

Consider, is this a Man? Retaining Humanity in the Face of Dehumanizing Narratives

Benjamin Hover
Penn Alexander School

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Overview

The following unit is constructed for students from 8th to 12th Grade in a Literacy or English program. Through reading poetry and literature, listening to testimony, and watching movies about the Holocaust, the students will engage in the process of evaluating different methods of constructing narrative about traumatic and dehumanizing events from history. This unit is centered upon the necessity of bearing witness as a means for maintaining humanity through the attempts to construct meaning about otherwise inexplicable events. Inextricably intertwined with this discussion are the ethical dimensions of possible exploitation in the production of narratives about the suffering of others by pairing the testimony of Holocaust survivors with fiction written after the Holocaust. Within this context, students will be engaged in the process of bearing witness as auditors and storytellers and making judgments about the ethics of cultural production. Finally, the unit serves to facilitate the concept of resistance in the face of brutality. The Holocaust disturbs our historical consciousness because of the acquiescence of and the active participation by otherwise humane, intelligent peoples of numerous countries—the United States, included--in the public degradation of a minority population. Yet, individuals, both within and outside the Jewish community, resisted. Through this unit I intend to facilitate student understanding of the methods of resistance and subversion—violent and nonviolent—used by survivors, fighters, and writers to create a narrative of resistance.

Rationale

For the past several years, I prioritized literature of the Holocaust as an integral portion of the Middle School curriculum. Through Elie Wiesel's *Night* and the teleplay of "The Diary of Anne Frank," I attempted to build connections between my students and the difficult thematic material. Despite the importance of the material in my mind, I

perceived a disconnect between the narratives and the value placed on the subject by my students. To be more specific, I was troubled by their ability to shift easily from the subject matter into more jovial aspects without any transitional time. In other words, I did not see the lesson creating much of an impact and I wanted the curriculum to inspire more of a transformation. During the Spring of 2014, I attended the Teacher's Institute of Philadelphia where I participated in a class entitled Teaching the Holocaust: Bearing Witness with the anticipation that the course would enhance the connection between my students and the content by using the material to provide a context for the students in their own journeys of discovery in life. Through the institute, I discovered the necessity of focusing on the human ability to tell and listen to stories as an attempt to remain human in the face of the dehumanizing elements of civilization.

For too many students, their initial foray into the challenging content of the Holocaust involves an emphasis on the piles of shoes, the stacks of suitcases, even the multitude of razors left behind. Or, even worse, students view reel after reel of piles of corpses being bulldozed, of recently liberated emaciated prisoners, and photographs of crematoria. Despite the best attempts and best intentions of teachers to convey the enormity of the Holocaust through stressing the statistics of death and destruction of the European Jewish community, the pedagogical choice to emphasize numbers often perpetuates the dehumanization of the individuals ensnared in the ideological web of the Nazis. Likewise, focus on the numerous tragedies negates the multiple acts of resistance, subversion, and defiance before, during, and after the Nazi rise to power. Through creation of this unit, I sought to create a location for the voices of survivors to confront the overwhelming discourse of the Holocaust in creating a narrative of despair that leaves the student with nothing but feelings of apathy in the face of such nihilism. Instead of shocking students into submission with this story, the unit I designed allows the voices of survivors to confront the ideological discourse of the Nazis in redefining German, Jewish, and world culture.

Although the Nazis attempted to purify civilization of all Jewish influence and forbid Jews from participating in German cultural life, Jewish intellectuals, artists, musicians, and writers resisted through cultural production. Yet, the intentional construction of narratives by survivors resist conventional narrative structures, as the survivors struggle to find a voice to articulate the indescribable and inexplicable horror of the trauma caused by the events of the Holocaust. Because of the complexity of narrative techniques and the struggle of comprehension, I included in the unit design a cursory examination of literary theory with the students. Through my curricular unit, I will facilitate my student's examination of the interaction between the authoritative discourse of the dominant society, as articulated by Mikhail Bakhtin, and the internally persuasive discourse as individuals counter the dehumanizing effects of the dominant society through the "ideological becomings" of their narratives. By examining the methods of dehumanization employed in the authoritative discourse of the Nazis and the response by individuals to resist and retain humanity through the creation of narratives that bear witness to the events they experienced, my students will explore the diverse methods of resistance to dehumanization. Using narratives of survivors and other representations of the Holocaust, my unit will allow students the opportunity to witness how individuals, in life or even death, retain their humanity as constructors of meaning.

