

A FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES PUBLICATION

Facing History and Ourselves:
Holocaust and Human Behavior
Elective Course Curriculum



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FACING
HISTORY
AND
OURSELVES

People make choices. Choices make history.

A Facing History and Ourselves Publication

**Facing History and Ourselves: *Holocaust and Human Behavior*
Elective Course Curriculum**

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Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational and professional development organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. By studying the historical development of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide, students make the essential connection between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives. For more information about Facing History and Ourselves, please visit our website at www.facinghistory.org.

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ABOUT FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES

Facing History and Ourselves is a nonprofit educational organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote a more humane and informed citizenry. As the name Facing History and Ourselves implies, the organization helps teachers and their students make the essential connections between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives, and offers a framework and a vocabulary for analyzing the meaning and responsibility of citizenship and the tools to recognize bigotry and indifference in their own worlds. Through a rigorous examination of the failure of democracy in Germany during the 1920s and '30s and the steps leading to the Holocaust, along with other examples of hatred, collective violence, and genocide in the past century, Facing History and Ourselves provides educators with tools for teaching history and ethics, and for helping their students learn to combat prejudice with compassion, indifference with participation, myth and misinformation with knowledge.

Believing that no classroom exists in isolation, Facing History and Ourselves offers programs and materials to a broad audience of students, parents, teachers, civic leaders, and all of those who play a role in the education of young people. Through significant higher education partnerships, Facing History and Ourselves also reaches and impacts teachers before they enter their classrooms.

By studying the choices that led to critical episodes in history, students learn how issues of identity and membership, ethics and judgment have meaning today and in the future. Facing History and Ourselves' resource books provide a meticulously researched yet flexible structure for examining complex events and ideas. Educators can select appropriate readings and draw on additional resources available online or from our comprehensive lending library.

Our foundational resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*, embodies a sequence of study that begins with identity—first individual identity and then group and national identities, with their definitions of membership. From there the program examines the failure of democracy in Germany and the steps leading to the Holocaust—the most documented case of twentieth-century indifference, de-humanization, hatred, racism, antisemitism, and mass murder. It goes on to explore difficult questions of judgment, memory, and legacy, and the necessity for responsible participation to prevent injustice. Facing History and Ourselves then returns to the theme of civic participation to examine stories of individuals, groups, and nations who have worked to build just and inclusive communities and whose stories illuminate the courage, compassion, and political will that are needed to protect democracy today and in generations to come. Other examples in which civic dilemmas test democracy, such as the Armenian Genocide and the US civil rights movement, expand and deepen the connection between history and the choices we face today and in the future.

Facing History and Ourselves has offices or resource centers in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom as well as in-depth partnerships in Rwanda, South Africa, and Northern Ireland. Facing History and Ourselves' outreach is global, with educators trained in more than 80 countries and delivery of our resources through a website accessed worldwide with online content delivery, a program for international fellows, and a set of NGO partnerships. By convening conferences of scholars, theologians, educators, and journalists, Facing History and Ourselves' materials are kept timely, relevant, and responsive to salient issues of global citizenship in the twenty-first century.

For more than 30 years, Facing History and Ourselves has challenged students and educators to connect the complexities of the past to the moral and ethical issues of today. They explore democratic values and consider what it means to exercise one's rights and responsibilities in the service of a more humane and compassionate world. They become aware that "little things are big"—seemingly minor decisions can have a major impact and change the course of history.

For more about Facing History and Ourselves, visit our website at www.facinghistory.org.

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Memphis Elective **Introduction**

"There is a complex and intimate relationship between theory and practice in the classroom. Theoretical ideas are tested every day by the complex and often unpredictable behavior of students and teachers, and by the constant influence of life outside of the classroom. Practicing teachers have to constantly adjust theory based upon their practice. The craft develops through experience and reflection upon that experience. What is hardest to maintain in the midst of the immediate demands of the classroom is the intellectual aspect of teaching, which, though less apparent on an everyday level than the craft issues, still pervades and underlies every good teacher's practice."

-Herbert Kohl, The Discipline of Hope: Learning from a Lifetime of Teaching

This curriculum is designed to guide you and your students through a semester-long Facing History and Ourselves course of study. The resources included here have been selected and sequenced in order to deepen students' ethical and moral reasoning, challenge their critical thinking and literacy skills, and engage them in a rigorous study of history. The course is divided into 12 sections that parallel the chapters in our resource book *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Each section includes essential questions, pedagogical overviews, resources to use in your class (readings, films, websites, primary source documents, etc.), discussion and reflection questions, and activity suggestions.

Still, this guide is missing a crucial ingredient of any Facing History course: the unique voices of your students and you, the teacher. We cannot predict how the particular students in your classroom will respond to the ideas, history, resources, and activities that comprise this course. We trust and respect you to make wise choices based on careful attention to your students' questions and ideas. We also recognize that teachers have different levels of experience, comfort, and understanding with the ideas explored in this course. And, we know that Facing History teachers work in a variety of school contexts with a wide range of students. Nevertheless, the roles of the teacher in a successful Facing History classroom are both numerous and essential. It will be your job not only to listen, but also, at time, to be directive. It will be your job to carefully guide class discussions, providing accurate answers to clarify points of confusion and enforcing rules and guidelines to safeguard a reflective, respectful learning environment.

Finally, we appreciate that teachers enter the profession with their own passions, values and purposes. In the essay, "Why I teach," anthropologist Alice H. Reich explains the beliefs and goals that underlie her work with students, and how these have shifted over time. We have included her essay on the following pages because her words resonate with many Facing History teachers and serve as a model for teacher reflection. What

thoughts and questions does reading this essay bring up for you? As you read, what ideas did you agree with and disagree with? How can reading “Why I teach” help you articulate and/or revisit your own purpose for teaching?

While we expect and encourage teachers of a Facing History and Ourselves course to follow closely the materials included here, we also know, for all of the reasons listed above, that some variation between classrooms is inevitable. No two Facing History courses are exactly alike, and that is how it should be. Indeed, we have learned that over time, educators’ experience guiding students on a Facing History journey, enhanced by their creative energy, helps them use our materials to craft their own unique voice. We continue to learn from the wisdom of the teachers in our network. Thus, we encourage you to share your ideas, lesson plans, student reactions, and questions with us so that we can all benefit from being part of a learning community that shares a commitment to students’ intellectual, moral and social development.

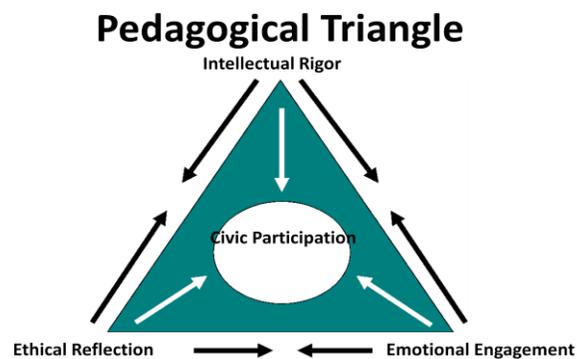
Core Elements of a Facing History and Ourselves Journey

Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational and professional development organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. The Facing History journey is different for each class and each setting. At the same time, each journey is built around a core of common elements.

- 1) Connections between history and students' lives
- 2) Teachers as learners: Materials are professional development tool for teachers
- 3) Facing History's scope and sequence



- 4) The Pedagogical Triangle of Historical Understanding: Ethical reflection, intellectual rigor and emotional engagement



- 5) Reflective classroom community
- 6) Literacy development
- 7) Interdisciplinary

Why I Teach¹

(Alice H. Reich, Chronicle of Higher Education, October 19, 1983)

I recently had the opportunity to think about why I teach, and I took the time to articulate the good things about teaching, to sharpen a vision toward which I can move. I am aware of the aspects of the profession that threaten to shrink the soul, such as the insufficient resources of every kind going all too frequently to the wrong places. And I do upon occasion despair about the meaning of what I do. But I keep teaching, because it is, for me, the practice of what it means to be human, to have a voice that names the world in relation to one's own experiences.

When I began teaching, I knew what some of my goals were, but I had very few ideas about how to achieve them. I wanted to make students active rather than passive members of their culture. I wanted them to see that to be human is to be a creator as well as a creature of the world. I wanted them to understand that the conditions of our own humanity are the conditions of humanity as a whole, that we are essentially no freer than the least free among us, that our well-being is dependent upon the well-being of others. I wanted them to believe that if they accepted those premises, they could and must work to make a better world.

But how does one teach that? You cannot give people power; you cannot make people responsible. The grammar of such constructions reveals the politics behind them. "I will teach students" is a statement of my power over them, of my being the active subject and their being the passive objects. In that situation, the main things they can learn are irresponsibility and powerlessness.

So I have tried to learn how to teach by asking myself who were my best teachers. My parents were better teachers than many I encountered in most of my years of school because they taught me to learn everywhere. There were a few fine teachers, good in different ways: one was patient, another full of enthusiasm, another brilliant, and another whose ideas came at the right time for me and my ideas. But I learned the most from friends, because in friendship one finds genuine reciprocity, and no compulsion other than the force of discourse; no oppression, no violence of any kind.

And that is my model of the ideal teaching situation. The ideal of reciprocity and freedom is not fully attainable in a classroom, of course, but it provides a useful measure. And insofar as I have attained that ideal in teaching, it has been due to students, students who have taken responsibility when I have relinquished control, who have reciprocated speech and thought.

Love of my material and the support of my friends and colleagues are vital, but without hearing the voices of students, I could not continue to teach. What keeps me at it is not the exceptional student -- one who, in my limited definition, shares and is able to articulate and act upon my vision of the world -- but the possibility that every student will find a voice, a way of being in the world that changes it.

I have learned the most about teaching from my students. I have learned that the sound of my voice in the classroom is not necessarily an indication that more learning is taking place than when there is silence. I have learned that allowing them to see my mind working on confusing issues is more instructive for them, and less exhausting for me, than presenting myself as one who knows all, and mystifying the processes through which I became so knowledgeable.

I have learned that I don't have to be all things to all people. Students who do not learn with me may well find other teachers with whom they will learn. And I have learned that the silent preposition in the sentence "I teach students" is not to or for; it is with. I teach with students.

That is not to deny the difference in our status, I am the teacher and they are the students; we do not gain much, and we may create considerable confusion, by denying that ours is an unequal relationship. But in humane unequal relationships, such as those between parent and child, and, one would hope, teacher and student, the goal is to work toward eliminating the inequality.

I have learned to live with contradictions and to embrace them as sources of new understanding.

For some time I thought there was a conflict between caring for the methods of teaching and attending to content. It seemed to me that people who were concerned with how to reach students necessarily worked on that at the expense of what was supposed to reach them. I felt that one could not get through a semester's worth of material if one paid too much attention to whether or not the students understood it.

Now, although I am very concerned with content, I also see that if students don't understand it, I am getting through the material only for my benefit. I have come to see the relationship between teaching methods and course content as one of creative tension. In working through that tension, teaching is an art, sharing with other arts the equal emphasis on message and medium, subordinating neither to the other. It is not a question of finding a way to package the material any more than we would think of Bach's B-minor Mass as a package of religious ritual. What I know about anthropology is worthless in teaching unless students make some of it their own. And that doesn't happen by their "buying" a package of anything.

As a teacher I hope to convey to students the joys of critical thinking, a way of being in the world that may not give much comfort but one that makes life interesting. I hope to show them that caring passionately for ideas has to make room for the possibility of being wrong. I want them to know that I am critical not because I think life is not worth living but because I think it is worth living better than most of us are now doing.

I want to change the world. I may not be able to do that by teaching, but it is my chance to become part of a process in which people learn that they do not have to accept the world as it is, that their futures are not given, and that there are things we can all do to make the world better. I have always wanted to change the way my students see the world. I also want them to change their world, and mine, by finding their own voices, by articulating in an active way their experience with the experience of others.

The most exciting place in teaching is the gap between what the teacher teaches and what the student learns. That is where the unpredictable transformation takes place, the transformation that means we are human beings, creating and defining our world, and not objects, passive and defined.

I teach because it is my job, and I feel privileged to have a job that is very nearly synonymous with my work. I teach because it puts me in a place in society where competing ideas are encouraged, not feared, where we cherish the contest between ideas more than the victory of our own. I teach because it is one of the quickest ways of finding out what I don't know; it makes me alert to possibilities. And I teach to create new possibilities.

Using These Materials

The materials in this curriculum are divided into 12 sections. Each section is comprised of one or more lessons. There are 30 lessons in the course. Each lesson includes readings and other resources, as well as suggestions for how to implement them in your class. The following is an overview of the organization of the materials in this curriculum:

Section Overview

The first pages of each section provide you with the following information:

Essential Questions

What *is* an essential question? An essential question is – well, *essential*: important, vital, at the heart of the matter – the *essence* of the issue. Think of questions in your life that fit this definition – but don't just yet think about it like a teacher; consider the question as a thoughtful adult. What kinds of questions come to mind? What is a question that any thoughtful and intellectually-alive person ponders and should keep pondering?²

- Grant Wiggins, author of *Understanding by Design*

At the beginning of each section, we provide essential questions to guide student learning. These questions can be used to guide your own curricular choices and as journal prompts, essay questions or discussion questions for students. You might also engage your class in the process of creating your own essential questions using the “[essential questions](#)” teaching strategy. Often you will see more specific versions of these questions within lessons and resources, adapted for the particular content under investigation or written in a way that connects with students' own experiences.

List of Lessons

Each of the twelve sections in this curriculum contains one or more lessons. On the first page of each section, you will see a simple list of the titles of the lessons to follow.

Rationale

What do we hope students learn in this section? Why is this material important? Where does this material fit into the larger scope and sequence of this course? What have teachers and students helped us understand about effective ways to engage students with these questions and ideas? The rationale answers these questions. We encourage you to have a “conversation” with the rationale presented here as you read it. What do you agree with? How might you see this material differently? Our hope is that actively reading our rationale helps you articulate your own rationale for teaching this material.

Note that the rationale of each section is not intended to be a comprehensive introduction to the history and concepts to be introduced in the section (suggested resources for background information for each section will be provided after the rationale). Rather, this rationale is intended to provide you guidance about how to frame the presentation of each section to your students. We encourage you to read the rationale for each section carefully in order to glean important information and guidance from the collective wisdom of Facing History teachers about how to frame important ideas and present challenging and complicated historical events for your students in ways that best support their intellectual and emotional growth.

Background Information

The Section Overview concludes with a short list of resources for you, the teacher, to turn to for background information on the history and concepts introduced in the lessons that follow. In many cases, the essential information that you need will be presented within the text of the resources included in each lesson. Nevertheless, we encourage you to deepen your knowledge and understanding of the history and ideas presented in this course by engaging with the resources suggested here. Additionally, these suggested resources may help you find answers to specific questions that arise in class. In most cases, these resources refer you to the Facing History resource books from which the materials in this curriculum were adapted.

Lesson Overview

Each Section includes one or more Lessons, and each Lesson begins with an overview with important information to help you decide how to use its resources in your class. The Lesson Overview includes the following information:

Essential Questions

In order to help illuminate the thematic connections between the lessons in each Section, we have also included a list of Essential Questions for each Lesson. By design, the questions at the Lesson-level often overlap with some of those at the Section-level. Each Lesson also includes one or more additional essential questions that probe more deeply into the particular focus of the lesson.

Included Resources

Each Lesson includes several resources for you to consider using in your class. Rather than referring or linking to them in other Facing History publications, we have included the full-text (or images) of many of these resources in this curriculum for easy copying and distribution in your class. The resources that have been fully incorporated into the curriculum are listed in the Lesson Overview.

While the resources included here are those we recommend, it is not expected or required that you use all, or any, of the resources included in each lesson in your course. Most

certainly, you will need to exclude some of the resources simply for lack of time. In order to help you decide which resources to include, we have identified some resources in this list as “core resources” by placing an asterisk next to them. We encourage you to question our choices, for as you become a more experienced Facing History teacher you may find different resources to be “core” for your approach to teaching this course or for your students.

Additional Recommended Resources

Facing History has created and collected an extensive library of resources that illuminate the themes and histories that are core to this course. Sometimes, the most difficult part of teaching a Facing History and Ourselves course is simply deciding what resources to use. In addition to the resources we have chosen to fully incorporate into this curriculum, there are always a variety of others that you might use as alternatives or extensions. In each Lesson Overview, we list several additional recommended resources (along with links to help you obtain them from our website or library) that you might choose to use.

Introduction

Each Lesson Overview includes a short introduction to the themes and content explored in the included resources. These overviews are extensions of the rationale offered in the Section Overview, but they speak more specifically to the content and instruction of the lesson. We recommend that you read each introduction carefully for additional suggestions, garnered from the collective experience of our teachers, about how to approach the lesson and its resources.

Journal and Discussion Prompts

You will notice that each Resource in this curriculum includes numerous questions for reflection, journaling, and discussion. If you choose not to use a particular resource, however, you might also miss a question that provides a valuable opportunity for reflection. Therefore, we have collected several journal and discussion questions that probe important themes in each lesson in the Lesson Overview for your reference and convenience.

Resource Pages

Each Lesson includes one or more Resources. The Resource pages in this curriculum are designed to be easily and neatly reproduced for your students. In the majority of cases, these Resources are full-text readings adapted from other Facing History resource books. Sometimes the Resource pages include a photograph, painting, or other visual. Occasionally the Resource pages introduce a film or video that you will need to obtain from the Facing History library or stream from the internet. Regardless of the type of resource, all of the Resource pages in this curriculum follow a consistent format:

Creating Context

Every resource begins with a section entitled “Creating Context.” The purpose of these sections is to either activate students’ relevant prior knowledge and experience or provide brief background information to help students better understand the content of the resource. It is partly through “Creating Context” that the connections between different resources and lessons are made, not to mention connections between the content and students’ lives.

By engaging in the content of this section before exploring each resource, you are likely to help improve student’s comprehension and deepen their understanding of important concepts. Often the “Creating Context” section will pose a question for students to consider. You can choose to have students reflect on the question in their journals, or in many cases you can use the question as the basis for a [Barometer](#), [Four Corners](#), or [Anticipation Guide](#) activity.

Vocabulary Terms

Each “Creating Context” section ends with a list of vocabulary terms. Terms might be listed here for a variety of reasons. Some words appear here because they are essential to the concepts or history introduced in the resource. Other words appear simply because they might be new or challenging words for adolescent readers, even if they have no intrinsic connection to the content of the resource. Students may be quite familiar with some of the words that appear in this list, but they might be listed here because it is important to explore a particular meaning of the term in the context of the lesson and resource in which it appears.

There are a variety of ways that you can use these vocabulary lists to expand students’ vocabularies and deepen their understanding of each resource. At bare minimum, it will be helpful for students to review each list before reading the resource that follows. That way, readers will know that they are not necessarily expected to know the meaning of each of the terms immediately, but they can prepare themselves to recognize the vocabulary words and immediately try to figure out their meanings based on their context. Focusing on the list before reading will, combined with the rest of the content in the “Creating Context” section, can also serve as a valuable pre-reading activity by previewing for students the important ideas and concepts that they will read about. By knowing something about the important information to follow, students reading comprehension is often enhanced.

Consider having students create *working definitions* in their journals for some of these terms, either before reading (based on their prior experience with the word) or after reading (based on context). By creating and refining their own definitions, students will “own” the words and more effectively incorporate them into their own vocabularies than if they simply look them up in the dictionary.

Comprehension and Connections

Every resource is followed by a set of questions for reflection and discussion. Some of these questions are designed to foster what research tells us are the habits of effective readers. For instance, effective readers frequently summarize, highlight important ideas in their reading, and re-read important sections of a document. Many questions prompt students to perform these skills. Additionally, the “Comprehension and Connections” questions will also ask students to draw a conclusion based on the information from the resource, and then go back and find evidence from the resource to support their conclusion.

The “Comprehension and Connections” sections also include questions that ask students to think deeply about the ideas introduced in each resource, to analyze those ideas, and to make connections with what they have learned. These questions are designed not just to foster effective reading habits but more importantly to develop *critical thinking*. Nearly every set of questions also includes what we call “ourselves” questions. How do the ideas, conflicts, and dilemmas introduced in the resource resonate in students’ lives? These are the questions that make this course most relevant and powerful to our students.

Using the Resource

Each Resource concludes with a “Using” section that provides specific suggestions for how to incorporate it into your class. You will find valuable guidance for approaching some of the more challenging topics that arise in this course. The suggestions rely heavily on Facing History’s collection of recommended [teaching strategies](#), and they frequently link to descriptions of these strategies on our website. The “Using” sections also include specific suggestions for other resources you might use as alternatives or extensions, including videos and books available from the Facing History library.

Journals in a Facing History Classroom

Our ideas about the importance of journals in a Facing History and Ourselves classroom have been informed by decades of experience listening to teachers and students as well as by academic research, especially the following studies: Lisa Colt, Fanny Connelly, and John Paine, "Excerpts from Student Journals in Response to the Curriculum Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior." *Moral Education Forum*, Summer 1981.

Philosopher Hannah Arendt, herself a refugee of the Holocaust, asked, "Could the activity of thinking. . . be among the conditions that make men abstain from evil-doing or even 'condition' them against it?"³ A study of Nazi Germany reveals the danger that can befall a society that is conditioned not to critically examine the world around them. Adolf Hitler remarked, "What luck for leaders that men do not think."⁴ His belief that people "do not think" (or that people could be conditioned not to think) gave him confidence that he could push through his racist agenda without much resistance. Indeed, the Nazis built an education system that force-fed knowledge and propaganda and discouraged questioning and individual thought. They also prohibited free speech and free assembly, and kept their citizenry so busy with state-required tasks and meetings that there was "no time to think." Just as dictatorships like the Third Reich rely on an unthinking populace to maintain control healthy democracies depend on a citizenry capable of critical thinking in order to support institutions such as a free press, an evenhanded judicial system, and fair and open elections.

Facing History and Ourselves is committed to helping students develop their ability to critically examine their surroundings from multiple perspectives and to make informed judgments about what they see and hear. Keeping a journal is one tool that Facing History has found instrumental in helping students' develop these skills. A journal might be defined as any place where thoughts are recorded and stored. Loose-leaf and bound notebooks both make excellent journals. Many students find that writing or drawing in a journal helps them process ideas, formulate questions, and retain information. Journals make learning visible by providing a safe, accessible space for students to share thoughts, feelings and uncertainties. In this way, journals are also an assessment tool-something teachers can review to better understand what their students know, what they are struggling to understand, and how their thinking has changed over time. In addition to strengthening students' critical thinking skills, journal writing serves other purposes as well. Journals help nurture classroom community. Through reading and commenting on journals, teachers build relationships with students. Frequent journal writing also helps students become more fluent in expressing their ideas in writing or speaking.

Students use their journals in different ways. Some students may record ideas throughout class while others may only use it when there is a particular teacher-driven assignment. Some students need prompts to support their writing, while other students feel more comfortable expressing their ideas without any external structure. Just as students vary in how they use their journals, teachers vary in their approach to journal writing as well. While there are many effective ways to use a journal as a learning tool in the classroom,

below are six questions, based on decades of experience working with teachers and students, that we suggest you consider:

- 1. What is the teacher's relationship with students' journals?** Students are entitled to know how you plan on reading their journals. Will you read everything they write? If they want to keep something private, is this possible? If so, how do students indicate that they do not want you to read something? Will their journals be graded? If so, by what criteria? (See more on grading journals below.) For teachers at most schools, it can be impossible to read everything students write in their journals; there just is not enough time in the day. For this reason, some teachers decide that they collect students' journals once a week and only read a page or two—sometimes a page the student selects and sometimes a page selected by the teacher. Other teachers may never collect students' journals, but might glance at that during class time or might ask students to incorporate quotes and ideas from their journal into collected assignments. You can set limits on the degree to which you have access to students' journals. Many teachers establish a rule that if students wish to keep information in their journals private, they should fold the page over or remove the page entirely.
- 2. What is appropriate content for journals?** It is easy for students to confuse a class journal with a diary (or blog) because both of these formats allow for open-ended writing. Teachers should clarify how the audience and purpose for this writing is distinct from the audience and purpose for writing in a personal diary. In most classrooms, the audience for journal writing is the author, the teacher, and at times, peers. Facing History believes the purpose of journal writing is to provide a space where students can connect their personal experiences and opinions to the concepts and events they are studying in the classroom. Therefore, some material that is appropriate to include in their personal diaries may not be appropriate to include in their class journals. To avoid uncomfortable situations, many teachers find it helpful to clarify topics that are not suitable material for journal entries. Also, as mandatory reporters in most school districts, teachers should explain that they are required to take certain steps, such as informing a school official, if students reveal information about possible harm to themselves or another student. Students should be made aware of these rules, as well as other guidelines you might have about appropriate journal writing content.
- 3. How will journals be evaluated?** Many students admit that they are less likely to share their true thoughts or express questions when they are worried about a grade based on getting the "right" answer or using proper grammar or spelling. Therefore, we suggest that if you choose to grade students' journals, which many teachers decide to do, that you base these grades on criteria such as effort, thoughtfulness, completion, creativity, curiosity, and making connections between the past and the present. Additionally, there are many ways to provide students

- with feedback on their journals besides traditional grading, such as by writing comments or asking questions. Students can even evaluate their own journals for evidence of intellectual and moral growth. For example, you might have students look through their journal to find evidence of their ability to ask questions or to make connections between what was happening in Nazi Germany and an event from their own life.
4. **What forms of expression can be included in a journal?** Students learn and communicate best in different ways. The journal is an appropriate space to respect different learning styles. Some students may wish to draw their ideas, rather than record thoughts in words. Other students may feel most comfortable responding in concept webs and lists, as opposed to prose. When you introduce the journal to students, you might brainstorm different ways that they might express their thoughts.
 5. **How can journals be used to help students build vocabulary?** Throughout this unit, students will be encountering new vocabulary, while they develop a more sophisticated understanding of concepts which might already be familiar to them. From the earliest days of Facing History, the journal was used as a place to help students build their vocabulary through constructing "working definitions." The phrase "working definition" implies that our understanding of concepts evolve as we are confronted with new information and experiences. Students' definitions of words such as "identity" or "belonging" should be richer at the end of the unit than they are on day one. We suggest you use the journal, perhaps a special section of the journal, as a space where students can record, review, and refine their definitions of important terms referred to in this unit. (Note: each lesson plan includes a list of key terms.)
 6. **How should journal content be publicly shared?** Most Facing History teachers have found that students are best able to express themselves when they believe that their journal is a private space. Therefore, we suggest that information in students' journals is never publicly shared without the consent of the writer. At the same time, we encourage you to provide multiple opportunities for students to voluntarily share ideas and questions they have recorded in their journals. Some students may feel more comfortable reading directly from their journals than speaking "off-the-cuff" in class discussions.

Once you settle on the norms and expectations for journal writing in your class, there are many possible ways that you can have students record ideas in their journals. Here are some examples:

Teacher-selected prompts: One of the most common ways that teachers use journals is by asking students to respond to a particular prompt. This writing often prepares students to participate in a class activity, helps students make connections between the themes of a lesson and their own lives, or provides an

opportunity for students to make meaning of ideas in a reading or film. In every lesson, you will find suggested prompts for journal writing.

Dual-entry format: Students draw a line down the center of the journal page or fold the page in half. They write the factual notes ("What the text says" or "What the historians say") on one side and on the other side their feelings about the notes ("Reactions").

"Lifted line" responses: One way to have students respond to what they have read is to ask them to "lift a line" - select a particular quotation that strikes them- and then answer questions such as, "What is interesting about this quotation? What ideas does it make you think about? What questions does this line raise for you?"

Brainstorming: The journal is an appropriate place where students can freely list ideas related to a specific word or question. To activate prior knowledge before students learn new material, you might ask students to brainstorm everything they know about a concept or an event. As a strategy for reviewing material, you might ask students to brainstorm ideas they remember about a topic. Moreover, as a pre-writing exercise, students can brainstorm ways of responding to an essay prompt.

Freewriting: Freewriting is open, no-format writing. Freewriting can be an especially effective strategy when you want to help students process particularly sensitive or provocative material. Some students respond extremely well to freewriting while other students benefit from more structure, even if that means a loosely-framed prompt such as, "What are you thinking about after watching/reading/hearing this material? What does this text remind you of?"

Creative writing: Many students enjoy writing poems or short stories that incorporates the themes addressed in a particular lesson. To stimulate their work, some students benefit from ideas that structure their writing, such as a specific poem format or an opening line for a story (examples: Once upon a time, I could not believe my eyes when my friend came running down the street, yelling...).
Drawings, charts and webs: Students do not have to express their ideas in words. At appropriate times, encourage students to draw their feelings or thoughts. They can also use symbols, concept maps, Venn diagrams and other charts to record information.

Note-taking: To help students retain new information, they can record notes in their journals. Notes could be taken in various formats-such as lists, concept maps, or in graphic organizers.

Vocabulary: Students can use their journals as a place to keep their working definitions of terms, noting how those definitions change as they go deeper into the resources. The back section of their journals could be used as a glossary-the

place that students record definitions and where they can turn to review and revise their definitions as these terms come up throughout the unit.

K-W-L charts: To keep track of their learning in this unit, students can keep a K-W-L chart in their journals. In this three column chart, the first column "K" represents what students already know about a topic. The second column, "W," represents what they want to know. And, "L," the third column, is where they record what they have learned.

Interviews: From time to time you might ask students to interview classmates, family, or community members about particular themes or questions. Students can record data from their interviews in their journals.

Sharing: While there will be times when some students will not want to publicly share thoughts from their journals, most of the time students are eager to have the opportunity to select something from their journals to share with a small group or the larger class. There may be times when you let students know in advance that what they wrote will be shared with the class. A pass-around is an exercise where journals are "passed around" from one student to the next. Students read the page that is opened (and only that page!) and then write connections they see in their own lives, current events, or other moments in history.

¹ This article is taken from a lecture; the entire lecture is available in the volume *Adducere* edited by Margaret McDonald, and published by Regis College Press, Denver, Colorado, 1987.

² For more information on essential questions, see
<http://www.authenticeducation.org/bigideas/article.lasso?artId=53>

³ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (Orlando: Harcourt Inc. 1971), 5.

⁴ Quoted in Joachim Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich* (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1970), 39.

Section 1: Introducing the Journey

Essential Questions

- *What is the purpose of education? What kind of education can help someone become more human?*
- *How is a classroom like a community?*

Lessons

Section 1 includes the following lesson:

- Lesson 1: Facing History and Ourselves
- Lesson 2: Classroom Community

Overview

In the opening class periods of any course, it is certainly important and helpful to give students an overview of the course of study that lies ahead. What will they learn about this semester? What topics will they study? What kind of assignments will they be given? How will the teacher evaluate them? For this course, you might take your students on a guided exploration of the table of contents for this curriculum, or give them a brief overview of the Facing History scope and sequence. This is all important information for the students to receive.

However, in the beginning of a Facing History and Ourselves course, it is perhaps even more important to help students *experience* how this course will be different from other courses they have taken. It is essential that they get a sense of the Facing History approach to learning. This section is designed to introduce students to some of the ways in which they will learn throughout the course. They will

- rigorously encounter history through primary sources,
- explore big ideas,
- analyze powerful visual images,
- generate questions,
- use their voices, and
- negotiate expectations for all of the members of their classroom community.

The first lesson immediately plunges students into some of the fundamental questions that underlie this curriculum. What is the relationship between each of us as individuals and the course of history? What does it mean to *face* history? To *face* ourselves? What does it mean to be human, and what kind of education can make us more human? Students will begin the process of reflecting in their journals in the very first class period, and soon after they will engage in the deep analysis of an iconic photograph. The processes introduced in this lesson for observing closely, generating questions, and thinking critically will be repeated throughout the course. This first lesson serves as an introduction to what it means to *think and learn* like a Facing History student.

In the second lesson, students will take a step back and consider themselves both as individual learners and members of a classroom community. What do they need, individually, in order to feel sufficiently safe and supported to share their deep thinking and participate in the deep learning that will take place in this course? What expectations can they agree upon for all members of the class in order to foster a sense of community in which everyone's voice is heard? The tangible goal of this lesson is for the class to create a contract to guide their participation in the course. This lesson may also very well serve as an introduction to the give and take, the balance and negotiation, inherent in democracy. As students consider what it will take to nurture their classroom community over the course of the semester, their suggestions may mirror those that arise as they discuss later in the course what is necessary for citizens to do and value for democracy to thrive.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources from the Facing History website:

- [“Journals in a Facing History Classroom”](#)
- [“Strategic Ways to Use a Facing History Journal”](#)
- [“Media Literacy: Analyzing Visual Images”](#)
- [“Contracting”](#)

Lesson 1: Facing History and Ourselves

Essential Questions:

- *What does it mean to be humane? What kind of education can help someone become more humane?*
- *What does the name “Facing History and Ourselves” suggest about the experience of taking this course?*

Included Resources:

- * 1.1 – Reading: The Journey
- 1.2 – Photograph: What does it mean to face history and ourselves?

* = core resource

Introduction:

In the first lesson of this semester, students will be asked to consider some essential questions about the experience of taking a Facing History and Ourselves course:

- What does education have in common with the experience of a journey?
- What does it mean to be human? What kind of education can make us more human?
- Why is it important to *face* history?
- What is the relationship between history and ourselves?

These “big picture” questions emerge from two resources: a letter from a principal and Holocaust survivor to his teachers (Resource 1.1) and an iconic photograph of a boy held at gunpoint in the Warsaw Ghetto (Resource 1.2). By thinking about these big picture questions, students will begin to articulate their expectations and hopes for the course of study ahead. Additionally, we encourage teachers to provide students with a more concrete overview of the course by introducing the steps of the Facing History scope and sequence or by sharing the table of contents of this curriculum. As a result, students will receive both a glimpse of some of the key concepts that underlie this course and a preview of the path they will follow in the coming months.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “Facing History and Ourselves?”
- Identify a time when knowing something about the past – about history – was important to you or helped you in some way. Why do you think understanding this event was significant for you?
- A principal of a school once said to the teachers at his school, “Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.” What do you think he meant by this statement? What does it mean to become “more human?” What helps people learn how to be “more human?”

Resource 1.1:**Reading: The Journey*****Creating Context***

Facing History students and teachers often compare taking this course to going on a journey. What are the characteristics of a journey? How can the experience of taking a class be like a journey? Record your thoughts in your journal before continuing.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

humane**learned****education****psychopath****Eichmann**

In his book *Teacher and Child*, noted psychologist Haim Ginott includes a copy of a letter that a principal sent to his teachers at the beginning of each new school year.

Dear Teacher,

I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:

Gas chambers built by learned engineers.

Children poisoned by educated physicians.

Infants killed by trained nurses.

Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.

So I am suspicious of education. My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.

Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane.

1.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. What is the purpose of education in your opinion? Take a few moments to brainstorm a list in your journal of the five most important things you learn about in school. Compare your list with your classmates. What similarities do you notice? What differences are there?

2. What is the point the author of the letter above is trying to make? What does it mean to be humane? What does it mean to make students more humane? What kind of education can make a student more humane?
3. What experiences, circumstances, words, or actions might make one less humane? What can we do to prevent this from happening?
4. Which courses that you have taken in school were the most meaningful to you? Why? What do you learn? How did those classes make you feel?
5. What do you hope to learn in this course? What do you hope to experience?

Using Resource 1.1

Video Introductions

The Facing History website contains a variety of short videos that you might show your students in order to introduce the them to this course. Consider the following

- [“A Letter to Teachers: This is Facing History”](#) (5 min.) begins with Facing History executive director Margot Stern Strom reading the letter above, then describing some of her experiences that led her to create the first Facing History course. Teachers and students also provide a quick tour of the Facing History approach to studying history.
- [“Face It”](#) (3 min.) provides a compelling animated overview of the major themes of a Facing History course, and provides details about the organizations impact on teachers and students.
- [“Urban Education and Facing History: Douglass High School in Memphis”](#) (4 min.) introduces Facing History’s work in one school through the words of students and teachers.

Introducing the Scope and Sequence

Students often benefit from beginning with at least a basic road map of scope and sequence the course will follow. As you know, the Facing History scope and sequence typically follows the following thematic order:

1. The Individual and Society
2. We and They
3. Historical Case Study
4. Judgment, Memory, and Legacy
5. Choosing to Participate

You can simply write these five steps on the board and describe them to your students.

Use the following pages from the Facing History website to find helpful language describing each step:

- [“The Journey”](#)
- [“Scope and Sequence”](#)

For a more robust introduction to the scope and sequence of this course, you might also choose to share the Table of Contents for this curriculum with your students. Students will not be able to understand the topic of every lesson by viewing the table of contents, but they will get an idea of the general progression of the course. Consider giving them a brief [3-2-1](#) assignment in order to engage them more deeply in thinking about what is to come. When browsing the table of contents, they can record

3 lessons that look interesting to them

2 questions they have about what they will learn about in this course

1 lesson that they think they might already know something about

Generating Questions

Regardless of the resources you choose to include in this lesson, students might also benefit from taking some time to generate questions about the themes they will soon explore. Consider using the [Question Formulation Technique](#) teaching strategy. Building on the “Dear Teacher” letter above, you can start students with the following prompt: “Your goal is to design a class that helps students become more humane.”

Resource 1.2:**Photograph: What does it mean to face history and ourselves?*****Creating Context***

Think about the name of this course: *Facing History and Ourselves*.

What does the name suggest about this class? How do you think it will be different from other history courses you have taken? What does it mean to face history? How is facing history related to ourselves? Record your thoughts in your journal before continuing.

Analyzing Visual Images

In this course, you will examine many visual resources—artwork, photographs, film. By separating the process of making observations about a visual image from the process of trying to determine the meaning of the image, we can often reach a deeper understanding. The following six-step process will help you do so.

The painting below is by artist Samuel Bak. It is part of a series of works that Bak painted in response to his experiences surviving the Holocaust. This image appears on the cover of *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*, the book on which this course is based. Use this process to analyze the painting.

Step One:

Look deeply. Look at the image for a good long time. Observe shapes, colors, textures, the position of people and objects.

Step Two:

Write down what you see *without making any interpretation* about what the painting is trying to say.

I see...

Step Three:

What questions do you have about this painting that you would need answered before you can begin to interpret it? (Ask as many questions as you have.)

I want to know... I was wondering... Who?... What?... Where?... When?... Why?...

Step Four:

Discuss your questions with a partner or small group to try to find some answers.

Step Five:

What do you think the artist is trying to say? What does the piece mean, and who do you

think is the intended audience?

I think the artist is trying to say... I think the intended audience is...

Step Six:

Discuss your interpretation with the class, and be prepared to support your view by referring to specifics in the image.



1.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Describe your experience analyzing this image. How did it feel to follow the six-step procedure? Which steps were most challenging? Which were most illuminating?
2. Review your thoughts about what it means to *face* history. What kind of history needs to be faced? What parts of this painting might symbolize the idea of history that needs to be face? What should we do after we face history?
3. Why do you think this painting was chosen for the cover of *Facing History and*

Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior? What does it suggest about the course you are beginning? What questions does it raise for you about the history you are about study?

Using Resource 1.2

Starting with Image Analysis

Starting the course by asking students to analyze a painting (or photograph) can be an effective way to engage students both emotionally and intellectually in considering the meaning of “Facing History and Ourselves.” It is exploring this broader theme—What does it mean to *face* history?—that is the goal of this exercise. It is important to avoid introducing too much historical detail in this first exercise, because students have not yet had the benefit of absorbing any of the framework for understanding and engaging that the Facing History scope and sequence provides.

Because the class has not yet delved into the history of the Holocaust, you might limit the amount of historical background you give the class about the Holocaust. Instead, you might record the questions students generate about the painting on chart paper that you can keep or hang in the classroom. That way you can return to these questions throughout the course.

You might choose to substitute a photo for this exercise. It is not necessary that the photo pertain to the specific history of the Holocaust in order to provoke deep thinking about the meaning of “Facing History and Ourselves.” Photographs you might consider include:

- [“The Soiling of Old Glory”](#): A famous photograph from Boston’s busing crisis in the 1970s.
- A photograph of [Elizabeth Eckford](#) walking to school in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957

A [gallery of images of additional Bak works](#) is also available on the Facing History website.

Regardless of the image you choose to start with, take great care to choose an image that is appropriate for the students in your particular class. For instance, one that has significant meaning to your local community might not prove effective in prompting deep thinking about the themes of Facing History and Ourselves. Instead, students might get bogged down in the details of the image with which they are familiar.

Introducing the Process

The six-step process outlined above for analyzing images can be adapted for the analysis of any photograph, painting, or even film that you use in this course. Students will use this process again when analyzing propaganda images in Lesson 16. Therefore, it is important to take the time to introduce the process carefully this first time that you use it. Students are often tempted to skip ahead, offering their analyses before taking the time to

simply observe. Be sure to help them understand the difference between observation and interpretation, and use this lesson as an opportunity to practice both.

You also might have students work in pairs or small groups as they follow this process. Consider structuring this activity using the [Think, Pair, Share](#) teaching strategy.

Lesson 2: Contracting for a Reflective Classroom Community

Essential Question:

- How is a classroom like a community?
- What needs to happen in a classroom for everyone to feel safe sharing their ideas and questions?

Included Resources:

* 2.1 – Classroom Contracts: Creating a Safe and Reflective Environment

* = core resource

Introduction:

We believe that a Facing History and Ourselves classroom is in many ways a microcosm of democracy—a place where explicit rules and implicit norms protect everyone’s right to speak; where different perspectives can be heard and valued; where members take responsibility for themselves, each other, and the group as a whole; and where each member has a stake and a voice in collective decisions. Your students may or may not have experienced all of these characteristics in other classrooms and learning environments. Therefore, it is essential at the beginning of your Facing History course to facilitate the beginning of a supportive, reflective classroom community. This typically takes significant, explicit focus in the opening weeks of the course, and once established, both you and your students must continue to nurture the reflective community on an ongoing basis through the ways that you participate and respond to each other.

We believe that a reflective, supportive classroom community is fostered by:

- creating a sense of trust and openness
- encouraging participants to speak and listen to each other
- making space and time for silent reflection
- offering multiple avenues for participation and learning
- helping students appreciate the points of view, talents, and contributions of less vocal members

Some teachers already customarily create classroom contracts with their students at the start of each course. If you do not typically do so, we recommend that before beginning your class’s journey through the Facing History scope and sequence, you engage the students in the process of creating one. Contracts typically include several clearly defined rules or expectations for participation, and consequences for those who do not fulfill their obligations as members of the learning community. Any contract created collaboratively by students and the teacher together should be consistent with the classroom rules already established by the teacher. Many Facing History teachers differentiate their own classroom rules, which are non-negotiable, from the guidelines set forth in the classroom contract, which are negotiated by the students with the teacher’s guidance. A sample contract, along with discussion questions and strategies for incorporating student voices into the contract are included in Resource 2.1.

We have also found that the classroom environment is enhanced by emphasizing [journal writing](#) and employing multiple formats for facilitating large and small group discussions. Throughout this curriculum guide, we will suggest specific teaching strategies designed to encourage students' critical thinking and encourage each of them to share their ideas. Detailed descriptions and examples of these strategies can be found in the [Classroom Strategies](#) section of the Facing History website.

We encourage you to frequently remind your students that, regardless of the classroom strategy you are using or the topic you are addressing, it is essential that their participation honors the contract they helped create and follows your own classroom rules. In addition, we strongly recommend that you post the contract in a prominent location in your classroom and that when students stray from the guidelines set forth in the contract you refer to the specific language in the contract when you redirect to them. You might find that when one student strays from the guidelines of the contract, other students will respond by citing the specific expectations listed in the contract.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Identify a time when you felt confident sharing your ideas and questions in class. What about this environment was empowering for you? Identify when you have had ideas or questions but have not shared them. What was happening at those moments that may have caused you to stay silent?
- What needs to happen in a classroom for you to feel confident sharing your ideas and questions?
- Thinking about classroom experiences from your past, what are some classroom rules or norms that you think have worked well?
- What do you think people in this class already “know” about you? What do you want them to know about you?

Resource 2.1:**Reading: Classroom Contracts - Creating a Safe and Reflective Environment***Creating Context*

Identify a time when you felt safe sharing your ideas and questions in a class. What factors made you feel safe and willing to share?

Now, identify a time when you have had ideas or questions in class but have not shared them. What was happening at those moments that may have caused you to stay silent?

Record your thoughts about these questions in your journals.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

contract

rule

community

expectation

This course may be different than others you have experienced. You will be asked to share your own ideas and questions—in discussions and through writing in a journal. You will be asked to listen carefully to the voices of others—of people in your classroom community as well as the voices of people in the history you are studying. In this course, you may hear things that spark powerful emotions, such as anger or sadness. You will be asked to use both your head and your heart to make sense of the choices people have made in the past, and the choices people continue to make today.

As you embark on this journey with the students and teacher in your classroom, it is important for you to support each other along the way so that everyone can learn. In order to help you do this, it is important for all of the students in your class to work together, and with your teacher, to create a contract. Your contract will contain a set of guidelines or expectations for how each of you will participate in this course. After creating this contract, your classmates, your teacher, and you can remind each other of its expectations when one or more of you begins to stray from them. That way, all of the members of your classroom community will help ensure that every student has a voice in the powerful learning and discussion that takes place.

Consider the following list of guidelines for your classroom contract. As you work together to create your own, we encourage you to include (or modify) any or all of the items on this list:

- Listen with respect. Try to understand what someone is saying before rushing to judgment.
- Make comments using “I” statements. (“I disagree with what you said. Here’s what I think...”)

- If you do not feel safe making a comment or asking a question, write the thought down. You can ask the teacher after class to help you find a safe way to share the idea.
- If someone says an idea or question that helps your own learning, say “thank you.”
- If someone says something that hurts or offends you, do not attack the person. Acknowledge that the comment—not the person—hurt your feeling and explain why.
- Put-downs are never okay.
- If you don’t understand something, ask a question.
- Think with your head and your heart.
- Share talking time—provide room for others to speak.
- Do not interrupt others while they are speaking.
- Write down thoughts, in a journal or notebook, if you don’t have time to say them during our time together.

2.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. Which of the guidelines suggested above do you think is the most important? Which will make you feel most safe in sharing your questions and ideas with the class?
2. Which of the guidelines above do you think would be hardest for you to follow? Why? Which do you think would be easiest for you to follow?
3. Make a list of three expectations that you believe should be a part of your class’s contract. You might copy or modify items from the list above or write different ones. Be prepared to share your ideas as your class drafts its contract.
4. Whose responsibility is it to enforce your class’s contract? What can your classmates, your teacher, and you do throughout this course to make sure that the expectations listed in the contract you create will be followed by everyone?
5. What is the difference between being *proactive* and *reactive*? How can you and the other members of your class be proactive in making sure that there is a safe, supportive, and reflective environment for everyone? How do you hope the class will react if there are moments when the class does not feel like a safe environment to you or anyone else?

Using Resource 2.1

Community Building Activities and Icebreakers

If you have a class of students who do not know each other well, it is important to

include activities that will break the ice and help students get to know each other in order to build a stronger classroom community. You might start each class period with a short community building activity for the first week or two of the course. The [Teaching Strategies](#) section of the Facing History website includes a variety of community building activities. Many of these activities can also be integrated into the class's exploration of identity in Section 2. Here is a short list of activities we especially recommend:

- [Using Names to Understand Each Other](#)
- [Life Road Maps](#)
- [People Bingo](#)
- [Post-it Note Partners](#)
- ["Where I'm From" Poems](#)

Creating Your Classroom Contract

While student participation in creating your classroom contract is essential, teachers should set some basic parameters and guide the process. Before beginning this process, consider the language you want to use. For instance, Many teachers reserve the term *rules* for their own, non-negotiable classroom rules and procedures, while using the terms *expectations* or *guidelines* for their classroom contracts. You might even have students reflect on the difference between *expectations* and *rules*.

Also, consider a format for this contract that you think would work best for you and your students. Some teachers have found that a few, brief norms work well (e.g. "Respect yourself, respect others, respect the space"). Other teachers have found that it helps to have a more concrete list of dos and don'ts with clear consequences attached.

Here's one way you can structure contract-writing:

1. Divide the class into small groups. Give students five minutes to come up with 2-3 norms or "rules" they want their peers to follow during the elective course. We suggest you model this exercise by showing students several rules or norms that are important to you.
2. Have students write each rule on a separate piece of paper.
3. Post the papers around the classroom.
4. Ask students to go around the room and sign their names on any rules that they think are reasonable expectations that can help ensure a safe learning environment. There will likely be overlap, and that is okay. Tell students to sign their names on any paper that has a norm they support, even if it is a repeat.
5. Review the pages that have signatures of a majority of students. Use this to come up with a class contract.
6. Make sure that rules and norms that are important to you are also included on the class contract. It is important for students to see the teacher as a member of the classroom community and as an adult who is ultimately responsible for maintaining a positive learning environment.

While this process might not represent a consensus, it does reflect what most students desire in order to feel safe in this course. If you have time, you can facilitate a discussion

about what steps could be taken to help achieve a class consensus. For more ideas, refer to the [contracting](#) teaching strategy.

Section 2: The Individual and Society

Essential Questions

- *Who am I? What factors shape my identity?*
- *How much of one's identity is determined by his or her choices? How much of one's identity is determined by the labels, assumptions, and expectations of others?*
- *How does identity influence the choices we make?*

Lessons

Section 2 includes the following lessons:

- Lesson 3: Identity - The Individual in Society
- Lesson 4: Identity and Decision Making

Overview

This section introduces the theme of identity to students, for whom the question “Who am I?” is especially critical at this point in their adolescent lives. As we search for the answer to this question, we must also consider the following questions:

- How is our identity formed?
- To what extent are we defined by our talents, tastes, and interests?
- To what extent are we defined by our membership in a particular ethnic group?
- To what extent are we defined by our social and economic class?
- To what extent are we defined by our religion?
- To what extent are we defined by the nation in which we live?
- How much of our identity is shaped by how we think others define us?
- How do our identities inform our values, ideas, and actions?
- In what ways might we assume different identities in different contexts?
- How do we manage these multiple identities?

In this unit, students will explore how individuals and groups develop their identities. Understanding the concept of identity is not only valuable for students' own social, moral, and intellectual development, but it is also critical to understanding the choices made by individuals and groups during the pivotal moments in history that students will learn about later in this course.

The goal of the first lesson in this section, Lesson 3, is to establish a framework for understanding identity as a tension between the individual and society. By exploring a variety of readings and films, students will consider what parts of their identity they decide for themselves and what parts are decided by other people and circumstances. Additionally, several of the resources in the lesson introduce students to the dilemmas people face when different parts of their identity come into conflict.

Lesson 4 deepens our examination of the individual *in* society by looking at how identity influences the choices we make. This lesson introduces some essential vocabulary for

this course—*stereotype, prejudice, discrimination*—and invites students to consider how these human behaviors complicate an otherwise seemingly simple choice a man must make about whether or not to help a woman on the subway. This lesson highlights the significant consequences of many of the assumptions we make about each other, and it prepares students to explore issues of membership and belonging that they will encounter in the next section.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- Chapter 1 of the resource book, [*Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*](#)
- Chapter 1 of the resource book, [*Race and Membership in American History: The Eugenics Movement*](#)
- [*Stories of Identity: Religion, Migration, and Belonging in a Changing World*](#)

Lesson 3: Identity - The Individual In Society

Essential Questions:

- ***Who am I? What factors shape my identity?***
- ***How much of one's identity is determined by his or her choices? How much of one's identity is determined by the labels, assumptions, and expectations of others?***
- ***How can we respond to limitations and contradictions that arise from different parts of our identities?***

Included Resources:

- * 3.1 – Reading: The Bear That Wasn't
- 3.2 – Reading: Beyond Classification
- 3.3 – Reading: Searching for Identity
- 3.4 – Reading: Transcultural Identities
- 3.5 – Reading: Orientation Day
- 3.6 – Reading: Identity and Belonging

* = core resource

Introduction:

In this lesson, students will begin to answer the question, “Who am I?”. More importantly, however, they will think deeply about the question itself and consider its significant complexity.

The first resource in this lesson, *The Bear That Wasn't*, introduces students to the tension we all experience between the how we define ourselves and how others seek to define us. This is a tension with which adolescents are quite familiar. Sometimes others attach labels to us that differ from those we would choose for ourselves. In *The Bear That Wasn't*, author Frank Tashlin uses words and pictures to describe the process of being defined by others. Reading Tashlin's story helps students think about how our identities are formed by our perceptions of ourselves and by how others define us. This awareness not only helps students better understand themselves, but also helps them better understand the choices made by individuals and groups throughout history. Facing History teachers regularly find that students frequently make meaningful connections with *The Bear That Wasn't* throughout the entire course.

This lesson follows the story of the bear with a series of real-life, first-hand reflections on identity. These resources provide examples of how people from around the world have attempted to answer the question, “Who am I?” They illuminate the tensions that emerge when individuals feel forced to prioritize one aspect of their identity above another. Reading and watching these stories can help students think about the many factors (i.e. nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-economic class, age, interests, race, etc.) that influence their own identities.

One common way to define one's identity is to describe "where I'm from." Individuals and groups often define themselves as coming from a tradition, a culture, a religion, or a history. Especially at this time of globalization and migration, students can easily recognize how it is possible, and even likely, that the question "Where am I from?" is met with multiple answers. A student can be from a neighborhood in Memphis, while also being from Mexico, while also being from a specific family history. Cultural psychologist Carola Suárez-Orozco writes that many children, especially immigrant youth, "must creatively fuse aspects of two or more cultures—the parental tradition and the new culture or cultures. In so doing, they synthesize an identity that does not require them to choose between cultures but incorporates traits of both cultures."¹

In addition to introducing important ideas about identity, this lesson also provides an important opportunity for community-building in your class. Several activities for doing this are suggested in the *Building Community* section at the end of this lesson. These activities are designed to provide ways to help students express their answers to the question "Who am I?", and we encourage you to give students the opportunity to share this work with their classmates. Throughout this course, students will be engaging in discussions about complicated ethical issues, and they will probably experience moments of disagreement with some of their classmates. Exercises like sharing identity charts or "Where I'm From" poems can help students understand where these divergent views might be coming from, and this understanding can foster more respectful listening, deeper dialogue, and better informed judgment—vital skills for citizens in today's diverse communities.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- How much of who you are is determined at your birth? How much of your identity do you decide? What aspects of your identity, if any, are determined by others?
- What words or "labels" would you use to describe yourself? What words might others use to describe you? What words might others use to describe you that you would not choose for yourself?
- To what groups do you belong? How does your membership in these groups shape how others see you?
- Have you ever felt pressured to choose between two or more identities? If so, how do you manage this tension?
- Think about a time when you have felt labeled. How did you feel? How did you respond? What other options did you have?
- How is your identity affected when you move from one place to another (e.g. from English class to gym class, from home to school, from one city to another, etc)? What stays the same? What changes?

Additional Resources:

- Video – [The Eye of the Storm](#)
- Video – [A Class Divided](#)

- Video – [Becoming American: The Chinese Experience](#)
- Lesson – “[Becoming American: Exploring Names and Identities](#)”
- Lesson – “[Becoming American: Between Two Worlds](#)”
- Video – [Family Name](#)
- Internet – [Facing Today](#) articles about Identity
- Video – “[Arn Chorn Pond: Everyone Has a Story](#)”

Additional Reading from Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior:

- “Stereotyping,” pp. 16-20
- “Conformity and Identity,” pp. 31-33
- “In the Barrio,” pp. 33-37

Additional Reading from Race and Membership in American History:

- “What Is Your Race?,” pp. 13-16

Additional Readings from Stories of Identity:

- “Identity in Diaspora,” pp. 32-35
- “A New Concept of Identity,” pp. 93-98

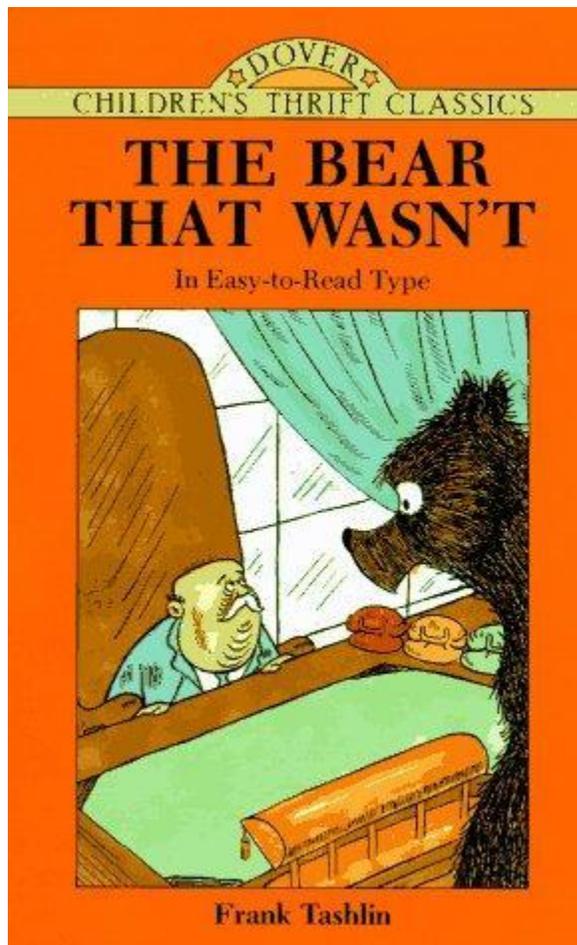
Resource 3.1:**Reading: The Bear That Wasn't*****Creating Context***

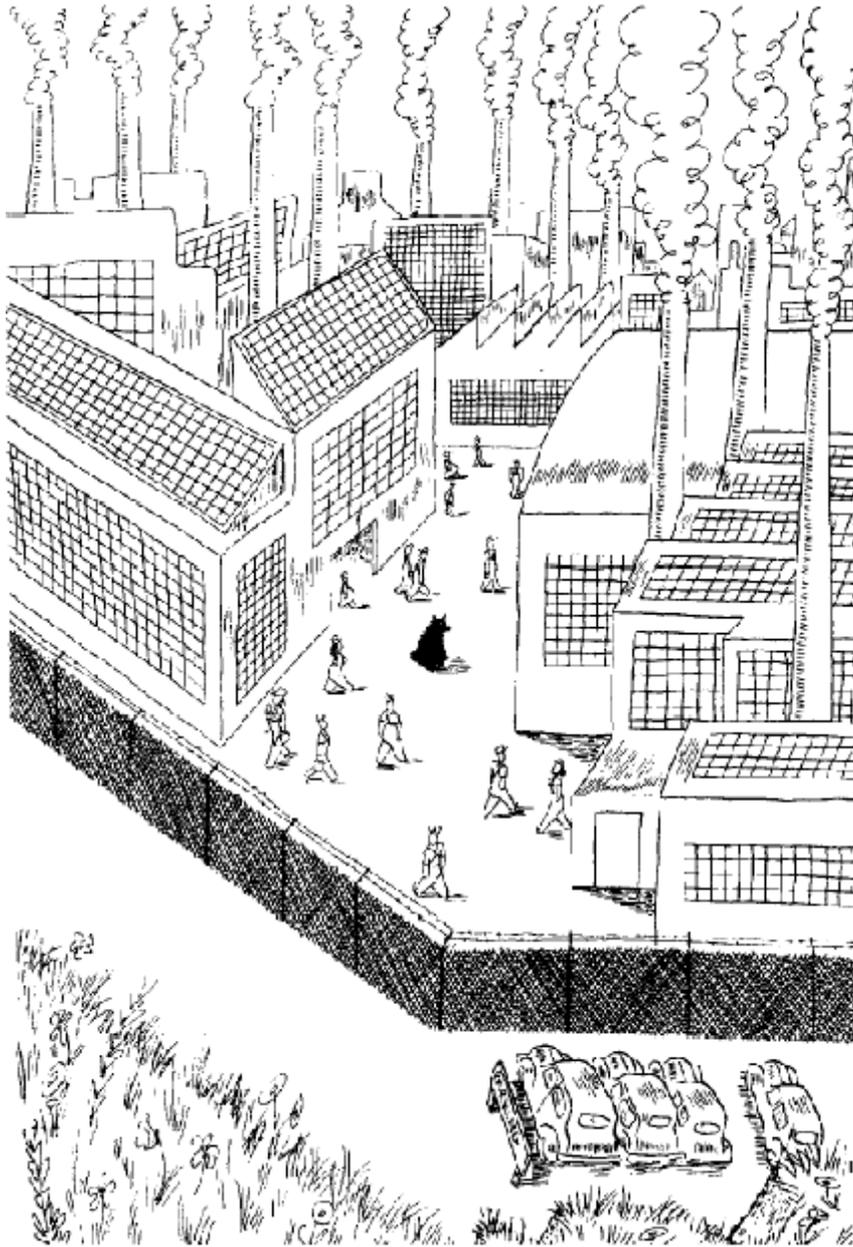
No two people are exactly alike. Each is an individual with unique talents, interests, and values. At the same time, each also belongs to many different groups. Everywhere, to be human means to live with others. In groups, we meet our most basic needs. In groups, we learn a language, customs, and values. We also satisfy our yearning to belong, receive comfort in times of trouble, and find companions who share our dreams and beliefs. Even as we struggle to define our unique identity, those groups attach labels to us that may differ from those we would choose for ourselves. In the book, *The Bear That Wasn't*, Frank Tashlin uses words and pictures to describe that process.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

identity
foreman

general manager
bureaucracy





Once upon a time, in fact it was on a Tuesday, the Bear saw that it was time to go into a cave and hibernate. And that was just what he did. Not long afterward, in fact it was on a Wednesday, lots of workers arrived near that cave. While the Bear slept, they built a great, huge factory.

