

Arts-Based Holocaust Remembrance: Resources for Educators

Arts-Based Holocaust
Remembrance:
Resources for
Educators

*ANDREA WEBB; ALYSSA WOOD;
AND CASS MINKUS*



Arts-Based Holocaust Remembrance: Resources for Educators Copyright © 2026 by Andrea Webb is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/), except where otherwise noted.

Contents

Introduction	1
--------------	---

Part I. Foundations: Graphic Narratives and Trauma Informed Pedagogy

Trauma-Informed Pedagogy	5
Reading Graphic Narratives	10
Non-Fiction Graphic Narratives	15
Judging a Book By Its Cover	20
Mood and Tone	24

Part II. A Kind of Resistance

Part III. Narrative as Collaboration: Listening and Representation

Identity, Memory, Storytelling, and Listening	33
How Graphic Memoirs Tell Stories	38
Listening, Interpreting, and Drawing	45
Crafting a Personal Narrative: Unit Project	50

Part IV. Agency in the Holocaust

Graphic and Literary Techniques	57
Jewish Youth: Agency and Resistance	64

Preparing a Visual Representation 70

Part V. The Holocaust in Roumania

The Holocaust in Roumania 79

Testimony As An Historical Source: Focus on David 84

Immigration and Post War Life 88

Part VI. Two Roses

Part VII. Visual Representation and Testimony

Introduction to Holocaust Testimonies and Visual Narratives 99

Reading Comics as a Medium 104

Retelling Testimonies Respectfully and Planning Comics 108

Comic Preparation 113

Visual Narrative Planning Peer Review and Workshop 118

Visual Narrative Show and Tell 122

Part VIII. Seeing Beyond Stereotypes

What are Stereotypes? 129

Stereotypes and Identity in Two Roses 135

From Stereotypes to Systems 142

Then and Now 148

Part IX. Hidden Identities: Gender, Choice, and Survival in Polish Labour Camps

Choice and Survival	155
Concealment, Performance, and Hidden Identity	160
Gendered Labour in the Camps	165
Agency, Ethical Judgment, and Historical Significance	170

Part X. Working With Both Narratives

Part XI. Human Biology: Stress, Trauma, and the Body

Fight, Flight, Freeze: The Body in Danger	179
Survival and Stress	183
Stress and Resilience	188

This educators' resource was written by educators for educators. It draws on current classroom practices, pedagogy, and curriculum, but is designed for flexible implementation by teachers in a variety of classrooms.

The [Survivor Centred Visual Narratives](#) and [Narrative Art & Visual Storytelling in Holocaust and Human Rights Education](#) projects brings together researchers, visual artists, survivors of genocide, librarians, and students in order to create educational resources. Artists work directly with survivors to co-create graphic narratives based on their personal experiences before, during, and after genocide with the help of historians and students. This resource bridges the two projects – highlighting the narratives of two Canadian survivors of the Holocaust.

We are grateful the [University of British Columbia Teacher Education Program Community Field Experience](#) which connects teachers to “expand their concept of potential learning sites and how they might get involved, either as a career option or as a classroom teacher with an understanding of educational community connections.”

Our primary goals are to:

- Provide open educational materials online and in print through graphic narratives;
- Develop pedagogical tools for educators around the world teaching the Holocaust;
- Encourage further research by creating audio-visual interviews to enrich the archival collections of partner institutions.

While the resources may be useful to educators on their own, they are meant to accompany [But I Live: Three Stories of Child](#)

[Survivors of the Holocaust](#) (2024) by (artists) Miriam Libicki, Gilad Seliktar, and Barbara Yelin (edited by Charlotte Schallié), and [Two Roses](#) (2026) by (artist) Miriam Libicki (edited by Charlotte Schallié) both from the University of Toronto Press.

For more educational materials to accompany *But I Live* and *Survivor Centred Visual Narratives Resources*, including our educational approach, please visit our other sites: [But I Live Educators' Resource](#) and [Survivor-Centred Visual Narratives Resources](#).

These resources were supported by Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program, National Holocaust Remembrance Program from the Government of Canada. Our international collaboration was made possible by the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council](#) Partnership Development Grant and Partnership Grant, and is based at the University of Victoria in British Columbia.

PART I

FOUNDATIONS: GRAPHIC NARRATIVES AND TRAUMA INFORMED PEDAGOGY

This material is from the previously published [But I Live Educators' Resource](#). If you are interested in other narratives in [But I Live](#), please take a look at the site.

The lessons in this section introduce skills and strategies for reading and working with graphic narratives. These lessons may be taught individually or as one unit.

Why Graphic Narratives?

Graphic narratives do not tell us the answer. Through visual narratives, they offer another way to develop multimodal critical and media literacy skills, which are a necessity for success in the 21st century. Additionally, reading and writing graphic narratives can motivate struggling students and reluctant readers. Graphic narratives, as opposed to films or academic texts, allow the reader to pause and reflect, to move backwards and forwards in the narrative.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- examine the historical events surrounding the presented graphic narratives.
- explore the conventions used in graphic narratives.
- practice close reading text and image.

Guiding Questions

- How can graphic narratives help us understand history?
- What is the importance of perspective in non-fiction graphic narratives, and how does perspective affect the reader's experience of a text?
- How do mood and tone influence our reading of a graphic narrative?

Sequence

- Lesson 1: [Trauma-Informed Pedagogy](#)
- Lesson 2: [Reading Graphic Narratives](#)
- Lesson 3: [Non-Fiction Graphic Narratives](#)
- Lesson 4: [Judging a Book by its Cover](#)
- Lesson 5: [Mood and Tone](#)

Trauma-Informed Pedagogy

This section introduces trauma-informed pedagogy. When addressing difficult histories and topics, it is important that educators consider ways to engage learners without traumatizing, or triggering previous experiences of trauma.

The goal of this lesson is to teach the core tenets of trauma-informed pedagogy. Using these core tenets, together the class will create a list of protocols and agreements to ensure everyone's safety and wellbeing. A deeper understanding of trauma-informed pedagogy, and this experience of co-creation, will enhance student understanding of the text.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify and articulate key features of trauma.
- identify and articulate basic principles of trauma-informed pedagogy.
- advocate for their own needs and safety.
- collaborate with peers to ensure the safety of the class as a whole.
- reflect on learning to challenge previous assumptions in order to deepen understanding.

Guiding Question

- What is the lasting impact of trauma?

Preparation

Individually or in a previous class, watch the video, “The Paradox of Trauma-Informed Care” by Vicky Kelly.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/artsbasedholocaustremembrance/?p=53#oembed-1>

Introduction

Begin the lesson with a general content warning. Inform students that throughout this project, they will be dealing with difficult subject matter and troubling images. Inform them that today’s lesson will help equip them with tools to confront challenging subject matter in a productive and safe way.

Establish the class routine of the “mood meter” (see resources). Students will begin and end each class by taking stock of their mood, and then writing a short private reflection on what they are feeling and why they are feeling that way. Inform students that regular emotional self check-ins are an important part of safety—it is important that students stay mindful of their mood so that they can advocate for themselves if they feel incapable of participating.

This practice will bookend each lesson: begin and end with a period of quiet reflection. Students should be encouraged to pay attention to changes in their mood over the course of the lesson, the unit, the project. Some may not experience much fluidity; this is okay too.

Lesson Activities

Trauma Basics

Begin by reviewing “The Paradox of Trauma-Informed Care”.

Start broadly, giving students time to reflect on the video individually or together with a neighbour before sharing with the class. We recommend that the instructor circulates, inserting themselves into conversations where appropriate. Let students know ahead of time if, based on what you’ve heard, you would like them to share.

Suggested questions to begin:

- What did you notice?
- What did you wonder?
- What connections did you make?

Next, move to:

- What are some of the features/symptoms of trauma identified in the video?

Protocols

Break students into small groups. In each group, students will

come up with a set of agreed upon rules or protocols to follow during the remainder of the unit to ensure everyone's safety. Encourage students to build on ideas from the video and from class discussion.

Record these protocols as groups share out. An app like Padlet could be used to record them digitally.

Conclusion

Wrap-up by revisiting the mood meter and asking students to reflect on their emotional movements throughout the lesson.

Extension

Students write short reflections, roughly a paragraph in length, to be collected as exit slips.

Potential exit slip suggested prompts:

- Based on your experiences in today's class, how would you describe "trauma"?
- How has your understanding of the concept changed over the course of the lesson?
- What are things we can do individually, and as a class, to make sure that in learning about another's trauma, we do not become traumatized ourselves?

Note: Students need not answer all questions—it is in keeping with a trauma-informed practice to offer students their choice of prompt.

Support Materials

Trauma-Informed Pedagogy: Five Principles

Reading Graphic Narratives

The goal of this lesson is to familiarize students with visual narratives as a unique medium and mode of storytelling.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- understand that visual narratives are distinct from other media.
- understand how their distinct form shapes their content and message.
- identify and articulate the key features of visual narratives, and how they function.
- appreciate the breadth and variety of many different kinds of visual narratives.
- interpret various visual narratives, discussing their interpretations while adhering to a trauma-informed pedagogy.

Guiding Questions

- What makes graphic narratives a unique medium?

Preparation

Individually or in a previous class, watch the video, “Understanding Comics,” by Scott McCloud.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/artsbasedholocaustremembrance/?p=55#oembed-1>

Print sample pages of graphic narratives to hang around the classroom. Each sample page is a station. Provide a way for students to annotate the pages: display the sample pages on a large sheet of paper, give students sticky notes, or offer another note-taking option.

Introduction

Begin with the mood meter.

Ask the class how familiar they are with graphic narratives using the one-to-five finger scale or hands up. If “graphic narrative” doesn’t provoke a response, try the terms “graphic novel” and “comic book.”

Lesson Activities

How to Read Comics: Gallery Walk

Begin by reviewing “Understanding Comics” with Scott McCloud.

Break students into groups of no more than four. Have groups rotate through each station, writing comments and questions about things they notice in the sample pages. Ask students to think specifically about how the samples demonstrate the unique language of visual narrative/comics. While each page typifies one aspect of the medium, there is overlap between pages (they use similar techniques to accomplish different things).

For a more detailed breakdown of what to look for, review the suggested sample pages. See the Handout: Reading Graphic Narratives.

After each group has rotated through each station, adding written notes, groups will revisit the stations to review their peers' questions and comments.

Keeping students in their groups, and giving them time to prepare answers to prompting questions, facilitate a class discussion.

Suggested questions:

- What were some things you noticed all the pages had in common?
- Which page(s) stood out to you and why?
- How might these stories need to change if told through a different medium (film, novel, etc.)?

You may also wrap-up the activity by showing students the two images from *Red: A Haida Manga* as an example of a book that

breaks with the typical conventions of the form. It can be useful to see how varied the medium can be.

Conclusion

Revisit the mood meter, asking students to reflect on how the lesson has affected their mood.

Once students are feeling grounded, and before moving to the reflection exit slip, we recommend you prepare students for the challenging content in the next lesson. Let them know what to expect so they feel prepared to take it on, and reiterate that their emotional wellbeing is the priority. Discussing the lesson in advance will help students confront the challenging subject matter.

Wrap-up with an exit slip reflection.

Extension

Exit slip suggested prompts:

- What are some advantages and disadvantages to communicating trauma through visual/graphic narratives over other forms such as films, non-visual text (novels, memoirs, poetry), etc.?
- We may think of graphic narratives as a less serious form of literature, being closely associated with things like superheroes or newspaper comic strips. How do you feel about very serious subject matter such as the Holocaust being represented in this form? Do you think the graphic narrative is an appropriate medium?
- What was your understanding of comics or graphic narratives before this lesson? How has your understanding

changed? Give specific examples.

Note: Students need not answer all questions—it is in keeping with a trauma-informed practice to offer students their choice of prompt.

Support Materials

Handout: Reading Graphic Narratives – [Handout_Reading_Graphic-Narratives](#)

Non-Fiction Graphic Narratives

This lesson introduces the genre of non-fiction graphic narratives through the lens of historical perspective. We will look at a historical narrative from a specific perspective. Using the graphic narrative, *But I Live* or *Two Roses*, we will look at the varied ways that individuals were impacted during World War Two and the Holocaust.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- evaluate how story and imagery can be used to teach history.
- form inferences about historical values through observations.
- examine how our experiences and biases influence how we view the past.
- identify, analyze, and discuss narrator perspective and bias.
- define, identify, and discuss narrative perspective and bias in a given text.

This lesson is easily adaptable. Use any class set of graphic narratives, depending on your desired focus. Adapt the handouts to the specific pages you wish to emphasize from your

graphic narrative. Examples of alternative non-fiction graphic narratives:

- *Maus* by Art Spiegelman
- *Borders* by Thomas King

Guiding Questions

- How can graphic narratives help us understand history?
- How do personal narratives provide insight into different historical perspectives?
- Do the visuals provided in historical graphic narratives, such as *But I Live*, help the reader develop a deeper understanding of cultural and historical context?

Preparation

Gather a class set of chosen graphic narratives.

Introduction

Begin the lesson with a guided discussion.

- Non-fiction graphic narratives can take many forms, but the most common forms are autobiography, individual narrative, and memoir. The narratives we will look at express people's lived experiences during prominent points in history. These genres communicate people's real life stories.

Think-Pair-Share

- Start with the cover. Ask everyone to look at the cover of this graphic narrative. What do you expect this book to be about?

Lesson Activities

Book Synopsis

An intimate co-creation by three graphic artists and four Holocaust survivors, *But I Live* consists of three illustrated stories based on the experiences of each survivor during and after the Holocaust. David Schaffer and his family survived in Romania due to their refusal to obey Nazi collaborators. In Poland, Rose Lipszyc was separated from her family and we see the lifelong trauma inflicted by the Holocaust.

Prompt:

- What feelings arise when you think about reading this book?
- Free write the answer to this question.
- Prompt to expand the writing: Is there discomfort, is there curiosity? Why?

Connect Back

- Those feelings and the preconceptions are called unconscious bias, which is shaped by our lived experiences, our values, and what we have learned. When we approach history, it is very possible that our biases from how we live today will get in the way.
- History is often presented as a linear story. What we know or learn from history comes from a place of bias, either the influence of our own experiences shaping what we

explore, or biased views and values shape the stories being told.

- This is why it is important to examine history from multiple perspectives. Reading and looking at history from multiple angles will give us a fuller idea of what history was truly like. Personal narratives allow us to see how individual people thought and felt during the past. Together, these individual narratives give a much more holistic and comprehensive view of history

Individual (or Group Activity) – Read and Interpret

Using the handout, find the specific pages and answer the following questions:

- What were your initial thoughts as you read this passage?
- What questions do you have?
- What did you learn from this passage?

Lead a class discussion using the prompts provided at the bottom of the handout.

Conclusion

Questions and Journal

Have each student write their questions from reading the graphic narratives on the whiteboard. Let students reflect on these questions, using them as guides for the assessment journals.

Support Materials

[Non_Fiction_GraphicNarratives_Handout](#)

Judging a Book By Its Cover

This lesson is situated in the first of two sections on survivor testimony as told through graphic narratives. This lesson consists of a modified anticipation exercise focusing on three covers from the graphic narratives in *But I Live*. Students will complete a guided handout asking them to interpret and infer information about the three stories based on their covers. Students will be challenged to infer the historical context of the testimonies based on their covers alone. The lack of historical context in this lesson is purposeful in that it will ease students into difficult testimonies, instill the importance of having context in the following lesson, and prime students for deeper visual analysis of illustrations. The lesson following this will focus on context, setting, and perspective.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- assess and interpret the covers of the graphic narratives.
- define the following vocabulary: infer, anticipate, evoke, resist.
- collect, analyze, and report on observations gathered from various graphic narratives based

on survivor testimony.

- construct and express their observations and predictions based on the covers.
- collaborate with peers and participate in meaningful discussion.

Guiding Question

- What role does the cover play in creating a narrative?
- How does a cover influence our desire to read a given graphic narrative?

Preparation

The teacher will need coloured copies of the covers of each story, or technology to project each cover on the overhead. And copies of the worksheet for each student.