Through mastery of the form and narrative structure of the authoritative discourse, individuals previously oppressed by the ideology of power are able to subvert the intentions and significations of the authoritative discourse and in the process destabilize the dehumanizing project. As the Nazis created the official authoritative discourse denying citizenship and even humanity to Jews within their reach, individuals responded by assimilating the meta-narrative of the Nazis and subverting the narrative through creative acts of resistance, defiance, and assertions of humanity.

Finally, the unit should be framed in the larger context of attempts to dehumanize, individuals from other cultures. During the unit on the Holocaust, students should be encouraged to make connections between the Holocaust narratives and slave narratives. For example, African-Americans resisted and survived the brutality of slavery through the power of education, determination, and mental resistance. As Frederick Douglass recounts in *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, “You have seen how a man was made a slave, now you will see how a slave was made a man” (76). Like the enslaved African-Americans seeking freedom, Jewish survivors of the concentration camps retained humanity and resisted through means of cultural production. With this in mind, the unit plan seeks to balance the intertextuality between literature—poetry, prose, testimonials, and fiction—and music and representations of the Holocaust in film.

Goals/Objectives

Although the goals of this unit encompass mastery of a broad spectrum of the National Common Core Standards, my overarching goal resides in the development of a location for my students to recognize how others were able to counter authoritative narratives that seek to dehumanize or silence individuals as they endeavor to participate in the human journey. Especially in a society that reduces education to a compilation of statistics about the human participants, I want to encourage my students in this unit to use their awareness of the struggle of others as the foundation for their own struggles. As Henry David Thoreau writes in “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience,” “We are accustomed to say, that the mass of men are unprepared; but improvement is slow, because the few are not materially wiser or better than the many. It is not so important that many should be as good as you, as that there be some absolute goodness somewhere; for that will leaven the whole lump.” At the end of this unit, I want my students to be prepared.

Objectives

SWBAT conduct close readings of poetry by individuals impacted by the Holocaust in order to identify and analyze literary techniques of narration, poetic techniques—including form, allusion, imagery, and, metaphorical language.

SWBAT cite evidence from literature in order to synthesize material from multiple literary sources into an organizational structure.

SWBAT listen to testimony from Holocaust survivors in order to identify the struggles in narration and recognize the human ability to survive.

SWBAT research instances of individual or collective resistance and evaluate testimony in order to develop a formal essay about an instance of individual or collective resistance to the Holocaust or other genocidal actions.

SWBAT compose a multimedia project concerning the Holocaust or other genocidal actions in order to present information in a whole group setting.

SWBAT participate in whole group or small group discussion, as speakers and listeners, in order to analyze methods of resistance.

Strategies

The strategies in this unit are designed to maximize the students' interactions with the texts, to construct their individual responses, to challenge their pre-conceived ideas, and to listen, understand, and possibly contradict their classmates' opinions. To address both the Common Core Standards and the requisites of the content, the students will be encouraged to engage in higher-order thinking skills. Students will be involved in peer-to-peer teaching, Socratic Seminar, close reading of text, small group discussion, and whole group discussion, literature groups, individual research, auditing oral testimony and musical selections, viewing video clips of testimony and video representations of the Holocaust, and a power-point presentation of artwork.

*Classroom Discussion

*Paragraph Writing

With this in mind, each class period will open with a constructed response question about the text or about a larger philosophical idea prompted by our discussions of the text and to guide the theme of our class for the day., in which the students will formulate an argument in paragraph form. After creating their responses, the students will discuss the topic with their small group to refine their claims. During the small group discussions, the teacher will circulate in the room to audit and assess the student responses. After the small-group discussions, the teacher will solicit responses in a whole group discussion.

*Socratic Seminar

*Annotation of Text

When reading literature in the classroom, the primary strategies will involve close reading and annotation of the text. The poetry will be read orally in the class and then the teacher will facilitate interpretation of the text through soliciting student responses and Socratic Seminar. During the reading of the novels and nonfiction, the students will be expected to conduct independent reading and annotate the literature as they read. Likewise, the students will also be expected to respond to constructed response questions to facilitate understanding and approximate independent analysis of the text.

*Active Listening

*Active Viewing

To promote more complete understanding, the students will be shown several video clips containing the testimonies of survivors from the Yale Holocaust Archive, video clips from movies, and oral stories of survivors. Before viewing the testimony, the students should be instructed about how to actively listen to speakers by taking notes, making eye contact with the screen, modeling the thinking process while listening. Also, the teacher should ask for students to provide a summary of what they heard and also provide a space for the students to construct and ask questions about what they have heard. As part of the process, students should also write descriptions of the images and stories that they are seeing.

