

## We're All Alike

Unit: The Holocaust  
Class: 9<sup>th</sup> grade general English

### Materials:

- Students' photographs from home
- Holocaust photographs
- Graphic organizers
- Overhead projector

### Objectives:

- By the end of the class, students will
  - Compare their home photos to those of the Holocaust
  - Identify feelings/thoughts/motivations for both perpetrators and victims
  - Give specific reasons to support their findings
  - Conclude that they are not very different from the children in the

Holocaust pictures

### Hook (anticipatory set)

- Ask students to tape their pictures from home to the front board
- Have students come up to the front to view everyone's pictures
- Discuss with the class the different pictures, asking students to give background information to the picture, such as who is in it, where it was taken, when it was taken, what was the event

### Lesson:

- Put the first set of Holocaust pictures (pre Hitler) on the overhead
- Ask students to talk about the picture, giving suggestions about the event of the picture, how the people may be related
- Have students choose one person from the picture and identify how that person might have felt during the picture, giving support from the picture
- Ask students which of their pictures is most like the Holocaust picture(s) and why
- Put second set of pictures (during Hitler's reign) up (these pictures should include adults as well)
- , showing only the faces of the children
- Ask students to go through the same set of questions as done with the previous groups of pictures and what is different about these pictures
- Expand the view of the pictures to include the children's perpetrators
- Hand out graphic organizer
- Discuss the use of the organizer

Ask students why I did not differentiate the silhouette of the victim from that of the perpetrator, why do both look identical (look for answer such as “anyone could be either perpetrator or victim)

Ask the students to consider what the children are thinking/feeling

Ask the students what is different about the perpetrators and the victims

Have students brainstorm common qualities of victims and perpetrators, writing their responses on the graphic organizer

Using the graphic organizer on the overhead, write the students’ responses

Closure:

Explain to students that this was an introductory into a study of the Holocaust or Shoah, where 6 million Jews were mercilessly massacred, 2/3 of their overall population

Tell them that the first group was of life before the Holocaust/Shoah

Ask students to explain why I chose to show pictures of the people before the Holocaust (look for answers like “so we could see they were like us”)

Group 1 pictures:



Jewish class photo prewar



זלמה שירצקי  
הצגה של ביצ ספר ברח' ריקה בברלין  
חנוכה 1935

Selma Schiratzki  
Schulaufführung der "Schule  
in der Rykestrasse" in Berlin  
Chanukka 1935