As winter turned to spring, the Bear awoke and stepped out of his cave. His eyes popped.

Where was the forest?

Where was the grass?

Where were the trees?

Where were the flowers?

WHAT HAD HAPPENED?

“I must be dreaming,” he said. “Of course, I’m dreaming.” But it wasn’t a dream. It was real. Just then the Foreman came out of the factory. “Hey, you get back to work,” he said.

The Bear replied, “I don’t work here. I’m a Bear.”

The Foreman laughed, “That’s a fine excuse for a man to keep from doing any work. Saying he’s a Bear.”

The Bear said, “But, I am a Bear.”

The Foreman stopped laughing. He was very mad.

“Don’t try to fool me,” he said. “You’re not a Bear. You’re a silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat. I’m going to take you to the *General Manager*.”

The General Manager also insisted the Bear was a silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat.

The Bear said, “No, you’re mistaken. I am a Bear.”

The General Manager was very mad, too.

The Bear said, “I’m sorry to hear you say that. You see, I am a Bear.”



The Third Vice
President was even madder.



The Second Vice
President was more than
mad or madder. He was
furious.

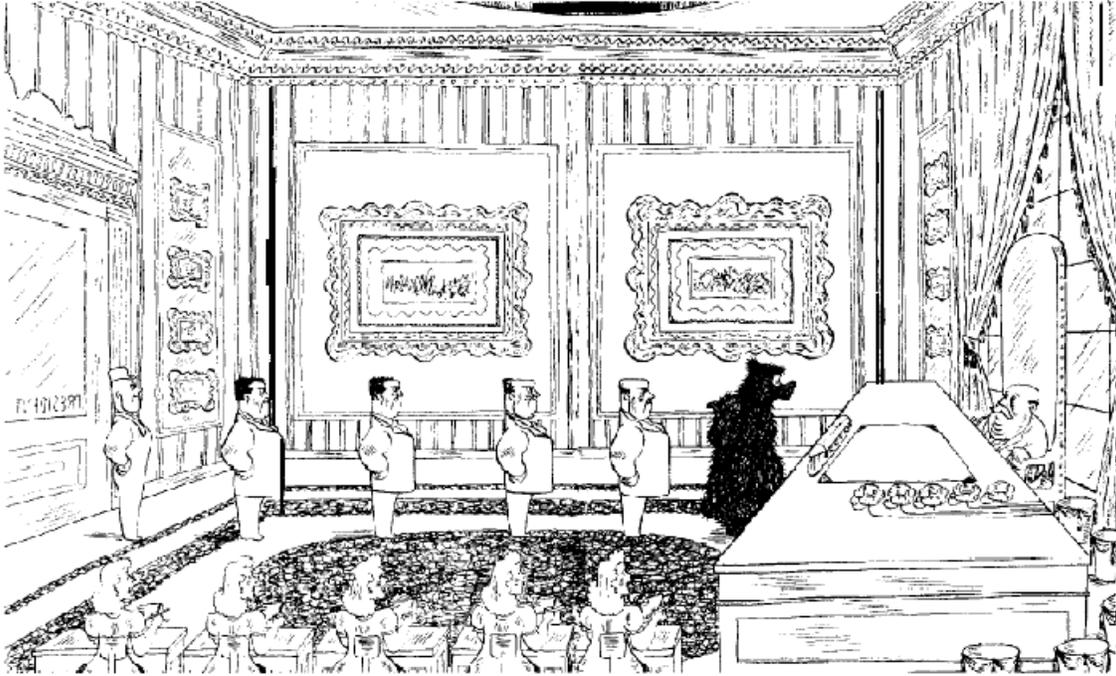


The First Vice
President yelled in
rage.

He said, "You're not a Bear. You're a silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat. I'm going to take you to the *President*."

The Bear pleaded, "This is a dreadful error, you know, because ever since I can remember, I've always been a Bear."





And that is exactly what the Bear told the President.

“Thank you for telling me,” the President said. “You can’t be a Bear. Bears are only in a zoo or a circus. They’re never inside a factory and that’s where you are; inside a factory. So how can you be a Bear?”

The Bear said, “But I am a Bear.”

The President said, “Not only are you a silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat, but you are also very stubborn. So I’m going to prove it to you, once and for all, that you are *not* a Bear.”

The Bear said, “But I *am* a Bear.”

The President packed his vice presidents and the Bear into a car and drove to the zoo. The Bears in the zoo said the Bear was not a Bear, because if he were a Bear, he would be inside a cage.

The Bear said, “But I am a Bear.”

So they all left the zoo and drove to the nearest circus.

“Is he a Bear?” the President asked the circus Bears.

The Bears said no. If he were a Bear he would be wearing a little hat with a striped ribbon holding onto a balloon and riding a bicycle.

The Bear said, “But I am a Bear.”

When the President and his vice presidents returned to the factory, they put the Bear to work on a big machine with a lot of other men. The Bear worked on the big machine for many, many months.

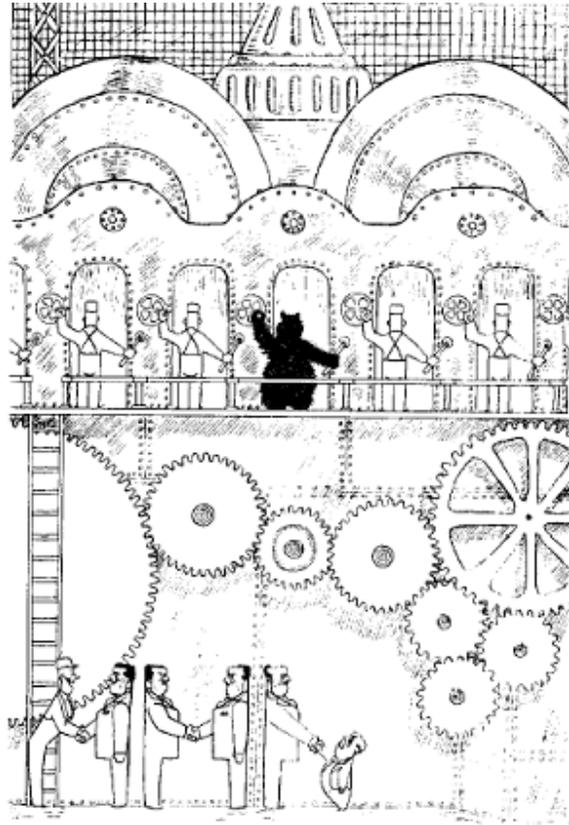
After a long, long time, the factory closed and all the workers went away. The Bear was the last one left. As he left the shut-down factory, he saw geese flying south and the leaves falling from the trees. Winter was coming, he thought. It was time to hibernate.

He found a cave and was about to enter when he stopped. "I can't go in a cave. I'm NOT a Bear. I'm a silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat."

As the days grew colder and the snow fell, the Bear sat shivering with cold. "I wish I were a Bear," he thought.

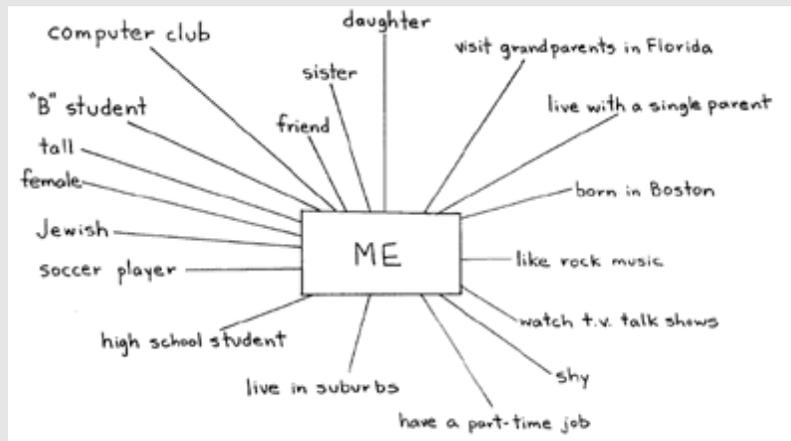
Then suddenly he got up and walked through the deep snow toward the cave. Inside it was cozy and snug. The icy wind and cold, cold snow couldn't reach him here. He felt warm all over.

He sank down on a bed of pine boughs and soon he was happily asleep and dreaming sweet dreams, just like all bears do, when they hibernate. So even though the FOREMAN and the GENERAL MANAGER and the THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT and the SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT and the FIRST VICE PRESIDENT and the ZOO BEARS and the CIRCUS BEARS had said, he was a silly man who needed a shave and wore a fur coat, I don't think he really believed it. Do you? No indeed, he knew he wasn't a silly man, and he wasn't a silly Bear either.²



3.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. “Who am I?” is a question that each of us asks at some time in our life. In answering, we define ourselves. The word *define* means “to separate one thing from all of the others.” What distinguishes the Bear from all other bears? From all other workers at the Factory? Using evidence from the text, create an identity chart for the Bear. The diagram below is an example of an identity chart. What phrases does the Bear use to define himself? What words did others use to define him? Include evidence and direct quotations from the reading on the diagram.



2. Create an identity chart for yourself. Begin with the words or phrases that describe the way you see yourself. Add those words and phrases to your chart. Most people define themselves by using categories important to their culture. They include not only gender, age, and physical characteristics but also ties to a particular religion, class, neighborhood, school, and nation.

Compare your charts with those of your classmates. Consider the following questions:

- Which categories were included on every chart?
 - Which appeared on only a few charts?
3. As you look at other charts your perspective may change. You may wish to add new categories to the one you created. This activity allows you to see the world through multiple perspectives. Think about these questions:
 - What labels would others attach to you?
 - Do they see you as a leader or a follower? A conformist or a rebel?
 - Are you a peacemaker, a bully, or a bystander?
 - How do society’s labels influence the way you see yourself? The kinds of choices you and others make each day? For example, if a person is known as a bully, how likely is he or she to live up to that label?

4. What does the title *The Bear That Wasn't* mean? Why didn't the Factory officials recognize the Bear for what he was? Why did it become harder and harder for him to maintain his identity as he moved through the bureaucracy of the Factory? Use evidence from the story to support your answer.
5. What is Tashlin suggesting about the relationship between an individual and society? How do you know? What does the story say about the way a person's identity is defined? What does it say about the way powerful individuals and groups shape the identity of those with less power and authority? What sentence or phrase from the story helps you answer this question?
6. How does our need to be a part of a group affect our actions? Why is it so difficult for a person to go against the group?
7. Have you ever experienced a similar problem to that of the Bear? How did you deal with it? Were you able to maintain your independence? How difficult was it to do so?
8. Create a working definition for the word *identity*. What does it mean to you? What ideas do you associate with the word? You can update, add to, and revise your working definition as you continue through this course.

Working Definitions

Throughout this course, you will encounter words that you know but have difficulty explaining. Instead of relying only on a dictionary to define these words, develop your own working definitions. Doing so will help you can make those words an integral part of your vocabulary. The following is an example of a working definition that builds to encompass more and more information:

Bureaucracy:

- like a tree or an organization
- a structure that organizes the work of business or government
- the system set up in the factory described in *The Bear That Wasn't* (foreman – general manager – 3rd vice-president – and so on.)

You may want to include pictures in your working definition. Often they reveal more about a complex idea than a definition that relies only on words. Draw a picture of a bureaucracy and add it to your working definition. Then create a working definition for the word *identity*. A useful reference is *Visual Thinking* by Rudolf Arnheim (University of California Press, 1969). It suggests new ways of looking at ideas.

Using Resource 3.1

Using Alternate Formats

This curriculum guide includes an abbreviated version of *The Bear That Wasn't*. We recommend that, if possible, you read the entire storybook. You can [borrow class sets of the book](#) from Facing History's library.

A [video](#) depicting this story is also available on the Facing History website. You might show the video and provide copies of the reading for your students to follow along.

Reading *The Bear That Wasn't* Aloud

The bear that wasn't lends itself to being read aloud (see [read-aloud](#) strategy). Student volunteers can read the following parts: Narrator, Bear, Foreman, General Manager, Third Vice President, Second Vice President, First Vice President, President, zoo bears, circus bears. Alternatively, have the class watch an animated film-version of this story.

Creating Identity Charts

To help students compare how the Bear sees himself and how others see the Bear, ask students to create an [identity chart](#) for the Bear. Have students draw a large circle in the middle of the page. In the circle, students write words and phrases that represent how the Bear describes himself. Outside of the circle, students write words and phrases that represent how the Bear is described by others. Students can do this individually or in small groups. Either way, encourage students to use specific evidence and direct quotations from the story in their identity charts for the bear.

After creating an identity chart for the bear, students should also create identity charts for themselves. Consider using a variation of this activity. For instance, you might have students create identity charts in the form of a pie chart. Factors that have a larger influence on identity would be represented by a bigger "slice" of the pie. You could also have students create their identity charts by tracing their hand on a piece of paper. All of the words that they use to describe themselves can be represented inside the shape of the hand, and all of the labels that others use to describe the student can be represented outside the shape of the hand.

Enhancing the Discussion

After students make identity charts for the Bear, lead a class discussion about the meaning of this story. Use the questions in Comprehension and Connections above to guide the conversation.

You might enhance the discussion by using the [barometer](#) teaching strategy. Pose the question: "Which do you think has more influence on identity—the labels we give ourselves or the labels others give us?" Then, post a sign reading, "Labels we give ourselves" on one end of the line and one reading, "Labels others give us" on the other side. Then ask students to stand on the point along the line that represents their answer to the question, "Which do you think has more bearing on identity?" Consider conducting the activity in two phases, first asking students to base their answers only on evidence

from the story and second allowing students to bring their own experiences into the conversation.

Connecting to Bullying

You might ask your students to consider whether or not the bear in *The Bear That Wasn't* is the victim of bullying. How does the power to label and define others' identities figure into the behavior of a bully? Facing History has created [a discussion guide to the film *Bully*](#), a documentary that follows the stories of several young people who are bullied. The film, which has not yet been released on DVD, and the guide can help you both delve deeper into the issue of bullying and think about its connection to the bear.

Using Readings 3.2 - 3.6

Exploring Readings About the Individual and Society

To support students' exploration of the relationship between individuals and society, and how one's identity results from a tension between the two, Facing History and Ourselves has published many autobiographical narratives in which individuals wrestle with the question "Who am I?" Some of those readings include "Beyond Classification" (3.2), "Searching for Identity" (3.3), "Transcultural Identities" (3.4), "Orientation Day" (3.5), and "Identity and Belonging" (3.6).

There are a variety of ways to incorporate these readings and other resources (suggested below) into this lesson. Consider the following suggestions:

- Have students read several texts and use evidence from the readings to compare and contrast what the authors reveal about the factors that shape identity.
- Divide students into groups and have them discuss and present the main ideas in these texts using the [jigsaw](#) strategy.
- Divide students into groups, provide each group a reading, and then ask students to identify thought-provoking quotations from their reading to share with the larger class. These quotations could also be used as the basis of a [Big Paper](#) activity focused on the theme of identity.
- Instead of using all of the readings included here, choose one or two readings (from this lesson or from the additional resources listed in the lesson overview) that will resonate with your particular class.

With any of these suggestions, Comprehension and Connections questions after each reading can guide students' analysis. Appendix 3A is a worksheet that provides another way to organize student responses to these readings.

Using Film to Explore the Individual in Society

Consider showing your students the following videos to deepen your discussion of the individual in society:

- The short film, [The Eye of the Storm](#) (27 min.), describes Jane Elliott's classroom experiment in the early 1960s in which she separated her students by eye color. This film provides a powerful illustration of how the labels that are placed on people can shape how they think about themselves, how they behave, and even how well they perform on academic tasks. This film provides evidence of the effects that labels have on identity and anticipates a variety of issues of membership the class will explore in the next section. An expanded version of this film, [A Class Divided](#), which follows up on the class twenty years later, is also available from the Facing History library

- Including a short clip about the Chinese American actress Anna May Wong from the documentary [*Becoming American: The Chinese in Experience*](#) is a particularly useful for exploring the consequences of labels and stereotypes on identity.

The clip, which describes Wong’s struggles to be accepted as fully American in the United States and as fully Chinese in China, can be found in the episode “Between Two Worlds.” After watching the nine minute clip, you might ask your students to consider the following questions:

- How did Anna May Wong define her identity? How did others define her?
- What stereotypes did Anna May Wong have to confront in her film career? How did they limit the choices she had as an actress?
- How did the Chinese public respond to the roles she played in her film career?
- What were the consequences of the labels and stereotypes that Anna May Wong had to endure in her career?

Note: This rich and versatile video clip is also recommended in the next section of this curriculum. You might choose to use it only once, but it is also short enough that you might watch it twice with your class, once in this section to gain insight into issues of identity and once in the next section to gain insight into issues of membership.

Resource 3.2:**Reading: Beyond Classification*****Creating Context***

In his poem “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman resisted being limited by the labels that he or anyone else used to define his identity. He wrote: “Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes.”

Look back over your identity chart. Have you ever felt confined or limited by a label that you or others have used to describe you? What was the label, and how did you feel confined by it?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

middle class	race
subtlety	class
idiom	
vernacular	

Dalton Conley understands the power of the assumptions of society. He writes:

I am not your typical middle-class white male. I am middle class, despite the fact that my parents had no money; I am white, but I grew up in an inner-city housing project where most everyone was black or Hispanic. I enjoyed a range of privileges that were denied my neighbors but that most Americans take for granted. In fact, my childhood was like a social science experiment: Find out what being middle class really means by raising a kid from a so-called good family in a so-called bad neighborhood. Define whiteness by putting a light-skinned kid in the midst of a community of color. If the exception proves the rule, I’m that exception.

Ask any African American to list the adjectives that describe them and they will likely put black or African American at the top of the list. Ask someone of European descent the same question and white will be far down the list, if it’s there at all. Not so for me. I’ve studied whiteness the way I would a foreign language. I know its grammar, its parts of speech; I know the subtleties of its idioms, its vernacular words and phrases to which the native speaker has never given a second thought. There’s an old saying that you never really know your own language until you study another. It’s the same with race and class.

In fact, race and class are nothing more than a set of stories we tell ourselves to get through the world, to organize our reality. . . . One of [my mother’s favorite stories] was how I had wanted a baby sister so badly that I kidnapped a black child in the playground of the housing complex. She told this story each time my real sister, Alexandra, and I were standing, arms crossed, facing away from each

other after some squabble or fistfight. The moral of the story for my mother was that I should love my sister, since I had wanted to have her so desperately. The message I took away, however, was one of race. I was fascinated that I could have been oblivious to something that years later feels so natural, so innate as race does.¹

Diana Chang was born in New York City and reared in China. After returning to the United States, she wrote a poem called “Saying Yes.”

“Are you Chinese?”

"Yes."

"American?"

"Yes."

"Really Chinese?"

"No...not quite."

"Really American?"

"Well, actually, you see..."

But I would rather say yes

Not neither-nor

not maybe,

but both and not only

The homes I've had,

the ways I am

I'd rather say

twice,

yes.²

Ifemola J. Nwokoye has lived in the United States and Nigeria. Her mother is a white American and her father a Nigerian. In both nations, people regard her as “different.” She writes:

In our society, being both black and white is a difficult thing to deal with; you learn from the beginning that you are supposed to be a member of some specific group and so will never be accepted for who you really are. You are born into a complex world that aims to simplify things by making divisions between races. In America, people are often unwilling to accept the idea of a biracial person. In our everyday lives we are constantly confronted with situations in which we must define who we are. We check the boxes marked “white,” “black,” on our college forms, but there is no space marked “multiracial” yet. There is no place for me.

It is also twice as hard coming from two very distinct cultures— Nigerian and American. In each society I am treated in extremely different ways; yet, in both, I am identified by color. In America, I'm seen as black. I remember the time a schoolmate asked a friend of mine why she was sharing her snack with a black girl. I recall the icy stares of the ladies behind the perfume and make-up counters of every department store, their plastic smiles melting to frowns as they watched my every move. Most vividly, however, I remember how my math teacher would repeatedly confuse me with the only other black girl in the class, even until the end of the year—his belief apparently being that all black people look alike. Through all my experiences living in this culture, it has been a struggle to maintain my self worth.

Ironically, in Nigeria the situation is absolutely reversed. Because I am so much lighter than most people there, I am given a higher status and considered a model for others. I am treated with the utmost respect and admiration because in their eyes, I resemble a white person. What does remain consistent in both cultures is that I am not considered a biracial person; I'm still being labeled as one or the other.

I lived in Nigeria for the first seven years of my life and have visited on and off since my parents' divorce. As a child in Nigeria, I wasn't fully aware of people's perceptions of me, but I had a sense that I was somehow "better" than most of the children I knew, and that I had something special that they lacked. I remember being the teacher's favorite; the other students would get beaten, while I never experienced a lash of my teacher's cane. And I recall sitting in the front seat of my dad's car during a traffic jam. The little hands and noses of the village children would press hard against the window of the car, as if to penetrate the barrier of glass to steal a precious part of me. The society conditioned me to view myself as superior.

Drawing on my experience in America and in Nigeria, I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that there is no place in either of my cultures where I can be accepted for who I am. I think of the irony in both experiences, and I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

I know that I must ignore the limitations and labels society places on me, and instead, realize that I am an individual with unique insight, able to encompass the best of both worlds. I refuse to see my biracial identity as confining, and I am determined not to be defeated by other people's narrow vision. Increasingly I am able to get strength from my inner voice and accept my own perspective on who I am. I now take pride in my two cultures.³

3.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Using evidence from the reading, create two identity charts: one for Dalton Conley and one for Ifemola Nwokoye. Use direct quotations and other evidence from the readings in your charts.
 - What words or phrases does each use to describe him- or herself?
 - What words or phrases might others use to describe each of them?
 - How are the two charts alike?
 - What differences seem most striking?
2. Our identity—our sense of who we are and what we might become—is more than a set of labels. It is also shaped by our philosophy—our ideas, values, and beliefs about the world and our place in it. What ideas about self and others have shaped the philosophy of each of the individuals quoted in this reading? What ideas, values, and beliefs help shape your identity? Add them to the identity chart you created, if they are not already there.
3. How does society shape our identity? To what extent does your answer explain why Ifemola Nwokoye believes that the identity crisis everyone faces is “doubly hard” for biracial children? Who else in American society may confront similar challenges in forging an identity?
4. A Facing History and Ourselves student who dislikes being labeled was surprised to discover that her classmates had similar feelings. Read the student’s reflection below, then answer the questions that follow. She writes:

I had always known that I didn't fit into boxes and labels neatly, but it was not until all of us in class looked carefully at our identities that I realized that there were times when we all couldn't fit into a box: racially, economically, religiously, or politically. That day we put away facades, superficial stereotypes, and imposed labels and came to the understanding that we are all crossbreeds in some way. . . Once we were able to understand our own identities, we were better able to understand those of others.

- How do the student’s comments explain why Dalton Conley believes that “race and class are nothing more than a set of stories we tell ourselves to get through the world, to organize our reality”?
- How do the comments explain why Ifemola Nwokoye has come to believe that she must “ignore the limitations and labels society places on me, and instead, realize that I am an individual with unique insight, able to encompass the best of both worlds”?

Resource 3.3:**Reading: Searching for Identity*****Creating Context***

In the reading below, Rachel Altman writes that as she grew older she “embarked on a search for my identity.” What does it mean to “embark on a search for one’s identity”? To what extent is your identity something that you discover? To what extent is it something that you inherit? To what extent is it something that you decide? Record your thoughts in your journal before reading.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

pious	seder
acumen	bar mitzvah
Talmud	Reform
synagogue	Conservative
liturgy	Orthodox
rabbinate	kosher
observant	Torah
interracial	rabbi
aristocracy	proselytize
Episcopalian	goyim

Both Rachel Altman and Carolyn Craven learned that their identities as Jews have forced them to confront contradictions between the expectations of others and their own beliefs. By learning about her grandmothers, Altman had to confront her own feelings about being a modern Jewish woman:

I was . . . named after my grandmothers: Ruchel, for my father’s mother, who died in the gas chambers, and Miryam, for my mother’s mother, who died before the war began. We lived the life of an extended family (my surviving aunts and uncles all settled, with my parents, in Kansas City and we saw a great deal of each other); even so, as a child I yearned to know my grandmothers. As an adult, I still yearn to know them, seeking connection in continuity and context. Like an archaeologist, I dig through the past, unearthing fragments, putting together the pieces in an attempt to envision what once was whole.

This is what I know about my grandmother Miryam: She bore thirteen children, four of whom died in an influenza epidemic during World War I. Her husband Avram—a pious man, busy with his religious studies—earned a meager living and the family was poor; it fell to Miryam to make ends meet. She was ill for most of her adult life—an illness about which little was known (I’ve been told at times that she had “heart trouble,” at others that she had diabetes—and died in her early fifties, when my mother was nine.)

This is what I know about my grandmother Rachel: She went against custom and married a man she loved, rather than having an arranged marriage. When her first husband died of pneumonia, leaving her with three children, she took over his shirt-making business, refusing many suitors, for fear that her new husband would not treat her children, his stepchildren, well. She ran the business with competence and acumen and expanded it, hiring three seamstresses who worked at the kitchen table of her small apartment. She eventually married again and bore another child with her second husband. Well-educated, unlike many women in the old country, and not religious, she was known as a rebel.

In Jewish life women are the guardians of tradition—family, values, morals. In the old country, men sat for hours discoursing and arguing the Talmud, the book in which the law is encoded. But it fell to the women to insist that people behave as they should—as a *mensch*, a human being, should. The rituals of Jewish life and religious practice are not reserved for the synagogue; built into the liturgy are prayers to be spoken on awakening, prayers to be said when washing the hands, when seeing a rainbow, when eating a meal, prayers to be recited in the midst of life. In its purest form, Judaism brings us into an atmosphere of appreciation and awareness of every moment of life as sacred. At the center of Jewish life is the home, and at the center of the home is the woman.

At the same time, Judaism has discriminated against women: in Jewish mythology and tradition, women are given a clearly second-rate status and until recently, we have been excluded from the study of Talmud and the rabbinate.

In thinking about the women in my family—in allowing myself to feel a longing to be part of their world—I recognize a certain irony. I bemoan the loss of my family, of the Jewish world that existed in Eastern Europe before the war, with a grief that will never be assuaged. However, as a modern woman, I acknowledge that the Eastern European *shtetl* [village or small town] is not a world in which I would choose to live.

How different my grandmothers' lives were from mine! How can I—a woman who is educated and has explored options; a woman whose marriage was not arranged; a woman with rights, living in a time when a woman can choose to actively confront discrimination, can even become a rabbi—pretend to know them, these women who sat separate from men in the *shul*, who walked down narrow streets and bargained with shopkeepers, who raced home to complete the preparations for the Sabbath before the sun went down, who kept the children quiet so their husbands' studies would not be disturbed? How can I pretend to know my grandmother Miryam, who was pregnant for thirteen years of her life, who lived at the mercy of an illness that could not be named (though today it could probably easily be treated), whose life revolved around stretching a tiny piece of meat to provide food for fifteen people, while her husband sat at the kitchen table and prayed? . . .

. . . . I am not an observant Jew, but I light candles on Friday night to usher in the Sabbath. I enjoy the peace that the ritual brings to my household, and I appreciate this weekly reminder to be grateful for the beauty of the creation. Also, it is a way of knowing them—the women of my family, the mothers and grandmothers and daughters who, in the midst of hunger, illness, war, persecution, brought light to the darkness. I visualize a procession of them, a line reaching back in time and forward from this moment. Covering my head with a scarf, circling my hands over the flames three times and reciting the blessing, I join this procession of women, welcoming their spirit into my life, into my daughter's life.⁴

Not everyone who is Jewish was born a Jew. Some people have chosen to be Jewish. How do they define themselves? Carolyn Craven, a well-known journalist in the San Francisco area, is a Jew by choice, and by making that choice she, like Altman, had to confront the expectations others held about her identity. She described her search for identity to an interviewer:

I grew up in a nice, stable, black, upper-middle-class home in Chicago. My mother taught physics in the public schools, my father was a lawyer and a judge. My parents were basically unreligious, but my twin sister and I were sent to Sunday school in an interracial Baptist church around the corner. Our social peers, the other members of the black aristocracy, went to St. Edmund's Episcopal Church. My sister and I converted to Episcopalianism when we were twelve so we could get confirmed there. It was all black, upper-middle-class. The church was very beautiful, and we went with great regularity. I loved the service, like a Catholic mass in English, with religious fervor, in the quiet, sophisticated way that Episcopalians can have. It was a big part of our lives.

But most of our family's close friends were Jewish, and we went to seders every year, and to zillions of bar mitzvahs. I knew the Shema Yisrael [the prayer that affirms a Jew's belief in one God] as early as I knew the Lord's Prayer. A good number of these Jewish families were religious, some Reform, some Conservative, some were even Orthodox and kept kosher. . . .

Craven writes that by the time she went to college, she did not think much about religion. That changed when she and her friends started to think about having families:

I remember people talking about religion in the early seventies. My generation was having children, settling down. . . . All of a sudden, some of my very good friends started seriously talking about being Jews again and what that meant. Now, I'm sure there were Christians who, doing the same thing, but I happened to be around people who were Jewish. And when I started to think about religion, it was Judaism I thought of. . . .

I remember being very embarrassed to say that what I was really thinking was that I wanted to learn more because I wanted to convert. I must have known people who converted for reasons of marriage, but not straight conversions. . . . Then I

got sick and was in the hospital for a few months. A close friend brought me the Hertz edition of the Torah. I couldn't sleep in the hospital, and I used to stay up late at night and wake up early, and I read the Torah a lot. I was fascinated. . . .

Later I was talking to a friend from San Francisco, and I told her what I'd been studying and considering converting, but I didn't know what to do. Even though many of my friends were getting involved in Jewish things, none of them belonged to synagogues. She suggested Marty Weiner, a rabbi at Shearith Israel, in San Francisco.

So I called and made an appointment. I don't know if I told him I was black. And it was an advantage that he didn't know me from television. I wasn't "Carol Craven of Channel Nine News" to him. When I told him I'd decided to convert, he tried to discourage me, with all the kindness in the world, hinting, I think, Why would you want to be part of another minority? He talked for a long time about how hard the conversion process was, and how Judaism wasn't a proselytizing religion.

And he asked, "Why take on the burden of becoming a Jew?" I explained that the burden for me now was not being a Jew. We agreed we would continue meeting and I would take the conversion class.

Craven completed the conversion class and soon after converted to Judaism. She reflected:

In Shearith Israel, I met a lot of people like me who had converted because they wanted to convert. There are lots of us; we're not a rare breed. . . .

In the years since then, I've become less observant. But, as with every other Jew I know, becoming less observant in no way diminishes my feeling of Jewishness. I think of Jewish history as my history. . . . Do I talk to my sister about this? Well, maybe other Jews aren't like this, but I don't really talk about this a lot with goyim. There is too much they don't understand. See, I have a four-thousand-year history that my sister doesn't share. We have separate histories now, we really do. I have this rich and wonderful four-thousand-year history.⁵

3.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. Create identity charts for both Rachel Altman and Carolyn Craven. Use direct quotations and other evidence from the reading in your charts. What similarities do you notice? What differences seem most striking?
2. Summarize both Altman's and Craven's "search for identity." Is being Jewish something each has discovered, inherited, or decided?

3. Eliezer Berkovits, a scholar and an Orthodox Jew, is quoted as saying, “To be a Jew does not mean ‘I believe this or that.’ To be a Jew means ‘I am!’ To be a Jew means to open a book of Jewish history and say, ‘This is my history, this is me.’” To what extent do Altman and Craven fit Berkovits’s definition of being Jewish? Find specific details in the reading to support your answer.
4. What does Craven mean when she says “I think of Jewish history as my history”? Did she acquire a new history when she converted to Judaism? Did she give up her previous history?
5. What contradictions between others’ expectations and their own beliefs did both Altman and Craven encounter? How did they resolve those contradictions?
6. How do labels cause others to form expectations about who you are and how you should live? How did Altman and Craven respond to those expectations? How do you respond to the expectations others form about you?

Resource 3.4: Reading: Transcultural Identities

Creating Context

Think about your *heritage*. From which countries and cultures did your family come? Which country and culture do you identify with most? How do you show your connection to that country and culture? Record your thinking in your journal before reading.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

transcultural	proficiency
synthesize	bicultural
alien	impostor
reel-to-reel	singular
outmoded	deprivation
pronouncement	

This reading contains excerpts from Jhumpa Lahiri’s, “My Two Lives,” *Newsweek World News*.

Cultural psychologist Carola Suárez-Orozco writes that for children, “the task of immigration . . . is creating a transcultural identity.” She explains, “These youth must creatively fuse aspects of two or more cultures—the parental tradition and the new culture or cultures. In so doing, they synthesize an identity that does not require them to choose between cultures but incorporates traits of both cultures.”⁶

Like many immigrants to Europe, Indian-American author Jhumpa Lahiri has lived in two cultures for most of her life. Balancing her dual identity has not always been easy for her. Despite her rich heritage, while growing up, she never felt completely Indian or American. Only later in life did she accept both of her identities. Lahiri, now a parent, hopes to pass both of her identities on to her children. She explains:

I have lived in the United States for almost 37 years and anticipate growing old in this country. Therefore, with the exception of my first two years in London, “Indian-American” has been a constant way to describe me. Less constant is my relationship to the term. When I was growing up in Rhode Island in the 1970s I felt neither Indian nor American. Like many immigrant offspring I felt intense pressure to be two things, loyal to the old world and fluent in the new, approved of on either side of the hyphen. Looking back, I see that this was generally the case. But my perception as a young girl was that I fell short at both ends, shuttling between two dimensions that had nothing to do with one another.

At home I followed the customs of my parents, speaking Bengali and eating rice and dal* with my fingers. These ordinary facts seemed part of a secret, utterly alien way of life, and I took pains to hide them from my American friends. For my parents, home was not our house in Rhode Island but Calcutta, where they

were raised. I was aware that the things they lived for—the Nazrul songs they listened to on the reel-to-reel, the family they missed, the clothes my mother wore that were not available in any store in any mall—were at once as precious and as worthless as an outmoded currency.

I also entered a world my parents had little knowledge or control of: school, books, music, television, things that seeped in and became a fundamental aspect of who I am. I spoke English without an accent, comprehending the language in a way my parents still do not. And yet there was evidence that I was not entirely American. In addition to my distinguishing name and looks, I did not attend Sunday school, did not know how to ice-skate, and disappeared to India for months at a time. Many of my friends proudly called themselves Irish-American or Italian-American. But they were several generations removed from the frequently humiliating process of immigration, so that the ethnic roots they claimed had descended underground whereas mine were still tangled and green. According to my parents I was not American, nor would I ever be no matter how hard I tried. I felt doomed by their pronouncement, misunderstood and gradually defiant. In spite of the first lessons of arithmetic, one plus one did not equal two but zero, my conflicting selves always canceling each other out.

. . . As I approach middle age, one plus one equals two, both in my work and in my daily existence. The traditions on either side of the hyphen dwell in me like siblings, still occasionally sparring, one outshining the other depending on the day. But like siblings they are intimately familiar with one another, forgiving and intertwined. When my husband and I were married five years ago in Calcutta we invited friends who had never been to India, and they came full of enthusiasm for a place I avoided talking about in my childhood, fearful of what people might say. Around non-Indian friends, I no longer feel compelled to hide the fact that I speak another language. I speak Bengali to my children, even though I lack the proficiency to teach them to read or write the language. As a child I sought perfection and so denied myself the claim to any identity. As an adult I accept that a bicultural upbringing is a rich but imperfect thing.

While I am American by virtue of the fact that I was raised in this country, I am Indian thanks to the efforts of two individuals. I feel Indian not because of the time I've spent in India or because of my genetic composition but rather because of my parents' steadfast presence in my life. . . .

I have always believed that I lack the authority my parents bring to being Indian. But as long as they live they protect me from feeling like an impostor. Their passing will mark not only the loss of the people who created me but the loss of a singular way of life, a singular struggle. The immigrant's journey, no matter how ultimately rewarding, is founded on departure and deprivation, but it secures for the subsequent generation a sense of arrival and advantage. I can see a day coming when my American side, lacking the counterpoint India has until now maintained, begins to gain ascendancy and weight. It is in fiction that I will

continue to interpret the term “Indian-American,” calculating that shifting equation, whatever answers it may yield.⁷

Excerpted from *Newsweek* (March 2006).

* Dal is an Indian term for all varieties of dried beans, split peas, and lentils.

3.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. According to Suárez-Orozco, what is the challenge of immigration, especially for children? How does Lahiri’s story help explain the idea of a transcultural identity?
2. Lahiri writes, “Like many immigrant offspring I felt intense pressure to be two things, loyal to the old world and fluent in the new, approved of on either side of the hyphen.” Why is there pressure to choose between her two identities? Do people have to choose one identity?

Re-read the quotation by Walt Whitman at the beginning of Resource 3.2. Did he believe people had to choose one identity?

3. Lahiri talks about the Indian customs she followed at home with her parents. She explains, “These ordinary facts seemed part of a secret, utterly alien way of life, and I took pains to hide them from my American friends. . . . According to my parents I was not American, nor would I ever be no matter how hard I tried . . . one plus one did not equal two but zero, my conflicting selves always canceling each other out.” What do you think Lahiri means? Why do you think she felt she had to hide her identity? Are there times when you hide parts of who you are? Why?
4. Lahiri worries she lacks the “authority” to be Indian. Why? What authority does a person need to belong to a group? Who determines which people belong to a group and which people don’t belong?

Resource 3.5:**Reading: Orientation Day*****Creating Context***

Has someone else ever made an assumption about you because of some aspect of your identity? Was it a positive assumption or a negative one? How did you find out about the assumption? How did you respond? Record your thinking in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

orientation

Caucasian

Chinese

At the age of seven, Jennifer Wang came to the United States from Beijing, China with her family. At seventeen, she wrote an essay entitled “Orientation Day.” It is a response to a familiar experience: introducing oneself to a group of strangers. Wang writes in part:

Something about myself? How do I summarize, in thirty seconds, everything, which adds up and equals a neat little bundle called, Me? How do I present myself in a user-friendly format, complete with “Help” buttons and batteries? Who am I, and why do I matter to any of you?

First of all, I am a girl who wandered the aisles of Toys “R” Us for two hours, hunting in vain for a doll with a yellowish skin tone. I am a girl who sat on the cold bathroom floor at seven in the morning, cutting out the eyes of Caucasian models in magazines, trying to fit them on my face. I am the girl who loved [newscaster] Connie Chung because she was Asian, and I’m also the girl who hated Connie Chung because she wasn’t Asian enough. . . .

During that time I also first heard the term “chink,” and I wondered why people were calling me “a narrow opening, usually in a wall.” People expected me to love studying and to enjoy sitting in my room memorizing facts for days and days.

While I was growing up, I did not understand what it meant to be “Chinese” or “American.” Do these terms link only to citizenship? Do they suggest that people fit the profile of either “typical Chinese” or “typical Americans”? And who or what determines when a person starts feeling American, and stops feeling Chinese?

I eventually shunned the Asian crowds. And I hated Chinatown with a vengeance. I hated the noise, the crush of bodies, the yells of mothers to fathers to children to uncles to aunts to cousins. I hated the limp vegetables hanging out of soggy cardboard boxes. I hated the smell of fish being chopped, of meat hanging in a

window. I hated not understanding their language in depth—the language of my ancestors, which was also supposed to be mine to mold and master.

I am still not a citizen of the United States of America, this great nation, which is hailed as the destination for generations of people, the promised land for millions. I flee at the mere hint of teenybopper music. I stare blankly at my friends when they mention the 1980s or share stories of their parents as hippies. And I hate baseball.

The question lingers: Am I Chinese? Am I American? Or am I some unholy mixture of both, doomed to stay torn between the two?

I don't know if I'll ever find the answers. Meanwhile, it's my turn to introduce myself. . .

I stand up and say, "My name is Jennifer Wang," and then I sit back down. There are no other words that define me as well as those do. No others show me being stretched between two very different cultures and places—the "Jennifer" clashing with the "Wang," the "Wang" fighting with the "Jennifer."⁸

3.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. What assumptions did others make about Jennifer Wang because she was born in China? How does she respond to those assumptions? Support your answer with evidence from the reading.
2. According to Wang, what aspects of a "typical Chinese" identity does she specifically reject? What aspects of "typical American" identity does she reject?
3. Why does Wang describe the combination of being Chinese and American as "unholy"?
4. To what extent is Wang's struggle to define her identity unique? To what extent is it a struggle that other Americans share?

Resource 3.6:**Reading: Identity and Belonging***Creating Context*

How do your experiences at school affect the way that you think about your identity? What impact do your friends have on the way that you define yourself? What affect do your teachers have? Record your thoughts in your journal before reading below.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

pragmatism	vainly
knickers	chapatti
skinheads	tittering
Sikh	smug
Underpass	Urdu
anarchic	dismissive

In his memoir *Greetings from Bury Park*, Sarfraz Manzoor writes about the experiences—in and out of school—that shaped his understanding of what it means to be British.

My father left Pakistan when he was twenty-nine but he never stopped being Pakistani. He came to Britain for economic reasons and his relationship to this country remained rooted in financial pragmatism rather than emotional attachment. “This is not your country,” he would tell me, “you have to have your own language.” I was brought up to believe that Pakistan was our true home and Britain merely where we happened to live. When we lived in Bury Park, it was an easy distinction to maintain; we lived around mostly Pakistanis, I went to a school that was mostly Pakistani and the only people who ever visited our home were Pakistanis. When we moved to Marsh Farm, that all changed. At school I was just another schoolboy collecting Panini football stickers and stealing peeks at the girls doing handsprings in their knickers, but at home my parents were constantly reminding me I was Pakistani and different from my friends....

On the way to Lea Manor [his school], there was a subway where a gang of skinheads would hang out. They looked like glue sniffers and I knew they were trouble: a Sikh boy called Rupinder, who was one year below me at school, had told me of how the boys had spat on him as he tried to walk through the underpass. After he told me this story, I was always nervous about seeing the skinheads and changed my route to school. Not all racists were so easily identifiable. When I asked someone, for example, where the nearest bus stop was, and the lad pointed me in the wrong direction, I would know he was a racist: racists loved giving bad directions.

At Lea Manor there were very few Asian pupils and only one Asian teacher. His name was Mr. Judge and he taught maths. Mr Judge was a short, plump, middle-aged man who wore a large turban, thick glasses and dressed in a brown suit, usually over a patterned sweater. Mr. Judge's maths lessons were anarchic; each time he turned his back towards us, there would be a flurry of conkers hurled toward him. He vainly tried to discipline us, but his thick Asian accent meant no one took him seriously. Those of us who obeyed Mr. Judge did so as much out of sympathy as respect....

As we filed out of the room at the end of our maths lesson, I would see him tidying up his papers and rubbing the equations from the blackboard in advance of another class and, most likely, another grueling hour, and I used to wonder what it must have been like to be Mr. Judge. But it wasn't only pupils who could be hurtful. In woodwork, if I got my measurements wrong, the teacher would say, "I said five centimetres, not five chapattis."

Another teacher who I was convinced was racist, began one lesson with a discussion about how words could be abbreviated. "So, for example, you, Sarfraz," he said, turning to me. I immediately began to feel the tingle of unwanted attention. "Now, you are Pakistani, are you not?"

"Yes, sir," I replied.

"So if someone was [sic] to call you a Paki, and the term is a common shorthand for Pakistani, then it would be true to say you are a Paki, would it not?"

I could hear tittering in the class.

"Yes, but no sir...it's not just a shorter word, is it, sir..." I said, trying to make my point.

"All I'm saying, Sarfraz, is that technically, and only technically, mind, you are a Paki...would you agree?"

I looked straight at him. The more smug he looked, the more I hated him. "Yes sir," I replied finally.

It is not easy to convey the impact of such incidents...

"What you have to remember," my father would tell me, "is that the whites don't actually want you in this country. You do understand that, don't you?...The reason I want you to speak Urdu and not forget you are Pakistani is that you never know when we might have to leave. It could happen. And if it does what will you do? If the Tories say they want to throw us all out, send us back home as they say, what will you do? Do you think your friends...will stand up for you? Take you into their home? Of course they won't. That's why I still keep our house in Pakistan.

Open your ears when I tell you this: Pakistan is the only country that will never deny you. It is the only country that you can always call home.”

My father was always dismissive of my friends, I’m not sure he believed it was possible to be friends with a white person. But I knew differently. Scott was my best friend and he was white....

I wished me and Scott could have been actual brothers. If I could have summoned a genie who could have rubbed my brownness off, the shameful truth is that I would have been elated. As that was impossible, I settled on being invisible. That was how I felt being Pakistani in the eighties: I wanted to be invisible and anonymous so that no one could point at me and say: “You are different and you do not belong.”⁹

3.6 Comprehension & Connections

1. In this excerpt, Manzoor shares several stories that have an impact upon the way he thought about belonging. Considering the impact of these stories, create an identity chart for Manzoor. What factors does he suggest shaped the way he thought about his identity? Use quotations and other specific evidence from the reading to complete your chart.
2. How are Manzoor’s struggles to define his identity similar to others you have read about in this lesson? What differences seem most striking?
3. How do you explain the differences in the way Manzoor and his father thought about their relationship to Britain? Does Manzoor consider himself British, Pakistani, or both? How would his father answer that question? What evidence from the reading supports your answers?
4. Experiences at school often have a lasting impact on the way people think about their identities. After describing two painful memories from his school days, Manzoor writes, “It is not easy to convey the impact of such incidents.” What does he mean? What are the different ways such experiences might shape the way people think about themselves, others, and the choices they make?
5. As a young man Mazoor remembers:

If I could have summoned a genie who could have rubbed my brownness off, the shameful truth is that I would have been elated...I wanted to be invisible and anonymous so that no one could point at me and say: “You are different and you do not belong.”

What does he mean when he says he wanted to be “invisible”?

6. Throughout his memoir *Greetings from Bury Park*, Manzoor emphasizes the

important role his friends—including white friends—played in his life. How do your friendships shape your sense of identity? Why might his friendship to Scott have been particularly important for him?

Community-Building Activities

This lesson provides an important opportunity for building community in your class before your students explore challenging moral dilemmas and confront difficult histories together. Consider the suggestions below for helping students represent the many facets of their identities:

Answer the Question: Who Am I?

Creating identity charts prepares students to create a more formal presentation of their answer to the question, “Who am I.” Students can write [biopoems](#) or [“Where I’m From”](#) poems to express their identities. Three-dimensional representations of their identities, such as masks or identity boxes, allow students to present how others see them on the outside, and how they see themselves on the inside. As they work on these identity projects, encourage students to think about issues raised when reading *The Bear That Wasn’t* and the autobiographical narratives included in this lesson. For example, how do their projects represent how students define themselves and how they are defined by others? How do their projects show students’ awareness of how their identities might shift based on where they are or who they are with?

Sharing Work

Sharing their ideas about and representations of their identities is essential for building a safe, trusting classroom community for this course. The purpose of this lesson is not only for students to think more deeply about their own identities but also to learn about the identities of their classmates. As students share their identity charts and/or identity projects, ask them to record the following:

- Something you have in common with a classmate
- Something that surprised you about a classmate
- A question you would like to ask a classmate
- An aspect of your identity that is unique in this classroom
- Something you want to add to your identity chart or project after seeing the work of your peers

Activities that help students better know each other help build a foundation for understanding the divergent points of view that may be expressed throughout the course. In other words, as students and teachers gain a deeper awareness of their peers’ identities, they may be more likely to understand where classmates’ ideas and questions may be coming from.

Lesson 4: Identity and Decision Making

Essential Questions:

- ***How much of one’s identity is determined by his or her choices? How much of one’s identity is determined by the labels, assumptions, and expectations of others?***
- ***How does identity influence the choices we make?***
- ***What happens when the labels and stereotypes others place on us conflict with the beliefs and attitudes we hold about ourselves?***

Included Resources:

* 4.1 – Reading: Little Things Are Big

* = core resource

Introduction:

The core of this lesson is a single reading, “Little Things Are Big,” that illustrates the way that the complex interplay between the individual and society can affect the choices we make. The reading starts by introducing important vocabulary—*prejudice*, *stereotype*, and *discrimination*—to help us describe the way that we label others and the actions that often result from such labeling.

As the reading continues, Jesús Colón tells the story of a dilemma he faced late one night on the subway. Explaining the thinking behind his choice not to assist a woman getting off the train, Colón provides students with an example of how stereotypes and prejudice influence how we see ourselves and how we think others define us. This, in turn, influences the choices we make – the people we talk to, the places we feel comfortable, the interests we pursue, and much more.

Facing History teachers often find that “Little Things Are Big” prompts deep analysis, thoughtful moral reasoning, and spirited discussion. Reading this story not only helps students reflect on the relationship between identity and decision-making, but also lays the groundwork for the work they will do in the next section as they explore themes such as membership, belonging, inclusion, and exclusion —concepts that are prevalent in our everyday lives and in the history we will be studying in this unit.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Identify an experience when you felt that someone misjudged you. Where do you think this false impression came from? How did you react to being judged inaccurately?
- Identify a time when you misjudged someone else. How did your false impression affect how you acted towards that person? What were the consequences?
- How do others see you? How does this compare to how you see yourself?

- What is prejudice? What is discrimination? What is the relationship between prejudice and discrimination?

Additional Resources:

- Video – [The Lunch Date](#)
- Website – www.choosingt partic ipate.org
- Lesson – “[Identity and Individuality: Exploring Art and Literature](#)”

Additional Readings from Stories of Identity:

- “Talking About Religion,” pp. 88-93

Resource 4.1:**Reading: Little Things Are Big*****Creating Context***

This reading introduces three concepts that are essential to this course: *stereotype*, *prejudice*, and *discrimination*. What does each term mean to you? Create a working definition for each term in your journal before reading the text below.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

stereotype	slander
prejudice	ancestral
discrimination	illiterate
segregation	chauvinism
valise	courtesy
preconceived	

Part A

According to many psychologists, although it is natural to view others as representatives of groups, *stereotypes* are offensive. They are more than a label or judgment about an individual based on the characteristics of a group. Stereotyping reduces individuals to categories. Therefore stereotyping can lead to prejudice and discrimination. The word *prejudice* means pre-judge. We prejudge when we have an opinion about a person based on his or her membership in a particular group. A prejudice attaches value to differences to the benefit of one's own group and at the expense of other groups. *Discrimination* occurs when prejudices are translated into actions. Not every stereotype results in discrimination. But all stereotypes tend to divide a society into us and them.

In the 1950s, discrimination, segregation and ideas about “race” shaped the way Americans in all parts of the nation saw one another as well as the way they saw themselves. As writer Jesús Colón discovered on a subway ride in New York City, those ideas also influenced the decisions people made about one another.

It was very late at night on the eve of Memorial Day. She came into the subway at the 34th Street Pennsylvania Station. I am still trying to remember how she managed to push herself in with a baby on her right arm, a valise [suitcase] in her left hand and two children, a boy and girl about three and five years old, trailing after her. She was a nice-looking white lady in her early twenties.

At Nevins Street, Brooklyn, we saw her preparing to get off at the next station—Atlantic Avenue—which happened to be the place where I too had to get off. Just as it was a problem for her to get on, it was going to be a problem for her to get off the subway with two small children to be taken care of, a baby on her right arm, and a medium-sized valise in her left hand.

And there I was, also preparing to get off at Atlantic Avenue, with no bundles to take care of—not even the customary book under my arm, without which I feel that I am not completely dressed.

As the train was entering the Atlantic Avenue station, some white man stood up from his seat and helped her out, placing the children on the long, deserted platform. There were only two adult persons on the long platform some time after midnight on the eve of last Memorial Day.

I could perceive the steep, long concrete stairs going down to the Long Island Railroad or into the street. Should I offer my help as the American white man did at the subway door, placing the two children outside the subway car? Should I take care of the girl and the boy, take them by their hands until they reached the end of the steep, long concrete stairs of the Atlantic Avenue station?

Courtesy is a characteristic of the Puerto Rican. And here I was—a Puerto Rican hours past midnight, a valise, two white children and a white lady with a baby on her arm [badly] needing somebody to help her, at least until she descended the long concrete stairs.

But how could I, a Negro* and a Puerto Rican, approach this white lady, who very likely might have preconceived prejudices about Negroes and everybody with foreign accents, in a deserted subway station very late at night?

What would she say? What would be the first reaction of this white American woman perhaps coming from a small town with a valise, two children and a baby on her right arm? Would she say: yes, of course, you may help me. Or would she think that I was just trying to get too familiar? Or would she think worse than that perhaps? What would I do if she let out a scream as I went forward to offer my help?

Was I misjudging her? So many slanders are written every day in the daily press against the Negroes and Puerto Ricans. I hesitated for a long, long minute. The ancestral manners that the most illiterate Puerto Rican passes on from father to son were struggling inside me. Here was I, way past midnight, face to face with a situation that could very well explode into an outburst of prejudices and chauvinistic conditioning of the “divide and rule” policy of present-day society.

It was a long minute.

4.1 Part A Comprehension & Connections

1. Create an identity chart for Jesús Colón using evidence from the reading. What words does Colón use to describe himself? What words might others use to describe him? Include both on the diagram.

2. What dilemma does Colón face? What risks does he perceive if he tries to help the woman? Use evidence from the story to support your answers.
3. Would Colón's dilemma have been different if the woman had been in danger? Would it have been different if the incident had taken place during the day?
4. In this story, Colón mentions several stereotypes and labels:
 - What stereotypes does Colón worry others have about him?
 - What labels does Colón place on the groups to which he belongs?
 - What stereotypes and labels does Colón place on other groups?
5. Before reading Part B, take a moment to consider what you think Colón should do. Do you think he should help the woman? Why or why not?

Part B

I passed on by her as if I saw nothing. As if I was insensitive to her need. like a rude animal walking on two legs, I just moved on, half running by the long subway platform, leaving the children and the valise and her with the baby on her arm. I took the steps of the long concrete stairs in twos until I reached the street above and the cold air slapped my warm face.

This is what racism and prejudice and chauvinism and official artificial divisions can do to people and to a nation!

Perhaps the lady was not prejudiced after all. Or not prejudiced enough to scream at the coming of a Negro toward her in a solitary subway station a few hours past midnight.

If you were not that prejudiced, I failed you, dear lady. I know that there is a chance in a million that you will read these lines. I am willing to take the millionth chance. If you were not that prejudiced, I failed you, lady. I failed you, children. I failed myself to myself.

I buried my courtesy early on Memorial Day morning. But here is a promise that I make to myself here and now; if I am ever faced with an occasion like that again, I am going to offer my help regardless of how the offer is going to be received.

Then I will have my courtesy with me again.¹⁰

*The word Negro was commonly used in the early and middle years of this century to refer to an African American. Its use reflects the time period.

4.1 Part B Comprehension & Connections

1. How did stereotypes and labels shape the way that Colón perceived his choices? How did they shape the decision he made? Why does he have regrets?
2. Did Colón pre-judge the woman in the subway? Why? How did the attitudes and actions of members of the larger society, those who were not present in the subway that evening, shape the way that Colón perceived his choices?
3. Who is the victim in this story—Colón, the woman, or the larger society?
4. Political scientist Benjamin Barber defines civility as “a work of the imagination, for it is through the imagination that we render others sufficiently like ourselves that we view them as worthy of tolerance and respect, if not always affection.”¹¹ What does courtesy mean? How are courtesy and civility related? Colón writes that he “buried his courtesy” that morning. What does he mean? What is the significance of that loss?
5. What is respect? What are the ways that we can show respect for other people and their identities?
6. Create a different ending to Colón’s story. What do you think Colón might have done? How do you think the woman might have responded to the action you have imagined for Colón? Describe the effect of that action on Colón.

Using Resource 4.1

Collaborating on Working Definitions

The Creating Context section asks students to create working definitions for *stereotype*, *prejudice*, and *discrimination* before reading. Students might deepen their initial thinking about these concepts if given the opportunity to brainstorm about and discuss them together. You might structure a brief activity by adapting the [gallery walk](#) strategy. Write each term at the top of a piece of chart paper while students take a few minutes to generate their own ideas about the terms. Then let students circulate around the room, either individually or in groups, adding ideas about each term to the chart paper. If they see another student's ideas that they like they can both copy the idea into their journal and place a star next to it on the chart paper. Debrief the activity by asking students to share with the whole group what they noticed both about the process and the ideas that were shared.

Using a Word Wall

Students will be prompted throughout this curriculum to generate working definitions for a variety of terms and to refine their definitions as they encounter new information. Consider designating part of your classroom as a [word wall](#) in order to help students develop their vocabulary skills and keep track of the words they should have defined in their journals.

Reading in Two Stages

Many teachers find it useful to divide this reading into two parts (labeled here as Part A and Part B). Whether reading as a group or individually, you might choose to stop students from reading beyond Part A so that the class can discuss the choice the Jesus Colón is facing before examining his final decision.

After reading Part A, you might:

- Ask students to share important words or phrases they recorded.
- Ask students to discuss the Comprehension & Connections questions in small groups.
- Conduct a [Barometer Activity](#) with “Should Help the Woman” at one end of the continuum and “Should Not Help the Woman” at the other end.

After reading Part B, debrief the story using the Comprehension and Connections questions.

Enhanced Reading

[Enhanced audio and video versions of “Little Things Are Big”](#) are available on Facing History's Choosing to Participate website. You might choose to use these versions to assist struggle readers or to simply introduce a different voice into the classroom as you and your students read together.

Extending the Discussion

The 10-minute film, [The Lunch Date](#) (available from the Facing History library) is highly

recommended resource to use either before or after reading “Little Things Are Big.” The film is a highly engaging examination of the way that assumptions and stereotypes can affect our behavior.

