



Echoing Voices: Unpacking History

Echoing Voices helps students make a human connection to history through the story of a local Holocaust survivor, liberator, or rescuer.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze primary source materials in the form of Holocaust testimony and facsimiles of primary source documents.
- Strengthen listening and learning skills, critical thinking, reading and analysis.
- Build communication skills through writing and discussion.

Common Core State Standards

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2](#)
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4](#)
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6](#)
Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9](#)
Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Materials

- Introductory [video](#)
- Holocaust survivor testimony video
- Survivor biography (print for students)
- Historical timeline by country (print for students)
- Facsimiles of primary source documents and artifacts (if using a digital kit, print for student groups)
- Photographs/Object [Worksheet](#) (optional student resource)
- Inventory list of facsimiles, documents, photographs, and artifacts (educator resource)
- Key highlights (educator resource)

Activity Set Up: For students to build a complete picture of the survivor's story, they need access to the Holocaust survivor's video testimony and biography, the historical timeline, and the primary source documents and artifacts.

Activity Part I: View and Analyze Testimony

Analyze primary source material through Holocaust survivor, liberator, or rescuer testimony.

1. Explain to students that they will be watching the testimony of a Holocaust survivor, liberator, or rescuer.
2. Distribute biography and timeline either before or after they view.
3. Determine what you want students to look for in the testimony. You could have them identify terms such as antisemitism, concentration camps; themes including resilience, resistance, identity; or topics like Auschwitz, ghettos, etc.

4. Ask students for general reflections/feedback from the testimony.
5. For a more in-depth exploration, you could use a jigsaw framework by assigning a term, theme, or topic to student groups and allowing them time share their findings with other groups.

Activity Part II: Artifacts

Analyze primary source material through Holocaust survivor, liberator or rescuer documents, artifacts, and photographs.

Based on what they have learned through the video and the biography, students will now explore facsimiles of artifacts.

1. Divide students into groups according to how many artifacts are in the suitcase.
2. Have students analyze their artifact by completing the [Photographs/Object Worksheet](#) as a group.
3. Once students have completed the worksheet, allow them to present their artifact and group's findings with the class.
4. Large group discussion: ask students what they think their artifact tells us about the survivor's experiences? Did the survivor speak about it in his or her video? Why do you think this artifact was important to be in his/her suitcase?

Extension Activity: Constructing Narratives

After analyzing testimony, biography, and artifacts, students will construct a narrative based on the profiled individual. Students will gain an understanding of the value of personal testimony, narrative, and memory.

1. Students create a visual or written presentation based on the information gathered through viewing testimony, reading the biography, and examining artifacts. This can be accomplished by having the student communicate the individual's story they examined. Alternatively, students can create a visual or written presentation of "their story."

If writing their own story: Students will consider what is important to them and create a visual or written presentation which will tell "their story."

1. Ask students to recall the artifacts from the Echoing Voices suitcase and how they were important to the Holocaust survivor they learned about. Have them recall how those items illustrated parts of the survivor's story and their significance.
2. Next ask: if someone were to learn about your life, what would you want others to see or touch? Ask them to think about what they would visually want to present to others.
3. Ask students to consider their identity-how do you see yourself? Next, ask them what values are important to them. How do they embody/express those values? Finally, what things are important to them (i.e. personal belongings, family heirlooms, etc.)?
4. Have students present "their story" to the class.