Introduction

Display and review the following definitions.

infer: to gather and hypothesize information from evidence and reasoning rather than from explicit statements. For instance: “From these facts we can *infer* that crime has been increasing.” In order to infer, we must sometimes read between the lines and fill in the blanks.

anticipate: The act of anticipating something; the expectation or prediction that something will happen. Anticipation may involve feelings of excitement or nervousness.

evoke: Bring or recall to mind; stimulate a thought.

resist: The refusal to accept or comply with something; the attempt to prevent something by action or argument.

Lesson Activities

Do we judge a book by its cover?

Ask the class and take several student responses. What do people mean when they say, “Don’t judge a book by its cover?” Why do they say it?

Have students turn to a person near them and come up with three pros and three cons of judging a book by its cover.

Groups will share out one pro and one con, teacher will record answers on the board.

Have students vote on the statement “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” One finger = disagree; 2 fingers = on the fence; 3 fingers = agree.

Anticipation Guide

Display the **Judge A Book By Its Cover** handout, going over the questions and ensuring students are comfortable with their wording. Explain that as a class we will work through the first cover together. They will complete the other two covers in groups of two or three.

1. What are three things we can infer from the title?
2. What are three important visual elements you see on the cover?
3. What could these visual elements represent?

4. This graphic narrative is based on testimony of one individual; what are three things we can infer about the individual from the cover?
5. What are two predictions you have after examining the cover? What evidence do you have to support those predictions?

Distribute the handout and display the first cover on a projector/enlarger. As a class, work through the five questions, having students record answers on their sheets.

Once the first section has been completed, prompt students to form groups of two or three. Distribute copies of the remaining two covers, and/or display them on a projector/enlarger.

If time allows, go over answers as a group.

Conclusion

Tell students that they have dug deep into the covers of these books; collaboratively, they have analyzed these covers, and made predictions based on their insights. This experience will help them engage in deeper visual analysis throughout the remainder of the unit. This lesson will also provide a foundation for when they make their own covers in the second half of the unit.

Conduct vote for a second time. “Don’t judge a book by its cover,” one finger = disagree; two fingers = on the fence; three fingers = agree.

Support Materials

Judge A Book By Its Cover Handout –
[Judge A Book By Its Cover](#)

Mood and Tone

This lesson introduces the concepts of mood and tone, giving students opportunities to practice identifying these aspects in a text. Mood and tone are complex concepts. When introducing these concepts to the class, be sure to use examples from texts the students are already familiar with. Examples can be pulled from pop culture or texts covered previously in class. If students are already familiar with these terms, challenge them to analyze the difference between conveying mood and tone through visuals versus through text.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- define and identify the mood and tone of a text.
- collaboratively make meaningful connections between the text, the speaker, and the mood/tone.
- communicate their connections, providing evidence to support their connections.
- describe the importance of mood and tone in understanding a text.

Guiding Question

- How do graphic artists use visuals to establish the mood and tone of a graphic narrative?

Preparation

Have copies of the two handouts for the learners.

Introduction

Distribute the mood and tone literary devices reference sheet to students or project in the classroom.

Review the terms on the handout, discuss, and give examples from stories known to students.

Lesson Activities

Exploring Mood and Tone

NOTE: The following activity is based on the graphic narrative *But I Live*, however, if you do not have access to this book through your school or public library, this lesson can be adapted to work with any graphic narrative of your choice (for example, *This Place: 150 Years Retold*)

Students will be provided with excerpts from three narratives. They will identify the mood(s) and tone(s) in each, providing textual evidence to support their findings.

Distribute and explain the handout below on mood and tone.

Work together as a class to determine the mood and tone of the excerpt from “A Kind of Resistance.” In groups of two or three, students will complete the remainder of the handout.

Once groups have completed identifying the mood and tone in their assigned texts, groups will share their findings with the class.

Conclusion

Review how to identify, describe, and discuss the mood and tone of graphic narratives. Suggest how this will be useful in reading graphic narratives – it will help them better understand other literature and media. As well, this will help them create an engaging atmosphere when writing and illustrating their own graphic narratives.

Extension

In a 200-word reflection paragraph, respond to the prompt: Why is today’s lesson on mood and tone important for comprehending, analyzing, and contextualising graphic narratives?

Support Materials

Mood and Tone Literary Devices – [Mood_Tone_Literary_Devices](#)

Mood and Tone Literary Devices Worksheet – [Mood_Tone_Literary_Devices_Worksheet](#)

PART II

A KIND OF RESISTANCE

Some of this material is from the previously published [But I Live Educators' Resource](#) (as noted). If you are interested in other narratives in [But I Live](#), please take a look at the site.

The lessons in this section are supported by additional materials in *But I Live*. David Schaffer has provided information about himself (pp. 159–162). For information on where David lived during the Holocaust, read “The Holocaust in Transnistria” by Alexander Korb (pp. 126–135). Additionally, this **map** will show David’s movement during the Holocaust.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- examine the historical events surrounding the graphic narratives.
- explore the conventions used in graphic narratives
- practice close reading of text and images in the graphic narratives.

Guiding Questions

- How can graphic narratives help us understand history?

- What is the importance and influence of perspective in non-fiction graphic narratives?
- How do mood and tone influence our reading of a graphic narrative?

[Narrative as Collaboration](#)

- Lesson 1: [Identity, Memory, Storytelling, and Listening](#)
- Lesson 2: [How Graphic Memoirs Tell Stories](#)
- Lesson 3: [Listening, Interpreting, and Drawing](#)
- Lesson 4: [Crafting a Personal Narrative: Unit Project](#)

[Agency in the Holocaust](#)

- Lesson 1: [Graphic Technique and Literary Devices](#)
- Lesson 2: [Jewish Youth Agency and Resistance](#)
- Lesson 3: [Preparing a Visual Representation](#)

[A Personal Approach to the Holocaust in Roumania](#)

- Lesson 1: [The Holocaust in Roumania](#)
- Lesson 2: [Testimony as Historical Source: Focus on David](#)
- Lesson 3: [Immigration and Post War Life](#)

PART II

NARRATIVE AS COLLABORATION: LISTENING AND REPRESENTATION

This unit is designed for grades 10–12 and is adaptable to English, social studies, and humanities courses. Prior to entering this unit, students should have a foundational understanding of the events and impact of the Holocaust on Jewish people and other marginalized groups targeted by the Nazi regime. Building on this foundation, this unit shifts the focus from broad historical narratives commonly found in textbooks to personal narratives, specifically survivor testimonies. Students will explore the historical significance and relevancy of Holocaust survivors' testimonies through class discussion and individual research.

Additionally, students will read *Two Roses* and uncover the techniques and devices utilized by comics to create layers of meaning outside of what we typically find in traditional prose—such as timing, silence, symbolism, and visual metaphors. Finally, students will understand their role in preserving Jewish memory both effectively and respectfully through the creation of their own visual narratives.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- understand the historical significance of Holocaust survivor testimonies and learn to engage with them respectfully and ethically.
- analyze and interpret visual narratives (comics) and recognize how visual elements and devices convey deeper meaning.
- produce visual narratives based on a survivor's testimony that are accurate, respectful, and utilize comic devices to create additional layers of meaning.
- collaborate and offer peer feedback to refine and enhance storytelling practices and ensure alignment with Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies.

Guiding Questions

- Why is it important to respect and remember personal testimonies of painful or difficult events?
- How can comics communicate experiences of trauma and survival in ways that written or oral stories alone cannot? How do comic devices create additional layers of meaning?
- What responsibilities do we have when retelling someone else's story, especially one involving injustice and genocide?
- What techniques can be used in comic-writing to enhance the work? How can artistic choices affect a reader's response to the work?

Sequence

- Lesson 1: [Introduction to Holocaust Testimonies and Visual Narratives](#)
- Lesson 2: [Reading Comics as a Medium](#)
- Lesson 3: [Retelling Testimonies Respectfully and Planning Comics](#)
- Lesson 4: [Comic Preparation](#)
- Lesson 5: [Visual Narrative Planning Peer Review and Workshop](#)
- Lesson 6: [Visual Narrative Show and Tell](#)

Identity, Memory, Storytelling, and Listening

In this lesson, students will explore how memories are shared through storytelling and how listening and interpretation help shape meaning and understanding.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- analyze how storytelling communicates identity and memory in a graphic memoir.
- reflect on active listening and understanding when engaging with someone else's story.
- recognize the role of collaboration and interpretation in storytelling.

Guiding Questions

- How do stories help us understand both ourselves and others

Materials

- excerpt from 'A Kind of Resistance'
- student journals or loose-leaf paper

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Have students respond to **one** of the following prompts in their journals.

Journal Prompt 1: Think of a moment when something changed for you—a place, routine, or situation. What do you remember most about that moment, and why do you think it stayed with you?

Journal Prompt 2: Think of a time when someone really listened to you. How did that change the way you felt about your story or yourself?

Journal Prompt 3: Think of a time when you listened to someone else's story. What helped you understand their experience better?

Turn and Talk (Optional) – Students may discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think certain moments stay with us longer than others?
- Why do you think listening matters when someone is sharing a personal story?

Connecting Personal Experience to David’s Story

Briefly, introduce the story and provide general context. Explain that the memoir was created through a collaborative process, where memories were interpreted and represented visually. In the introduction, emphasize that stories gain meaning through both sharing and listening. Teacher framing could include:

“Just like the moments you wrote about, David’s story is built from memories that shaped who he became. Today, we’re going to look at how his identity comes through graphic storytelling. David’s story didn’t appear on its own. It was created in collaboration with an artist who listened to his memories and helped translate them into images. That means this memoir is not only about remembering—it’s about being heard. In this unit, we’re not just learning how to tell our own stories. We’re also learning how to listen carefully, respectfully, and thoughtfully to the stories of others. Understanding someone’s story takes just as much skill as sharing one.”

Introduction to Analysis

Project this page: Page 27 – *A Kind of Resistance*. On the first read, remind student to focus on Noticing. Prompt students to notice:

- emotions.
- visual details.
- words or details that stand out.

Guided Analysis

Have students work individually or in pairs to respond to the following questions:

- What do we learn about David from this moment?
- What does this panel tell us about **how** David's story was created?
- What role does David play in this moment? What role does the artist (Miriam) play?
- How does this panel show that storytelling can be a shared process?

Class Discussion

- Debrief the guided analysis. Potential discussion prompts include, "What responsibility does a listener have when hearing someone's personal story?"

Narrative Collaboration Video

Watch the following video: ***If We Had Followed the Rules, I Wouldn't Be Here***, Miriam Libicki & David Schaffer

Full Film: <https://holocaustgraphicnovels.uvic.ca/films/index.html>

Discussion Questions:

- What stood out to you most in the film?
- What new information did you learn about how the graphic memoir was created?
- What does the film suggest about trust between a storyteller and the person sharing their story?

- How does the film show the difference between remembering an experience and representing it in art?
- Why might some details be emphasized, changed, or simplified in the graphic memoir?
- What challenges might arise when turning memories into images?

Conclusion

In wrapping up the lesson, remind students that stories don't exist on their own. They are shaped by memory, but also by listening, trust, and interpretation. David shared his experiences, and another person listened carefully and helped turn those memories into something we could see and understand. The students are now stewards of these stories.

Discussion or Journal Prompt:

- How might David's story feel different if it had not been listened to carefully?

A reminder for next class, the class is going to look closely at the choices that were made when David's story was turned into a graphic memoir—how images, spacing, and visual details help readers understand experiences that are hard to put into words.

Additional Resources

Biography of David Shaffer – [Biography_D_Shaffer](#)

How Graphic Memoirs Tell Stories

In this lesson, students will explore how interpretation influences the way a story is translated from listening into images. Students analyze how visual and textual choices in graphic memoirs reflect careful listening and interpretation of personal experiences. By examining panels from David's story, students will consider how images, layout, and pacing reflect careful listening and interpretation of personal memories.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- analyze how visual and textual choices in graphic memoirs communicate meaning and emotion, especially when representing personal memories.
- explain how graphic narratives reflect careful listening and interpretation, recognizing the responsibility involved in representing someone else's story.

Guiding Questions

- How does interpretation influence the way a story is translated from listening into images?

Preparation

Teachers will want to gather materials.

- copies or projected pages of *But I Live: 'A Kind of Resistance'*
- student journals or analysis sheets
- sticky notes

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Revisit the anchor idea from Lesson 1: **Stories are shaped by both telling and listening.**

For example, “Last class, we focused on identity, memory, and the importance of listening when someone shares their story. Today, we’re going to look closely at how listening shows up on the page—through images, layout, and storytelling choices.”

From Hearing to Interpreting

This activity is designed to help students understand that interpreting a story always involves choices, and that visuals reflect

how someone understood what they heard—not a perfect copy of the original story.

Step 1: The Listening Moment

Tell students a **very short, neutral story** out loud (30–45 seconds). For example:

“Someone is sitting alone in a room. It’s quiet. They’re waiting for something important to happen. Time feels slow.”

Or

Use a short, written paragraph and read it aloud once (do not show the text yet).

Step 2: Visual Interpretation

Ask students to quickly sketch what they pictured while listening.

- Stick figures are fine.
- No art skill expected.
- This can be done after actively listening to what was said.

Step 3: Compare

In pairs or small groups, have students compare:

- What did you draw?
- Look at similarities or differences

Step 4: Guided Discussion

Bring the class together and ask:

- Why did our drawings look different if we heard the same story?
- What choices did you make when you turned listening into an image?
- What details did you add or leave out—and why?

Anchor idea (write on board): **Listening leads to interpretation, not duplication.**

Step 5: Connection to graphic memoir / Transition

Teacher framing (example): “This is exactly what happens in a graphic memoir. David shared his memories, and the artist listened, interpreted, and made visual choices. Today, we’re going to read the graphic narrative while paying attention to those choices—not just what happened, but how it was understood and represented.”

Introduce the Lesson 2 Inquiry Question

- How does interpretation influence the way a story is translated from listening into images?

Reading with the Creator in Mind (Part 1)

In direct instruction to students, explain the intention when they read the memoir. For example, “When we read a graphic memoir, we’re not just reading what happened. We’re also reading the choices someone made while listening to another person’s memories and turning them into images.”

Introduce the idea that:

- memories are interpreted, not copied.
- images represent meaning, not exact detail.
- the artist makes choices based on what they heard.

Project or reference these images from the text. (Pages 25–26 *But I Live*)

Pose the question: What does this panel show about how the story was listened to and interpreted?

- Think-pair-share.
- Prompt them to remember the video they watched in the previous lesson.

Reading with the Creator in Mind (Part 2)

Have students read 'A Kind of Resistance' using the Guided Analysis Handout, annotating with sticky notes as they read.

Students may work independently, in pairs, or in small groups. They do **not** need to answer every question; this is meant as a guide when analyzing the frames. Try to use a different colour sticky note for each sub-section, when placing sticky note analysis throughout.

Part A: Noticing the Creation Process (Observation)

- What visual details feel carefully chosen or emphasized?
- What emotions are shown through images rather than words?
- What does this panel ask you, as a reader, to pay attention to?

Part B: Listening & Interpretation (Process Focus)

- What might David have shared verbally that the artist had to interpret?
- How do you think the artist decided what to include or leave out?
- What clues suggest the artist listened carefully to David's experience?

Part C: Visual Storytelling Choices

- How do panel size, spacing, or framing affect how this moment feels?
- Why might this moment be slowed down or given more space?
- How do the visuals help communicate feelings that might be hard to explain in words?

Part D: Collaboration & Responsibility

- How does this panel show care or respect for David’s experience?
- What could be misunderstood if the artist had not listened carefully?

Whole Class Share & Synthesis

Bring the class back together.

Guiding questions:

- What did you notice about how listening shows up visually?
- Which panels felt the most careful or intentional? Why?
- How did this way of reading change your understanding of the story?