The Lunch Date dramatizes issues of stereotyping by depicting a woman’s experience waiting for a train in Grand Central Station in New York City where, after missing her train, she has an unexpected “lunch date” with an African American man. Adam Davidson, the filmmaker, provides various visual clues to represent the woman’s prejudices. The twist in the story comes when the woman is treated respectfully and kindly by a black man at a diner in the train station. The ending leaves us wondering, “Did this event change this woman’s assumptions?”

When showing this film, we recommend stopping after the woman eats “her lunch” but before she discovers that she had actually been eating from the man’s plate (at approximately 7:30). Ask students to describe what they think happened. What did they observe? How do they interpret what they have seen? Then have students watch the end of the film, responding to the following prompts:

- What did you observe at the end of this film?
- Did any of your initial impressions about the situation or the characters change? If so, how?

You might ask the students to reflect on their experience watching the film:

- Did they find themselves sharing any of the woman’s assumptions about the African American man?
- What details about the man led to those assumptions?
- Did they feel manipulated by the filmmaker?
- If so, why do they think the filmmaker chose to manipulate his audience? What was his purpose in making the film?

For more ideas about how to help students observe and interpret film, refer to the teaching strategy [Media Literacy: Analyzing Visual Images](#).

¹ *Honky* by Dalton Conley. University of California Press, 2000, pp. xi–xii.

² Copyright © 1985 by Diana Chang.

³ *Of Many Colors: Portraits of Multiracial Families* was copyrighted ©1997 by Peggy Gillespie and was published in 1998 by the University of Massachusetts Press. pp. 137-138.

⁴ Rachel Altman, “Fragments of a Broken Past,” in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Carol Rittner and John K. Roth (Paragon, 1993), 366-370.

⁵ Interview in *Saving Remnants: Feeling Jewish in America* by Sara Bershtel and Allen Graubard, 293-298.

⁶ Carola Suárez-Orozco, “Formulating Identity in a Globalized World,” *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millennium*, ed. Marcelo Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 192.

⁷ Jhumpa Lahiri, “My Two Lives,” *Newsweek World News*, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11569225/site/newsweek/> (accessed May 23, 2007).

⁸ “Orientation Day,” by Jennifer Wang. In *Yell-Oh Girls! Emerging Voices Explore Culture, Identity, and Growing Up American*, ed. by Vickie Nam. Quill, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2001, 199-200.

⁹ Sarfraz Manzoor, *Greetings from Bury Park: A Memoir* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 240–55.

¹⁰ Jesús Colón, *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches* (New York: International Publishers, 1982), 115–17.

¹¹ Benjamin Barber, “America Skips School: Why We Talk So Much about Education and Do So Little,” *Harper’s Magazine* v287 (November 1993).

Section 3: We & They

Essential Questions

- *What does it mean to belong? Which differences between people are used to create distinctions between "we" and "they"?*
- *How are religion, race, and nationality used to create "the Other"?*
- *What is a nation's "universe of obligation"? What are the consequences for those who are excluded from it?*

Lessons

Section 3 includes the following lessons:

- Lesson 5: Membership and Belonging
- Lesson 6: Antisemitism: A Case Study in Religious Discrimination
- Lesson 7: Membership and Race
- Lesson 8: Nationalism and Universe of Obligation

Overview

How do humans respond to difference? How do we form groups, and how does one know if he or she belongs? More importantly, what are the benefits of belonging and the consequences of being excluded? These are questions of membership that are central both to understanding the history we will examine in this course and to knowing ourselves and our behavior more deeply.

We often label others and assume we are being labeled based on our membership in specific groups, be they religious, racial, ethnic, gender or others. For example, in the story “Little Things Are Big” Jesus Colon’s actions seem based upon a stereotype of dark-skinned men as dangerous. Psychologist Deborah Tannen argues that it is natural for people to stereotype others – to ascribe characteristics to them solely because of their membership in a particular group. She explains:

We all know we are unique individuals but we tend to see others as representatives of groups. It’s a natural tendency; since we must see the world in patterns in order to make sense of it; we wouldn’t be able to deal with the daily onslaught of people and objects if we couldn’t predict a lot about them and feel that we know who or what they are.¹

It is worth asking if Tannen is right in her claim, and if so, to then ask when such distinctions might be helpful; and when dividing people into groups creates problems? In what circumstances is it useful to take notice of differences among people and under what conditions is it important to put aside differences in order to form a collective identity?

This section begins by considering broadly the ideas of membership and belonging. Lesson 5 is designed to connect the idea of membership, of “in” groups and “out” groups, to students’ lives. The lesson then helps students consider the variety of ways we respond to the differences, real and imagined, between us.

After Lesson 5, this section turns towards an examination of three specific phenomena of membership in the modern world—religious discrimination, race, and nationalism—that played a central role in the history of Nazi Germany and whose legacies persist today. In Lessons 6, 7, and 8, students are likely to learn much that is new about ideas they may believe they already grasp. Learning that race has no biological basis, that nations are about more than lines on a map, and that harmful myths such as the blood libel of Jews persisted throughout the twentieth century can be unsettling to students and cause them to experience cognitive dissonance. This is an expected, even healthy, response and all the more reason that effective teaching of this material demands that teachers provide students with ample time for writing, reflection, and structured discussion. These practices will help students resolve the dissonance they experience and deepen their thinking as a result.

In order to illuminate the phenomena of religious discrimination, race, and nationalism, this section introduces specific histories into this course for the first time. Therefore, it is both important and helpful at this point in the course to introduce the concepts of the *particular* and the *universal*. We delve into the particularities of these histories, just as we later look more deeply into the particular history of the Holocaust, seeking to illuminate some universal lessons about history and human behavior. It is the goal of this course to help students and teachers examine the particular in order to better understand the universal. It is important to discuss with your students (and consider for yourself) the danger of making facile comparisons and drawing inadequate parallels between different histories. We look into the particular in order to find the universal, not to see all events as equal—they are not.

We encourage you to devote a significant amount of class time to this section, and to teach for depth of understanding as much as for breadth of content, for the concepts introduced here constitute the backbone of this course. Students will return to ideas about membership, difference, religious identity, race, and nationalism repeatedly in the sections that follow. By learning about the relationship between notions of membership and nations' universes of obligation, students will also reach a deeper understanding of the choices that guide the course of history. This examination will deepen students' own moral and ethical reflection as they consider how they define the circles of responsibility that guide their own choices.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- Chapter 2 of the resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*
- Chapter 1 of the resource book, [*Race and Membership in American History: The Eugenics Movement*](#)
- The resource book, [*Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians*](#)
- The resource book, [*Stories of Identity: Religion, Migration, and Belonging in a Changing World*](#)

Lesson 5: Membership and Belonging

Essential Questions:

- *What does it mean to belong? Who decides who belongs and who does not?*
- *What are the differences between people that seem to be most important? What are the characteristics that we use to divide ourselves into groups?*
- *What dilemmas are individuals face with when they are trying to be included?*

Included Resources:

- * 5.1 - Reading: The "In" Group
 - 5.2 - Poem: What Do We Do With a Variation?
 - * 5.3 - Reading: Understanding Strangers
- * = core reading

Introduction:

The basis of human behavior and relationships revolves around how we negotiate differences and create groups. What differences matter? Who decides? Why have some differences counted more than others in history, and why do those historical judgments regarding differences persist until today? Furthermore, much of human behavior is driven by the dilemmas we confront when we are trying to be included in a social group, a community, or a nation. This lesson explores all of these ideas at their most basic level.

The reading “The ‘In’ Group” begins the discussion by telling a story about ostracism in a middle school classroom that rings true for students of all ages. In this reading, Eve Shalen states: “It was as if the outcasts were invented by the group out of a need for them. Differences between us did not cause hatred; hatred caused differences between us.” This reflection captures an essential conundrum that appears in our later examinations of race, nationalism, and antisemitism. Are the differences we use to divide ourselves real or imagined? To what extent do we invent differences and imbue them with significance because of our pre-existing desire to define, discriminate, and ostracize?

The lesson then turns to poetry, James Berry’s “What Do We Do With a Variation?”, to consider the myriad ways, both positive and negative, that humans respond to difference. Combined with the final reading of this lesson, “Understanding Strangers,” students are prompted to consider the idea of “normal” and how, dating back to prehistory, those we encounter who do not fit our idea of normal have been cast as “the Other.”

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What does it mean to belong? Do you think belonging to a group is important? Why or why not?
- To what groups do you belong? What do you gain by being part of these groups? What, if anything, do you give up to be a member of these groups?
- Under what conditions, if any, is it appropriate to exclude individuals from membership in a group?

- Is it possible to maintain your own identity and be a member of a group? How might you try to navigate that challenge?
- Identify a moment when you did something to fit in with a group. What did you do? Would you do the same thing again? Why or why not? When can it be useful to conform in order to belong to a group? When can conformity be harmful?

Additional Resources:

- Video - [Becoming American: The Chinese in Experience](#)
- Video - [The Eye of the Storm](#)
- Video - The Twilight Zone, [“The Eye of the Beholder”](#)

Additional Reading from Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior:

- “Harrison Bergeron,” pp. 58-64

Additional Reading from Race and Membership in American History:

- “Eye of the Beholder,” pp. 4-7

Resource 5.1:
Reading: The “In” Group***Creating Context***

Think about a group you belong to. It might be your family, a team, a faith community, a club, a classroom, an online community, or some other type of group. How did you become a member of that group? How do you know you belong? What must you do to continue to be a member of the group? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

dilemma

harassment

Eve Shalen, a high-school student, reflected on her need to belong.

My eighth grade consisted of 28 students most of whom knew each other from the age of five or six. The class was close-knit and we knew each other so well that most of us could distinguish each other’s handwriting at a glance. Although we grew up together, we still had class outcasts. From second grade on, a small elite group spent a large portion of their time harassing two or three of the others. I was one of those two or three, though I don’t know why. In most cases when children get picked on, they aren’t good at sports or they read too much or they wear the wrong clothes or they are of a different race. But in my class, we all read too much and didn’t know how to play sports. We had also been brought up to carefully respect each other’s races. This is what was so strange about my situation. Usually, people are made outcasts because they are in some way different from the larger group. But in my class, large differences did not exist. It was as if the outcasts were invented by the group out of a need for them. Differences between us did not cause hatred; hatred caused differences between us.

The harassment was subtle. It came in the form of muffled giggles when I talked, and rolled eyes when I turned around. If I was out in the playground and approached a group of people, they often fell silent. Sometimes someone would not see me coming and I would catch the tail end of a joke at my expense.

I also have a memory of a different kind. There was another girl in our class who was perhaps even more rejected than I. She also tried harder than I did for acceptance, providing the group with ample material for jokes. One day during lunch I was sitting outside watching a basketball game. One of the popular girls in the class came up to me to show me something she said I wouldn’t want to miss. We walked to a corner of the playground where a group of three or four sat. One of them read aloud from a small book, which I was told was the girl’s diary. I sat down and, laughing till my sides hurt, heard my voice finally blend with the others. Looking back, I wonder how I could have participated in mocking this girl when I knew perfectly well what it felt like to be mocked myself. I would like to say that if I were in that situation today I would react differently,

but I can't honestly be sure. Often being accepted by others is more satisfying than being accepted by oneself, even though the satisfaction does not last. Too often our actions are determined by the moment.²

5.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. How did Eve Shalen's need to belong shape her identity? How did it affect the way she responded when another girl was mocked? Why does her response still trouble her? How do you like to think you would have responded to the incident?
2. What is a *bystander*? Was Shalen a bystander? What evidence from the reading supports your answer?
3. What is the conflict that emerges, according to Shalen, between being accepted by others and accepting oneself? Which form of acceptance does she suggest is more satisfying?
4. How is Shalen's story like that of the Bear in *The Bear That Wasn't*? How is it different?
5. "Hatred begins in the heart and not in the head. In so many instances we do not hate people because of a particular deed, but rather we find that deed ugly because we hate them."³ How do Shalen's experiences support the statement? What evidence from the reading can you cite to support your thinking?
6. What dilemmas did Shalen face because of her desire to belong to the "in" group? What did she need to in order to feel like she belonged? What did she have to give up?
7. How might people who would like to belong to a new community or nation face similar dilemmas to those Shalen describes? How does one prove that one belongs?

Using Resource 5.1

Broadening the Discussion

Many teachers find that Eve Shalen's story resonates strongly within their students' experiences as adolescents. The story also continues to resonate with many adults. As this section continues, we will begin to broaden the discussion about membership and belonging, as is hinted in Question 5 above.

Including a short film clip about the Chinese American actress Anna May Wong from the documentary [*Becoming American: The Chinese in Experience*](#) is a particularly useful

way to begin to broaden the discussion before moving on to the next resource.

The film, which describes Wong's struggles to be accepted as fully American in the United States and as fully Chinese in China, can be found in the episode "Between Two Worlds." It also introduces ideas about race, ethnicity, and stereotypes that will be explored in more depth later in this section. After watching the nine minute clip, you might ask your students to consider the following questions:

- How are the dilemmas faced by Anna May Wong similar to those Eve Shalen experienced? How are they different?
- What misperceptions does Wong confronted with throughout her life?
- Why isn't Wong fully accepted by American society? Why isn't she accepted by Chinese society?

Resource 5.2:**Poem: What Do We Do With a Variation?***Creating Context*

How do you learn about which differences between people matter and which do not? In your journal, describe a time you learned about people from a group different than your own. What characteristics made the group seem different from yours?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

variation
stealthily
application

James Berry raises important questions about the ways we respond to differences in a poem entitled “What Do We Do with a Variation?”:

What do we do with a difference?
 Do we stand and discuss its oddity
 or do we ignore it?

Do we shut our eyes to it
 or poke it with a stick?
 Do we clobber it to death?

Do we move around it in rage
 and enlist the rage of others?
 Do we will it to go away?

Do we look at it in awe
 or purely in wonderment?
 Do we work for it to disappear?

Do we pass it stealthily
 Or change route away from it?
 Do we will it to become like ourselves?

What do we do with a difference?
 Do we communicate to it,
 let application acknowledge it
 for barriers to fall down?⁴

5.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. What is the message of Berry's poem? Why does the answer to the title's question, "What do we do with a variation?", matter? What are the consequences of how we answer this question?
2. Go back and underline all of the verbs in Berry's poem. How would you describe the tone the verbs create? What do the verbs tell us about how Berry suggests we often respond to differences?
3. Noy Chou, a high school student who was born in Cambodia and reared in the United States wrote the following stanza as part of a poem entitled "You Have to Live in Somebody Else's Country to Understand." It explains how she feels about being perceived as different:

What is it like to be an outsider?
 What is it like to sit in the class where everyone has blond hair and you have black hair?
 What is it like when the teacher says, "Whoever wasn't born here raise your hand."
 And you are the only one.
 Then, when you raise your hand, everybody looks at you and makes fun of you.
 You have to live in somebody else's country to understand.⁵

What does the student add to your understanding of James Berry's question? How would you answer his question?

4. When two people meet for the first time, each often takes stock of the other, focusing on differences, without realizing it. Legal scholar Martha Minow warns that difference always "implies a reference: difference from whom? I am no more different from you than you are from me. A short person is different only in relation to a tall one; a Spanish-speaking student is different in relation to an English-speaking one. But the point of comparison is often unstated."⁶ Who decides what is the point of comparison? In other words, who decides what is "normal" and what is "different"? Why is this question important?
5. How did you learn which differences matter and which do not?

Using Resource 5.2

Conducting a Close Read of Poetry

Many teachers begin a close read of poetry by reading the poem aloud several times.

You might begin by asking students to read it silently. Then you might read it aloud to the class, and then ask for several volunteers to read it again. Often, hearing the poem several times in different voices helps students notice more of the nuances of the language and form a deeper impression of the poem's meaning. It is also helpful to debrief this simple process of hearing the poem. What was the experience like of hearing the poem several times in different voices? How did the voice and style in which the poem was read change its impact?

Reflection and Discussion

Use the Comprehension & Connections questions to start your class discussion. Consider using one of a variety of effective discussion strategies, depending on the size and the needs of your particular class. [Fishbowl](#) and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) are both strategies that could work well discussing this reading.

Considering “Normal”

You might decide to dig deeper into the questions posed in Question 3 above: Who defines what is “normal” and what is “different”? An excellent resource for investigating the power of the person or group who decides what is “normal” is an episode of the television series *The Twilight Zone* entitled “Eye of the Beholder.” Facing History's [Race and Membership in American History](#) resource book provides a synopsis of the episode on page 4. You can also borrow [a video of the episode](#) from the Facing History library. You might discuss this resource by asking your students to think about how “different” and “normal” are defined in the society depicted and who decides their definitions. Also, consider how the society in the story might answer the question: What do you do with a variation?

Resource 5.3: Reading: Understanding Strangers

Creating Context

What are the differences between people that seem to be most important? What are the characteristics that we use to divide ourselves into groups? What characteristics do people use to deny people membership in their groups? Record your thinking in your journal before reading.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

“the Other”	sanctuary
conviction	vestige
kinfolk	covenant
revelation	conspiratorial
agora	

Journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski explains that an “an encounter with the Other, with other people, has always been a universal and fundamental experience for our species.” The question he asks is, Do those encounters lead to violence or to cooperation, to bridge building or to the building of walls?

Archaeologists tell us that the very earliest human groups were small family-tribes numbering 30 to 50 individuals. Had such a community been larger, it would have had trouble moving around quickly and efficiently. Had it been smaller, it would have found it harder to defend itself effectively and to fight for survival.

So here is our little family-tribe going along searching for nourishment when it suddenly comes across another family-tribe. What a significant movement in the history of the world, what a momentous discovery! The discovery that there are other people in the world! Until then, the members of these primal groups could live in the conviction, as they moved around in the company of 30 to 50 of their kinfolk, that they knew all the people in the world. Then it turned out that they didn’t—that other similar beings, other people, also inhabited the world! But how to behave in the face of such a revelation? What to do? What decisions to make?

Should they throw themselves in fury on those other people? Or walk past dismissively and keep going? Or rather try to get to know and understand them?

That same choice our ancestors faced thousands of years ago faces us today as well, with undiminished intensity—a choice as fundamental and categorical as it was back then. How should we act toward Others? What kind of attitude should we have toward them? It might end up in a duel, a conflict, or a war. Every archive contains evidence of such events, which are also marked by countless battlefields and ruins scattered around the world.

But it might also be the case that, instead of attacking and fighting, this family-tribe that we are watching decides to fence itself off from others, to isolate and separate itself. This attitude leads, over time, to objects like the Great Wall of China, the towers and gates of Babylon, the Roman limes and the stone-walls of the Inca.

Fortunately, there is evidence of a different human experience scattered abundantly across our planet. These are the proofs of cooperation—the remains of marketplaces, of ports, of places where there were agoras and sanctuaries, of where the seats of old universities and academies are still visible, and of where there remain vestiges of such trade routes as the Silk Road, the Amber Route and the Trans-Saharan caravan route.

All of these were places where people met to exchange thoughts, ideas and merchandise, and where they traded and did business, concluded covenants and alliances, and discovered shared goals and values. “The Other” stopped being a synonym of foreignness and hostility, danger and mortal evil. People discovered within themselves a fragment of the Other, and they believed in this and lived confidently. People thus had three choices when they encountered the Other: They could choose war, they could build a wall around themselves, or they could enter into dialogue.⁷

Moroccan scholar Fatema Mernissi remembers the advice of her grandmother, Yasmina, who felt that each encounter with strangers was a chance to learn. An internationally known scholar, Mernissi now travels the world and tries to remember Yasmina’s lessons.

If by chance you were to meet me at the Casablanca airport or on a boat sailing from Tangiers, you would think me self-confident, but I am not. Even now, at my age, I am frightened when crossing borders because I am afraid of failing to understand strangers. “To travel is the best way to learn and empower yourself,” said Yasmina, my grandmother, who was illiterate and lived in a . . . traditional household with locked gates that women were not supposed to open. “You must focus on the strangers you meet and try to understand them. The more you understand a stranger and the greater is your knowledge of yourself, the more power you will have. . . .”

. . . [A]ccording to Yasmina’s philosophy, which I later discovered she had adopted from the Sufis, the mystics of Islam, I needed to transform my feelings of shock toward the Western journalists [I encountered] into openness to learn from them. At first, I had great difficulty doing so and started wondering if perhaps, due to my age, I was losing my capacity to adapt to new situations. I felt terrified of becoming stiff and unable to digest the unexpected. . . .

To learn from travel, one must train oneself to capture messages. “You must cultivate the state of readiness,” Yasmina used to whisper conspiratorially in my ear, so as to exclude those whom she regarded as unworthy of the Sufi tradition. “The most baggage carried by strangers is their difference. And if you focus on the divergent and the dissimilar, you get ‘flashes.’”⁸

5.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. What does Kapuscinski mean by “the Other”? Find evidence in the reading to support your answer.
2. What groups might be considered the Other in your school or community? What groups might be considered the Other in your country?
3. If we want to understand others better, is it more helpful to focus on similarities or differences? According to Kapuscinski, what are the three possible ways to respond to the Other?
4. How have you responded to individuals or groups who are different from you? Why? What factors influence the choices people make about how to respond to difference?
5. Kapuscinski writes about times when “‘[t]he Other’ stopped being a synonym of foreignness and hostility, danger and mortal evil” and people “discovered within themselves a fragment of the Other.” What does Kapuscinski mean when he writes about discovering fragments of the Other in ourselves?
6. Fatema Mernissi’s grandmother believed that “the more you understand a stranger . . . the more power you will have.” What did she mean? Do you agree with her statement? What can you learn from people who have grown up with religions, cultures, and habits that are different from your own? What do you think are the “flashes” she referred to?
7. Sociologist Kai Erikson has noted that one of the surest ways to “confirm an identity, for communities as well as for individuals, is to find some way of measuring what one is *not*.”⁹ For example, people who practice Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism might be referred to collectively as “non-Christian.” What are the effects of a negative identity – of defining someone by what he or she is not? Have you ever been defined by what you are not? If so, how did it affect the way you viewed yourself?
8. Why do you think that individuals so often focus on differences rather than similarities when they meet someone for the first time? How does doing so encourage myths and misinformation?

Using Resource 5.3

Say Something Literacy Strategy

This reading includes both historical and scientific information as well as first-hand testimony. It might be helpful to have students use a literacy strategy that prompts them to monitor their comprehension and think deeply about what they are reading.

One strategy that is designed to improve comprehension of challenging texts and provide students an opportunity to “talk back” to the ideas in the text is *Say Something*.¹⁰ Have students read the text together in pairs. At the end of each paragraph, the students will pause and do one of the following:

- Ask a question
- Comment on what is happening in the reading
- Connect what is happening in the reading to something else they know about

If students are unable to accomplish any of these tasks, then that is a sign they need to re-read the paragraph, then ask for help.

Alternatively, you might choose to have students use the [Two Column Note Taking](#) or [Chunking](#) strategies.

Reflection and Discussion

Use the Comprehension & Connections questions to start your class discussion.

Consider using one of a variety of effective discussion strategies, depending on the size and the needs of your particular class. [Think-Pair-Share](#) and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) are both strategies that could work well discussing this reading.

Lesson 6: Antisemitism – A Case Study in Religious Discrimination

Essential Questions:

- ***What allows religious stereotypes to flourish? Why do people cling to stereotypes and myths that have no basis in reality?***
- ***How is hatred spread both deliberately and unconsciously?***
- ***What is antisemitism? Why is it a “convenient hatred”?***

Included Resources:

- * 6.1 - Reading: Religious Stereotyping
 - 6.2 - Reading: The Roots of Religious Stereotyping
 - * 6.3 - Video: [The Power of a Lie: The History of the Blood Libel](#)
- * = core resource

Introduction:

Religion is a difference that societies have used to create “the Other” for thousands of years. Indeed, it is a common basis on which members of a society are divided into *we* and *they*. According to a Pew Forum study in 2010, 75% of the world’s population “lives in countries where governments, social groups, or individuals restrict people’s ability to freely practice their faith.” This is complicated by the fact that people know very little about each other’s religious beliefs and practices. Lies, misinformation, and myths can spread in the absence of such knowledge. Sadly, even in some instances when there is a real understanding of religious differences, religious bigotry still occurs. Religious discrimination has often been a “convenient hatred,” exploited when leaders find it will help further their political goals or consolidate their power. One such convenient hatred, exploited numerous times throughout history, is antisemitism, the hatred of and discrimination against Jews.

Judaism is a religious tradition that has existed for more than 3,000 years. Throughout much of the faith’s history, Jews lived in territories ruled by other groups. As a result, Jews were treated as “the Other” at various times throughout history and conveniently scapegoated for differences in faith and culture. Pre-modern European monarchs, who derived their power from religion and the claim of divine authority, blamed Jews and other religious minorities for hard times as a way to deflect attention from their own responsibility. As the old monarchies dissolved in modern times, leaving power up for grabs, new nationalistic groups capitalized on the lies and myths that painted Jews as “the Other” in order to enhance their own power and standing. Many of these lies and myths about Jews persist in the contemporary world.

The resources in this lesson prompt students to confront a number of deep-seated myths and stereotypes about Jews, many of which survive into the 21st century. One example is the story of the blood libel told in the video “The Power of a Lie.” By delving into these misconceptions, students will have the opportunity to think deeply about how rumors, stereotypes, and myths are started, why they persist despite being exposed as frauds, and how they can help foment discrimination, hatred, and violence.

Subsequent lessons in this section will revisit the topic of antisemitism as they explore the ideas of race and nationalism. For the intersection of the ancient phenomenon of anti-Judaism with the more modern beliefs in race and nationalism has had powerful consequences. In the 1800s, the idea that Jews were of a separate race and nationality became widespread, perhaps making antisemitism an even more virulent and persistent form of hatred. Once the perception of “Jewishness” became rooted in these modern inventions, integration became more difficult for Jews. Having been descended from Jewish parents and grandparents made that facet of one’s identity immutable even if one chose to practice a different religion (or none at all). Being a Jew became a matter of “blood.” By examining this intersection of racism, nationalism, and antisemitism, students will be better prepared to understand the hateful Nazi ideology to which they will be introduced in the next section. We also hope that by exploring antisemitism, in particular, we will have a framework to investigate other forms of religious discrimination in our times.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- In what groups do you belong? Have you ever heard lies or misinformation spread about one of these groups? Do you think people may have believed this misinformation? What might have caused them to believe these lies? What might have caused someone to doubt these lies?
- How have you learned about other peoples’ religious traditions and practices?
- Have you ever heard someone make a negative comment or a joke about a religious group? How did it make you feel? What stereotypes did the person use? What motivated the person to make the statement or tell the joke? How did you respond?
- Is it possible to hate or fear someone you have never met? Can you think of an example of this phenomenon? Do you think this happens a lot? Sometimes? Rarely? Explain your answer.
- How do rumors get started? Why might lies persist even after they have been proven wrong? Have you ever helped spread a rumor that you doubted or knew wasn’t true? Why?
- Have you ever been in a position where you believed something about someone or a group and then later changed your mind? What changed your mind? What can be done to stop people from believing misinformation about groups of people?
- What purpose can hate or fear serve? How can fear and hatred be used to maintain or gain power?

Additional Resources:

- Book – [*A Convenient Hatred: The History of Antisemitism*](#)
- Video – [*Sister Rose’s Passion*](#)

Additional Reading from Holocaust and Human Behavior:

- “Anti-Judaism: A Case Study in Discrimination,” pp. 46-69
- “Citizenship and European Jews,” pp. 91-94
- “‘Race’ and Identity in France,” pp. 97-99

Resource 6.1: Reading: Religious Stereotyping

Creating Context

Have you ever heard someone make a negative comment or a joke about a religious group? How did it make you feel? What stereotypes did the person use? What motivated the person to make the statement or tell the joke? How did you respond? Record your thoughts in your journal before reading.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

stereotype	Judaism
prejudice	theology
discrimination	ignorance
prizefight	
antisemitic	

For many of us, religion is a significant part of our identity. The word *religion* comes from a Latin word that means “to tie or bind together.” Modern dictionaries define *religion* as “an organized system of beliefs and rituals centering on a supernatural being or beings.” Those “beliefs and rituals” unite followers into a community of believers who share not only a faith but also a worldview.

Each of the world’s religions offers its followers a way of explaining the mysterious and the marvelous. Each also provides a code of conduct that guides individuals in their dealings with the people around them. It has been said that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are more alike than they are different. Yet, often, in practicing their faith, individuals tend to stress the differences rather than focusing on the similarities. As a result, some come to regard those who choose to follow another religion as suspicious, different, and dangerous. Religion can be used to create “the Other” in a society.

In reflecting on his experiences with stereotypes, Major General Robert Bailey Solomon recalled a Friday night in the 1950s. That evening when he returned to his barracks, he found a fellow soldier sitting on his bunk:

He says, “Hey Solomon, where were you?” I said, “I’ve been out.” And he says, “Well, yeah, where were you?” I said, “Well, I went to religious services.” He looked at me and said, “Well, what are you, a Seventh Day Adventist?” I said, “No.” He said, “Well, what are you?” With a little trepidation, I said, “I’m Jewish.” He said, “Are your parents Jewish?” And he is looking at me very intently. I said, “Yes, both my father and my mother and my grandparents are Jewish.” And he said, “You don’t look Jewish.” And he is still looking at me. You remember the haircuts we had. Everybody looked alike. And so I finally said, “Well, why would you say I don’t look Jewish?” because I always thought I did. He said, “Well,” and he’s looking at my head, he says, “You don’t have horns.” I said, “Pardon me!” You see I had led a very sheltered life, and I said, “Are you

kidding me?” He said, “Well, Jews have horns.” I said, “How many Jews do you know who have horns?” He said, “I never met a Jew before.” So I found out that of the probably 220 people in that company, there weren’t more than five of them that ever met a Jew. The only ones that had were a couple of kids who had lived in Chicago, a couple in Milwaukee.

Now, the interesting phenomenon is that I spent sixteen weeks in basic training and had probably somewhere between twenty and thirty prizefights. Usually it was some fellow who wanted to beat my brains out because I was Jewish. I didn’t lose a fight. I got knocked on my keester a few times, but I think the fact that I was willing to fight sort of let them know that I was not a spindly little Jew that they could walk up to and push over.

As opposed to making me more Christianized, the military service, if anything, has made me more Jewish. I found nothing difficult about being in the army and I found nothing to compromise my faith in the army from the first day. I did find a lot of people who were antisemitic. And I also found out that many of those were antisemitic because they didn’t have the foggiest notion of what Jews were, where they came from, what they might be, what they believed. They simply believed popular myths about Jews.¹¹

Over 40 years later, Chana Schoenberger had an experience similar to Solomon’s. Hers took place in Wisconsin the summer she, along with several other high school students, participated in the National Science Foundation Young Scholars program. She writes:

Represented among us were eight religions: Jewish, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, Methodist, Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness and Lutheran. It was amazing, given the variety of backgrounds, to see the ignorance of some of the smartest young. My friends, ever curious about Judaism, asked me about everything from our basic theology to food preferences. “How come, if Jesus was a Jew, Jews aren’t Christian?” my Catholic roommate asked me in all seriousness. Brought up in a small Wisconsin town, she had never met a Jew before, nor had she met people from most of the other “strange” religions (anything but Catholic or mainstream Protestant). Many of the other kids were the same way. . . .

Nobody was deliberately rude or antisemitic, but I got the feeling that I was representing the entire Jewish people through my actions. I realized that many of my friends would go back to their small towns thinking that all Jews liked Dairy Queen Blizzards and grilled cheese sandwiches. After all, that was true of all the Jews they knew (in most cases, me and the only other Jewish young scholar, period).

The most awful thing for me, however, was not the benign ignorance of my friends. Our biology professor had taken us on a field trip to the [Environmental Protection Agency] field site where he worked, and he was telling us about the project he was working on. He said that they had to make sure the EPA got its money’s worth from the study—he “wouldn’t want them to get jewed.”

I was astounded. The professor had a doctorate, various other degrees and seemed to be a very intelligent man. He apparently had no idea that he had just made an antisemitic remark. . . What scares me about the experience, in fact about my whole visit to Wisconsin, was that I never met a really vicious antisemite or a malignantly prejudiced person. Many of the people I met had been brought up to think that Jews (or Mormons or any other religion that's not mainstream Christian) were different and that difference was not good.¹²

6.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. What examples are there of misunderstandings, prejudice, and hatred in Solomon's story?
2. What stereotypes shaped the way Solomon's fellow soldiers regarded him? How did those stereotypes affect the way he saw himself? How did it shape the way he viewed other Jews?
3. Chana Shoenberger says of her experience with Jewish stereotypes, "Ignorance was the problem I faced this summer. By itself, ignorance is not always a problem, but it leads to misunderstandings, prejudice, and hatred." How are ignorance, misunderstanding, prejudice and hatred related? Have you ever had an experience like the one she describes? If so, how did you respond? How did it make you feel?
4. How does ignorance make it more difficult to get rid of stereotypes? What can we do to make harmful stereotypes less prevalent? What kind of education do you think is most effective in combating stereotypes and prejudice?
5. Chana Schoenberger writes, "Nobody was deliberately rude or antisemitic, but I got the feeling that I was representing the entire Jewish people through my actions." Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is an African American who has had similar experiences. In his book *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man*, each of the men he profiles rages at the notion "that you represent your race, thus that your actions can betray your race or honor it." Why do you think Gates and others view "representation" as a "burden"? Would Schoenberger and Solomon agree? Do you agree?

Using Resource 6.1

Reflection and Discussion

Use the Comprehension & Connections questions to start your class discussion. Consider using one of a variety of effective discussion strategies, depending on the size and the needs of your particular class. [Think-Pair-Share](#) and [Learn to Listen/Listen to](#)

[Learn](#) are both strategies that could work well discussing this reading.

Resource 6.2:**Reading: The Roots of Religious Stereotyping*****Creating Context***

Judaism is a religious faith that has existed for more than 3,000 years. Throughout much of the faith's history, Jews lived in territories ruled by other groups. As a result, Jews were treated as "the Other" at various times throughout history and conveniently scapegoated for differences in faith and culture. This anti-Judaism, called *antisemitism* in modern times, has given birth to persistent rumors, lies, myths, and misinformation about Jews throughout history and the contemporary world. This reading gives an overview of the history of antisemitism and points out where many of those myths and misinformation come from.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

Roman Palestine	contempt
disciple	misinformation
sect	inquisition
atone	ghetto
gentile	heretic
synagogue	Catholic
excommunicate	Protestant
anti-Judaism	captive
discrimination	

Historians have traced myths about Jews back to the time of the Roman Empire and the beginnings of Christianity. Historian Robert S. Wistrich writes. "Jesus was born, lived and died as a Jew in first-century Roman Palestine. He never conceived nor dreamed of a Christian Church. His father, mother, brothers and first disciples were all Jews, so that early Christianity can be said to have been essentially a rebellious Jewish sect that emerged out of . . . Judaism and had to define itself against the mother religion."¹³

Jesus lived at a time of crisis for Jews in Palestine. After the Romans conquered their country, they insisted that the Jews not only obey Roman laws but also worship Roman gods. Jews who refused to do so were labeled "stubborn" "clannish," and "hostile." As pressure to accept Roman culture mounted, they searched desperately for a way to maintain their religious identity. Some urged rebellion. Others, including Jesus, argued that Jews must reform their religious practices and atone for their sins.

As each side marshaled arguments in defense of its position, the debate increased in intensity. Still, all of the attacks and counterattacks took place within the context of Judaism. Only when Christians separated from Judaism, did those angry words take on new meaning. They became, in the words of Krister Stendhal, a professor of Christian Studies, missiles hurled from a "mainly gentile Church toward the Synagogue across the street, from which now those Jews who

followed Jesus had been excommunicated. And by that shift Christian anti-Judaism was born.” He goes on to say:

Much has been written and more can be said about why and how that parting of the ways happened. No one factor was decisive. No one action or doctrine did it. As only a small number of Jews but an ever-increasing number of gentiles [or non-Jews] joined the Jesus movement, the outcome was Christian Churches, which, for all practical purposes, were gentile communities.

In time what began as a division within the Jewish community was transformed into two distinct communities, “the Synagogue and the Church.” Stendhal notes that “once established, these two entities felt the necessity to define themselves by sharpening their differences.”¹⁴ By the fourth century, the word Jew had become an expression of contempt among Christians. Laws now protected Christians from “contamination” by not allowing them to eat or associate with Jews. By the eleventh century, Jews were a small vulnerable minority in Western Europe. How vulnerable they truly were became clear in 1096, when Church leaders launched a series of crusades against the Muslims to win control of Palestine. On their way to the Middle East, the crusaders attacked Jewish communities. Thousands of Jews were murdered.

As persecutions mounted, many survivors fled to Islamic countries in Southwest Asia and North Africa or to Eastern Europe, where they found more freedom for a time. But whether they stayed behind or ventured elsewhere, Jews could not escape violence based on myth and misinformation. Almost everywhere in Europe, they now faced a variety of restrictions.

Peter Abelard, a twelfth-century philosopher and priest, described some of them in his *Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew, and a Christian*: “Heaven is their only place of refuge. If they want to travel to the nearest town, they have to buy protection with the high sums of money from the Christian rulers who actually wish for their death so that they can confiscate their possessions. The Jews cannot own land or vineyards because there is nobody to vouch for their safekeeping. Thus, all that is left to them as a means of livelihood is the business of moneylending, and this in turn brings the hatred of Christians upon them.”

Jews were allowed to become bankers, because the Church considered it a sin for a Christian to charge interest for a loan. Moneylending was also contrary to Jewish laws. But Jews had few other ways of earning a living, so many were forced to become bankers. That occupation led to a new stereotype: that of the Jew as a greedy moneylender. It was a stereotype that would linger long after the French and Italians forced the Jews from the banking industry.

Nowhere were Jews safe. In 1492, for example, Spain expelled any Jew who refused to convert to Christianity. Tens of thousands of Jews abandoned the country of their birth rather than give up their faith. Others pretended to be Christians but secretly practiced Judaism. The Spanish called these secret Jews Marranos, a word that means “pigs” according to some scholars. The Spanish Inquisition was an attempt to root out Marranos. Those accused of practicing Judaism were brought before the inquisition, a special court, and required to prove that they were good Christians. If they were unable to do so, they could be burned at the stake. The evidence against them might include a reluctance to eat pork, the lighting of candles on Friday night, or even the

absence of smoke from a chimney on Saturday. These were all said to be telltale signs of a “secret Jew.”

Even in places where Jews were allowed to practice their faith, they were often isolated from their Christian neighbors except for a few business encounters. In many countries, people of the Jewish faith were confined to a ghetto, a section of a city or town that was enclosed by high walls and guarded by Christian gatekeepers. With more rigid separation came new myths and misinformation. Increasingly Jews were portrayed as agents of the devil responsible for every catastrophe from random crime to plague and drought. Artists now portrayed Jews with horns, tails, and evil faces. Priests and scholars elaborated on the idea that Jews were evil creatures who were less than human in sermons and lectures.

Beginning in 1517, a new division developed within Christian Europe. That year, in what is now Germany, Martin Luther protested corruption in the Catholic Church by calling on Church leaders to reform. Instead they branded him a heretic and excommunicated him. He started his own Protestant churches. As Luther’s ideas became more popular, religious wars broke out in many parts of Europe.

Luther had assumed that Jews would want to become Protestants. But when they showed no interest in converting, an angry Luther wrote in part:

First, their synagogues or churches should be set on fire, and whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so that no one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it. . . .Secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed. For they perpetrate the same things there they do in their synagogues. For this reason they ought to be put under one roof or in a stable, like Gypsies, in order that they may realise that they are not masters in this land, as they boast, but miserable captives.¹⁵

Other Protestant leaders were more tolerant of Jews, in part because their quarrel was with Catholics. But even among those Protestants, old stereotypes lingered. Indeed they survived into modern times. As Malcolm Hay, a Catholic historian, explains: “Men are not born with hatred in their blood. The infection is usually acquired by contact; it may be injected deliberately or even unconsciously, by parents, or by teachers. . . .The disease may spread throughout the land like the plague, so that a class, a religion, a nation, will become the victim of popular hatred without anyone knowing exactly how it all began; and people will disagree, and even quarrel among themselves, about the real reason for its existence; and no one foresees the inevitable consequences.”¹⁶

6.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Which parts of the history described in this reading are new to you? Which parts are most surprising? Go back and underline any information in this reading that you find new or important. Also highlight any information from this reading you find powerful or noteworthy.

2. What actions or events helped establish Jews as “the Other”?
3. What factors account for the divergence between Judaism and Christianity? What role did the notion of identity play in this process?
4. What words or phrases used by Martin Luther illustrate his tone towards Jews?
5. Historian Robert S. Wistrich describes the stereotype of the Jews as being “divorced completely from the real, concrete Jews of everyday life.” What allows stereotypes to flourish? What role do leaders play in keeping them alive? What role does segregation play? Why do people cling to stereotypes that have no basis in reality?
6. This reading includes the following quotation from Malcolm Hay, a Catholic historian: “Men are not born with hatred in their blood. The infection is usually acquired by contact; it may be injected deliberately or even unconsciously, by parents, or by teachers. . . .The disease may spread throughout the land like the plague, so that a class, a religion, a nation, will become the victim of popular hatred without anyone knowing exactly how it all began; and people will disagree, and even quarrel among themselves, about the real reason for its existence; and no one foresees the inevitable consequences.”¹⁷

How do the Christian soldier and the biology professor described in Resource 6.1 relate to Hay’s thinking? How can people spread hatred unconsciously?

7. Many scholars have reflected on the hatred directed at the Jews throughout history. Some have been struck by the way leaders have tried to set Jews apart, stir hatred, and teach contempt. What part does language play in the level of tolerance one group has for another? What can it play in dehumanizing a group of people? Find an example of hateful or dehumanizing language in the reading above.

Using Resource 6.2

Improving Comprehension

This reading provides a brief summary of an extraordinarily large sweep of history. Students with little prior knowledge of the related historical events and periods (such as the Spanish Inquisition and the Reformation) may find this reading particularly challenging. Therefore, for some classes it may be helpful to use one of the following strategies:

- Try a literacy strategy, such as [Chunking](#) or Say Something (described after the reading “Is Race ‘Skin’ Deep?” earlier in this section), to prompt students to use effective reading habits such as monitoring comprehension and summarizing.

- Design a short lecture based on the information in this reading. If you do so, you might choose to build your lecture around the quotations from scholars and historical figures. It is important to emphasize that antisemitism is a hatred that has existed for millenia; it was not invented by the Nazis.

Reflection Strategy

For many students, this lesson might be the first time they have encountered the history of Christian antisemitism. Especially for those who identify with a Christian faith tradition, this encounter might precipitate a complicated or emotional response. Therefore, it might be helpful to provide the class with a simple strategy to help them process their reactions to what they are learning. One such method is the S.I.T. Analysis Strategy. Simply ask students in advance to record something they learned that is *surprising*, something that is *interesting* or *intriguing*, and something that is *troubling*. Follow up this strategy by having students [Think, Pair, Share](#) their responses.

Film: *Sister Rose's Passion*

The documentary [Sister Rose's Passion](#) tells the story of a Catholic nun who confronted the history of Christian antisemitism and helped influence changes in Catholic teaching about Judaism. You might decide to show this film in your class instead of using the reading above, pairing it with the Malcom Hay quotation in Question 3 above. The film explores and refutes the charge of deicide—the belief that Jews were responsible for the death of Christ, which has inspired antisemitism throughout history. The film is 39 minutes long, but the first 22 minutes are especially recommended. The film is available from the [Facing History library](#).

Hatred as Infection: Using the Malcolm Hay Quotation

The quotation in this reading by Malcom Hay provides a particularly powerful insight into the spread of hatred and destructive stereotypes. Even if you choose not to use this reading with your class in its entirety, it would be a useful and important exercise to ask students to analyze this quotation and gather evidence that either supports or refutes it from the materials they have studied in this section.

There are a variety of strategies you might use to encourage students to think deeply about Hay's insight. Consider any of the following:

- [Text to Self; Text to Text; Text to World](#)
- [Big Paper](#)
- [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#)

Resource 6.3:**Video - The Power of a Lie: The History of the Blood Libel*****Creating Context***

How do rumors get started? Why might lies persist even after they have been proven wrong? Have you ever helped spread a rumor that you doubted or knew wasn't true? Why? Record your thoughts in your journal before watching the video.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

pernicious	demonize
libel	precarious
ritual murder	Good Friday
willful	distraught
obstinate	crucifixion
dehumanize	virulent

Transcript for *The Power of a Lie: The History of Blood Libel*

Hatreds are rooted in stereotypes and myths. The lies persist despite heroic efforts to set the record straight. We are going to examine one of the most powerful and pernicious of those lies, the Blood Libel. It is false claim that Jews engage in ritual murder—that is, religiously sanctioned murder. It has been traced England in the 12th century.

The 1100s were a time when many Christians were outraged that Jews refused to convert to Christianity. They saw the Jews' refusal as a willful and obstinate denial of what they perceived as "God's truth." They expressed their anger in words and images that dehumanized and demonized Jews. It was in this charged atmosphere that some Christians began to accuse Jews of ritual murder. The accusation came at a time when life was precarious in Europe. And, as in other times of great fear and anxiety, many people found it all too easy to blame "them"—the people who are not like "us"—for every tragedy, every hardship, every loss.

The blood libel grew out of an incident that took place in Norwich, England, in 1144. On Good Friday, a woodsman discovered the body of a missing child in a forest near his home. The man claimed that young William's death had to be the work of Jews, because no Christian would have murdered a child so brutally. The boy's distraught family agreed. The authorities did not. They firmly stated that there was no proof that any Jew was involved. No one was punished for the child's death.

Five years later, a monk named Thomas of Monmouth arrived in Norwich. After hearing the gossip, he decided that the boy's death was no ordinary murder; it was a ritual murder. He claimed that "the Jews" were re-enacting the crucifixion. He charged that every year they killed an innocent child in much the way "they" killed Christ. He insisted that in 1144 the country they chose was England and the city Norwich. The chosen child was William of Norwich.

Within just 50-years time, Christians in eight European cities had accused Jews of ritual murder. In 1255, a new element was added to those charges in the German town of Fulda. It was the strange notion that “the Jews” murder innocent children “for their blood.” By the end of the 13th century, the number of known accusations had more than tripled and spread to almost every part of Europe, despite the many rulers and popes who insisted that this charge was false. They insisted that Judaism does not permit ritual murder.

Over the centuries the blood libel became rooted in Christian culture in part because it tapped into the fears and anxieties of parents and children alike. It also had particular appeal to the greedy and the corrupt. As Pope Gregory X noted in 1271, some Christians purposely hid their children so that they could use the blood libel to extort money from Jews.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, the blood libel was rooted in religious beliefs. When those beliefs changed, the lie persisted. By the 1800s, it was often linked to notions of “race.” Accusations that Jews engage in ritual murder were now considered “proof” of the depravity of the so-called “Jewish race.” In the 1930s and 1940s, Adolf Hitler and his followers used the blood libel as propaganda.

To the surprise of many people, the blood libel continued to incite violence long after the Holocaust ended. On July 4, 1946, a nine-year-old boy in Poland falsely claimed that “the Jews” had dumped him into a sack and then carried him to a basement where he witnessed the murder of 15 Christian children “for their blood.” Within hours of his supposed escape from “the Jews,” 5,000 angry Polish protestors surrounded a building owned by the Jewish community and attacked the Jews inside—nearly all of whom were survivors of Auschwitz and other death camps. When the rampage ended, about 75 Jews were injured and 41 were dead, including a number of infants. Police officers and soldiers rushed to the scene but did not even try to stop the violence.

And nearly 700 years after Innocent IV had become the first of pope to confirm that Jews do not practice ritual murder, Poland’s cardinal and all but one of his bishops insisted that the matter had not yet been settled. By the end of 1946, a virulent antisemitism had driven thousands of Jews from Poland, and many others were eager to join them. The blood libel reveals much about the way a lie becomes imbedded in a society. It also reveals why antisemitism persists—it is a very convenient hatred.

6.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. Summarize the beginning of the blood libel. Why did it take root so strongly in Christianity at the time? What fears and anxieties did it tap into?
2. According to the video, what factors help explain the persistence of the myth of the blood libel despite the fact that popes and other Christian leaders denounced it as a lie? What does this story suggest about how far people are willing to take a lie?
3. What is the difference between a reason and an excuse? Do you think that belief

in the blood libel was a reason for persecution of Jews by Christians, or was it merely an excuse to justify the hatred they felt towards Jews anyway? What evidence can you find in the video for each position?

4. In his book *Fear*, Jan Gross writes in detail about the violence towards Jews in Kielce, Poland, in 1946 that the video describes. Gross writes that part of the myth of the blood libel was the claim that the blood of murdered Christian children was used by Jews as an ingredient for matzo, the traditional Jewish unleavened bread (made without yeast). After a Jewish community center was destroyed in Kielce, many Christians in the neighborhood helped themselves to abandoned food from the center. Gross writes about one woman, interviewed for a documentary in the 1980s, who recalled: “they also took matzo because it tastes good. I liked it too, why not.” When the interviewer asked the woman why Christians would eat matzo if they believed it was made from the blood of murdered children, “the lady smiled again, shrugged her shoulders, and dismissed the question with a chuckle.”¹⁸

Does this information support the idea that belief in the blood libel is a reason or excuse for violence towards Jews?

5. What does it mean to say that antisemitism is a “convenient hatred”? How is it convenient? How does the video support this characterization? How does the interview with the Polish woman described in Gross’s book support it?
6. What actions can one take to stop harmful rumors, gossip, and misinformation after they have already started to spread?

Using Resource 6.3

Using the Video

It is highly recommended that you show the [six-minute Facing History video](#) of this story. It includes images and maps to illustrate the information. The transcript above is provided in case you are unable to stream the video. You might also provide copies of the transcript to your students so that they can follow along, underlining important phrases and annotating the story for future reference.

Reflection and Discussion

The history of the blood libel is both surprising and provocative for many students. It is also, in some ways, familiar because of the way that we all have experienced to some degree the phenomenon of lies, gossip, and misinformation that take on lives of their own.

Use the Comprehension and Connections questions to guide your class discussion after watching and reflecting on the video. Consider using the [Save the Last Word for Me](#) or [Fishbowl](#) strategies to structure the conversation.

Lesson 7: Membership and Race

Essential Questions:

- *Why do some differences matter more than others? Who decides which differences matter most?*
- *What is race? How has it been used to determine who belongs to a group, society, or nation?*
- *What is racism? What are the consequences of allowing prejudices to become “fashionable”?*

Included Resources:

- * 7.1 - Reading: Defining Race
 - * 7.2 - Reading: Is Race "Skin Deep"? / Film: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Part One
 - 7.3 - Reading: "Race" and Science in a Changing World / Film: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Part Two
 - * 7.4 - Reading: Antisemitism and Race
- * = core reading

Introduction:

In modern history, the notion of race has had a powerful effect on way we define ourselves, our communities, and our nations. What is surprising to many students and adults alike is that race is a concept that has only existed in the modern, post-Enlightenment world. What is even more surprising is to learn is that, confirmed by recent work in genetics, the idea of race has no basis in biology. Scholar [Kwame Anthony Appiah explains](#) that while there is biological variation between people, this variation does not explain any of the differences that are commonly attributed to race. In other words, race is purely a social construct.

Learning that the idea of race has no basis in biology can be both disconcerting and liberating. If this is true, then the pernicious labels and stereotypes so often associated with race also have no scientific basis. This realization can prompt students to think about themselves and others in a new, more positive manner. Yet, even if it has no scientific basis, the idea of race has certainly had an enormous impact on our history and our society. So where did the idea of race come from, and how do we respond to both its legacy and its persistence? These are difficult questions; students will need time to process and discuss these ideas.

This lesson begins with the reading “Defining Race,” which tells the story of Susie Phipps and her startling discovery that the way she has always defined her race is not consistent with the way the State of Louisiana defined it on her birth certificate. This story help students begin to grasp both the arbitrary nature of the way race has been defined throughout history and the social significance of those definitions. The lesson continues with two additional readings that contain complex information both about the science of race and the history of racial classification. You might find that the information in these readings is presented more effectively and compellingly in the documentary [Race: The Power of an Illusion](#) (available from the Facing History library). See the “Using Resource” sections after each reading for more specific information about each hour-long episode of the documentary. This lesson concludes by examining how the concept of

race provided a new and convenient (albeit false) justification for discrimination against Jews in the modern world.

It is important to acknowledge both here and in your classrooms that race is a topic that is emotionally charged and difficult for many to talk about. Consider the following recommendations for conducting conversations about race or any of the other challenging topics that will come up throughout this course:

- Before beginning the lesson, give students the opportunity to reflect in their journals on the connections and experiences that come to mind for them with this topic. You might follow the reflection with the [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy.
- Revisit your classroom contract. Give students an opportunity to add to or amend the guidelines on your contract.
- Leave time at the end of each class period for reflection, especially with [Exit Cards](#). Plan as carefully as possible so that class does not end just as emotionally charged or controversial topics arise in a resource or discussion.
- Follow up individually with students who you observe may be having a difficult time with the discussions in class. Similarly, follow up individually with students who are finding it difficult to observe the guidelines of the classroom contract.
- End the lesson with another journal reflection about how students experienced the process of learning about and discussing the topic.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Why do people sometimes find it difficult to talk about race?
- Is it possible to divide people into groups without privileging one group as superior to the other? Why or why not?
- What is “race?” What does “race” tell you about a person? What doesn’t it tell you?
- What is racism? How have ideas about race been used and abused?
- How has the idea of “race” affected you, your family or your community?

Additional Resources:

- Website - [“Race - The Power of an Illusion”](#)
- Video - [Race - The Power of an Illusion](#)
- Website - [Understanding Race](#)
- Video - [“Race and Biology,”](#) from a Facing History interview with Kwame Anthony Appiah

Additional Reading from Holocaust and Human Behavior:

- “Membership in the United States,” pp. 71-77
- “A Changing World,” pp. 86-87
- “‘Race Science’ in a Changing World,” pp. 87-90

Additional Reading from Race and Membership in American History:

- “‘What is Your Race?’,” pp. 13-16
- “Passing,” pp. 17-19

- “Race and Racism,” pp. 20-25
- All readings from Chapter 2: Race, Democracy, and Citizenship, pp. 34-61
- “Is Race ‘Skin Deep’?,” pp. 295-301
- “The Power of Stereotypes,” pp. 302-309

Resource 7.1: Reading: Defining Race

Creating Context

Humans have always separated themselves according to differences. For most of recorded history, these separations were made according to religion and wealth. In the 18th and 19th centuries, some scientists began to classify humans according to physical differences. These classifications led to the idea of race, and that idea has been a significant part of the way that people think about their differences ever since.

Write a working definition of *race* in your journal. What does the word mean to you? (A working definition is one that you will come back to and revise as you learn more about the concept.) Why is race difficult for many people to discuss? What does discussing race make you think and feel? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

objective
cultural framework

Sociologist Allan G. Johnson offers an example to describe the importance individuals and groups in American society have placed on the concept of “race.”

Imagine that you apply for a copy of your birth certificate one day, and when you receive it, you discover that it lists your “race” as something other than what you and everyone else always considered it to be. You are black, and the certificate says you are white; or you are white, and it says you are black. How would you feel?

This is exactly what happened in 1977 to Susie Guillory Phipps – a New Orleans resident who had always been white, both to herself and to everyone who encountered her. She had twice married white men, and her family album was filled with pictures of blue-eyed, white ancestors. The state of Louisiana, however, defined her as “colored.”

When she protested to state authorities, they carefully traced her ancestry back 222 years, and found that although her great-great-great-great grandfather was white, her great-great-great-great grandmother was black. Under Louisiana law, anyone whose ancestry was at least 3 percent black was considered black. Thus, even with an ancestry 97 percent white, the state defined her as black.

Susie Phipps spent \$20,000 to force Louisiana to change her birth certificate, and in 1983 Louisiana repealed the law. Why did she go to such expense? Beyond the obvious shock to her identity, there are larger issues. Why does the state have a formula for officially deciding what each person’s race is? Why would a tiny percentage of black ancestry

cause her to be considered black, while an overwhelmingly white ancestry would not mean she is white?

The key lies in the word “mean” in the previous sentence, for... what things objectively are is often less significant to human beings than what things mean in cultural frameworks of beliefs, values, and attitudes.¹⁹

7.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. Summarize the dilemma that Susie Phipps faced? Why might it have been so important to her to change her birth certificate?
2. Like the Bear in *The Bear That Wasn't*, Susie Phipps was told that she wasn't who she thought she was. Who told her that? How important is that opinion?
3. What does Johnson mean when he says “what things objectively are is often less significant to human beings than what things mean in cultural frameworks of beliefs, attitudes, and values”? As you continue reading, look for other examples in the text that support that point of view. Look, too, for evidence that calls it into question.
4. Review your working definition of *race*. How would you revise your definition after considering the story in this reading? Take a moment to expand or modify your definition using evidence from the reading.

Using Resource 7.1

Shaping Definitions

In Creating Context above, students are prompted to create a working definition for *race*. Encourage students to take a few moments to do so, because they will be asked to review, reconsider, and revise their definitions as they learn more about the concepts of race and racism over the next few readings. By continually revising their definitions in this way, students will develop a deeper understanding of these important concepts.

Resource 7.2:**Reading: Is Race “Skin Deep”? / Film: *Race: The Power of an Illusion, Part One******Creating Context***

In order to make sense of the world around us, we group people and things into categories. Legal scholar Martha Minow points to the consequences of this human behavior: “When we identify one thing as unlike the others, we are dividing the world; we use our language to exclude, to distinguish—to discriminate.”

When is it dangerous to point out the differences between people? When is it necessary? Is it possible to divide people into groups without privileging one group as superior to the other?

Record your thoughts in your journal before you read the text below and watch the film.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this resource:

genome	unfounded
biological	sensibility
genetic	socially constructed
species	discrimination
Caucasian	melanin
arbitrary	

In the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, many scientists divided the world into “races” and insisted that some “races” (their own in particular) were superior to others. In the last several decades, scientists studying the human genome have learned that race is not a meaningful way to classify people from a biological standpoint. In 2001, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City opened a new exhibit entitled “The Genomic Revolution.” In a prominent place, the organizers featured the following statement:

**The Only Race Is Human Race
No Biological Basis for Race**

New data from the mapping of the human genome reveal that all humans are incredibly similar—in fact, we are 99.9% genetically identical. **We are all members of one species, Homo sapiens.** Scientists have confirmed, as they long suspected, **that there is no genetic or biological basis for race.**

Genetic variation between people within the same “racial” group can be greater than the variation between people of two different groups. Many people of African descent are no more similar to other Africans than they are to Caucasians. Genetic distinctions between Asians and Caucasians are less pronounced than those between groups from, for example, parts of East and West Africa.

No matter how scientists today scrutinize a person's genes, they can't determine with certainty whether an individual is from one "racial" group or another. **Differences of culture and society** distinguish one group from another, but these distinctions are not rooted in biology.

"Mapping the DNA sequence variation in the human genome holds the potential for promoting the fundamental unity of all humankind." —Dr. Harold P. Freeman²⁰

Physiologist Jared Diamond writes that the characteristics we use to define races are arbitrary and scientifically meaningless. We could just as easily choose to define races by other traits that vary among humans such as fingerprints, the presence of lactase (an enzyme that allows some humans to drink milk), or the genes that protect some humans from contracting malaria. If we used any of those traits to define race, then which people are members of which race would vary significantly. Diamond notes, "Depending on whether we classified ourselves by antimalarial genes, lactase, fingerprints, or skin color, we could place Swedes in the same race as either Xhosas, Fulani, the Ainu of Japan, or Italians." Instead, Diamond observes, we separate ourselves into races by the most visible physical differences, such as skin color.²¹

When her family spent six months in the Netherlands, Barbara Katz Rothman discovered how arbitrary racial classifications are. Fearful that her then five-year-old daughter Victoria would be the only "black kid in her class," Rothman was told her concerns were unfounded. Yet, Rothman writes:

She was the only black kid in her class. She was the only black kid I saw anywhere in that school. If I hadn't been reassured by people I genuinely like and trust, I'd have just been angry. As it was, I was puzzled. I walked over to a wall of photographs of the school going back for years and years, group after group of class photos. No black kids. I didn't say anything, just kept watching, thinking about it. A few days later, light dawned for me: there were dark-skinned kids from India and Pakistan in all the classes. Black kids. European-style black kids.

