

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION USING *THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS*

This curriculum is designed for seventh to ninth grade level students. To be finished within 1-2 months, spending roughly 1.5 to 2 weeks on each unit.

Within each unit the first 2-3 days are spent on the introductory presentations and questions with a transition to the projects and analysis for the next 2-3 days with the final 1-2 days of the unit being spent on the learning benchmarks. This may be changed depending on the time allotted and the project formats chosen.

1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND VALUES

A. Unit 1 – Overview of the Holocaust (Novel Reading)

- Gain a general understanding of the events of the Holocaust, who the Nazis were, what led to the Holocaust, etc.
- Begin to understand the characters within the novel and create individual perceptions of the relationship between Bruno and Shmuel.

B. Unit 2 – The Jewish Experience

- Demonstrate the ability to recognize and differentiate the aspects of the Jewish experience of the Holocaust. (concentration camps, Nuremburg laws, ghettos, etc.)
- Produce a piece of art that illustrates the emotional aspects of the Holocaust and evaluate the different parts of the project in a way that recognizes the turmoil experienced.

C. Unit 3 – Hitler Youth and Nazi Propaganda:

(Human Behavior similar to Facing History And Ourselves)

- Become aware of the roles and responsibility that propaganda and societal pressures played in recruiting, young, individuals into the Nazi Party.
- Grapple with the choices made in response to the Nazi dictatorship and propaganda and the violence and harm it caused, along with the aspects of human behavior and individuality that contributed to those choices.

D. Unit 4 - Analysis of the Film/Novel and Wrap Up:

(Literary Analysis similar to Current Curriculums)

- Gain a literary and historical perspective on the characters of the novel and film and critique how the characters relate to real individuals during the Holocaust.
- Connect the lessons learned to universal themes (democracy, race, etc.), ideas of human behavior, and how they relate to bringing about a compassionate world.

2. POTENTIAL PRESENTATION POINTS AND QUESTIONS

Students will also be asked to keep a journal to write down thoughts about the novel and the material, there will be occasional journal entries used as progress checks.

A. Unit 1

- Begin reading *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* to view a fictionalization of the Holocaust, continue this throughout the units.
 - Use the historical background presented in this unit to examine Bruno, Shmuel, and the other characters to equip students with an understanding of the historical background of the characters for their reading of the novel.
- Use the context and 1933-1939 sections for the Life Before the War and Explaining the Nazi Party. May also be useful to refer to when presenting about the events of the Holocaust.
 - <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/an-overview-of-the-holocaust-topics-to-teach>
- Life Before the War
 - Mention the aftermath of WWI on Europe and Germany as a whole, depending on the course subject this may already have been covered. Explain how some of these effects motivated Hitler to create a better Germany.
 - Describe the Jewish population and culture in Europe before 1933 and contrast this with what the Jewish population is like today in Europe and how there is still a culture of antisemitism within many European countries.
- Overview of the Holocaust in its entirety. Review key terms and events that occurred throughout the Holocaust. Make sure to mention that the Holocaust did not only affect the Jewish population of Eastern Europe but also affected many other minority groups.
 - These vocabulary lists provide a good overview of what events and terms to cover throughout this Unit.
https://candleholocaustmuseum.org/file_download/inline/7dcd0d4b-8938-4f11-a101-461caa3104b6

<https://hmh.org/education/resources/vocabulary-terms-related-holocaust/>

- Explanation of the Nazi Party and the Rise of the Third Reich
 - Rise of the Third Reich: Relate back to the motivation based on the effects that WWI had on Germany. Beginning with Hitler's appointment as chancellor in 1933 and how this started the targeting of Jews with different laws and restrictions.
 - Nazi Party: Detail the Nazi ideology, be careful with wording in this section. Describe the "racially pure or inferior" framework and how this prompted the "Final Solution" and how these ideas affected domestic and foreign policy. Explain the Nazi Party hierarchy and the different aspects of the party that affected society. Show the hierarchy with the SS, Gestapo, the Nazi elite, doctors, and other perpetrators.