Conclusion

In the lesson wrap-up, highlight what was practiced and look ahead to the next lesson. For example,

“Today, we practiced reading as listeners—paying attention to how someone else’s memories were interpreted and represented. These same skills are what storytellers and interviewers need when they help carry someone else’s story forward. Next class, you’ll practice these listening skills directly by interviewing another person. You’ll begin to see how questions, attention, and care help shape the stories we tell.”

Additional Resources

[Optional Open Ended Question Guide](#)

Listening, Interpreting, and Drawing

Using David's story as a model, students practice interviewing a peer to understand how memories are shared, interpreted, and respectfully represented. The lesson emphasizes listening as a literacy skill and prepares students to responsibly create narratives based on lived experience.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate active and ethical listening during an interview with a peer.
- create a visual interpretation of an oral story, explaining the choices they made while representing it.

Guiding Questions

- How does listening shape the way we interpret and represent someone else's story?
- Students develop listening and interpretive skills by translating a heard narrative into a visual representation.

Preparation

Gather materials for activities.

- student journals or blank paper
- pencils/markers
- interview question prompts
- (Optional) listening checklist

Lesson Activities

Introduction

In framing today's lesson, start by connecting with the previous work. Encourage students to take on the position of the artist in listening closely to the testimony. For example, "So far, we've seen how listening becomes interpretation in David's graphic memoir. Today, you'll practice that process yourself — listening to someone's story and then turning what you heard into a drawing."

Ethical Listening and Interpretation

Quick review of earlier lesson. Ask students to share examples of what they observed or did when listening. Try to tease out how they use these techniques to create meaning.

Ethical listening means:

- letting the storyteller control what they share.
- listening without interrupting.
- asking open-ended questions.

- respecting boundaries.
- consent.

Interview and Listening Practice

Step 1: Decide on a Story to Share

Have students brainstorm a life moment (e.g., change, learning, challenge, success) that they feel comfortable sharing with their partner.

Step 2: Set Roles

Students pair up.

- One = storyteller
- One = listener / interpreter

Step 3: Interview Round 1

The storyteller shares the moment with the listener.

Listener:

- asks 2–3 open-ended questions (See question guide)
- takes notes
- paraphrases one idea back

Step 4: Consent Check

Listeners ask:

“Is there anything you don’t want shown if I draw this?”

Step 5: Switch Roles

Students switch storyteller and listener roles.

Visual Interpretation – Sketch What You Heard

Have students create a **single-panel** or **two-panel sketch** that represents the story they just heard.

Guidelines for students:

- Simple figures are completely okay.
- Focus on:
 - emotion
 - atmosphere
 - what felt most important
- You do **not** need to include exact details

Prompt on board:

What part of the story felt most important to show visually?

Reflection – Explaining Interpretation

Have students respond in writing or orally:

Choose one:

- What choices did you make when turning the story into a drawing?
- What did you leave out, and why?
- How did listening influence what you chose to show?

Optional – Share Out

Students may share:

- their drawing

- one choice they made

Emphasize that they are sharing interpretations, not judging stories or art.

Conclusion

Teacher wrap-up. For example, “Today, you experienced how listening turns into interpretation and then into images. This is the same process used to create David’s graphic memoir.”

Looking ahead. For example, “Next, you’ll plan a full graphic narrative that represents someone else’s story with care, intention, and respect.”

Additional Resources

[Optional Open Ended Question Guide](#)

Crafting a Personal Narrative: Unit Project

The aim of the project is to create a short graphic narrative based on a story shared by someone in the student's life. This could be a family member, caregiver, elder, coach, neighbour, or another trusted person. Their job is not to tell their story, but to listen carefully, interpret what they hear, and represent that person's experience with respect and care—just like the process used to create David's graphic memoir.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- practice active and ethical listening.
- learn how stories are shaped through interpretation.
- understand that storytelling is a shared responsibility.
- use images and words together to communicate meaning.

Preparation

Teachers need to ensure that students have access to the

assignment sheet and the supplies needed for their graphic narratives.

Lesson Activities

The Task

Students will:

1. Interview someone in their life about a moment they choose to share.
2. Listen carefully and take notes, focusing on meaning rather than details.
3. Create a graphic narrative that represents how you understood their story.

Additional Resources

[Unit Project Handout](#)

PART III

AGENCY IN THE HOLOCAUST

This material is from the previously published [But I Live Educators' Resource](#). If you are interested in other narratives in [But I Live](#), please take a look at the site.

The purpose of this mini-unit is to combine two sets of competencies—one from the language arts, and the other from social studies—to enrich student ability to identify, analyze, and explain the perspectives of Holocaust survivors who went into hiding in Nazi-occupied Europe. By developing students' literary and historical skills through reading stories about Jewish resistance, the expectation is that students will build deeper, more lasting, and more adaptive competencies in employing historical empathy across their future humanities coursework. Students will learn to identify how Holocaust survivors' stories have been brought to life through literature. Students will then conduct targeted research about a survivor's life, presenting their learning in the form of a visual or graphic narrative representation. This process teaches students to persuasively and creatively illustrate the humanity expressed by those who sought to survive under extreme conditions.

This unit encourages teachers to investigate the relationship between art and history, thereby suggesting that literary techniques and primary sources are vitally interdependent in fostering student ability to meaningfully engage with the past. This mini-unit is designed for students in grades 10–12.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify and recreate both graphic and literary techniques used in contemporary graphic novels.
- reflect on and articulate the significance of these techniques for telling narratives of trauma.
- use this knowledge of technique to describe and assess the degree of agency possessed by Holocaust survivors who went into hiding, as well as survivors' ability to resist oppression, as expressed through a specific graphic narrative.
- apply this investigative approach to another narrative account of European Jews in hiding.
- create a visual representation illustrating individual agency by using a selection of narrative and/or non-narrative graphic and literary techniques that are identified in the unit.

Guiding Questions

- What are the key graphic and literary techniques employed by Miriam Libicki in her graphic narrative representing David Schaffer's experiences?
- How did David exercise agency in Miriam Libicki's account of his testimony?
- How can survivor agency and resistance be presented in Holocaust testimony?

Sequence

- Lesson 1 – [Graphic and Literary Techniques](#)
- Lesson 2 – [Jewish Youth: Agency and Resistance](#)
- Lesson 3 – [Preparing a Visual Representation](#)

Graphic and Literary Techniques

The aim of the lesson is to identify and analyze the most prominent graphic techniques and literary devices used in Miriam Libicki's graphic narrative representing David Schaffer's Holocaust experience.

This lesson establishes the framework for two subsequent lessons in the mini-unit, in which students explore the agency of Holocaust resisters who went into hiding. Students will create a narrative or non-narrative visual representation of their choice, illustrating the agency of one resister (or a group of resisters). Most of the conceptual learning for the mini-unit will take place in this lesson, which teachers may wish to divide into several smaller lessons based on the activity options.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Differentiate between elements of story, character, and environment in the narrative.
- Identify and analyze the usefulness of graphic techniques, including colour schemes, panel bleeds, diagrams, different point of views, and splash pages.
- Identify and analyze the usefulness of literary

elements and devices, including inciting incidents, climaxes, atmosphere, denouements, and techniques of metaphor and symbolism.

- Infer the significance of certain techniques in representing story, character, and environment.
- Identify significant evidence of Schaffer's life experience during the Holocaust.

Students will develop historical thinking through narrative:

Students will use Evidence and Significance competencies by applying their knowledge of techniques and devices. They will pinpoint examples of Schaffer's significant experiences, by isolating the most compelling evidence in the story.

Guiding Questions

- How did survivors have agency during the Holocaust?

Preparation

Teachers may wish to review the Backgrounders, including [The Author's Use of Graphic and Literary Techniques](#), which covers the prominent techniques and devices Miriam Libicki uses in her narrative, as described in a recent interview with Libicki, and [Biography of David Shaffer](#), which offers context on David's life.

Distribute copies of the narrative in advance, and ask students to have completed a preliminary read of the text before the lesson.

Lesson Activities

Analyzing Story, Character, and Environment

Following the *I do, we do, you do* strategy, model a breakdown of the narrative's story by identifying the main plot points in the narrative, and providing biographical context as needed.

You may want to show the YouTube clip, "[If We Had Followed the Rules, I Wouldn't Be Here](#)," a collaboration between Schaffer and Libicki.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/artsbasedholocaustremembrance/?p=123#oembed-1>

Then, on the whiteboard, lead the class in creating a timeline of events and moments that students found significant to the plot, answering any basic questions about sequence that occur.

Finally, divide students into partners or small groups and ask them to create a diagram of rising and falling action in the story, identifying which moments are most compelling to them.

Analyzing Character

In the same small groups, or different ones, have students

brainstorm evidence for a biography of [David Schaffer](#), in list or mind map form, based on what they have gleaned from reviewing the text (no details are too small or minor).

Or, have students mind map Schaffer's character using the STEAL technique: evidence from what he Says; Thinks; his Effects on others; his Actions; and his "Looks" or body language and gestures.

Or, have students complete a diagram or visual profile of Schaffer using the Five W's approach: Who, What, Where, When, and Why.

When finished, have groups share out their findings with the class.

Analyzing Environment

Explain to the class how the environment that Schaffer experienced in hiding is very important to his story. Ask the class to brainstorm, or mind map on the board, examples of how his environment affected him, and how he sought to survive in it.

Then, choose a splash page, such as the one on Page 17. Display it on the projector, and, as a class, have students complete the [Begbie Contest guiding questions \(such as those from Number 20, on paintings\)](#).

Then display another splash page with even richer imagery, such as the one on Page 17, and individually, have students write down everything they notice about its environment in one minute.

Remove the image.

Complete the process again with the same image, asking students to add details that they missed. You may need to repeat this process several times, so that observational skills improve.

Analyzing Techniques and Devices

Using "[The Author's Use of Techniques](#)" backgrounder, prepare one or two activities on analyzing graphic techniques and literary devices in the narrative, respectively.

Analyzing Graphic Techniques

Prepare a list of key graphic techniques used in the narrative and hand out the list of terms to the class.

In pairs or in small groups, have students identify examples of each term, as well as evidence for why their chosen examples are significant. Or, you may decide to create a jigsaw activity, in which each group of students gets a few graphic techniques, as well as a few possible examples of where to search for them.

Circulate around the room giving hints and guidance as needed, then have students assemble in new groups. Each individual from the first group explains their findings to their peers.

As a class, have each group share their analysis of the examples, putting the images on the overhead for context. Add further explanation of each of the findings as needed, then have students complete the process one more time in second groups, giving a second example of each technique for them to analyze.

Analyzing Literary Devices

Have students refer back to the earlier activities on diagramming rising and falling action in the story. In the original activity groups, hand out the story structure terms and have students chart them on their existing diagrams, citing examples.

Then have them explain their reasoning to another group.

Next, have students refer back to their earlier analyses of the forest splash page, and have them look for evidence of two of the three remaining devices (metaphor/symbolism and forces of nature), circulating throughout the room as needed to offer guidance or leading questions.

For the last device, dialogue, pose a question to the class about where dialogue appears and where it does not. Ask the groups to prepare a summary statement on what this suggests about the mood or atmosphere of the story being told in the flashbacks. Ask students to refer to several other devices or techniques previously discussed when preparing their answers.

Identifying Significant Evidence of Schaffer's Experience

Analyzing Significant Moments

As a final activity, ask students, individually or in partners, to identify the four to five most significant moments in the text that illustrate the significance of Schaffer's experience in hiding.

Ask students to write a few notes about each moment describing why that moment is significant, and, if possible, how that moment is demonstrated or enhanced by one of the techniques or devices discussed in the lesson.

Have students share their findings with the class.

Conclusion

Introduce the next two lessons in the mini-unit, and explain the requirements of the final short project. You may want to hand

out the requirements for the project now, especially if you will be dividing up these lessons within a larger unit of the course.

NOTE: The lessons do not need to be taught back-to-back. Students may benefit from having more time between lessons to digest the material. They will also need time to prepare their projects.

Additional Resources

[The Author's Use of Literary Techniques](#)

[Biography of David Shaffer](#)

Jewish Youth: Agency and Resistance

The lesson plan aims to identify, interpret, and explain how young Jewish victims of the Holocaust demonstrated agency and resistance in their actions, thoughts, and feelings.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe and differentiate between the varied experiences of Jewish individuals who went into hiding during the Holocaust.
- Reflect on the coexistence of oppression and individual agency through the experiences of Jewish youth, using reasoning provided by human rights education.
- Identify evidence of perspective in various accounts of hiding that illustrate the agency and resistance of individuals.
- Share historical perspectives in a narrative or visual representation.

Guiding Question

- What are some of the ways that Jewish youth resisted during the Holocaust?

Context for the Lesson

This lesson builds on the conceptual foundations established in the lesson on [Graphic and Literary Techniques](#), and adds one more important conceptual focus: human rights education. This intermediary lesson will encourage students to identify how, even under extreme conditions of persecution, European Jews still exercised their humanity by developing methods of survival that demonstrated creativity and resilience. This lesson forms a bridge to [Preparing a Visual Representation](#), when students will prepare create their own graphic narrative of the agency of a victim in hiding.

Preparation

Teachers may want to review the backgrounder, "[Holocaust and Human Rights Education](#)," which provides important context about how to teach about the Holocaust with a focus on human rights education.

Introduction

Recap the previous lesson, and explain to the class that even oppressed individuals in the Holocaust were sometimes able to resist their oppressors. Refer to several of the examples pro-

vided by students at the end of the last lesson, when they identified significant aspects of David Schaffer’s experience, highlighting how he demonstrated agency and was able to make decisions and fight back against his oppressors. Provide context as needed about how oppression and resistance often coexisted during the Holocaust.

Lesson Activities

Introducing the Dossier of Sources

Building on interest in the David Schaffer graphic narrative, provide sets of diary excerpts written by Jewish youth who sought to survive during the Holocaust, exhibiting their own forms of resistance. Provide some context on the three types of Holocaust diaries written by Jewish youth—those written by youth who went into hiding; youth who fled Europe; and youth who were sent to live in **ghettos**. Not very many diaries of Jewish youth in ghettos exist, and they show the perspective of youth whose experiences were similar to those of David Schaffer.

Two curated sets of diary entries teachers can use are excerpted from Peter Langer and Otto Frank’s diaries, which are adapted from [Salvaged Pages: Young Writers’ Diaries of the Holocaust](#). A third excerpt is text and art from Petr Ginz’s diary, adapted from a lesson on [Facinghistory.org](#). Each source highlights the experience of a youth that was forced to flee, hide, or live in a ghetto. The sources also highlight the distinctive forms of resistance these youth displayed in their daily lives. (See Support Materials, for examples of curated entries.) More challenging diary examples could include those of Anne Frank, in particular entries from June 12 and 14, 1942; April 5, 1944; or July 15, 1944. Teachers hoping to further explore the experience

of survivors who went into hiding might prefer to use video testimony. The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre has multiple testimonies (see Support Materials, below).

You may want to create a gallery walk, in which students rotate from station to station, taking notes on taking notes on examples of agency and resistance, either subtle or outright, as seen through the actions, thoughts, and feelings of persecuted individuals. Encourage them to do this in partners or groups, and to share their reflections with each other as they go. When complete, ask students to record three things that they learned; two things that they are curious to learn more about; and one thing that surprised them. Share out loud as a class.

Closure

Choosing Sources and Introducing the Short Project

Students will use their questions and insights from these activities to begin researching an individual they want to focus on in their narrative or visual representation.

Let students know that they can choose from among the individual examples in today's lesson, or, if you prefer, another individual (youth or adult) that they choose to research.

More complete diaries from Otto Wolf or Peter Langer, for example, can be found in the full text of [Salvaged Pages](#). Review the requirements of the short project as needed.