For an American, with an American sensibility of race, Indian and African kids are not both "black." For a Dutch person, with a different race system in his head, these were all black kids.

So what does that story prove, anyway? That the Dutch draw a different line? Maybe between the Dutch and everyone else? Not being Dutch, are all the blacks, well, black? The Indian kids in her class could see what my kid and I could see, the distinctiveness of African features over and above the similarity of skin color.

So does the story tell us that race is a socially constructed category, constructed differently in different places? Or does it tell us that the Dutch draw their lines so tightly around themselves that they don't bother to make finer discriminations—not that they don't see or experience the distinction as existing, but that they don't see why it should matter.

And is that what white Americans do when they see a black kid whose family has been in the United States since slavery days, a black kid whose family arrived two generations ago from Haiti, and a black kid who just immigrated here from Nigeria, and calls them all “African American,” seeing no meaningful differences?²²

Rothman explains:

People certainly do see race. We see race as this physical reality, this recognizable pattern of differences between people. It is foolish to try to persuade people that the differences don’t exist. They do. It is pointless to try to convince people that the differences don’t matter. They do.

What confuses us is that the differences exist physically, but matter socially. There are physical differences, and even physical consequences. But there is not a physical cause-and-effect relationship between them. Take something relatively simple: There is a much higher infant mortality rate among blacks than among whites in America. The differences between black and white women are there, real and measurable. But those differences, the physical, biological characteristics marked as race—level of melanin in the skin, shape of the nose, or whatever—are not the cause of the different infant mortality rates. The darkness of the mother is a physical, biological phenomenon, as is the death of the baby. But the relationship between the two is a social reality; it is the social consequence of race that causes the physical reality of death.²³

7.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. The organizers of the exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History placed a number of sentences and phrases in their statement on race in large and/or very dark type. Why do you think they chose to highlight those ideas? *Summarize the main idea of the museum’s statement.*
2. Why do you think we have no difficulty in telling individuals apart in our own group, but *they* all look alike – even though there are more genetic variations among *us* than there are between *us* and *them*?
3. To what extent is seeing believing? How does Jared Diamond challenge that idea? To what extent does Rothman’s story challenge it?
4. How does our culture shape what we see and what we fail to notice? How does culture affect the importance we place on the differences we see in the world?
5. Review your working definition of *race*. How would you revise your definition after considering the information in this reading? Take a moment to expand or modify your definition using evidence from the reading.

6. One goal of education is to expose individuals to other ideas so that they can weigh alternatives and make wise decisions. What role can education play in ending the “social reality” of race? In small groups, brainstorm ideas for altering or abolishing harmful stereotypes—or calling them out. Report to the class on the idea or combination of ideas your group considers most effective in ending discrimination.

Using Resource 7.2

Viewing Race: *The Power of an Illusion*

The documentary [Race: The Power of an Illusion](#) provides an excellent alternative or supplement to the ideas in this resource. In particular, Episode One, “The Difference Between Us,” (56 min.) provides important insights into the irrelevance of race as a biological concept. *The entire episode is highly recommended.* If you choose to show the film instead of using the reading, focus your post-viewing discussion on questions 2-6 above.

The website for the documentary also includes an article, [“Ten Things Everyone Should Know About Race.”](#) that explains the science concerning the concept of race in a concise and engaging manner.

Say Something Literacy Strategy

This reading includes both historical and scientific information as well as first-hand testimony. It might be helpful to have students use a literacy strategy that prompts them to monitor their comprehension and think deeply about what they are reading.

One strategy that is designed to improve comprehension of challenging texts and provide students an opportunity to “talk back” to the ideas in the text is *Say Something*.²⁴ Have students read the text together in pairs. At the end of each paragraph, the students will pause and do one of the following:

- Make a prediction
- Ask a question
- Clarify something that is confusing
- Comment on what is happening in the reading
- Connect what is happening in the reading to something else they know about

If students are unable to accomplish any of these tasks, then that is a sign they need to re-read the paragraph, then ask for help.

Alternatively, you might choose to have students use the [Two Column Note Taking](#) or [Chunking](#) strategies.

Digging Deeper

A longer version of this reading is available from the [Race and Membership in American](#)

[History](#) resource book from Facing History (p. 295). The expanded reading includes an excerpt from an article in *Discover* magazine by Jared Diamond that further illuminates his thinking described above.

Resource 7.3:**Reading: “Race” and Science in a Changing World” / Film: *Race: The Power of an Illusion, Part Two******Creating Context***

What is *racism*? Add a working definition of this term to your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

fixed	fertile
intrinsic	indigenous
objective	natural selection
species	Social Darwinism
prejudice	fit/unfit
province	volk
fashionable	eugenics
scientific	objective

In the 1800s and 1900s, people looked increasingly to science to justify their ideas about who was “in” and who was “out.” The first scientists to respond were not Europeans but Americans. In the United States, dozens of scientists set out to prove the superiority of the “white race” over all others. Such research allowed some to insist that *they* are less than human and therefore less deserving of having their rights protected or being granted full citizenship than *we* are.

In the early 1800s, for example, a white surgeon from Philadelphia, Samuel Morton, hypothesized that there was a link between brain size and race. He maintained that it was therefore possible to rank races “objectively.” After measuring a vast number of skulls, he concluded that his findings “proved” that whites were “superior” to other races. He was not sure if blacks were a separate race or a separate species, but he did insist that they were different from and inferior to whites. He also added a new twist to racist thinking – the idea that each race is fixed, intrinsically different from all others, and incapable of being changed. Although he gathered data just before the Civil War, Morton claimed the debate over slavery had no bearing on his research.

Frederick Douglass disagreed with Morton. He claimed that Morton was one who “reasons from prejudice rather than from facts.” He went on to say, “It is the province of prejudice to blind; and scientific writers, not less than others, write to please, as well as to instruct, and even unconsciously to themselves, (sometimes,) sacrifice what is true to what is popular. Fashion is not confined to dress; but extends to philosophy as well – and it is fashionable now, in our land, to exaggerate the differences between the Negro and the European.”²⁵

It was also fashionable in Europe. Many people there were also intrigued with the idea that they belonged to a superior race. A French anthropologist, Paul Broca, later built upon Morton’s theories. Broca believed that only “compatible” races would produce fertile or what he called

“eugenic” offspring. He therefore warned against “race mixing.” These ideas had powerful effects when governments applied them to everyday life.

In the years before the Civil War, Americans used such research to force indigenous peoples onto tiny reservations in the West. After the Civil War, they used it to defend the separation of African Americans from others in the community. In 1896, Homer Plessy, an African American, decided to challenge a Louisiana law that kept blacks separated from whites on public transportation. After deliberately taking a seat in the “white” section of a train, he was arrested, tried, and found guilty. He appealed the verdict, arguing that John Ferguson, the Louisiana judge who convicted him, had violated his rights as stated in the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. That amendment guarantees every citizen equal protection under the law.

The Supreme Court, however, sided with Ferguson, who argued that as long as the railroad offered “separate but equal” seating for whites and blacks, Plessy’s rights were protected. The court not only accepted the idea of race, but based its decision on the assumption that race is a scientifically sound concept. Broca’s research supported the ruling. It also encouraged other states to pass similar laws. By the early 1900s, those laws affected every aspect of American life. African Americans were kept apart in schools, factories, churches, theaters, hospitals and even cemeteries.

Racists also found support for their arguments in work that seemed unrelated to human societies. In 1859, Charles Darwin, a British biologist, published *The Origin of the Species*. It explained how various species of plants and animals physically change, or evolve, over time. Darwin’s work suggested that each competes for space and nourishment and only those with a selective advantage survive to reproduce themselves. A number of Europeans and Americans, including a British writer named Herbert Spencer, began to apply Darwin’s ideas to human society. Referring to Darwin’s work but using his own phrases such as “the struggle for existence” and “the survival of the fittest,” Spencer helped popularize a new doctrine known as Social Darwinism.

Social Darwinists saw their ideas at work everywhere in the world. Those who were fit were at the top of the social and economic pyramid. Those at the bottom were “unfit,” they reasoned, because competition rewards “the strong.” Many Social Darwinists therefore questioned the wisdom of extending the right to vote to groups who were “less fit.” They argued that if the laws of natural selection were allowed to function freely, everyone would find his or her rightful place in the world. Increasingly that place was based on race.

In every country, people interpreted Social Darwinism a little differently. In Germany, Ernst Haeckel, a biologist, popularized the idea by combining it with romantic ideas about the German Volk (the traditional “German people”). In a book called *Riddle of the Universe*, he divided humankind into races and ranked each. Not surprisingly “Aryans” were at the top of his list and Jews and Africans at the bottom.

Haeckel was also taken with the idea of eugenics – breeding “society’s best with best” – as a way of keeping the “German race” pure. That idea also came from England. Its originator was Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin. Galton’s ideas were popular not only in Germany but also in

the United States. American eugenicists used them to advocate restrictions on marriage and immigration as well as laws that would sterilize the “socially unfit.”

Scientists who tried to show that there was no “pure” race were ignored. In the late 1800s, the German Anthropological Society, under the leadership of Rudolph Virchow, conducted a study to determine if there really were racial differences between Jewish and “Aryan” children. After studying nearly seven million students, the society concluded that that the two groups were more alike than they were different. Historian George Mosse said of the study:

This survey should have ended controversies about the existence of pure Aryans and Jews. However, it seems to have had surprisingly little impact. The idea of race had been infused with myths, stereotypes, and subjectivities long ago, and a scientific survey could change little. The idea of pure, superior races and the concept of a racial enemy solved too many pressing problems to be easily discarded.

The survey itself was unintelligible to the uneducated part of the population. For them, Haeckel’s *Riddles of the Universe* was a better answer to their problems.²⁶

7.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. What was happening in the US during Morton’s work? Using your knowledge of United States history and information from this reading, answer the following questions:
 - What was “fashionable” for people to believe about race in Morton’s time?
 - How might these beliefs have influenced the conclusions of scientists?
 - What do you think motivated Morton and other scientists to rank “races”?
2. Morton’s work had far-reaching effects mainly because he was considered a scientist – one who judges from evidence. What does objective mean? Was Morton objective? Are modern scientists objective?
3. What specific ways does Frederick Douglass refute Morton’s claims about race? How successful is Douglass’s argument?
4. Define the word *scientific*. Is Social Darwinism scientific? Are scientific proofs more convincing than other proofs?
5. Review your working definitions of *race* and *racism*. How would you revise your definitions after considering the information in this reading? Take a moment to expand or modify both definitions.
6. What are the barriers to trying to confront a person with strongly held beliefs about race that are different than your own? What factors might help change

one's attitude about race?

7. What might happen if the knowledge that there is no scientific basis for race conflicts with the beliefs about race of one's family, friends, or other group affiliations? What roles do science and facts play in shaping one's beliefs? What role does empathy play?
8. Think of times when prejudice has blinded you or someone you know. How did you react? How did you feel? What are the consequences of allowing prejudices to become "fashionable"?
9. What problems did the idea of "pure races" "solve" in the United States? How does your answer explain why people were so reluctant to disregard the idea?
10. How were the ideas of Social Darwinism and race adopted in Germany? Is it surprising to you that Jews were considered a separate race?

Using Resource 7.3

Viewing *Race: The Power of an Illusion*

The documentary [Race: The Power of an Illusion](#) provides an excellent alternative or supplement to the ideas in this resource. In particular, Episode Two, "The Story We Tell," (56 min.) traces the history and evolution of the concept of race, as well as the way this concept became a tool of subjugation for Native American and African American populations in the United States. If you choose to show the film instead of using the reading, focus your post-viewing discussion on questions 3-8 above.

Exploring the Race and Slavery in American History

Few figures in American history better represent the contradictions and dilemmas the nation has experienced with race than Thomas Jefferson. The primary author of the *Declaration of Independence*, which famously asserts that "All men are created equal," was also a slaveholder who had complicated relationships with his slaves. To help your students learn more about Jefferson, his beliefs about slavery, and his relationships with his own slaves, consider showing the documentary [Jefferson's Blood](#), available from the Facing History library.

In order to explore more deeply the role that the concept of race played in the history of American slavery, consider the following readings from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*:

- "Slavery and Freedom" (p. 68)
- "Membership in the United States" (p. 71)
- "Citizenship and African Americans" (p. 94)

Say Something Literacy Strategy

This reading includes both historical and scientific information as well as first-hand

testimony. It might be helpful to have students use a literacy strategy that prompts them to monitor their comprehension and think deeply about what they are reading.

One strategy that is designed to improve comprehension of challenging texts and provide students an opportunity to “talk back” to the ideas in the text is *Say Something*.²⁷ Have students read the text together in pairs. At the end of each paragraph, the students will pause and do one of the following:

- Make a prediction
- Ask a question
- Clarify something that is confusing
- Comment on what is happening in the reading
- Connect what is happening the reading to something else they know about

If students are unable to accomplish any of these tasks, then that is a sign they need to re-read the paragraph, then ask for help.

Alternatively, you might choose to have students use the [Two Column Note Taking](#) or [Chunking](#) strategies.

Reflecting on the Discussion

Similar to beginning discussions about race, it is also essential to bring students safely out of these discussions. Before continuing to the next lesson, you might ask students to reflect on what they learned about race and how the process made them feel. You might use these prompts:

- “Something new about race that I have learned is...”
- “Learning and talking about race makes me wonder...”

You can debrief these short reflections using the [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy.

Resource 7.4:**Reading: Antisemitism and Race*****Creating Context***

In the previous reading, historian George Mosse asserts: “The idea of pure, superior races and the concept of a racial enemy solved too many pressing problems to be easily discarded.”²⁸

What does Mosse’s statement mean? Is what people believe to be true more important than the truth itself? Record your thoughts in your journal before reading about how ideas about race were used to justify antisemitism.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

psychoanalyst	discontinuity
sociologist	assimilate
continuity	antisemitism
conversion	Israelite

New beliefs about race in the late 1800s had a profound effect on the ways European Jews defined their identity. Michael A. Meyer, a professor of Jewish history, writes:

Long before the word became fashionable among psychoanalysts and sociologists, Jews in the modern world were obsessed with the subject of *identity*. They were confronted by the problem that Jewishness seemed to fit none of the usual categories. Until the establishment of the state of Israel, the Jews were not a nation, at least not in the political sense; being Jewish was different from being German, French, or American. And even after 1948 [the year the state of Israel was declared] most Jews remained nationally something other than Jewish. But neither could Jews define themselves by their religion alone. Few could ever seriously maintain that Judaism was, pure and simple, a religious faith on the model of Christianity. The easy answer was that Jewishness constituted some mixture of ethnicity and religion. But in what proportion? And was not the whole more than simply a compound of those two elements?

Martin Buber, surely one of the most profound of twentieth-century Jewish religious thinkers, argued that the Jews eluded all classification.²⁹

The problem was a new one. In the past, Jews had known exactly who they were. Their identity was defined by Jewish law and reinforced by both the Jewish community and the larger Christian society. Meyer notes, “Parents implanted in children the same values that they had absorbed in growing up, values sanctioned by a spiritually self-sufficient Jewish society. Continuity prevailed across the generations.” Meyer went on to explain, “Conversion was the only pathway out of the ghetto. Within its walls, clear models of Jewish identity were instilled in the home, in the school, in the community. There were no significant discontinuities, no occasions for severe crises of identity.”³⁰

In those days, Jews who converted, or so the reasoning went, were no longer outsiders. They belonged. Many Christians who favored equal rights for Jews believed that once Jews had those rights they would abandon their faith and end the “Jewish problem.” Indeed many Jews did respond to freedom by assimilating – by becoming more like the majority. They were confident that once they were “more German,” “more French,” or “more British,” discrimination would end.

Instead, racists turned the “Jewish problem” into a permanent problem. Neither assimilation nor conversion to Christianity altered one’s race. Jews would always be Jews, because they belonged to a different “race.” This new, and wrong, view of the Jew combined older stereotypes with the pseudo-scientific thinking of the age. In 1879, Wilhelm Marr, a German journalist, published a pamphlet entitled *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism*. In it, he used the word *antisemitism* for the first time. It meant, and still means, hatred of Jews. Marr attacked Jews as a separate, evil, and inferior race.

Antisemitism found a home everywhere in Europe. In Germany, it became particularly popular. In 1883, Theodor Fritsch published *The Racists’ Decalogue* to explain how a good “German” should treat “Jews.” It stated in part:

Thou shalt keep thy blood pure. Consider it a crime to soil the noble Aryan breed of thy people by mingling it with the Jewish breed. For thou must know that Jewish blood is everlasting, putting the Jewish stamp on body and soul unto the farthest generations...

Avoid all contact and community with the Jew and keep him away from thyself and thy family, especially thy daughters, lest they suffer injury of body and soul.

Two years later, Hermann Ahlwardt, a member of the German Reichstag, urged that Germany’s borders be closed to “Israelites who are not citizens of the Reich.” His arguments were based on the idea that “Semites” [Jews] were racially different from Germans whom he referred to as “Teutons.”

7.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. What was identity such a concern for Jews in the 1800s? Support your answer with evidence from the reading.
2. Write a working definition of the word *assimilation*. How is it like *conformity*? How does it differ? After your working definition, write about a time that you either assimilated or conformed to a group. What did you have to give up in order to belong?
3. What was the “Jewish problem”? Why was it a problem? For whom was it a problem? Does our society face similar “problems” today?

4. How did racists make the “Jewish problem” a permanent one? Use evidence from the reading to support your response.
5. What are the underlying themes of Fritsch’s *Racists’ Decalogue*? How does the language he uses affect his message? What steps did he urge all Germans to take? What was his solution to the “Jewish problem”?
6. Why are Jews often thought of not only as members of a different religion but also as members of a different race? To what extent does Judaism fit the definition of *race* that you learned earlier in this lesson? Why would it be useful for antisemites to describe Jews as members of a specific race?
7. How does the redefining of Judaism as a race, rather than only as a religion, support the idea that antisemitism is a “convenient hatred”?

Using Resource 7.4

Connecting Antisemitism, Race, and Nationalism

This reading highlights an important phenomenon regarding Jewish identity that is sometimes difficult for students to grasp: the fact that many have considered Jews to be not only of a specific religion but also of a specific race, ethnicity, and nation. This is not an easy phenomenon to explain, yet it remains consistent with the way many continue to think and talk about Jews today. The implications of Judaism being associated with race are significant, for even by converting to Christianity, Jews would still be considered Jewish “by blood.” These ideas, that emerged and spread in the 18th and 19th centuries became central to Nazi racial ideology and their policies towards Jews.

Checking for Understanding

After reading and discussing this resource in class, consider using the [Exit Card](#) strategy to gauge your students’ depth of understanding of the connections between antisemitism, race, and nationalism. You might ask them to reflect on the quotation from Michael Meyer, or you might ask them to explain why Martin Buber concluded that Jews elude all classification.

Lesson 8: Nationalism and Universe of Obligation

Essential Questions:

- ***What is a nation? What does it mean to belong to "a people"?***
- ***What is nationalism, and how does it affect people's feelings about who belongs to a country and who doesn't?***
- ***How does nationalism unite and divide societies? What happens when nationalism leads to violence?***
- ***What is a universe of obligation? How can nationalistic feelings affect how a country defines its universe of obligation?***

Included Resources:

- * 8.1 - Reading: What is a Nation?
8.2 - Reading: Nationalism, Power, and Identity in Europe
8.3 - Reading: Questions of Loyalty
 - * 8.4 - Reading: Threats to Power in a Changing World
8.5 - Reading: The Eve of World War
 - * 8.6 - Film: *The Armenian Genocide*
 - * 8.7 - Reading: Neighbor Turns Against Neighbor
 - * 8.8 - Reading: Universe of Obligation
- * = core resource

Introduction:

In this lesson, students will consider the consequences of how nations define themselves. The lesson begins by exploring the definitions of *nation* and *nationalism*. It is important for students to understand that nations are often defined as “a people” with a common heritage, language, or race, rather than simply as a country on a map.

Just as individuals ask questions about their identities, so do nations. In Resource 8.1, students will read about the ways that people today in France and Germany are wrestling with the questions, “What does it mean to be French?” and “What does it mean to be German?” The reading describes briefly how global migration in the contemporary world is challenging the traditional ways that many nations define themselves. Naturally, teachers should also ask students to consider and discuss the ways in which these questions are playing out in their own country. Who holds the power to make the rules that define who can be a citizen? Who participates in that process? Who counts?

But these questions have been around for several centuries, as the history of nationalism in Europe described by Resources 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, and 8.5 suggests. Monumental shifts took place in the world in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries as a result of the emergence of nationalism, the spread of democratic ideals, and the industrial revolution. All of these factors contributed to the decline of European monarchies, and these significant shifts in world power left a world on the precipice of the First World War. These changes took place at the same time the pseudo-science of race began to pose significant questions about who belongs and who does not.

It is in the context of these shifts in world power that the first genocide of the 20th century, the Armenian Genocide, was perpetrated by the rulers of the Ottoman Empire. This history, introduced in Resources 8.6, 8.7, and 8.8, vividly illustrates the potential for nationalism to become a discriminatory and destructive force. Nationalism was both a cause of the fraying of the Ottoman Empire, as several subject European nations declared their independence from the empire, and a useful ideology for the Ottoman rulers as they attempted to strengthen and unify the struggling empire. The Armenians found themselves caught unable to declare their independence and excluded from the ideology of Turkish nationalism. As a result, they were left vulnerable and became victims of genocide under the cover of World War I.

The lesson concludes with an exploration of the concept *universe of obligation*. Scholar Helen Fein defines *universe of obligation* as the circle of individuals and groups toward whom obligations are owed, to whom rules apply, and whose injuries call for amends. In other words, a nation's universe of obligation includes those who are believed to have rights that must be respected and protected. By recounting conversations during the Armenian Genocide between American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau and Ottoman Minister of the Interior Mehmed Talaat, Resource 8.8 both illustrates the very different ways in which these men conceived of their nations' universes of obligation and hints at the complexity of international responses to genocide that will be explored later this curriculum.

This lesson does not endeavor to teach the entirety of the Armenian Genocide. Some questions about the legacy of this history, as well as the disastrous precedent it set for the Holocaust, are explored in the "Historical Legacies" section of this curriculum. If you wish to teach the Armenian Genocide in more depth, Facing History has created a resource book entitled *Crime Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians*.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Think of a time when you have been a minority in a group. Next, think of a time when you have been a member of the majority. How are these experiences different?
- What nation or nations do you belong to? How do you know you belong?
- In your own country, who do you think the phrase "my country's people" refers to? Who would be included in "the population of my country" or "the people of my country"? Are there differences between these characterizations?
- When is nationalism a positive force? When is it negative? When might nationalism lead to discrimination?
- How do nations define their universe of obligation? What are the consequences for those who are included? For those who are excluded?
- Whom do you include within your circle of responsibility? Why? How does your circle of responsibility influence the choices you make about how to treat people?
- Do you think it is possible for people to include everyone in the world in their circle of responsibility? Why or why not? Do you think it is possible for people to include everyone in their neighborhood in their circle of responsibility? Why or why not? Do you think it is possible for someone to include all students in his/her school in his/her circle of responsibility? Why or why not?

Additional Readings from Holocaust and Human Behavior:

- “Nationalism, Power, and Identity in Europe,” pp. 77-81
- “Nation Building in Germany,” pp. 82-85
- “Nationalism, ‘Race,’ and Empires,” pp. 99-101
- “The Eve of World War,” pp. 101-102
- “Creating Enemies of the State: The Armenians,” pp. 102-106

Additional Reading from Race and Membership in American History:

- “Race and Citizenship,” pp. 55-57

Additional Facing History and Ourselves Resource Book:

Crime Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians

Resource 8.1:

Reading: What is a Nation?*Creating Context*

When many people talk about a nation, they are often referring to a country, a territory delineated on a map with its own government. In history, the term *nation* often has a deeper and more complex meaning that has less to do with the borders on a map than with the common history, culture, language, or religion of a group of people.

The idea of a nation arose in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as people began to identify their bonds with each other in a new way. Instead of defining themselves by their allegiances to specific leaders, such as kings, many people began to define themselves by their membership in “a people” and its common heritage. In this sense, the members of a nation might spread throughout more than one country. By the twentieth century, people added race to the list of characteristics that might define a nation. All of these characteristics were said to represent one’s *nationality*, and the feeling of solidarity and pride between those of a particular nationality is called *nationalism*.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

nation	citizen
nationalism	genealogy
nationality	volk
solidarity	naturalization
pseudoscientific	integrate

In his influential 1882 essay “What Is a Nation?” French philosopher Ernest Renan wrote about the bonds that hold nations together. He explained, “A heroic past, great men, glory [are the links between people] upon which one bases a national idea. . . . A nation is . . . a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future.”³¹ Others have stressed language, ethnicity, or even pseudoscientific ideas about “race.” Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970), the French leader who is credited with rebuilding the country after the horrors of World War II, described complicated feelings about the identity of his nation this way:

It is very good that there are yellow Frenchmen, black Frenchmen, brown Frenchmen. They prove that France is open to all races and that she has a universal mission. But they must remain a small minority. Otherwise, France would no longer be France. We are after all primarily a European people of the white race, our culture Greek and Latin, our religion Christian.³²

In France as well as in many other countries, the migration of people between one nation and another is challenging long-held assumptions about what holds a nation together. This has led

others in France to articulate more open and universal ideas about what it means to be French. In this way, the citizens of many nations are debating an important question: Who belongs?

The way that many nations officially recognize that people belong is by allowing them to become citizens. In some countries, such as the United States, all individuals who are born in the country are considered citizens regardless of their parents' country of origin. Other countries have different requirements for citizenship. The Germans traditionally defined their nation by race and genealogy. That is, German citizens were part of the *Volk*—a community that linked blood and citizenship. The idea of the German Volk was linked to race and notoriously used by the Nazis to justify the persecution and murder of Jews and Gypsies (Sinti and Roma). In 2004, however, the German Parliament passed a law allowing for naturalization, whereby German-born children of immigrants could apply for German citizenship on the basis of residence, work, and other criteria. As a result, some of Germany's Turkish residents, who numbered approximately 2.3 million at the time, were able to become citizens. The hope is that as immigrants become citizens they will become more integrated into society. Will allowing immigrants to become citizens change the identity of the German nation?

8.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. What is a nation? In your opinion, how does a nation get its identity?
 - From its people?
 - From its past?
 - From its laws?
 - From shared experiences?
2. How did Renan define a nation? What did he believe gives a nation its identity? Compare his ideas with yours and those of your classmates.
3. According to Charles de Gaulle, what does it mean to be French? In your opinion, what does it mean to be American?
4. When scholars discuss nations and national identity, many try to identify the “social glue” that serves as a bond between different groups and people within a nation. What ideas and experiences serve as the social glue for your community? For your country?
5. In 2000, as changes to Germany's citizenship laws were being debated. Artist Hans Haacke was invited to submit a proposal for a project housed in the German Parliament building. The inscription on the building famously says, “To the German People.” Haacke entitled his project, “To the Population.” What is the difference between “the people” of a nation and its “population”? What point was Haacke trying to make?
6. In your own country, who do you think the phrase “my country's people” refers

to? Who would be included in “the population of my country” or “the people of my country”? Are there differences between these characterizations? If so, what does each phrase imply? Do you think these differences are useful or problematic?

7. What is the danger in linking nationalism with race? How does it increase the vulnerability of minorities?

Using Resource 8.1

Connecting to the Concept of Race

It is important to help students make the connection between the concepts of nationalism and race. Both concepts were born in the 18th century and came to prominence in the early 20th century. As this course continues, students will encounter quotations from leaders such as Adolf Hitler that refer to the people of a nation in racial and biological terms. For instance, the Nazis might refer to a German as having “German blood.” (This is similar to the manner in which the concept of race also became connected to antisemitic ideas, allowing a Jew to be said to have “Jewish blood.”) This intersection of ideas about race and nationality is sometimes confusing for students. Therefore it is worth discussing how the terms were used even though they do not conform to what science tells us about biology, race, and nationality.

Recording Important Terminology

The first three terms listed above (nation, nationalism, and nationality) are particularly important for this course, and their meanings in a discussion of history are often at least slightly different from how we often use them in normal conversation. Consider asking students to use a modified version of the [two-column note taking](#) strategy. They should record these terms in the left column and then record a definition for each in the second column after reading the text above. They should also write down an example or quotation that illustrates each term next to the definition.

Extending the Discussion

The examples in this resource hint at significant challenges posed to the identities of several nations today because of migration. You might extend the conversation generated by this reading by investigating one or more readings from the following Facing History resources:

- [*Stories of Identity: Religion, Migration, and Belonging in a Changing World*](#)
- [*What Do We Do With a Difference?: France and the Debate over Headscarves in Schools*](#)

Resource 8.2:**Reading: Nationalism, Power, and Identity in Europe*****Creating Context***

Europeans eagerly watched as the Americans experimented with democracy in the 18th and 19th centuries. The United States Constitution begins with the words “We the People,” and Americans struggled with and fought over the answer to the question, “Who are ‘We the People’?” Who would have power in the new American republic? Who could be a citizen?

Europeans were struggling with similar issues. They, too, were deciding how power should be divided in their nations and what rights individuals ought to have. These new ideas about nations, individual rights, and democracy posed new threats to the power of autocratic rulers throughout Europe.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

democracy	chauvinism
republic	patriotism
autocracy	ethnocentrism
nationalism	<i>Volk</i>
nation	artifice
state	Aryan
nation-state	naturalized citizen

In 1789, the French replaced their king with a government that allowed individuals a say in their own future. In their *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, they expressed the ideals that inspired their revolution:

- I. Men are born, and always continue, free and equal in respect of their rights ...
- IV. Political liberty consists in the power of doing whatever does not injure another...
- X. No man ought to be molested on account of his opinions, not even on account of his religious opinions, provided his avowal of them does not disturb the public order established by the law.

Like the Americans, the French had to decide how their new government would reflect their ideals. Would citizenship be open to all or limited to a few individuals and groups? In the end, the National Assembly took a democratic approach to citizenship. It eliminated distinctions between nobles and ordinary people. Then it turned its attention to religious minorities within the nation – particularly to Protestants and Jews. The assembly declared that both were citizens and entitled to the rights other citizens enjoyed.

France’s new republic did not last long. Within a few years, Napoleon Bonaparte, a general in the French army, had destroyed it and made himself emperor. He then set out to conquer

neighboring countries. As he took over one nation after the other, his armies spread the ideals of the revolution, particularly the ideals of liberty and equality. They also unknowingly unleashed a new force in the world: *nationalism*. As Europeans struggled to drive the French army from their land, they began to see themselves in a new way. In the past, people expressed loyalty to their ruler, not to their country. Now many began to see themselves as Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Slavs, or Italians. It was an idea that lived on long after Napoleon was defeated in 1815 and traditional rulers regained their thrones.

Historian Hans Kohn stresses the importance of membership to the idea of a nation. He defines nationalism as “a state of mind inspiring the large majority of a people and claiming to inspire all its members. It asserts that the nation-state is the ideal and the only legitimate form of political organization and that the nationality is the source of all cultural creative energy and of economic well-being.”³³ Sociologist Theodore Abel views nationalism as a feeling “more positive than patriotism, or love for one’s country for its ‘beautiful streams, valleys, and mountains’” and warns that it may involve “a certain amount of ethnocentricism, a feeling of superiority of one’s nation over other nations.”³⁴

By the early 1800s, many Europeans were defining a nation as a people who share traditions and a history. Among the leaders of this movement were a number of Germans who argued that the character of a people is expressed through its *Volkgeist*—its unchanging spirit as refined through history. They insisted that a common language, history, and culture are essential to national identity. Many German students responded to such ideas by organizing patriotic fraternities dedicated to uniting the German people. They were inspired by history books that pictured their ancestors as a pure people who were self-reliant, courageous, free, and loyal. Those who did not share that ancestry were increasingly viewed not only as outsiders but as an evil force that threatened the unity of the nation.

To many young Germans, nationalism was a crusade. Its aim was not only to create a German nation but also to protect its purity. It was an idea that also attracted such scholars as Friedrich von Schlegel who imagined the founders of the German Volk as a gifted “race” that left India in the distant past and carried its language and culture westward. Schlegel did not have a name for this ancient people. But others called them Indo-Europeans. It was not until later in the century that they were known as “Aryans.”

Throughout the 1800s, the “Aryans” were romanticized. One German writer pictured their route from east to west as the route of civilization. He wrote, “The march of culture, in its general lines has always followed the sun’s course.” A French scholar agreed, but he saw the route as leading “from India to France.” The British had their own myth. They had already linked their ancestors – “free Anglo Saxons” – to Germanic tribes. Now they traced a journey through the forests of Germany to the British Isles.³⁵

8.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. How did the French revolutionaries define who belonged in France? Who had the

power to make laws? Who was protected by those laws? How did the young German nationalists answer these questions?

2. If the United States had a *Volkgeist*, what would it be? Whose culture would it include?
3. Nationalism is a positive idea. It is a way of uniting people. At what point is it dangerous? Can any idea, no matter how positive, be abused?
4. Describe how you feel about your country and its people. Do you regard yourself as a *patriot*? A *nationalist*? Or a *chauvinist*? What is the difference between those terms? Some people are naturalized citizens. How do they reconcile their loyalty to their new country with their feelings for the country of their birth?
5. Schlegel's notion of the origins of the "Aryan" race is fiction rather than fact. Yet in 1904, a French writer noted, "Today, out of 1,000 educated Europeans, 999 are convinced of the authenticity of their Aryan origins."³⁶ What effect do you think such beliefs had on the way a nation viewed its citizens? On the ways individuals regarded themselves and others? Historians maintain that what people perceive as true can be more important than the truth itself. Do you agree?

Using Resource 8.2

Focusing on Important Vocabulary

This resource includes several essential vocabulary terms for this course. Ask students to review the list of terms in Creating Context before reading. Consider having them create working definitions for terms with which they might already have some familiarity (such as *democracy*, *republic*, *patriotism*). Also have students identify which words with which they have little or no familiarity so that they may look for context clues as they read. After reading and discussing this resource, students can modify any working definitions they created beforehand, and they can create new working definitions for terms that were new to them. If you are using a [Word Wall](#), make sure to add these new vocabulary words.

Connecting to American History

This resource refers briefly to 17th and 18th century American history. Consider using "Membership in the United States" from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* (p. 71) for a more detailed review of the conflicts over membership, citizenship, and national identity that occurred in the United States during this time period.

The story of George Washington's letter to the Jewish congregation of Newport, Rhode Island, also explores issues of national identity in American History. Facing History has created a variety of resources, including a blog and series of lesson plans, [available on](#)

[the internet](#) to help you explore this moment in American history with your students.

Reflection and Discussion

Use the Comprehension & Connections questions to start your class discussion.

Consider using one of a variety of effective discussion strategies, depending on the size and the needs of your particular class. [Think-Pair-Share](#) and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) are both strategies that could work well discussing this reading.

Resource 8.3:
Reading: Questions of Loyalty***Creating Context***

As the power shifted throughout Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries and new rulers and governments replaced the old monarchies, myths and misconceptions about Jews persisted. As individuals began to believe in the idea of nations, whether or not Jews would belong remained uncertain. Some nationalistic groups capitalized on the lies and myths that painted Jews as “the Other” in order to enhance their own power and standing. Napoleon Bonaparte, the general who seized control of France in 1804, named himself emperor, and set out to conquer Europe, had questions about the loyalty of French Jews to the new French nation. Did French Jews consider themselves first and foremost French or Jewish?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

brethren
consonant

pitch
subject

In 1807, in the midst of Napoleon’s conquest of Europe, he called together seventy-one rabbis and other Jewish religious leaders to help him decide whether the Jews of France were members of the French nation. He asked:

In the eyes of Jews, are Frenchmen considered as their brethren? Or are they considered as strangers?

Do Jews born in France, and treated by the laws as French citizens consider France their country? Are they bound to defend it? Are they bound to obey the laws and to conform to the dispositions of the civil code?

By 1807, Jews had been living in France for about two thousand years. The Jews Napoleon questioned offered the following response:

The love of country is in the heart of Jews a sentiment so natural, so powerful, and so consonant to their religious opinions, that a French Jew considers himself in England, as among strangers, although he may be among Jews; and the case is the same with English Jews in France.

To such a pitch is this sentiment carried among them, that during the last war, French Jews have been seen fighting desperately against other Jews, the subjects of countries then at war with France.

8.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. What do Napoleon's questions suggest about the way Jews were viewed? About the way Napoleon, in particular, regarded them? How would you feel if the President of the United States were to ask a group you belonged to similar questions? How would you respond?
2. What point were the French Jews trying to make? What were they trying to tell the emperor about the way they defined themselves? About their loyalty? Why do you think that loyalty was questioned?
3. Chapter 1 explored the need individuals have to belong. How did Napoleon decide who belonged and who did not?
4. Investigate how church and state came to be separated in the United States. How does that separation safeguard democratic institutions? How does that separation promote Havel's "civil society" – one that encourages people "to act as citizens in the best sense of the word and drive out manifestations of intolerance"?

Using Resource 8.3

Reflection and Discussion

Use the Comprehension and Connections questions to guide your class discussion after completing the reading. Consider using the [Save the Last Word for Me](#) or [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategies to structure the conversation.

Resource 8.4:**Reading: Threats to Power in a Changing World*****Creating Context***

With the rise of nationalism and the spread of ideas about democracy in the 1800s, the power and authority of the old empires of Europe and Asia, and their autocratic rulers, were threatened. Some citizens increasingly demanded individual rights; some factions and minority groups within the empires increasingly demanded a voice in government. Many individuals increasingly felt a bond to the fellow citizens of their nation rather than their king or emperor. At the same time, the Industrial Revolution was spreading throughout Europe, Asia, and America. As a result, in the 1800s, the world seemed to be changing faster than ever before. While many people embraced those changes, many others were bewildered by them. They longed for the “good old days” when life was safe and secure, instead of the emerging world in which everything was up for grabs.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

norm	modern
pension	rootless
domicile	communist
mite	socialist
emperor	feminist
radical	revolution
Industrial Revolution	

Stefan Zweig, a Jewish writer who grew up in Austria-Hungary, describes the feelings of stability of life in the empire that many felt before the radical changes of modernity took hold:

Everyone knew how much he possessed or what he was entitled to, what was permitted and what forbidden. Everything had its norm, its definite measure and weight. He who had a fortune could accurately compute his annual interest. An official or an officer, for example, could confidently look up in the calendar the year when he would be advanced in grade, or when he would be pensioned. Each family had its fixed budget, and knew how much could be spent for rent and food, for vacations and entertainment; and what is more, invariably a small sum was carefully laid aside for sickness and the doctor’s bills, for the unexpected. Whoever owned a house looked upon it as a secure domicile for his children and grandchildren; estates and businesses were handed down from generation to generation. When the babe was still in its cradle, its first mite was put in its little bank, or deposited in the savings bank, as a “reserve” for the future. In this vast empire everything stood firmly and immovably in its appointed place, and at its head was the aged emperor; and were he to die, one knew (or believed) another would come to take his place, and nothing would change in the well-regulated order. No one thought of wars, of

revolutions, or revolts. All that was radical, all violence, seemed impossible in an age of reason.³⁷

Long before Zweig was born, the old ways were beginning to change. Many of those changes were a result of the Industrial Revolution. It began in England in the 1700s with the invention of machines powered by steam. That innovation quickly led to thousands of others. People everywhere felt the impact of the changes, whether they worked at home or took a job in one of the many new factories that were springing up throughout Europe and North America.

The Industrial Revolution changed not only the way goods were made but also where they were made. More and more people were now leaving the countryside for jobs in large urban centers. Some mourned the change. Friedrich Tonnies, a sociologist, accentuated the differences between the old and the new by comparing a society rooted in tradition with a modern, rootless society in which the old ways were no longer respected. Traditional society was exemplified by the small, rural communities that dotted Europe and much of the United States. In those communities, every family was linked in some way to every other family. People knew their neighbors. Modern society, on the other hand, was exemplified by large industrial cities where people lived and worked among strangers.

In a rootless society, it was easy to blame someone else for all that was new and disturbing. *They* were responsible for society's ills. *We* are blameless. Who were *they*? Sometimes, *they* were people who held unpopular ideas. *They* were communists, socialists, even feminists. Often, *they* were people who were different in some way. In the United States, *they* were immigrants, African Americans, and Native Americans. In much of Europe, *they* were Jews and migrants. In the Ottoman Empire that straddled Europe and Asia, *they* were Armenians, a Christian minority in a Muslim empire.

8.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. In your journal, summarize the changes taking place in Europe in the 19th century that are described in this reading. What benefits might individuals find from these changes? What threats might they perceive? What benefits might *rulers* find from these changes? What threats to their power might rulers fear?
2. What does Zweig mean when he writes that “all that was radical, all violence, seemed impossible in an age of reason”? What is he implying about the age that followed it?
3. Write a working definition of the word *revolution*. Was the Industrial Revolution a revolution?
4. According to Martha Minow, a legal scholar, “Human beings use labels to describe and sort their perceptions of the world. The particular labels often chosen... can carry social and moral consequences while burying the choices and responsibility for those consequences. The labels point to conclusions about

where an item, or an individual, belongs without opening for debate the purposes for which the label will be used.”³⁸ How do those labels affect who is “tolerated” and who is not?

5. Why are periods of rapid change often periods of intolerance? What conditions seem to encourage racism? What conditions foster tolerance? Find examples to support your answers from current events.

Using Resource 8.4

Literature Connection: “Harrison Bergeron”

Facing History classes frequently read Kurt Vonnegut’s short story, “Harrison Bergeron,” during this section of the course. The story describes a society in which the government uses its power to ensure that no one is superior to anyone else. If you have not already shared this story with your students, you might read it now. Consider with your students how the society Zweig describes in this resource is like the one Harrison Bergeron lived in. What differences seem most striking? “Harrison Bergeron” can be found on page 58 of *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. A 10-minute audio version of this story is also available on [the Facing History website](#).

Resource 8.5:**Reading: The Eve of World War*****Creating Context***

As changes swept across Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, creating a world in which power was up for grabs, European nations competed to expand their empires, strengthen their power, and demonstrate their superiority.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

alliance

neutral

casualty

As the competition among nations increased, the world became a more and more dangerous place to live. One nation could expand its empire only at another's expense. As tensions mounted, nations built more and more ships, stockpiled more and more weapons, and trained more and more soldiers. They also looked for allies. As a result, a conflict between any two nations could draw almost the entire world into war. That is exactly what happened in the summer of 1914.

On June 28, a Serbian nationalist shot the heir to the Austrian throne and his wife. One month later, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. So did Germany, an ally of Austria-Hungary. Russia was also drawn into the fighting, as an ally of Serbia. Within days, France, an ally of Russia, was invaded. Britain entered when Germany began its invasion of France by marching through Belgium, a neutral nation that Britain had pledged to defend. By 1915, the Ottoman Empire had entered the war on Germany's side. Italy now supported France and Britain. A "world war" had indeed begun. By the time it ended in 1918, thirty countries were involved.

In 1914, most people greeted the war with enthusiasm. Many young men viewed it as the adventure of a lifetime and feared only that it would end before they had a chance to fight. Just before the war began, Rupert Brooke, a young British poet, wrote "The Soldier."

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;

And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

The First World War proved to be neither a glorious adventure nor a quick fight. On Germany's western front, the two sides faced one another across lines of trenches. Victories were measured in yards rather than miles. As the weeks became months, each side introduced ever newer and more technologically advanced weapons in an effort to break the stalemate. Poison gas, machine guns, aerial bombings, and tanks increased the number of casualties but did not result in a clear-cut victory for either side. After a visit to the front, a British commander said, "I don't know what this is. It isn't war."

8.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. What does Rupert Brooke mean when he says "some corner of a foreign field that is for ever England"? How does he picture war? How does he imagine his death? Why do you think young people responded to the war with such enthusiasm?
2. European alliances were based on the principle that "the enemies of my enemy are my friends." What are the problems of an alliance system based on that principle? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
3. How does war affect people's feelings of loyalty towards their countries? How might those feelings impact people's choices?

Using Resource 8.5

Investigating World War I

The aftermath and consequences of World War I will be explored in the next section of this curriculum. If you wish to dig deeper into the war itself, the [companion website](#) for the PBS film "The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century" provides a good overview. The documentary itself is out of print and available only on VHS video tape from the [Facing History library](#). It is often available on YouTube as well.

Resource 8.6:**Film: *The Armenian Genocide******Creating Context***

Early in the 20th century, genocide was perpetrated against the Armenians who lived in the Ottoman Empire during World War I. For hundreds of years, the Ottomans ruled over Muslims, Christians, and Jews in territories covering Eastern Europe, the Balkan Peninsula, the Middle East, and parts of Russia and North Africa ([map](#)).

By the sixteenth century, Armenians were one national group of Christians within the vast Ottoman Empire. Over time, borders had changed and a portion of the traditional Armenian homeland had become part of the neighboring Russian Empire. Ottoman Armenians, like the rest of the population, were divided into *millet*s, semi-autonomous communities organized by religion. Leaders of the millet ran most of the administration of the group including education and tax collection. The rulers of the empire were Muslim. While the autocratic Ottoman ruler, called the sultan, oversaw the Muslim millet—including Turks, Arabs, and Kurds—Christian patriarchs ran the Greek and Armenian millets, and the grand rabbi headed the Jewish millet. The leaders of the millets were held accountable for the behavior of the members of the group. Under this system, Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire had second-class status.

While Christians and Jews were often able to live safely within the Ottoman Empire, the rise of nationalism, the demand for increased rights, and the chaos of World War I weakened and splintered the empire. As a new group, the Young Turks, took control of the empire, the exclusion of Armenians from the new Turkish national identity became increasingly clear. The Armenian's second-class status now left them vulnerable, and eventually they became the target of mass violence.

By learning about the *particular* history of the Armenian Genocide, we can observe specific precedents for the history of the Holocaust we will learn about later in this course. More importantly, we also can begin to form more *universal* conclusions about the vulnerability and injustice experienced by those forced to live with second-class status because they have been excluded from a nation's identity.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this resource:

Armenia	war
fervor	Ottoman Empire
millet	Turkey

Using the Film: The Armenian Genocide

The documentary [The Armenian Genocide](#) (Two Cats Production) provides an excellent overview of the history of the 20th century's first genocide. In this lesson, we suggest

learning this history as a way to deepen students' understanding of nationalism and what happens when nationalism turns violent. The aftermath and legacy of this history will be explored in greater detail in Section 12 of this curriculum.

The clip of this documentary from the beginning to the 13:40 mark provides students with:

- An overview of the Armenian people, their history, and their place within the Ottoman Empire
- An overview of the Ottoman Empire and the turbulence it encountered as nationalism emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries
- The rise of Turkish nationalism in the Ottoman Empire and its promise to unify the fracturing empire, despite its costs to minorities such as the Armenians.

An additional clip from this documentary is also recommended later in this lesson as a companion to Resource 8.7.

Pre-viewing:

Share the overview in the Creating Context section above. This information will help students connect the specific history they are about to explore with the concept of nationalism they learned about from the previous resource.

This is also a good time to look at a map of Armenia and the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century. The [LookLex Atlas of the Ottoman Empire](#) provides snapshots of the empire in different years of its history. By toggling between the maps for 1815 and 1914, students can see how the empire lost most of its European territory during that time period, a contributing factor to the feelings of crisis among the Ottomans. [This map](#) from thehistoryplace.com will help students locate Armenia within the empire

During-viewing:

This video clip provides a significant amount of historical information about the Armenians and the Ottoman Empire. It might be helpful to pause the video briefly once or twice to allow students to take notes on important information.

[Two-column note-taking](#) can be a useful structure to help students capture information about what they observe as well as their reactions (feelings, questions, comments) to this information. To provide more structure for students' note-taking, ask them to respond to specific, factual questions such as:

- Who are the Armenians?
- Where was the Ottoman Empire?
- What rights did Armenians (and other non-Muslims) have in the Ottoman Empire?
- Why did the Armenians fight for greater rights?
- What happened when Armenians began demanding more rights? How did officials in the Ottoman Empire respond?
- Who are the Young Turks?

- What happened to the Ottoman-controlled territories in the Balkans (Greek, Bulgaria, Serbia) in 1912 and 1913?
- How did the Young Turks respond to the defeat of the Ottoman army?
- Why does Turkish Nationalism become popular in the Ottoman Empire?
- What is the Committee of Union and Progress? What was its slogan?
- Why did Turkish Nationalism threaten groups such as the Armenians who were not Turkish?

Post- viewing:

After viewing the clip, it might be helpful to review the factual questions students answered in their notes while watching. Then consider the Comprehension and Connections questions below.

The [Think-pair-share](#) or [fishbowl](#) teaching strategies can be used to structure a class discussion. Or, small groups of students can select one or more of these questions to discuss and then they can share the highlights of their discussion with the larger class.

Digging Deeper

For additional information about the rise of nationalism in the Ottoman Empire and the events preceding the Armenian Genocide, we recommend reading Chapters 2 and 3 of the Facing History resource book, [Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians](#). These chapters contain a variety of readings that can also be used with students in order to build a deeper understanding of this history.

Contemporary Connections

As you explore this history with your students, it is important to make connections to contemporary issues in the United States and other countries around the world. By doing so, students will recognize the history of Armenia in the early 20th century as relevant and timely. Therefore, make sure you devote time to discussing questions #4 and #5 above in class. What stokes the fires of nationalism globally? Who is excluded as a result? These are especially relevant questions when asking your students about the severe recession and terrorist attacks of the last fifteen years. You might also find useful the additional contemporary connections linked to the [Facing History website](#).

8.6 Comprehension & Connections

1. What groups of people “belonged” in the Ottoman Empire before the nineteenth century? What groups were “tolerated”? What is the difference between belonging and being tolerated?
2. Explain how the idea of nationalism affected the fortune of the Ottoman Empire? What held so many different groups of people together under one rule before the nineteenth century? How did people’s allegiances change in the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries? What happened to the empire as a result?

3. How did Turkism, an example of nationalism, increase the vulnerability of the Armenians? How did it further transform them into the “other” in Ottoman society?
4. Have you ever heard people say things that sound nationalistic? Did they sound discriminatory? Did they sound dangerous?

Resource 8.7:**Reading: Neighbor Turns Against Neighbor*****Creating Context***

The lyrics to one of the songs from the musical *South Pacific* suggests: “You’ve got to be taught to hate and fear. You’ve got to be taught from year to year. It’s got to be drummed into your dear little ear. You’ve got to be carefully taught, you’ve got to be carefully taught.”

Where does hatred come from? Is it true that you have to be taught to hate? Record your thinking in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

infidel	liquidation
alliance	specter
war aims	pretext
fear	convoy
humanitarian	gendarme

Relationships between Turks and non-Muslim minorities deteriorated as ideas related to Turkish nationalism became law. Armenians, who had always held in an inferior position in the Ottoman Empire, were increasingly labeled *gavours* or “infidels.” Veron Dumehjian, an Armenian girl who grew up at the turn of the twentieth century in the Ottoman Empire, remembers how she disgraced her family when she cut her hair in bangs to look like the Turkish mayor’s daughter, Lehman.

“You should be ashamed of yourself,” Auntie said. “Only Turkish girls wear their hair in bangs. You have brought disgrace upon your family.”

As Veron grew older she recognized that the differences between being Turkish and Armenian had taken on a new meaning.

I had never thought about time or change. But slowly changes began to occur. Our lives went on as before, but now our days, which had always seemed to be lit by the sun, were being shadowed by a dark cloud.

For the first time I began to sense the seriousness of our problems with the Turks. I had always known that they were not our friends, even though there were some with whom we were friendly, but now it seemed, in truth, that they were our enemies. We were Christians, and they were [Muslims], but it was not this alone that separated us: we were also different in language, race and custom. We did live on the same soil, but I was told that soil could be owned and that the present owner of this soil, which we had always called home, was Turkey.

Grandma had hinted in the past that there might be trouble between the Armenians and the Turks, but now it was being talked about more openly—not only by her, but by everyone in our quarter. I was told that the Turks had massacred several hundred thousand Armenians a few years before, in 1895, and then again in Adana, in 1909, when I was two years old. And now there were rumors that there would be more massacres. I wasn't sure what all this meant, but I could see that the elders were worried. This made me worried, too, and I began to talk about my fears with the older children. No one could understand what was happening, but I could see that they were uneasy, too. This made me aware for the first time that our fears were not imagined, not childish, but real and deep rooted.

I began to hear whisperings—at home and at Grandma's, especially at night, when my parents thought we were asleep. But more than their whisperings, it was the way they looked, the way they talked and moved about, that made me know something was wrong. I began to hear words like “deportations,” “massacres,” “annihilation.” I didn't like the sounds of the words, but mostly I didn't like the looks on their faces when they said these words.

It was around this time that the Turkish army drafted my uncles Apraham and Hagop. When I asked Grandma about this, she said something about the World War.³⁹

As World War I was breaking out in August 1914, the inner circle of the Young Turk leaders signed a secret alliance with Germany. Even before the war, those leaders had already put forth proposals to the German ambassador outlining their war aims. Historian Christopher Walker notes that the Ottoman dictators hoped the war would give them an opportunity to “establish a link with the Muslim peoples of Russia.” Creation of the link would require finding a solution to the “Armenian Question,” because Armenians were concentrated on both sides of the Russian border. When the Ottoman Empire entered the war at the end of October 1914, the government issued a proclamation declaring its intent to extend its borders and unite “all branches of our race.”⁴⁰ Quickly rumors began to spread about the safety of Christians within the Ottoman Empire.

An article in the January 11, 1915, *New York Times* brought the concerns of the empire's Christians to the world's attention. Titled “Turks Advise Christians to Flee,” the article reported that Mehmet Talaat, now the Minister of the Interior, had told the Greek Patriarch that there was no room for Christians living in Turkey.

Armenian survivor Abraham Hartunian tells a story to illustrate the increasing fear and mistrust between Turkish officials and ordinary Armenians:

[O]ne day, as I was conversing with a Turkish official, he said to me, “My friend, there is no hope. No longer can the Turk and the Armenian live together. Whenever you find the opportunity, you will annihilate us; and whenever we find the opportunity, we will annihilate you. Now the opportunity is ours and we will do everything to harm you. The wise course for you will be, when the time comes, to leave this country and never to return.”⁴¹

The Armenians, however, had no plans or power to annihilate the Turks, but the Young Turks' plans were becoming increasingly clear. In notes written after a meeting with Young Turk leaders, Max Scheubner-Richter, a military commander of a joint German-Turkish force, described plans to “destroy” the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire:

*The first item on this agenda concerns the liquidation of the Armenians. Ittihad will dangle before the Allies a specter of an alleged revolution prepared by the Armenian Dashnak party. Moreover, local incidents of social unrest and acts of Armenian self-defense will deliberately be provoked and inflated and will be used as pretexts to effect the deportations. Once en route, however, the convoys will be attacked and exterminated by Kurdish and Turkish brigands, and in part by gendarmes, who will be instigated for that purpose by Ittihad.*⁴²

Because of their alliance, the Germans had forged close ties with the Ottoman Empire, allowing them to watch as the genocide was carried out.

8.7 Comprehension & Connections

1. Veron came to understand that, “we” were the Armenians, and the “they” were the Turks. How did she learn those differences? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
2. What did the *New York Times* article suggest was going to happen? What choices were available to people who read the article in January 1915? What choices were available to world leaders? What options were available to Christians living in the Ottoman Empire? Which options seem most likely to have made a difference?
3. What role did rumors play in the time leading up to the Armenian Genocide?
4. Consider the use of the word *annihilate* in Hartunian’s recollection of his conversation with a Turkish official. What impact might this choice of words have had on the rising tensions between Turks and Armenians?
5. Under what conditions do differences between people and groups become obstacles to empathy? Under what conditions do those differences lead to violence?
6. How might nationalism lead to hatred? Can you feel proud of your nation without feeling negatively towards other nations?
7. What is *humanitarianism*? What provides the moral compass of an individual, group or nation?

Using Resource 8.7

Say Something Literacy Strategy

This reading includes both historical information and powerful first-hand testimony. It might be helpful to have students use a literacy strategy that prompts them to monitor their comprehension and think deeply about what they are reading.

One strategy that is designed to improve comprehension of challenging texts and provide students an opportunity to “talk back” to the ideas in the text is *Say Something*.⁴³ Have students read the text together in pairs. At the end of each paragraph, the students will pause and do one of the following:

- Make a prediction
- Ask a question
- Clarify something that is confusing
- Comment on what is happening in the reading
- Connect what is happening the reading to something else they know about

If students are unable to accomplish any of these tasks, then that is a sign they need to re-read the paragraph, then ask for help.

Video Suggestion – *The Armenian Genocide*

After reading this resource, you can help students deepen their knowledge of the Armenian Genocide by watching an additional clip (14:45-25:00) of the documentary [The Armenian Genocide](#). This suggested clip describes the steps taken by the Young Turks in their efforts to exterminate the Armenians. It provides evidence of an organized plan to create a “Turkey for the Turks,” an issue that will be important later in this course when students learn the definition of the word genocide. This segment documents the atrocities committed by the Turks on the Armenian community, including references to the forced relocation of people, massacres, rapes, and starvation. Here are some ideas on how to structure students’ viewing of this segment:

Pre-viewing

Before showing the video clip, inform students about the violent acts depicted in it and explain that after viewing it they will have the opportunity to share their ideas, feelings, and questions.

During-viewing

To help students keep track of both the historical evidence and their emotional response to this evidence, you might use the [two-column note-taking](#) strategy. In one column, students can record historical facts that they think are important, especially evidence documenting the different steps taken by the Young Turks to rid the Ottoman Empire of the Armenian community. In the other column, students can record responses (words, ideas, questions, feelings) to the evidence of “crimes against humanity and civilization” presented in the video. To encourage students to take notes, you might suggest that students record five

entries in each column.

Post-viewing

Students have just been exposed to depictions of graphic violence inflicted on innocent people. Before initiating a discussion, give students an opportunity for silent reflection and journal writing. You may find that the material is provocative enough on its own to stimulate students' thinking. If you think your students could benefit from a more directive prompt, you might ask them to identify a moment from the video that surprised them or caused them discomfort and explain why they think the scene elicited this emotional response. This journal writing could be a space where students connect what they have viewed to violence they see around them in the world today. Given the depictions of violence on the news, in movies, and in video games, some argue that we may be desensitized to violence. Ask students the extent to which they agree or disagree with this argument.

Resource 8.8: Reading: Universe of Obligation

Creating Context

In the second decade of the 20th century, 1.2 million Armenians were killed as part of the genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire (Turkey). At this time, there were no common rules among nations for the protection of human rights. Many people, including the American ambassador to Turkey, wanted to protect the Armenians but met stiff resistance from other nations who did not see fit to interfere in events taking place inside another country.

Those who wanted to protect the Armenians were including them in their *universe of obligation*. Scholar Helen Fein defines *universe of obligation* as the circle of individuals and groups toward whom obligations are owed, to whom rules apply, and whose injuries call for amends. In other words, a nation's universe of obligation includes those who are believed to have rights that must be respected and protected.

