

Curriculum Guide Grades 6-12 With Common Core Standards

Introduction

Dear Educators,

In 2015, we opened the Stan Greenspon Holocaust and Social Justice Education Center at Queens University of Charlotte. My vision for the Center was that every person have access to learn the lessons of the Holocaust. I believe that it is important to know this history in order to examine our own behavior and work to make our communities places that promote honor and respect for all people, especially the marginalized and outcast. Five years later, we are thrilled with the feedback and support you have given to us!

Thanks to our partnership with The Holocaust Education Film Foundation, we are able to extend our impact nationally. We worked diligently to create meaningful lessons from Dr. Eger's story. We are proud to present this guide to you.

The guide is for students from grades six through twelve. Every lesson aligns with Common Core Standards for Reading, ELA and History/Social Studies. The handouts provided may be used electronically and allow students to interactively complete the assignment. If you prefer to print these resources, the interactive fields will not show.

After surviving the Holocaust, Edith Eva Eger went on to earn her PhD. Out of respect for her accomplishment and recognition of her status, the guide refers to her as Dr. Eger in the lesson procedures. To remind the students that she was just a teenage girl during the Holocaust, we suggest that you refer to her as Edie or Edie Eger when speaking with your class. All handouts use this form of Dr. Eger's name.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, to you our educators, for your dedication to keep the memory of the Holocaust survivors alive by connecting them to the lives of your students.

With Gratitude,
Stan Greenspon

Curriculum Guide Lessons

Overarching Theme:

Choices — Everyone has them; everyone makes them for different reasons; each individual choice affects persons and communities.

Outline:

Before Viewing the Film

Lesson 1: An Introduction to the Holocaust in Hungary

Mini theme — How did Hungary's history influence the decision to collaborate with Germany?

After Viewing the Film

Lesson 2: Collaborate or Resist?

Mini theme — There are a variety of factors that influence choice, but in the end it is our personal decisions that help or hurt others.

Lesson 3: Friendship in the Camps

Mini theme — Individualism vs. Collectivism

Lesson 4: The Stories of the Past Are Our Stories

Mini theme — Holocaust testimony, history, and writings are filled with themes that continue to shape our lives and our society.

Lesson 5: The Value of Oral History

Mini theme — Preserving individual stories deepens our understanding of past events and helps us make more informed choices in the present.

Lesson 6: Victim or Survivor?

Mini theme — The words we use to explain our experiences have an effect on the way we see ourselves and the way society sees us. Some words and ideas make us stronger while others tear us down. Learning how to exercise personal choice and choosing the words we use are key to resilience after trauma.

Before Viewing Film Clips:

Six million Jews were murdered during the Holocaust. One and a half million of those were children.

Both of these numbers are too large for most adults to comprehend in any meaningful way. For students, it is even more difficult.

One of the most effective ways for students to learn the lessons of the Holocaust is to listen to a survivor share their story. It is an intimate experience that creates a lasting connection between the storyteller and the audience members.

Dr. Edith Eger shared her story with tens of thousands of students and educators over the past thirty years. During her talks, she transforms the overwhelming largeness of the Holocaust into one person's experience of prejudice and hatred. Throughout her story, Dr. Eger reminds us that we all have choices and those choices matter.

Before you watch Dr. Eger tell her story in the film clips, use Lesson One to help you prepare your students for what they will see and hear.

By working through this lesson, students have an opportunity to situate Dr. Eger's story within the larger context of World War II and antisemitism in Hungary. The lesson includes a brief background of the events that led to Hungary's partnership with Germany during World War II and a timeline of antisemitism in Hungary.



“Listen. We don’t know where we’re going. We don’t know what’s going to happen. Just remember, no one can take away from you what you’ve put in your mind.”

Dr. Edith Eger

Lesson One: An Introduction to the Holocaust in Hungary

Overview:

Hungary was an ally of Germany in World War I. After the war, Hungary lost territory and suffered economic hardship. Many Hungarians believed the Nazi propaganda that the Jews were responsible for their defeat in WWI. As the Nazi party rose to power in Germany, many in Hungary saw an opportunity to regain status in Central Europe by working with Hitler's government.

Procedures:

Opener

Tell the class:

Today we are going to get ready to watch the story of Dr. Edith Eger, a Holocaust survivor born in Hungary in 1927. In order to understand some of the things Edie talks about in the film, we will take a look at Hungarian ideas about Nazism and Judaism during that time. So, we will explore a bit of Hungarian history!

Why? Because ideas and beliefs that exist in a society do not form overnight. A nation's ideas and beliefs about different people are rooted in the distant past and take shape as leaders and individuals make choices about themselves and others.

First we will investigate the existence of antisemitism in Hungary's history and the consequences of Hungary's involvement in World War I. After that, we will look briefly at Hungary's involvement in World War II. When we are finished, you should have a better understanding of the social conditions that existed when Edie was growing up and came face to face with Nazism.

Key Understandings:

- Governments are made up of individuals whose choices influence laws and actions.
- Governmental laws and actions shape societal beliefs and impact individual lives.

Key Questions:

- What impact did antisemitism in Hungary have on the way Hungarians chose to treat the Jews after 1939?
- What factors influenced Hungarian leaders to decide to ally with Germany in World War II?

Common Core:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1, 7.1, 8.1

Lesson One: An Introduction to the Holocaust in Hungary

Activity One:

Timeline of Antisemitism

1. Hand out the timeline of antisemitism in Hungary. Ask students to read through the timeline and annotate as follows:
 - *Underline things that seem familiar to you.*
 - *Circle things that are surprising to you.*
2. Pair or group students and give them five-six minutes to discuss their annotations and answer the question:

Do you think this history helped create a social environment that allowed for discrimination against Jewish people? Explain your answer.

3. Re-group and spend five-six minutes hearing from small groups. Keep a list of ideas shared on a large sheet of paper or on a virtual whiteboard. Tell the class that you'll be revisiting the list at the end of the lesson.

*Make sure the students address the role of the government in encouraging or discouraging discrimination through legislation.



We were able to discover an inner strength we could draw on — a way to talk to ourselves that helped us feel free inside, that kept us grounded in our own morality, that gave us foundation and assurance even when the external forces sought to obliterate us. “I’m good,” we learned to say. “I’m innocent. Somehow, something good will come of this.”