Support Materials

[Diary Entry Excerpts by Peter Langer and Otto Frank from Salvaged Pages](#)

[Text and Art by Petr Ginz](#)

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre contains multiple testimonies of survivors who went into hiding. Each includes a summary index of the topics discussed:

[Miriam E \(1984\)](#), Holocaust Testimony, [Holocaust Documentation Project](#), VHEC



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/artsbasedholocaustremembrance/?p=125#oembed-1>

[Boris W \(1983\)](#), Holocaust Testimony, [Holocaust Documentation Project](#), VHEC



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/artsbasedholocaustremembrance/?p=125#oembed-2>

[Miriam E \(1984\)](#), Holocaust Testimony, [Holocaust Documentation Project](#), VHEC



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/artsbasedholocaustremembrance/?p=125#oembed-3>

[Thelma K \(1984\)](#), Holocaust Testimony, [Holocaust Documentation Project](#), VHEC



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/artsbasedholocaustremembrance/?p=125#oembed-4>

[Estera K \(1990\)](#), Holocaust Testimony, [Holocaust Documentation Project](#), VHEC



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/artsbasedholocaustremembrance/?p=125#oembed-5>

Preparing a Visual Representation

This lesson plan aims to represent, in narrative or visual form, the agency and resistance of a Jewish individual during the Holocaust, using graphic techniques and literary devices identified in Miriam Libicki's graphic narrative. This lesson completes Unit 4 by bringing together the teachings of the previous two lessons, requiring students to complete a project that combines a) an aspect of the graphic narrative (story, character, or environment); b) techniques and devices used in graphic narratives; and c) research on an individual to demonstrate historical thinking competencies.

Students will draw on their learning from the first two lessons to demonstrate their competencies in three areas: specific reference to evidence; understanding of significance; and capacity to empathize with, and understand, different perspectives. Researching a Holocaust victim through relevant primary source evidence will help a student understand a victim's unique perspective and experience. Through this process of experiential research, students will be better equipped to translate their learning into graphic narratives.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Select and demonstrate effective use of specific graphic techniques and narrative devices that represent the lived experience of the individual Holocaust victim.
- Identify and express how this experience provides evidence of agency and resistance by the individual.
- Use graphic narratives techniques and devices to create a visual narrative or representation that focuses on the poignant aspects of story, character, or environment.

Guiding Question

- How does artistic expression provide insight into personal experience?

Preparation

As discussed in [Graphic and Literary Techniques](#), teachers may want to explain the requirements of the project at the end of Lesson 1, so students can think about the final project as they learn more about survivors of the Holocaust, unless the teacher has decided to break up the lessons within a larger unit.

Lesson Activities

Project Work

Students are required to create a representation of the agency and resistance demonstrated by the individual they have chosen to research. Students may choose between two options: writing and illustrating a short multi-panel graphic narrative, modeled on Miriam Libicki's process, or creating a collage, painting, or graphic diagram which expresses an example of agency and resistance. They may choose from several different mediums, depending on their artistic confidence and individual preferences: they may complete their projects by hand, or by using a graphic design program or other kind of computer software.

First, students should choose their individual, whether an individual previously selected by the teacher in [Jewish Youth: Agency and Resistance](#), or another they have been approved to research. Then, they should identify how best to illustrate that individual's agency—through a focus on story, character, or environment. Then they must identify and incorporate five devices and techniques studied in [Graphic and Literary Techniques](#) (or another number of techniques, as decided by the teacher). If they choose not to create a narrative representation, they are free to illustrate their knowledge of techniques by using other graphic approaches that do not require plot, that are non-diegetic.

The teacher may choose to assign a short written description in which the student must explain the reasoning behind their techniques and devices, and their strategy for representing the agency of the individual they have chosen.

This project is designed to allow students to independently refine their graphic narrative techniques from a variety of dif-

ferent vantage points, gradually allowing them to build confidence in making their own design decisions. This structure also allows for significant differentiation in the classroom, letting learners practice perspective and historical empathy using their individual learning strengths. This project could also be assigned in other subjects, including language arts or English.

Extension

Depending on the make-up of the class and/or the preferences of the students, the project could be combined with a fair, gallery walk, or series of individual or group presentations, in which students share the highlights of their learning journeys.

PART IV

THE HOLOCAUST IN ROUMANIA

This material is from the previously published [But I Live Educators' Resource](#). If you are interested in other narratives in [But I Live](#), please take a look at the site.

This three-lesson unit focuses on David Schaffer, a survivor of the Holocaust from Romania. Through David's story, we examine the horrific events which took place, and the deep and lasting impact these events had on the people and communities targeted. The trauma and pain inflicted by the Holocaust did not end on Liberation Day. It caused deep and pervasive scars and decimated communities beyond the point of return. It is crucial that students understand the lasting impacts of these actions, and how they changed the lives of millions of people—and the course of the world.

Students will examine the events of the Holocaust in Romania through a historical thinking/research lens and through a more personal approach as we delve into David's testimony. Finally, we will explore what these events meant for immigration and refugee movements before researching local support systems that could assist people who are today fleeing atrocities.

This unit is intended for senior students, but can be adapted to suit the needs of the classroom. Ideally, this unit will follow previous lesson(s) on the Holocaust.

The primary goal of this unit is to examine the staggering, horrific events of the Holocaust through the humanizing medium of testimony: David Schaffer's personal story. Students will gain experience working with testimony and gathering historical information and data. The unit concludes in a support

action plan, which prompts students to consider how they can personally assist immigrants and refugees in their own communities.

The unit is flexible, allowing educators to adapt the lesson depending on the needs of their classroom. We have also included prompts for additional topics or concepts that could be focused on. These three sections, “The Holocaust in Romania,” “Testimony as Historical Source: Focus on David,” and “Immigration and Post-War Life” can be taught individually or together.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- gain experience working with survivor testimony.
- examine the Holocaust in Romania.
- identify the 10 stages of genocide and how they occurred in Romania.
- consider and analyze the lasting impacts of trauma.
- build understanding of immigrant and refugee movements.
- consider how they can personally support newcomers in their own communities.

It is crucial that educators provide trauma-informed pedagogy, perhaps including trigger warning to their class for the following material. A safe space should be offered if students feel the need to disengage.

Before delving into this unit, students would benefit from previous engagement with World War Two, more generally, and the Holocaust specifically. However, with ample context, this unit can serve as primary learning about the Holocaust.

Though not necessary, students would benefit from previous learning about:

- World War Two and the Holocaust
- related concepts—antisemitism, discrimination, immigration, etc.
- genocide
- context for the Holocaust, and a timeline of events
- other survivor testimony

Guiding Questions

- Describe the treatment of Jews in Roumania through the lens of the stages of Genocide.
- What were the movements of refugees during and post-war?
- How can citizens and local services support immigrants and refugees moving into their neighbourhoods?

Sequence

- Lesson 1 – [The Holocaust in Roumania](#)
- Lesson 2 – [Testimony As An Historical Source: Focus on David](#)
- Lesson 3 – [Immigration and Post War Life](#)

Additional Topics

David's story provides avenues to highlight many other topics and concepts:

- civil disobedience versus “following the rules”
- trauma, inter-generational trauma
- loss of community, possessions, land, business

The Holocaust in Roumania

This section focuses on the Holocaust in Roumania and builds historical thinking skills

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- research the events of the Holocaust in Roumania
- research historical data.
- collect, analyze, and report on the data gathered.
- identify the 10 stages of genocide and how these stages occurred in Roumania.
- represent historical research through a project.

Guiding Question

- How was the Holocaust experienced in Roumania?

Preparation

First and foremost, efforts should be made to create a safe classroom atmosphere before diving into challenging content.

Introduction

This lesson will focus on researching the Holocaust in Roumania. Ensure that students have access to all needed materials. Depending on the needs of the classroom, research can be conducted through the lens of the stages of genocide, or students can research first and then learn about the stages of genocide after.

Lesson Activities

Historical Research

Teachers can use any or all of the included sources to examine the events of the Holocaust in Roumania.

[Timeline Activity](#)

- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has this timeline activity which uses info cards to teach about the Holocaust. There is an [extension that focuses on Elie Wiesel and his experience surviving the Holocaust in Romania](#). These are interactive activities which prompt learning about this heavy topic.

[Where Did the Largest Numbers of Jews Murdered in the Holocaust Come From? Activity](#)

- The University College of London (UCL) Centre for Holocaust Education has developed this short lesson focusing on historical data and information. This resource places a heavy emphasis on historical information and skills, thus it is important to follow-up by humanizing the data covered.

The Stages of Genocide

Either alongside or immediately following the lessons on historical context, students will take an in-depth look at the stages of genocide, analyzing how these steps took place in Romania.

- [The United Nations Office of Genocide Prevention](#) is a reliable resource.

Research Project

Students can complete a research assignment with a focus either on historical events or on the stages of genocide. This assignment can be done individually or as a group.

Conclusion

Wrap-up by discussing the possibilities for presenting this research. Possibilities for projects include:

- Assign one stage to each small group. Ask them to present to the class how this step occurred in Romania.
- Have students work individually to create a timeline of events.
- Have students create a presentation on the Holocaust in

- Romania either individually or in small groups.
- Another option, depending on the needs of the class.

Support Materials

The following resources may be useful.

- The Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) <https://www.ehri-project.eu/elie-wiesel-national-institute-study-holocaust-romania-0>
- Romania (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) <https://portal.ehri-project.eu/countries/ro>
- Jewish Virtual Library (this virtual library hosts many resources, including primary sources) <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>
- Genocide (Montreal Holocaust Museum) <http://genocide.mhmc.ca/en/>
- The Holocaust Explained: Romania (The Wiener Holocaust Library) <https://www.theholocaustexplained.org/life-in-nazi-occupied-europe/occupation-case-studies/romania/>
- Romania (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/romania>
- Rumaenien [Romania] (documentary) (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn1001658>
- Primary Voices (Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre) <https://vhec.org/primaryvoices/>
- Open Hearts Closed Doors (Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre) <https://vhec.org/open-hearts/english/index.html>
- Murder of the Jews in Romania (Yad Vashem) <https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/final-solu->

[tion-beginning/romania.html](https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/romania-historical-background.html)

- Romania (Yad Vashem) <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/romania-historical-background.html>
- The Story of the Jewish Community of Balti (Yad Vashem) <https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/communities/balti/overview.asp>
- Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania (International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania) <https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20080226-romania-commission-holocaust-history.pdf>

Testimony As An Historical Source: Focus on David

This lesson focuses on David's testimony as an historical source.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- define testimony.
- collect, analyze, and report on data gathered from Holocaust survivor testimony.
- examine testimony to better understand the lasting impacts experienced by survivors.

Guiding Question

- What was significant in David's experience of the Holocaust?

Introduction

The previous lesson "[The Holocaust in Roumania](#)," provides context for David's experience of the Holocaust. Alternatively, these lessons can follow any instruction on the Holocaust, or lessons can be used to highlight survivor testimony in particular.

Lesson Activities

Thinking about Testimony

As a class, lead a discussion about testimony, using the following questions as prompts:

- What is an eyewitness?
- What is testimony?
- What forms does testimony take?
- Why would somebody leave a testimony?
- What can testimony tell us about a past event that other sources might not? What are the limitations of testimony?
- Compare the value of testimony, artefacts (such as documents and photographs), and textbooks as sources for understanding the past.

Reading David's Testimony

Gather various sources of David's testimony

- David Schaffer has provided information about himself (*But I Live* pp. 159–162).

- [Biography D.Shaffer](#) from the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre

Based on the sources, what are the significant events in David's testimony?

Reading the Graphic Testimony

Depending on your class, you may choose to have students read the testimony in many ways.

- What happens in the graphic narrative? How does David describe what happened to him?

Three potential options are:

- Have students read the testimony independently. Highlight certain topics as a class after ward.
- Have students read the testimony in groups.
- Read the testimony as a class, stopping to highlight certain topics as you read.

Develop a list of the significant events in the graphic testimony. Does this vary from David's biography?

[Potential Discussion Questions are provided here.](#)

Conclusion

Debrief the discussion. Potential questions could include:

- How does this testimony contribute to your understanding of the Holocaust, or to our previous lessons?
- What long-term effects has the Holocaust had on David?

- How do you think David felt when he described what happened to him?
- What did you learn from this personal testimony that you did not learn from the historical sources?
- What stood out to you about David's story? Why?
- What will you remember about the experience of studying David's testimony? Why?

Extension

Teachers may decide to use these lessons as avenues into other topics, including:

- trauma, inter-generational trauma
- desecration/loss of community
- inter-generational impacts such as land loss, economic impact, education, etc.
- other survivor testimonies

Support Materials

Using video testimony in the classroom (USC Shoah Foundation) https://www.facinghistory.org/sites/default/files/USCSF_Teaching_Guidelines.pdf

Danger in Forgetting: Eyewitnesses to the Holocaust (Facing History and Ourselves) <https://www.facinghistory.org/videos/danger-forgetting-eyewitnesses-holocaust-sonia-weitz>

Immigration and Post War Life

This section focuses on the movement of refugees and immigrants during and following World War Two. Students will research support services for immigrants and refugees in their own communities, as well as how they can personally support new immigrants.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- collect, analyze, and report on data gathered.
- examine the desecration of Jewish communities during the Holocaust.
- consider the lasting impacts of World War Two on immigration patterns.
- research support services in their communities.
- consider how they can support immigrants and refugees joining their local communities.

Guiding Question

- What are the local resources to support immigrants and refugees?

Introduction

Discuss the difference between key terms: immigration, migration, refugee, displaced person.

Lesson Activities

Immigration and Refugee Movement

First, the class will research patterns of mass immigration during and immediately following the Holocaust. The three following resources provide information and activities to prompt learning (there are many resources available online).

- **Primary Voices** (<https://vhec.org/primaryvoices/immigration/>) – The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre has a collection of survivor testimonies in their Primary Voices program. In “Immigration,” students can explore survivor immigration stories: the experiences survivors had while immigrating and creating new identities. Students should create an inquiry question through an optional activity.
- **Open Hearts Closed Doors** (<https://vhec.org/open-hearts/english/index.html>) – Another resource by the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Open Hearts Closed Doors follows the lives of children orphaned by the Holocaust, as well as their journeys fleeing to Canada. Students may find this resource easier to connect with because the ages of those studied match their own.
- **Responding to a Refugee Crisis** (<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-and-human->

[behavior/responding-refugee-crisis](#)) – Facing History & Ourselves has created a lesson plan entitled Responding to a Refugee Crisis, which is part of a larger unit on teaching the Holocaust and human behaviour. Though specific to Germany, this lesson provides an interesting view on the difficulties of leaving Nazi-occupied Europe, and of immigrating more broadly.

Canada's Reaction

The class could discuss Canada's reaction (or lack thereof) to these immigration movements. Additionally, the class could discuss a history of a history of patterns of refugee movements in Canada or in Canadian policy (current or past).

Local Support Services

Finally, we will look at support services available to immigrants, and specifically refugees, in Canada and locally. (The United Nations High Commission on Refugees has many resources.)

Local support services vary greatly. In Vancouver and surrounding areas, organizations include:

- Immigrant Services Society of BC
- MosaicBC
- Kinbrace
- WelcomeBC
- BC Refugee Hub
- NewToBC
- Multi-Agency Partnership BC

This could be an informal in-class discussion or a more formal

assignment. Students could write a journal entry about the services, or about difficulties that immigrants to BC communities might face. Alternatively, David's story could be examined as a class, with a focus on brainstorming what services he may benefit from.

Extension

Students could then select a different survivor to research via testimony before creating a list of services refugees and survivors might benefit from.

PART V

TWO ROSES

Much like the units for “A Kind of Resistance”, these units highlight visual representations of Holocaust testimonies from *Two Roses*.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- examine the historical events surrounding the graphic narratives.
- explore the conventions used in graphic narratives
- practice close reading of text and images in the graphic narratives.

Guiding Questions

- How can graphic narratives help us understand history?
- What is the importance and influence of perspective in non-fiction graphic narratives?
- How do mood and tone influence our reading of a graphic narrative?