***Independent Research**

As part of the unit, students will also conduct independent research in the computer lab. The teacher must facilitate development of the skills for formal research, including how to construct research questions, how to evaluate sources, proper citation, the creation of a works cited page, and the formatting of a research paper. Similarly, students will need to be able to construct a five to seven page informational paper about the instance of individual or collective resistance.

***Peer-to-peer Teaching**

As culmination of the unit, students will present their research to their classmates through a multimedia presentation about an exemplar of individual or collective resistance to the authoritative discourse of dehumanization. By presenting their research, the students develop the ability to conduct formal presentations. Likewise, the activity decenters the authority of the classroom away from the teacher to allow the students the opportunity to have ownership over the work they produce. Instead of memorization of facts, the students gain the ability to participate in the process of mastering the content that they are learning.

Approximate Unit Timeline

Texts	Approximate Unit Timeline	National Common Core Standards
“Debbie Fisher: Story Corps”	One 90 minute class period.	RL 8.1, 8.3, 8.4 SL. 8.1
The Testimony of Father S. Pastor Niemoller King, “Letter from the Birmingham Jail”	One 90 minute class period.	SL 8.2, W8.2 a-d RL 8.1, 8.3, 8.4
Primo Levi’s “Shema” and Shema, the Prayer	One 90 minute class periods.	RL. 8.1., 8.4, 8.10, 8.5, 8.9 SL 8.1
		RL. 8.1., 8.4, 8.10,

Excerpts from <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i> (Cantos in Auschwitz)	Two 90 minute class periods.	8.5, 8.9
“Primo Levi’s Old Negro Spirituals”	One 90 minute class period.	RL. 8.1., 8.4, 8.10, 8.5, 8.9 W8.2 a-d
<i>Night</i> (excerpts) Introduction to Elie Wiesel	Three 90 minute class periods.	RL. 8.1., 8.4, 8.10, 8.5, 8.9
The Testimony of Leon S. (excerpts) (Excerpts of Night)	One 90 minute class period.	SL 8.2, W8.2 a-d
“Death Fugue”—Paul Celan Bach—Fugue in G Minor The Testimony of Edith P. (Excerpts)	Two 90 minute class periods.	L 8.5
Danse Macabre—Handout Pictures of Hans Holbein Music—Saint-Saens, Danse Macabre Schubert, Death and the Maiden	One 90 minute class period.	SL 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 W8.1 a-d
“Music in Concentration Camps 1933-1945” Excerpt “The Grey Zone.” Wagner and Anti-Semitism.	One 90 minute class period.	SL 8.1, W8.2 a-d
“Rafael Schachter . . . Verdi’s Requiem.” Excerpts from “The Pianist” BBC News on “The Cellist of Auschwitz”	One 90 minute class period.	SL 8.1 a-c, 8.2
Bertolt Brecht “Burning of the Books” “I, the Survivor” Yehuda Amichai—“Endless Poem”	One 90 minute class period.	RL. 8.1., 8.4, 8.10, 8.5, 8.9 SL 8.2, W8.1 a-d
Escape from Sobibor-Movie	One 90 minute class period.	SL 8.2, W8.2 a-d
Student Presentations of Research Project about Resistance	Three 90 minute class periods	

Elie Wiesel’s “Nobel Prize Speech”		SL8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6 W 8.2 a-d,8.7, 8.9
Approximate Timeline for unit	20 90 minute class periods. (Approx. 4 weeks)	

Classroom Activities/Lesson Plans

Activity #1

Listening to the Difficult Story

Text: Debbie Fisher: Story Corps—90 minute period

Procedures:

1. Students will respond to the paragraph response prompt:
Describe a time in which you saw or heard something that you wished you could forget. What compelled you to view or listen to the event? Why did you listen?
2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss the response in small groups.
3. Whole group discussion: a. During the discussion, add the questions, “Are there some stories that you do not want others to know?” “Are some stories too painful to hear?”
4. Introduce Debbie Fisher’s interview on Story Corps. Listen to the interview.
5. Ask questions after listening:
 - a. Why was her father resistant to telling his “story?”
 - b. Why did her father tell her a different story when she was growing up?
 - c. What does she mean that something died in her soul?
 - d. Why doesn’t Debbie Fisher tell her father’s story?
 - e. Do Holocaust survivors have an obligation to tell their story?
6. Discuss the difficult nature of the stories we will be listening to.