Dr. Edith Eger



Lesson One: An Introduction to the Holocaust in Hungary

Activity Two

Hungary and the World Wars

1. Explain to the class that you are going to evaluate the choices made by the Hungarian government before and during the two world wars. Remind the class that the antisemitism they read about on the timeline influenced the leaders making the decisions.
2. Read through the passage titled “Choosing Sides” as a class. As you read, keep in mind that Dr. Eger was born during the time between the wars.
3. After reading, have students consider the choices made by the Hungarian governmental leaders during this time period by asking the following questions:
 - *What were the main factors that led to the allyship between Austria-Hungary and Germany in World War I?*
 - *How did Hungary’s history of antisemitism support the narrative that blamed the Jews for the loss of World War I?*
 - *What were the main factors that led Hungary to choose allyship with Germany in World War II?*



It’s the first time I see that we have a choice: to pay attention to what we’ve lost or to pay attention to what we still have.

Dr. Edith Eger

Bringing it all together

Recap the lesson by telling the class: *When we watch Edie’s story, keep in mind that her experience was shaped by hundreds of years of history. Throughout those years, individuals made decisions about what they would believe about the Jewish people. Neighbors made decisions about how they would treat their Jewish neighbors. People who had never met a Jewish person made judgments based on lies and stereotypes.*

Some of the very antisemitic individuals rose to positions of power in the government. They took with them

their antisemitic ideas and exercised their power to create laws and policies. These policies isolated the Jewish people in Hungary, gave a stamp of approval to stereotypes, instituted systemic discrimination, and resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews.

As you watch Edie’s story, think about how stereotypes and prejudice affect the way we think today and how that is expressed in our community, state, and national decisions.

After Viewing the Film:

Watching the testimonies of Holocaust survivor Dr. Edith Eger and camp liberator Alan Moskin can be a very moving experience. Listening to vivid testimony might bring up painful memories of injustice. Watching people who lived through extraordinary times recount their stories can also inspire us to acts of compassion. As educators, you will need to navigate these potential reactions with your students.

Watching Dr. Eger's story with teenagers often raises a question that deserves a good answer: "What does this have to do with me?" It is with this question in mind that we created the following lessons. Each lesson addresses one of the themes in Dr. Eger's film in ways that bring it back to the lives of the students.

Lesson Two helps students take a look at the choices different people made when faced with the opportunity to resist or collaborate with the Nazis. Students examine personal choices and their effects on the community.

Lesson Three explores the experience of friendship in the camps where Dr. Eger was imprisoned and the value of a network of support. The lesson ends with the class doing a compare and contrast of individualism and collectivism.

Lesson Four explores how the history of the Holocaust is still relevant to us today. The lesson allows students to explore timeless social themes using found poetry.

Lesson Five dives into the difference between textbook history and oral history. Students will be assigned the task of collecting oral history from someone in their family or community.

Lesson Six takes a look at how words hold the power to shape how we see ourselves and those around us. Students will examine personal experiences that exemplify this process and commit to using words that build rather than destroy.



... competition and dominance get you nowhere, cooperation is the name of the game; to survive is to transcend your own needs and commit yourself to someone or something outside yourself. For me, that someone is Magda.

Dr. Edith Eger

Lesson Two: Collaborate or Resist

Overview:

Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933. On April 7, 1933, the first anti-Jewish laws were enacted in Germany. From that time on, Jews and non-Jews lived with rapid social changes and growing fears of what was to come. Nazi actions forced people to decide whether they would be a perpetrator, collaborator, resistor, rescuer, or bystander. Individuals chose how they would respond based on personal, social, economic, and political factors. Individual actions often had effects that went far beyond what the person intended. We still face these choices, on a smaller level, in our lives today.

Materials:

1. Handouts
2. The Secret Student Resistance to Hitler:
The White Rose: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-tOKRsF6Rr0>
3. Partisans: Through the eyes of the Soviet Newsreel:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ue7k1rkxExg>

Procedures:

1. Hand out the vocabulary list for this lesson or write the vocabulary on the board or other place the students can easily see.

2. Opener

Tell the students:

Edie's story is filled with different types of people who behaved in different ways when the Nazis were in power. Some people joined the Nazi organization and committed acts of violence against the Jews and other Nazi targets. These people are called perpetrators. Some people cooperated with the Nazis by allowing them to hurt or kill innocent people. These people are called collaborators. Some people stepped up and protected those who were being persecuted. These people are called upstanders. Some people saw what was happening and chose to do nothing. These people are called bystanders.

Key Understandings:

- Individual choices are influenced by many factors. Every individual choice impacts a larger community.
- “Bystanding” is a choice that always helps the perpetrator.
- Students can learn to make better choices by anticipating and evaluating outcomes.

Key Questions:

- What enabled some Jewish people to stand up to the Nazis while others did not?
- What factors influenced people to collaborate with the Nazis?
- How do individual acts of kindness or harm impact the larger society?

Common Core:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Lesson Two: Collaborate or Resist

Lesson Two Continued

Perpetrators and collaborators chose to inflict harm upon those targeted by the Nazi regime in small and large ways. They chose, for many different reasons, to act in ways that hurt Jews and other targeted groups. Through their actions, these groups worked to isolate, persecute, dehumanize, and eventually kill the Jewish people that came under Nazi rule. Many of these people were interviewed after the Holocaust. Some had remorse. Many said they would do it again.

Upstanders chose to do something to stop or diminish the effect of the Nazi policies against the Jews. They offered resistance in many ways. Some refused to join the Nazi youth parties or serve in the army. Others published written works denouncing the Nazis and tried to build up a larger resistance among the population. Some committed acts of sabotage. Then there were those who rescued Jews and other targeted people by hiding them, creating false papers, or smuggling them out of danger. When interviewed after the Holocaust, the majority of upstanders stated they were only doing what they knew had to be done and they would do it again.