Visual Representations and Holocaust Testimonies

- Lesson 1: [Introduction to Holocaust Testimonies and Visual Narratives](#)
- Lesson 2: [Reading Comics as a Medium](#)
- Lesson 3: [Retelling Testimonies Respectfully and Planning Comics](#)
- Lesson 4: [Comic Preparation](#)
- Lesson 5: [Visual Narrative Planning and Peer Review and Workshop](#)
- Lesson 6: [Visual Narrative Show and Tell](#)

Seeing Beyond Stereotypes

- Lesson 1: [What are Stereotypes?](#)
- Lesson 2: [Stereotypes and Identity in Two Roses](#)
- Lesson 3: [From Stereotypes to Systems](#)
- Lesson 4: [Then and Now](#)

Hidden Identities: Gender, Choice, and Survival in Polish Labour Camps

- Lesson 1: [Choice and Survival](#)
- Lesson 2: [Concealment, Performance, and Hidden Identity](#)
- Lesson 3: [Gendered Labour in the Camps](#)
- Lesson 4: [Agency, Ethical Judgment, and Historical Significance](#)

PART V

VISUAL REPRESENTATION AND TESTIMONY

This unit is designed for grades 10–12 and is adaptable to English, social studies, and humanities courses. Prior to entering this unit, students should have a foundational understanding of the events and impact of the Holocaust on Jewish people and other marginalized groups targeted by the Nazi regime. Building on this foundation, this unit shifts the focus from broad historical narratives commonly found in textbooks to personal narratives, specifically survivor testimonies. Students will explore the historical significance and relevancy of Holocaust survivors' testimonies through class discussion and individual research.

Additionally, students will read *Two Roses* and uncover the techniques and devices utilized by comics to create layers of meaning outside of what we typically find in traditional prose—such as timing, silence, symbolism, and visual metaphors. Finally, students will understand their role in preserving Jewish memory both effectively and respectfully through the creation of their own visual narratives.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- understand the historical significance of Holocaust survivor testimonies and learn to engage with them respectfully and ethically.
- analyze and interpret visual narratives (comics) and recognize how visual elements and devices convey deeper meaning.
- produce visual narratives based on a survivor's testimony that are accurate, respectful, and utilize comic devices to create additional layers of meaning.
- collaborate and offer peer feedback to refine and enhance storytelling practices and ensure alignment with Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies.

Guiding Questions

- Why is it important to respect and remember personal testimonies of painful or difficult events?
- How can comics communicate experiences of trauma and survival in ways that written or oral stories alone cannot? How do comic devices create additional layers of meaning?
- What responsibilities do we have when retelling someone else's story, especially one involving injustice and genocide?
- What techniques can be used in comic-writing to enhance the work? How can artistic choices affect a reader's response to the work?

Sequence

- Lesson 1 – [Introduction to Holocaust Testimonies and Visual Narratives](#)
- Lesson 2: [Reading Comics as a Medium](#)
- Lesson 3: [Retelling Testimonies Respectfully and Planning Comics](#)
- Lesson 4: [Comic Preparation](#)
- Lesson 5: [Visual Narrative Planning Peer Review and Workshop](#)
- Lesson 6: [Visual Narrative Show and Tell](#)

Introduction to Holocaust Testimonies and Visual Narratives

In this lesson, students will explore the importance of survivor testimony and the ways in which personal stories shape our understanding of historical events.

Lesson aim: To introduce students to testimonies and intentional use of visual storytelling techniques.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- define testimony and describe its importance in the history of the Holocaust.
- discuss the role of testimony in resisting erasure and honouring lived experiences.
- discuss and explore comics as a method of storytelling.

Guiding Questions

- Why do people tell stories about painful or difficult events?

- What happens when those stories are forgotten or ignored?
- How can art serve as a form of historical testimony?

Materials

- whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- laptop and projector
- chart paper
- copies of *Two Roses*
- copies of [Handout_Instructions](#) and [Handout_Rubric](#)

Preparation

Ensure that you have tested the video links. Additionally, have all of the necessary materials printed off (along with extra copies). Finally, familiarize yourself with the assignment and rubric.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Begin by writing two questions on the board: “Why do people tell stories about painful or difficult events?” and “What happens when those stories are forgotten or ignored?” Instruct students to discuss these questions in their table groups and take collaborative notes on chart paper.

Guide students towards some of the following ideas:

1. People tell painful stories to make meaning, heal, and ensure others remember.
2. Sharing testimony can be empowering for the speaker and can humanize historical events for listeners.
3. When stories are forgotten or ignored, the pain may be repeated, voices erased, and lessons lost.
4. Oral and visual traditions—especially in Indigenous and Jewish cultures—play a critical role in preserving memory and identity.

Explain that this unit will allow students to explore Holocaust survivors' testimonies: valid historical accounts that are often left out of standard curriculums in favour of collective memory and Western-centered narratives. Explain that students will watch two videos for additional context on this subject.

Activity 1: Video and Discussion

Play the following videos and discuss what students learned about testimonies:

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0d4I-HgRYo&ab_channel=ChoicesProgram.
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RK9T_haru3Y.

Explain that, as allies to the Jewish community, students will take on the meaningful responsibility of helping preserve the historical memories of Holocaust survivors by respectfully retelling their testimonies. They will do this through the medium of visual storytelling, creating original comics inspired by the style and purpose of *Two Roses*.

Activity 2: Introducing the Visual Narrative and Project

Introduce *Two Roses* and explain its context as a comic memoir created in collaboration with a Holocaust survivor. Lead a think-pair-share discussion: Why might a survivor choose to tell their story in comic form? What can visuals convey that written words cannot?

Finally, hand out the instructions and rubric for the unit project and discuss the expectations, timeline, and criteria.

Activity 3: Read *Two Rose*

Distribute the comic and instruct students to begin reading silently. Let them know the remainder will be completed as homework.

Conclusion

5–7 minutes before class ends, ask students to take out a sheet of paper and answer the following questions:

1. What are you most looking forward to about the project?
2. What is one thing you are curious or worried about?

Write these questions on the board. Ask them to hand in their papers when they are done.

Additional Resources

[L4.1a_Handout_Instructions](#)

[L4.1b_Handout_Rubric](#)

Reading Comics as a Medium

In this lesson, students will explore how comic devices create meaning. Through guided discussion, group analysis, and individual practice, students will strengthen their understanding of how *Two Roses* uses visual elements to communicate deeper ideas.

Lesson aim: To deepen students' understanding of how comics use visual techniques to communicate complex ideas and present deeper meanings.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- define key comic terminology and recognize its function in narrative structure.
- identify how comic elements contribute to tone, pacing, mood, etc., in *Two Roses*.

Guiding Questions

- How does the comic format affect how we read and understand a story?
- How can comic devices create meaning?

Materials

- copies of *Two Roses*
- copies of the Comic Terminology Worksheet [Hand-out_ComicTerminologyWorksheet](#)
- copies of the Comic Device Analysis Worksheet [Hand-out_ComicDeviceAnalysisWorksheet](#)
- laptop and projector
- Comic Terminology Slideshow [ComicTerminologySlideshow](#)

Preparation

Ensure students have copies of *Two Roses*, and make sure you have the digital version open on your computer. Prepare the Comic Terminology Worksheet and Device Analysis Worksheet.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Begin by asking students their impressions of *Two Roses*. Encourage them to reflect on how the comic format affected their reading experience. In other words, how did this experience differ from reading prose?

Comics Terminology

Hand out the Comic Terminology Worksheet. Go through the

accompanying slide show (Comic Terminology Slideshow) and have students write down the definitions for each term. Have students think about how the size, colour, and/or placement of devices can affect meaning.

Pose this or a similar question: If a panel is small and cramped, what feeling might that create? If a gutter is wide and empty, what might that silence suggest?

Device Analysis

Divide the students into groups of 3–4 and assign each group one device from the list. In their groups, students must find at least two examples from *Two Roses* where their assigned device is used to convey meaning outside of its basic function.

Have one group member keep track of the page number and their notes.

After 10 minutes, have each group share their analysis with the class while you project the page on the screen.

Comic Device Analysis – Individual Practice

Hand out the individual practice sheet. Students will complete the Comic Device Analysis Worksheet using *Two Roses*. Circulate the classroom and provide assistance where needed. If students do not complete this sheet, it will be assigned as homework.

Conclusion

Five minutes before class ends, ask students to think about one new thing they learned about analyzing comics today. Have

them think-pair-share and then call on a few students to share their ideas. Before they leave, remind them of their homework.

Additional Resources

[L4.2a_Handout_ComicDeviceAnalysisWorksheet](#)

[L4.2b_Handout_ComicTerminologyWorksheet](#)

[L4.2c_ComicTerminologySlideshow](#)

Retelling Testimonies Respectfully and Planning Comics

In this lesson, students will continue to develop their comic-creating skills through two scaffolded activities. At the end of class, students will participate in a class discussion regarding the ethics and best practices surrounding the retelling of Holocaust survivors' stories.

Lesson aim: For students to practice creating their own comics while using comic devices to communicate deeper meaning. Additionally, this lesson aims to equip students with an understanding of what constitutes the respectful retelling of Holocaust survivors' testimonies.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- create short comics and utilize comic devices to communicate deeper meaning.
- understand what it means to respectfully share a Holocaust survivor's story and why that responsibility matters.

Guiding Questions

- What does it mean to tell someone else's story respectfully?
- What techniques can be used in comic writing to enhance the work? How can artistic choices affect a reader's response to the work?

Materials

- white board and dry-erase markers
- timer (a laptop or smartphone, for example)
- copies of "Little Miss Muffet" and "It's Raining, It's Pouring"
- rulers

Preparation

Print out copies of "Little Miss Muffet" and "It's Raining, It's Pouring." Ensure that you have at least 10 rulers available for students to use.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Explain that students will practice creating their own comics and using comic devices to convey meaning. Split students up into groups of four and hand out one sheet of blank paper to each group member.

Tell students that they will be creating four four-panel comics with the help of their group members. Set a two-minute timer for students to create the first panel of their comic. Once the timer goes off, have them pass down their sheet to the next group member. From there, students will create the next panel of their group member's story. Students will complete this process two more times until each group has four finished comics. You may come up with your own prompt for this activity or pose the following: Going on a trip to someplace magical/special/unreal.

Additional Comic Practice

As an additional practice, students will create their own 3-to-4-page comic based on one of two nursery rhymes: "Little Miss Muffet" and "It's Raining, It's Pouring." Hand out a new sheet of blank paper and a copy of both nursery rhymes. Students must tell the entire story from beginning to end, as well as use two or more comic devices intentionally to create additional meaning. On the back of their comic, have them explain which devices they used and how these devices enhanced the story.

Additionally, emphasize the importance of neatness and organization in comic writing. Provide them with rulers and ask them to create panels with straight lines. Finally, encourage them to keep their writing and drawings legible and tidy. Give students at least 20–30 minutes to work on their comics; if they do not finish in class, have them complete their comics for homework.

Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies

10–15 minutes before the end of class, have students put away their work and prepare to engage in a class discussion. Explain that prior to creating their own visual narratives, it is important to understand the responsibility that comes with retelling someone else’s story—especially when it involves lived experiences of trauma and genocide.

Pose the following questions to your students:

1. What does it mean to tell someone else’s story respectfully?
2. What should we avoid? What should we emphasize?

Record students’ responses on the board. Guide the discussion towards the following ideas:

1. Accuracy and truthfulness
2. Avoiding exaggeration or distortion
3. Focusing on the survivor’s perspective, not our own opinions
4. Being mindful of tone and visuals

Let your students know that you will be printing off a set of guidelines based on their responses; it will be their responsibility to follow these guidelines closely when creating their visual narratives.

Conclusion

Ask your students if they have any questions regarding the Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Holocaust Survivors’

Testimonies. Additionally, remind them that they will be assigned a survivor next class and to be prepared for reading and listening to survivor testimonies. If they have any questions or concerns about engaging with survivor testimonies, encourage them to speak with you after class.

Possible Extension

Once students have finished the introductory activity, have them do a gallery walk around the classroom and encourage them to take note of the techniques they found interesting or effective in their peers' work. Finally, lead a class discussion where students contribute their findings, opinions, praise, or questions regarding their peers' work.

Comic Preparation

In this lesson, students will practice planning out a comic based on a Holocaust survivor's testimony before they start their own visual narrative assignment. Students will adhere to the Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies while planning out their practice comics. Finally, students will be given time to work on their Visual Narrative Planning Worksheet, which they will use to plan out their Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment.

Lesson aim: To break down and retell survivors' testimonies respectfully and effectively while adhering to the Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- break down and convert testimonies into comic outlines that adhere to the Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies.
- understand what key aspects of testimony are necessary to include in their comics to ensure that they are as accurate as possible.

Guiding Questions

- What techniques should be used in comic writing to ensure that a work adheres to the Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies?
- What key details from a survivor's testimony must be preserved to ensure historical accuracy and respect?

Materials

- copies of the Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies
- copies of the Example Testimony [Handout_ExampleTestimony](#)
- white board and dry-erase markers
- copies of the Visual Narrative Planning Practice Worksheet [Handout_ExampleNarrativePlanningPracticeWorksheet](#)
- copies of the Visual Narrative Planning Worksheet [Visual-NarrativePlanningWorksheet](#)
- school computers, if necessary

Preparation

Create a list of all the survivors documented in the Azrieli Foundation archive found here: <https://memoirs.azrielifoundation.org/recollection/#home|view-all>.

Print off the Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies based on the responses you recorded from your students in the last class. On this sheet, ensure that you clarify what you expect from your students in terms of accuracy. Due to the nature of this project, it may be challenging to incorporate every detail of the students' chosen testimonies

into their visual narratives. Therefore, it is necessary to include a section on the sheet where you clearly explain which details should be emphasized in their visual narrative. The recommended guidelines are as follows:

1. Include key facts from the testimony, such as events, names, locations, and the timeline/sequence of events. Key facts should not be adapted or removed from the visual narrative.
2. The emotional and historical weight of the events should be respected. Avoid humour, exaggeration, or fictionalized drama that minimizes the survivor's experience.

In addition to this, ensure that your students have some way to access the internet, as they will be required to conduct their own research. Finally, print off copies of the Example Testimony, the Visual Narrative Planning Practice Worksheet, and the Visual Narrative Planning Worksheet.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Hand out the Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies. Direct students to the section outlining expectations for accuracy, and take a moment to review and clarify these standards together.

Planning Visual Narratives Practice

Put students in groups of four and hand out copies of the

Example Testimony and the Visual Narrative Planning Practice Worksheet. Students will practice breaking down the testimony into a 10-panel comic using their guidelines as a reference. Briefly explain the instructions and ask the class if they have any questions before they start. When a group finishes, review their work to ensure that it follows the assigned guidelines. Once they have your approval, assign each group member a Holocaust survivor from the Azrieli Foundation archive.

Research and Planning Visual Narratives

Hand out the Visual Narrative Planning Worksheet to those who have completed Activity 1 and have been assigned a survivor. Put the link to the Azrieli Foundation website on the board and have students use their phones or school computers to access the archive. They will explore their survivor's testimonies and choose one story to retell in their visual narrative. Tell students that they must choose a testimony by the end of class and share their choice with you. Record their choices. Allow students to work on their Visual Narrative Planning Worksheet for the remainder of the class while you circulate and provide guidance as needed. Encourage them to keep the guidelines in mind as they work.

You may decide to assign the worksheet for homework or give your students a work block next class. Regardless, their worksheets must be completed before the next lesson.

Conclusion

Let students know that they will be peer reviewing each other's Visual Narrative Planning Worksheet next class and to have it completed by then. Additionally, ask students to bring rulers

and pencils for the next class, as they will have allotted class time to begin working on their visual narratives. Ensure that you have spoken with each of your students and have recorded the name of their chosen testimony.

Visual Narrative Planning Peer Review and Workshop

In this lesson, students will ensure that their peers' Visual Narrative Planning Worksheet accurately portrays their chosen testimonies and adheres to the Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies. Additionally, students will be allotted time to work on their visual narratives.

Lesson aim: To help students refine their visual narrative plans through peer feedback and begin constructing their comics.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- offer and receive constructive feedback to improve narrative planning and ethical storytelling.
- revise their plans based on their peers' suggestions.