Text: Father S. Testimony, Poem of Pastor Niemoller, Excerpt from “The Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Procedures:

1. Students will respond to the paragraph response prompt:
Why do individuals allow discrimination and prejudice to occur?
2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss the response in small groups.
3. Whole group discussion: a. Add the question, “Are we responsible to intervene when we see something wrong happening?”
4. View Father S.’s Testimony.
 - a. Why did Father S. not act to help the individuals?
 - b. Is he guilty, as an accomplice, for the crimes of others?
 - c. What does he mean, “I was utterly unprepared?”
5. Close read of Pastor Niemoller’s poem.
 - a. How does Pastor Niemoller develop the sense of responsibility in his poem?
 - b. Discuss Niemoller’s problem with the “I, thou” relationship with Jewish

individuals after the Holocaust.

6. Read M. L. King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail." (Excerpts)
 - a. Explain Martin Luther King Jr.'s quotation, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have never yet engaged in a direct-action movement that was 'well timed' according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation."
 - b. Why does M. L. King declare that he would have helped the Jews in Europe?
 - c. Should King have made the comparison between segregation and the Holocaust?
 - d. Discussion of the impact of the Holocaust on African-American soldier returning from liberating the camps.

Activity #2

Telling the Human Story

Text: Primo Levi's "Shema" and "Shema, the Prayer"—90 minute period.

Procedures:

1. Students will respond to the paragraph response prompt:
"If you have knowledge that a crime has occurred, do you have an obligation to tell others?"
2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss the response in small groups.
3. Whole group discussion.
4. Close reading of "Shema" by Primo Levi. Socratic Seminar for analysis.
5. Discuss the narration of "Shema"—Explain the impact of second-person narration.
 - a. Why does Levi use the "you" understood and imperatives in constructing the poem?
6. Why does Primo Levi create the contrast between the individuals in their houses to the individuals in the camps?
7. What happens if we don't listen?
8. Close read of "Shema." Why does Primo Levi use the prayer as the allusion for his poem?
 - a. Discussion of maledictions and benedictions.
 - b. The Power of Words—ancient tradition of the curse.

Text: Primo Levi's Survival in Auschwitz—Two 90 minute class periods

*Students will have read excerpts from Survival in Auschwitz before the class.

Procedures:

1. Students will respond to the paragraph response prompt:
"How does poetry help Primo Levi to survive?" Cite specific evidence.
2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss the response in small groups.
3. In small groups, the students will compare the "Cantos of Ulysses" to Primo Levi.
4. Socratic Seminar: Return to the pre-class question.
 - a. Discuss the power of poetry to inspire.
 - b. How does remembrance of the cantos prove to Levi that he is a man?
5. Students will be expected to choose important passages to use for small and whole group discussion.

Text: “Primo Levi’s Old Negro Spirituals”—One 90 minute class period.

*Students will have read excerpts from “Survival in Auschwitz” before the class.

Procedures:

1. Students will respond to the paragraph response prompt:

Do you agree with Coates’ assessment of the similarities between “The Middle Passage” and Auschwitz?

2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss the response in small groups.

3. Read the quotation cited by Coates:

“Here, momentarily far away from the curses and the blows, we can re-enter into ourselves and meditate, and then it becomes clear that we will not return. We travelled here in the sealed wagons; we saw our women and our children leave towards nothingness; we, transformed into slaves, have marched a hundred times backwards and forwards to our silent labours, killed in our spirit long before our anonymous death. No one must leave here and so carry to the world, together with the sign impressed on his skin, the evil tidings of what man’s presumption made of man in Auschwitz.”

4. Socratic Seminar discussion of the quotation.

a. Focus on lines from the quotation and have the students create explanations.

Text: *Night*—Three 90 minute class periods.

“The Testimony of Leon S.”-One 90 minute class period.

*Students will have read excerpts from *Night* before the class.

Procedures:

1. Before each class period, students will respond to a paragraph response prompt:

a. Should we create art or literature about the Holocaust? Refer back to Debbie Fisher’s absence of a story.

b. Why doesn’t the Jewish community listen to Moshe?

c. How does music play a role in Elie Wiesel’s narration?

2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss the response in small groups.

3. Whole group discussion.

a. Analysis of text through close reading.

--Importance of Moshe as a symbol for Elie Wiesel and other survivors.

--Comparison of Moshe to Primo Levi’s “Shema.”