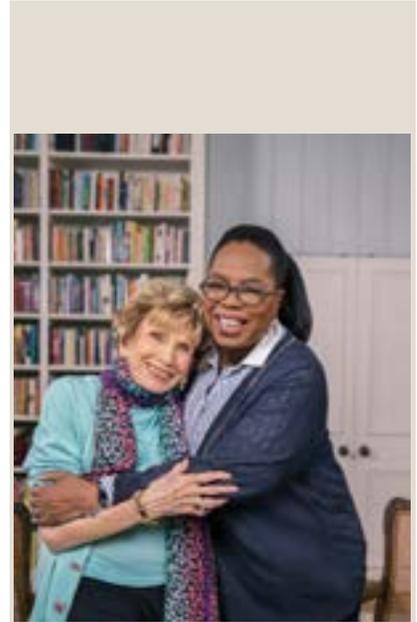
The bystanders are a more complicated group. These people saw the violence and discrimination and chose

to do nothing. Bystanders did not actively perpetrate violence. They did not actively support Nazism and its hateful ideology. They simply said and did nothing and went about their lives. The reasons they gave for doing nothing are complex and varied. When interviewed after the Holocaust, many of them stated that they wish they had done something because they knew what was happening was wrong.

3. If you cannot watch the entire film, watch clips 1 and 2, found here <https://www.stangreensponcenter.org/educator-programs-and-resources/>.

4. After the film, ask students for feedback on the film or any questions raised by the film. After you have listened and answered what you can, tell the class it is time to move on and unpack Edie's story further.

5. Choose one (or both) of the following activities. The first activity looks more closely at the roles of perpetrator, collaborator, bystander, and upstander through close reading of events from Dr. Eger's life. The second activity explores the role of upstander by looking at two very different stories of resistance.



To be passive is to let others decide for you. To be aggressive is to decide for others. To be assertive is to decide for yourself. And to trust that there is enough, that you are enough.

Dr. Edith Eger

Lesson Two: Collaborate or Resist

Activity One: Choices and Consequences

1. This activity asks students to evaluate five different events in Dr. Eger's story. They will use the text to make inferences about motivation of the different people involved with the event. Students will understand that motivation to act is influenced by both internal and external factors. Students will also realize that individual actions then become factors that determine the motivation of others.
2. Break students into pairs or groups of three. Give each pair or group one of the handout readings.
3. Tell the class:

We are now going to read through different accounts of events that happened to Edie during her life under Nazi rule. Some of these are events we saw in the film clips we just watched. Others are from parts of her life not shown in the documentary. Each account contains different people who chose to act in ways that harmed or helped Edie and the other Jewish people who came under Nazi rule during the Holocaust.

Your group must identify each person in the account and answer a few questions about their actions. The questions ask some factual information (i.e., what was their name?, what did they do?) and some critical thinking questions (i.e., what do you think motivated their action? How free were they to act?). You must answer all the questions fully.

4. Hand out the event descriptions, allow 10 minutes for the groups to work and then reconvene as a large group. Give each group time to summarize the event and report their group's answers.
5. When all the groups are finished, reflect with the following questions:
 - *How did the level of freedom influence the person's action? How does your level of freedom to act influence your choices? Give a specific example.*
 - *What motivations were most common among the perpetrators? In your opinion, what kinds of actions in our school community are rooted in similar motivations?*
 - *Look at this statement: A bystander is basically a collaborator. Do you agree or disagree with this idea? Explain.*

OPTIONAL USE: Assign these for homework or individual written reflection.

Lesson Two: Collaborate or Resist

Activity Two: Planning to Resist

Upstanders came in two main forms during the Holocaust: resisters and rescuers. Resisters were people who, at great personal risk, acted in a variety of ways to oppose those in power. Rescuers were those who actively helped members of persecuted groups escape the actions of the perpetrators. They were ordinary people who became extraordinary people because they acted in accordance with their own personal belief systems while living in an immoral society. In many cases, they were also members of the targeted group.

Thousands survived the Holocaust because of the choices made by resisters and rescuers.

*Pull up the two videos using the links in the “Materials” section. Have them ready to go before you begin.

1. Tell the class:

In this activity, we will watch two different stories of resistance. The White Rose was a group of German teenagers who tried to warn other Germans about the dangers of Nazism through the printed word. The Jewish Partisans were groups of Jewish men and women who escaped Nazi round-ups and fought the occupation with guns and bombs. The Jewish Partisans also rescued other Jews from the ghettos in the areas where they operated.

Each of the stories shows different ways that people had access to what Facing History and Ourselves calls “Levers of Power.”¹ In a literal sense, a lever is a tool that allows one to pick up or move something much heavier than could be lifted without it. In other words, a lever allows someone to use a small amount of force to have a big impact. We are going to watch two different stories of resistance. As you watch each story, think about what individuals or groups used that, by itself, was a small thing but made a big impact.

¹<https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/strategies-making-difference>

2. Show the films, pausing between the first and second, to remind students to be thinking about the levers of power.
3. Break the class into two groups. One group will evaluate the White Rose and the other will evaluate the Jewish Partisans. The two groups can work on the evaluations individually or as smaller pairs or groups — whatever works best for your class.
4. Hand out the “Resistance and Levers of Power” worksheet and go over the levers of power to make sure the students understand the activity. Allow eight minutes for the students to work.
5. Have individuals or groups share out.
6. Finish with a wrap up discussion about how access to levers of power was, and still is, the most crucial element when people attempt to enact change in our world, whether on a local, national or global level. During the Holocaust this access was denied to the Jewish people and other targeted groups, which made it very difficult to stand up for themselves. This was part of the Nazi plan. When those with access shared with the Jewish people, the Jews showed that they were extremely capable of resisting and even rescuing others.

The issues of injustice in our world today often result from lack of access by oppressed groups to today’s levers of power. If we have access to those levers, it is our job to make sure everyone else also has the same level of access.

TAKING IT FURTHER: Assign students a longer-term project that requires them to evaluate how they can use levers of power available to them now (social media, influential friends/school leaders/community leaders/family friends, local businesses, local government, schools, nonprofits, etc.) to enact positive change in the school or community. This will require them to first identify how injustice exists in those communities and what they would need to do to confront and dismantle the injustice.