Individuals also have something akin to a nation's universe of obligation. One's *circle of responsibility* refers to those people whose rights and safety one feels a responsibility to protect.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

human rights	implications
ambassador	progressive
universe of obligation	ambition
amends	reactionary
circle of responsibility	humanitarianism
belligerent	sovereignty

American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau often met with leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress, the party of the Young Turks, to protest the treatment of Christians in Turkey. Morgenthau pleaded with the American government throughout the war to defend the Armenians, but the United States chose not to act. Nevertheless, Morgenthau believed that Armenians should be included in the American universe of obligation.

Later he recounted the first time he brought up the plight of the Armenians with the Ottoman Minister of the Interior Mehmed Talaat. His recollection helps illustrate how they defined their nations' universes of obligation differently:

I began to talk about the Armenians at Konia. I had hardly started when Talaat's attitude became even more belligerent. His eyes lighted up, he brought his jaws together, leaned over toward me, and snapped out:

"Are they Americans?"

The implications of this question were hardly diplomatic; it was merely a way of telling me that the matter was none of my business. In a moment Talaat said this in so many words.

“The Armenians are not to be trusted,” he said, “besides, what we do with them does not concern the United States.”

I replied that I regarded myself as the friend of the Armenians and was shocked at the way they were being treated. But he shook his head and refused to discuss the matter. 111

Morgenthau dropped the subject but continued to raise the “Armenian Question” in subsequent meetings. At another meeting Talaat asked Morgenthau: “Why are you so interested in the Armenians anyway?” Talaat continued:

“You are a Jew; these people are Christians. The [Muslims] and the Jews always get on harmoniously. We are treating the Jews here all right. What have you to complain of? Why can’t you let us do with these Christians as we please?”...

“You don’t seem to realize,” I replied, “that I am not here as a Jew but as American ambassador... I do not appeal to you in the name of any race or any religion, but merely as a human being. You have told me many times that you want to make Turkey a part of the modern progressive world. The way you are treating the Armenians will not help you to realize that ambition; it puts you in the class of backward, reactionary peoples.”

“We treat the Americans all right, too,” said Talaat. “I don’t see why you should complain.”

“But Americans are outraged by your persecutions of the Armenians,” I replied. “You must base your principles on humanitarianism, not racial discrimination, or the United States will not regard you as a friend and an equal...”

8.8 Comprehension & Connections

1. How does Morgenthau define his identity in his exchanges with Talaat? What assumptions does Talaat make about Morgenthau? How does Morgenthau defy Talaat’s expectations? Use evidence from the reading to support your answers.
2. Use evidence from the reading to compare the way Talaat and Morgenthau each define their nations’ “universes of obligation”? How does the way that a nation defines itself affect its universe of obligation? How does that way that you define yourself affect your circle of responsibility?
3. Morgenthau tells Talaat that he must base his treatment of the Armenians on *humanitarianism*? What is humanitarianism? What does it mean to be humane?

4. Underline words and phrases in this reading that resonate with you. Reflect on them in your journal. How do they help you understand this particular history? What connections are you making to your own life or other history that you have learned?
5. In the early 1800s, the United States Congress debated whether to break its treaties with the Cherokee and other Native American nations to open more land for white Americans. During the debate, Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey asked his fellow senators, “Do the obligations of justice change with the color of the skin?” What does the question suggest about the way some Americans in the early 1800s defined their “universe of obligation”?
6. How do you think that your nation defines itself? How would you describe your nation’s universe of obligation? Who belongs in your nation? Who is the “other”?

Using Resource 8.8

Illustrating Your Circle of responsibility

Handout 8A provides a graphic organizer consisting of four concentric circles that students can use to illustrate their own universes of responsibility. While nation’s have a universe of obligation, at Facing History we say that individuals have their own circle of responsibility – the people or groups for whom we feel a sense of responsibility. The people we most care for are in the center of our circle of responsibility.

In their journals, students can answer the questions, “How do you define your circle of responsibility? Who is included? Who is excluded? Explain.” Handout 8A provides a graphic organizer to help students answer these questions. One’s circle of responsibility is often contextual. Who we care for and protect may change over time and in a different situation. Bring up this point with students and see if they can come up with examples of factors that might cause someone’s circle of responsibility to shift. How can personal experiences such as relationships, education and travel influence how someone defines his or her circle of responsibility?

Students can use the same graphic (or draw concentric circles in their journals) to illustrate a nation’s universe of obligation. For instance, in this lesson, they might draw the universe of obligation of the Ottoman Empire. You can continue to use this strategy as the class explores Germany in the 1920s or world responses to Kristallnacht in future lessons.

Making Connections

Issues of nationalism and ideas about universe of obligation are highly relevant in many of the political debates occurring in countries around the world. Global migration, in

particular, has brought tensions surrounding national identity to the fore. In order to help students make connections between the history of the Armenian Genocide and the contemporary world, you might use the [Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World](#) teaching strategy. You might choose, instead, to use a more open-ended literacy strategy such as the *Say Something* strategy described in Using Resource 10.3

Handout 8A:

Universe of Obligation/Circle of responsibility Worksheet

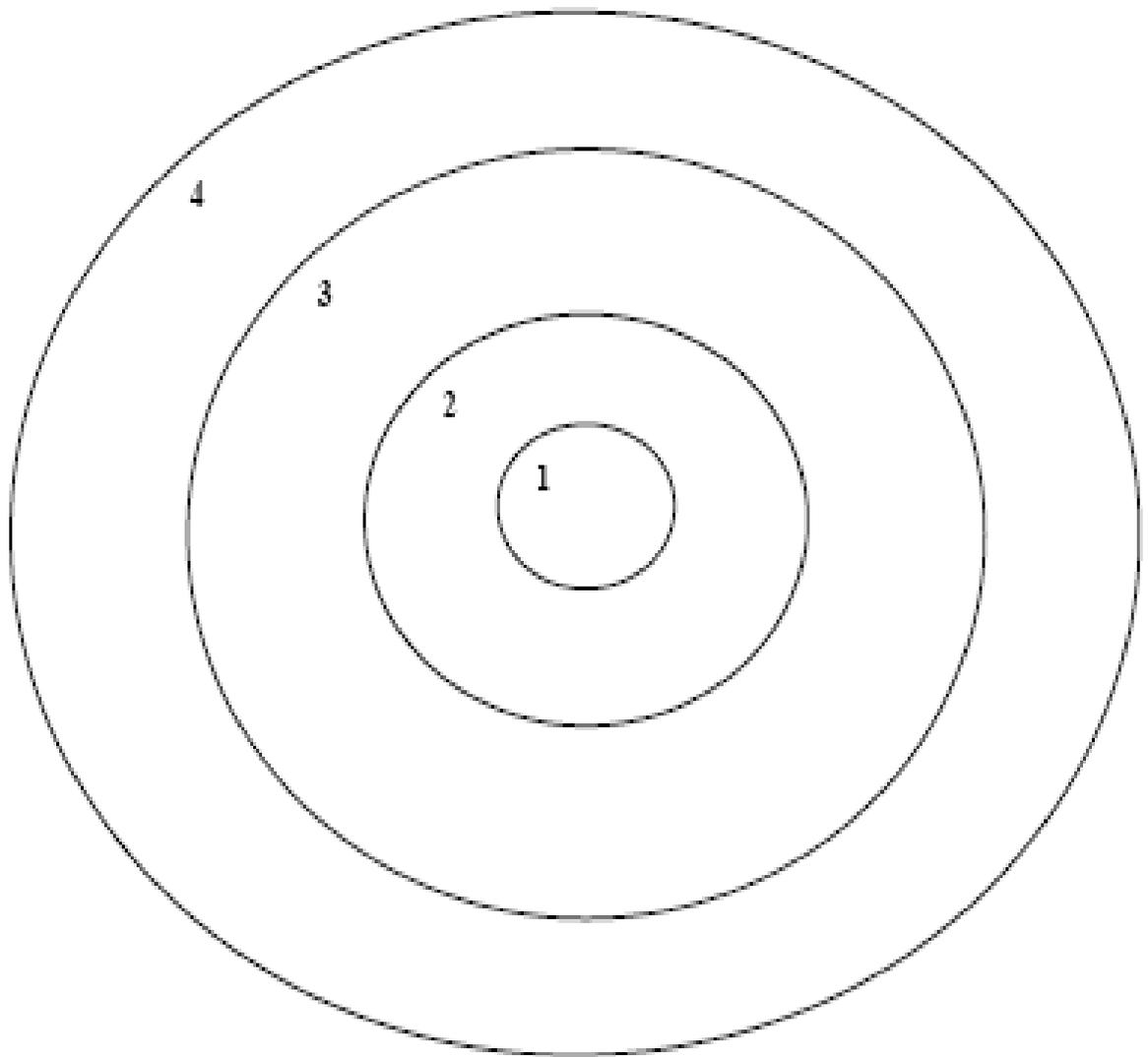
In **Circle 1**, write your name.

In **Circle 2**, write the name of people to whom you feel the greatest obligation – for example, people for whom you’d be willing to take a great risk or put yourself in peril for (you don’t have to write actual names, you could refer to a group of people, such as “my family”).

In **Circle 3**, who are the people on the next level? That is, people to whom you feel some responsibility, but not as great as in circle 2.

In **Circle 4**, who are the people on the next level? People to whom you feel some responsibility, but not as great as in circle 3.

To whom do you feel no sense of responsibility? List these groups outside of Circle 4.



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- ¹ Get footnote from DM or HHB
- ² Eve Shalen, *A Discussion with Elie Wiesel: Facing History Students Confront Hatred and Violence*. (Facing History and Ourselves, 1993).
- ³ Dagobert D. Runes, *The Jew and the Cross* (Citadel Press, 1966), 30-31.
- ⁴ “What Do We Do with a Variation?” from *When I Dance* by James Berry, Harcourt Brace. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Inc.
- ⁵ “You Have to Live in Somebody Else’s Country to Understand” by Noy Chou. In *A World of Difference Teacher/Student Guide*, Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith and Facing History and Ourselves, 1986, Group and Individual Identity, pp. 8-9.
- ⁶ Martha Minow, *Making All the Difference*, 22.
- ⁷ Ryszard Kapuscinski, “Encountering the Other: The Challenge for the 21st Century,” *New Perspectives Quarterly*, vol. 22 #4 (Fall 2005) http://www.digitalnpq.org/archive/2005_fall/02_kapuscinski.html (accessed November 8, 2007).
- ⁸ Fatema Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2001), 1–4.
- ⁹ Quoted in Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 41.
- ¹⁰ Kylee Beers, *When Kids Can’t Read: What Teachers Can Do* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 105-110.
- ¹¹ Robert Bailey Solomon, Interview by Howard Simons in *Jewish Times*, 239-240.
- ¹² Chana Schoenberger, “Getting to Know About You and Me,” From *Newsweek*, September 20, 1993. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
- ¹³ Robert Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (Pantheon, 1991), 7.
- ¹⁴ Krister Stendahl, “Can Christianity Shed It’s Anti-Judaism?” *Brandeis Review*, 1992, 27.
- ¹⁵ Robert Wistrich, *Antisemitism*, 39-40.
- ¹⁶ Malcom Hay, *Thy Brother’s Blood: The Roots of Antisemitism* (Hart Publishing, 1975), 3.
- ¹⁷ Malcom Hay, *Thy Brother’s Blood: The Roots of Antisemitism* (Hart Publishing, 1975), 3.
- ¹⁸ Jan Gross. *Fear()*, 165-166.
- ¹⁹ Allan G. Johnson, *Human Arrangements* (Harcourt Brace, 1986), 353.
- ²⁰ www.amnh.org/exhibitions/genomics/1_identity/ninety_nine.html
- ²¹ “Race without Color” by Jared Diamond. *Discover*, November, 1994, p. 89.
- ²² Barbara Katz Rothman, *The Book of Life: A Personal and Ethical Guide to Race, Normality, and the Implications of the Human Genome Project*. Beacon Press, 1998, 2001, pp. 51-52.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- ²⁴ Kylee Beers, *When Kids Can’t Read: What Teachers Can Do* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 105-110.
- ²⁵ *The Life and Writings of Fredrick Douglass*, Vol. 2, ed. Philip S. Foner, (International Publishers, 1950), 298.
- ²⁶ George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution, A History of European Racism* (Fertig, 1978), 92.
- ²⁷ Kylee Beers, *When Kids Can’t Read: What Teachers Can Do* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 105-110.
- ²⁸ George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution, A History of European Racism* (Fertig, 1978), 92.
- ²⁹ Michael A. Meyer, *Jewish Identity in the Modern World* (University of Washington Press, 1990), 3.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ³¹ Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation?” as quoted in Geoff Eley & Ronald Grigor Suny, *Becoming National. A*

Reader (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 52–4.

³² Quoted in Thomas Deltombe, *L'islam imaginaire: La construction médiatique de l'islamophobie en France 1975–2005*, (Paris: La Découverte, 2005), 232.

³³ Hans Kohn, *Nationalism* (D. Van Nostrand, 1955), 9.

³⁴ Theodore Abel, *Why Hitler Came to Power*, 29.

³⁵ Quoted in Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Harvard University Press, 1981), 35-36.

³⁶ Quoted in Leon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth* (Basic Books, 1974), 277.

³⁷ Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday, An Autobiography* (Viking, 1945), 1-2.

³⁸ Martha Minow, *Making All the Difference*, 4.

³⁹ David Kherdian, *The Road From Home* (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1979), pp. 29-30.

⁴⁰ Christopher J. Walker, “World War I and the Armenian Genocide,” in Richard G. Hovannisian ed. *The Armenian People: From Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 2 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), pp. 244.

⁴¹ Abraham Hartunian, *Neither to Laugh Nor to Weep: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*, 2nd ed., trans. Vartan Hartunian (Cambridge, MA: American Heritage Press, 1986) p. xixi.

⁴² Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *The Holocaust: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), p. 35.

⁴³ Kylee Beers, *When Kids Can’t Read: What Teachers Can Do* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 105-110.

Section 4: The Weimar Republic

Essential Questions

- How does the time and place in which people live shape their beliefs, actions, and decisions?
- What must citizens do and value in order for a democracy to thrive?
- How do choices and circumstances help some political parties gain power and cause others to lose power?

Lessons

Section 4 includes the following lessons:

- Lesson 9: World War I and the Birth of Weimar
- Lesson 10: Life in the Weimar Republic
- Lesson 11: The Rise of the Nazi Party
- Lesson 12: Competing Political Parties

Overview

What makes a democracy strong? What makes one vulnerable? What must citizens do and value in order for a democracy to thrive? What attitudes and ideas undermine a democracy? These are the kinds of questions raised by a close examination of the Weimar Republic—a tumultuous era in Germany following World War I in which a democratic government struggled to balance the demands of opposing political parties, ideologies, and group affiliations. The period is characterized by volatility and contrasts. On the one hand, the Weimar period was a time of flourishing creativity, vibrant art, and a progressive spirit. At the same time, many Germans reacted to the rapid changes precipitated by the end of World War I by deepening their affiliation with traditional German culture and by reaffirming their nationalistic belief in German superiority. Political differences, severe economic hardships, uncertainty, and unforeseen change led to an unstable environment in which political parties frequently attempted to increase their power through intimidation and even violent clashes on German streets. The result was an increasingly fragile democracy, and this fragility eventually opened the door for the Nazi Party to ascend to power as the republic began to crumble.

Why should we care about what happened during the Weimar Republic? Historian Paul Bookbinder argues that understanding this era is not only crucial to making sense of the Nazis' rise to power, but can also help us serve as a warning and a guide for democracies today. He explains:

The history of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) illuminates one of the most creative and crucial periods in the twentieth century and serves as a significant case study of our own time. Many of the questions asked about the Weimar Republic are relevant to problems that individuals and societies face in the twenty-first century.¹

The Facing History online module, “[The Weimar Republic: The Fragility of Democracy](#),” and the resources in this section include an array of sources, from music to images to historical essays, describing life during these tumultuous years. This section will explore the reasons why Germany turned to democracy after World War I and how the Weimar government functioned. It will also examine the volatility of life in the Weimar Republic. An awareness of the context for Weimar Germany and the main beliefs of the Nazi Party at the time of its founding not only illuminate how in less than 15 years, Germany went from being a new, fragile democracy, to a dictatorship, but also helps us think about the factors that have the potential to make any democracy vulnerable.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- Chapters 3 and 4 in the resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*.
- Facing History’s online module [The Weimar Republic: The Fragility of Democracy](#), especially the [readings](#) by historian Paul Bookbinder:
 - Why Study Weimar?
 - Weimar – 1929
 - Weimar Political Parties
 - Choices and Consequences
- The article “[Versailles and Peacemaking](#),” by Dr. Ruth Henig (BBC, October 15, 2010) explains the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany and the rest of the world.
- The BBC-produced film [The Nazis: Warning from History](#), episode one, “Helped into Power” provides a detailed account of German history from the aftermath of the First World War to Hitler's elevation to the post of Chancellor in 1933.

Lesson 9: World War I and the Birth of Weimar

Essential Questions:

- *How does the time and place in which people live shape their beliefs, actions, and decisions?*
- *How do choices and circumstances help some political parties gain power and cause others to lose power?*
- *What must citizens do and value in order for a democracy to thrive?*
- *How do people respond to disappointment, shame, and humiliation?*

Included Resources:

- * 9.1 - Reading: Germany and the End of World War I
 - 9.2 - Chart: Casualties of World War I
 - 9.3 - Graph: Effect of World War I on the German Population
 - 9.4 - Artwork: Wounded
 - * 9.5 - Reading: The Weimar Constitution
 - * 9.6 - Reading: The Treaty of Versailles
- * = core reading

Introduction:

The Nazis came to power not through a military coup, but by using the tools of democracy – voting, laws, and public declaration of their aims. How did this happen? To begin to answer this question, we need to review the situation in Europe, and especially in Germany, at the end of World War I. The first four resources in this lesson (9.1-9.4) tell the story of the end of the war in Germany and describe its impact through tables, charts, and artwork. It was in the context these resources describe that a new democracy, the Weimar Republic, was created. Resource 9.5 describes how this new government was designed to function, as outlined in its constitution. This is important information for students to understand, for it is by using the mechanisms created by the Weimar Constitution that the Nazi Party initially gained power. The first act of the new democracy was to sign the Treaty of Versailles, officially ending World War I. Resource 9.6 explores the impact of the treaty and the feelings of resentment and betrayal it brought to surface in German society. Those feelings would cast a shadow over the country throughout the Weimar years.

The core resources of this lesson are among the most challenging in this course because they summarize significant and complex historical events in a relatively short space. Depending on the reading skills of your class, you may choose to summarize the essential information from one or more of these resources in short lectures and focus more class time analyzing the charts, graphs, and artwork in the other resources. These statistics and visual representations will provide a basis for students to form hypotheses about the impact of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles on German society.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What might happen to one's nation (or to any group to which one considers oneself a member) to make one feel shamed or humiliated? What are some ways that people might respond to that feeling? What helps people recover when they feel humiliated?
- If war is so costly—in terms of lives and property, why do you think it happens again and again?
- Do you think your life would be different if you did not live in a democracy? Why or why not?
- What makes democracy strong? What weakens it? How would you measure the strength of the democracy that you live in?

Additional Readings from Holocaust and Human Behavior:

- “The Impact of Total War,” pp. 110-113
- “War and Revolution in Russia,” pp. 113-115
- “The Treaty of Versailles,” pp. 119-122

Resource 9.1:**Reading: Germany and the End of World War I*****Creating Context***

World War I (1914-1918) was fought between the Allied Powers—which included France, Great Britain, Russia, and later the United States—and the Central Powers—which included Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. Germany, as well as several other nations who fought, entered the war with a nationalistic confidence in the superiority of its leaders and military forces. Many Germans expected the war to be short and easily won, but it did not turn out that way. Instead, World War I lasted four years and inflicted enormous casualties and hardships on the countries of Europe, Germany included. To the shock of the German public, their nation was defeated by the Allied Powers in November 1918.

Prior to the war, the German government was a monarchy, led by the Kaiser (German for *emperor*) who appointed a Chancellor to run the affairs of the government. This reading describes how Germany surrendered at the end of the war and instituted a new government in the form of a republic.

What is the difference between a monarchy and a republic? What distinguishes a republic from other forms of democracy? Record your thinking in your journal before you begin to read.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

kaiser	republic
chancellor	armament
mutiny	armistice
communist	abdicate
monarchy	traitor
democracy	civilian

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

By early September of 1918, the Germany's top military leaders were aware that the nation would soon be defeated in World War I. The generals therefore reluctantly asked the kaiser (German for *emperor*), Wilhelm II, to seek a peace agreement and he reluctantly agreed. His chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, secretly informed the Americans that Germany wanted to end the war. The military generals, the kaiser, and the prince all worked behind closed doors. Not a word of the approaching defeat appeared in print. The German people had no idea that they were about to lose the war. They believed what they were told, and official announcements remained optimistic. By November, that faith was beginning to shatter. German sailors stationed in Kiel mutinied rather than carry out what they considered a "suicidal" attack on the British navy. At

the same time, Communists, members of an emerging political system that had just caused a revolution in Russia, began to openly plot a revolution in Berlin and a number of other large German cities.

In the belief that the Americans would be more sympathetic to a democratic government than a monarchy, the generals asked the Social Democrats, the largest political party in Germany, to form a republic. Friedrich Ebert, the party's leader, shared the generals' feelings about the need for order. A saddlemaker by trade with little formal education, Ebert considered himself a reformer not a rabble-rouser. He and other Social Democrats respected authority and tried to avoid drastic changes. They were more than willing to promise that the new government would preserve German traditions and allow the nation's army officers, bureaucrats, judges, and teachers to keep their jobs. All of these groups and many others demanded power in the new government. Like other discussions, these negotiations took place in secret.

The German people knew nothing until November 9 – the day the kaiser fled to the Netherlands and the Social Democrats declared Germany a republic. That same day, the nation's new leaders learned that the Allies expected Germany to give up its military forces, including its navy, and evacuate all troops west of the Rhine River. If the Germans did not accept those terms within seventy-two hours, the Allies threatened to invade the nation.

Germany's new leaders turned to the military for advice. When Matthias Erzberger, of the Catholic Center Party, met with General Paul von Hindenburg, the commander of the German Armed Forces, the general tearfully urged him to accept the truce. German soldiers could not hold out much longer. So early on the morning of November 11, 1918, three representatives of the new republic traveled to France to sign an armistice agreement. They made the trip alone. The generals chose not to attend the ceremony.

The kaiser's flight and Germany's surrender marked the end of what is referred to as Germany's Second Reich. (*Reich* roughly means *empire* in English.) The First Reich, also known as the Holy Roman Empire, was formed by the emperor Charlemagne in the year 800 and lasted until 1806. The Second Reich was formed by Kaiser Wilhem I after the Franco-Prussian War, during which several smaller states unified to form the country of Germany. Now the Second Reich had been defeated, and Wilhem II had abdicated.

As soon as the armistice agreement was signed to end World War I (thus ending the Second Reich), people in many countries rejoiced, but there were no celebrations in Germany. People there were in a state of shock. How could they *possibly* have lost the war? Many were convinced that the loss had to be the work of traitors and cowards. Erzberger, who had long opposed the war, was an early target for their anger. He and the other signers of the armistice were later characterized as the "November criminals" who had "stabbed Germany in the back." The charge was unfair, but the generals who knew the truth did not set the record straight. Indeed, they encouraged the belief that civilians had double-crossed the army.

Within just forty-eight hours, Germany was turned upside down. The stunned nation lost its monarch, its empire, most of its military, and the war itself. To make matters worse, there was

now fighting in the streets of many German cities, as the Communists tried to bring about a revolution. Berlin was so unsettled that the nation's new leaders met in the city of Weimar – which is why the new government became known as the Weimar Republic.

9.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. This reading summarizes the complex events that ended World War I in Germany. *Go back and underline two facts about the end of the war that you think are particularly significant or noteworthy.* Why did those two facts stand out to you?
2. What actions by Germany's leaders would make Germans surprised they lost the war? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
3. How significant was the decision by Kaiser Wilhelm, Prince Max of Baden, and the German generals to keep the news of the approaching defeat from the public? Did the people have a right to know?
4. Why did German leaders choose to replace monarchy with democracy? What evidence does the reading provide to explain this shift?
5. How might a country go about replacing one form of government with a different one? Is it possible to do so while, as Friedrich Ebert desired, avoiding drastic changes? Is creating a new constitution enough? Is it necessary to persuade the citizenry to go along?
6. How might the sudden news defeat and surrender affect the nationalism of the German people after World War I? How easily might the members of a nation give up the idea of their superiority over other nations? What other explanations might they seek to explain their defeat?
7. How did the generals react when the new republican leaders of Germany were accused of "stabbing Germany in the back"? What was the impact of their response?

Using Resource 9.1

Pre-reading: Define *democracy* and *republic*

Before students can analyze what happened to democracy in Germany, they need to have a solid understanding of what democracy is.

- Begin this exercise by having students discuss or write about the questions, “Where does the authority – the power – to lead a nation come from? How has this question been answered in the past?” They could do this as a [think-pair-share](#).
- As students will soon learn, the Germans called their first democratic government the Weimar Republic. Before defining *democracy*, you can first introduce the term *republic*. A republic is a system of government that gets its power (its ability to govern) from the people, rather than from god, hereditary or tradition.
- Many republics, but not all, take the form of a *democracy*. “Demos” is Greek for “people” and “kratia” means “power.” In a democracy, the “people,” as opposed to only an individual or a small group, have power. All democracies are not structured in exactly the same way, but all democracies have some mechanisms for citizens to have a voice in how they are governed (e.g. who the leaders should be, what laws should be passed, etc). Have students to discuss the ways that people (or citizens) have power in the United States.

Say Something Literacy Strategy

This reading introduces a significant amount of new history (especially for those who have not yet studied World War I) in a few paragraphs. Some students may find that the density of information in this reading makes it challenging to comprehend. Therefore, you may need to allow for extra time to read and process this reading in class.

One strategy that is designed to improve comprehension of challenging texts is *Say Something*.² Have students read the text together in pairs. At the end of each paragraph, the students will pause and do one of the following:

- Make a prediction
- Ask a question
- Clarify something that is confusing
- Comment on what is happening in the reading
- Connect what is happening the reading to something else they know about

If students are unable to accomplish any of these tasks, then that is a sign they need to re-read the paragraph, then ask for help.

Designing a Short Lecture

You may also choose to provide students the essential information from this reading in a brief lecture. Before moving on, it is important that students at least understand the following points:

- Germany suffered a humiliating defeat in World War I.
- News of the oncoming defeat was kept secret from the public, so most Germans were surprised and shocked by the news of the armistice.
- While the German military encouraged politicians to end the war, they did not publicly support the armistice after it was signed. This led to resentment towards the politicians, “November’s Criminals,” but not the military generals.
- As the war ended, Germany replaced its monarchy with a republic, known as the

Weimar Republic, but public support for the new government was uncertain.

Extension: Exploring World War I and It's Consequences

The devastating consequences of World War I had a profound effect on the development of the Weimar Republic. Have students review what they remember about the consequences of World War I. You might also give them the opportunity to do some online research about the consequences of “The Great War” and then present their findings to the class. Examples of useful sites include:

- [“World War I casualty and death tables”](#) (PBS, *The Great War*)
- [“Aftermath of World War I”](#) (UK National Archives)
- [“The Heritage of the Great War”](#) (This is not an academic site; it is published by a Dutch journalist for the purpose of preventing war by showing its consequence. This site purposefully contains graphic images of the human costs of World War I.)

Video: The Great War & The Shaping of the 20th Century

This eight part documentary about World War I contains several clips that might deepen students understanding of the events in this reading.

The last 10 minutes of *Episode 6: Collapse* describes the end of the war, the Kaiser’s flight, and the varying reactions to the armistice.

The first 30 minutes of *Episode 7: Hatred and Hunger* describe the immediate aftermath of the war in both Russia, where the Bolshevik Revolution was underway, and Germany, where communist and social democratic paramilitary groups battled in city streets.

This video series is available on VHS from the Facing History library. Most episodes can also be found in their entirety on YouTube.

Resource 9.2:

Chart: Casualties of World War I

Country	Total mobilized forces	Killed or died*	Wounded	Prisoners or missing	Total casualties
Allied Powers:					
Russia	12,000,000	1,700,000	4,950,000	2,500,000	9,150,000
France**	8,410,000	1,357,800	4,266,000	537,000	6,160,800
British Empire**	8,904,467	908,371	2,090,212	191,652	3,190,235
Italy	5,615,000	650,000	947,000	600,000	2,197,000
United States	4,734,991	116,516	204,002	—	320,518
Japan	800,000	300	907	3	1,210
Romania	750,000	335,706	120,000	80,000	535,706
Serbia	707,343	45,000	133,148	152,958	331,106
Belgium	267,000	13,716	44,686	34,659	93,061
Greece	230,000	5,000	21,000	1,000	27,000
Portugal	100,000	7,222	13,751	12,318	33,291
Montenegro	50,000	3,000	10,000	7,000	20,000
TOTALS	42,188,810	5,152,115	12,831,004	4,121,090	22,104,209
Central Powers:					
Germany	11,000,000	1,773,700	4,216,058	1,152,800	7,142,558
Austria-Hungary	7,800,000	1,200,000	3,620,000	2,200,000	7,020,000
Turkey	2,850,000	325,000	400,000	250,000	975,000
Bulgaria	1,200,000	87,500	152,390	27,029	266,919
TOTALS	22,850,000	3,386,200	8,388,448	3,629,829	15,404,477
GRAND TOTALS	65,038,810	8,538,315	21,219,452	7,750,919	37,508,686

Source: Department of Defense.

* Includes deaths from all causes.

** Official figures.

9.2 Comprehension & Connections

- How might the data in this chart help you form a hypothesis about which countries were most impacted by World War I? Which statistics in the chart are most helpful in estimating the impact? Why?
- A *casualty* is a soldier who, because of events related to the war (such as a battle), is killed, dies from another cause, is wounded, is taken prisoner, or goes missing. A country's *casualty rate* is the percentage of its total mobilized forces that end

up as casualties. Which countries had the highest numbers of casualties in World War I? Use a calculator to compute the casualty rates of the countries listed in the chart. Which countries had the highest casualty rates?

3. Can the data on casualties and casualty rates alone tell you who won or lost the war? Why or why not? Use evidence from the chart and from Reading 9.1 to support your answer.
4. Based on the numbers of casualties and casualty rates, what assumptions can you make both about where the war's biggest battles were fought and where the impact of the war was greatest? Use evidence from the chart to support your answers.
5. Compare the casualties and casualty rates of Germany, France, Russia, England and the United States. What might be some reasons for the discrepancies between countries, especially between the United States and other countries?
6. Many of the countries listed in this chart entered World War I with confidence in their superiority over the other countries in the world. How might the reality that this chart represents change how nations think about themselves? How might the impact of the war on victorious nations be different from the impact on the nations that lost the war? How might it be similar?
7. After analyzing this chart, what questions come to mind? Record them in your journal so that you can refer to them as you learn more about the impact of World War I in class.

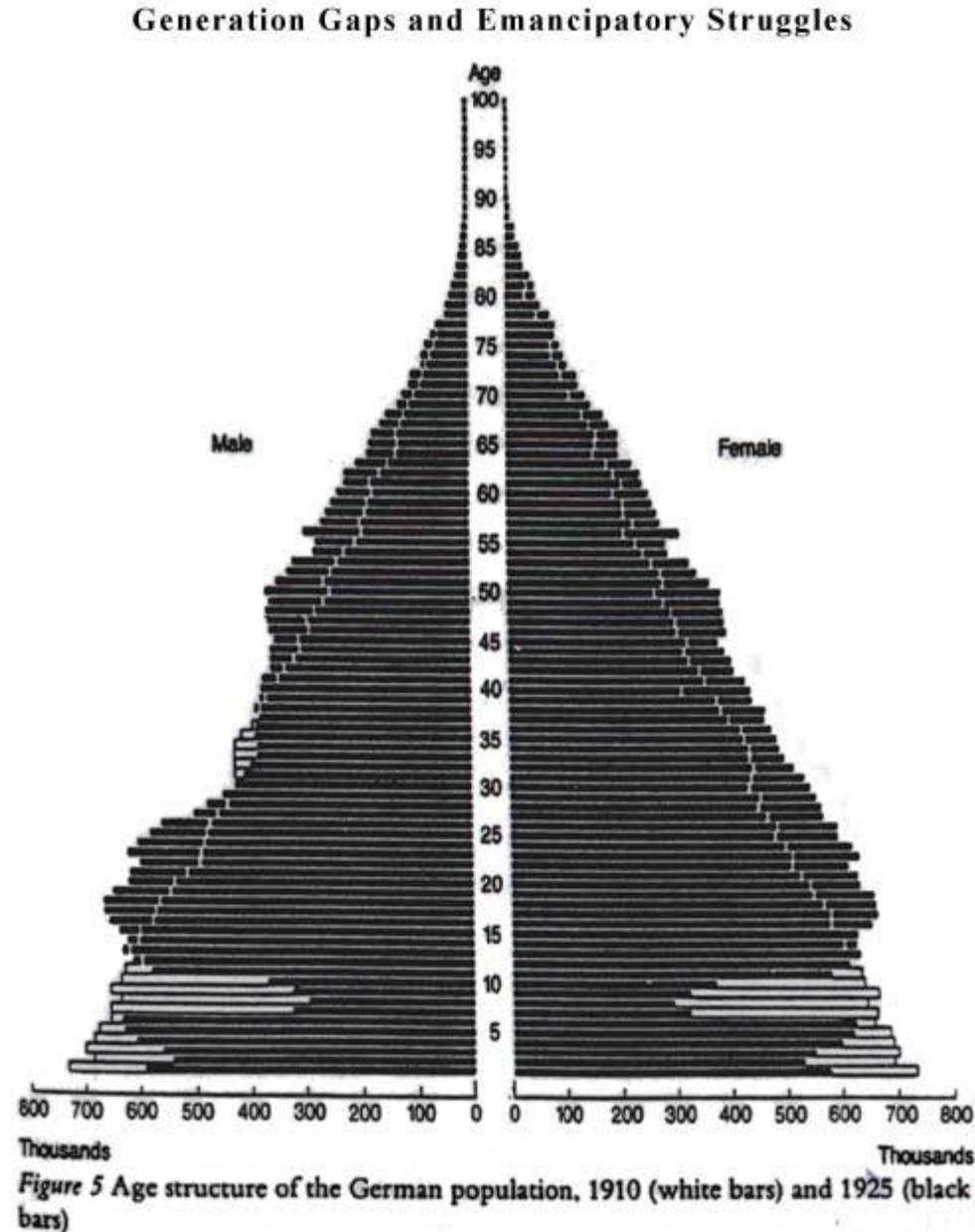
Using Resource 9.2

Small Group Discussion & Analysis

This chart can be used to inspire rich discussions among students. Students should be encouraged to use the data to both form hypotheses about the impact of World War I and make predictions about how the aftermath of the war will affect the future of Germany. You might ask your students to analyze the chart in pairs or small groups, using the [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy. The Connections questions will provide a useful guide for their analysis. Groups should be encouraged to share their own questions, inspired by the chart, with the class. You might assign student-generated questions to groups or individuals for further research, perhaps for homework.

Resource 9.3:**Chart: Effect of World War I on the German Population**

The graphic below represents the population of Germany, by age, four years before the outbreak of World War I (1910 numbers are represented in white horizontal bars) and seven years after the end of the war (1925 numbers are represented in back horizontal bars). Note that the 1925 population (black bars) is superimposed over the 1910 population (white bars). The notches in the black bars represent where the shorter white bars end underneath.



9.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. This graph might take a few minutes to understand, but it represents a significant amount of information about the German population before and after World War I. Take a few minutes to simply practice reading and interpreting the graph. For instance, try to answer these questions:
 - How many 50-year-old women lived in Germany in 1925? How many in 1910?
 - How many 10-year-old boys lived in Germany in 1925? How many in 1910?
2. What do you notice about the shape of the graph? How is the 1910 shape different from the 1925 shape? How, specifically, do you account for the changes you notice in the shapes?
3. How do you account for the fact that the German population contains fewer children, ages ten and under, in 1925 compared to 1910?
4. What part of the graph represents the German casualties in the war?
5. What theories can you make based on this graph about the impact of World War I on German society? How might you predict German citizens' thoughts and feelings about World War I in the years that followed?
6. Knowing that Germany entered World War I with confidence in its superiority over the other countries in the world, how might have the reality that this chart represents changed how Germans thought about their country? How might it affect their feelings of nationalism?
7. What questions does this graph raise for you about the impact of World War I on German society? Record them in your journal so that you can refer to them as you learn more about the impact of World War I in class.

Using Resource 9.3

Analyzing Complex Graphs

While more complex in design than the chart in Resource 9.2, this graph is rich with information to inspire continued insight into and discussion of the impact of World War I. Before asking students to analyze or discuss this graph, it might be necessary to practice together extracting information from it. If you can, project this image in your classroom and ask for volunteers to approach the projected image. Then ask volunteers

questions that they can answer using the graph. Make sure that they demonstrate to the class how they found their answers. This exercise can also be accomplished by handing out copies of the graph and asking the students to work in groups.

Small Group Discussion & Analysis

After practicing interpreting the graph, it can be used to inspire rich discussions among students. Students should be encouraged to use the data to both draw conclusions about the impact of World War I and make predictions about how the aftermath of the war will affect the future of Germany. You might ask your students to analyze the chart in pairs or small groups, using the [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy. The Connections questions will provide a useful guide for their analysis. Groups should be encouraged to share their own questions, inspired by the chart, with the class. You might assign student-generated questions to groups or individuals for further research, perhaps for homework.

Resource 9.4:**Artwork: “Wounded”**

Artist Otto Dix volunteers for the German army in World War I, and he fought on the Western Front in France as a machine-gunner. Like many Germans, he was initially enthusiastic about the war and believed Germany would demonstrate its superiority over other countries. His experiences in the war changed his feelings about the war. Below is an etching he made during the war (in 1916), entitled “Wounded.” This work was not released to the public until 1924, when Dix published a series of etchings he made during the war entitled “Der Krieg.”

**9.4 Comprehension & Connections**

1. Take a few moments and record what you noticed about this painting in your journal. What shapes, colors, objects, and textures do you see? Try to refrain, for now, from interpreting the ideas and emotions the artwork conveys, and only describe what you see.
2. What was the artist trying to convey in this painting? What emotions does this painting evoke for you?
3. What questions does this piece of art raise for you about the impact of World War I on the artist? What do you think Dix wants his audience to remember about the

war?

4. How does the depiction of the war in this painting challenge the way many Germans thought of their nation's identity? Cite specific details about this image to support your answer. Is this a nationalistic painting?

Using Resource 9.4

Analyzing Visual Images

Many Facing History teachers find it useful to take the time to look closely at works of art like Dix's "Wounded." The [Analyzing Visual Images](#) teaching strategy provides an excellent framework for doing so by separating observation, questioning, and interpretation into discrete steps. This process slows down student thinking and often leads to deeper insight and richer class discussion of the lasting effects of World War I on German society and Europe as a whole.

Video: The Great War & The Shaping of the 20th Century

The first 15 minutes of *Episode 4: Slaughter* describes the battlefield conditions on the Western Front that haunted many after the war. This clip also contains a short profile of Otto Dix.

This video series is available on VHS from the Facing History library. Most episodes can also be found in their entirety on YouTube.

Exploring "Der Krieg" Further

"Wounded" is part of a series of etchings that Dix created while fighting in World War I on the Western Front. The entire series can be [viewed](http://nga.gov.au/dix/) on the website for the National Gallery of Australia (<http://nga.gov.au/dix/>). You might assign your students to work in groups to analyze one or more additional paintings from this series. A few additional links to works about World War I by other artists can be found on the Facing History [online module](#) about the Weimar Republic.

Literature and Film Connection: *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Erich Maria Remarque's famous novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, captures the experiences of many German soldiers during the war. As a result, it was subsequently banned by the Nazis. Reading excerpts from this novel, or showing clips from the 1930 film (available on DVD), can help illustrate for students the change in the feelings of German soldiers from proud and patriotic at the beginning of the war to anger, humiliation, and disillusionment in the end.

Resource 9.5:**Reading: The Weimar Constitution*****Creating Context***

Brainstorm with your classmates about the characteristics of democracy:

- What conditions need to be in place for democracy to be successful?
- What do the people of a nation need to do to make democracy work?
- What ideas do they need to believe in?

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

government	coalition
constitution	domestic
Reichstag	cabinet
deputy	Article 48
president	insurrection
chancellor	

Work began on a constitution for the Weimar Republic within days of the armistice, and it was completed that winter. The document created a democracy with power divided among three branches of government. Of the three, only the judicial branch was appointed. The other two were elected by the people. Every seven years, German voters selected among several candidates for president. But in electing members of the Reichstag, the national legislature, they cast their ballots for a particular political party rather than a specific candidate. As long as a party got 1 percent of the vote, it was entitled to one deputy in the Reichstag. The more votes a party received, the more deputies it was entitled to. For example, if the Social Democrats received 36 percent of the vote, they would be allowed 36 percent of the seats in the Reichstag. But party officials, rather than the voters, decided exactly who those representatives would be.

The president was given the power of commanding the armed forces, appointing public officials and nominating the chancellor. The Reichstag had to confirm the president's choice of chancellor, which meant that the party with a majority in the Reichstag had a say in the selection. If no single party held a majority, two or more could band together to form a coalition to control the legislature and agree upon a chancellor with the president.

The writers of the constitution intended for the chancellor to be the major leader of the government. The chancellor directed domestic policy and foreign affairs. He also chose the members of the cabinet [the leaders who ran each department of the government] which in turn had to be ratified by the Reichstag. If the Reichstag failed to support the policies, appointments, or legislation desired by the chancellor, he could change the members of his cabinet to try to satisfy them. If that still did not satisfy the members of the Reichstag, the president could appoint a new chancellor or call new elections for the Reichstag. New elections were also called

when the political parties that had formed a coalition in the Reichstag stopped cooperating with each other. In less than fourteen years, the Weimar Republic had twenty Reichstag elections.

The new constitution carefully protected individual freedom – including the rights of minorities. A total of fifty-six articles spelled out the “basic rights and obligations” of the German people. For the first time, they were guaranteed freedom of speech and press, although some censorship was permitted to combat “obscene and indecent literature, as well as for the protection of youth at public plays and spectacles.” The constitution also guarded religious freedom. And, it gave women the right to vote and hold office. Indeed Germany was the first industrialized nation to allow women an equal say in government.

Yet there were signs that the people who framed the constitution were uneasy about democracy. Lawmakers did not replace many old laws, even though some limited freedoms promised in the constitution. For example, laws that discriminated against homosexuals and “Gypsies” (the name Germans gave to two ethnic groups known as the Sinti and Roma) remained. Also, under Article 48 of the Constitution, the president was given extra powers in times of emergency. The article reads:

In case public safety is seriously threatened or disturbed, the Reich President may take the measures necessary to reestablish law and order, if necessary using armed force. In the pursuit of this aim he may suspend the civil rights [outlined elsewhere in the Constitution].

In other words, by declaring an emergency, the president suspend civil liberties, assume temporary dictatorial power (allowing him to ignore the Reichstag), and direct the military to deal with domestic insurrection.

In January of 1919, almost every eligible voter went to the polls and most voted for parties that supported the republic, not the ones that advocated for a different system of government altogether. After that election – and once the results of the Treaty of Versailles became known – parties that favored democracy did not do nearly as well. They won less than half of the vote in every other election.³

9.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. What is a constitution? How does a constitution help define the identity of a country?
2. Draw a diagram of the Weimar Republic government. What branches does it have? What is the function of each? Who are the government’s most important leaders? What are their titles and responsibilities?
3. Look over the list of characteristics of democracy you compiled before reading. What characteristics from your list did you find evidence of in the description of the Weimar Constitution? What characteristics were missing?

4. Who could be a citizen of Germany in 1919? What rights did German citizens have? What responsibilities? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
5. What elements of the Weimar Republic's constitution could lead to instability in the Republic? Cite specific examples from the reading.
6. Summarize Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution. Why do you think it was included? What are the advantages of including Article 48 in the country's constitution? What dangers might it present?
7. Suppose you were asked to develop a government for a new nation. What kind of government would you establish? Would it be democratic? Rather than spell out every detail of your plan, explain the principles upon which it would be based. How would you educate people to support that government?

Using Resource 9.5

Diagramming the Weimar Government

After completing this reading, you might ask students to use the information provided to draw a diagram of the Weimar Republic. (See Question 3 above.) It might also be helpful to compare the structure of the government in Germany at that time to the structure of the United States government.

Say Something Literacy Strategy

This reading outlines the intricacies of the German government during the Weimar years. Some students may find that the density of information in this reading makes it challenging to comprehend. Therefore, you may need to allow for extra time to read and process this reading in class. The *Say Something* strategy, outlined in *Using Reading 9.1*, may also be helpful to use to improve student's comprehension of this reading.

Planning a Short Lecture

Instead of reading the text with your students, you might choose to use the information from this reading as the basis of a short lecture. If you do so, include a diagram of the branches of the Weimar government along with the positions of president and chancellor. Also, remember to share with the students the civil liberties citizens of Germany were provided as well as the emergency powers available to the president under Article 48. It might be useful to use the information from this reading as the basis for a short lecture on the Weimar Constitution.

Resource 9.6:
The Treaty of Versailles***Creating Context***

Although fighting had stopped in November 1918, the Treaty of Versailles, which officially ended World War I, was negotiated for six months. One of the first acts of the new Weimar government, in June 1919, was to sign the treaty. As the victors, the Allied Powers—including France, Britain, Italy, and the United States—were able to demand terms of the treaty that were favorable to them. The Allied countries wanted to ensure that Germany would not be able to threaten its neighbors with war again. Some also wanted to punish Germany for the trouble it had caused them. While German government officials hardly approved of the treaty, many felt they had no choice but to sign; Allied powers threatened to continue the war if Germany did not agree to the demands of the treaty. Many Germans felt betrayed by the treaty.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

treaty
demobilize
reparations

An [extended and enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

Excerpt from the Treaty of Versailles
(June 28, 1919)

- 80. Germany will respect the independence of Austria.
- 81. Germany recognizes the complete independence of Czechoslovakia.
- 87. Germany recognizes the complete independence of Poland.
- 119. Germany surrenders all her rights and titles over her overseas countries.
- 159. The German military forces shall be demobilized and reduced not to exceed 100,000 men.
- 181. The German navy must not exceed 6 battleships, 6 light cruisers, 12 destroyers, and 12 torpedo boats. No submarines are to be included.
- 198. The Armed Forces of Germany must not include any military or naval air forces.
- 231. Germany and her Allies accept the responsibility for causing all the loss and damage to the Allied Powers.
- 233. Germany will pay for all damages done to the civilian population and property of the Allied Governments. [The figure was later set at \$33 billion].
- 428. To guarantee the execution of the Treaty, the German territory situated to the west of the Rhine River will be occupied by Allied troops for fifteen years.

431. The occupation forces will be withdrawn as soon as Germany complies with the Treaty.

9.6 Comprehension & Connections

1. What was the effect of the Treaty of Versailles on the size of Germany's empire around the world? What was the effect on the size of Germany's military? Cite specific details from the treaty to support your response. What might have been the effect of the treaty on Germany's prestige?
2. Analyze the language of the treaty. How does the language imply that Germany has no say in the terms of the treaty? Use specific examples of words and phrases to support your answer.
3. This reaction to the Treaty of Versailles was published in a German newspaper: "...today German honor is being carried to its grave. Do not forget it! The German people will, with unceasing labor, press forward to reconquer the place among the nations to which it is entitled. Then will come vengeance for the shame of 1919."⁴
 - How do you define *honor*?
 - What specific parts of the treaty might Germans have perceived as violating their nation's honor?
 - Given what you know about nationalism and identity, how do you think the terms of the Versailles Treaty might have made some Germans feel?
4. While many view Germany as the primary aggressor in World War I, some argue that the terms of the Versailles Treaty were unfair to Germany. Do you think the Treaty of Versailles was fair? Why or why not? What criteria did you use to make the evaluation?
5. Reading 9.1 described how Matthias Erzberger and the other signers of the armistice agreement that stopped the fighting in World War I came to be characterized as the "November criminals" who "stabbed Germany in the back." How do you think the terms of the treaty affected that view?
6. What questions do you have about the events described in this reading? Record them in your journal so that you can refer to them as you learn more about the Treaty of Versailles in class.

Using Resource 9.6

Reviewing the Treaty

In class, have the students read the main provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. They can read them aloud and highlight key words as they read. As a [wraparound](#), students can share one of the words that stood out to them. If you prefer to have your students review the entire treaty rather than the excerpt provided, the full text is available [here](#).

Using Online Maps

To illustrate one of the conditions of the Versailles Treaty, have students look at maps of Germany before and after World War One. This [map](#) shows the European territory Germany lost after the war and this [map](#) shows the territory Germany lost in Africa.

Small Group Discussions

Have students discuss one or more of the Comprehension and Connections questions in small groups. When discussing Question #2, some groups can be assigned to represent the viewpoint of the victors while others can be assigned to represent the viewpoint of the Germans. Then, groups can share their answers with the whole group. How are they similar? How are they different?

Video: The Great War & The Shaping of the 20th Century

Episode 7: Hatred and Hunger contains two consecutive segments (totaling about 20 minutes) entitled “The Victors” and “Revenge” that describe the negotiations, arguments, and uncomfortable compromises that led to the Treaty of Versailles.

This video series is available on VHS from the Facing History library. Most episodes can also be found in their entirety on YouTube.

Digging Deeper

The BBC website has several interactive features about the Versailles Treaty that students can explore. “[Interpretation: Treaty of Versailles](#)” offers three interpretations of the treaty for students to compare. “[Terms of the Versailles Treaty](#)” provides a graphic way to understand the consequences of the treaty on Germany. It also includes an online game students can play to connect the terms of the treaty to reactions by German citizens. Finally, the October 2010 article, “[Why has Germany taken so long to pay off its debt](#)” focuses on how the influence of the Treaty of Versailles nearly 100 years after it was signed.

Lesson 10: Life in the Weimar Republic

Essential Questions:

- *How does the time and place in which people live shape their beliefs, actions, and decisions?*
- *What must citizens do and value in order for a democracy to survive?*
- *How do countries negotiate differences in values and culture among citizens?*
- *How do people respond to uncertainty in their lives?*

Included Resources:

- 10.1 Weimar Economy: The Inflation Years (1919-1924)
- 10.2 Weimar Economy: Hard Times Return (1929-1933)
- 10.3 Weimar Culture: Street Scene Paintings
- 10.4 Weimar Culture: Fritz Lang's "Metropolis"
- 10.5 Weimar Culture: Cabaret - "Throw Out The Men"
- 10.6 Weimar Culture: Antisemitic Cartoons
- 10.7 Weimar Education: What Did You Learn in School Today?

Introduction:

The Nazi Party was born and took root in a German society characterized by conflict and creativity, change and backlash. The political and cultural ideas of the Nazis did not dominate this period of German history; they had numerous competitors. Therefore it is essential to survey the cultural, economic and political history that characterizes Weimar Germany, so that students may better understand the circumstances and choices that eventually led to the Nazis' ascendancy. The Resources in this lesson provide glimpses into the following aspects of Weimar society:

- Economics: Hyperinflation, stability, then depression
- Arts: Visual, musical, and film
- Rights of minorities: Women's rights, antisemitism
- Education: a bulwark of tradition

It is important to note that these Resources rarely mention the Nazis; the lesson that follows will examine their activities during the Weimar Republic in more depth. But first, it is important for students to understand the varied nature of the society into which the Nazi Party was born. As you teach this material, encourage your students to think about the similarities and differences between this period and the varied and contradictory characteristics of our society today. As Historian Paul Bookbinder writes:

The history of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) illuminates one of the most creative and crucial periods in the twentieth century and serves as a significant case study of our own time. Many of the questions asked about the Weimar Republic are relevant to problems that individuals and societies face in the twenty-first century.⁵

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Identify major events and trends that have happened in your lifetime. How has the context in which you have lived shaped your beliefs and actions? Which event or trend do you think has had the most profound influence on your life?
- What movies, songs, or television shows best explain life in your school, city, or country? Pick one or two and explain why you chose them.
- What skills and values do you need in order to be successful in life? Which do you need to be a good citizen? How do you learn these skills and values?
- How have the recent economic problems around the world affected life in your community? What changes have you noticed? Has the recession changed how people you know treat each other?

Additional Readings from Holocaust and Human Behavior:

- “Voices in the Dark,” pp. 126-127
- “Order and Law,” pp. 130-133
- “Criticizing Society,” pp. 133-135
- “Creating the Enemy,” pp. 141-144
- “Beyond the Stereotypes,” pp. 144-146

Using Resources 10.1-10.7

The resources in this lesson are not arranged chronologically, and they are designed to be used in class simultaneously by different students. Therefore, these classroom suggestions apply to the seven resources that follow as a collection. As you use this collection of resources, it is possible that not every student will examine each resource.

Opener: Introducing Historical Context

You might begin this lesson by introducing the concept *historical context*: Why do individuals and groups make particular choices at a particular point in time? This is a question students will address as they consider how the historical context (the economic, political, and social conditions) of the Weimar Republic may have influenced Germans' choices at the ballot box.

Before introducing the phrase “historical context”, ask students to brainstorm a list of major events that have taken place in their lifetime. For example, you might have them respond to a question such as, “Twenty years from now, what do you think people will remember about the time period in which you grew up? What major events took place? What ideas, inventions, or people will people remember when they look back at this time?”

With this list posted on the board or wall, explain that these items make up the historical context in which students live. Students can add a definition of historical context to the class word wall and their journals.

To check for understanding, ask students to identify an example of how their historical context has shaped their life. In other words, what is a belief they hold or a decision they have made that might have been different if they were living in a different time or place?

Surveying the Big Picture

The goal of this lesson is not for students to learn about the economics, arts, and education of Weimar Germany in depth so much as it is for them to get a big picture sense of the dynamism and contradictions of the time. Therefore, activities for this lesson should give students the opportunity to explore at least a handful of resources in this lesson, reflect on the Comprehension and Connections questions, and share what they learned with classmates who explored different resources.

The [Gallery Walk](#) and [Jigsaw](#) teaching strategies both give students the chance to consider a number of different resources in a relatively brief period of time. Many of these resources include visual images. Therefore, you might ask students to use the [Analyzing Visual Images](#) strategy when they encounter a visual image.

Depending on available time, each student might not be able to examine every resource. However, if you leave time to debrief the activity as a whole group at the end, students will be able to get a sense of the resources that they missed. As a wrap-up activity, ask students to write down one word or phrase in their journals that best captures what they have learned about life in Weimar Germany. (Since students may have completed a similar exercise after the previous lesson, they can choose to use the same phrase or revise their selection). Students can then share their words and phrases in a [Wraparound](#).

The Weimar Republic Online

Facing History hosts a website with a significant number of additional resources about the Weimar Republic. These include primary source documents, audio-visual materials, essays from experts, and an interactive timeline. As an extension to or in place of the resources included here, you might have your students explore this online module to get a broad sense of culture, education, economics, and politics in Weimar Germany. The site is available [here](http://weimar.facinghistory.org/content/weimar-republic-timeline). (<http://weimar.facinghistory.org/content/weimar-republic-timeline>).

Starting With Art

If you lack the available time needed to approach this material as outlined in “Surveying the Big Picture” above, you might provide students with an overview of the Weimar years in a more teacher-led activity. One way to do this is to start with the street scene paintings in Resource 10.3. These three works were painted in three different economic periods of the Weimar Republic: the first during hyperinflation (1922), the second during the relatively stable economic times (1925), and the third during the Great Depression (1932). Building from your students’ observations of each of these images, you can weave in notes not only about the economic roller coaster of the Weimar period but also about art and culture as well.

Resource 10.1:**Weimar Economy: The Inflation Years (1919-1924)*****Creating Context***

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

economy	strike
inflation/hyperinflation	pension
reparation	bankrupt
mark	

The early years of the Weimar Republic were marked by a period of incredible inflation. Inflation is a time when the value of money decreases and/or general prices increase sharply. During the war, the German government printed money freely to pay for soldiers, guns, and ammunition. After the fighting ended, there was more money in circulation than there were things to buy. The result was inflation. To make matters worse, the French occupied the Ruhr, an important German industrial area, in 1923, when Germany failed to make reparation payments. The Germans, in turn, responded to the occupation with a general strike. During that strike, they produced nothing. So the few goods available became even more valuable. Prices skyrocketed and the German mark purchased less and less.

People who had saved their money in banks or were living on pensions or disability checks found themselves bankrupt. Those with jobs found that their salary increases could not possibly keep up with the almost instantaneous rise in prices.

Artist George Grosz described what shopping was like in those days:

Lingering at the [shop] window was a luxury because shopping had to be done immediately. Even an additional minute meant an increase in price. One had to buy quickly because a rabbit, for example, might cost two million marks more by the time it took to walk into the store. A few million marks meant nothing, really. It was just that it meant more

Date	Marks	US Dollars
1918	4.2	1
1921	75.0	1
1922	400.0	1
Jan. 1923	7,000.0	1
Jul. 1923	160,000.0	1
Aug. 1923	1,000,000.0	1
Nov. 1, 1923	1,300,000,000.0	1
Nov. 15, 1923	1,300,000,000,000.0	1
Nov. 16, 1923	4,200,000,000,000.0	1

lugging. The packages of money needed to buy the smallest item had long since become too heavy for trouser pockets. They weighed many pounds... People had to start carting their money around in wagons and knapsacks. I used a knapsack.⁶

By 1924, the government, with the help of loans from the United States, was able to bring the inflation under control. The German economy remained stable for the next five years.



10.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. For many, the concept of inflation and the reasons that it happens may be new. Try explaining the concept of inflation to a classmate to test how well you understand it.
2. Go back and underline the details about the hyperinflation in Germany between 1919 and 1924 that stand out to you. What is most surprising to you about the effects of this period of inflation?
3. Re-read George Grosz's account of shopping during the years of hyperinflation. What evidence does this description provide of Grosz's attitude towards the changing German economy?
4. Numbers can tell a story. What story do the numbers provided in this reading tell? Do they lead you to any conclusions? Numbers do not tell the whole story. What do the eyewitness accounts suggest about how inflation affected the way people saw themselves and their government? Who was hurt most by this kind of inflation? Use evidence from the reading and chart to support your answers.
5. It has been said that "any system can stand in fair weather; it is tested when the wind blows." What does this saying mean? How do economic crises test democracy? How do such crises encourage people to place their faith in leaders

who offer simple solutions to complex problems?

6. What questions do you have about the events described in this reading? Record them in your journal so that you can refer to them as you learn more about this time period in class.

Resource 10.2:**Weimar Economy: Hard Times Return (1929-1933)***Creating Context*

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

economy**inflation/hyperinflation****business boom****reparation****depression**

By 1924, the German economy started to improve from after the war and the hyperinflation. By 1928, business was booming, partly because German leaders had persuaded the Allies to lower reparations payments. Then in 1929, a worldwide depression began. A depression is a time when economic activity slows as more and more businesses decrease production and lay off workers. Germany felt the effects of the depression almost immediately. Until 1929, loans from the United States helped fuel German recovery, but now hard-hit American banks began to call in those loans. As a result, many large German companies were forced to close their doors. Like leaders everywhere, those in Germany looked for ways to end the depression. And like other leaders in 1929, they failed.



The original caption for this photo reads: "When night comes! Picture taken in the municipal refuge for the homeless. View of one of the dormitories which can house up to 100 people."



Translation: "Hello! I'm looking for work. I can do shorthand and typing, can speak French and English, will accept any type of household job and can do anything that demands an attentive mind."

