](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

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- [Manya Friedman describes death march to Ravensbrück](#) (audio, 03:54)
 - [Biography and additional collections](#)
- [Rochelle Blackman Slivka describes a death march from Stutthof](#) (video, 02:03)
- [Lily Appelbaum Malnik describes death march from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen](#) (video, 01:45)

Liberation

[Liberation of Nazi Camps](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Gerda Weissman Klein describes her liberation by a US soldier following a death march in Czechoslovakia](#) (video, 02:52)
- [Kurt Klein describes encountering a group of death march survivors in a Czechoslovak village](#) (video, 03:35)
- [Norbert Wollheim describes liberation at Schwerin, in northeast German, in May 1945](#) (video, 02:13)
- [Witnesses to the Holocaust: Liberation 1945 - survivors and liberators reflect upon their experiences during liberation of the camps](#) (YouTube video, 12:31)

Post-1945

Postwar Trials

[Postwar Trials](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Thomas Buerghenthal describes the significance of Nuremberg both personally and as a lawyer and judge](#) (video, 01:23)
- [Benjamin \(Beryl\) Ferencz describes collecting evidence of death marches](#) (01:30)
- [William Denson describes the nature of the evidence uncovered](#) (02:49)

Displaced Persons Camps and Emigration

[Displaced Persons Camps](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

[Postwar Refugee Crisis and the Establishment of the State of Israel](#) (Encyclopedia Article)

- [Fela Warschau describes the Feldafing displaced persons camp](#) (video, 01:10)
- [Colonel Richard R. Seibel describes aid given to survivors after liberation in Mauthausen and their plans for emigration](#) (video, 01:36)
- [Life After the Holocaust – 6 survivors recount their journeys to the United States and the complexity of starting over](#) (audio)