--Wiesel’s comparison of the removal to a novel:

“Here came the Chief Rabbi, hunched over, his face strange looking without a beard, a bundle on his back. His very presence in the procession was enough to make the scene seem surreal. It was like a page torn from a book, a historical novel, perhaps, dealing with the captivity in Babylon or the Spanish Inquisition.”

5. Introduce Leon S.’s testimony.

6. Play Leon S.’s testimony. Focus on Leon S.’s discussion of being deported on the train station.

a. Compare to Elie Wiesel’s narration of the deportation.

b. Which is more effective? Metaphorical comparison vs. absence of narration.

c. Objective Narration vs. Eyewitness Testimony: “I’ve seen it with my own eyes.”

7. Return to the question about art and literature about the Holocaust. Refer to Theodore Adorno's, "The critique of culture is confronted with the last stage in the dialectic of culture and barbarism: **to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric**, and that corrodes also the knowledge which expresses why it has become impossible to write poetry today."

- a. Apply the quotation to Leon S. and Elie Wiesel.

Activity #3

Methods of Resistance

Text: "Death Fugue" by Paul Celan—Two 90 minute class periods.

*Students will have read "Death Fugue for homework.

1. Students will respond to the paragraph response prompt:
Explain what Celan means, when he writes, "Black milk of daybreak."
2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss the response in small groups.
3. Whole group discussion.
 - a. Analysis of text through close reading.
 - b. Discuss multiple meanings of "fugue."
 - c. Play an example of a fugue. Bach's "Fugue in G Minor."
 - d. Discuss the purge of Jewish musicians from German symphonies.
--Forbidden music: Jewish musicians forbidden to play Beethoven.
4. Return to the first stanza and discuss the "Black milk of daybreak."
5. Discuss the use of metaphor to explain the inexplicable.
6. Play excerpts of Edith P.'s Testimony.
 - a. Focus on "The sun was not the sun."

Text: "Danse Macabre"—One 90 minute class period.

1. Notes on the origins of the Danse Macabre, connections to the Plague, and the anti-semitic response to the plague.
2. Close Reading of "Death Fugue."
 - a. Analyze the lines, "he whistles his Jews into rows has them shovel a grave in the ground he orders us strike up and play for the dance."
3. Show images from Hans Holbein's "Dance of Death."
4. Play the music of Saint-Saens, "Danse Macabre."
 - a. Play Schubert's "Death and the Maiden."
5. Analysis questions:
 - a. Why is Celan using the tradition to create his poem?
 - b. How does "Death Fugue" act as a resistance against the culture that created the Holocaust?
6. Discussion of "Shulamith" and "Margeurite."
 - a. Allusions to German and Jewish mythology.

Text: "Music in the Concentration Camps 1933-1945"—One 90 minute class period.

*Students will have read the handout "Music in the Concentration Camps 1933-1945" for the class.

1. Students will respond to the paragraph response prompt:
How did the Nazis use music to control the inmates in the concentration camps?

2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss the response in small groups.
3. Discuss the annotations and questions generated by the students. —Socratic Seminar guided by students.
4. Close reading of the “Death Fugue.”
 - a. Focus on the lines, “He shouts play death more sweetly Death is a master from Deutschland he shouts scrape your strings darker you'll rise then in smoke to the sky you'll have a grave then in the clouds there you won't lie too cramped.”
 - b. Show video clip from *The Grey Zone*. The concentration camp orchestra plays the “Roses from the South”—Strauss.
 - c. Analysis questions for discussion:
 - How have the Nazis destroyed culture?
 - Explain how the musicians might have responded to be forced to play music.
5. View images of the concentration camp orchestras.
6. Discuss the Nazi ideals of music and the legacy of Wagner in the Nazi ideological scheme.

Texts: “Rafael Schachter . . . Verdi’s Requiem.” Excerpts from “The Pianist” BBC News on “The Cellist of Auschwitz”—One 90 minute class period.

*Students will have read the handout “Rafael Schachter . . . Verdi’s Requiem” for the class.

1. Students will respond to the paragraph response prompt:

After reading the article about Rafael Schachter, why was it important for him to play Verdi’s Requiem Mass?
2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss the response in small groups.
3. Analysis questions:
 - a. What does it prove to master and perform the masterworks of Classical music?
 - b. How does the performance of music prove humanity?
4. Show clips of “The Pianist,” Władysław Szpilman practicing on the piano without playing while in hiding.
 - a. Why is he practicing? How does this allow for dignity?
5. Show video clip of “The Cellist of Auschwitz.”
6. Analysis Questions:
 - a. Why didn’t’s Anita Lasker –Wallfisch refuse to play at Auschwitz?
 - b. How might the experience ruin the experience of playing music?
 - c. What do the experiences of the musicians prove about the culture of Europe?