10.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. This reading introduces the idea of economic depression. Try explaining the concept of economic depression to a classmate to test how well you understand it.
2. How did the severity of the depression in the United States affect economic conditions in Germany? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

3. Photographs often do more than document an event; they can also tell a story that reflects the perspective of the photographer. What story do the photographs provided in this reading tell? What is the message the photographer intends to convey? What other types of evidence do you need to fully understand the conditions in Germany during the Great Depression?
4. In times of trouble, people often look for easy answers. Their fears and suspicions of those they regard as “the other” also increase. In the United States, during periods of high unemployment, there is often a corresponding rise in anti-immigrant legislation, hate crimes, and discrimination. The same has been true of nations in Europe both long ago and today. How do you account for such attitudes? How do they threaten minorities? How do they threaten democracy itself?
5. What questions do you have about the Great Depression and how it affected Germany? Record them in your journal so that you can refer to them as you learn more about this time period in class.

Resource 10.3:
Weimar Culture: Street Scene Paintings

Creating Context

In the mid-1920s, artists in Europe commonly painted depictions of life on the streets of their countries. By analyzing such works, we can make observations about how the artists viewed the conditions in their countries. Below are three Berlin street scenes, painted by three different artists in the 1920s and early 1930s. Examine carefully and consider what each artists may have been trying to show about the specific time and place he painted. Follow the six step process for examining visual resources that you used to analyze the painting in Lesson 1.

“Street Scene,
Berlin”
by Albert Birkle.
Painted in 1922.



“Street Scene,
Berlin”
by George Grosz.
Painted in 1925.



“Berlin Street
Corner” by Bruno
Voigt. Painted in
1932.



10.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. Look closely at each of the three paintings. Before analyzing each painting and

answering the questions that follow, first spend a few minutes simply looking at each without interpretation. What shapes, colors, and textures do you notice? How are the people in each image positioned? What are they doing? Record your observations in your journal.

2. Study Albert Birkle's *Street Scene, Berlin*. Based on your observations, what do you think he is saying about life in the city? About the people who make up that city? A critic has said of the people in Birkle's painting, "They grasp at emptiness, and reach out in the surrounding space, with eyes bereft of hope."⁷ How do you see the Berliners in his painting?
3. Look carefully at Grosz's *Street Scene, Berlin*. Based on your observations, what do you think he is saying about life in the city? About the people who make up that city? How is his view similar to Birkle's? What difference seems most striking?
4. Both Grosz and Birkle created their street scenes in the 1920s. Bruno Voigt created his in 1932 when such paintings were no longer popular. Voigt deliberately invoked the past in his work to make a point about the present. Why do you think he drew heavy lines around the man seated in the foreground? Why do you think Voigt saw his work as a weapon in the fight against the Nazis?
5. What is the relationship between art and nationalism? How can art reinforce ideas about who belongs to "a people"? How can art be used to champion those who are excluded from a nation's identity?
6. Freedom of expression is critical to a democratic society. People express ideas in pictures as well as words. In what other ways do individuals criticize their society? Research the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. How does it protect the rights of individuals to express their views? When have those rights been threatened?

Resource 10.4:
Weimar Culture: Fritz Lang’s “Metropolis”

Creating Context

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this resource:

science fiction	conservative
class conflict	right-wing
mechanization	decadent
radical	Sodom and Gomorrah



Germany during the Weimar years rivaled, and according to many surpassed, Hollywood as a center for creative, cutting-edge production of motion pictures. At the center of the German film industry was the production company UFA (short for Universum Film AG). UFA produced hundreds of films during the Weimar years, including *Metropolis*.

Metropolis was directed by Austrian Fritz Lang and released in 1926. It was based on the novel of the same name by Lang's wife, Thea von Harbou. The story of class conflict and mechanization was set in the city of the future. Notable for its fantastic imagery and imaginative sets, the film reflected similar tensions between rich and poor in Weimar and a widespread fascination with the modern and futuristic.

While many applauded the non-traditional culture and art of the Weimar Republic, of which *Metropolis* is a good example, conservative and radical right-wing critics decried the new cultural products as decadent and immoral. They condemned Weimar Germany as a new Sodom and Gomorrah and attacked American influences, such as jazz music, as contributors to the decay.

Metropolis was recently re-released in the United States. To view more images from the film, as well as the trailer for its re-release, click [here](http://www.kino.com/metropolis/). (<http://www.kino.com/metropolis/>)

10.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. Study the image from *Metropolis* above. If possible, view the movie trailer for its re-release in the mid-2000s (<http://www.kino.com/metropolis/>). What do the images from the film make you think about? What surprises you about what you saw?
2. *Metropolis* is available to watch in the internet and in a variety of other formats. Make a list of questions about the film that, if you were to watch it, you would like to find the answers to.
3. Based on what you know about *Metropolis* and the genre of science fiction, what part of the population in Weimar Germany do you think would be most interested in seeing the film?
4. What is the relationship between art and nationalism? How can art reinforce ideas about who belongs to “a people”? How can art be used to champion those who are excluded from a nation’s identity?

Resource 10.5:**Weimar Culture: Cabaret - “Throw Out The Men”*****Creating Context***

Cabaret was a jazz-influenced form of musical theater popular in Germany during the Weimar years. There were two types of cabarets: There were larger halls or theaters where crowds of all ages and classes came together to witness variety shows which consisted of singers, dancers, acrobats, and comedians. Then there were smaller clubs where the audience was largely middle and upper class, younger and middle aged adults, and where the songs were political and social satire. The freer atmosphere of Weimar was demonstrated in these small clubs by intense criticism of government officials and political party leaders and the airing of previously taboo themes of gender conflict, clergy corruption and homosexuality. This resource includes the lyrics of one song most likely performed in a smaller club setting.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this resource:

satire
taboo

**"Throw Out the Men" (Raus mit den Männern)
by Friedrich Hollaender (1926)**

Lyrics:

The battle for emancipation's been raging since history began
Yes, feminists of every nation want to throw off the chains made by man
Hula girls and housemaids and wives in Maribou
hear all our voices thunder in protest
Anything that men do women can do too
and more that that we women do it best

CHORUS:

Throw all the men out of the Reichstag
and throw all the men out of the courthouse
Men are the problem with humanity
they're blinded by their vanity
Women have passively embraced them
when we could have easily outpaced them
Yes we should have long ago replaced them
or better yet erased them
If we haven't made our feelings clear
we women have had it up to here

As babies men all howl and bluster they cry through the night and the day
 perfecting the techniques they'll muster for the times when they don't get their way
 Nursie holds the monster and feeds him from her breast
 and baby is contented for a bit
 But when he sees his nurse is trying to get some rest
 the little man decides to have a fit

CHORUS

The men get their pick of professions they're policemen or scholars or clerks
 They get rich and acquire possessions like we wives who keep house for these jerks
 They're ruining the country while we mop up the floor
 They're flushing this whole nation down the drain
 Sisters stand together, let's show these men the door
 before they drive us totally insane

CHORUS

10.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. Go back and read the lyrics to “Throw Out the Men” again. Which lines from the lyrics best summarize the message of the song? Copy a line or two from the lyrics into your journal.
2. What does Hollaender’s use of the word *emancipation* reveal about his feelings toward the way women were treated in Germany?
3. Why does Hollaender use the metaphor of a nurse and baby? How does the metaphor further the song’s message?
4. What words and phrases are used to describe men in the song? What effect do these words and phrases have on the song’s mood?
5. Who in Weimar Germany do you think the message of this song would appeal to? List as many groups as you can. Who do you think would dislike the message in this song? Why would they dislike it?
6. What is the relationship between art and nationalism? How can art reinforce ideas about who belongs to “a people”? How can art be used to champion those who are excluded from a nation’s identity?
7. An audio recording of this song is available on the Facing History website (<http://weimar.facinghistory.org/content/its-all-swindle-alles-schwindel-mischa->

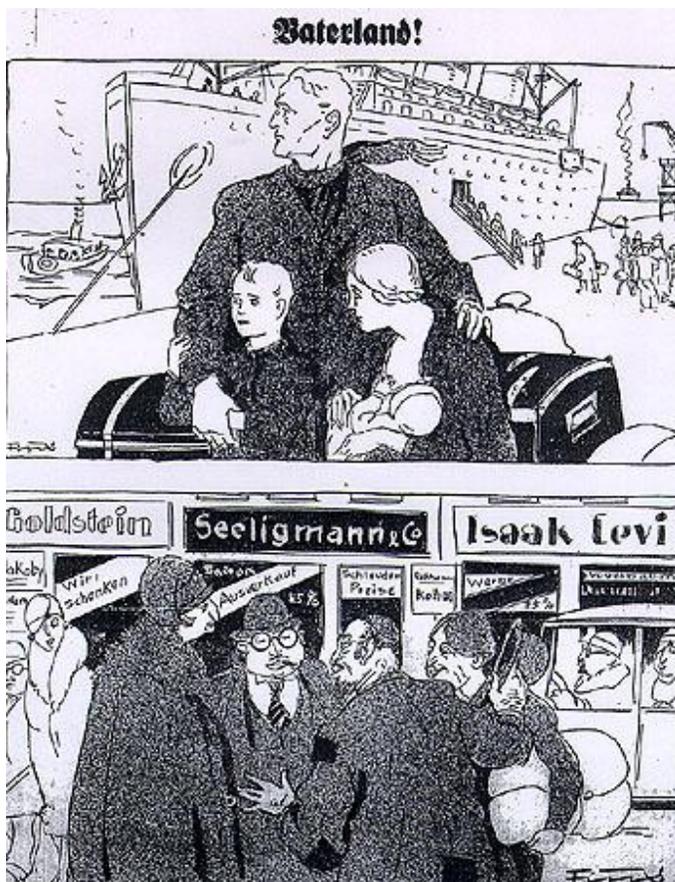
[spoliansky-and-marcellus-schiffer-1931](#)). If possible listen to the recording. How would you describe this style of music? Does it remind you of anything in particular? How does hearing the music add to your understanding of Weimar society?

Resource 10.6: Weimar Culture: Antisemitic Cartoons

Creating Context

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this resource:

antisemitism
race science



Cartoon published in German newspaper (1929)

Antisemitism is a term invented in 1879 that refers to the unfounded fear and hatred of Jews. Prior to 1879, Jews, like many minority groups, had been discriminated against in Germany (and the rest of Europe) mostly for religious and cultural differences. For hundreds of years, and especially during tough economic times, Jews had been denied certain jobs, had been forced to live in certain sections of town, and had been victims of violence and bullying. Even though many Jews assimilated—blended into mainstream society—they were still often thought of as

different. With the emergence of “race science” in the late 1800’s, older anti-Jewish traditions merged with new ideas that the Jews belonged to a separate and inferior race of people, resulting in antisemitism.

In the 1920s, the German press published books and articles portraying negative ideas about Jews. In this cartoon, published in 1929, the top square shows a German family leaving Germany because of economic conditions. In the bottom square, the shop signs all have Jewish names and the men are supposed to represent Jewish businessmen.

10.6 Comprehension & Connections

1. Who do you think the author of these cartoons was trying to reach? What did he want his audience to think and feel? Why?
2. Review what you learned about antisemitism in Lesson 8. What does it mean to describe antisemitism as a “convenient hatred”? What events and circumstances in Weimar Germany might some Germans turn to antisemitism to explain? Use evidence from the resources you have examined in this lesson to support your answer.
3. Statistics reveal that less than 1 percent of Germany’s population was of Jewish descent. In other parts of Europe the percentage ranged from 10-11 percent in Poland to less than 1/2 percent in such countries as Sweden, Denmark, Italy, and Yugoslavia. Although a few were rich, most barely eked out a living. Yet throughout Europe, people saw Jews as a powerful and dangerous people. How do you explain why people would believe antisemitic stereotypes?
4. Victoria Barnett argues, “The very intensity with which the Jews were attacked in times of political uncertainty revealed how deep and irrational antisemitism was.”⁸ What does she mean by that statement? Do you agree?
5. How does being an “outsider” affect one’s self-esteem? The way one sees himself or herself? How does the act of making others into outsiders affect the way one sees himself or herself? How does it affect the way a nation sees itself?

Resource 10.7:**Weimar Education: What Did You Learn in School Today?*****Creating Context***

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

facts
reason
expression

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

While World War I and the Weimar Republic brought on many changes to life in Germany, not every part of society changed. The nation's schools, in particular, changed very little since the days of the Kaiser. Albert Einstein, a student in Germany before the war, claimed that his teachers were more interested in producing "mental machines" than in educating human beings. Albert Speer, who later became a high-ranking Nazi official, recalled: "In spite of the Revolution, which had brought us the Weimar Republic, it was still impressed upon us that the distribution of power in society and the traditional authorities were part of the God-given order of things. We remained largely untouched by the currents stirring everywhere in the early twenties. In school, there would be no criticism of courses or subject matter, let alone the ruling powers of the state... It never occurred to us to doubt the order of things."⁹

A German named Klaus, who was a little younger than Speer, had a similar experience:

We were taught history as a series of facts. We had to learn dates, names, places of battles. Periods during which Germany won wars were emphasized. Periods during which Germany lost wars were sloughed over. We heard very little about World War I, except that the Versailles peace treaty was a disgrace, which someday, in some vague way, would be rectified. In my school, one of the best in Berlin, there were three courses in Greek and Roman history, four in medieval history, and not one in government. If we tried to relate ideas we got from literature or history to current events, our teachers changed the subject.

[...]

And there was always a great deal of homework in a school like mine, which prepared students for the university. At the end of our senior year, we were expected to take a detailed and exceedingly tough exam called the Abitur. How we did on the exam could determine our whole future. Again, the Abitur concentrated on our knowledge of facts, not on interpretation or on the expression of personal ideas. Looking back on it now, it also didn't seem to measure our ability to reason clearly... to draw conclusions, to interpret ideas.¹⁰

10.7 Comprehension & Connections

1. This reading describes what education was like in Weimar Germany. What facts from the reading seem most significant to you? *Go back and underline two or more sentences in the reading that are most striking to you.*
2. Speer speaks of learning the “God-given order of things.” What does the phrase mean? How important is it to learn? Have you learned it?
3. The emphasis in German education was on the wars that Germany won rather than on the ones it lost. The failure to discuss World War I was an important omission. What schools choose not to teach is often as important as what they do teach. How did the failure to teach World War I distort German history? How might failing to teach World War I strengthen nationalism in Germany? Do you think that omitting World War I was a betrayal of German students?
4. Every school teaches attitudes and values as well as facts and skills. What attitudes and values were Klaus’s teachers conveying when they tried to control what students learned? When they refused to discuss current events? What values are reflected in the emphasis on the *Abitur*, the exam that controlled so much of Klaus’s life?
5. Compare education in the United States today with education in the Weimar Republic. What values did German children learn in the 1920s? How well did their schools prepare them for life in a democracy? What values are stressed in American schools, including your own? How well prepared are you and your classmates for life in a democracy?
6. When Albert Einstein became a teacher, he encouraged his students to reflect, ask questions, and criticize ideas. Why is thinking essential to a scientist? How important is it to a citizen in a democracy? For what reasons?

Lesson 11: The Rise of the Nazi Party

Essential Questions:

- *How do choices and circumstances help some political parties gain power and cause others to lose power?*
- *What must citizens do and value in order for a democracy to thrive?*
- *How is democracy affected when citizens do not feel safe?*

Included Resources:

- 11.1 - Anger and Humiliation
- * 11.2 - The Nazi Party Platform
- 11.3 - Attracting Members, Intimidating Opponents

* = core resource

Introduction:

Lesson 10 gave students the opportunity to survey some of the various, disparate, and sometimes contradictory characteristics and trends of Weimar society. Now they are ready to learn about the birth of the Nazi Party during this time period, as well as its ebbs and flows during the Weimar years. It is important to remember that the Nazis were a part of the politics and culture of the Weimar Republic, but for most of those years they were not considered a major part. It is in this lesson that students can begin to analyze the choices and circumstances that led to rise of the Nazi party by the end of the 1920s.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What do you know about the Nazis and the Nazi Party? Where does this information come from? What questions do you have about the Nazis?
- What does it mean to be a citizen? What are the benefits of citizenship? What responsibilities come with being a citizen? Who should decide who belongs to a nation and who does not?
- Who do you know in popular culture, politics, or your personal life who seems to have a natural ability win people over to his or her way of thinking? What qualities enable that person to be so influential of others?
- What is bullying? Have you ever been bullied, witnessed it, or bullied someone else? What is the goal of bullying, threats, and intimidation? How does it affect the victim's willingness to stand up for his or her ideas?

Additional Readings from Holocaust and Human Behavior:

- "Order and Law," pp. 130-133
- "A Revolt in a Beer Hall," pp. 137-141
- "Creating the Enemy," pp. 141-144

Resource 11.1: Anger and Humiliation

Creating Context

The Nazi Party was born in 1920, in the aftermath of World War I, as a young Adolf Hitler joined, and then led, a tiny political party in the Weimar Republic. The Nazis played a small role in German society and politics for most of the 1920s, but it was Hitler's goal from the outset to create a new movement in Germany. This reading provides additional detail about the beginnings of the Nazi Party and its leader.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

bureaucrat	Bolshevik
civilian	movement
traitor	National Socialist German Workers Party/
paramilitary	NSDAP/ Nazi Party
Pole	<i>Mein Kampf</i>

German soldiers returned home from World War I experiencing a complex variety of feelings about the war and their country. Some were indeed burned out. Others returned home angry and bitter – not with the war itself but with the surrender and the treaty that followed it. Johann Herbert was among them. His son later said of him:

He had lost a leg on the battlefield, and he refused to try to use a wooden leg. Instead he rolled around the house in his wheelchair and stormed at the “bureaucrats and bloodsuckers” who had brought Germany into disgrace. He described the leaders of the civilian government as traitors, to whom we owed no loyalty or allegiance. When I brought home the black, red, and gold flag of the new republic (the old flag had been black, white, and red), he ripped it up, spit on it, slapped me in the face and told me never to bring that rag into the house again.¹⁰

Other veterans shared Herbert's anger. Some joined paramilitary groups like the Freikorps (Free Corps). These armed and often violent groups attempted not only to crush revolution at home but also to protect the nation's borders from the Poles and the Bolsheviks. Members were recruited by former army officers who ran ads that read, “What's the use of studies, and what's the good of business or a profession? Enemies within and beyond are burning down our house. Help us, in the spirit of comradeship and loyalty, to restore our power of national defense.”

Adolf Hitler was among those veterans who struggled to find a place for themselves in 1919. When the fighting began, Hitler was as enthusiastic about the war as most of the men of his generation. In *Mein Kampf*, his autobiography, he wrote that when he and the others in his unit returned from their first battle “even our step had changed. Seventeen year-old boys now looked

like men.” The war gave those young men a sense of purpose and a way of distinguishing themselves.

Hitler, in particular, wanted to distinguish himself. Born in 1889 in a small Austrian town, he was one of six children, four of whom died in childhood. His father died when he was fourteen and he lost his mother a few years later. By then Hitler had left school with little more than an eighth-grade education and dreams of becoming an artist.

In 1907, Hitler moved to Vienna in hopes of winning a place at the Academy of Fine Arts. His failure to do so shattered his early views of the world. So did his mother’s death. He was also bewildered by life in a large sophisticated city that was home to people of many nationalities. In 1913, he moved to Munich, Germany, probably to escape a military service that would have required that he fight in a multinational army. In *Mein Kampf*, he noted that the longer he lived in Vienna “the more my hatred grew for the foreign mixture of peoples which had begun to corrode the old site of Germany culture.” Munich was, in his view, a more “German” city.

When the war began, Hitler was a drifter struggling to find his place in the world. When the war was over, that struggle continued but now it had a focus. In his autobiography, he recalls, “In the days that followed [the surrender] my own fate became known to me... I resolved to go into politics.” He was not alone. In the 1920s, many angry veterans joined political parties and clubs that plotted the takeover of the government. In fact, the army hired Hitler to spy on one of those groups, the German Workers’ party. Instead, he became a member.

What attracted him to that particular party? He explains, “This ridiculous little makeshift [band] with its handful of members, seemed to offer one distinct advantage: it had not yet frozen into organization. Thus there were unlimited opportunities for individual activity.” He set out to transform the group into something more than a political party in the ordinary sense. He wanted to create a “movement.” He had no intention of being “one of the nameless millions who live and die by the whim of chance.” He vowed to control his own destiny and the destiny of Germany.

By February 1920, the tiny party had a new name, the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei – NSDAP or Nazi, for short). The Nazi Party was unknown to many Germans in 1920. It was one of more than 30 political parties that competed for voters during the Weimar years.

11.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. Make an identity chart for a member of the Freikorps. Also make charts for Johann Herbert and Hitler. Use direct quotations and other evidence from the reading to complete your charts. How are the three alike? What differences do you notice?
2. According to the reading, who were the Germans’ frustrations directed towards? Why?

3. In 1920s Germany, numerous paramilitary groups recruited thousands of former soldiers and young people to join their ranks. These groups, many of which represented political parties, brawled frequently on the streets of German cities. What do these violent clashes say about the strength of the Weimar Republic? What affects might organized violence have on the possibility of democracy?
4. What type of movement did Hitler want to create? Who did he envision being a part of it? Use evidence from the reading to support your answers.
5. Was Hitler a *visionary*? If so, what was his vision and how do you think he would get others to accept it? Was he dogmatic? That is, did he believe that he alone had the truth? If so, what was the dogma he preached?
6. Drawing on what you know about life in the Weimar Republic, predict who you think Hitler will initially try to attract to the Nazi Party? What strategies do you think he will use to appeal to his audience?
7. What questions do you have about the events described in this reading? Write them down in your journal so that you remember them as you learn more about the Nazi Party in future lessons.

Using Resource 11.1

Activating Prior Knowledge

In this lesson students are introduced to the terms “Nazi” and “Nazi party.” From prior studies and popular culture, many students have some knowledge about the Nazis. Some of it may be true, and some may not. You can begin this lesson by asking students to make a list of what they know about the Nazis. Then they can place a “1” by the items they strongly believe are correct, “2” by the items they are pretty sure are accurate and “3” by any items that they are slightly unsure about. Students can revise this list throughout the case study portion of this course.

Two Column Notetaking for Comprehension

For readings such as this that are relatively dense with information, it may be helpful for students to use a [two column notetaking](#) strategy. In their journals, students record the name of the reading and then create two columns: (1) “Notes from the text” and (2) “My response.” As students read, they can record words or phrases that are significant in the first column, then add a question, connection, or visual symbol (to help them remember) next to each entry in the second column. Students can then use these notes during a class discussion and to ask clarifying questions.

Video - The Nazis: Warning From History, Episode One: “Helped into Power”

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (approximately the first 20 minutes) of this episode provide visual imagery and commentary on the first years of the Weimar Republic. This covers the devastation of the war, the Treaty of Versailles, hyperinflation, riots in the street, and other issues. The clip provides a good snapshot of the country that German World War I veterans returned to. Students can take notes on key ideas and record questions that the film raises for them.

**Resource 11.2:
The Nazi Party Platform*****Creating Context***

By 1920, the Nazi's released a new platform to state the principles and goals for which the party stood. The platform did not make headlines, because the Nazis were just one of many small political groups in the Weimar Republic at the time. An excerpt of the platform is below. You will learn about two more Weimar political parties, and read their platforms, in the next lesson.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this resource:

political platform
self-determination
aliens

science of citizenship
extremist

Nazi Party Platform (excerpt)

1. A union of all Germans to form a great Germany on the basis of the right to self-determination of peoples.
2. Abolition of the Treaty of Versailles.
3. Land and territory (colonies) for our surplus population.
4. German blood as a requirement for German citizenship. No Jew can be a member of the nation.
5. Non-citizens can live in Germany only as foreigners, subject to the law of aliens.
6. Only citizen can vote or hold public office.
7. The state insures that every citizen live decently and earn his livelihood. If it is impossible to provide food for the whole population, then aliens must be expelled.
8. No further immigration of non-Germans. Any non-German who entered Germany after August 2, 1914, shall leave immediately.
9. A thorough reconstruction of our national system of education. The science of citizenship shall be taught from the beginning.

10. All newspapers must be published in the German language by German citizens and owners.

11.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Use the reading to answer the following comprehension questions:
 - How do Nazis define a German citizen? Who do they believe should enjoy the rights of German citizenship?
 - Which groups of people might be stripped of their citizenship if Nazis were in control?
 - How will Nazis help Germans put food on the table for their families?
 - What do Nazis believe about the Versailles Treaty?
 - What do the Nazis believe about race?
2. The Nazi platform notes that education will teach the “science of citizenship.” What is the significance of using this phrase instead of simply referring to “citizenship”?
3. How do the Nazis link nationalism and race in their platform? Does this connection make sense to you? Why or why not? Do you think people today connect national identity and race?
4. Some documents have to be studied carefully. The Nazi program is one of those documents. Divide into groups and focus on two or three points. As you study them, consider these questions:
 - What is the aim of this particular point? What key phrases provide clues to its meaning?
 - To whom will this particular point appeal? Why?
 - If the word *American* were substituted for the term *German*, would your opinion of any point change? Which point or points?
 - Do you think that any of these ideas would be acceptable to people today? If so, which one or ones?
5. To many people in the 1920s, the Nazi platform did not seem to be the work of an extremist group. What parts of the document may have seemed most reasonable?
6. Why might some people have found parts of the Nazi program appealing and overlooked the disturbing parts? What are the risks of doing this?

Using Resource 11.2

Explain the Purpose of a Party Platform

Ask students to explain what they think the purpose of a party platform is. Who writes a party platform? Who is the audience? Why is it written?

Reading and Analyzing the Platform

Students can read the platform individually or in small groups. They might be assigned sections to present to the class. To reinforce understanding, students can present a poster with their assigned statements. On each poster, they can write the statements in their own words and include a visual to represent the main ideas.

Students can also use *Handout 11.2a* (below) to guide their analysis of the platform. This handout can also be used as an assessment tool at the end of this lesson.

The full text of the 25-point Nazi program can be found [here](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/nsdappro.asp).
(<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/nsdappro.asp>)

Connecting to the Concept of *Race*

As you debrief students' analysis of the Nazi Party platform, the most important idea for students to come away with is how the Nazis defined German citizenship: they believed only those people who could prove that they belonged to the Aryan race (had "German blood") should enjoy the rights of citizens.

It is essential at this point to connect these Nazi beliefs to what students have learned earlier in this course about the concept of *race*. The Nazi Platform, notably, links race and nationalism, thus defining some races as outside of Germany's universe of obligation.

Connecting to the Concept of *Universe of Obligation*

Encourage students to make connections between the Nazi Party Platform and the concept *universe of obligation*. One way to reinforce students' understanding of universe of obligation is to have them draw a circle in their journals (or use *Handout 11.2b*). Inside the circle, ask students to describe the groups that the Nazis believed should be included in the definition of German citizen. Outside of the circle, ask students to describe the groups that the Nazis believed should be excluded from German citizenship. Post this circle chart on the wall. Students can refer to it throughout the unit as they study the consequences of Germany's universe of obligation under the Nazis.

Making predictions: The Nazi Party platform was written in 1920 when Germany was a young democracy. In 1920, the Nazi Party was very small and did not have any representation in the Reichstag, the German parliament. Twelve years later, in 1932, the Nazis had more seats in parliament than any other party; they had become the most powerful political party in Germany. Share these ideas with students and then ask them to predict how they think the Nazis were able to gain power. What may have happened from 1920-1932 to account for the Nazis' rising popularity?

Handout 11.2a**What did the Nazis believe?**

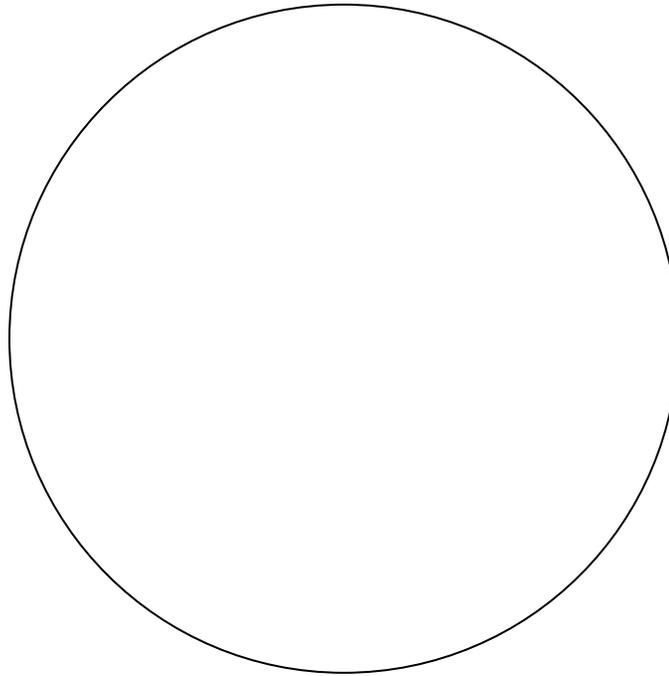
Directions: Refer to the Nazi Party platform to answer true or false for the following statements about the Nazis' core beliefs. In the "Evidence" column, write the number of the statement(s) from the Nazi Party Platform that helped you answer the question.

Statement	True or False	Evidence
1. The Nazis believed that only people who could prove they had "German blood" could be citizens.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
2. The Nazis believed that Germans should not be blamed for World War I and should not have to pay money or give land to the winners of the war.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
3. The Nazis believed that anybody living in Germany should have the same rights as German citizens.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
4. The Nazis believed that schools should teach students "the science of citizenship," explaining how some people have German blood and other people, like Jews, do not.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
5. The Nazis believed that Jews who had been living in Germany for hundreds of years and fought in wars for Germany have "German blood."	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
6. The Nazis believed that Germany should be able to get more land for its growing population.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
7. The Nazis believed that anyone should be able to publish a newspaper in Germany.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
8. The Nazis believed that recent non-German immigrants are welcome in Germany.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
9. The Nazis believed that all German citizens have the right to a job and food for their family.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
10. The Nazis believed that if the country could not provide enough jobs and food for its own citizens, then immigrants must leave so that they do not take jobs and food away from German citizens.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
11. The Nazis believed that anyone living in Germany could vote and run for office.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	
12. The Nazis believed that anyone living in Germany who does not have German blood should follow special laws for non-citizens.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	

Handout 11.2b

**Nazi Beliefs About Citizenship:
Who is included? Who is excluded?**

Directions: According to the Nazi Party platform, who is included in the Nazis' definition of the German citizen? Write adjectives or nouns describing those groups in the center of the circle. Who is not included in the Nazis' definition of the German citizen? Write adjectives or nouns describing those groups outside of the circle.



Resource 11.3: Attracting Members, Intimidating Opponents

Creating Context

During the Weimar years, the personal charisma of Adolf Hitler helped the Nazis attract new members. At the same time, the Nazis used violence and intimidation to stifle and silence those who challenged their ideas or protested their rallies. Like other political parties in Weimar Germany, the Nazis formed their own paramilitary group. Dressed in brown military-style uniforms, the SA (also referred to as storm troopers or brownshirts) regularly brawled with rival political groups on the streets of Germany. The first-hand accounts in this reading describe both Hitler's charismatic presence and the intimidating threats of violence by the SA.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

charisma
unconditional

A woman named Anna describes her experience listening to one of Hitler's speeches:

You cannot imagine how silent it becomes as soon as this man speaks; it is as if all of the thousand listeners are no longer able to breathe. When he angrily condemns the deeds of those who have ruled our people since the revolution and those who now prevent him and his followers from settling accounts with those November bigwigs, cheers ring through the hall for minutes on end. There is no silence until he waves his hands repeatedly to indicate that he wants to continue speaking... Adolf Hitler is so firmly convinced of the correctness of his nationalistic views that he automatically communicates this conviction to his listeners. God grant that, as trailbreaker to better times, he will be able to gather many more racial comrades under the Swastika. After all, every class is represented. Workers and lower-ranking civil servants, officers and storm troopers, students and old pensioners – all sit together, and all are in agreement with the great concept embodied in the person of Adolf Hitler. It is often said that where eleven Germans come together, ten political parties are represented. Here, however, I have never heard anyone say that Hitler should do this, or that he should have done that. Sometimes it almost seems to me as if Hitler used a magic charm in order to win the unconditional confidence of old and young alike.

James Luther Adams, an American, traveled to Germany in 1927 to study at the University of Heidelberg. While visiting Nuremberg, he attended a Nazi rally. He later recalled:

[Perhaps] I went there because I had read the Nazis were having a big rally and it was said that about 150,000 youth came for this particular rally in Nuremberg and it was claimed that none of them rode for one step in order to show German vigor and show that

they were genuine Germans – echt Deutsch. Each youth was to walk from whatever part of Germany he lived to Nuremberg for this conference and there was a rally and there was a parade that lasted about three or four hours. It was on a Sunday and singing Nazi songs and carrying banners and the crowds were very dense and here I was standing right in the front as these Nazis were marching by. These youth goose-stepping and I asked a couple of people standing with me, knowing what the answer should be. I asked, “Well what’s the meaning of the swastika?” And these fellows gave me a typical Nazi answer about superiority of the German race and the necessity to purify Germany of Jewish blood and [in] the course of the conversation I asked them where are they [the Jews] going to go? “Well, we will put them out. They can find out where they’re going to go.”

The conversation became a little more intense and we were beginning to raise our voices. At this moment I was seized from behind. I, being a callow theological student, was inadequate for the situation, I couldn’t get away. A fellow had seized me by both elbows from behind and pulled me out. I tried to get away and nobody paid any attention to me and I couldn’t get away from him. He pushed me through that dense crowd and down the street into a side street and from there up into a dead-end alley marching me all the way. Nobody was interested in stopping him or anything and we got up to the end of the dead-end alley... and I didn’t know, of course, what was going to happen to me. Was he going to beat me up because of what I had been saying and he wheeled me around and shouted at me in German, “You damn fool, don’t you know that in Germany today you keep your mouth shut or you’ll get your head bashed in.” Well, I thought that was the next item on the agenda from his point of view and then he changed mood and smiled and he said, “You know what I have done. I’ve saved you from getting beaten up. They were not going to continue arguing with you. You were going to be lying flat on the pavement and I saw that coming and I grabbed you.

11.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. The word *charisma* is defined as a quality attributed to those who have an exceptional ability to win the devotion of large numbers of people. What qualities made Hitler a charismatic leader? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. According to Anna’s account, what did Hitler do during his speech that might have won over the “unconditional confidence” of those in the audience?
3. Anna speaks of the clarity of Hitler’s viewpoint. How did that clarity contribute to his ability to attract followers? How did the fact that he seemed so sure of himself affect his audiences? Did Hitler’s ideas on “race” contribute to his charisma?
4. What leaders today do people consider charismatic? Do these leaders express

their ideas clearly? Are they self-confident? What other qualities do they possess?

5. Did Adams's story surprise you? What did you think was going to happen when he was picked up and carried away? Why do you think an anti-Nazi attended a Nazi rally? Did it take courage for him to go?
6. What does Adams's story tell you about the political climate in Germany in the late 1920s? How significant is this story?
7. First-hand testimonies provide essential information about periods in history, but they do not provide the entire story. What questions do Anna's and Adams's stories raise for you? What types of resources might help you answer these questions?

Using Resource 11.3

Reflection & Discussion

The first-hand accounts in this reading lend themselves to rich class discussion. Use the Comprehension & Connections questions to start the discussion. Consider using one of a variety of effective discussion strategies, depending on the size and the needs of your particular class. [Think-Pair-Share](#), [Fishbowl](#), and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) might be all strategies that could work well discussing this reading.

Video Options

Your discussion of charisma may be aided by showing video of Hitler and other charismatic leaders. Video clips of Hitler speaking in public are easy to find on YouTube. Also, *The Democrat & The Dictator* is a video that compares and contrasts the styles and autobiographies of Hitler and Franklin Roosevelt. By viewing any number of short clips from this documentary showing both leaders speaking and interacting with the public, students will be able to make observations about how charisma can take many forms. Then, you can discuss what Germans may have found particularly charismatic about Hitler. Much of this video depicts events in the 1930s, after the Nazis are in power in Germany. However, it focuses mainly on style and autobiography of the two leaders, so it is appropriate to use at this point in the curriculum.

Lesson 12: Competing Political Parties

Essential Questions:

- *What must citizens do and value in order for a democracy to thrive?*
- *How do choices and circumstances help some political parties gain power and cause others to lose power?*
- *How do countries negotiate differences of values and culture among citizens?*

Included Resources:

* 12.1 – The 1932 Election

* 12.2 – Hitler In Power

* = core resource

Introduction:

Now that students have learned about the Nazi Party in the 1920s, they can situate the party in the political spectrum of the Weimar Republic. While more than 30 parties competed for votes in the Weimar Republic, this lesson focuses on two of the Nazis' most significant competitors, the Social Democrats and the Communists. The Social Democrats were the most popular political party throughout most of the Weimar years, and its members fully supported the existence of the republic itself. Historian Paul Bookbinder calls the Social Democrats the "bulwark of the Weimar Republic." The Communist Party, on the other hand, was committed to the overthrow of the republic. Inspired by the revolution in Russia, and connected to the leaders of the Russian Communist Party, the KPD competed with the Nazis from the opposite end of the political spectrum. Like the Nazis, the Communists' popularity increased at times when the Weimar economy was most uncertain.

In this lesson, students will compare and contrast the platforms of the Social Democrats and Communists with each other as well as with the Nazi platform. They will then consider the profiles of a variety of citizens from the Weimar Republic, and hypothesize which party each person would have found most attractive. Finally, the students will analyze Reichstag election results between 1919 and 1933, and they will learn about the circumstances that led President Hindenburg to appoint Hitler as chancellor.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- How would you decide who to vote for in an election? What factors would you consider? Which are most important?
- What does it mean to belong to a political party? Would you join or support a party if it held positions you do not agree with? To what extent does membership in a political party define one's identity?

- Describe a time you had to choose whether or not to compromise on an issue or situation that was important to you. What were you asked to give up? What would you gain in return? What decision did you make?

Resource 12.1: The 1932 Election

Creating Context

During the Weimar years, over thirty political parties competed for German voters. Because votes were spread across so many parties, no party ever won a majority of the seats in the Reichstag. This made it necessary for multiple parties to ally themselves by forming a coalition to govern the country. Although they never received a majority of the votes, the Social Democratic Party received the most votes of any party in each election until 1932. As a result, they were often a leader in the coalitions that controlled the Reichstag. As the German economy fell apart after 1929, however, the Communist Party and the Nazi Party gained fast on the Social Democrats. After 1930, these three parties were the most popular in Germany.

In Resource 11.2, you analyzed the Nazi Party platform. At the end of this reading, you will have the opportunity to read and analyze the platforms of the Social Democrats and the Communists.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

reparation	incumbent
League of Nations	public works
depression	unemployment compensation
industrialist	expenditure
liberal	land reform
pacifist	capitalist
egalitarian	radical

By 1928, Germany had recovered from the war and business was booming, partly because German leaders had persuaded the Allies to lower reparations payments. Furthermore, Germany was no longer considered an “outlaw” nation. It was now a welcomed member of the League of Nations. As a result, fewer Germans seemed interested in Hitler’s ideas. In the 1928 elections, the Nazis received only about 2 percent of the vote. Other conservative parties, like the People’s Party, did far better. So did the Communists (KPD).

Then in 1929, a worldwide depression began. A depression is a time when economic activity slows as more and more businesses decrease production and lay off workers. Germany felt the effects of the depression almost immediately. Until 1929, loans from the United States helped fuel German recovery, but now hard-hit American banks began to call in those loans. As a result, many large German companies were forced to close their doors. Like leaders everywhere, those in Germany looked for ways to end the depression. And like other leaders in 1929, they failed. The chancellor of the Weimar Republic in 1929 was Hermann Mueller, a Social Democrat. By 1930, he and his party (SPD) were in trouble.

Heinrich Brüning of the Catholic Center Party replaced Müller as chancellor, but he, too, failed to solve the economic problems. Even though he suspended the Constitution by invoking Article 48, Brüning could not end the depression. Only the most extreme political parties seemed to have clear solutions to the crisis. The Communists won votes by blaming everything on wealthy industrialists. To end the depression, they argued, Germany had to replace the present system with a government like the one in Russia. The Nazis, on the other hand, blamed the Jews, Communists, liberals, and pacifists. And they, too, won support. Many saw the Nazis as an attractive alternative to democracy and communism. Among them were wealthy industrialists alarmed by the growth of the Communist party. They liked the Nazis' message; it was patriotic, upbeat, and energetic.

In 1932, Hitler ran for president against a Communist candidate and Hindenburg, the incumbent president. In order to do so, Hitler finally became a German citizen. The election was a spirited one, in which 84 percent of all eligible voters cast ballots. Those voters had to decide which party offered the best solution to the nation's problems. The decision was not an easy one. An observer noted that as voters went to the polls, each saw the war behind him, "in front of him social ruin, to his left he is being pulled by the Communists, to his right by the Nationalists, and all around him there is not a trace of honesty and rationality, and all his good instincts are being distorted into hatred."

To appreciate those choices, compare the platforms of the Social Democratic party (SPD) and the Communist Party (KPD) with that of the Nazis (Resource 11.2).

Social Democratic Party (SPD)

From 1919 to 1932, the Social Democratic Party was the party that received the most votes in national elections and had the largest legislative delegation. This party supported the Weimar Republic, wanting to change it but not do away with it altogether. The SPD was committed to further reform of Weimar society and hoped to eventually make the institutions and economy of Weimar more egalitarian. It was the most active opponent of antisemitism during the Weimar years.

Social Democratic Party Platform

1. We are committed to maintaining the Republic and a policy that will allow Germany to take its rightful place among the free governments of Europe.
2. We will support the present German Republic so that freedom, democracy, and justice will live in the hearts of our German countrymen.
3. We will honor all of Germany's obligations, political and financial, in order that Germany's honor and respect will not be decreased in the eyes of the world.
4. We plan to create more jobs by undertaking an extensive program of public works.
5. We will provide unemployment compensation for up to six months.
6. We will cut government expenditures to lower taxes.

7. We believe in the right of those who disagree with the party to speak and write on those issues without interference.

Communist Party (KPD)

The German Communist Party (KPD) was founded at the end of December 1918 in the midst of revolutionary chaos. Its earliest members came from the ranks of a radical group that had been crushed by the army under orders from a transitional government dominated by Social Democrats. Drawing on a membership of more radical workers and a small group of radical intellectuals, the party was fundamentally opposed to the existence of the Weimar Republic. The Communists were in favor of a government that would control all aspects of the economy until it was possible to have a classless society where all goods were shared by the community. The party opposed antisemitism and had Jews among its leaders.

Communist Party (KPD) Platform

We are committed to the overthrow of the presently existing, oppressive Republic and all of its economic and social institutions. We favor:

1. The abolition of private property.
2. The establishment of land reform programs, so that the government can take over the land and distribute it for the common good.
3. Government ownership of all industrial productive forces, so that they can be run for the benefit of the people rather than the capitalists.
4. A foreign policy that regards the Soviet Union as an ally against capitalism.

To the German people: The cause of your misery is the fact that French, British, and American capitalists are exploiting German workers to get rich themselves. Germans, unite to get rid of this terrible burden.

12.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. This reading explains significant information about politics in Germany in the late 1920s and early 1930s. *Briefly summarize the events that led up to the 1932 election.* Record your summary in your journal for future reference.
2. Which of the political parties seems most aggressive? What evidence in the platforms supports that characterization?
3. Was the Weimar Republic a success in 1928? If so, by whose standards? How do people measure the success of a nation and its government?
4. Chancellor Heinrich Brüning invoked Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution to

give him more power and flexibility to respond to the depression. What were the advantages of invoking Article 48? What were the dangers?

5. How was the role of scapegoating similar or different between the Nazi and Communist parties? Who did each party blame for the depression? What solutions did each party propose?
6. The reasons for the success or failure of a nation's economy are usually enormously complicated, yet extremist parties such as the Nazis and the Communists tend to offer simple solutions to fix economic hard times. Why do you think people often look for simple answers to complex problems? Why do they find ambiguity frightening? Record your ideas in your journal so that you can refer to them later.
7. Historians note a decrease in tolerance and an increase in the number of hate groups during periods of depression and other forms of economic instability. How do you account for the decrease in tolerance? The rise in the number of hate groups? Are their observations as true today as they were in the past?
8. Review the characteristics of a successful democracy that you brainstormed with your classmates before exploring Resource 9.5. Which of those characteristics existed in Weimar Germany? Which seemed to be missing?
9. What questions do you have about the events described in this reading? Write them down in your journal so that you remember them as you learn more about the Nazi Party in future lessons.

Using Resource 12.1

Strategies for Comprehension

This reading is dense with important information. Some classes will need extra time and support to fully comprehend the events and ideas described in this reading. All students will benefit from following a reading strategy that prompts them to pause frequently to monitor their own comprehension and respond to the text. Consider using the **Double Entry Notetaking** (described in *Using Resource 11.1*) or the **Say Something** (described in *Using Resource 10.1*) strategies.

Using Weimar Biographies to Analyze Voting Choices

Handout 12.1 includes short fictional, biographical sketches, representing typical experiences of German citizens during the Weimar Republic. For this activity, you can divide the class into groups of three or four, and assign one German citizen to each of the groups. Have them create [identity charts](#) for this individual. Encourage them to use

direct quotations and specific evidence from the biographies to complete their charts.

After they learn more about the Weimar Republic, groups should discuss how they think this individual might have voted in the 1932 election. Would he or she have been most likely to vote for the Social Democrats, the Communists, or the Nazis? Each group member should be prepared to explain the factors that might have influenced the individual's voting decision.

Groups can present their answer, with an explanation supported by evidence, to the rest of the class. Many teachers structure these presentations as a [café conversation](#) where students representing each biography meet at a table and discuss the upcoming election. To prepare students for a group presentation or café conversation, you can have them complete *Handout 12.2*.

Discussion and Analysis

The Comprehension and Connections questions can form the basis of a meaningful discussion about how people respond to crisis and uncertainty. The [Fishbowl](#) discussion strategy provides an effective format to have a class discussion using these questions.

Extension: Conducting Interviews about Voting Decisions

For homework at any point during this activity, students can ask someone in their family or community who has voted in a national election about the factors that influenced their choice at the ballot box. Students may find that the same factors that influenced voters during the Weimar Republic (e.g., the economy, fear, cultural issues. . .) also shape the voting decisions of people today. A follow-up discussion might have students predict how the current economic, political and social context might influence voting decisions in an upcoming election.

Handout 12.1:**Weimar Republic Biographies**

Excerpt from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*, pp. 148-150

Hermann Struts

Hermann Struts, a lieutenant in the German army, fought bravely during the war. He comes from a long line of army officers and is himself a graduate of the German military academy. Struts has always taken pride in the army's able defense of the nation and its strong leadership. Yet Struts is bitter about the fact that he has not had a promotion in over ten years. Few soldiers have, mainly because the Treaty of Versailles limited the size of the German army. In the old army, Struts would have been at least a captain by now and possibly a major. The treaty, he argues, has harmed not only Germany's honor but also his own honor as a soldier. He feels that if the government had refused to sign the treaty and allowed the army to fight, both he and Germany would be better off.

Otto Hauptmann

Otto Hauptmann works in a factory in Berlin. Although his trade union has actively worked for better conditions and higher wages, it has not made many gains. Hauptmann blames their lack of success on the 1923 inflation and the current depression. He believes that the union would be more successful if the economy were more stable. Still, it is the union that has kept him employed. At a time when many of his friends have been laid off, his union persuaded the owners of his factory to keep men with seniority.

Karl Schmidt

Karl Schmidt is an employed worker who lives in the rich steel-producing Ruhr Valley. Like so many in the Ruhr, he lost his job because of the depression. Yet Schmidt notes that the owners of the steel mills still live in big houses and drive expensive cars. Why are they protected from the depression while their former employees suffer? Although the government does provide unemployment compensation, the money is barely enough to support Schmidt, his wife, and their two children. Yet the government claims that it cannot afford to continue even these payments much longer. Schmidt feels that the government would be in a stronger position to help people if it cut off all reparations.

Elisabeth von Kohler

Elisabeth von Kohler, a prominent attorney who attended the University of Bonn, has a strong sense of German tradition. She believes that her people's contributions to Western civilization have been ignored. Kohler would like to see the republic lead a democratic Europe. She disapproves of the methods the Weimar Republic often uses to repress extremist parties. Her sense of justice is even more outraged by the way the victors of World War I, particularly France, view Germany. She would like to prove to the world that the Germans are indeed a great race. She is proud to be an attorney and a German woman in the Weimar Republic.

Handout 12.1 - Weimar Republic Biographies

Gerda Munchen

Gerda Munchen is the owner of a small Munich grocery store started by her parents. For years, her parents saved to send her to the university. But Munchen chose not to go and the money stayed in the bank. In 1923, she had planned to use the money to pay for her children's education. But that year inflation hit Germany. Just before her older daughter was to leave for the university, the bank informed the family that its savings were worthless. This was a blow to Munchen, but even more of a blow to her daughter, whose future hung in the balance. Munchen does not think she will ever regain her savings. With so many people out of work, sales are down sharply. And Munchen's small grocery is having a tough time competing with the large chain stores. They can offer far lower prices. She and her children question a system that has made life so difficult for hardworking people.

Albert Benjamin

Albert Benjamin is a professor of mathematics at the University of Berlin. While his grandparents and other relatives are observant Jews, Benjamin saw himself as a secular Jew. He is very proud of his German heritage, and even volunteered to serve in the German Army during World War I. After the war, Benjamin married Eva Steiner. Eva is Protestant and they are raising their three children as Christians. Benjamin is concerned because prices have gone up while his salary as a professor has not. His family can no longer afford vacations and special presents for the children. His wife worries that if the economic problems continue, the family might have to cut back on spending for food.

Eric von Ronheim

Eric von Ronheim, the head of a Frankfurt textile (fabric) factory, is very concerned about the depression. Sales are down and so are profits. If only Germany had not been treated so ruthlessly at Versailles, he argues, the nation would be far better off. Instead the government has had to impose heavy taxes to pay reparations to its former enemies. As a result, Germans are overtaxed with little money to spend on textiles and other consumer goods. The worldwide depression has made matters worse by making it difficult to sell German products to other countries. Even if the depression were over, Ronheim does not think taxes would come down because of reparation payments.

Handout 12.2:
1932 Election - Presentation Preparation

Using your understanding of conditions during the Weimar Republic and your understanding of the political party platforms of the Nazis, Social Democrats, and Communists, consider which political party might have been most appealing to the citizen you have been assigned.

 (fill in name of your assigned German citizen)

<p>Reasons why the Social Democrats might appeal this Weimar Citizen:</p>	<p>Reasons why the Social Democrats might <u>not</u> appeal this Weimar Citizen:</p>
<p>Reasons why the Communists might appeal this Weimar Citizen:</p>	<p>Reasons why the Communists might <u>not</u> appeal this Weimar Citizen:</p>
<p>Reasons why the Nazis might appeal this Weimar Citizen:</p>	<p>Reasons why the Nazis might <u>not</u> appeal this Weimar Citizen:</p>

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Based on the information in this chart, which party do you think this Weimar citizens is most likely to vote for in the July 1932 election?

Explain your answer:

Resource 12.2: Hitler in Power

Creating Context

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

Lebensraum

In the July 1932 election, the Nazis won 37% of the seats in the Reichstag - more than any other political party. At the same time, Hitler lost his bid for the presidency. The incumbent Paul von Hindenburg won. Still, having received the most votes, the Nazi Party was the most powerful political party in Germany.

Weimar Republic Reichstag Election Results, 1928-1932

Party	1928	1930	July 1932	Nov. 1932
Social Democrat	153	143	133	121
Center	62	68	75	70
Communist	54	77	89	100
Nazi	12	107	230	196
People's	45	30	7	11

After the election, Hindenburg promptly chose a new chancellor, because the country was still operating under Article 48 of the German constitution. Hindenburg named Franz von Papen, a close friend, to the post. Papen ran the country for the rest of the year. When he, too, failed to end the depression, yet another of Hindenburg's friends, General Kurt von Schleicher, took over. He too was unable to bring about a recovery.

Schleicher, Papen, and Hindenburg's other advisers were all conservatives who represented wealthy landowners, industrialists, and other powerful people. They had little popular support. So in January of 1933, they decided to make a deal with Hitler. He had the popularity they lacked and they had the power he needed. They also agreed on a number of points, including opposition to Communism, hostility to the republic and the need for *Lebensraum* (additional "living space," or territory, for the "true" German people).

Hindenburg's advisors convinced themselves that they could control Hitler. They also believed that he would be less "wild" once he was in power. And they were certain that he too would fail to end the depression. And when he failed, they would step in to save the nation. Surprisingly, many Communists also supported the move. Unlike the conservatives, they did not expect Hitler to become more responsible. Instead they believed he would ruin Germany – a good thing from their point of view. Then the real revolution could begin and they would be able to take over. Hitler fooled them all.

12.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. The Nazis were a little known political party in Germany in 1920, but by July 1932 they were the most popular party in the country. How did this happen? What strategies did the Nazis use to gain popularity? What circumstances, while beyond their control, were they able to take advantage of? How did the Nazis use their popularity to their advantage?
2. In the 1932 election, the Nazis won the greatest share of the vote, but they did not win a majority. In fact, the Nazis never won a majority of the vote in Germany. How significant is this fact?
3. Study the chart above, *Weimar Republic Reichstag Election Results, 1928-1932*. Which parties gained the most seats? Why? How do you think that the individual you learned about from *Handout 12.1* reacted to Hitler's rise to power?
4. Explain to a partner the reasoning of Hindenburg and his advisors when they decided to appoint Hitler as chancellor. *If you have trouble, read the reading again and underline any parts that you have questions about.* Why do you think many people underestimated Hitler? Why do you think they failed to see him as a threat?
5. What could have been done in the early 1930s that might have prevented the Nazis from gaining so much power?
8. What questions do you have about the events described in this reading? Record them in your journal so that you can refer to them as you learn more about the 1932 election in class.

Using Resource 12.2

Analyzing Elections Results

The chart of election results in this reading is ripe for analysis and discussion. You might guide your students to analyze this data in two steps. First, ask them to simply observe the data, recording any notable trends and changes that they see. After compiling a list of observations about the data, then ask students to apply what they have learned throughout Section 4 to explain their observations. Return to the idea of *historical context* that you introduced at the beginning of the section. How does the data in the chart reflect events and trends that they have learned about as they have studied the historical context of the Weimar Republic?

Extension: Discussing Strategy and Compromise

The decision to appoint Hitler to the chancellorship was part of a political calculation by Hindenburg and his advisors. It is worth discussing the role of strategy and compromise in politics and government. You might ask students to look for a current events article about politicians either compromising on an issue or refusing to compromise. Do the students think the compromise is acceptable? Can they identify a broader strategy that the politicians involved are pursuing? What risks are they taking in agreeing to the compromise? How did their supporters react?

¹ Weimar module Why Study Weimar Germany

² Kylee Beers, *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 105-110.

³ Paul Bookbinder, *Weimar Germany* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 42-43.

⁴ Koppel S. Pinson, *Modern Germany: It's History and Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 398.

⁵ Paul Bookbinder, FH Weimar module Why Study Weimar Germany

⁶ George Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big NO*, trans. L.S. Dorin (Dial, 1946), 63.

⁷ Quoted in Reinhold Heller, *Art in Germany, 1909-1936: From Expressionism to Resistance* (Prestel, 1991), 163.

⁸ Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 124.

⁹ Albert Speer, *Spandau* (Macmillan, 1976).

¹⁰ Ellen Switzer, *How Democracy Failed*, 62-63.

Section 5: The Nazis in Power

Essential Questions

- Who or what shapes the values of a society? What role do leaders play? What role do laws play? What about ordinary citizens?
- What factors make democracy strong? What factors make it vulnerable?
- What does it mean to be a citizen of a country? How do countries define who is a citizen and who isn't?

Lessons

Section 5 includes the following lessons:

- Lesson 13: From Democracy to Dictatorship
- Lesson 14: Targeting the Jews

Rationale

What choices are available to citizens in a democracy? What choices were available to citizens as the Nazis came to power and how did the range of those choices change as the decade of the 1930's proceeded? Were laws establishing discrimination accepted, or even embraced? Was there any resistance? In many German towns and cities, Jews and Germans lived together. Germans had Jewish teachers and Jewish doctors. They attended schools with Jews and had served in the military with them. Because of intermarriage, some German families had members who identified as Jews or were now being identified as Jewish by the Nazis. Were laws alone sufficient to turn neighbor against neighbor?

The previous section explored life in the Weimar Republic, including the birth and rise of the Nazi Party during the 1920's and early 1930's. In the last lesson of the section, students learned about both the elections that made the Nazi's the most powerful party in the Reichstag and Hitler's subsequent appointment as chancellor. With the power of these new leadership positions, the Nazis quickly set out to transform German society and destroy democracy.

This transformation was the product of choices made both by powerful leaders and by the citizens of Germany. The lessons in this section explore both sets of choices. Through timelines, readings, and primary source documents, students will closely examine the steps that the Nazis took to define German society and the individual identities of those who lived within it. These steps presented individual citizens with choices of their own. Would they resist or follow along? By exploring this pivotal period, students can begin to see that this history is as much about the choices made by the citizens of a country as it is a history of powerful leaders.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- Chapter 4 in the resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*.
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "[Law, Justice and the Holocaust](#)"

Lesson 13: From Democracy to Dictatorship

Essential Questions:

- *Who shapes the values of a society? What role do leaders play? How powerful are the choices made by individual citizens?*
- *What factors make democracy strong? What factors make it vulnerable?*
- *What is an oath? What is an oath's purpose?*
- *How do groups encourage loyalty, conformity, and obedience? What happens to those who resist the group?*

Included Readings:

- * 13.1 – Timeline: Germany's Transition From Democracy to Dictatorship
- * 13.2 – Pledging Allegiance
- * 13.3 – Do You Take the Oath?
- 13.4 – No Time To Think

* = core reading

Introduction:

In the previous section, students learned about life in the Weimar Republic and analyzed the 1932 election, which made the Nazis the most powerful political party in Germany and helped lead the way to Hitler's appointment as chancellor. At that point, democracy in Germany was on shaky ground. The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand how it took less than two years for Germany to transition from being a democracy, albeit a weak one, to being a dictatorship. The readings and materials provide the students the opportunity to learn about some of the specific events and details of this history while continuing to explore the themes of identity, membership, and choices.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What is the difference between a democratic leader and a dictator? How might your life be different if you lived in a dictatorship instead of a democracy?
- What are the values of your school community? Who shapes them? Administrators? Teachers? Students?
- Who shapes the values of a society? What roles do leaders play? What roles to individual citizens play?
- What does it mean to be loyal? Who or what would you pledge an oath of loyalty to? Explain your answer.
- Was Hitler's rise to power inevitable? What could have been done to prevent it from happening?
- Is democracy always vulnerable? What can be done to make democracy safer and stronger?

Additional Resources:

- Video - *The Nazis: A Warning From History*, Episode One: “Chaos and Consent”

Additional Readings from Holocaust and Human Behavior:

- “The Democrat and the Dictator,” pp. 155-58
- “Targeting the Communists,” pp. 162-63
- “Targeting the Jews,” pp. 165-66
- “Dismantling Democracy,” pp. 169-70
- “Killing Ideas,” pp. 179-80
- “Whenever Two or Three Are Gathered,” p. 182
- “One Nation! One God! One Reich! One Church!” pp. 186-88
- “Eliminating Opposition,” pp. 193-94

Reading 13.1:**Timeline: Germany's transition from democracy to dictatorship***Creating Context*

The Nazis went from having no formal power in 1920, to some power, to all of the formal political power in Germany in 1934. At the same time, citizens went from having the power to elect representatives, join a variety of political parties, and enjoy civil rights such as freedom of speech, to losing much of that power when Hitler became Führer. The timeline in this reading outlines many of the steps, both small and large, that the Nazis took to transform German government and society.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

democracy	constitution/article
dictatorship	veto
Reichstag	führer
chancellor	inevitability
totalitarianism	opportunism
president	

1919 — Weimar Constitution is adopted. The constitution creates separate executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government so that one group or person cannot hold all of the power. It also includes articles protecting civil liberties (freedoms) such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly (freedom to meet in public), and freedom of religion. The constitution also protects privacy so that individuals cannot be searched without the court's permission.

