



Lesson Plan

Unit 2: Introduction to the Holocaust

Grade 8 ELA - 50 minutes

Objectives

- Students will be able to explain how the Holocaust affected individuals and society.
- Students will be able to analyze media to make personal connections and predictions about the unit's content.

Standards

CC.1.2.8.A

- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text.

Materials

- Holocaust Survivor [Video](#)
- [KWL Worksheet](#) with [link to article](#)
- Whiteboard/Smartboard

Vocabulary

- Holocaust
- Ideology
- Humanity
- Liberation
- Persecution
- Trauma

Background & Notes

In the Savvas curriculum for 8th grade, students learn about the Holocaust before reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*. To prepare students for this serious topic, engage in group discussion of classroom expectations. Since students have various levels of background knowledge surrounding WW2 and the Holocaust, the teacher should arrange for supplemental activities depending on students' needs. This lesson serves as a basic introduction to the unit. Instead of focusing on historical content, this lesson asks students to think about how they treat others.

Procedure

Discussion

- Post the essential question on the board: "What is humanity?"
- Distribute the KWL worksheet (or post online).
- Most students have heard this word, but many need guidance to understand what it means. Allow for a think-pair-share or individual responses to the essential question. (3-5 minutes)
- In large group discussion, scaffold this question by asking:
 - "What makes us human?"
 - "How are people different than animals?"
 - "How do you want to be treated?" (3-5 minutes)
- After students have responded, explain that the class will be learning about WW2 and the Holocaust. Today, the class will focus on gaining background information in order to read *The Diary of Anne Frank* later.
- Direct students to complete the K section of the KWL. If students have limited experience with this topic, encourage them to make their best guess, or provide a scaffolding question like:
 - "What do you know about war in general?"
 - "What do you know about Europe?"
 - "What might happen to people if their country is attacked?" (3-5 minutes)

Procedure (cont.)

Video

- Explain that students will now see a video clip with a short account from a Holocaust survivor. During the video, students should take notes in the L section of the KWL.
- Watch the video. After watching, give students time to write in their L sections. (3-5 minutes)
- Next, in whole group discussion, make a list together on the board of information from the video. Topics to include: the survivor's age, the treatment of children, the tattoo (number instead of name), the trauma/emotional impact of war and separation.
- Then, students will most likely have questions! In whole group discussion, small groups, or partners, have students record at least three questions they have in the L section of the KWL.
- Share out one question per pair/group if time allows. (3-5 minutes)

Reading

- On the second page of the worksheet (back of the KWL), students will take notes about the text linked at the top. This informational text is from the Savvas MyPerspectives Unit 2 Introduction. Depending on learners' needs, the teacher may pre-teach this lesson's vocabulary to ensure student understanding.
- Students should read the text and make at least three bullet point notes about each section. Notes could be important facts/dates/statistics, definitions, or personal reactions to the text. Remind students to analyze all text features (photos, captions, etc.) to gather information. Begin independent reading and notetaking. (10-15 minutes)

Additional Strategies

- If students struggle with reading, try this tips:
 - Chunk the text: have volunteers read sections aloud, read sections with a partner, or use a timer help students focus on reading the section independently.
 - After each chunk , give students time to record at least one bullet point about the reading.
 - Then, share bullet points so the class comes up with a joint list of important facts from the section.
 - Allow for student questions during this time and clarify vocabulary if necessary.
 - Repeat the process if students require scaffolding, or have them finish the rest independently.

Wrap Up

- After students finish taking notes, collectively decide an MVP (most valuable point) for the passage. Students should record their answers in the appropriate box. (3-5 minutes)
- Finally, go back to the essential question. Ask students, "How is today's lesson connected to the concept of humanity?"
 - "What did we learn today about how people were treated during the Holocaust?"
 - "How were people **dehumanized** during the Holocaust?"
 - "Why do you think this topic is important?"
- Discuss as a class and collect materials. (3-5 minutes)

Supplemental Activities

Check out these related topics for enrichment activities:

- The Anne Frank House's [Virtual Tour](#)
- NewsELA [Current Event](#): "Casualties of hate: Pittsburgh synagogue mass shooting kills 11, wounds 6"