Summative Questions on “Death Fugue” and *Night*

1. For Paul Celan, does music serve to inspire or degrade humanity?
2. Explain the role of music in *Night*. Consider the importance of Beethoven.
3. Is Adorno right? Is the creation of culture after the Holocaust barbaric?
4. Connect Paul Celan to one of the musicians.

Texts: Bertolt Brecht “Burning of the Books” “I, the Survivor”
 Yehuda Amichai—“Memories”
 Excerpts from “Maus”

*Students should read the poems before the class.

1. Students will respond to the paragraph response prompt:
Why would the narrator of the poem, “Burning of the Books,” demand to have his work burned?
2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss the response in small groups.
3. Close reading of “Burning of the Books” and “I, the Survivor”
 - a. Show image of Nazis burning books.
 - b. Analysis questions:
 - Explain how Brecht demonstrates resistance by asking to be burnt.
 - Is there an obligation to side with authors who are being burnt?
 - Why would a survivor feel guilt?
 - Explain the connection to “survival of the fittest.”
4. Close reading of “Memories.”
 - a. How does Amichai relate to Primo Levi’s “Shema?”
 - b. Why would he write that the synagogue is in the museum?
 - c. Show images of exhibits from the US Holocaust Museum.

Text: Escape from Sobibor—One 90 minute class period.

1. View Escape from Sobibor.
2. How do the prisoners resist the dehumanization of the camp conditions?
3. How does the narrative contrast with the narrative of victimization?

Activity #4

Capstone Project

1. Guide students through research questions. (See appendix.)
2. Presentations of research projects.
3. Read excerpts of Elie Wiesel’s Nobel prize speech aloud in class.
4. Focus attention on the lines:

Because if we forget, we are guilty, we are accomplices.
And then I explain to him how naive we were, that the world did know and remained silent. And that is why I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim.

 - a. Allow the students to generate responses. Emphasize the importance of action.

Annotated Bibliography/Resources

Amichai, Yehuda. "Endless Poem." *Poemhunter*. Web. 10 May 2014.

--This poem by Yehuda Amichai provides an excellent continuation of the dialogue provoked by Primo Levi. With both the references to the museum and the memories in the heart, Amichai creates an excellent text for analysis.

Bach, J. S. "Fugue in G Minor." *Youtube*. Performed by The Canadian Brass. 1985. Web. 30 May 2014.

--This is a short video clip of the Canadian Brass playing Bach's fugue. This provides context so that students know what a fugue sounds like.

Brecht, Bertolt. "The Burning of the Books." Trans. By Michael Burch. *The Hypertexts*. Web. 12 April 2014.

--In this poem, Brecht provides an excellent example of siding with individuals who are being persecuted. Through the narrator, Brecht expresses the idea that to identify with truth and justice necessitates a place on the side that opposes the authoritative discourse.

" . . . "I, the Survivor." *Holocaust Poetry*. Ed. By Hilda Schiff. New York: Harper Collins, 1995. Print.

--In this poem, Brecht expresses the lament often heard amongst survivors of traumatic events. Certainly, the testament of the human experience is the guilt that survival imbues in those who witness terrible events.

Celan, Paul. "Death Fugue." Trans. by John Felstiner. *George Mason University*. Web. 5 May 2014.

--Paul Celan's "Death Fugue" is a difficult poem, but important to study. In "Death Fugue," Celan attacks the German literary and musical tradition. Many Holocaust survivors discuss their disbelief that a cultured civilization, such as Germany could commit acts of atrocity. Celan establishes the narrative discourse in Europe that allowed for the Holocaust and creates the imagery of horror that underpins Western thought.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "Primo Levi's Old Negro Spiritual." *The Atlantic*. 7 August 2013. Web. 5 May 2014.

--This editorial provides a clear link between the suffering of individuals in the Holocaust and during slavery. For students who ask the legitimate questions about why we study the Holocaust and elide the Middle Passage, Coates firmly connects the events in this article. I highly recommend that the pedagogy of the Holocaust refers to the Civil Rights movement that occurred shortly after World War II.

Edith P. "Testimony (HVT-8039)." *Youtube*. *Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies*. Web. 27 May 2014.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbaSloeu-WQ>

--In this testimony, Edith P. provides a quite figurative description of her experiences in the Holocaust, which allows for classroom discussion of the difference between truths and facts in the relationship of narrating traumatic events.