Lesson Three: Friendship in the Camps

Overview:

Throughout the narrative of Dr. Eger's time at the different camps, she repeatedly talks about the friendships among the inmates. She remembers how they would sit around at night, constantly hungry, talking about their favorite recipes. She speaks about how the girls helped one another during difficult times. In her book and during other interviews, she speaks about "fashion shows" the inmates would hold, using their uniforms, blankets, and other scraps of fabric. Other female survivors share their memories of skits and plays they created as well as recitations of poetry and short stories. All of these activities show how women in the concentration camps derived great strength from their friendships. The authors often mention that inmates who only took care of themselves usually did not fare well. This lesson helps students recognize the importance of their own friendships.

Materials:

1. Enough thank you cards and envelopes for each of your students to have one.
2. Postage to mail the cards (when other teachers did this, the school provided the postage. The school's return address was used in case the mail was undeliverable.)
3. Video testimonies of Holocaust survivors explaining value of friendships:

Irene Fogel Weiss: <https://youtu.be/IpbB2hn7fPc?t=123> (English) 2:34

Sara Lebron: <https://youtu.be/S9IPEjKWtgE> (Hewbrew with subtitles) 1:59

Bart Stern: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/bart-stern-describes-the-role-of-friendships-in-survival-at-auschwitz> (English) 2:09

Blanka Rothschild: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/blanka-rothschild-describes-the-role-of-sharing-and-friendship-in-surviving-the-lodz-ghetto> (Accented English with subtitles available) 1:33

Key Understandings:

- Showing kindness to other inmates was an act of resistance to the Nazi effort toward dehumanization of the Jews.
- Caring for another person can help a person maintain hope during difficult times.

Key Questions:

- How did resisting the Nazi attempt at dehumanization provide hope to Edie and other camp inmates?
- How do relationships of mutual caring help individuals overcome their own personal struggles?

Common Core:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

Lesson Three: Friendships in the Camps

Procedures:

*Before class, pull up the video testimonies using the links in the “materials” section.

1. Opener

Tell the class:

In Edie’s story, she often speaks about friendship. Over and over she explains that her friendship with her sister, Magda, kept hope alive in her and gave her the strength to go on when all she wanted to do was give up. She also shared stories of how friendships with other women were important to survival.

2. Ask the class to recall the story Dr. Eger told about dancing to Dr. Mengele. As they recall the story, make sure they recall the bread that he gave to Edie and how she shared it with her bunkmates.

3. If no one has already made the connection, ask the class to share their thoughts about how that one act of kindness and the friends she had came back to help Dr. Eger literally survive the death march. (The girls who made a chair out of their arms to carry her were the same ones with whom she shared the bread.)

4. Show the clips of other survivors sharing their stories of the importance of friendship in the Nazi camps.

5. Hand out the “Friendship in the Camps: Hope and Resistance” worksheet and allow students four minutes to brainstorm individually. Once the four minutes are up, have the students turn to one-two other class members and share results, adding ideas to their personal lists. (8 minutes)

Answers to #1 might include: isolating them from friends and family; taking their money, home, and possessions; putting them in ghettos; destroying their synagogues; encouraging the German people to hate them; depriving them of food and water and health care; calling them rats and other names; shaving their heads; taking their clothes and giving them prison uniforms; making them get a tattoo; making them do harsh and dangerous work; death marches; putting them in camps; beating them; killing them; treating them like animals; and not letting them clean properly (no showers, soap, toothbrushes).

Answers to #2 might include: the friends are going through all of it together; friends support one another; friends tell each other it will get better; being friends shows you are human; sharing with someone means you are not an animal; a friend can tell you that you do not look so bad; friends share their food; friends can help you when you’re sick; friends remind you of who you really are; friends can help you think about other things — good memories or life outside the camps; and friends can hide you sometimes.

6. Bring the class together and have groups list all of their answers for #2 on the worksheet on the board or a large piece of paper. Have the class look at the list and think about the testimony and Edie’s film.

7. Tell the class:

We have listened to the testimony of five Holocaust survivors. Each one

of them credits friendship as crucial to survival. If you keep looking and listening to the stories of people who have come through war and other genocide attempts, you will encounter this same theme of friendship. You will begin to realize that thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of times, survival came down to the act of a friend, new friend or old friend. Now, think about all of the people who never told their stories. People who survived all different types of trauma and never talked about their experiences. I often sit and wonder how many of those stories must have involved the kindness of a friend at a moment of great need. True friendship is one of the greatest things in this world. It is one of the highest forms of humanity. And, we often pass it by. So, to close this lesson, you are going to write a thank you note to a friend who has helped you through a rough time in your life.

8. Hand out the “Thank You” worksheet and go through the directions. Allow students the rest of the class period to complete the activity. Collect the cards from the students and hold them until the students bring you an address.

*In this day and age of electronic everything, having students physically mail a thank you note might seem absurd. However, the educators who have done this activity report that in about 90% of the cases, when the friend receives the note they contact the student. The student is amazed and the friendship is strengthened.

Lesson Four: The Stories of the Past Are Our Stories

Overview:

A traditional found poem is created using words that have been copied and rearranged from another text. It allows students to “find” meaningful pieces of the text and shape them into a new piece of writing to highlight a significant theme and meaning. Found poems come with no structural or grammatical expectations, which often results in even the most tentative writer creating a deeply impactful piece of prose. Creating a found poem from a Holocaust survivor’s testimony can be a way to pay respectful attention to and honor his or her experiences. It can also help students recognize a specific theme as relevant to them today. Dr. Eger’s story focuses on Choice, Power, and Hope. This lesson requires two 45-minute or one 90-minute class period(s).

Procedure:

NOTE: This lesson requires students to write a few things while they watch the film clip

1. Opener

Before you begin watching the film clip, ask students to have a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil ready. Tell students they will make a list while they watch Edie’s story. This list can include words, phrases, or emotions they have while they watch the film. The list can also include things they see in the film that are interesting or impactful. (i.e., my list might include: choose, Edie smiles a lot, shaved heads, sad, cartwheels, soldier with a gun . . .)

2. Watch the entire film or, if time is limited, clip one is a good start. Watch here: <https://www.stangreensponcenter.org/educator-programs-and-resources/> (44 or 28 minutes)

3. Once the film is over, give students a few minutes to add to their list. Now, give the class five minutes or so to look through any of the materials you are currently using in your class (textbooks, novels, short stories, art, classroom posters, etc.) and add to the list they started while watching the film. The longer the list, the easier it will be to create the found poem.