Chanukah celebration prewar



Jewish band prewar

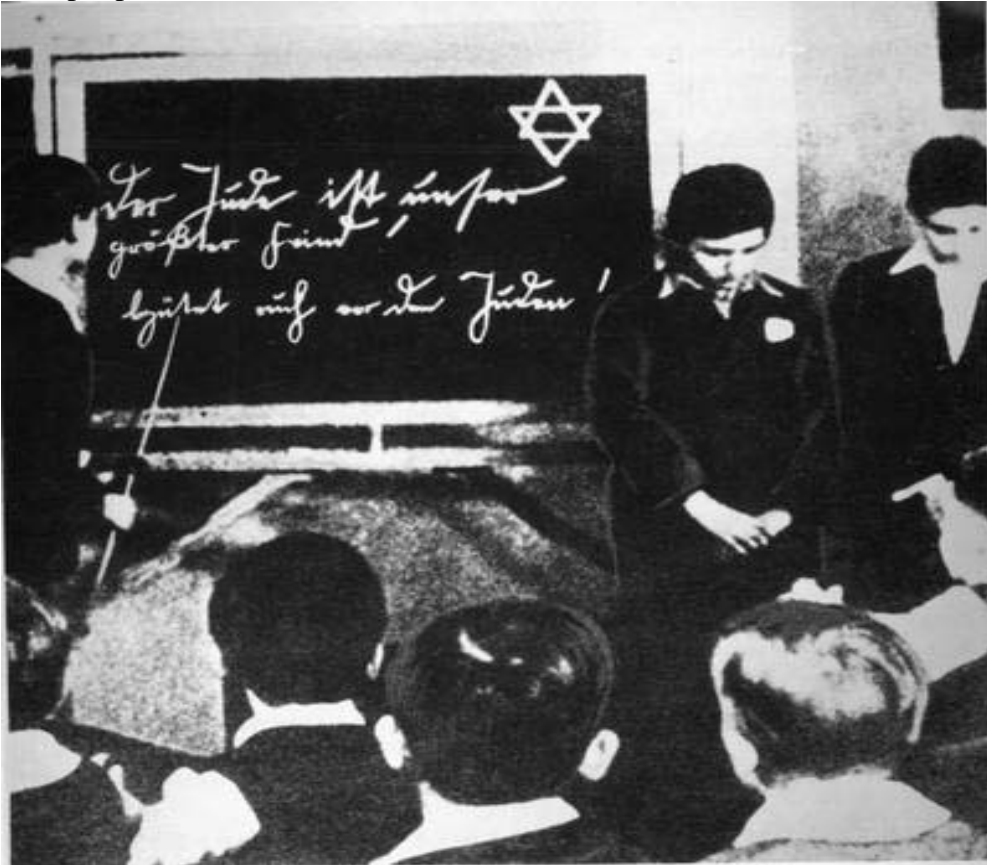


Jewish children playing ball prewar



picture of a baby who later died in Auschwitz

Group 2 pictures:



r:

\*\*In this picture, I will select the Jewish boys first, then show the rest



\*\*I will show just the men bathing first, then the on-lookers.



\*\*First I will show the children, then the father with the arm band and the deportation train





\*\*First I will show the mass of people then the archway into Theresienstadt, a camp in the Czech Republic



\*\*First I will show the group in the front of the picture then add in the smiling soldiers taking the women and children to the Jasenovac concentration camp in Yugoslavia

Characteristics Handout



## CHARACTERISTICS

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## CHARACTER

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\*\*\*\*If at anytime a student questions why they didn't just fight back, give the "Resistance" handout.

#### Reflection:

I have done a version of this lesson before and found it quite successful. Students were able identify common traits of victims such as being different, not protected, trusting, scared, taken off guard. I did not, however, take this lesson a step further, asking students to consider how the Nazis to a certain extent reflect everyday people. In doing this, I hope to nurture the understanding that we all have the capability of becoming persecutors if we do not maintain logic and reasoning. I could also extend the discussion to involve the role of the photographer, the bystander, and discuss the implications of being an on-looker.

I found the use of the silhouettes successful. In addition to helping students organize their thoughts, it also encourages the discussion of how you can not necessarily tell a victim from an abuser; there is no certain look for either. Both are people whose situation forces them or encourages them to become one or the other.

The summer institute caused me to rethink my original lesson. In the past, I took video clips of people being harassed, such as *Radio* or *Summer of My German Soldier*. The workshop made me realize the power of images. I learned that there were many ways to look at a picture, from the eye of the photographer and the subject, as with an emotional analysis, not just an academic look. I understand the need to present the "victims" as people, so I incorporated this into the lesson. I also felt the need to encourage students to see themselves in the images, to better understand how common the victims were, just as common as the students.

I still have concerns though. I am not sure when I should do this type of plan. Should I first give some background on the Holocaust or should it be day 1? As much passion as I felt for this subject, I realize now what little thought I gave to it before presenting it. I am afraid that I still might be not giving it enough depth. In helping my students to see themselves in the images, am I minimizing the plight of the Jew? Am I over-simplifying the Nazis in saying that we all risk becoming a perpetrator? I definitely

understand the need for this unit but at times I do not feel equipped enough to present it; it almost seems too profound to be able to “teach” it.

### Resistance

Identify 10 items (abstract or concrete) people would need to “fight back.”

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Tom, I will work on cropping the pictures. I just have to find the right software on my computer to do it. I know for a fact that I can do it at school.  
Please send me any feedback to help improve this lesson. Thank you~Meg