1919 — The constitution includes Article 48. This article suspends the constitution in times of emergency, allowing the president to make rules without the consent of the parliament and to suspend (put on hold) civil rights, like freedom of speech, in order to protect public safety. Many people thought this article was a good idea because there were so many political parties in Germany that sometimes it was difficult for them to agree enough to pass any laws. At times of crisis, like the inflation Germany suffered in 1923 or the depression in 1929, it was important for government to respond quickly and not be held from action by politicians who can not agree. Thus, many Germans thought it would be wise to have a clause in the constitution that would allow the president to take over and make quick decisions in times of emergency.

July 1932 — The Nazi Party wins 37% of the votes. For the first time, the Nazis are the largest and most powerful political party in Germany. Still, over half of the German citizens *do not* vote for the Nazis and they still do not have enough seats in the Reichstag (parliament) to be able to pass laws without getting additional votes from representatives from other political parties.

November 1932 — The Nazi Party wins 33% of the votes, giving them more seats in the Reichstag than any other political party.

January 1933 — German President Paul von Hindenburg understands that he will need the support of the Nazi Party to get any laws passed. As a result of the success of the Nazi Party in the elections, President Hindenburg appoints Hitler to the position of Chancellor—the head of parliament.

February 1, 1933 — Hitler proclaims the new government of Germany by speaking directly to the German people on the radio, not by speaking to members of parliament. He declares, “[The] new national government will consider it its first and supreme duty to restore our nation’s unity of will and spirit. . . . In place of turbulent instincts, the government will once again make national discipline our guide.” A parade is held in Hitler’s honor. *To learn more about Hitler’s first day as Chancellor, read “The Democrat and the Dictator,” pages 155-158 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

February 27, 1933 — The Reichstag (parliament) building is set on fire. Hitler quickly blames the communists, a rival political party.

February 28, 1933 — Using the fire as a justification, Hitler convinces President Hindenburg to invoke Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution in order to protect public safety.

February 28, 1933 — Hitler uses the emergency power of the president to issue two laws. He says the purpose of these laws was to protect public safety. The first law allows the government to search and confiscate private property. Government officials are now permitted to read mail and to take belongings from people’s homes. The other law allows him to arrest anyone belonging to rival political parties, especially communists. Because of Article 48 these laws do not need to be approved by the Reichstag. If a majority of the members of the Reichstag do not approve of a law, they still have the power to veto it. But, with many of his opposition jailed or scared to speak out, none of Hitler’s laws get vetoed.

March 11, 1933 — Hitler creates a new government department, the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. The purpose of this department is to spread Hitler’s ideas among the German public.

March 23, 1933 — Hitler opens a jail for people he thinks are plotting to overthrow the government, especially members of the Communist Party. These jails were called “concentration camps” because they *concentrated* a targeted or undesirable group of people in one place where they can be monitored.

March 23, 1933 — Hitler announces the Enabling Act, which is then approved by the Reichstag. The Enabling Act gives Hitler dictatorial powers for four years. It allows (or “enables”) Hitler to punish anyone he considers an enemy of the state. This law also says that Hitler can pass laws that are against the ideas in the constitution. Some members of parliament do not agree with this law. While some opponents of the Enabling Act vote against it, many opponents of the law are in jail or in hiding. So there are not enough votes in parliament to veto the Enabling Act.

To learn more about the events of February and March 1933, read “Targeting the Communists,” pages 162-163 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.

April 7, 1933 — The Nazis pass the “Law for the Restoration of the Professional Service,” giving the government the power to dismiss any civil servant who was politically undesirable or who would not “support the national state at all times and without reservation.” *To learn more about this law, read “Legalizing Racism” and “Dismantling Democracy,” pages 167-170 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

April 26, 1933 — Hitler organizes a secret state police called the Gestapo to “protect public safety and order.” Gestapo police can arrest people and place them in jail without any oversight by a court or judge. *To learn more about the beginning of the Gestapo, read “Turning Neighbor Against Neighbor,” page 171 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

May-June, 1933 — The Nazis outlaw trade unions and all other political parties. Even special interest groups—glee clubs, soccer teams, historical societies, and so on—had to receive permission from the government in order to meet. *To learn more about the Nazi’s total control of German society, read “Whenever Two or Three Are Gathered,” page 182 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

May 6, 1933 — Nazis begin holding public book burnings. Germans are asked to burn any books considered offensive to Germany, including books by Jewish authors. *To learn more about Nazi book burnings, read “Killing Ideas,” page 179 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

June 30, 1934 — Hitler orders the SS and the regular army to eliminate all opposition within the Nazi party. Ernst Roem, leader of the SA, and over 200 other SA leaders are murdered. Kurt von Schleicher, a former chancellor, and his wife are also murdered by the SS. This event became known as the “Night of the Long Knives.” *To learn more about the “Night of the Long Knives, read “Eliminating Opposition,” pages 193-194 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

August 2, 1934 — President Hindenburg dies. Hitler proposes a new law that would combine the role of president and chancellor in a new position called the Führer (which means “leader” in German). He calls for a vote of the German people.

August 19, 1934 — 95% of registered voters in Germany go to the polls. Nazi soldiers were present at most voting booths. 90% of these voters approve of Hitler’s law making himself Führer. Now Hitler can say that he became the supreme leader, or dictator, of Germany through the direct will of the people.

13.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. This reading summarizes a significant amount of historical detail in a timeline. *Go back and highlight the two or three events you think are most significant.* What conclusions does this timeline help you draw about Germany’s transition from a democracy to a dictatorship? What events would you like to know more about in order to better understand this transition?
2. Create identity charts for both a democracy and a dictatorship. Using the characteristics you added to the identity charts, what conclusions can you draw about how life might be different in a dictatorship and a democracy?
3. What weaknesses in the Weimar Republic did the Nazis exploit? What could have been done to strengthen democracy in Germany to protect against the rise of a dictatorship?

4. What is *inevitability*? Think about what you learned about the Weimar Republic, do you think that the failure of democracy in Germany was inevitable? What evidence can you cite from this timeline, as well as other readings and resources you have encountered, to support your position?
5. What is *opportunism*? Are there any events in this timeline in which Hitler and the Nazis were opportunistic in their actions?
6. What lessons can be learned from studying the destruction of democracy in Germany about the strength or fragility of democracy? What questions does this history bring up for you about democracy in the United States or elsewhere in the world today?

Using Reading 13.1

Human Timeline Activity

One way to help students visualize how Germany did not go from being a democracy to a dictatorship overnight is through a [human timeline](#) activity. You might use the timeline in Reading 13.1, adapting or combining items as necessary to meet the needs of your students. Even better is to have students create their own timeline items based on key events from the above readings. In preparation for this activity, we suggest placing each of the events on an index card or an 8 1/2 x 11" sheet of paper, along with the date when it occurred. Then assign students (individually or in pairs) one timeline event to present to the class. Handout 13.1 (included below) includes questions that can help students prepare for their timeline presentations.

Democracy to Dictatorship in More Depth

The following readings from the resource book provide more detailed information than the timeline that helps explain Germany's transition from democracy to dictatorship. In addition to using the timeline, or as an alternative, you could assign one reading to a small group of students and ask them to share how the information from that reading helps answer the question, "What happened to allow Hitler to become dictator of Germany?"

- "The Democrat and the Dictator," pp. 155-58
- "Targeting the Communists," pp. 162-63
- "Targeting the Jews," pp. 165-66
- "Dismantling Democracy," pp. 169-70
- "Killing Ideas," pp. 179-80
- "Whenever Two or Three Are Gathered," p. 182
- "One Nation! One God! One Reich! One Church!" pp. 186-88
- "Eliminating Opposition," pp. 193-94

Video Clip - *The Nazis: A Warning From History*

The first ten minutes of Episode Two, "Chaos and Consent," includes footage and interviews that are relevant to the events in this reading. The clip begins with Hitler's appointment as chancellor, discusses the arrests and imprisonment of Communists and Social Democrats, and depicts the early harassment of Jews in Nazi Germany. The clip ends by showing the chaos and violence caused by the Stormtroopers.

Handout 13.1:
Timeline Presentation Worksheet

1. Read over your timeline item once or twice.
2. Do not read directly from this paper when you give your presentation. Instead, explain this specific event in your own words. If you are having trouble writing the statement in your own words, ask for help.

Describe event in your own words:

3. Share at least one connection between this event and Germany’s path to a dictatorship with the class.

How does knowing about this event help you answer the question, “What happened to allow Hitler to become dictator of Germany?”

Reading 13.2: Pledging Allegiance

Creating Context

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

allegiance	obedience
oath	unconditional

When Paul von Hindenburg died on August 2, 1934, Hitler combined the positions of chancellor and president. He was now the Führer and Reich Chancellor, the Head of State, and the Chief of Armed Forces. In the past, German soldiers had taken this oath:

I swear loyalty to the Constitution and vow that I will protect the German nation and its lawful establishments as a brave soldier at any time and will be obedient to the President and my superiors.

Now Hitler created a new oath:

I swear by God this sacred oath, that I will render unconditional obedience to Adolf Hitler, the Fuehrer of the German Reich and people, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and will be ready as a brave soldier to risk my life at any time for this oath.

In his book, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, William Shirer said the new oath “enabled an even greater number of officers to excuse themselves from any personal responsibility for the unspeakable crimes which they carried out on the orders of the Supreme Commander whose true nature they had seen for themselves... One of the appalling aberrations of the German officer corps from this point on rose out of this conflict of ‘honor’ – a word... often on their lips... Later and often by honoring their oath they dishonored themselves as human beings and trod in the mud the moral code of their corps.”¹

13.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Summarize the two oaths. What is the main difference between the two? How significant is that difference? What are the implications of swearing an oath to an individual leader rather than to a nation?
2. What oaths do people take today? For what reasons? Have you ever taken an oath? Did it make you feel part of something larger than yourself?
3. What is the significance of the phrase “unconditional obedience”? What does it

mean to unconditionally obey someone?

4. What is the “conflict of ‘honor’” writes about? What role did the idea of honor play in encouraging soldiers to take the oath? Explain using evidence from the text.
5. Which comes first – one’s military duty or one’s moral duty? Can an oath excuse one from personal responsibility?

Using Reading 13.2

Reflection & Discussion

While this reading is short, many Facing History teachers find that it lends itself to rich class discussion. A comparison of the two oaths will deepen the class's exploration and understanding of some essential concepts in this history. In particular, the class should consider how taking an oath is often a sign of membership in a group, and requiring an oath is often used as a tool to ensure conformity and obedience from the group's members. It is also important for students to consider the impact of replacing an oath to a nation with one to a single person. How does this change connect to the class's discussion of the fragility of democracy after reading 13.1? Finally, considering the relationship between oaths and one's responsibility for one's actions provides a starting point for a deeper exploration of judgment and responsibility that will take place later in this unit.

Use the Comprehension & Connections questions to start your class discussion. Consider using one of a variety of effective discussion strategies, depending on the size and the needs of your particular class. [Think-Pair-Share](#), [Fishbowl](#), and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) are all strategies that could work well discussing this reading.

Video Clip - *The Nazis: A Warning From History*

The clip from approximately 9:00 to 12:30 of Episode Two, "Chaos and Consent," includes footage of soldiers taking the oath of fidelity. The clip also includes footage of Nazi book burnings and discusses the conflict between the SA and the German military which led to the Night of the Long Knives.

Reading 13.3: Do You Take the Oath?

Creating Context

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

conscription	consequence
fidelity	opportunity
conscience	defamation
Bolshevik	exile
reservation	

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

Part A

Soldiers were not the only ones required to take the new oath. A German recalled the day he was asked to pledge loyalty to the regime.

I was employed in a defense plant (a war plant, of course, but they were always called defense plants). That was the year of the National Defense Law, the law of “total conscription.” Under the law I was required to take the oath of fidelity. I said I would not; I opposed it in conscience. I was given twenty-four hours to “think it over.” In those twenty-four hours I lost the world...

You see, refusal would have meant the loss of my job, of course, not prison or anything like that. (Later on, the penalty was worse, but this was only 1935.) But losing my job would have meant that I could not get another. Wherever I went I should be asked why I left the job I had, and when I said why, I should certainly have been refused employment. Nobody would hire a “Bolshevik.” Of course, I was not a Bolshevik, but you understand what I mean.

I tried not to think of myself or my family. We might have got out of the country, in any case, and I could have got a job in industry or education somewhere else. What I tried to think of was the people to whom I might be of some help later on, if things got worse (as I believed they would). I had a wide friendship in scientific and academic circles, including many Jews, and “Aryans,” too, who might be in trouble. If I took the oath and held my job, I might be of help, somehow, as things went on. If I refused to take the oath, I would certainly be useless to my friends, even if I remained in the country. I myself would be in their situation.

13.3 Part A Comprehension & Connections

1. Summarize the dilemma that this factory worker faces. Re-read Part A if

- necessary. What are the consequences to him for refusing to take the oath? What are the consequences if he agrees to take it?
2. What is the difference between a *consequence* and an *opportunity*? What are the opportunities that will open up to the factory worker if he takes the oath? What opportunities will he have if he refuses?
 3. Explaining how he could be refused employment, the man says: “Nobody would hire a ‘Bolshevik.’ Of course, I was not a Bolshevik.” What is a Bolshevik? Why would he be labeled as a Bolshevik even though he was not one?
 4. In what ways is this man reflecting on his “circle of responsibility”? How does it influence the choice he makes?
 5. What decision do you think this man will make? What evidence in Part A did you find for your prediction?

Part B

The defense plant worker continued:

The next day, after “thinking it over,” I said I would take the oath with the mental reservation, that, by the words with which the oath began, “Ich schwore bei Gott,” “I swear by God,” I understood that no human being and no government had the right to override my conscience. My mental reservations did not interest the official who administered the oath. He said, “Do you take the oath?” and I took it. That day the world was lost, and it was I who lost it.

First of all, there is the problem of the lesser evil. Taking the oath was not so evil as being unable to help my friends later on would have been. But the evil of the oath was certain and immediate, and the helping of my friends was in the future and therefore uncertain. I had to commit a positive evil there and then, in the hope of a possible good later on. The good outweighed the evil; but the good was only a hope, the evil a fact... The hope might not have been realized – either for reasons beyond my control or because I became afraid later on or even because I was afraid all the time and was simply fooling myself when I took the oath in the first place.

But that is not the important point. The problem of the lesser evil we all know about; in Germany we took Hindenburg as less evil than Hitler, and in the end, we got them both. But that is not why I say that Americans cannot understand. No, the important point is – how many innocent people were killed by the Nazis, would you say?... Shall we say, just to be safe, that three million innocent people were killed all together?... And how many innocent lives would you like to say I saved?... Perhaps five, or ten, one doesn’t know. But shall we say a hundred, or a

thousand, just to be safe?... And it would be better to have saved all three million, instead of only a hundred, or a thousand? There, then, is my point. If I had refused to take the oath of fidelity, I would have saved all three million...

There I was, in 1935, a perfect example of the kind of person who, with all his advantages in birth, in education, and in position, rules (or might easily rule) in any country. If I had refused to take the oath in 1935, it would have meant that thousands and thousands like me, all over Germany, were refusing to take it. Their refusal would have heartened millions. Thus the regime would have been overthrown, or, indeed, would never have come to power in the first place. The fact that I was not prepared to resist, in 1935, meant that all the thousands, hundreds of thousands, like me in Germany were also unprepared, and each one of these hundreds of thousands was, like me, a man of great influence or of great potential influence. Thus the world was lost...

These hundred lives I saved – or a thousand or ten as you will – what do they represent? A little something out of the whole terrible evil, when, if my faith had been strong enough in 1935, I could have prevented the whole evil... My faith, I did not believe that I could “remove mountains.” The day I said, “No,” I had faith. In the process of “thinking it over,” in the next twenty-four hours, my faith failed me. So, in the next ten years, I was able to remove only anthills, not mountains. My education did not help me, and I had a broader and better education than most men have had or ever will have. All it did, in the end, was to enable me to rationalize my failure of faith more easily than I might have done if I had been ignorant. And so it was, I think, among educated men generally, in that time in Germany. Their resistance was no greater than other men’s.

Not everyone was willing to take the oath. Among those who refused was Ricarda Huch, a poet and writer. She resigned from the prestigious Prussian Academy of Arts with this letter.

That a German should feel German, I should take almost for granted. But there are different opinions about what is German and how German-ness is to be expressed. What the present regime prescribes as national sentiment, is not my German-ness. The centralization, the compulsion, the brutal methods, the defamation of people who think differently, the boastful self-praise I regard as un-German and unhealthy. Possessing a philosophy that varies so radically from that prescribed by the state I find it impossible to remain one of its academicians. You say that the declaration submitted to me by the Academy would not hinder me in the free expression of my opinion. Apart from the fact that “loyal collaboration in the national cultural tasks assigned in accordance with the Academy’s statutes and in the light of the changed historical circumstances” requires an agreement with the government’s programme that I do not feel, I would find no journal or newspaper that would print an oppositional view. Therefore, the right to express one’s opinions freely remains mired in theory... I herewith declare my resignation from the Academy.

Huch could not publicize her stand by publishing her letter. She lived in Germany throughout the Nazi era as a silent dissenter in “internal exile.”

13.3 Part B Comprehension & Connections

1. In Part B, the German factory worker explains his thoughts and feelings after taking the oath to Hitler. *Go back and underline the parts of his explanation that you found most convincing.* How would you respond to his thoughts and feelings after taking the oath? What questions would you ask him?
2. What does the man mean when he says he took the oath with a “mental reservation”? Why was the Nazi official not interested in his reservations so long as he took the oath? What is the purpose of the oath?
3. What does the man mean when he says that “no human being and no government had the right to override my conscience”? What is a conscience? Did the man have one? Did he know right from wrong? If so, did his conscience fail him?
4. What factors influenced the man’s decision? What values and beliefs? What hopes and fears? The man states, “I had to commit a positive evil there and then, in the hope of a possible good later on.” Do you agree with his reasoning? Is it possible to distinguish between different evils? Who might face similar dilemmas today? How do they resolve those dilemmas?
5. The man says that on the day he took the oath, “the world was lost, and it was I who lost it.” What does he mean? Using evidence from the text, explain his reasons for regretting his choice. In what sense is he responsible for the victims of the Nazis after he took the oath?
6. Teachers were also asked to take the oath of fidelity to Hitler, and most did. Why were their decisions to take and obey the new oath crucial for Nazi plans to create a totalitarian state?
7. How do the factory worker’s and Ricarda Huch’s visions of what it means to be “German” differ? Support your answer with evidence from the reading.
8. In many places in the United States today, civil servants are required to take oaths to support the national or state constitutions or to faithfully carry out the laws and policies of their communities. Is there an appropriate place for oaths? When might an oath help bind people together in a positive way?
9. What is a “silent dissenter”? What is “internal exile”? Are either helpful or meaningful?

Using Reading 13.3

Reading in Two Stages

Many teachers find it useful to divide this reading into two parts (labeled here as Part A and Part B). Whether reading as a group or individually, you might choose to stop students reading beyond Part A so that the class can discuss the choice the man is facing before examining his final decision.

After reading Part A, you might:

- Ask students to share important words or phrases they recorded.
- Ask students to discuss the Connections & Comprehension questions in small groups.
- Conduct a [Barometer Activity](#) with “Will Take the Oath” at one end of the continuum and “Will Not Take the Oath” at the other end.

After reading Part B, you might structure a class discussion so that students have the opportunity to explore what the man means when he says, “That day the world was lost, and it was I who lost it.” The Comprehension & Connections questions will help guide your discussion.

Reading 13.4: No Time To Think

Creating Context

With the Nazis in power, Germany was awash in new rules, regulations, laws, and policies. As they transformed Germany into a dictatorship, the Nazis sought to control all aspects of German society: including politics, art, culture, education and more. Even local community groups—glee clubs, soccer teams, historical societies, and so on—were monitored closely by the Nazis.

Milton Mayer, an American college professor, wanted to find out how ordinary people reacted to Hitler’s policies and philosophy. Seven years after World War II ended, he interviewed German men from a cross-section of society. One of them, also a college professor, described his life in Nazi Germany and the changes that occurred all around him. The reading below tells this college professor’s story in his own words.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

rigamarole
machinations
alarmist

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

So Much Activity

[My] Middle High German [the subject of specialty to this professor] was my life. It was all I cared about. I was a scholar, a specialist. Then, suddenly, I was plunged into all the new activity, as the university was drawn into the new situation; meetings, conferences, interviews, ceremonies, and, above all, papers to be filled out, reports, bibliographies, lists, questionnaires. And on top of that were demands in the community, the things in which one had to, was “expected to” participate that had not been there or had not been important before. It was all rigamarole, of course, but it consumed all one’s energies, coming on top of the work one really wanted to do. You can see how easy it was, then, not to think about fundamental things. One had no time.

Too Busy to Think

...The dictatorship, and the whole process of its coming into being, was above all diverting. It provided an excuse not to think for people who did not want to think anyway. I do not speak of your “little men,” your baker and so on; I speak of my colleagues and myself, learned men, mind you. Most of us did not want to think about fundamental things and never had. There was no need to. Nazism gave us some dreadful, fundamental things to think about – we were decent people – and kept us so busy with continuous changes and “crises” and so fascinated, yes, fascinated, by the machinations of the “national enemies,” without and within, that we had no time to think about these

dreadful things that were growing, little by little, all around us. Unconsciously, I suppose we were grateful. Who wants to think?

Waiting to React

One doesn't see exactly where or how to move. Believe me, this is true. Each act, each occasion, is worse than the last, but only a little worse. You wait for the next and the next. You wait for one great shocking occasion, thinking that others, when such a shock comes, will join with you in resisting somehow. You don't want to act, or even talk alone; you don't want to "go out of your way to make trouble." Why not? – Well, you are not in the habit of doing it. And it is not just fear, fear of standing alone, that restrains you; it is also genuine uncertainty.

Uncertainty

Uncertainty is a very important factor, and, instead of decreasing as time goes on, it grows. Outside, in the streets, in the general community, "everyone" is happy. One hears no protest, and certainly sees none. You know, in France or Italy there would be slogans against the government painted on walls and fences; in Germany, outside the great cities, perhaps, there is not even this. In the university community, in your own community, you speak privately to your colleagues, some of whom certainly feel as you do; but what do they say? They say, "It's not so bad" or "You're seeing things" or "You're an alarmist." And you are an alarmist. You are saying that this must lead to this, and you can't prove it. These are the beginnings; yes; but how do you know for sure when you don't know the end, and how do you know, or even surmise, the end? On the one hand, your enemies, the law, the regime, the Party, intimidate you. On the other, your colleagues pooh-pooh you as pessimistic or even neurotic. You are left with your close friends, who are, naturally, people who have always thought as you have.

But your friends are fewer now. Some have drifted off somewhere or submerged themselves in their work. You no longer see as many as you did at meetings or gatherings. Informal groups become smaller; attendance drops off in little organizations, and the organizations themselves wither. Now, in small gatherings of your older friends, you feel that you are talking to yourselves, that you are isolated from the reality of things. This weakens your confidence still further and serves as a further deterrent to – to what? It is clearer all the time that, if you are going to do anything, you must make an occasion to do it, and then you are obviously a troublemaker. So you wait, and you wait.

Small Steps

But the one great shocking occasion, when tens or hundreds of thousands will join with you, never comes. That's the difficulty. If the last and worst act of the whole regime had come immediately after the first and smallest, thousands, yes millions, would have been sufficiently shocked – if, let us say, the gassing of the Jews in '43 had come immediately after the "German Firm" stickers on the windows of non-Jewish shops in '33. But of course this isn't the way it happens. In between come all the hundreds of little steps, some of them imperceptible, each of them preparing you not to be shocked by the next. Step C is not so much worse than Step B, and, if you did not make a stand at Step B, why should you at Step C? And so on to Step D.

Too Late

And one day, too late, your principles, if you were ever sensible of them, all rush in upon you. The burden of self deception has grown too heavy, and some minor incident, in my case my little boy, hardly more than a baby, saying “Jew swine,” collapses it all at once, and you see that everything, everything, has changed and changed completely under your nose. The world you live in – your nation, your people – is not the world you were born in at all. The forms are all there, all untouched, all reassuring, the houses, the shops, the jobs, the mealtimes, the visits, the concerts, the cinema, the holidays. But the spirit, which you never noticed because you made the lifelong mistake of identifying it with the forms, is changed. Now you live in a world of hate and fear, and the people who hate and fear do not even know it themselves; when everyone is transformed, no one is transformed. Now you live in a system which rules without responsibility even to God. The system itself could not have intended this in the beginning, but in order to sustain itself it was compelled to go all the way.

Living with New Morals

You have gone almost all the way yourself. Life is a continuing process, a flow, not a succession of acts and events at all. It has flowed to a new level, carrying you with it, without any effort on your part. On this new level you live, you have been living more comfortably every day, with new morals, new principles. You have accepted things you would not have accepted five years ago, a year ago, things that your father, even in Germany, could not have imagined.

Suddenly it all comes down, all at once. You see what you are, what you have done, or, more accurately, what you haven't done (for that was all that was required of most of us: that we do nothing). You remember those early meetings of your department in the university when, if one had stood, others would have stood, perhaps, but no one stood. A small matter, a matter of hiring this man or that, and you hired this one rather than that. You remember everything now, and your heart breaks. Too late. You are compromised beyond repair.²

13.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. This reading provides a first hand account of the transformation of German society under the control of the Nazis. *Go back and underline two or three sentences that you found most striking in this professor's testimony.* What questions do the experiences of the professor raise for you?
2. The professor describes the changes to German society brought on by the Nazis as a series of small steps. What examples of “small steps” can you find in this reading or others from this lesson? Why does the professor think that these small steps make it difficult to resist the Nazis?
3. What evidence is presented in the professor's account to support his claim that “we were decent people”? What evidence is there that would undermine his

claim?

4. What is an alarmist? Why does the professor fear being labeled an alarmist?
5. In the second paragraph, why does the author use quotation marks around the words “national enemies” and “crises”? What meaning does the use of quotation marks add to these words?
6. What has happened to the professor’s sense of right and wrong during this time period? How does he explain how this has happened?
7. Did the professor feel isolated with the worry he felt about the changes the Nazis brought to Germany? Was he, in fact, alone in his worries? How do you account for his feeling of isolation?
8. When this professor was making his decisions about how to act (or not act), who or what do you think was most on his mind? Why do you think this?
9. Review your definition of *opportunism*. Who likely benefited from the changes in German society the professor describes? How might those benefits blind people to the changes around them and enable them to “live more comfortable every day, with new morals, new principles”?
10. What evidence does the professor’s description of Nazi Germany provide about how the Nazis used nationalism, race, and antisemitism to strengthen their power and eliminate dissent?
11. How might the ideas in this reading help explain why ordinary people participated in violence and discrimination against innocent people?
12. What warnings can you infer from this reading? To what extent are these warnings relevant today?

Using Reading 13.4

Found Poems

This reading provides excellent source material for your students to use to create [found poems](#). The process of creating a found poem will facilitate close reading of the language and ideas the professor uses to describe his experiences. You might also ask students to write “artist statements” describing the processes they followed and the choices they made in crafting their poems. Why did they choose the themes they chose? Why did the words and phrases they chose from the reading resonate with them?

Also consider a variation of the found poem strategy: a group found poem. [This variation](#) requires the class to work together, or in groups, to create a found poem for the entire group. In this version, each student will choose only one phrase or sentence from the reading that resonates with them. Then teachers and students will work on arranging the student-chosen lines in the most effective order. The class can recite the poem together, with each student reading his or her chosen line. Later, you might ask each student to write a paragraph describing what resonates for them in the line they chose from the reading.

Video Clip - *The Nazis: A Warning From History*

A clip from approximately 18:00 to 23:00 in Episode Two, “Chaos and Consent,” provides a different perspective of the transformation of Germany by the Nazis. The clip depicts events and trends under the Nazis that restored, for many Germans, pride in their country.

Exploring Opportunism

Opportunism is an often overlooked factor when considering why many Germans went along with Nazi policies, but it is worth exploring in class. Connections Question #6 can begin the exploration by asking students to consider who might benefit from the discriminatory policies put in place by the Nazis. A short clip from the video *The Nazis: A Warning From History* will help you deepen the class’s consideration of opportunism. Watch the episode, “Chaos and Consent” from 26:00 to 33:00 to see an interview of a woman who reported her neighbor who seemed “different” to the Gestapo. The class might then discuss the factors that motivated this woman to turn in her neighbor. What might she have gained from doing so?

Lesson 14: Targeting the Jews

Essential Questions:

- *Do you create and control your own identity, or do the labels others place on you also contribute to your identity? What happens when one loses the right to make choices about his or her identity?*
- *Who shapes the values of a society? What role do leaders play? What role do laws play? What about ordinary citizens?*
- *What does it mean to be a citizen of a country? What is the difference between living in a country as a citizen and living as a non-citizen?*

Included Readings:

- * 14.1 – The Nuremberg Laws
 - * 14.2 – The Impact of the Nuremberg Laws
- * = core reading

Introduction:

In the previous lesson, students learned about the many of the steps the Nazis took to transform Germany into a dictatorship. The Nazis wanted to transform German society in many other ways as well. Most notably, they sought to define who was a “real” German and who was not, limiting the rights and benefits of citizenship only to those who fit their definition of “German.” Many groups—including Communists, homosexuals, and Gypsies—were excluded from the new German society the Nazi’s were building, but Jews were the primary target of their discrimination.

Of the hundreds of laws that Nazi’s passed to exclude the groups they deemed inferior from German society, the Nuremberg Laws were the most notorious. This lesson looks in detail at this set of laws, decreed in 1935, and the effects they had on the lives and livelihoods of thousands of Germans.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Identify a time when a group or individual placed you in a category or labeled you in a way that you felt was inaccurate. How did this feel? What gives an individual, group or government the power to define (label or categorize) someone else?
- What is the purpose of having laws? Who do they protect? Are the needs or interests of some people more protected than others?
- How do laws help define a nation’s universe of obligation? Who is excluded, if anyone, from how the your country’s government defines its universe of obligation?

- What can be done to change laws that you disagree with? What would be required to change laws in your community (local, state or national)? Which of these options, if any, were available in Germany in the 1930's?

Additional Readings from Holocaust and Human Behavior:

- “Targeting the Jews,” pp. 165-166
- “Legalizing Racism,” pp. 167-170
- “Breeding the New German ‘Race’,” pp. 183-186
- “‘One Nation! One God! One Reich! One Church!’,” pp. 186-189
- “A Refusal to Compromise,” pp. 192-193
- “Isolating Gays,” pp. 195-196

Reading 14.1: The Nuremberg Laws

Creating Context

Upon taking power in Germany, the Nazi government began to create a society that discriminated against a number of groups; chief among them were the Jews. The Nazis passed forty-two anti-Jewish measures in 1933 and nineteen more in 1934. Each was designed to protect “Aryan blood” from contamination with “Jewish blood.” Then in 1935, Hitler announced a series of new laws at the party rally in Nuremberg to further isolate Jews and exclude them from the rights provided to German citizens.

These laws, known as the Nuremberg Laws, included the “Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor” and the “Reich Citizenship Laws.” They stripped Jews of citizenship and made marriage and sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews a crime. In order to strip Jews of citizenship, the Nazis first needed a way to identify Jews. According to the Nazis’ racist ideology, “being Jewish” was something biological, passed down from parent to offspring. Individuals who never practiced Judaism, who may have even converted to Christianity, could be deemed Jewish if they had three Jewish grandparents.

This reading includes three excerpts from the Nuremberg Laws. You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

national colors	Reich
“Jewish colors”	kindred
subject	

Part A

Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor (September 15, 1935)

Firm in the knowledge that the purity of German blood is the basis for the survival of the German people and inspired by the unshakeable determination to safeguard the future of the German nation, the Reichstag has unanimously resolved upon the following law. . .

Section 1

Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or some related blood are forbidden. Such marriages . . . are invalid, even if they take place abroad in order to avoid the law.

Section 2

Sexual relations outside marriage between Jews and citizens of German or related blood are forbidden.

Section 3

Jews will not be permitted to employ female citizens of German or related blood who are under 45 years as housekeepers.

Section 4

1. Jews are forbidden to raise the national flag or display the national colors.
2. However, they are allowed to display the Jewish colors. The exercise of this right is protected by the State.

Section 5

Anyone who disregards Section 1 . . . Section 2 . . . Sections 3 or 4 will be punished with imprisonment up to one year or with a fine, or with one of these penalties. . . .

14.1 Part A Comprehension & Connections

1. What is the purpose of this law? Summarize its purpose in your own words. Also note any portions of the law you do not understand. How might you determine their meaning?
2. What does this law reveal about how Germany defines its universe of obligation at this time? Cite specific phrases and sentences from the text of the law to support your answer.
3. What do the authors of the law mean by “German blood”? How does their focus on bloodlines reflect what you have learned earlier in this course about the concepts of *race*, *nationalism* and *antisemitism*?
4. How do laws influence the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of ordinary citizens? How might this law have affected the way that non-Jewish Germans thought about and behaved towards Jews? How might it have affected how Jewish Germans felt about themselves?

Part B

The Reich Citizenship Law (September 15, 1935)

Article 1

1. A subject of the state is one who belongs to the protective union of the German Reich, and who, therefore, has specific obligations to the Reich.
2. The status of subject is to be acquired in accordance with the provisions of the Reich and the state Citizenship Law.

Article 2

1. A citizen of the Reich may be only one who is of German or kindred blood, and who, through his behavior, shows that he is both desirous and personally fit to serve loyally the German people and the Reich.
2. The right to citizenship is obtained by the grant of Reich citizenship papers.
3. Only the citizen of the Reich may enjoy full political rights in consonance with the provisions of the laws.

Article 3

The Reich Minister of the Interior, in conjunction with the Deputy to the Führer, will issue the required legal and administrative decrees for the implementation and amplification of this law.

14.1 Part B Comprehension & Connections

1. What is the purpose of this law? Summarize its purpose in your own words. Also note any portions of the law you do not understand. How might you determine their meaning?
2. What does this law reveal about how Germany defines its universe of obligation at this time? How does it reflect the ideas of *race* and *nationalism* that you learned about in previous sections of this course? Cite specific phrases and sentences from the law to support your answers.
3. Article 3 refers to the “amplification” of this law. What does the word “amplification” imply about how the law will be implemented in the future?
4. How do laws influence the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of ordinary citizens? How might this law have affected the way that those who met the qualifications to be a citizen felt about themselves? How might it have affected how citizens felt about non-citizens? How non-citizens felt about themselves?
5. What does it mean to be a citizen? What is the difference of living in a country as

a citizen and as a noncitizen?

Part C**Addition to the Reich Citizenship Law (excerpt)****(November 14, 1935)****Article 4**

1. A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He cannot exercise the right to vote; he cannot hold public office.
2. Jewish [military] officials will be retired as of December 31, 1935 [...]

Article 5

1. A Jew is an individual who is descended from at least three grandparents who were, racially, full Jews...
2. A Jew is also an individual who is descended from two full-Jewish grandparents if:
 - (a) he was a member of the Jewish religious community when this law was issued, or joined the community later;
 - (b) when the law was issued, he was married to a person who was a Jew, or was subsequently married to a Jew;
 - (c) he is the issue from a marriage with a Jew, in the sense of Section I, which was contracted after the coming into effect of the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor of September 15, 1935;
 - (d) he is the issue of an extramarital relationship with a Jew, in the sense of Section I, and was born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936.

14.1 Part C Comprehension & Connections

1. What is the purpose of this law? Summarize its purpose in your own words. Also note any portions of the law you do not understand. How might you determine their meaning?
2. What does this law reveal about how Germany defines its universe of obligation at this time? Cite specific phrases and sentences from the law to support your answer.
3. How does this law reflect what you have learned earlier in this course about the concepts of *race science*, *nationalism*, and *antisemitism*?
4. How do laws influence the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of ordinary citizens? How might this law have affected the way that non-Jewish Germans thought about an behaved towards Jews? How might it have affected how Jewish Germans felt about themselves?
5. What does it mean to be a citizen? What is the difference of living in a country as a citizen and as a noncitizen?

Using Reading 14.1

Pre-reading

“Targeting the Jews” (pp. 165-166) and “Legalizing Racism” (pp. 167-68) provide background material for students’ exploration of the Nuremberg Laws. You might have students read one or both of these readings for homework, or you can summarize some of the ideas in this reading in a brief lecture. That way, students will understand that the Nuremberg Laws did not come from nowhere; they were a culmination of dozens of prior laws aimed at identifying and marginalizing the Jewish population of Germany.

Small Group Discussion & Analysis

Since the excerpts of the Nuremberg Laws are split into three parts in this reading, you can split your class into small groups and assign on part of the reading to each group. Students can then work in their groups to read and analyze the law they are assigned using the *Comprehension and Connections* questions.

You can each group prepare a short presentation about their law, or you can use the [Jigsaw](#) strategy to make sure that all students learn about all three parts of the reading.

Video: *Childhood Experiences of German Jews and Childhood Memories*

This short video (23 minutes) will help the class better understand the tangible differences that the Nuremberg Laws made in the lives of Jews in Nazi Germany. The video provides excerpts from the testimonies of five German Jews representing different areas of Germany. They explain what the circumstances were like for Jewish children attending school between 1933 and 1939. A principal theme of the montage is that antisemitic legislation, including the Nuremberg Laws, was applied at different levels of intensity in different areas of Germany and not all Jews felt equally threatened by the discriminatory policies of the prewar Nazi regime.

Levels of Questions

Instead of using the *Comprehension and Connections* questions, you might ask students to analyze one or more excerpts from the Nuremberg Laws using the [Levels of Questions](#) strategy. This can be combined with the small group discussion outlined above, or you can have students complete a Levels of Questions worksheet individually as preparation for a whole group discussion. *Handout 14.1*, provided below, can be adapted to your specific needs.

Extension: Exploring Other Targeted Groups

The Jews were not the only groups targeted by the Nazis in the 1930s. Communists, the disabled, homosexuals and gypsies (Roma) were also seen as threatening the health of German society. The following readings in the resource book describe how these groups were treated once the Nazis came to power:

- “Breeding the New German Race,” pp. 183-84
- “Targeting the Communists,” pp. 162-63
- “Isolating Gays”, pp. 195-196

These readings provide important information for extending any class discussion of Germany's universe of obligation in the 1930s.

Handout 14.1

Analyzing the Nuremberg Laws

Name of the law you are reviewing:

Comprehension questions

What is the purpose and meaning of this law? Rewrite the law in your own words.

Interpretive questions (Select one)

- How do these laws connect to “race science”?
- How do these laws connect to the concept of “nationalism”?
- What does this law reveal about how Germany defines its universe of obligation at this time?
- How might this law have influenced the attitudes, beliefs and actions of the German people?
- Laws are created to solve a problem or address a need. Why was this law created? What problem did it solve and/or what need did it address? (Note: In 1935, less than 1% of the German population was Jewish.)

Universal questions (Select one)

- What is the range of responses to laws set by an authority figure, like a government official?
- How might possible responses to laws be different for citizens living in a democracy as opposed to citizens living in a dictatorship?
- What is the difference of living in a country as a citizen and as a noncitizen?
- Under what circumstances, if any, do you think it is fair for a government to strip someone of citizenship? Under what circumstances, if any, do you think it is fair for a government to strip an entire group of citizenship?

Reading 14.2: Impact of the Nuremberg Laws

Creating Context

After the Nuremberg Laws, being a Jew was no longer a matter of self-definition or self-identification. Now a person was considered a Jew because of what his or her grandparents had chosen to believe. Who you were no longer depended upon you. This reading describes the impact this change had on many in Germany.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

decree
pernicious
gentile

After noting that by 1935, “at least a quarter of the Jews who remained had been deprived of their professional livelihood by boycott, decree, or local pressure,” historian Martin Gilbert noted:

More than ten thousand public health and social workers had been driven out of their posts, four thousand lawyers were without the right to practise, two thousand doctors had been expelled from hospitals and clinics, two thousand actors, singers and musicians had been driven from their orchestras, clubs and cafes. A further twelve hundred editors and journalists had been dismissed, as had eight hundred university professors and lecturers, and eight hundred elementary and secondary school teachers.

The search for Jews, and for converted Jews, to be driven out of their jobs was continuous. On 5 September 1935 the SS newspaper published the names of eight half-Jews and converted Jews, all of the Evangelical-Lutheran faith, who had been “dismissed without notice” and deprived of any further opportunity “of acting as organists in Christian churches.” From these dismissals, the newspaper commented, “It can be seen that the Reich Chamber of Music is taking steps to protect the church from pernicious influence.”³

Marta Appel, like many Germans of the Jewish faith, found that the Nuremberg Laws affected even old friendships. For years, she had been getting together once a month with women from her old high school. In 1935, she stopped attending, mainly because she did not want to embarrass her non-Jewish friends.

One day on the street, I met one of my old teachers, and with tears in her eyes she... tried to convince me that [the women] were still my friends, and tried to take away my doubts. I decided to go to the next meeting. It was a hard decision and I had not slept the night before. I was afraid for my gentile friends. For

nothing in the world did I wish to bring them trouble by my attendance, and I was also afraid for myself. I knew I would watch them, noticing the slightest expression of embarrassment in their eyes when I came. I knew they could not deceive me; I would be aware of every change in their voices. Would they be afraid to talk to me?

It was not necessary for me to read their eyes or listen to the changes in their voices. The empty table in the little alcove that had always been reserved for us spoke the clearest language. It was even unnecessary for the waiter to come and say that a lady phoned that morning not to reserve the table thereafter. I could not blame them. Why should they risk losing a position only to prove to me that we still had friends in Germany?⁴

14.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. After the Nuremberg Laws, being a Jew was no longer a matter of self-definition or self-identification. What does it mean to lose the right to define yourself? In what ways did Appel lose the right to define herself? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
2. How was the dilemma confronting Germans of Jewish descent in 1935 similar to that of the Bear in *the bear that wasn't*? How did it differ?
3. If you were one of Marta's school friends, how might you have explained to her that she should not come to the lunch? Conversely, how might you have convinced the others in the group that they should continue to welcome Marta?
4. Suppose you were one of Appel's school friends. What do you like to think you might you have done? Might you have attended the lunch in 1933? In 1935? What might the consequences of attending be in 1933? In 1935? Of not attending? Suppose you were in Marta Appel's position. Do you like to think you would have gone to lunch?
5. Franklin Roosevelt told Americans in the 1930s that the only thing they had to fear was "fear itself." Does it take courage to face one's fears and do the right thing? What was the right thing in 1933? In 1935? When did it take more courage to do right?
6. What questions does learning about the Nuremberg Laws raise for you? What resources and strategies can you use to help answer your questions?

Using Reading 14.2

Reflection & Discussion

The impact of the Nuremberg Laws lends itself to rich class discussion. Provide students time to reflect and write quietly about the Comprehension and Connections questions, particularly when thinking how they would hope to respond to the dilemma faced by Marta Appel and her friends.

Smaller groups discussions about this reading may be most effective. Try using the [Think-Pair-Share](#) or [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) strategies.

Extension: Government, Labels, and Identity

The Nuremberg Laws represent the power of a government to define an individual's identity. During the 1930s, an individual who had converted and was a practicing Protestant could still be defined as a Jew by the government. Other governments have also used their power to label individuals. Apartheid-era South Africa is one powerful example of this. The reading "Race and Science" (pp. 13-15) provides an interesting example of what happened when a "white" woman in Louisiana found out that the government defined her as "black." After learning about how the Nuremberg Laws provided a legal way to decide who was a Jew and who was not, students may wish to discuss the ways that government labels people today. The fact that the Nazi government had the power to define and label individuals, even against their own wills, has the power to provoke students' own thoughts on the concept of identity. Questions you can use to spark journal writing or discussion include:

- What are examples from today or the past of when governments have labeled individuals? Are these labels and definitions always negative?
- What can be the consequences for those being labeled?
- What does it mean to lose the right to define yourself?

¹ William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (Simon & Schuster, 1960), 227.

² Milton Mayer, *They Thought They Were Free*, 177-181.

³ Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust* (Holt, 1985), 47.

⁴ Marta Appel, "Memories." In *Jewish Life in Germany*, ed. Monika Richarz, 353.

Section 6: Conformity and Obedience

Essential Questions

- *What is the difference between obedience and unconditional (“blind”) obedience? What can be the consequences of unconditional obedience?*
- *What is propaganda? How can propaganda be distinguished from other forms of media?*
- *How do young people learn the values of their society? How do they help shape the values of their society?*
- *What type of schooling prepares young people for their role as citizens in a democracy?*

Lessons

Section 6 includes the following lessons:

- Lesson 15: A Matter of Obedience
- Lesson 16: Propaganda and Conformity
- Lesson 17: “He Who Owns the Youth, Gains the Future”

Rationale

In Section 6, students considered how the Nazis transformed Germany from a democracy to a dictatorship. This section looks at why the German people allowed it to happen. Earlier sections of this course offered insights into the importance we, as individuals, place on our membership in various groups. This section explores how the Nazis took advantage of that yearning to belong. It describes, in Fritz Stern’s words, how they used the “twin instruments of propaganda and terror” to coerce and cajole a people into giving up their freedom.

Others argue that the process of transforming a democratic society into a totalitarian one was not quite so simple. They note that “life is almost always more complicated than we think. Behind the gleaming ranks of those who seem totalitarian robots stand men and women, various and diverse, complex and complicated, some brave, some cowardly, some brainwashed, some violently idiosyncratic, and all of them very human.”¹

The lessons in this section guide students through an exploration of the human behaviors of conformity and obedience. First the class will step momentarily away from the history of Nazi Germany to learn about Stanley Milgram’s infamous exploration of authority and obedience. Under what circumstances do people readily obey authority? What factors might enable individuals to question or challenge authority? Milgram’s provocative research provides numerous insights into these questions, and learning about the Milgram Experiments provides an important lens through which the class can view the choices made by Germans under Nazi rule. Many Facing History teachers find that, along with resources such as “The Bear That Wasn’t” and “The ‘In’ Group,” the Milgram Experiments become a memorable and useful touchstone for students throughout the rest of the course.

After studying Milgram, the class will return its attention to the history of Germany in the 1930's to study the Nazi's use of propaganda techniques to condition the attitudes and influence the choices of individual Germans. This is another lesson that will prompt students to make numerous connections with the contemporary world in which they live. As students explore the persuasive techniques the Nazis employed through a vast range of media, questions about modern advertising, political campaigning, and educational strategies will come up. The class will consider tricky ethical distinctions concerning the use of media for to persuade for these different purposes.

Finally, the class will explore the way that the Nazis brought young Germans into their movement both through the education system and through youth groups (such as the Hitler Youth) that dominated their social lives. It is through both of these means that young Germans learned who belonged to the "In" groups and the "Out" groups in German society. By studying this facet of Nazi society, students will also distinguish between *education* and *indoctrination*. They will also consider the role of education in society, and discuss the characteristics of an education that supports democracy.²

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- Chapter 5 in the resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*.
- Film: *Obedience*
- Website: [The Lucifer Effect - Dehumanization](#)
- Website: [Institute for Propaganda Analysis](#)

Lesson 15: A Matter of Obedience?

Essential Questions:

- ***What is authority? Under what conditions is it appropriate to obey authority? Under what conditions is it appropriate to resist authority?***
- ***What is the difference between obedience and unconditional (“blind”) obedience? What can be the consequences of unconditional obedience?***

Included Resources:

* 15.1 – Reading/Film: A Matter of Obedience?

* = core resource

Recommended Resource:

Video - *Obedience*

Introduction:

Why did many Germans follow the Nazis’ policies? At least part of the answer to this question involves *obedience*. Obedience influences decision-making every day of our lives, for we regularly choose to obey some rules while resisting or ignoring others. It is worth stopping to consider the factors that help us distinguish between rules that must be followed and those that we can safely disregard.

In order to seek a deeper understanding of obedience, students will temporarily pause their progression through the history of Nazi Germany in order to consider a psychological experiment conducted in Connecticut in the 1960s. By learning about the infamous Milgram Experiments, students will probe the ideas of authority, conformity, and obedience in order to build a framework for understanding and analyzing the decisions individuals made in response to Nazi policies.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Think of a time when you obeyed a rule or an authority figure (a parent, teacher, group leader, etc.). Why did you obey? What were the consequences of your decision? Now think of a time when you ignored or disobeyed a rule or authority figure? Why did you resist authority? What were the consequences?
- How were you taught about obedience? How do you know who you are supposed to obey? How do you know when obedience is wrong?

Additional Readings:

- “Birthday Party,” pp. 237-240
- “A Matter of Loyalty,” pp. 240-241
- “Models of Obedience,” pp. 235-237
- “Rebels Without a Cause,” pp. 249-250

Resource 15.1: A Matter of Obedience?

Creating Context

Think of a time when you obeyed a rule or an authority figure (a parent, teacher, group leader, etc.). Why did you obey? What were the consequences of your decision?

Now think of a time when you ignored or disobeyed a rule or authority figure? Why did you resist authority? What were the consequences? Before reading, record your thoughts about these questions in your journal.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this reading:

obedience	conscience
blind obedience	hypothesis
authority	ethical

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

Part A: The Milgram Experiments

In the 1960s, Stanley Milgram, a professor at Yale University, decided to study the extent to which people are willing to obey the orders of an authority figure before their consciences prompt them to refuse. In Milgram's words, "The point of the experiment is to see how far a person will proceed in a concrete and measurable situation in which he is ordered to inflict increasing pain on a protesting victim... At what point will the subject refuse to obey the experimenter?"³

Milgram did not initially tell volunteers the true goal of his study. Instead, he told them that they were going to participate in "a study of the effects of punishment on learning." Working with pairs, Milgram designated one volunteer as "teacher" and the other as "learner." As the "teacher" watched, the "learner" was strapped into a chair with an electrode attached to each wrist. The "learner" was then told to memorize word pairs for a test and warned that wrong answers would result in electric shocks. The "learner" was, in fact, an actor who was a member of Milgram's team. The real focus of the experiment was the "teacher."

Each "teacher" was taken to a separate room from the "learner" and seated before a fake shock generator with switches ranging from 15 volts (labeled "slight shock") to 450 volts (labeled "danger – severe shock.") Each "teacher" was told to administer a "shock" for each wrong answer. The shock was to increase by fifteen volts every time the "learner" responded incorrectly. The volunteer received a practice shock before the test began to get an idea of the pain involved. Of course, the "learner," faked his responses to the shocks, and he was not in any real danger. The "learners" responded incorrectly

according to a script in order to see how long the “teacher” would be willing to shock him at higher and higher voltages.

15.1 Part A Comprehension & Connections

1. Explain how Milgram’s experiment works to a partner. What will the “teacher” be doing? What will the “learner” be doing? What is the goal of the experiment?
2. Make a prediction about the results of the experiment. Do you think that most “teachers” will be willing to continue long enough to give the “learner” that maximum level of electric shock (450 volts)? Write down the percentage of “teachers” you think will give a 450-volt shock, then explain your prediction.

Part B: The Results

Before the experiment began, Milgram hypothesized that most volunteers would refuse to give electric shocks of more than 150 volts. A group of psychologists and psychiatrists predicted that less than one-tenth of one percent of the volunteers would administer all 450 volts. To everyone's amazement, 65 percent gave the full 450 volts!

Later Milgram tried to isolate the factors that encouraged obedience by varying parts of the experiment. In one variation, he repeated the test in a less academic setting. Obedience dropped to nearly 48 percent, still a very high number. In another variation, the volunteers received instructions by telephone rather than in person. Without an authority figure in the room, only 21 percent continued to the end. Milgram also noted that when no one in authority was present, some volunteers reacted to the "pain" of the "learner" by repeating a relatively low level shock rather than increasing voltage as instructed – an innovative compromise in Milgram's view.

In a third version of the test, each volunteer was surrounded by authority figures who argued over whether to continue the experiment. In this variation, no "teacher" continued until the end. In yet another variation, it appeared as if three "teachers" were giving shocks at the same time. Two, however, worked for Milgram. When they "quit," only 10 percent of the real volunteers continued.

The distance between the volunteer and the "learner" also made a difference. Only 40 percent of the "teachers" obeyed when the "learner" was in the same room. Obedience dropped to 30 percent when volunteers had to place the "learner's" hand on a metal plate to give the shock. On the other hand, when they had a lesser role in the experiment, 92 percent "went all the way." Gender had little effect on the outcome of the experiment. Men and women responded in very similar ways. Women did, however, show more signs of conflict over whether to obey.

Philip Zimbardo, a psychologist at Stanford University, said of the experiments:

The question to ask of Milgram's research is not why the majority of normal, average subjects behave in evil (felonious) ways, but what did the disobeying minority do after they refused to continue to shock the poor soul, who was so obviously in pain? Did they intervene, go to his aid, did they denounce the researcher, protest to higher authorities, etc.? No, even their disobedience was within the framework of "acceptability," they stayed in their seats, "in their assigned place," politely, psychologically demurred, and they waited to be dismissed by the authority. Using other measures of obedience in addition to "going all the way" on the shock generator, obedience to authority in Milgram's research was total.⁴

While Milgram's experiments explored the extent to which individuals will *obey* authority, psychologist Solomon Asch, working a decade prior to Milgram, conducted a series of experiments to explore the extent to which individuals *conform* to the beliefs

and opinions of a group of peers. An article from the *New York Times* describes Asch's experiments:

... the subjects were shown two cards. On the first was a vertical line. On the second were three lines, one of them the same length as that on the first card.

Then the subjects were asked to say which two lines were alike, something that most 5-year-olds could answer correctly.

But Dr. Asch added a twist. Seven other people, in cahoots with the researchers, also examined the lines and gave their answers before the subjects did. And sometimes these confederates intentionally gave the wrong answer.

Dr. Asch was astonished at what happened next. After thinking hard, three out of four subjects agreed with the incorrect answers given by the confederates at least once. And one in four conformed 50 percent of the time.

Dr. Asch, who died in 1996, always wondered about the findings. Did the people who gave in to group do so knowing that their answers were wrong? Or did the social pressure actually change their perceptions?⁵

15.1 Part B Comprehension & Connections

1. How do you define *obedience*? What is *blind obedience*? How does it differ from other forms of obedience? Were the subjects of Milgram's study an example of obedience or blind obedience? Use evidence to justify your answer.
2. What is *authority*? How can you identify someone as an authority figure? What does one do or say to become an authority figure?
3. Milgram concluded from his experiments that "relatively few people have the resources to resist authority." What do you think he meant by this statement? What evidence did he observe from his experiment to support this conclusion?
4. What "resources" are needed to resist authority? How might someone acquire or develop these resources?
5. Compare and contrast the experiments conducted by Milgram and Asch. How are the goals of their experiments similar? How are they different? What are the similarities and differences between *obedience* and *conformity* that their studies illustrate?
6. How do people learn about obedience? Do you think this is something that is taught to people or is it just an instinctive part of human nature? Explain.

7. What is your hypothesis about Asch's questions at the end of this reading? Why do you think the subject's of Asch's experiment gave answers that conformed to the consensus of the other group members even when they were clearly incorrect? To what extent do you think people will go to avoid looking different from the group?
8. When *should* you obey authority? Under what circumstances is obedience the right choice? Are there any circumstances when you *should* conform?
9. How do these social experiments influence how you are thinking about the history you are studying in this course?

Using Resource 15.1

Extending the Discussion

This reading provides an important reference point for subsequent lessons in this section. The next two lessons explore both propaganda and the experiences of young people in Nazi Germany. As you proceed through these lessons, encourage students to make connections to the concepts of *obedience*, *blind obedience*, and *authority* that are introduced with this reading.

You might also choose to have your students read one of the following readings depicting various levels of obedience to Nazi policies:

- "Birthday Party," pp. 237-240
- "A Matter of Loyalty," pp. 240-241
- "Models of Obedience," pp. 235-237
- "Rebels Without a Cause," pp. 249-250

After reading one or more of these readings, students can meet in a small group to discuss the range of responses to Nazi policies. One way to structure this activity is to have students identify examples of *barely following orders*, *following orders*, *following orders to an extreme*, and *resistance (not following orders)*. Groups can then discuss how this evidence supports and/or refutes the results of Milgram's study and suggest other factors, in addition to obedience, that might have influenced the choices made by German youth.

Video – Obedience

This film dramatically and effectively illustrates the Milgram Experiments with actual footage of "teachers" and their reactions to the experiment conditions. See the *Using the Film* section below for detailed suggestions for incorporating this film into your class.

Using the Film: Obedience

The film *Obedience* is a 45-minute documentary about Stanley Milgram's famous experiment which demonstrated the human tendency to obey authority. It is a recommended companion to this reading because it vividly illustrates the experiments described here. Nevertheless, *we strongly recommend that you watch the entire film before deciding whether or not it is appropriate for your students*. To allow ample time for preparation and debrief, many teachers show students only excerpts of the film.

Excerpts commonly used include:

- (9:30-11:45) – The “teacher” (subject) refuses to go along with the experimenter’s instructions
- (21:50–35:15) – The “teacher” volunteer obeys the instructions of the test administrator to the most advanced degree
- (39:40-44:17) - Milgram describes variations to the experiment and how that influenced the results. In particular, this excerpt shows how subjects were influenced by the actions of people around them. When the group obeyed, the subject was more likely to obey, and vice versa. Thus, this clip can be useful in helping students consider the relationship between conformity and obedience.

Pre-viewing:

Read Part A of Resource 15.1 with the class. It is often most effective for the teacher to read this description of the experiments to the class, stopping along the way to explain or illustrate how the experiment is set up. Ask students to answer Comprehension and Connections questions for Part A in their journals, or record their predictions on the board.

During-viewing:

While viewing this clip, ask students to closely observe the behavior of the “teacher” and the test administrator. Provide frequent opportunities for students to write in their journals about what they have viewed, for example by pausing after selected excerpts.

[Two-column note-taking](#) can be a useful structure to help students capture information about what they observe as well as their reactions (feelings, questions, comments) to this information. To provide more structure for students’ note-taking, ask them to respond to specific questions such as:

- What language is used by the experimenter and the “teacher”?
- What is the teacher’s body language?
- How does the teacher act as he administered the shocks? What does he say?
- What pressures were placed on the teacher as the experiment continued?
- How does viewing this film make you feel? What ideas and questions does it raise for you?

This film has been known to provoke strong emotional reactions in students. Many teachers have been surprised when students laugh at sensitive moments of the documentary. This laughter can be interpreted in many ways, but often it is a sign of discomfort or confusion, not of enjoyment. Those who study human behavior say that

laughter can be a way of relieving tension, showing embarrassment, or expressing relief that someone else is “on the spot.” You might share these findings with students so that they see laughter as something other than an indication of humor or foolishness.

Post- viewing:

Teachers who have used this film comment on the importance of planning sufficient time for debriefing during that class period, making sure that students process their reactions before moving on to their next class. Leave time for initial reactions to the film, as a whole class discussion or as a [think-pair-share](#). There are so many ways that this film can be a springboard to deep discussions about obedience and conformity in the past and today. You might begin by asking students to generate a list of questions that they want to talk about. As you discuss, make sure students know that 65 percent of the volunteers gave the “learner” the full 450 volts. (You may want to remind students that the “learner” in the experiment was a member of the research team and was not actually receiving any electric shocks.)

The [Think-pair-share](#) or [fishbowl](#) teaching strategies can be used to structure a class discussion. Or, small groups of students can select one or more of these questions to discuss and then they can share the highlights of their discussion with the larger class.