Key Understandings:

- Dr. Eger’s life and experiences during the Holocaust are relevant to us today.
- Exploring historical events through the lens of found poems can help bring greater meaning to that history.

Key Questions:

- How does word choice impact the meaning we try to convey in a piece of writing?
- What themes from Dr. Eger’s life show up in our lives today? What makes those themes timeless?

Common Core:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

Lesson Four: The Stories From the Past Are Our Stories

Lesson Four Procedure Continued

4. Each student should now have a list that reflects their takeaway from Dr. Eger's story in relation to what they have learned in your class. The next step is to identify a theme and message that represents some or all of the language they have selected. Often it is helpful for students to do this step with a partner. Students can trade lists and describe the themes or main ideas they see in their partner's list. Explain to the class as follows:

A theme is a broad concept such as "obedience" or "loyalty." A message is a specific idea they would like to express about this theme. For example, "decision making" is a theme. A message about decision making expressed by humanitarian Carl Wilkens is, "Every situation is an opportunity and every opportunity demands a decision."

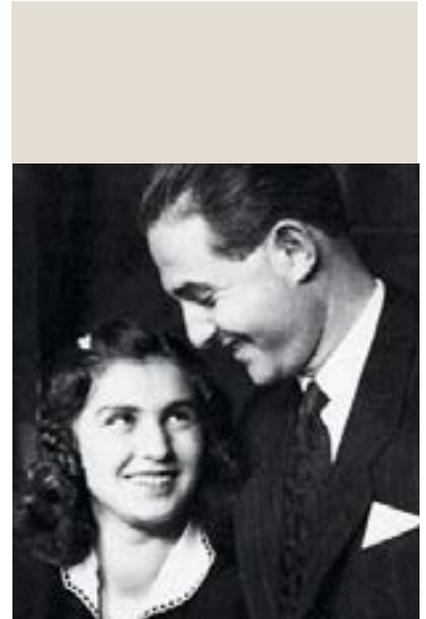
5. Students are now ready to create their poems. Explain to the students:

One way you might do this is to write all the words and phrases on slips of paper so that you can move the slips around until you are satisfied with your poem. Remember that the poem should reflect the theme and message you identified.

You will now use the words and phrases you collected to create your found poem. There is only one rule for this process: you may only use the words or phrases that appear

on your list. Seriously — you may not add prepositions, articles, or pronouns - nothing! You can repeat words or phrases that you collected. It is your choice. You do not have to use everything on your list. The poem does not have to rhyme!

6. Once the poems are finished, take time to share and reflect. Sharing can be done by asking students to read their poems to the class or by asking students to pass their poems for silent reading. For silent reading, ask students to pass the poem to their left, allow time for reading and then pass again to their left. Have students read the poem they've received, write a comment (students should sign their name to their comment), and then pass the poem again to the left for another comment. Depending on how much time you have, you might allow for three or four passes.
7. This activity can end with a final discussion or short reflective writing. Prompts you might use to structure this discussion/writing include:
- *What was it like to write this kind of poem?*
 - *What strikes you about these poems?*
 - *What do they have in common?*
 - *How are they different?*
 - *What surprised you when reading them?*



“When you can't go in through a door, go in through a window,” our mother used to say. There is no door for survival. . . It's only windows. Latches you can't reach easily, panes too small, spaces where a body shouldn't fit. But you can't stand where you care. You must find a way.

Dr. Edith Eger

Lesson Five: The Value of Oral History

Overview:

“ . . . oral history might be understood as a self-conscious, disciplined conversation between two people about some aspect of the past considered by them to be of historical significance and intentionally recorded for the record. Although the conversation takes the form of an interview, in which one person, the interviewer, asks questions of another person, variously referred to as the interviewee or narrator, oral history is, at its heart, a dialogue.” (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/what.html>)

Dr. Eger’s film is oral history. Although it contains factual information, it is presented to the audience entirely through her perspective. Viewers experience her emotions in the moment, through her facial expressions and vocal intonations, which brings a depth to the history of the Holocaust that is missing from a textbook or memoir. Listening to a Holocaust survivor often leaves people with questions and a desire to learn more. This is what makes oral history so powerful for students.

This lesson encourages that curiosity and provides the framework for students to conduct an oral history interview with someone from their family or community.

Materials:

1. Handouts
2. A way for students to record and edit interviews (computer, cell phone, etc.)
3. Optional: A secure platform on which to post edited interviews to share with the larger school community



Key Understandings:

- Oral histories enhance our understanding of recorded history.
- We are part of history. Our stories can shape and inform the society in which we live.

Key Questions:

- How does oral history expand our understanding of historical events?
 - How can listening to oral histories encourage us to seek out other perspectives about present day events?
-

Common Core:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Lesson Five: The Value of Oral History

Procedure:

Watching the Film and Introducing the project: Day 1

1. Watch the film here: <https://www.stangreensponcenter.org/educator-programs-and-resources/> (48 minutes)*
Film can be viewed by students before the class in order to save time.

2. Tell the class:

What we just watched is called oral history. It is Edie's personal recollections of the historical event we call the Holocaust. Although she shared things that are part of recorded history — we can find the information in textbooks or other written documents — she also shared events that are new and very personal. When she spoke to us in the film, Edie was emotional at times. She not only told us what happened, but she shared how it made her feel and how it impacted her. She told us how certain events interrupted her plans for the future and how others helped her build a new future. We do not learn all of the information about the Holocaust from Edie, but we do get a sense of how it was to live through that time. If we watched more oral testimonies from different survivors, our understanding of the Holocaust would become deeper and broader. Our ideas about the groups targeted by the Nazis would be attached to individuals and take on greater meaning. The more we hear, the more we would want to know. That is the beauty of oral histories. With that in mind, we are going to collect our own oral histories and share them with the class.

3. Hand out the “Family Oral History Project” worksheet.
4. Read through the sheet with the class so that everyone understands what you expect from them.
5. Set the deadline for the raw interview to be completed and ready for editing based on your curricular timeline. Set the deadline for completed interviews at this time as well.

Exploring the Project Requirements: Day 2

1. Review what you accomplished yesterday. Answer any questions.
2. Work with the class to create a list of interview questions that everyone will use. This makes it easier for the students and easier for you. Limit the number of questions

based on how long you want the video to be. Based on the age and ability of your students, you may want to create a list of questions ahead of time.