- B. Unit 2
 - The Jewish Experience: concentration camps, ghettos, the yellow stars, Nuremberg laws, death marches, etc.
 - Relate these historical facts to the world of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* and Shmuel's character. Where is he? Why is he there, and why is he wearing the "striped pajamas"? What is happening in the concentration camp?
 - Jewish Resistance: mention ghetto uprisings and other examples of Jews fighting back against the violence and terror.
 - Watch/Read Survivor Testimony to get a first-hand perspective of the events. This provides students a way to connect to the emotions of the events of Holocaust.
 - Discuss the different emotions felt while watching/reading the testimony. How did most people survive? What emotions do you feel when engaging with this material, how do you think the survivor feels about their experience?
 - An important aspect of the Jewish Experience is the ideas of being an upstander vs. being a bystander. In relation to the survivor testimony explore the different individuals and groups that helped to save the Jews during the Holocaust. Also analyze the decisions about the refugee crisis that other countries made.
 - This section of the Unit leads into the next Unit when discussing choices and their power/impact as well as their morality.
 - Which organizations and individuals aided and protected Jews from persecution between 1933 and 1945? Even though the consequences of

helping Jews was widely known in society, why do you believe these individuals/organizations still chose to help them? Why do you think countries refused to accept Jews as refugees, consider the political and social atmosphere of the time?

C. Unit 3

- Hitler Youth programs, how Nazi ideology permeated the education of young children at the time, and the indoctrination that happened using false information and propaganda.
 - Discuss the reasons behind Hitler Youth groups and Nazi Youth in general with an overall presentation on their formation, purpose, operations, and legacy.
- The psychological qualities of propaganda and specifically how Nazi propaganda affected individuals' decisions and lives during the Holocaust.
 - View some of the propaganda shown and Nazi symbols displayed during WWII and the Holocaust that convinced people to support the Nazi cause. Discuss what some of the commonalities are with this specific propaganda.
 - View some other forms of propaganda to discuss the effects of propaganda in general. How does this affect an individual? What would you think when viewing this? Would this affect your decision making or opinions on the subject? Based on these examples and the Nazi examples what techniques are the most effective? What messages are being conveyed?
- Moving towards decision making as a whole discuss the idea of right vs. wrong choices, keeping the ideas and aspects of propaganda and how they affect an individual in mind.
 - How does propaganda and societal influences affect the outcome of a choice, whether it is considered right or wrong, in the moment? What helps someone justify their actions, in the moment of the decision and even after time has passed?
- Emulating aspects of the Facing History And Ourselves curriculum, Teaching the Holocaust and Human Behavior by bringing the questions to the students and hearing their comments on the decisions made by individuals during the Holocaust.

D. Unit 4

- Finish the Novel and Watch the Film

- Begin class comparisons of the two: What was different/the same? Is it how you pictured the novel? What could be changed about the movie in relation to the novel?
- Watch behind the scenes of filming the movie in relation to the locations and interviews with John Boyne on his thoughts about the novel and movie to provide more context for the comparisons.
- Literary Aspects to define and discuss symbols, characterizations, development, and meaning of the text.
- Connect the novel/film to the historical background of the Holocaust.
 - How does this novel affect others with its relation to the Holocaust? What are the historical points presented? Based on your research, are they accurate?
- Relating choices to the power they hold and the impacts they have on the individuals and others around them in the context of society today. (Facing History and Ourselves – Lessons 1-5, 22-23 of Teaching the Holocaust and Human Behavior)
 - <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-and-human-behavior>
- Potential Questions to be used as references for material, discussion points, or to help build analytical skills.
 - What values are considered when making choices? (Some potential answers to discuss, respect, responsibility, friendships, human rights, etc.) Are there long-term impacts to decisions made by influential people?

3. PROJECT AND POINTS OF ANALYSIS IDEAS

Many of the following projects, progress checks, and learning benchmarks will be graded on completion and participation unless otherwise noted. However, if a student is not taking the something seriously the teacher will discuss with student/parents the best route moving forward.

A. Unit 1

- Analysis: The main focus of this Unit is to comprehend the historical background and facts that lead to the Holocaust and the events during the Holocaust. This Unit is laying the foundation for the analyses to come in the following Units.
- Project: The main project for this Unit will be a Research Project. Depending on the educator, class size and demeanor this can be a group or individual project. The final product could be a research paper or presentation with written script.

- This project will look at the historical background of the Holocaust and incorporate many of the presentation points and questions listed in the above section and the topics on the unit test listed in the next section. (Important people, event names and dates, significant places, etc.)
- In conjunction with the overall project, there will be provided worksheets to guide the project in terms of topics, facts, and resources. The worksheets could be turned into the project by making the final product be a booklet of completed worksheets.
 - This project and the worksheets will be graded on the accuracy of facts, timeliness of the submission, and overall completion.