Guiding Questions

- Why is it important to collaborate and review each other's work when dealing with sensitive historical narratives?
- What does it look like to transform a written testimony into a respectful visual narrative? How can it differ from artist to artist?

Materials

- blank paper
- fine-liners and/or Sharpies
- school computers, if necessary

Preparation

Prepare a list of peer review partners and ensure that students have access to computers or their smartphones. Additionally, bring enough fine-liners, Sharpies, and blank paper for your students.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Have students take out their completed Visual Narrative Planning Worksheet ([Visual Narrative Planning Worksheet](#)) and their Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies. Explain that they will be reading and peer reviewing

each other's worksheets to ensure that they have followed the guidelines and to offer feedback where necessary.

Visual Narrative Planning Peer Review

Ensure students have access to the internet; they may use their smartphones or school computers. Assign students a random partner and have them read/listen to their partner's chosen testimony. Afterward, have students exchange their Visual Narrative Planning Worksheets and review each other's work using the Guidelines for the Respectful Retelling of Survivor Testimonies to ensure it aligns with the expectations for accuracy, empathy, and respect. Encourage them to make notes and leave comments on their partner's worksheet. Finally, have them share their feedback with their partner and make the recommended changes.

Possible extension, have students complete an "I like, I wish, I wonder" activity based on their partner's worksheet.

Visual Narrative Workshop

Once students have completed their peer reviews and made the recommended changes, ask them to take out their pencils and rulers and provide them with blank paper, fine-liners, and Sharpies. For the rest of the class, students will begin working on their visual narratives. Ensure that students are consulting their Visual Narrative Planning Worksheets, Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment Instructions, and Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment Rubrics. While students are working, circulate around the classroom and offer guidance where necessary.

You may ask your students to complete the Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment at home, or you can allocate time

in class for them to work on it. Regardless, their visual narratives must be completed before the next lesson.

Conclusion

Five minutes before the end of class, ask students to complete an exit slip where they identify one challenge they anticipate facing as they begin creating their comics and briefly explain how they plan to address or overcome it.

Encourage students to continue working on their assignments outside of class. Additionally, remind students that they will be sharing their work with their peers next class and must bring in three photocopied versions of their comic along with their original copy and reflection. If they cannot access a photocopier, have them send you a clear picture of their work and print it out for them next class.

Visual Narrative Show and Tell

In this lesson, students will share their Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment in small groups, as well as practice giving and receiving constructive feedback. Students will have the opportunity to explore their peers' alternative/unique approaches to comic-making and reflect on their own creative process.

Lesson aim: To provide students with an opportunity to share and reflect on their visual narratives, as well as practice giving and receiving peer feedback.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- provide constructive feedback to peers using the “I like, I wish, I wonder” format.
- present and explain their Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignments in a small-group setting.
- reflect on the process of transforming survivor testimonies into visual narratives.

Guiding Questions

- What can students learn from analyzing the narrative and

stylistic choices made by their peers?

- How can peer review foster a classroom culture of constructive dialogue and mutual respect?

Materials

- timer (a laptop or smartphone, for example)
- laptop and projector
- Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment Rubric file ([L4.1b_Handout_Rubric](#))

Preparation

For students who requested assistance with printing, ensure that three copies of each of their Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignments are printed out. Ensure that you have access to a timer and have the Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment Rubric file open and ready to be projected.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Ask students to take out their Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment, including three copies of their visual representation and reflection. Explain that students will share their work in small groups. Divide the students into groups of four and ask them to take out a lined sheet of paper and a pencil.

Show and Tell

Ask students to take out their copy of the Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment Rubric and/or project it on the screen.

In their groups, have one student distribute copies of their comics to their group members. Students may read their comic to their group members or briefly explain the synopsis. Finally, the student will either read out their reflection or briefly summarize their answers to both questions. Other group members will listen carefully to the student's presentation.

Once the student has finished sharing, their group members will use the Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment Rubric and complete an "I like, I wish, I wonder" activity based on their peer's work. However, they cannot comment on anything that is not in the rubric (e.g., artistic ability, the facts of the testimony, etc.). They will share their answers with their peer.

Students will have 15 minutes to complete this process; they will repeat it three more times.

Conclusion

Have students hand in their completed Testimonial Visual Narrative Assignment. Finally, have students fill out an exit slip reflecting on their creative process. Pose the following question: What was it like for you to transform a survivor's testimony into a visual narrative? What did you enjoy and/or find difficult about the process?

Possible Extensions

Once students have finished sharing their comics, lead a

round-circle activity where students reflect on the assignment and the process of comic writing. Pose the following questions:

1. How did visually depicting the story change the way you understood the survivor's testimony?
2. What did you find difficult about this assignment?
3. Was there a project that stood out to you? Why?

Have students sit in a circle and each share one or more of their answers with their classmates.

PART VI

SEEING BEYOND STEREOTYPES

Students explore what stereotypes are, how they shape identity and belonging, and how they can escalate into discrimination and violence. Using key excerpts from *Two Roses*, they connect personal experiences of stereotyping to the historical treatment of Jewish people leading up to and during the Holocaust.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- define stereotypes and explain how they form.
- identify and analyze examples of stereotyping in *Two Roses*.
- explain how stereotypes contributed to prejudice and discrimination during the Holocaust.
- reflect on connections between past and present forms of bias and stereotyping.

Guiding Questions

- How do stereotypes shape the ways individuals see them-

selves and others, and what happens when these assumptions go unchallenged?

- How can understanding the role stereotypes played in the Holocaust help us recognize and confront harmful biases in our world today?

Sequence

- Lesson 1 – [What are Stereotypes?](#)
- Lesson 2 – [Stereotypes and Identity in Two Roses](#)
- Lesson 3 – [From Stereotypes to Systems](#)
- Lesson 4 – [Then and Now](#)

What are Stereotypes?

Students are introduced to the concept of stereotypes and explore where they come from, how they are spread, and why they persist. Through discussion and reflection, students learn the difference between stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, and begin to consider how these ideas influence how people see and treat one another. This lesson establishes a shared vocabulary and foundation for understanding how stereotypes can have real consequences.

Lesson aim: Build shared language and prepare students to understand how stereotypes can lead to real harm.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- understand what stereotypes are.
- explore how stereotypes form and spread.
- recognize how stereotypes influence behaviour and decision-making.

Guiding Questions

- Where do stereotypes come from, and how do they influence the way we see others?

Materials

- chart paper or whiteboard
- sticky notes or markers
- Graffiti Walk question prompts
- Ideogram template
- Stereotype Scenario Cards

Preparation

Key Vocabulary

- Stereotype—an oversimplified or unfair belief about a group of people
- Prejudice—a judgment or opinion formed without full knowledge
- Discrimination—actions or treatment based on prejudice
- implicit bias
- systemic discrimination

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Choose one of the following two prompts and write it on the board:

- What is the first word or image that comes to mind when you hear the word “stereotype”?
- When you hear the word “stereotype,” what ideas come to

mind?

Instructions:

- Students write silently (no sharing yet).
- Emphasize: This is about ideas we've heard, not what we believe.

Introduce the Ideogram and have them complete Layer 1. For instructions on what the ideogram is, please view the teacher's guide.

Layer 1: What I Know

Students may:

- write key definitions
- add emotional words
- first thoughts
- draw simple symbols that represent labelling or assumptions

Transition:

You might say:

- "Today we're talking about stereotypes. This topic can feel uncomfortable. That's normal. When we examine how unfair ideas spread, we sometimes have to name them."
- "Our goal is not to repeat harmful ideas; it's to understand how they work so we can challenge them."
- "Discomfort doesn't mean something is wrong. Sometimes it means we're learning."

Graffiti Walk – Where Do Stereotypes Come From?

Post chart paper with the following headings around the room:

- First Messages
- Media and Representation (TV, movies, social media)
- School and Peers
- History and Society
- Language

Instructions: Students rotate in small groups, adding ideas using neutral language. Answer the question prompts to help guide ideas. After rotation, debrief the activity.

1. Ask: What patterns do you notice? Do many stereotypes focus on intelligence? Behaviour? Personality? Do they tend to simplify people?

2. Then ask: How many of these stereotypes describe entire groups as if everyone is the same?

Layer 2: Influences

Have students begin to fill in the second layer of the Ideogram: Where do stereotypes come from? (Note: Students will build on the Ideogram in later lessons, so encourage students not to fill in every space of the second layer.)

Debrief the second layer. Ask:

- What did you write?
- Are stereotypes usually positive, negative, or both?
- What makes something a stereotype instead of just a fact?

Then clarify:

- Oversimplification
- Applying traits to an entire group
- Often learned, not naturally formed

Mini-Lesson – From Ideas to Actions

Create a simple flow chart on the board: Stereotype → Prejudice
→ Discrimination

Teacher Explanation (age-neutral):

- A stereotype is an idea.
- Prejudice is how that idea shapes feelings or judgments.
- Discrimination is when those ideas turn into actions.

Guided Example (non-sensitive): “If people believe a stereotype about a group, how might that change how they treat them?”

Grade 10–12: briefly discuss power and who benefits when stereotypes exist.

Scenario Discussion – Everyday Examples

Pull out your stereotype scenario cards and hand them out to pairs or small groups.

In pairs or small groups, students discuss:

- What stereotype might be at play?
- How could this affect the person?
- What could happen if this thinking continues?

Whole-Class Share: Highlight how **small ideas can create big impacts over time.**

Conclusion

Third Layer of the Ideogram: Consequences

This layer looks at the consequences of stereotyping.

Prompts to complete this layer:

- Why do stereotypes continue even when they aren't true?
- How do stereotypes affect belonging?
- What happens when stereotypes go unchallenged?

Bridging idea for Lesson 2:

If stereotypes simplify people into one trait, what might happen if those ideas are repeated widely or by people in power?

- Grade 10–12 extension: Discussion about power, systems, and implicit bias.

Additional Resources

Graffiti Walk Question Prompts [Graffiti Walk Questions](#)

Ideograph templates [Ideogram – Teacher Guide](#) / [Editable Ideogram Blank](#) / [Ideogram – Stereotypes – Larger Paper size](#) / [Ideogram – Stereotypes](#)

Stereotype Scenario Cards [Stereotype Scenario Cards](#)

Stereotypes and Identity in *Two Roses*

Students engage with the text *Two Roses* to identify moments where characters are stereotyped or judged based on assumptions. They explore how these experiences impact the characters' sense of identity, emotions, and belonging within their communities. Students consider how everyday stereotyping can shape relationships and influence how individuals see themselves and others.

Lesson aim: How stereotyping affects identity and belonging

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify stereotypes present in a text.
- analyze how stereotypes affect characters.
- explore how labelling shapes identity and belonging

Guiding Questions

- What happens to someone when others see them through a stereotype?

Materials

- selected excerpt(s) from *Two Roses*
- Ideogram from Lesson 1
- annotation tools (sticky notes, pens)

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Reintroduce the Ideogram. Ask:

- What was in the second ring? (Sources/Influences of stereotypes)
- What goes in a third ring? (Consequences)

Have students recap some of their learning from the previous lesson.

Ask students the following questions:

- What happens when stereotypes are reinforced by society?
- What happens when people in power repeat those stereotypes?

Bridge to the Reading

You might say:

- “We’re going to expand on our understanding and add to our Ideogram. Today we’re reading excerpts from *Two*

Roses. This is a **graphic memoir**, which means it tells the true story of a real person's life using images and text.

- “The main character, Rose, is sharing her lived experiences of the Holocaust. The story was created through interviews between Rose and the artist, Miriam Libicki, who then illustrated and shaped those memories into a visual narrative.
- “The story we are reading takes place during WWII and the Holocaust. During this time, Jewish people in Europe were targeted, isolated, and persecuted based on long-standing stereotypes and antisemitic beliefs.
- “Our main character, Rose, is Jewish. In order to survive, she hides her identity. She pretends not to be Jewish and works in Polish labour camps. This means she must constantly avoid anything that might reveal who she is.”

Pre-Reading Framing

Class Discussion with potential prompts:

- What might it feel like to hide an important part of who you are?
- How might stereotypes force someone to change their behaviour?
- What risks might come from being “discovered”?

Before students begin, encourage them to pay attention to:

- what assumptions people make
- what Rose must avoid saying or doing
- how she manages her identity
- the tension between who she is and how she must appear

Remind students that in this story, stereotypes are not just

hurtful—they are dangerous. Keep this factual and measured. You may want to clarify:

- Jewish identity is religious and cultural.
- Antisemitism is prejudice against Jewish people.
- Many stereotypes about Jewish people were false, harmful, and intentionally spread.

Reading *Two Roses*

Before reading you may say: “As we read, we are not just looking at what happens—we are looking at how Rose is seen / expected to be seen and how that shapes her experience. **Remember:** This is a real person describing moments where she was seen or treated in certain ways. We are looking closely at how stereotypes affect identity and belonging.”

Options for reading:

- Teacher read-aloud (strong choice for emotional tone)
- Partner read
- Silent read with annotation

While reading, students mark:

- moments where assumptions are made
- moments where treatment changes
- moments showing how the character feels internally

Small Group Discussion

In groups of 3–4, have students discuss:

Simplified Version (Grade 7-8)	Deeper Version (Grade 9-12)
What assumption is being made?	How do stereotypes shape systems of control?
How does it affect Rose?	How does power influence who must hide and who does not?
What does she have to do to stay safe?	How does identity become something negotiated rather than freely expressed?
How might she feel?	

Encourage students to reference specific panels or lines.

Whole-Class Debrief

Begin with neutral, text-based prompts:

- What patterns did you notice in how Rose was treated?
- Were the stereotypes subtle, direct, or both?
- Where did you see tension in the scene?

Keep the focus on evidence first, then move deeper:

- What does Rose have to control about herself?
- What parts of her identity become risky?
- How does hiding identity affect belonging?

Pause here.

You might say:

- “Belonging becomes conditional. Rose belongs only if she is seen a certain way.”

Let that sit.

Now guide them toward systemic thinking:

- Who decides whether Rose is safe?
- What gives those people power?
- How do stereotypes become tools of control?

If needed, clarify:

- “When stereotypes are repeated by society and supported by laws or authority, they move beyond personal opinion.

Ask slowly:

- “When stereotypes determine whether someone is safe or in danger, how do they change?”

Let students respond.

Then follow with:

- “What makes stereotypes especially dangerous in this historical context?”
- “How is this different from hallway jokes or casual assumptions?”

End with a forward-looking question:

- “Today we saw how stereotypes affect one person. What happens when those same stereotypes are written into laws, institutions, and public messaging?”

Closure

Review the layers again on their Ideograms. Ask them to add new information based on what they learned today. Add the new influences and consequences by reflecting on what happens because of stereotypes in this story.

If students are stuck on the influences layer, offer:

- Who repeated the assumptions?
- Where did the ideas seem to come from?
- Who had power in those moments?
- Why didn't people challenge the stereotypes?
- What made people afraid?

If students need help with consequences, prompt them with:

- What did Rose have to change about herself?
- What risks were created?
- How did stereotypes affect safety?
- How did they affect belonging?

From Stereotypes to Systems

This lesson invites students to consider how stereotyping can lead to legal and social discrimination. Students examine how stereotypes about Jewish people existed long before the Holocaust and were used to justify discrimination and exclusion. By connecting moments from *Two Roses* to historical examples, students learn how stereotypes helped normalize unfair treatment and contributed to the rise of discriminatory laws and practices. This lesson emphasizes the progression from harmful ideas to harmful actions.

Lesson aim: Connecting stereotypes to the Holocaust

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- understand what antisemitism is.
- identify historical stereotypes about Jewish people.
- trace how stereotypes moved from ideas → policy → persecution.
- connect historical patterns to *Two Roses*.

Guiding Questions

- How do stereotypes become powerful enough to shape laws and society?
- How did antisemitic stereotypes contribute to discrimination during the Holocaust?)

Materials

- Slide presentation [From Stereotypes to Systems](#)
- Progression Chart Handout [The Progression of Stereotypes](#)
- Computer or other means to research examples. For example: <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/anti-Semitism/316414?utm>

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Explain that today's lesson will look at harmful ideas that were spread about Jewish people. It is important to study these ideas critically to understand how they were used—not to repeat or validate them. Keep language factual.