3. Distribute the “Tips on how to Interview” handout and read through it with the class.
4. Spend the rest of class time allowing students to practice interviewing one another using the “tips” handout.

Editing the interview: Day 2

1. Tell the class:

Today you will have the entire class period to edit the raw interview. Remember that the words of your narrator are important. Do not remove any answers they shared, even if you think it is unimportant. When editing, you can add titles to the interview or place breaks between clips. You can add music in the background if you think it makes the interview more interesting, but make sure we can still hear the questions and the narrator.

2. Let the students work until about two minutes before class ends, checking progress as necessary.
3. Remind students about the due date for completed videos.

Watching the Interviews: Day 3 (or special event)

Plan a class during which you watch all of the interviews and reflect on the process of oral history collection with your students. You might want to use the “Oral History Evaluation” handout or create another way to unpack the experience for your students.

TAKING IT FURTHER: This project can be as simple or as complex as you make it. You can extend the amount of class time the students get to work on the project by collaborating with colleagues from different departments. You can extend the scope and complexity of the project by assigning different topics. If you are interested, the publication “Oral History Practices in Your Classroom” by Linda P. Wood is an excellent resource.

Lesson Six: Victim or Survivor? It's All in the Word

Overview:

An individual may identify as a victim or survivor simultaneously or at different points during times of trauma and while recovering from that trauma. We often envision a victim as a weak, helpless individual who actively does not fight back. If someone is labelled as a victim, it can imply that the perpetrator holds all the power and is in control of all aspects of the victim's life. To describe someone as a survivor implies that the perpetrator had power and attempted control but never quite succeeded. In this lesson, students will explore the power of these identities and the importance of allowing those who have suffered hurt to determine their own identity.

Procedures:

1. Opener

Write the following word pairs on the board or a place where the entire class can see them: receive/ earn, retrieve/rescue, collection/accumulation, steal/take

2. Tell the class to look at the word pairs. Ask students to share what the difference is between the words. They can use the word in a sentence to illustrate their point. Each word in the pair implies a different level of personal autonomy:

To receive something implies less effort than earning it;
To retrieve something implies less effort than rescuing it;
A collection implies more intention than an accumulation;
To steal automatically implies illegal action (except in sports), while to take usually does not.

3. Once the students figure this out, tell them:

Words are powerful. The words we choose influence many things in our lives and the lives of others. The Nazis knew this and chose very specific words to describe people, places, and actions.

When they arrested people for any number of reasons, they called it being put into "protective custody," a phrase which implies safety and order. The opposite was true. Most people put into "protective custody" were imprisoned and tortured.

When speaking about their plans for the Jews, the Nazis referred to it as "the Jewish problem." The opposite was true. The Jews were just normal people. The Nazi hatred was the problem. When the Nazi guards and accountants talked about the number of Jews arriving in the transports, they used the word "pieces." This word allowed them to dehumanize the Jewish people and think of them as objects with no purpose in the world.

Words are powerful.

4. Explain that the activity today is going to make us think about our words and how they affect us and those around us. The goal of the activity is to help us choose words that lift up our spirits and the spirits of others.

Key Understandings:

- People's words influence the way we feel about ourselves.
- Our words have the power to build up or break down others.

Key Questions:

- How can I choose words that build up people and groups in my communities?
- How can I get ready to make choices that will help me as I struggle through difficult situations?

Common Core:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Lesson Six: Victim or Survivor? It's All in the Word

Activity: The Power of Words

1. Read through section A as a class, including the question. Make sure everyone understands the book section and the question. Give time for students to answer.

2. Read through section B as a class, including the two questions. For question 1, you might want to use the following to help the students think of their own examples:

A young child buys their favorite ice cream. After they take one or two bites, they trip, and the ice cream falls in the dirt. They burst into tears. Their older sibling says, "Don't be a baby! You can have ice cream another day."

3. Once the class answers the questions you can do one of the the following:

- Have the students get into small groups and share their answers.
- Ask for volunteers to share how they answered the different questions.
- Break the class into pairs and have them choose one of the examples to turn into a short skit. If they choose the example from Section A, it is simple. If they choose the example from Section B, the pair will go through the skit twice — once with the original ending and then with the better ending.

4. Wrap up by telling the class:
"I told myself they were the prisoners, not me." "I am a survivor, not a victim." "I have pretty eyes and pretty hands."

These are some of the things that Edie repeated to herself during her time of suffering at the hands of the Nazis. Her own words to herself held the power to give her hope and the strength to push on. She surrounded herself with friends who spoke words of hope as well. Today we examined times in our own lives when another person's words either helped us "thrive" or made our suffering a little bit worse. We listened as the people in this room shared similar experiences. I hope you have a better understanding of just how much power our words carry.

I challenge you to pay attention to the words you choose throughout the rest of today and tomorrow and the effect they have on those around you.

I challenge you to choose to use words that will comfort and lift up the people with whom you talk.

I challenge you to stop yourself if you hear yourself using words that tear down or harm someone - whether the person is there with you or not.

I will ask you to report back to me tomorrow, in general, about how easy or difficult this was and how successful you were.

OPTIONAL USE: Create a "Wall of Words" and have students share affirming and uplifting things they said that made someone smile or feel better. You can have the students use sticky notes or write directly on a large sheet of paper. Encourage students to sign their names - it's OK to be proud of being nice!

Once a week go to the wall and read the newest posts. If the space gets filled, put another sheet over the filled sheet but make sure you can lift the new sheet to read what is underneath. If using sticky notes, remove the old notes and keep them in a box nearby so they can still be read.

TAKING IT FURTHER:

ELA/Literature -

- Examine word choices in a story the class is currently reading. Take one or two significant passages and ask the class to replace key words with synonyms that change the meaning of the passage.
- Examine the way in which vocabulary helps readers identify the protagonist and/or antagonist in a story your class is reading. Identify differences in the way the author uses words when the protagonist and/or antagonist is present in the narrative.

Social Studies/History -

- Examine the use of words in a textbook and/or historical primary source. Explore how the choice of words influences the way we read and understand the information.
- Compare two primary sources that cover the same historical topic or event from two different perspectives (the Civil War, the Slave Trade, the French Revolution, etc.). Have students explain how word choice impacts the way the reader understands these events.