Escape from Sobibor. Directed by Jack Gold. Zenith Entertainment. 12 April 1987. Film.

--This film provides an excellent counter narrative to the idea that individuals targeted by the Germans participated in their own destruction. Within the film are numerous instances of resistance by inmates in the camp, which culminates in the final escape from the camp. Also, the film demonstrates the extent to which the Germans attempted to deceive the individuals being sent to the camps.

Fackler, Guido. Translated by Peter Logan. "Music in Concentration Camps 1933-1945." *Music & Politics*. 13 May 2014. Web.

-In this essay, Fackler provides an excellent analysis of how the Nazis attempted to use music as a method to degrade and dehumanize individuals. Yet, Jewish musicians subverted the Nazi attempts by creating new music and empowering individuals to find hope through the creation of art.

Father S. "Testimony (HVT-8060)." *Youtube. Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies*. Web. 27 May 2014.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRejcHZu788&index=15&list=PLE129969D102584DD>

--The testimony of Father S. provides the classic bystander problem of inaction. Using the same words as King, and before him Thoreau, Father S. describes how he was unprepared to act. This provides the context for the purpose behind teaching the Holocaust: To prepare students to act.

Fisher, Debbie. "And I asked him . . . tell me the real story." Produced by Sarah Kramer. *Story Corps*. New York. Web. 25 April 2014.

Debbie Fisher's story provides a poignant example of the difficulties in telling the story of the Holocaust. In her narrative, Debbie Fisher recounts the multiple narratives provided by her father about his experiences in the Holocaust. Her story is about the telling of the story. Yet, the story she provides is the absence of the actual narrative.

Gray, Denis D. "Rafael Schachter, Jew Who Led Verdi's Requiem Mass in Terezin Concentration Camp, Honored Decades Later In Prague." *Huffington Post*. 6 July 2013. Web. 28 May 2014.

--In this article, Denis Gray discusses the power of art, literature, and music in retaining humanity through the processes of annihilation. Although Nazis had the power of life and death over individuals, they were not successful in vanquishing the indomitable human spirit.

The Grey Zone. Directed by Tim Blake Nelson. Lions Gate Entertainment. 30 November 2001. Film.

--Provided in this movie is a scene in which the orchestra plays "Roses from the South" by Strauss while individuals enter the gas chamber. There is no graphic imagery, but the clip's power resides in the absence of the graphic imagery. Should be used with Celan's "Death Fugue."

"Hans Holbein's Great Dance of Death." Web. 5 May 2014.

<http://www.dodedans.com/Eholbein-dans.htm>

--This website provides images of the woodcuts used by Hans Holbein. In "Death Fugue," Celan alludes to the medieval tradition of the Danse Macabre that infiltrates Western civilization. These images allow the students to see the artistic tradition described by Celan.

Herbermann, Charles, and George Williamson. "Dance of Death." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 4. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908.

Web. 14 June 2014.

--This informational piece provides a nice summation of the origins of the Danse Macabre and the pervasiveness of the motif throughout Western Europe.

"Holocaust Remembrance Day: Cellist remembers Auschwitz." *BBC*. 27 January 2014. Web. 30 May 2014.

This video clip provides an example of both a survivor's remembrance of her experience at Auschwitz and also an example of how music allowed her to survive. Of particular note to the unit, is Anita Lasker Wallfisch's commentary, in which she expresses disdain and disbelief that seemingly civilized humans could commit such barbaric acts.

< <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25922284> >

King, Jr., Martin Luther. "Letter from the Birmingham Jail." *The Atlantic Monthly*. August 1963. Web. 15 March 2014.

--Martin Luther King, Jr. discusses in his letter the duty of citizens to participate in the political process, even if it means being jailed. Through the discussion, King refers to the long tradition of breaking unjust, immoral laws. King draws a clear line from the Holocaust to the Civil Rights struggle and even discusses that he would have been imprisoned with Jews in Europe as a testament to his beliefs.

Leon S. "Testimony (HVT-8025)." *Youtube. Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies*. Web. 27 May 2014.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErtPjsisYLg>

--In this testimony, Leon S. describes his experience in being deported. During the deportation, Leon S. describes watching his grandmother being shot. Leon S.'s narration of the scene is spare. This clip should be introduced with care. In the lesson, Leon's testimony should be paired with Wiesel's narration, which compares the event to a novel to have students evaluate the effectiveness of the narrative stances

Levi, Primo. "Shema." Trans. Michael Burch. *The Hypertexts*. Web. 13 May 2014.
--This poem serves as the introduction of *Survival in Auschwitz*. The poem alludes to the central prayer of the Jewish faith. The maledictory nature of the poem provides an excellent challenge to students to think and respond to the literature.