Hook (Slides 1 and 2)

Ask students the question (Slide 1): "At what point does a

stereotype become dangerous?" Give them time to write / reflect / discuss

Ask students the following questions (Slide 2):

- Which of these feels harmless?
- Which feels serious?
- Where is the turning point?

There are speaker notes in the slide deck to help with the transition.

Mini-lecture: What is Antisemitism? (Slides 3-7)

Explain:

- Antisemitism means prejudice and discrimination against Jewish people.
- It existed in Europe long before the Holocaust.
- Jewish people were often blamed for economic and/or social problems.
- Stereotypes falsely and harmfully portrayed Jewish people as:
 - Disloyal
 - Greedy
 - Dangerous
 - Controlling

Clarify: "These ideas were not based on truth. They were stereotypes that spread through repetition."

Ask:

- Why might societies blame one group during times of crisis?

- Why are stereotypes easier than complex explanations?

Let students discuss briefly.

Escalation – From Idea to Law (Slides 8–10)

Project slides showing a simple progression: Stereotype → Social Acceptance → Policy → Persecution

Walk through briefly:

- Stereotypes circulated socially.
- Nazi propaganda repeated and exaggerated them.
- Laws (like the Nuremberg Laws) removed rights from Jewish people.
- Segregation, forced labour, and eventually genocide followed.

Keep it structured and not overly detailed.

Small Group Activity (Slide 11)

In small groups, give students a short Progression Chart to fill out.

- In each row, explain what happened at that stage.
- Give at least one specific historical example.

Optional: <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/anti-Semitism/316414?utm> give students article to help them guide their answers.

Optional: Allow devices so they can research their own examples.

Debrief: Looking at your chart, where do you see the turning

point—when stereotypes stopped being just ideas and became something more powerful?

Connecting Back to *Two Roses* (Slide 12)

Ask:

- How does Rose's story reflect this larger system?
- Other questions to help guide discussion:
- Why does Rose need to hide her identity?
- Who has the power to determine her safety?
- How do stereotypes shape the rules around her?

Help students see that her experience is part of a larger pattern.

Alternative questions:

- Where do we see this progression affecting Rose?
- What laws or social expectations shape her need to hide?

Emphasize: “Rose is navigating a society where stereotypes are no longer private ideas—they are supported by institutions.”

Closure

Have students add to their Ideograms. Prompt: “Based on today's lesson, what new consequences need to be added?”

Let students independently add:

- loss of rights
- forced labour
- segregation
- legal discrimination

- violence
- genocide

Then ask: Do stereotypes stay ideas?

Bridge to Lesson 4. End with: “If stereotypes can grow into systems, what responsibility do societies have to challenge them?”

Then and Now

This lesson encourages students to look for continuity and change in patterns in historical events. Students reflect on the patterns explored throughout the unit and consider why stereotypes continue to play a role in today's society. They make connections between the experiences shown in *Two Roses*, historical events during the Holocaust, and examples of stereotyping in the modern world. The lesson encourages students to think critically about how stereotypes can be challenged and why understanding the past is essential for building more inclusive communities.

Lesson aim: Reflecting on consequences and modern connections

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify modern examples of stereotyping.
- recognize similarities between past and present patterns.
- reflect on personal and societal responsibility.

Guiding Questions

- What responsibility do we have when we recognize harm-

ful patterns?

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Write on the board: Do stereotypes still shape society today?

Students:

- Think silently (2–3 minutes).
- Turn and talk

Then ask:

- In what spaces do stereotypes still spread?
- Social media?
- Politics?
- News?
- Schools?

Keep it general—avoid targeting groups.

Pattern Reflection

Reintroduce the progression from Lesson 3: Stereotype → Repetition → Acceptance → Policy → Harm. Then ask:

- Do you see this pattern anywhere today?
- Where does it usually stop?
- What prevents escalation?

Keep discussion analytical and systems-focused.

Small Group Discussion

Give groups this prompt: What are warning signs that stereotypes are growing in influence?

Possible guiding questions:

- When do jokes become normalized?
- What happens when leaders repeat harmful ideas?
- Why is silence powerful?

Each group identifies:

- **Two** warning signs
- **One** way stereotypes can be challenged

Build an Action Plan

In pairs or small groups, have students build an action plan to counteract stereotypes.

Step 1: Identify a Pattern

Groups choose one area where stereotypes commonly spread:

- social media
- school environment
- news and politics
- peer groups
- popular culture

They list:

- **Two to three** warning signs (build off their discussion from before, but now focused on a specific stereotype).
- What escalation might look like.

Step 2: Create an Interruption Strategy

Each group designs a simple “interruption plan.”

They must answer:

- What would interrupt the stereotype early?
- What would prevent it from spreading?
- What role do individuals play?
- What role do institutions play?

Encourage realistic solutions:

- asking questions
- fact-checking
- calling out misinformation respectfully
- promoting multiple perspectives
- changing language norms

Step 3: Share & Reflect

Groups present briefly. After each presentation, ask:

- Is this practical?
- What makes it effective?
- Where might it be difficult?

Ideogram Final Addition

Add a final layer (outside the circle) Interruption / Responsibility

Prompt: What helps stop stereotypes from escalation. Encourage students to think of their action plans and their peers' actions plans.

Students may add:

- education
- speaking up
- media literacy

- laws protecting rights
- inclusive communities

This visually completes the unit arc.

Closure

We studied how stereotypes grew into systems during the Holocaust. The lesson is not just historical—it's about recognizing patterns before they escalate. Stereotypes may start small, but history shows us they can grow—unless someone interrupts them.

Optional Reflection:

1. How has your understanding of stereotypes changed during this unit?
2. What did you learn about how stereotypes can grow from ideas into larger systems?
3. Looking at your ideogram, what does it reveal about how stereotypes grow and impact people?

PART VII

HIDDEN IDENTITIES: GENDER, CHOICE, AND SURVIVAL IN POLISH LABOUR CAMPS

This unit explores the experiences of Jewish women in Nazi-occupied Poland who either volunteered for forced labour camps as a survival strategy or concealed their Jewish identity by passing as Polish women. Through the study of the graphic memoir *Two Roses*, students examine how gender shaped labour roles, risk, concealment, and resilience. This unit challenges students to consider the complexity of “choice” under oppression and to analyze how visual storytelling helps preserve women’s wartime experiences.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- explain why some Jewish women volunteered for labour camps or hid their identities as a survival strategy.
- analyze how gender shaped labour roles, risks, and opportunities during WWII.
- interpret how a graphic memoir communicates

hidden identity, tension, and resilience.

- evaluate the complexity of choice and agency within systems of oppression using a historical perspective.

Guiding Questions

- What factors influenced some Jewish women to volunteer for labour camps or conceal their identities during WWII?
- How did gender shape the risks, labour roles, and survival strategies available to women?
- How can a graphic memoir help us understand the emotional experience of living with a hidden identity?
- How should we understand “choice” and agency when decisions are made under extreme oppression?

Sequence

- Lesson 1 – [Choice and Survival](#)
- Lesson 2 – [Concealment, Performance, and Hidden Identity](#)
- Lesson 3 – [Gendered Labour in the Camps](#)
- Lesson 4 – [Agency, Ethical Judgment, and Historical Significance](#)

Choice and Survival

Students examine the historical and emotional context behind the decision to volunteer for labour camps and conceal Jewish identity in *Two Roses*. Through historical framing and close reading, students begin exploring how gender and religion shaped survival decisions and identity concealment.

Lesson aim: Understand survival decisions and identity concealment in *Two Roses*.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- explain why volunteering for labour could be viewed as a survival strategy.
- analyze how visual storytelling represents tension and risk.
- apply a historical perspective to evaluate difficult wartime decisions.

Guiding Questions

- What factors influenced the decision to volunteer for labour camps in *Two Roses*?
- How did gender shape the risks and opportunities available to women?

- What does “choice” mean in a system designed to remove freedom?
- How does *Two Roses* visually represent moments of difficult decision-making?

Materials

- *Two Roses*
- short historical context slide deck (optional) [Choice and Survival PPT](#)
- [article](#) for background reading (optional)
- projector
- blank paper
- annotation chart [Handout_AnnotationChart](#)
- student notebooks / paper for reflection

Preparation

Mark stopping points in *Two Roses* leading up to the labour camp decision. Print out a class set of the annotation chart. Key points covered in the chart are:

- Escalating Restrictions
- Emotional Impact
- Gendered Experiences
- Signs of Tension

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Write the following question on the board:

- Can a choice still be a choice if every option is dangerous?

Instruct students to complete a silent quick write for 3–4 minutes. After writing, facilitate a discussion asking students to define what makes a decision voluntary. Guide them to consider power, safety, and survival. Transition by explaining that today they will explore how this question appears in *Two Roses*.

Transition into your short contextual overview slide deck before beginning the reading.

Historical Framing – Limited Choices

Using either the article or the slide deck, provide students with background context about:

- conditions in ghettos.
- labour recruitment policies.
- the perception that labour camps sometimes offered temporary survival advantages.
- the dangers of passing as Polish (documentation, accent, discovery).

Guided Reading – Building Context

Read the opening section of *Two Roses* together (either aloud

or silently with pauses). At key stopping points, ask students to annotate using the annotation chart as a guide.

Use the following questions to help prompt deeper thinking:

- What has changed since the last section?
- What freedoms have been removed?
- What new dangers appear?
- Where do you see fear or uncertainty visually?

Encourage students to pay attention to:

- shifts in panel size
- use of shadow
- facial expressions
- silence or minimal dialogue

After reading each section, briefly discuss what has escalated.

Escalation Mapping

In small groups, have students create an Escalation Timeline. Draw a horizontal line representing time from the beginning of the memoir to the start of the labour camp.

Groups label:

- new restriction introduced
- emotional response shown visually
- evidence of increasing danger
- gender-specific vulnerability

Have groups post timelines around the room. Do a short gallery walk.

Decision Analysis Discussion

Now return to the panel where they decide to go to the labour camps.

Ask students:

- After everything we've seen, does this decision feel sudden or inevitable?
- What pressures are influencing it?
- What alternatives realistically existed?
- How does the artwork show emotional weight?

Conclusion

Return to the opening question. Ask students:

- After reading *Two Roses*, would you still call this a voluntary choice? Why or why not?

Have students complete an exit slip:

Explain one factor that influenced where Rose ended up and how *Two Roses* helps us understand the emotional weight of that moment.

Collect responses to assess readiness for Lesson 2 (which can deepen into visual analysis of hidden identity).

Additional Resources

[Choice and Survival PPT](#)

[Handout_AnnotationChart](#)

Concealment, Performance, and Hidden Identity

Students analyze how *Two Roses* portrays the act of hiding Jewish identity and the emotional and physical risks involved. Through close reading and structured analysis, students examine how visual storytelling communicates tension, performance, and vulnerability.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- explain how Rose hiding her identity was a survival strategy.
- analyze how visual techniques communicate tension and concealment.
- evaluate the emotional and ethical complexity of living under concealment.

Guiding Questions

- What does it mean to “perform” an identity for survival?
- How does *Two Roses* visually represent concealment and

fear?

- What emotional costs come with hiding who you are?

Materials

- selected panels from *Two Roses* showing identity concealment or inspection, either printed or put together in a slide deck
- chart paper
- sticky notes
- exit slip

Preparation

Select 4–6 panels from different parts of *Two Roses* that depict moments of concealment, inspection, interaction with authorities, or emotional tension related to passing as someone else.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Begin by writing the word **Performance** on the board.

Ask students:

- When do people perform a version of themselves? Why?

Allow brief discussion (social settings, job interviews, peer pressure). Then shift the context:

- What happens when performance is necessary for survival?

Explain that today's lesson examines how *Two Roses* shows identity as something that must be carefully controlled and constantly performed.

Close Reading – Visual Tension

Distribute selected panels from *Two Roses*.

Instruct students to annotate individually using these prompts:

- What is she doing outwardly?
- What might she be feeling internally?
- What visual clues show fear, caution, or calculation?
- Where do you see silence doing important work?

Encourage students to pay attention to:

- facial expressions
- hands and posture
- panel size and spacing
- use of shadow or empty space
- eye contact or lack of it

After independent annotation, have students compare notes in pairs.

External vs. Internal Identity Chart

In small groups, have students complete a T-chart:

- Left side: What she must show the world
- Right side: What she likely feels or hides

Optional extension – add a third column:

- How gender shapes this moment

Have students rotate to other groups' charts and add one insight or question.

Conduct a brief class discussion focusing on:

- the strain of maintaining a hidden identity.
- the constant risk of exposure.
- the idea of identity as both protection and burden.

Ethical Reflection Discussion

Pose the question:

- Is hiding who you are an act of survival, resistance, or both?

Have students form small discussion circles and respond using evidence from the panels.

Encourage students to:

- refer directly to specific images.
- explain how the artwork supports their interpretation.
- consider emotional consequences.

Conclusion

Ask students to respond in writing:

- How does *Two Roses* help us understand the emotional cost of hiding identity in ways a traditional textbook might not?

Collect responses as formative assessment.

Gendered Labour in the Camps

Students examine how gender shaped daily labour, vulnerability, and survival inside labour camps. By comparing scenes from *Two Roses* with historical primary source testimonies, students analyze how individual narratives connect to broader historical patterns.

Lesson aim: Analyze gendered labour experiences using memoir and primary sources.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- describe the types of labour assigned to women in camps.
- analyze how gender influenced daily survival and vulnerability.
- compare a graphic memoir to historical primary source testimony.
- use evidence from both sources to deepen historical understanding.

Guiding Questions

- How did gender shape the types of labour women were assigned?
- What risks and vulnerabilities did women face inside labour camps?
- How does *Two Roses* compare to real survivor testimony?
- Why are both memoir and primary sources important for understanding history?

Materials

- selected labour scenes from *Two Roses*
- 2–3 short survivor testimony excerpts ([Primary Sources PPT](#))
- primary source analysis worksheet [Handout_PrimarySourceComparisonGuide](#)
- chart paper
- projector

Preparation

Select panels from *Two Roses* that depict:

- work assignments
- physical strain
- supervision or punishment
- interaction among women

Select 2–3 short, accessible primary sources (options provided or you may find your own) from Jewish women describing

labour conditions (e.g., factory work, agricultural labour, hunger, inspections, harassment, exhaustion).

Have a class set of the Primary Source and *Two Roses* Comparison Guide.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Begin by asking students:

- What does daily life look like in a place designed for control?

Invite a few responses. Remind students that survival was not only about one major decision—it was about everyday endurance.

Explain that today they will compare *Two Roses* with real historical testimonies to see how individual stories connect to wider patterns.

Close Reading – Labour in *Two Roses*

Instruct students to examine the selected labour panels carefully.

Have them annotate:

- What kind of work is shown?
- How physically demanding does it appear?
- How are supervisors portrayed?
- Where do you see gender influencing the scene?

- What emotional tone is conveyed visually?

Pause for brief partner discussion before transitioning.

Primary Source Analysis Stations

Divide students into small groups and assign each group one survivor testimony excerpt and one image.

At each station, students follow three steps:

1. read the excerpt or view the picture closely.
2. highlight descriptions of labour conditions.
3. complete the analysis worksheet.

Have groups rotate to a second testimony if time allows.

Comparing Sources – Memoir vs. Testimony

Bring students back together.

On chart paper, create a comparison chart:

| *Two Roses* | Survivor Testimony | Similarities | Differences |

As a class, discuss:

- Where do we see overlap?
- Does the memoir emphasize emotional experience differently?
- What details appear in testimony that are not shown visually?
- How does gender appear in both sources?

Guide students to understand that memoir offers emotional and visual immersion, while primary sources offer direct voice and historical documentation.

Conclusion

Have students respond to the following question in writing:

- How does comparing *Two Roses* with real survivor testimony deepen your understanding of women's labour experiences?

Encourage students to use at least one example from each source.