Additional Resources

Vocabulary related to Dr. Edith Eger's Film

Antisemitism: Prejudice towards, or discrimination against, Jews. Antisemitism was not new to Nazi Germany or Europe; feelings of hatred and distrust of Jews had existed there for centuries.

Appel: (literally “roll call”) The time when the camp inmates were forced to stand and be counted by the SS guards. Appel could last anywhere from 30 minutes to three hours and took place in all kinds of weather. It was another way for the Nazis to dehumanize and torture their prisoners.

Billiards: Another name for the game of pool

Couturier vs. “just a tailor”: A tailor is a person who makes standard clothing that fits a certain sized person or alters clothing to fit better. A couturier is a person who designs high-end clothing that perfectly fits only one individual. A couturier usually works for the rich and famous.

Death March: The name given to the forced evacuation of prisoners from Nazi concentration and death camps as the Allied forces came closer to those camps. The largest death marches took place during the winter of 1944-1945 as Russian forces liberated Poland. Prisoners were forced to walk long distances without food and water. If they dropped behind, they were shot. In some instances, Nazi guards shot large numbers of prisoners for no reason at all.

Deportation: The act of being forced to leave where one is living. The Nazis coerced, tricked, and forced prisoners to leave their homes or ghettos, and board cattle cars destined for concentration camps and/or death camps. Prisoners in the overcrowded, unsanitary, cattle cars were given no food or water during the two-four day ride to the camps and many died.

Erudite: Having or showing great knowledge or learning

Goulash: A highly seasoned Hungarian soup or stew of meat and vegetables, flavored with paprika

Goy: A Jewish name for a non-Jewish person

Kapo: An inmate of a Nazi camp who was appointed as a guard to oversee other prisoners. Kapos were often chosen by the SS based on their level of cruelty.

Kristallnacht: German for “night of broken glass,” for nation-wide pogroms (anti-Jewish riots) which occurred throughout Germany on November 9 and 10, 1938. This was the first organized, nation-wide, government-sanctioned vandalizing of property belonging to Jews by the Nazis. SA troops smashed store windows, burned synagogues, and beat up Jews in the streets, killing nearly 100 people. 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and imprisoned in Dachau concentration camp, near Munich. Several thousand Jewish women were arrested and sent to local jails. Kristallnacht was followed by a punitive fine to be paid by the Jewish community for the damages done to their own businesses.

Kultured: A person or society that was very high class or civilized, a step above those around them

Additional Resources

Vocabulary Continued

Liberation: The discovery of the camps by Allied forces who stumbled upon them while pursuing the German army. After liberation many thousands of camp inmates perished because they were too weak to live. Others survived and began looking for family members in vain.

Nazi: The abbreviation for Hitler's political party, the National Socialist German Workers' Party. The Nazi Party was a right-wing, nationalistic, and antisemitic political party formed in 1919 and headed by Adolf Hitler from 1921 to 1945.

Nazi Camp System: A series of outdoor prisons established by the Nazi government. The camps began as a "system of repression directed against political opponents of the Nazi state." The system expanded and came to include prisoner-of-war, transit, concentration, labor, and death camps.

Concentration camp: A place where prisoners were detained without regard to normal procedures of arrest or treatment. These camps were often described by the prisoners as an upside down world where the rules changed at the whims of the guards. Many different groups and individuals were imprisoned in concentration camps: religious opponents, resisters, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), Poles, and Jews.

Labor camp: A place where prisoners were sent to perform forced labor for the Nazis. Originally, the prisoners worked to build new camps. Eventually, they were forced to do jobs that would support the Nazi war machine or leased out to local industries. Life in these camps was designed to ensure the prisoners were given just enough food and water to do their jobs but not enough to become strong. Edie passes through Mauthausen and ends up at Gunskirchen, which were both labor camps.

Death camp: A place built for the specific purpose of mass murder of the Jews. The first death camp was Chelmo, where killings by gas began in December of 1941. Three other death camps were Treblinka, Sobibor and Belzek. Auschwitz II (Auschwitz/Birkenau) was used as a killing center beginning in spring of 1942.

POW (abbreviation for Prisoner of War) camp: A camp built to specifically hold military prisoners captured during war. Prisoners were underfed, housed in barracks, and sometimes used as forced labor. They received packages from the Red Cross, were allowed mail, and were not slated for extermination. The exception to this were Russian P.O.W.s, who were starved and killed by Nazis as subhuman and racial enemies.

RAF (abbreviation for Royal Air Force): Britain's air force. Formed toward the end of World War I, it was the first independent air force in the world.

Sweatshop: A factory or workshop where people work for low wages for long hours under poor conditions. Sweatshops are common in the clothing industry.

TB hospital: A hospital specifically for people suffering from tuberculosis. These hospitals are necessary because tuberculosis is a highly contagious airborne disease. TB patients spend weeks or months in the hospital during recovery.

Tow-headed: A person with light blonde hair

Yiddish: A language used by Jewish people in central and eastern Europe before the Holocaust

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nazi-camp-system>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Royal-Air-Force>