Levi, Primo. "The Canto of Ulysses." *Survival in Auschwitz*. New York: Orion Press, 1959. Print.
--In this chapter, Primo Levi discusses his attempts to remember and recite the Cantos of Ulysses to his friend. Through the attempts, Levi describes the humanizing effect the effort has to rejuvenate his will to survive.

Niemoller, Martin. "First they came for the Jews." *Holocaust Poetry*. Ed. By Hilda Schiff. New York: Harper Collins, 1995. Print.
--This is the edited text of the famous teachings of Pastor Niemoller in expressing the willingness of citizens to abrogate their responsibility in caring for their neighbors.

The Pianist. Directed by Roman Polanski. Lion's Gate Entertainment. 28 March 2003. Film.
--This movie details the survival story of the famous Polish concert pianist Władysław Szpilman. While the whole movie could be shown, the clips showing Władysław Szpilman's determination to live through the music underscores the theme of musicians creating a narrative of life in contrast to the "Dance of Death." Also, there is a clip, in which the Germans use music and dance to humiliate individuals in the ghetto.

Schoenberg, Shira. "Jewish Prayers: The Shema." *Jewish Virtual Library*. Web. 15 May 2014.
--This provides a translated text of the Hebrew prayer, which should be paired with Levi's poem.

Saint-Saens, Camille. "Danse Macabre." Web. 15 May 2014..
< https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyknBTm_YyM >
--This video clip plays a small portion of the 19th century composer Saint-Saens's symphony "Danse Macabre." The music is to show the continuity of the tradition of the Danse Macabre as it extends into the European Romantic tradition. The music is played by the National Philharmonic Orchestra.

Schubert, Franz. "Der Tod und Das Mädchen." Performed by Belcea Quartet. *Gardner Museum*. Web. 17 May 2014.
< <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NKEHosQf2k> >
--Schubert's famous work provides a clear connection to the idea of the personification of Death pursuing a maiden, in this case Shulamith and/or Marguerite.

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2006. Print.
--Elie Wiesel's *Night* is the classic narrative of the Holocaust. This book provides a center narrative to evaluate the power and problematic nature of conventional narration.

Wiesel, Elie. "Nobel Prize Speech." *Night*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2006. Print.

--In his Nobel prize speech, Elie Wiesel provides a powerful statement charging not just all of the readers of his text, but also world citizens in the necessity of engaging in the process of healing the world and helping others. For adolescents, Wiesel is unequivocal in demanding action.

Appendix/Standards

National Common Core Standards:

Reading:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.5

Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6

Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.7

Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.9

Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character

types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas,

Speaking and Listening:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.a

Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.b

Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.c

Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.d

Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.2

Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.3

Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4

Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.5

Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.5.a

Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.5.b

Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.6

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.a

Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.b

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.c

Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.d

Establish and maintain a formal style.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.e

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2.a

Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2.b

Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2.c

Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2.d

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Capstone Project

Resistance Project

Name _____ Section _____ Date _____

Despite the efforts of authoritarian regimes to silence critics, dehumanize individuals, and commit genocides, individuals and groups have actively resisted through violent and nonviolent means. By learning about others, we prepare ourselves to do more than be a bystander—or worse, a participant—when others are persecuted. Remember the words of Rabbil Hillel, *"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when?"*

Steps to Success

1. Pick an individual or group who resisted the Nazis during the Holocaust or pick another activist who
 - a. Research the person or group.
 - b. Find writings by the person or group and read them.
 - c. Understand the context that shaped the person or group's life.
 - d. Figure out why this person appealed to others.
 - e. Be original. Think of lesser known, but influential activists.

2. Write a five-paragraph essay about the person or group.
 - a. What world or societal events shaped this person? Why did he/ she become an activist within his/ her community?
 - b. How did they organize with others to be impactful?
 - c. What teachings are still relevant? What impact did this person have on society

3. Research information about the person.
 - Biography? --Education?
 - Societal Problems? --Career?
 - Context?

4. Create a PowerPoint about the individual or group.
 - a. Include pictures of the person people in his/her life, and pictures to show your understanding of the person's influence and context.
 - b. Be creative.
 - c. Include quotations from the person or group or about the group.
 - d. Present your understanding of the person's influence and his/ her appeal.

5. Present the PowerPoint. Good Luck!!!