B. Unit 2

- Analysis: This Unit will analyze and explore the emotional turmoil of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust. This analysis will bring a more individual focus to the event that provides the students with an emotional connection to the Holocaust.
- Project: An art project for this Unit to capture the emotional turmoil of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust and provide an outlet for students to express their feelings about the horrific events. This project can be as open-ended as the educator is comfortable with or it can have more restrictions on materials, images, and size. Note: there should be guidelines on the images and references used in the piece and should solely focus on emotions and feelings and not any specific event.
 - This project will be graded on completion and engagement with the material.

C. Unit 3

- Analysis: Analyzing the individuality of choice in conjunction with the societal pressures and the psychology around propaganda. Begin to question the aspect of choice in the Holocaust and their power and impact. Focus on morality and social emotional learning by using some of the proposed questions mentioned previously specifically about the morality, ethics, and process behind making choices.
- Project: Students create a framework/guide for making ethical decisions with regards to the values/morals, ideas, and emotions discussed throughout the unit. Note: provide explicit rubric instructions regarding appropriate ideas and values to include.
 - Graded on completion, effort, and timeliness.

D. Unit 4

- Literary Analysis: Diving into analyzing the characters based on the information they learned throughout the previous units, looking from a literary and historical perspective.
 - Symbols in the novel and potentially how they are presented in the movie – clothes representing differences and fences representing divisions.
 - Differences between Bruno and Shmuel, their characterizations, development, portrayal, etc. Connect it to their historical basis and the differences between the characters and the people they are portraying (i.e., Nazi Youth and Jewish people during the Holocaust)
- Project: Create an educational poster (or another presentable medium) that depicts the characters of the novel with an in-depth analysis about their differences and how they relate to the symbols throughout the novel. This project is more of a literary analysis to foster close reading skills and then relates to the final learning benchmark.
 - Graded on completion, thoughtfulness, and effort.
- Analysis: Continue the analysis on making choices and the power and impact they might have on others in relation to the novel.
- Project: Reflection paper (1-2 pages) on the theme of choices throughout the Holocaust and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. How did the choices the characters made impact other people? What power did individual choices have during the Holocaust?
 - Graded on completion and effort.

4. PROGRESS CHECKS AND LEARNING BENCHMARKS

Many of the units will solely have progress checks to help students actively engage with the material without the added stress of having a big learning benchmark at the end of each unit.

A. Unit 1

- Progress Check – The provided worksheets throughout the research project will serve as a progress check in Unit 1.
- Learning Benchmark - Test on historical material that was presented within the research project. This test will be graded on accuracy. Question topics include:
 - Dates regarding specific events in the Holocaust (beginning of WWII, when Germany annexed Austria, etc.)

- Specific terms related to the Holocaust (“The Final Solution”, Kristallnacht, antisemitism, Anschluss, etc.)
- Important People and Places (Auschwitz, the SS, Gestapo, etc.)

B. Unit 2

- Progress Check – Based on the art piece project in this unit each student will create an artist’s statement on why they chose the materials and images used as a way to portray the Jewish experience. What emotions or experiences were they trying to convey? This artist’s statement and the art piece will be used as a progress check and graded on completion and engagement.
 - The art pieces and the artist statements will be placed around the room and students will walk around to look at their peers’ work. This “gallery walk” will be silent reflection time for each student to reflect on the past unit and the feelings they may have felt.

C. Unit 3

- Progress Check – After analyzing the individuality of choice in conjunction with the societal pressures and the psychology around propaganda there will be a graded discussion. The discussion will be based around the role of Nazi propaganda and individuality played a role in Nazi youth groups and education.
 - This will be graded on participation throughout the discussion. Educators may take this template and create a Socratic seminar, fishbowl style discussion, small group discussion with journal entry notes, etc. The style of discussion depends on class size and engagement.

D. Unit 4

- Learning Benchmark – The final Learning Benchmark will be a presentation/video (depending on the class and teachers wishes) on the book and the film. The project will look at how the book and film compare to one another, how the overall story relates to the historical background, and how the story relates to decision making and the impacts of the literary choices. The presentation highlights two to three key aspects about each topic.
 - This will be graded on effort, completion, timeliness, and analysis.
- Final Progress Check – Last journal reflection on the ideas of morality and choices as they relate to human behavior and values. How do these events impact our society and our choices today? Collecting journals for a participation and completion grade to finish off the curriculum.