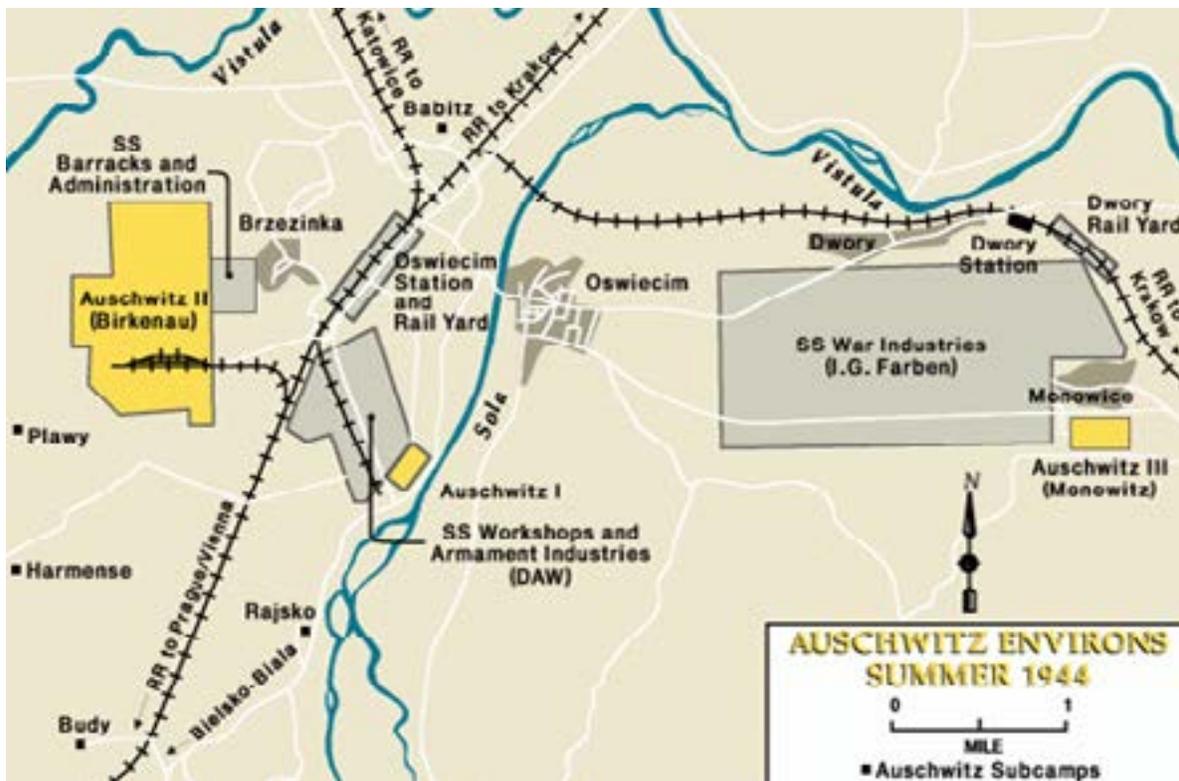
Additional Resources

Timeline of Dr. Eger's Life

- 1927 September 29, Edith Elefant is born in Kosice, Hungary (now Slovakia) Her father, Lajos, was a tailor, and her mother, Helen Klein, worked for the Hungarian ministry. She had two sisters, Magda and Klara.
- 1944 Dr. Eger was forced to live in the Košice ghetto (see map) with her parents and Magda, March 1944.
- 1944 They were forced to stay in a brick factory with 12,000 other Jews for a month, April.
- 1944 May, deported to Auschwitz (see map) with her sister, parents, aunts, and uncles to Auschwitz in May,
- 1944 Edith and Magda were consigned to ammunition trains and slave labor, November 1944, including spending time at Mauthausen.
- 1945 Dr. Eger was sent on a death march with her sister Magda to Gunskirchen concentration camp, a distance of about 35 miles.
- 1945 Liberated, on the brink of death, from Gunskirchen (see map)
- 1949 Moved to the United States with her daughter and husband
- 1969 Received her B.A. in Psychology from the University of Texas, El Paso
- 1978 Earned a Ph.D. in Psychology in 1978
- 2017 Published book, "The Choice: Embrace the Possible," and won both the 2017 National Jewish Book Award and 2018 Christopher Award.
- 2020 Published book, "The Gift: 12 Lessons to Save Your Life"

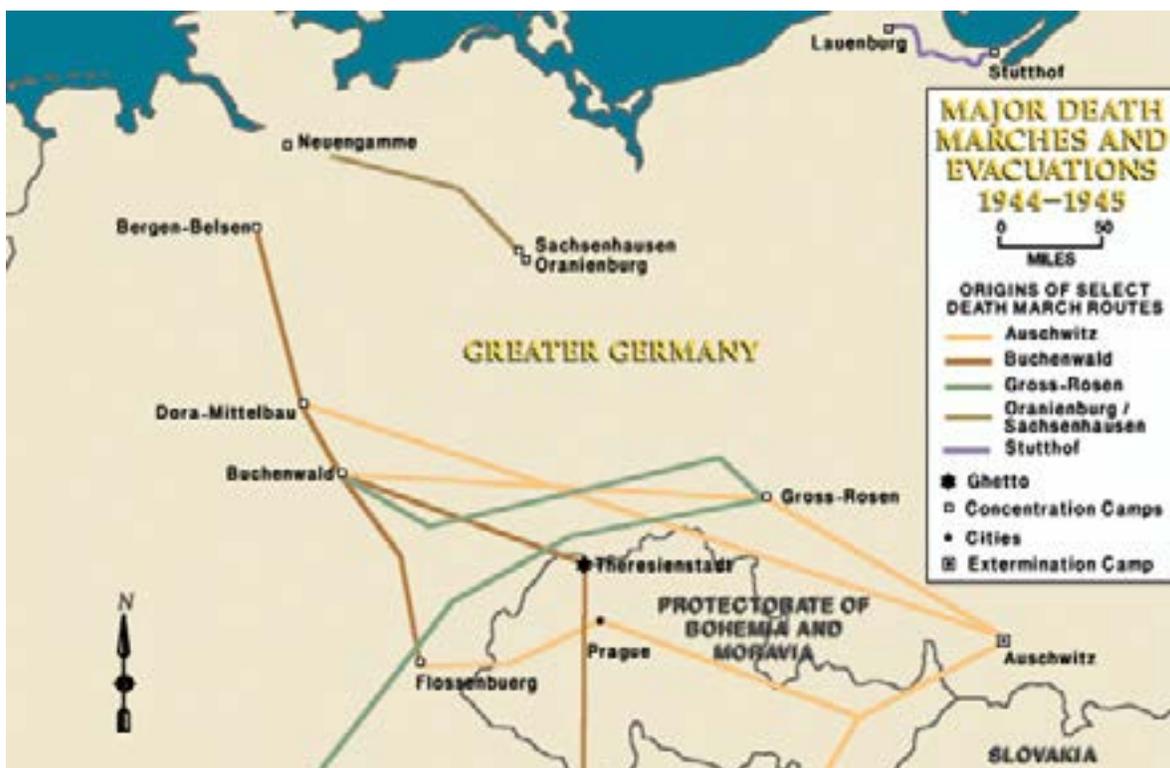
Additional Resources

Maps



Additional Resources

Maps



Photos