Additional Resources

[Handout_PrimarySourceComparisonGuide](#)
[Primary Sources PPT](#)

Agency, Ethical Judgment, and Historical Significance

Students synthesize their learning from *Two Roses* and primary source testimonies to evaluate the complexity of agency and survival under oppression. Through structured discussion and reflection, students consider how we should interpret and judge survival decisions and why women's labour camp experiences matter historically.

Lesson aim: Use ethical judgment to evaluate agency in survival decisions.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- explain how agency can exist within oppressive systems.
- apply historical perspective when evaluating survival decisions.
- support ethical judgments with evidence from *Two Roses* and primary sources.
- articulate the historical significance of women's labour camp narratives.

Guiding Questions

- In what ways did women demonstrate agency within systems designed to remove freedom?
- How should we ethically evaluate survival decisions?
- Why is documenting women's labour camp experiences historically significant?

Materials

- *Two Roses* (key decision and labour scenes)
- chart paper
- notebooks or lined paper

Preparation

Select 2–3 pivotal moments from *Two Roses* (decision to go to labour camps, moments of concealment, labour endurance).

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Begin by writing the word **Agency** on the board.

Ask students: What does it mean to have agency?

Collect responses. Then ask: Can someone still have agency when their choices are limited?

Explain that today's lesson focuses on interpreting survival

decisions through a historical perspective rather than modern judgment.

Evidence-Based Ethical Judgment

Divide students into small groups.

Provide each group with one prompt:

- Was volunteering for labour an act of survival, resistance, or both?
- Does hiding identity represent strength, fear, or strategic calculation?
- Were these decisions truly voluntary?
- How should we judge actions taken to survive?

Students must:

1. take a position.
2. use at least one example from *Two Roses*.
3. consider historical context in their reasoning.

Have groups record their reasoning on chart paper.

Gallery Walk or Socratic Format

Have groups rotate to read other responses.

Students should add:

- one point of agreement
- one question or challenge

Facilitate a class discussion focused on:

- avoiding presentism (judging the past by modern standards).
- recognizing emotional and physical constraints.
- understanding survival decisions as complex rather than simple.

Layers of Survival

Have students create a half-page visual artifact that represents how identity and survival functioned in *Two Roses* (Extension: Have them also use the primary source testimonies from Lesson 3)

Artifacts must include:

1. External Identity (What Was Shown)
 - A symbol representing how identity had to be performed or concealed.
2. Internal Reality (What Was Hidden)
 - A symbol representing fear, exhaustion, or emotional strain.
3. Constraint vs. Agency
 - One visual element showing constraint (e.g., barbed wire, shadow, scale, wall).
 - One visual element showing agency (e.g., choice point, footprint, hands, layered mask).

Evidence Requirement – On the back of or attached to their artifact, students should write:

- one sentence referencing a specific moment from *Two*

Roses.

- one sentence explaining the chosen symbol.

Discussion Component – After they have finished their artifacts, have students pair up and explain:

- how their symbols connect to their ideas.
- where they see complexity rather than simplicity.
- whether they see these decisions as survival, resistance, or something else.

Conclusion

Return to the unit's central question:

- What does choice mean in a system designed to remove freedom?

Have students write a short reflective letter beginning with:

“When people in the future study this time, they need to understand that...”

PART VIII

WORKING WITH BOTH NARRATIVES

These units invite students to work with both graphic narratives, and connect across the curriculum.

[Human Biology: Stress, Trauma, and the Body](#)

- Lesson 1: [Fight, Flight, Freeze: The Body under Stress](#)
- Lesson 2: [Survival and Stress](#)
- Lesson 3: [Stress and Resilience](#)

PART VIII

HUMAN BIOLOGY: STRESS, TRAUMA, AND THE BODY

This unit explores the impact of stress, trauma, and survival through a human biology lens. Using the graphic narratives “**A Kind of Resistance**” from ***But I Live: Three Stories of Child Survivors of the Holocaust***, which tells David Schaffer’s story, and ***Two Roses***, which tells Rose Lipszyc’s, students examine how the body responds to danger, prolonged stress, and limited access to food. Students investigate the nervous system and the fight, flight, freeze response, explore how malnutrition affects body systems, and consider how trauma can have lasting effects on physical and mental health. Moments from David’s and Rose’s stories are used to provide real-world context for understanding how the body reacts to fear, uncertainty, and survival conditions. By connecting scientific concepts to narrative experiences, students develop a deeper understanding of how the human body adapts to extreme stress and how resilience and recovery can happen over time.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- explain how the nervous system responds to

danger through the fight, flight, or freeze response.

- describe how stress hormones affect different body systems.
- explain how malnutrition impacts physical and cognitive functioning.
- connect biological stress responses to experiences described in narrative sources.

Guiding Questions

- How does the human body respond when it perceives danger?
- What happens in the body when stress continues for long periods of time?
- How does limited access to food affect the body and brain?
- How can scientific knowledge help us better understand experiences of survival and trauma?
- How can the body recover and build resilience after periods of extreme stress?

Sequence

- Lesson 1: [Fight, Flight, Freeze: The Body under Stress](#)
- Lesson 2: [Survival and Stress](#)
- Lesson 3: [Stress and Resilience](#)

Fight, Flight, Freeze: The Body in Danger

Students explore how the nervous system detects and responds to danger. Moments of fear, hiding, and uncertainty from David's and Rose's experiences provide context for understanding the brain's threat detection system and the automatic responses of fight, flight, or freeze.

Lesson aim: Understand how the nervous system responds to perceived threats.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify the role of the brain and nervous system in detecting danger.
- describe the fight, flight, and freeze responses.
- explain physiological changes that occur during moments of stress or fear.
- connect biological stress responses to survival situations described in narrative sources.

Guiding Questions

- How does the brain detect danger in the environment?

- What physical changes happen in the body during moments of fear?
- How can understanding the body's stress response help us understand survival situations?

Materials

- projector
- diagram of the nervous system ([StressResponseDiagrams_PPT](#))
- Understanding the Stress Response [UnderstandingStress-Response_PPT](#)
- excerpts or panels from David's narrative
- excerpts or panels from Rose's narrative
- student notebooks or Worksheet [Handout_StressResponsesGraphicNarratives](#)

Preparation

Select a short excerpt or visual panel from both narratives that capture a moment of fear, hiding, or sudden danger. Prepare a simple diagram showing the nervous system and basic stress responses.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Introduce the concept that the human body is constantly scanning for safety or danger. Ask students to imagine hearing

unexpected footsteps while hiding and not knowing whether they have been discovered. Guide a short discussion about what physical sensations might occur in the body during moments of fear. Transition the discussion toward how these reactions are controlled by the nervous system and are automatic survival responses.

Understanding Fight, Flight, Freeze

Explain how the brain detects danger through structures such as the amygdala and how signals travel through the nervous system. Introduce the fight, flight, and freeze responses ([UnderstandingStressResponse_PPT](#)) and discuss how these responses prepare the body to survive a threat. Review common physiological responses such as increased heart rate, faster breathing, muscle tension, and heightened awareness.

Applying the Stress Response to Narrative Moments

Before beginning the activity, briefly provide students with context about the sources they will be using. Explain that the excerpts come from “A Different Kind of Resistance” and *Two Roses*, which share experiences from Holocaust survivors. Both David and Rose were young people during the Holocaust and faced situations involving danger, uncertainty, hiding, and survival.

Explain that these narratives help provide real-life examples of situations where the human body would experience intense stress responses. Remind students that the purpose of the activity is not to analyze the stories themselves, but to use

these moments to better understand how the human body reacts biologically to danger and prolonged stress.

Provide students with excerpts or panels from David's and Rose's experiences that describe moments of fear or danger. Ask students to identify which stress response the body might activate during each moment. Students explain their reasoning by describing the physical changes that would occur in the body during that situation. Use the following graphic organizer ([Handout_StressResponsesGraphicNarratives](#)) to support students in their learning.

Conclusion

Facilitate a brief discussion about why the body might choose to freeze rather than fight or flee in certain situations. Emphasize that these responses are automatic and designed to increase chances of survival.

Additional Resources

[Handout_StressResponsesGraphicNarratives](#)
[StressResponseDiagrams_PPT](#)
[UnderstandingStressResponse_PPT](#)

Survival and Stress

Students explore how the body responds when food is limited and stress continues over long periods of time. Building on the survival responses introduced in the previous lesson, students investigate how prolonged stress and malnutrition affect body systems. Moments from David's and Rose's experiences provide context for understanding how survival conditions can influence energy levels, thinking ability, and overall health.

Lesson aim: Understand the biological effects of prolonged stress and malnutrition.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- describe how the body uses stored energy when food is limited.
- explain physical effects of malnutrition on the body.
- describe how prolonged stress affects body systems.

Guiding Questions

- What happens in the body when food intake is limited for long periods of time?

- How does prolonged stress affect the body and brain?
- How do survival conditions impact energy, concentration, and physical health?

Materials

- board or projector
- Survival and Starvation [SurvivalStarvation_PPT](#)
- cause and effect worksheet ([Handout_CauseEffectChart](#))
- optional: devices for additional research
- excerpts from narratives
- printed or digital copy of the following article "[Auschwitz: Starvation and Slave Labour of Prisoners.](#)" *Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum,*

Preparation

Prepare a simple explanation of how the body uses glucose, fat, and muscle as energy sources during starvation. Select excerpts from the narratives that reference food scarcity, exhaustion, or prolonged stress.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Begin by briefly reviewing the previous lesson on the fight, flight, and freeze response. Remind students that the body reacts quickly to danger through the nervous system and stress hormones. Explain that while these responses are

designed to help people survive immediate threats, the body can experience different effects when stress continues for long periods of time.

Explain that in survival situations, access to food may also be limited. When this happens, the body must adapt in order to keep functioning. Limited nutrition and prolonged stress can both affect how the body and brain work.

Connect this idea to the narratives students have been studying. Remind students that David and Rose experienced long periods of uncertainty, fear, and limited resources during the Holocaust as young people. These conditions would have placed significant strain on the body over time.

Explain that today's lesson will explore how the body responds biologically to prolonged stress and limited food, and how these survival conditions can affect energy levels, thinking, and physical health.

Energy and Survival

Using the Survival and Starvation [SurvivalStarvation_PPT](#) as a guide, explain how the body normally uses glucose from food as its primary energy source. When food intake is limited, the body begins using stored fat for energy and eventually muscle tissue if the shortage continues.

Discuss how malnutrition can affect the body, including fatigue, weakened immune function, slowed growth, and difficulty concentrating. Explain that these changes occur because the body is trying to conserve energy and prioritize survival.

Cause And Effect of Survival Stress

Have students read the following article, "Auschwitz: Starvation

and Slave Labour of Prisoners”. Provide students with a cause and effect worksheet ([Handout_CauseEffectChart](#)). Students connect survival conditions such as limited food, constant fear, and lack of rest to biological responses in the body. Students explain why these bodily responses occur using the biological concepts discussed in the lesson.

Applying Biological Effects to Narrative Moments

Provide students with excerpts or panels from *A Different Kind of Resistance* and *Two Roses* that describe moments involving hunger, exhaustion, fear, or prolonged stress. Ask students to revisit their chart and add additional entries using evidence from the narrative excerpts. Students should identify the situation occurring in the scene, the likely biological response in the body, and explain why that response would occur based on the scientific concepts discussed in the lesson. Encourage students to focus on how conditions such as limited food, lack of rest, or ongoing fear might affect the body’s energy levels, concentration, and overall health.

Conclusion

Review how prolonged stress and limited nutrition affect the body. Emphasize that while the stress response is designed to help people survive immediate danger, long-term survival conditions can place significant strain on the body and mind.

Additional Resources

Survival and Starvation [SurvivalStarvation_PPT](#)

cause and effect worksheet ([Handout_CauseEffectChart](#))

[“Auschwitz: Starvation and Slave Labour of Prisoners.”](#)

Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum

Stress and Resilience

Students explore how stress is experienced physically in the body and how the nervous system can return to a regulated state after periods of stress. Building on previous lessons about survival responses and prolonged stress, students identify where stress appears in the body and examine strategies that support recovery and resilience. Students apply their understanding by creating a body map that shows how stress can affect different parts of the body and how supportive strategies can help regulate the nervous system.

Lesson aim: Identify how stress appears in the body and explore strategies that support nervous system regulation and resilience.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify physical signs of stress in different parts of the body.
- explain how the nervous system can return to a regulated state after stress.
- describe strategies that support nervous system regulation.

Guiding Questions

- Where do people commonly experience physical sensations of stress in the body?
- How does the nervous system return to a more regulated state after stress?
- What strategies can help the body recover after prolonged stress?

Materials

- body outline worksheet ([Handout_BodyMapStressWorksheet](#))
- markers or colored pencils
- whiteboard and whiteboard markers
- excerpts from *A Different Kind of Resistance* and *Two Roses*

Preparation

Prepare body outline worksheets for students. Review common physical stress responses such as muscle tension, increased heart rate, headaches, stomach discomfort, and fatigue. Select brief excerpts from *A Kind of Resistance* and *Two Roses* that reference emotional or physical strain.

Lesson Activities

Introduction

Begin by reviewing the previous lessons on the stress response and the effects of prolonged stress and limited food. Remind students that the body has systems designed to help people survive dangerous situations, but those systems can place strain on the body when stress continues for long periods.

Explain that stress is not only experienced emotionally but also physically throughout the body. Today's lesson will focus on where stress can appear in the body and how the nervous system can gradually return to balance after stressful experiences.

Briefly remind students that individuals such as David and Rose experienced prolonged stress during their youth, and understanding the biology of stress can help explain some of the physical and mental challenges people face after surviving difficult conditions.

Identifying Stress in the Body

Lead with a short class discussion about how stress can appear physically in the body. Ask students where people might feel stress during difficult or frightening situations. Record student responses on the board. Common responses may include headaches, tight shoulders, stomach discomfort, rapid breathing, or muscle tension.

Briefly revisit moments from David's and Rose's stories where they experienced fear, uncertainty, hunger, or exhaustion. Ask students to think about what their bodies might have been experiencing during those moments.

Guide students to consider examples such as:

- increased heart rate during moments of danger
- muscle tension while hiding or remaining still
- fatigue from hunger or lack of rest
- difficulty concentrating during prolonged stress

Explain that these physical reactions are part of the body's stress response and can occur throughout different body systems.

Explain that these sensations occur because the nervous system activates the body's survival systems. When stress hormones are released, different body systems react to help prepare the body for danger.

Introduce the concept that these physical responses can remain in the body even after the immediate danger has passed.

Body Mapping Stress

Provide students with a body outline worksheet ([Hand-out_BodyMapStressWorksheet](#)). Have students select 2–3 moments from David's or Rose's stories that involve stress, danger, hunger, or exhaustion. For each moment, have students label areas on the body map where stress might appear and add brief notes describing the physical response that could occur in that area of the body.

Students should also include explanations for why these responses occur, connecting them to the biological concepts discussed in the unit such as stress hormones, muscle tension, and changes in energy use.

Encourage students to think about both short-term stress responses and effects that may occur when stress continues over long periods of time.

Mapping Resilience and Recovery

Have students return to their body maps and add strategies that help the body return to balance after stress. Explain that even after prolonged stress, the nervous system can gradually return to a regulated state.

Ask students to think about what may help the body recover after stressful experiences, such as:

- safety and stable environments
- rest and nutrition
- supportive relationships
- time and recovery

Have students add these strategies to their body maps and label how they help the body regulate stress responses.

Encourage students to consider how understanding the biology of stress helps us better understand the long-term effects of survival experiences described in David's and Rose's stories.

Conclusion

Facilitate a short discussion asking students what they noticed about how stress appears in the body and what strategies might help the body return to balance. Emphasize that the body's stress response is designed to help people survive danger, but recovery and support are important for helping the body return to a healthy state after stressful experiences.

Have students write a short reflection explaining how understanding the biology of stress can help people better understand survival experiences described in historical narratives.

Additional Resources

[Handout_BodyMapStressWorksheet](#)