Lesson 16: Propaganda and Conformity

Essential Questions:

- *What does it mean to conform? What factors encourage one to conform to the rules and standards set by leaders?*
- *What is “the media?” What purposes does it serve? How does the media shape the way we think and act?*
- *What is propaganda? How can propaganda be distinguished from other forms of media?*
- *How do you know when information is accurate? Under what conditions do you believe what you see and hear?*
- *What does it mean to dehumanize? What are the consequences of being defined as “other” or less than human?*

Included Resources:

- * 16.1 – Propaganda
 - 16.2 – The Impact of Propaganda
- * = core Resource

Introduction:

One way to look at obedience and conformity in Nazi Germany is through the lens of propaganda. Propaganda - the dissemination of information to persuade an audience toward a particular idea or cause - was among the most powerful tools in the Nazi arsenal. Adolf Hitler said, “By the skillful and sustained use of propaganda, one can make a people see even heaven as hell or an extremely wretched life as paradise.” By establishing the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda as one of his first acts as chancellor, Hitler demonstrated his belief that controlling information was as important as controlling the military and the economy. He appointed Josef Goebbels to direct this department. Goebbels penetrated virtually every sector of German society, from film, radio, posters, and rallies to school textbooks with Nazi propaganda. The Nazis also found ways to remove ideas from larger society that they felt went against party doctrine. They organized public book burnings, censored newspapers, published lists of banned books and authors, and prohibited “offensive” artists from displaying their work (except when displayed by the Nazis under the label of “degenerate” art).

In this lesson, students will read about and discuss some of the guiding principles the Nazis followed in the creation of propaganda. Students will also get a sense of the way the Nazis sought to shape and condition the beliefs of Germans through a constant barrage of finely tuned messages. They will also consider the consequences of using powerful media to glorify some groups while dehumanizing other segments of society.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- If you wanted to convince people to believe a certain idea, what might you do? What are some ways you might persuade people to agree with you?
- Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: Most people can be convinced to believe almost anything. Explain your answer.
- How do you decide whether or not to believe what you see and hear? Do you think people are generally skeptical? Or are they too willing to believe that they see on television, learn on the internet, or hear from celebrities or politicians?
- Describe an example of someone using the media (internet, television, books, etc.) to spread information about a person that was either exaggerated or completely untrue. What were the consequences of the situation? How was the subject of the lies or exaggerations affected?

Additional Readings:

- “A Substitute for Religion,” pp. 214-218
- “Propaganda and Sports,” pp. 221-223
- “Art and Propaganda,” pp. 223-225
- “Using Film as Propaganda,” pp. 225-227

Resource 16.1: Propaganda

Creating Context

Consider the following statements:

- The media (television, internet, movies, newspapers, etc.) continues education into adulthood.
- It is acceptable for the government to manipulate the media to increase the public's support for its policies.
- "If you tell a lie big enough and often enough, people will believe you."

Which do you agree with? Why or why not? Discuss your responses with your classmates.

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this resource:

propaganda	censorship
slogan	euphemism
dehumanization	

As Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels was responsible for making sure that every form of expression – from music to textbooks to movies and even sermons – trumpeted the same message.

In his diary, Goebbels wrote, "That propaganda is good which leads to success, and that is bad which fails to achieve the desired result, however intelligent it is, for it is not propaganda's task to be intelligent; its task is to lead to success. Therefore, no one can say your propaganda is too rough, too mean; these are not criteria by which it may be characterized. It ought not be decent nor ought it be gentle or soft or humble; it ought to lead to success... Never mind whether propaganda is at a well-bred level; what matters is that it achieves its purpose." To achieve that purpose, Hitler insisted that "it must be limited to a very few points and must harp on these in slogans until the last member of the public understands what you want him to understand by your slogan. As soon as you sacrifice this slogan and try to be many-sided, the effect will piddle away."

Hitler and Goebbels did not invent propaganda. The word itself was coined by the Catholic Church to describe its efforts to counter Protestant teachings in the 1600s. Over the years, almost every nation has used propaganda to unite its people in wartime. Both sides spread propaganda during World War I, for example. Hitler and Goebbels employed it in very similar ways. They, too, wanted to counter the teachings of their opponents, shape public opinion, and build loyalty. But in doing so, they took the idea to new extremes.

Goebbels left nothing to chance. He controlled every word heard the radio or read in a newspaper or magazine. And that control went well beyond censorship. He issued daily instructions on what to say and how to say it. Max von der Gruen said of those changes:

All the activities of everyday life were given a military orientation. This military aura extended even into the realm of language. Henceforth one heard only:

instead of “employment office” – “labor mobilization”...
instead of “worker” – “soldier of labor”
instead of “work” – “service to Fuehrer and folk”...
instead of “factory meeting” – “factory roll call”...
instead of “production” – “the production battle.”

It is easy to understand that if, for whatever reasons, these words are hammered into a person’s brain every day, they soon become a part of his language, and he does not necessarily stop and think about where they came from and why they were coined in the first place.⁶

The power to label ideas, events, groups, and individuals was central to Nazi efforts. Such labels made it clear who were the heroes and who were the enemies. In the process, the Nazis defined themselves as the guardians of the “true” Germany and the custodians of the nation’s glorious past.

16.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. How did Hitler and Goebbels describe the purpose of propaganda? What do their descriptions say about the extent to which they believed the people in Germany were willing or able to think critically about what they were told by the government?
2. In the second paragraph, Joseph Goebbels describes his philosophy for creating propaganda. Summarize this philosophy using evidence from the text. What criteria does he use to determine whether or not propaganda is effective?
3. What is the purpose of giving the names for everyday activities and occupations a “military orientation”? How does the language of the military stoke feelings of nationalism?
4. Re-read the statements in *Creating Context* above. Has your opinion of any of the statements changed? Why or why not?
5. Euphemisms are inoffensive terms used in place of more explicit language. In Germany, euphemisms disguised events, dehumanized Jews and other “enemies

of the state,” and diffused responsibility for specific actions. Thus the Nazis spoke of “cleanups,” rather than “murders.” They did not throw enemies into jail but took them into “protective custody.” What is the difference? List current examples of euphemisms. How is each used? What do they have in common? Why do people use these euphemisms?

6. What is the difference between propaganda and advertising? How might advertising be morally and ethically different?
7. What questions do you have about propaganda after thinking about this reading? Write your questions down in your journal. What resources or strategies can you use to answer your questions?

Using Resource 16.1

Defining Propaganda

You can prepare students for the content that follows in this lesson by helping them come up with a working definition of propaganda. Guide them to use information from this reading and to think about differences between propaganda and advertising. It is important to emphasize that the Nazis sought to control every form of media in Germany. While students will be analyzing printer materials and, if you choose, some film, propaganda today might be found on television or the internet, two forms of media that either did not exist or was not widely used in the 1930s and 1940s.

Resource 16.2:
The Impact of Propaganda***Analyzing Visual Images***

The following pages contain several examples of images and posters the Nazis used as propaganda in the 1930's and 1940's. Examine each one carefully. Follow these six steps as you examine each image:

Step One:

Look deeply. Look at the picture for a good long time. Observe shapes, colors, textures, the position of people and objects.

Step Two:

Write down what you see *without making any interpretation* about what the picture is trying to say.

I see...

Step Three:

What questions do you have about this picture that you would need answered before you can begin to interpret it? (Ask as many questions as you have.)

I want to know... I was wondering... Who?... What?... Where?... When?... Why?...

Step Four:

Discuss your questions with a partner or small group to try to find some answers.

Step Five:

Given what you know about the historical context and subject of the piece, what do you think the creator of the image is trying to say? What does the piece mean, and who do you think is the intended audience?

I think the artist is saying... I think the intended audience is...

Step Six:

Discuss your interpretation with the class, and be prepared to support your view by referring to specifics in the drawing and in what you know about the history of the time.

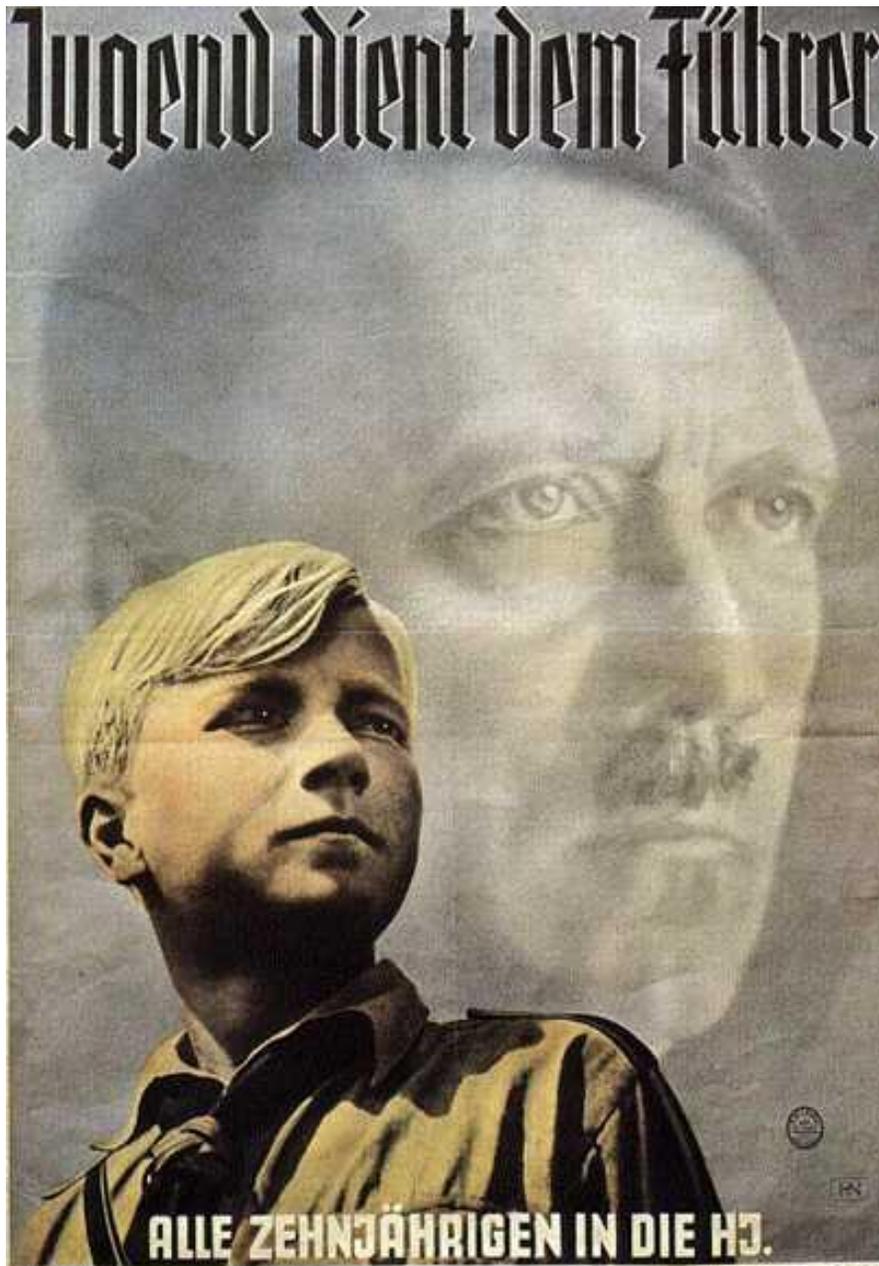
**Part A:
Poster - “Healthy Parents Have Healthy Children”**



Part B:
Poster - "Long Live Germany"



Part C:
Poster - “Youth Serve the Führer”



The bottom text reads: “All 10-year-olds in the Hitler Youth.”

Part D:
Children's Book - "The Poisonous Mushroom"



„Wie die Giftpilze oft schwer von den guten Pilzen zu unterscheiden sind, so ist es oft sehr schwer, die Juden als Gauner und Verbrecher zu erkennen...“

The text on this page from the German children's book, *Der Giftpilz (The Poisonous Mushroom)* reads, "Just as it is often very difficult to tell the poisonous from the edible mushrooms, it is often very difficult to recognize Jews as thieves and criminals."

Part E:
Poster - “The Eternal Jew”



This poster was used as an advertisement for an exhibit and book of photographs of Jews. *The Eternal Jew* is also the name of a propaganda film the Nazis produced.

16.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Based on the images you analyzed, how do you think the Nazis used propaganda to define the identities of individuals and groups? What groups and individuals did Nazi propaganda glorify? What stereotypes did they promote? Cite evidence from the images you looked at to support your answers.
2. How do the images you analyzed reflect ideas about *race*, *nationalism*, or *antisemitism*? Use your observations of the images as evidence for your answers.
3. What does it mean to dehumanize a person or group? Which images in this reading were dehumanizing? How did they accomplish this goal? What are the consequences of dehumanizing someone?

4. After seeing the Nazi propaganda film, *The Eternal Jew*, a Dutch graduate student named Marion Pritchard remembered:

It was so cruel... that we could not believe anybody would have taken it seriously, or find it convincing. But the next day one of the gentiles [non-Jews] said that she was ashamed to admit that the movie had affected her. That although it strengthened her resolve to oppose the German regime, the film had succeeded in making her see Jews as “them.” And that of course was true for all of us. The Germans had driven a wedge in what was one of the most integrated communities in Europe.⁷

After seeing a movie, television show, or advertisement (or after hearing a song), have you ever felt like an idea stuck with you, even though you questioned whether or not it was true? What is the effect of that kind of persistent ideas?

5. Where do you notice propaganda today? What are its consequences?
6. Can you think of positive uses for propaganda? Where is the line between the appropriate use of media to persuade and the misuse of media to inflict harm?
7. How do you tell whether what you hear or see through the media can be trusted? What criteria can you use to judge?
8. Some scholars caution that there are limits to the power of propaganda; they believe it succeeds not because it persuades the public to an entirely new set of ideas, but because it taps into beliefs people already hold. Scholar Daniel Goldhagen writes:

No man, [no] Hitler, no matter how powerful he is, can move people against their hopes and desires. Hitler, as powerful a figure as he was, as charismatic as he was, could never have accomplished this [the Holocaust]

had there not been tens of thousands, indeed hundreds of thousands of ordinary Germans who were willing to help him.⁸

Do you agree? Would people have rejected Nazi propaganda if they did not already share, to some extent, the beliefs it communicated?

Using Resource 16.2

Analyzing Propaganda Images

As outlined in the beginning of the reading, many teachers find the [Analyzing Visual Images](#) strategy to be an effective way to prompt students to examining propaganda images closely and carefully. You might ask students to follow this strategy and analyze all five images in this reading, or you might assign one image to each student (or to a small group), then have them share their analyses with each other.

The [German Propaganda Archive at Calvin College](#) includes additional examples of Nazi speeches, posters, and political cartoons that you can use to expand or modify this activity. Also, Facing History's library has a set of propaganda slides available for borrowing.

Discussing the Impact of Propaganda

The Comprehension and Connections questions above can inspire a deep thinking and spirited discussion. You might give students time to choose one or two questions to respond to in writing. Then in small groups, students can comment on each other's ideas using the [Save the last word for me](#) teaching strategy. This strategy might provide students an especially useful framework for analyzing the quotations above from both Marion Pritchard and Daniel Goldhagen.

Also consider extending your class discussion by showing a short excerpt from the episode "Chaos and Consent" from the documentary [Nazis: A Warning From History](#). One clip (roughly 26:00-33:00) includes an interview with a German woman who turned in one of her neighbors to the Gestapo. Ask students to consider the following questions:

- What factors motivated the woman to turn in her neighbor?
- Was she influenced by propaganda? By laws?
- Can propaganda encourage people to act beyond what is required by the law?
- What other factors can encourage people to act beyond what is required of them by the law?

Analyzing Propaganda Films

The Nazis hired prominent filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl to document the 1934 Nuremberg Rally and the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The two films she created from these events, *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia*, are considered masterpieces of propaganda filmmaking. Clips of both films are readily available on YouTube, and *Triumph of the Will* is available from the Facing History library on DVD.

The opening sequence of *Triumph of the Will* depicts Hitler's arrival in Nuremberg for the Party Rally and is rich with evocative imagery and symbolism. If you show this clip, using the [two-column note taking](#) strategy is an effective way to engage students in the analysis of what they see.

Analyzing Contemporary Media

Students are surrounded by advertisements and other media that are intended to influence public opinion. The media, intentionally or unintentionally, disseminate ideas about race, gender, age, class and the messages individuals, especially young people, pick up from the media can have a profound impact on how they define themselves and how they are defined by others. To expose and demystify these messages, ask students to interpret media in their lives. Here are some ways you can help students develop their media literacy skills while also giving them an opportunity to think about how the media influences how they see themselves and how they see others:

- Have students look for examples of how a group (families, men, women, teenagers, African Americans, Latinos, etc.) is represented by the media (by a song, a newspaper article, advertisements in magazines, etc.). To what degree (a lot, somewhat, not much) does the media's portrayal of this group match the student's own characterization? This exercise can lead into a discussion about the relationship between the media and identity. How do the media shape who we are and how we see others? In what ways can this be helpful? In what ways can the media be harmful?
- Students can bring in examples of propaganda, either found on the Internet, in magazines, or on television, and then discuss why they think this text should be classified as propaganda based on the definitions they developed in class. To complicate students' work with propaganda, include an example of media with a "positive" message, such as a public service announcement. Students could organize the examples of contemporary propaganda they have collected on a continuum from most ethical to least ethical.

Create propaganda posters

After students analyze propaganda from Nazi Germany and from today, give them the opportunity to create their own propaganda posters. Begin by having students select a cause or message that is important to them. Then they can identify an appropriate audience for this message and then they can brainstorm tactics that might be persuasive to this audience. For more information about propaganda techniques, one helpful resource is the [Institute for Propaganda Analysis](#).

Lesson 17: “He Who Owns the Youth, Gains the Future”

Essential Questions:

- *How do young people learn the values of their society? How do they help shape the values of their society?*
- *What is the role of education? Why does it matter what and how young people learn in school?*
- *What type of schooling prepares young people for their role as citizens in a democracy?*

Included Resources:

- * 17.1 – School for Barbarians
- 17.2 – Changes at School
- 17.3 – Propaganda and Education
- 17.4 – Racial Instruction
- 17.5 – School for Girls
- 17.6 – A Lesson in Current Events

* = core Resource

Introduction:

The Nazis paid an exceptional amount of attention to the young people in German society. In 1935, Hitler declared, “He alone who owns the youth, gains the future.” Through the education system, the organization of national youth groups (such as the Hitler Youth), and propaganda, the Nazis sought not only to enlist young men and women in their movement but also to shape their beliefs and feelings. This way, Hitler believed, the Nazis could build a movement that lasted a thousand years.

The goal of this lesson is to help students explore the different strategies the Nazis used to prepare young Germans for their role as obedient followers of Hitler. In the readings and videos of this lesson, your students will find many opportunities both to make connections with facets of the lives of young people in Nazi Germany and to draw contrasts between these young Germans and the lives of young Americans today. There are a number of rich resources to use in this lesson. As you weave together video clips and readings, make sure to give students ample time to reflect on the connections and contrasts they find.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What messages does society send to young people today about the proper way to think and act? Where do these messages come from? To what extent do you agree or disagree with these messages?

- Hitler said, “He alone who owns the truth, gains the future.” What do you think he meant by this? Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with this statement? Explain.
- If you were designing a school that was supposed to prepare young people for their role as citizens in a democracy, what would it be like? What would students learn? What would happen at this school? How might this school be different than one that was preparing students for their role as citizens in a dictatorship?
- What is the difference between education and indoctrination?

Additional Readings:

- “Belonging,” pp. 232-235
- “Birthday Party,” pp. 237-240
- “A Matter of Loyalty,” pp. 240-241
- “Models of Obedience,” pp. 235-237
- “Rebels Without a Cause,” pp. 249-250

Resource 17.1: School for Barbarians

Creating Context

The Nazis paid an exceptional amount of attention to recruiting young people into their movement. In 1935, Hitler declared, “He alone who owns the youth, gains the future.” What do you think he meant by this statement? Do you agree or disagree? What strategies do you think the Nazis could use to win over young people?

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this resource:

intrepid	barbarian
brutal	denounce
Jungvolk	salvation
Hitler Youth/HJ	blockwart
JungMaedel	placard
League of German Girls	

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

Hitler believed he was on side of the history. He claimed that “When an opponent declares, ‘I will not come over to your side,’ I calmly say, ‘Your child belongs to us already. You will pass on. Your descendants, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing else but this new community.’” In Hitler’s mind, young Germans were the key. In speech after speech, he declared:

We older ones are used up. Yes, we are old already... We are cowardly and sentimental... But my magnificent youngsters? Are there finer ones anywhere in the world? Look at these young men and boys? What material! With them I can make a new world... A violently active, dominating, intrepid, brutal youth – that is what I am after. Youth must be all those things. It must be indifferent to pain. There must be no weakness or tenderness in it. I want to see once more in its eyes the gleam of pride and independence of the beast of prey... I intend to have an athletic youth – that is the first and the chief thing... I will have no intellectual training. Knowledge is ruin to my young men.

By 1939, about 90 percent of the “Aryan” children in Germany belonged to Nazi youth groups. They started at the age of six. At ten, boys were initiated into the Jungvolk and at fourteen promoted to the Hitler Youth or HJ (for Hitler Jugend). Girls belonged to the Jungmaedel and then the BDM (the Bund Deutscher Maedel or the League of German Girls). In such groups, said Hitler, “These young people will learn nothing else but how to think German and act German... And they will never be free again, not in their whole lives.”

Erika Mann, a German who opposed the Nazis, wrote a book called *School for Barbarians*. It explained to Americans how the Nazis tried to carry out Hitler's ideas.

Every child says "Heil Hitler!" from 50 to 150 times a day but this new day, immeasurably more often than the old neutral greetings. The formula is required by law; if you meet a friend on the way to school, you say it; study periods are opened and closed with "Heil Hitler!"; "Heil Hitler!" says the postman, the street-car conductor, the girl who sells you notebooks at the stationery store; and if your parents' first words when you come home to lunch are not "Heil Hitler!" they have been guilty of a punishable offense, and can be denounced. "Heil Hitler!" they shout, in the Jungvolk and Hitler Youth. "Heil Hitler!" cry the girls in the League of German Girls. Your evening prayers must close with "Heil Hitler!" if you take your devotions seriously.

Officially – when you say hello to your superiors in school or in a group – the words are accompanied by the act of throwing the right arm high; but an unofficial greeting among equals requires only a comparatively lax lifting of the forearm, with the fingers closed and pointing forward. This Hitler greeting, this "German" greeting, repeated countless times from morning to bedtime, stamps the whole day. "Heil" really means salvation, and used to be applied to relations between man and his God; one would speak of ewiges Heil (eternal salvation), and the adjective "holy" derives from the noun. But now there is the new usage...

You leave the house in the morning, "Heil Hitler" on your lips; and on the stairs of your apartment house you meet the Blockwart. A person of great importance and some danger, the Blockwart has been installed by the government as a Nazi guardian. He controls the block, reporting on it regularly, checking up on the behavior of its residents. It's worth it to face right about, military style, and to give him the "big" Hitler salute, with the right arm as high as it will go. All the way down the street, the flags are waving, every window colored with red banners, and the black swastika in the middle of each. You don't stop to ask why; it's bound to be some national event. Not a week passes without an occasion on which families are given one reason or another to hang out the swastika. Only the Jews are excepted under the strict regulation. Jews are not Germans, they do not belong to the "Nation," they can have no "national events."

You meet the uniforms on the way to school: the black [uniformed] S.S. men, the men of the Volunteer Labor Service, and the Reichswehr soldiers. And if some of the streets are closed, you know that an official is driving through town. Nobody has ever told you that the high officials of other countries pass without the precautions of closed streets.

And here, where a building is going up, the workmen are gone – probably because of the "national event." But the sign is on the scaffolding. "We have our Führer to thank that we are working here today. Heil Hitler!" The familiar sign, seen everywhere with men at work, on roads, barracks, sport fields. What does it mean

to you? Do you think of a world outside, with workers who need not thank a Führer for their jobs? Certainly not – what you have, imprinted on your mind, is the sentence, deep and accepted as an old melody.

There are more placards as you continue past hotels, restaurants, indoor swimming pools, to school. They read “No Jews allowed;” “Jews not desired here;” “Not for Jews.” And what do you feel? Agreement? Pleasure? Disgust? Opposition? You don’t feel any of these. You don’t feel anything, you’ve seen these placards for almost five years. This is a habit, it is all perfectly natural, of course Jews aren’t allowed here. Five years in the life of a child of nine – that’s his life, after four years of infancy, his whole personal, conscious existence.

Through the Nazi street walks the Nazi child. There is nothing to disturb him, nothing to attract his attention or criticism. The stands sell Nazi papers almost exclusively; all German papers are Nazi; foreign papers are forbidden, if they do not please the men at the top. The child won’t be surprised at their huge headlines: “UNHEARD-OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST GERMANY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA!” “JEWISH GANGSTERS RULE AMERICA!” “THE COMMUNIST TERROR IN SPAIN SUPPORTED BY THE POPE!” “150 MORE PRIESTS UNMASKED AS SEXUAL CRIMINALS!”

“That’s how it is in the world,” the child thinks. “What luck we’re in, to have a Führer. He’ll tell the whole bunch – Czechs, Jews, Americans, Communists and priests – where to get off!”

There are no doubts, no suspicion at the coarse and hysterical tone of the dispatches, no hint that they may be inexact or false. No, these things are part of the everyday world of the Nazis, like the Blockwart, the swastika, the signs reading “No Jews allowed.” They add up to an atmosphere that is torture, a fuming poison for a free-born human being. The German child breathes this air. There is no other condition wherever Nazis are in power; and here in Germany they do rule everywhere, and their supremacy over the German child, as he learns and eats, marches, grows up, breathes, is complete.⁹

17.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. Re-read Erika Mann’s description of the life of a young person in Nazi Germany. What word or phrase would you choose to describe this life? What evidence from the reading supports the word or phrase you chose? Write the word or phrase in your journal, and then add a few sentences describing why you chose it.
2. Hitler demanded that the nation produce a “violently active, dominating, intrepid, brutal youth.” What part did the schools play in carrying out that goal? What part did youth groups play? What about the media, and society as a whole? How do

- your answers explain why Erika Mann called her book *A School for Barbarians*?
3. What does Hitler mean when he says that after joining a Nazi youth group, young Germans “will never be free again, not in their whole lives?” Support your answer with evidence from the reading.
 4. Hitler described his ideal youth. What is the ideal in American society? Do you know of anyone who fits either ideal?
 5. Why do you think Hitler referred to German youth as “my young men”? Why didn’t he mention young women?
 6. What characteristics did the youth groups foster in young people? For example, why did members wear uniforms and arm bands? Have a special salute? Take part in rallies and parades?
 7. What was the appeal of the Hitler Youth to young Germans? What opportunities did belonging to the Hitler Youth present to it’s members?
 8. Write a working definition of the word *indoctrinate*. How does it differ from the word *educate*? How did Hitler indoctrinate young Germans? Why did he focus his efforts on them rather than their parents? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
 9. Describe the messages a child would hear in Nazi Germany. How would those messages reinforce ideas about *nationalism*, *race*, and *antisemitism*? How would those messages affect the way he or she viewed the world? How does such an atmosphere turn hatred into a habit?
 10. What did Erika Mann mean when she said that after a time the child did not feel anything? Does hearing the same message over and over again affect you in the same way? Is Mann’s book propaganda?

Using Resource 17.1

Improving Comprehension

This reading includes quite a few details about the experiences of young people in Nazi Germany, as well as a number of vocabulary terms in German. To help struggling readers, you might ask the class to use the [Chunking](#) strategy while reading. You could also divide the reading, especially the excerpt from Erika Mann, into smaller sections for students to analyze in small groups using the [Big Paper](#) or [Gallery Walk](#) strategies.

Discussion and Analysis

Asking students to describe the ideal American youth (as in Question 3 above) can inspire a spirited class discussion. Use other Comprehension and Connections questions to keep the discussion going. Try using the [Fishbowl](#) strategy to give every voice a chance to be heard and to make sure everyone practices listening, too.

Using Videos to Explore Youth Experiences in Nazi Germany

Using clips from the following three videos can broaden students' ideas about the lives of young people in 1930's Germany:

Confessions of a Hitler Youth

The entire thirty-minute video is worth viewing, but the chapters "Hitler Youth" and "Nuremberg" are especially appropriate for this lesson. In these chapters, Alfons Heck, a high-ranking member of the Hitler Youth, describes how peer pressure and propaganda helped Hitler and the Nazis recruit eight million German children to participate in the war effort. Alfons Heck's story is described in more detail in the book *Parallel Journeys*, and his testimony is excerpted in the reading "Belonging" (pp. 232-235). These clips can be used in conjunction with Readings 17.2 – 17.6, and analyzed using the [Text-to-Text](#), [Text-to-Self](#), [Text-to-World](#) strategy.

Childhood Memories

This video is a montage of several people who were children in Nazi Germany sharing their memories of the time. The video includes segments from Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, and some who were not persecuted by the Nazis. Again, the entire hour-long video is worth watching, but the segments featuring Frank S. and Walter K. are recommended for this lesson. These clips can be used in conjunction with Readings 17.2 – 17.6, and analyzed using the [Text-to-Text](#), [Text-to-Self](#), [Text-to-World](#) strategy.

Triumph of the Will

Leni Riefenstahl's propaganda film about the 1934 Nazi Party Rally in Nuremberg includes significant footage of the involvement of young people in the rally activities. The DVD chapters showing the Youth Encampment and the Hitler Youth Rally (which includes a speech by Hitler to the HJ) provide insight into how the Nazis sought to attract youth into the movement. Because this is a propaganda film, we recommend that you use the [Two-Column Note Taking](#) strategy to prompt students to not only observe the events depicted in the film but also consider the intentionality behind way that they are depicted.

Using Resources 17.2 - 17.6

Exploring Additional Narratives about Young People in Nazi Germany

The following five resources describe different aspects of the experience of growing up in Nazi Germany. Each reading will extend the knowledge students have already gained through Resource 17.1 and any of the videos you showed them.

The Jigsaw teaching strategy is an effective way to structure your class's exploration of these readings. Each initial group will prepare a short summary of their article for its members to share in their second jigsaw groups. You might also assign each initial group one or both of the following tasks:

- Discuss the Comprehension and Connections following the reading
- Make connections with the reading using the [Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World](#) strategy

Revising Single Word/Phrase Summaries

The first Comprehension and Connections question after Resource 17.1 asks students to describe life for young people in Nazi Germany in a single word or phrase. After students have added to their knowledge through reading and analyzing some or all of Resources 17.2 to 17.6, ask them to revisit the word or phrase they chose. Would they revise their word or phrase? Why or why not? What did they learn in the new readings that either changed or confirmed their earlier conclusions? You can have students explain their reasoning in their journals on an [Exit Card](#) for assessment.

Defining and Discussing Civic Education

Nazi Germany was not the only government to make civic education an important priority. Many nations, including the United States, have said that one of the purposes of schooling, especially public schooling, is to prepare the young for their role as citizens. After reflecting on what kinds of citizens were desired in Nazi Germany and how schooling was adapted to achieve this goal, students can reflect on civic education in their own society. Before beginning this discussion, students can create working definitions for the phrase "civic education." In small groups, students can respond to the following prompt and then share their answers with the whole class: If you were designing a school that was supposed to prepare young people for their role as citizens in a democracy, what would it be like? What would students learn? What would happen at this school? How might this school be different than one that was preparing students for their role as citizens in a dictatorship?

Extension: Civic Education Debate

The materials in this lesson might spark students' interest in civic education. Students could research what their school, district, or state mandate in terms of civic education. They could also analyze civics or history textbooks. Another way to deepen students' understanding of civic preparation in a democracy is to organize a debate on the topic. Students can take positions on statements such as:

- The purpose of public schools is to prepare youth for their role as citizens.
- Schools today do a good job of preparing young people to be effective democratic citizens.
- It is appropriate for schools to indoctrinate youth to the norms valued in that society.

The following teaching strategies provide useful structures for classroom debates: [SPAR](#), [barometer](#), and [four corners](#).

Resource 17.2:
Changes at School

Ellen Switzer, a student in Nazi Germany, later recalled how a classmate named Ruth responded to attempts at isolating the Jews.

Her most appealing qualities were her total sincerity and her willingness to share whatever she had with a classmate in need. If the school was cold... Ruth would always lend you her sweater; she insisted that the cold air made her feel more alive. If you forgot your lunch, Ruth shared hers; she was not very hungry that day. Out of the same generosity that prompted her to share her clothing and her food, she also shared her ideas. Ruth was a dedicated Nazi.

She always had a large number of pamphlets, booklets, newsletters and other materials in her book bag, along with her school supplies. If one wanted to discuss clothes or one's problem with a teacher or a parent with Ruth, she was always willing to do so. But somehow, the discussion tended to turn political... "Here, take this booklet, it will explain what I'm talking about," she would often say, pressing in our hands yet another piece of literature, which often seemed surprisingly relevant to the problem we have been discussing...

Some of us, especially those of us who were called "non-Aryan" (and therefore, thoroughly evil) in Ruth's booklets, often asked her how she could possibly have friends who were Jews or who had a Jewish background, when everything she read and distributed seemed to breathe hate against us and our ancestors. "Of course, they don't mean you," she would explain earnestly. "You are a good German. It's those other Jews, pacifists, socialists and liberals who betrayed Germany that Hitler wants to remove from influence."...

When Hitler actually came to power and the word went out that students of Jewish background were to be isolated, that "Aryan" Germans were no longer to associate with "non-Aryans" (i.e., those who were either Jewish or who had one Jewish ancestor, even though they themselves were Christians), Ruth actually came around and apologized to those of us to whom she was no longer able to talk. "The whole thing may be a misunderstanding," she explained, "Maybe it will all be straightened out later. But meanwhile, Hitler must know what he is doing, and I'll follow orders," Not only did she no longer speak to the suddenly ostracized group of classmates, she carefully noted down anybody who did, and reported them.¹⁰

17.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. How was Ruth's behavior an example of conformity? What evidence is there that

- she was confused by some Nazi ideology? How did she try to make sense of it?
2. How is it possible for a person to be as kind as Ruth and still be a Nazi? What does her story suggest about those who found the Nazis' teachings so attractive?
 3. What did Ruth mean when she said "Of course, they don't mean you"? Have you ever said or heard a similar remark when the stereotype of the group doesn't fit an individual within the group?
 4. What were the benefits to Ruth of being a "dedicated Nazi"?
 5. After the war, in talking to the headmistress of her school about Ruth, Switzer learned that Ruth served as a nurse in a concentration camp where "so-called experiments were carried out on helpless inmates." The headmistress said of Ruth: "She was not really a bad person, she was what I call an ideologue. Once she had come to believe in an idea – no matter how perverted, illogical and evil – she couldn't let go. She's now in prison and she's probably still sure that what she believed was right." What relationship might there be between the Nazis' use of propaganda and Ruth's inability to let go of her beliefs?

Resource 17.3:**Propaganda and Education*****Creating Context***

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this Resource:

disciplinarian**pedagogy**

In *Education for Death*, American educator Gregor Ziemer described schooling in Nazi Germany. As part of his research, he studied curriculum materials used in German schools. He noted:

A teacher is not spoken of as a teacher (Lehrer) but an *Erzieher*. The word suggests an iron disciplinarian who does not instruct but commands, and whose orders are backed up with force if necessary.

Matters of the spirit are frankly and energetically belittled. Physical education, education for action, is alone worthy of the Nazi teacher's attention. All else can be dismissed as non-essential.

Nazi education transcends old-fashioned pedagogy. Education in Hitler schools is not the result of a gradual evolution, but of revolution. It stems from political conflict and political victory.

The Nazi schools are no place for weaklings. All children must, of course, finish the primary school before they are ten; but after that schools are proving-grounds for the Party. Those who betray any weakness of body or have not the capacities for absolute obedience and submission must be expelled.

“Students who are unable to produce required results or who betray any weakness, are to be kept out of the secondary schools,” states the iron Minister to his iron-minded teachers on page one of his iron-clad manual.

The regime draws a sharp distinction between girls, inherently weak, and boys, natural exponents of Strength. Boys and girls have nothing in common. Their aims, their purposes in life, are fundamentally different. Boys will become soldiers; girls will become breeders. Co-educational schools are manifestations of decadent democracies and hence are taboo.

[Dr. Bernhard Rust, the Nazi Minister of Education,] decrees that in Nazi schools the norm is physical education. After that, German, biology, science, mathematics, and history for the boys; eugenics and home economics for the girls.

Other subjects are permissible if they are taught to promote Nazi ideals. Spiritual education is definitely unimportant.¹¹

17.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. What is the role of the teacher in Nazi Germany?
2. Why does Ziemer say, “Education in Hitler’s schools is not the result of a gradual evolution, but of revolution.”? What evidence is there to support this claim?
3. Who would be attracted to the kind of education Rust described?
4. Every culture defines the roles men and women are expected to play in society. How were those roles defined in traditional German society? In Nazi society? How were those ideas reflected in German schools? Use evidence from the reading to support your answers.
5. How would you describe American education today? What do your parents and teachers expect you to learn? What kind of person do they want you to become? Compare your own views of American education with those of your classmates. How hard is it to reach a consensus?

Resource 17.4:
Racial Instruction***Creating Context***

You will need to know the following vocabulary terms in order to fully understand this Resource:

preponderant**admixture**

Soon after Hitler took power, a new course was added to the curriculum in every German school. The Nazi Minister of Education outlined the objectives of the course:

1. Give pupils an insight into the relationship, causes and effects of all basic facts having to do with the science of heredity and race.
2. Impress the pupils with the importance of the science of heredity and race for the future of the nation and the purposes of the government.
3. Awaken in the pupils a sense of responsibility toward the nation, as represented by both its ancestry and its posterity; imbue the pupils with pride in the fact that the German people are the most important exponent of the Nordic race, and to influence them in favor of complete (Nordification) of the German people.

This is to be accomplished early enough so that no child shall leave school without a conviction of the necessity of pure blood.

As homework for the new “race science” classes, students were to:

Collect from illustrated magazines, newspapers, etc., pictures of great scholars, statesmen, artists and others who distinguish themselves by their special accomplishments (for example, in economic life, politics, sports). Determine the preponderant race and admixture, according to physical characteristics. Repeat this exercise with the pictures of great men of all nations and times...

Observe the Jew: his way of walking, his bearing, gestures, and movements when talking.

Racial instruction was not limited to a single course. It was included in all classes, even arithmetic. One book entitled *Germany's Fall and Rise – Illustrations Taken from Arithmetic Instruction in the Higher Grades of Elementary School*, asks, “The Jews are aliens in Germany – In 1933 there were 66,060,000 inhabitants of the German Reich, of whom 499,682 were Jews. What is the percentage of aliens?”

17.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. What do the assignments described in the reading have in common? What were teachers trying to teach their students?
2. How effective do you think such assignments were?
3. After World War II, American composers, Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein, wrote a song about prejudice and hate. According to that song, children have to be taught how to hate and they must learn before they are seven or eight. Do you agree? Would the Nazi Minister of Education agree? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
4. Frank S., a Jewish boy in a German school during the Nazi era, recalls the humiliating lessons of “race science.” He can still remember being hauled to the front of the class to demonstrate his “Jewish features.” Carl, an Aryan schoolboy whose father belonged to the Nazi party, also remembers those days. He tells of the time a professor from the Office of Racial Research at the University of Wuerzburg visited his third-grade class. “We were given a lecture on what an Aryan was supposed to be, and sent into the village to find and describe a local Aryan.” What impact do you think such lessons had on both Jewish and non-Jewish students?

Resource 17.5: School for Girls

German girls attended school until the age of fourteen. Although they went to school Monday through Saturday, they had no textbooks and no homework. Their education was minimal except in matters relating to childbirth. After a visit to a girls' school, Gregor Ziemer wrote:

According to the teacher there was no such thing as a problem of morals in Hitler's Germany. The Führer wanted every woman, every girl to bear children – soldiers. She herself was willing to have a child, even though she was not married. The State would rear and educate it.

“All of us women can now enjoy the rich emotional and spiritual experiences of having a baby by a healthy young man without the restricting ties of the old-fashioned institutions of marriage,” were her words.

Hitler and his school authorities urge BDM girls to have babies. But they do not permit the girls to be educated in the same schools with boys. Girls do not require the same sort of education that is essential for boys. The schools for boys teach military science, military geography, military ideology, Hitler worship; those for the girls prepare the proper mental set in the future mates of Hitler's soldiers. One of Minister Rust's officials, a Herr Geheimrat Becker, discussed the problem of co-education with me. He knew something about American schools. It was his contention that the system of trying to put women on the same plane with men, even in matters of the mind, was a waste of time. He admitted there were women who could think as well as men – in their field. But the German schools had one aim: every course, every class had to contribute in some way to Hitler's ideology. He pointed out that the boys who learned about chemistry of war... should not be bothered with the presence of girls in their classes. Girls had a definite purpose. In moments of recreation boys needed girls...

Every girl, he said, must learn the duties of a mother before she is sixteen, so she can have children. Why should girls bother with higher mathematics, or art, or drama, or literature? They could have babies without that sort of knowledge...

Becker reminded me that Hitler devotes thirty pages of *Mein Kampf* to the education of boys. Besides, he mentions the subject frequently. Seven lines he grants to the girls. And that just about indicated the relative importance of the two, Becker said.¹²

17.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. What does the number of lines about girls' education in *Mein Kampf* suggest about Hitler's interest in this topic?
2. What were girls supposed to learn? Why? How did their education differ from the education boys received? Why did it differ? Use evidence from the reading to support your answers.
3. Many people in the early 1900s believed that gender determines what one can and cannot do. What roles were women expected to play in Nazi Germany? In the Weimar Republic? Use evidence from this reading and the resources from Section 4 to answer these questions.
4. What roles were women expected to play in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s? What roles do they play today? What similarities do you notice? What differences seem most striking? How were beliefs that gender determines behavior and aptitude similar to beliefs concerning "race" and religion?
5. What do you think would happen to a girl who demanded more than a minimal education?

Resource 17.6:
A Lesson in Current Events

Gregor Ziemer visited a geography class in one school. He wrote of that class:

The teacher was talking about Germany's deserved place in world affairs. He ascribed her recent swift rise to the Führer's doctrine of race purity. Not every country could boast of a pure race. Czechoslovakia, for instance, was nothing but a few remnants of a race formerly under German rule, mixed with Slavs, Jews, and Galicians. The Poles were no race. But there were other countries that were fast going downhill because of racial sins. He asked his boys to name some.

They mentioned Russia, England, France. The teacher was not satisfied.

"Well, which country has always called itself the 'melting pot' of all other nations? Jungens, that you must know."

Then came the chorus, "Amerika"...

The teacher launched into a devastating diatribe that made short shrift of the United States, that country which had joined the last war just to make money. He worked himself into an emotional fervor.

He explained how during the centuries there had been many men and women who could not get along in Europe. Most of them were criminals and crooks, reprobates and renegades. They were the undesirables. Whenever they tangled with the law in Germany, or any other European country, they got on a boat and went to the United States. There they married each other. And now the children – well, any German boy with intelligence could see what the result would be. These children, in turn, mingled with Jews and Negroes. The citizens of the United States were sinking lower and lower.

But he wasn't through.

"There are many other weaknesses as a result of this lack of racial purity," he continued. "Their government is corrupt. They have a low type of government, a democracy. What is a democracy?"

I wrote down a few of the answers:

"A democracy is a government by rich Jews."

"A democracy is a form of government in which people waste much time." "A democracy is a government in which there is no real leadership."

"A democracy is a government that will be defeated by the Führer."

"Das sowieso," The teacher grinned. "That in any case." He expressed the

conviction that the democratic form of government could not last long in a world where National Socialism was fast getting the upper hand. Democracies had too many flaws.

“Look at the United States,” he said. “It is the richest country in the world. It has almost all the gold in the world. But it also has the largest number of unemployed of any country. Look at some of these pictures.”

He had pictures, cut from German illustrated weeklies, purporting to depict starving men along sidewalks and wharves in American cities.

Moreover, the United States was abusing its minorities. The American Indian was almost exterminated; the Negro was lynched on the nearest tree.

The lot of the laboring man was especially unenviable. He reminded the boys of the benefits their fathers were deriving from the labor front, the Nazi *Arbeitsfront*, which provided pensions, free vacations, trips to the Mediterranean. But in America capital and labor were engaged in an eternal struggle. As a result there were innumerable strikes.

The boys, most of them nine years old, did not know what strikes were. There had not been any in Germany since 1933. The teacher explained, and used more pictures, allegedly of American strikes.

The reactions were written clearly on the faces of the listening boys. A country where such things could be need not be respected, much less feared.

The teacher had one parting shot. “And the leader of the United States? Who is he?”

“Roosevelt,” somebody said.

The teacher’s voice got mysterious. “Roosevelt he calls himself. But his real name is Rosenfeldt. What does that show you?”

“He’s a Jew,” shouted the class.

A bell rang. The boys were dismissed.¹³

17.6 Comprehension & Connections

1. What did the teacher say about the United States? Which statements were true? Which were false? How do you know?

2. How does the teacher use the term “melting pot” to criticize America? How his explanation of that term contrast with the ideals about race promoted in Nazi Germany?
3. What characteristics does the teacher associate with democracy? What consequences does he associate with American democracy?
4. What is the difference between *education* and *indoctrination*? Was the instructor teaching his students or indoctrinating them?
5. Roosevelt was not Jewish. Did the teacher actually say he was? Find other examples of false statements or faulty logic in his lesson.

¹ Harrison E. Salisburg, Forward to *Mischling, Second Degree: My Childhood in Nazi Germany* by Ilse Koehn (Greenwillow, 1977), viii-ix.

² Portions of Rationale adapted from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*, 209-210.

³ Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority* (Harper & Row, 1974), 3-4.

⁴ Philip Zimbardo, “The Pathology of Imprisonment,” *Societies*, April, 1972, 109.

⁵ Sandra Blakeslee, “What Other People Say May Change What You See,” *New York Times*, June 28, 2005, accessed May 10, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/28/science/28brai.html?_r=1.

⁶ Max von der Gruen, *Howl Like the Wolves*.

⁷ Marion Pritchard as quoted in *The Courage to Care*, ed. Carol Rittner and Sondra Meyers (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 28.

⁸ Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, interview with Richard Heffner, *The Open Mind* (TV program), July 9, 1996 (available at <http://www.thirteen.org/openmind/foreign-affairs/hitlers-willingexecutioners-part-i/563/>).

⁹ Erika Mann, *School for Barbarians* (Modern Age, 1938).

¹⁰ Ellen Switzer, *How Democracy Failed*, 89-91.

¹¹ Gregor Ziemer, *Education for Death*, 15-16.

¹² Gregor Ziemer, *Education for Death*, 128-129

¹³ Gregor Ziemer, *Education for Death*, 68-69.

Section 7: Escalating Violence

Essential Questions

- *How do perpetrators of injustice and violence gain power? How do the actions or inactions of others increase the power of a perpetrator? What actions can people take to decrease a perpetrator's power?*
- *How do you know when is the right time to stand up against injustice? How might an individual's answer to this question be different from a nation's answer?*
- *What does it mean to be included in a nation's universe of obligation? What happens to those who are outside of any nation's universe of obligation?*

Lessons

Section 7 includes the following lesson:

- Lesson 18: Kristallnacht - The Night of the Pogrom

Overview

Thus far this case study has led students to examine how the Nazis used laws, propaganda, the education system, and other means to systematically discriminate against and dehumanize Jews and other targeted groups. As a result, these groups were effectively isolated from membership in German society. In this section, we explore how this discrimination and isolation laid the groundwork for government-organized violence against Jews in the pogrom of November 1938 — an event that became known as Kristallnacht.

The materials and questions we explore in this section encourage students to consider what it means to be outside a nation's universe of obligation. What responsibility, if any, does a state have to the people living within its borders? What can happen when a nation does not live up to this responsibility? Do other nations, then, have any responsibility to intervene? Holocaust scholar Richard Rubenstein summarizes the vulnerability of excluded groups when he writes, “no person has any rights unless they are guaranteed by an organized community with the power to defend such rights.”¹ Indeed, by studying Kristallnacht, we learn that when a state not only fails to protect a group of people but also actively enforces policies that discriminate against that group, violence against innocents can become accepted behavior no matter if it originates from the citizenry or the government itself.

The resources included in this section bring into sharper focus the role of individual choices against the backdrop of powerful social forces such as propaganda, fear, prejudice and opportunism. The materials and activities in this section have been designed to help students build more complex answers to questions such as: Why did neighbor turn against neighbor? To whom did individuals, groups, and nations feel responsible? What dilemmas did people confront when making their decisions? What factors influenced their choices?

All of the concepts we have studied in this course thus far – identity, bureaucracy, conformity, prejudice, nationalism – are tools that help us address these questions. When thinking about the factors that give rise to an environment that tolerates, and even encourages, violence requires us to consider a variety of causal factors: political, economic, psychological (human behavior), and ideological (antisemitism). Similar issues are with us today as governments and legal systems still struggle with how to respond when other governments turn against their own people. When is the right time, if ever, to intervene? As individuals, we are faced with dilemmas about our responsibilities to those outside of our immediate family or community. Whose job is it to protect that student who is ostracized from his peers? How can we tell when labeling people and categorizing them into distinct groups is helpful or harmful? Reflecting upon the factors in Nazi Germany that laid the foundation for state-sanctioned violence and nurtured a context where neighbor turned against neighbor gives us tools we can use to recognize conditions in our communities that might lead to intolerance and injustice and extends the focus of our study from understanding to prevention.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- Chapter 6 in the resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*.

Lesson 18: Kristallnacht - The Night of the Pogrom

Essential Questions:

- *What is a turning point? How do you know when an event is a turning point? How do you recognize when something has gone too far?*
- *What does it mean to be included in a nation's universe of obligation? What happens to those who are outside of any nation's universe of obligation?*
- *To what extent do people of one nation have a moral obligation to help people facing persecution in another country?*

Included Resources:

- 18.1 – Timeline: Escalating Violence (1933-1938)
 - 18.2 – Reading: Stateless People
 - * 18.3 – Reading: The Night of the Pogrom
 - * 18.4 – Readings: The Impact of Kristallnacht
 - * 18.5 – Poem: “The Hangman”
- * = core resource

Introduction:

In the late 1930s, many Jews who lived in Germany, and German-occupied territories, spoke of their situation as a “narrowing circle”. In previous lessons, students have learned about the systematic exclusion of Jews in Nazi Germany through government policies, laws, and other social changes. By 1938, the number of options available to Jews in Nazi Germany grew even smaller, eventually leading to the government-organized violence of Kristallnacht.

This lesson follows the path towards this state-sanctioned violence. The lesson begins with a timeline designed to provide an overview both of the Nazi's escalating violence towards Jews and their increasing hostility towards the other countries of Europe. Next, in the reading, “Stateless People,” students will learn about the unwillingness of other countries to take in Jews wishing to leaving the Reich, further isolating them and leaving them increasingly vulnerable to violence. “The Night of the Pogrom” recounts the violence of Kristallnacht on November 9-10, 1938, as well as the events that provided the opportunity for the Nazis to unleash the pogrom. “The Impact of Kristallnacht” includes several short readings telling the stories of those victimized as well as those individuals and nations faced with important moral choices in responding to the attacks on Jews. The lesson concludes with the poem, “The Hangman,” an allegory about the consequences of ignoring injustice.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What does it mean to have rights? What protects our rights? To what extent were these protections present (or absent) in Nazi Germany?

- Which country do you think of as *your* country? What are the advantages of being from that country? For instance, what does one gain from being an *American*?
- Consider the following statement: “A government has the responsibility to protect the lives of people living within its borders, whether they are citizens or not.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

Additional Recommended Resources:

Videos (Available from Facing History Library):

- *Into the Arms of Strangers*
- *I’m Still Here*
- *America and the Holocaust*
- *The Hangman*

Readings (Available in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*):

- “Hitler’s ‘Saturday Surprises’,” pages 253-256
- “Taking Austria,” pages 257-258
- “Appeasing Hitler,” pages 261-263

Resource 18.1:**Timeline: Escalating Violence (1933-1938)*****Creating Context***

After replacing democracy in Germany with dictatorship, the Nazis began to ignore the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, rebuilding the nation's military might and becoming hostile to its neighboring countries. Simultaneously, the Nazis increasingly isolated Jews and other "enemies of the state," leading to the violence of Kristallnacht. This timeline traces the events that signaled increasing danger to Jews under Nazi rule as well as the steps that led to the outbreak of World War II.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

Anschluss	passport
emigration	Kristallnacht
Sudetenland	aryan
Reichstag	concentration camp
chancellor	

January 30, 1933 — Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany in a negotiated deal.

February 27, 1933 — The Reichstag (parliament) building is set on fire. Hitler quickly blames the communists, a rival political party.

February 28, 1933 — Hitler uses the emergency power of the president to issue two laws. The first law allows the government to search and confiscate private property and read private mail. The other law allows the Nazis to arrest anyone belonging to rival political parties, especially communists.

March 22, 1933 — Dachau concentration camp opens for housing political prisoners.

April 1, 1933 — Boycott of Jewish shops and businesses.

April 7, 1933 — Laws for Reestablishment of the Civil Service barred Jews from holding civil service, university, and state positions.

April 26, 1933 — Gestapo (Nazi secret service) established.

May 10, 1933 — Public burning of books written by Jews, political dissidents, and others not approved by the state.

August 2, 1934 — Hitler is elected Führer (Leader and Reich Chancellor). Armed forces must now swear allegiance to him.

March 8, 1935 — In the name of "defense," Hitler announces he is rebuilding the German air force, reinstating the draft, and re-arming the country in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. *To learn more about Hitler's defiance towards the Treaty of Versailles, read "Hitler's 'Saturday Surprises'," pages 253-256 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

May 31, 1935 — Jews barred from serving in the German armed forces.

September 15, 1935 — “Nuremberg Laws”: anti-Jewish racial laws enacted; Jews no longer considered German citizens; Jews could not marry Aryans.

March 3, 1936 — Jewish doctors barred from practicing medicine in German institutions.

March 7, 1936 — Germans march into the Rhineland (on the border with France), previously demilitarized by the Versailles Treaty. *To learn more about Hitler’s defiance towards the Treaty of Versailles, read “Hitler’s ‘Saturday Surprises,’” pages 253-256 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

July 15, 1937 — Buchenwald concentration camp opens.

April 26, 1938 — Mandatory registration of all property held by Jews inside the Reich.

March 13, 1938 — Anschluss (incorporation of Austria): all antisemitic decrees immediately applied in Austria. *To learn more about the annexation of Austria, read “Taking Austria,” pages 257-258 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

July 1938 — Evian Conference: Delegates from 32 countries meet in Evian, France to discuss the increasingly dangerous situation for Jews in German-occupied territories. Most countries, including the United States and Britain, decided not to extend immigration quotas to allow more Jews to enter their countries. *To learn more about Hitler’s defiance towards the Treaty of Versailles, read Resource 18.2, “Stateless People.”*

August 1938 — Adolf Eichmann establishes the Office of Jewish Emigration in Vienna to increase the pace of forced emigration. Jews are required to add the names Sarah and Israel on all legal documents, including passports.

August 3, 1938 — Italy enacts sweeping antisemitic laws.

September 29, 1938 — Britain, France, and Italy agree to give the German-speaking region of Czechoslovakia, called the Sudetenland, to Germany in an effort to avoid war. *To learn more about the annexation of the Sudetenland, read “Appeasing Hitler,” pages 261-263 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

October 5, 1938 — Following request by Swiss authorities, Germans mark all Jewish passports with a large letter “J” to restrict Jews from immigrating to Switzerland.

October 28, 1938 — 17,000 Polish Jews living in Germany expelled and their property is confiscated; Poles refused to admit them; 8,000 are stranded. Two of these Jews are the parents of Herschel Grynszpan.

November 7, 1938 — Herschel Grynszpan assassinates German diplomat Ernst von Rath in Paris.

November 9, 1938 — German state police and security agents (the SS and SA) and Nazi officials coordinate attacks against Jews across Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland; 200 synagogues are destroyed; 7,500 Jewish shops are looted; 30,000 male Jews are sent to concentration camps. Jews are told they must pay millions of dollars for the damage “they” have caused. This event is

called Kristallnacht, “Night of the Broken Glass.” *To learn more about Kristallnacht, read Resource 18.3, “The Night of the Pogrom,” and Resource 18.4, “The Impact of Kristallnacht.”*

November 12, 1938 — Decree forcing all Jews to transfer retail businesses to Aryan hands. *To learn more about new discriminatory policies towards Jews after Kristallnacht, read Resource 18.4, “The Impact of Kristallnacht.”*

January 30, 1939 — Hitler publically announces, “If war erupts it will mean the extermination of European Jews.”

March 1939 — Germany invades Czechoslovakia.

September 1, 1939 — Germany invades Poland.

September 3, 1939 - France, Britain, Australia and New Zealand declare war on Germany. World War II officially begins.

18.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. This timeline summarizes a significant amount of historical detail about the Nazi’s isolation of and escalating violence towards Jews. What were the steps to isolation? When did it start? When did it turn to violence? Cite events and details from the timeline to support your answer.
2. How was the isolation of Jews in Nazi society and the escalating violence towards them connected?
3. In the 1930’s, Hitler repeatedly violated the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, yet the other European powers, intent on avoiding a new war, chose not to confront Germany over the violations. Which events in the timeline might have led to a confrontation with other European nations?
4. Review what you learned in Section 4 about the impact of World War I on the nations who fought. What evidence, especially about the impact of World War I, can help explain why other countries avoided confrontation with Hitler in the 1930’s? What other factors might explain their avoidance?
5. What is the connection between laws discriminating against Jews, propaganda designed to portray Jews as “the other”, and organized acts of violence, such as Kristallnacht, that target Jews? Does discrimination and propaganda make violence inevitable? Is there an event in the timeline after which violence seems unavoidable?
6. In the readings that follow, you will learn more about Kristallnacht and its impact. Based on the information from this timeline, what questions do you have about

Kristallnacht? Record them in your journal so that you can refer to them later.

Using Resource 18.1

Providing Essential Historical Context

This timeline includes historical events that are crucial for students to know about in order to understand the impact of Kristallnacht and the escalating violence within Nazi Germany as well as the increasing tensions between Germany and other European nations. In particular, it is important for students to know about

- Additional anti-Jewish legislation in Germany after the Nuremberg Laws
- Hitler’s repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles
- The German annexation of Austria (known as the Anschluss)
- The German acquisition of the region of Czechoslovakia known as the Sudetenland

It is essential that you incorporate this important historical context into your course. This need not consume large periods of class time; you might share this context you’re your students in one or two short lectures. If you prefer a more student-centered approach, you might divide up this material so that students can first work in expert groups around one topic from the list above and then disseminate their knowledge to each other using the [Jigsaw](#) strategy.

The following readings and resources can be used as the basis of a short lecture, or they can be given directly to the class:

- “Hitler’s ‘Saturday Surprises’,” p. 253 in [Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior](#)
- “Taking Austria,” p. 257 in [Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior](#)
- [Map of Germany and Austria at the time of the Anschluss](#) (USHMM website)
- “Appeasing Hitler,” p. 261 in [Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior](#)
- [Map of the Sudetenland](#) (USHMM website)
- [“Anti-Jewish Legislation in Prewar Germany”](#) (from the USHMM website)

Human Timeline Activity

One way to help students visualize how Germany did not go from being a democracy to a dictatorship overnight is through a [human timeline](#) activity. You might use the timeline in Reading 17.1, adapting or combining items as necessary to meet the needs of your students. Even better is to have students create their own timeline items based on key events from the above readings. In preparation for this activity, we suggest placing each of the events on an index card or an 8 1/2 x 11” sheet of paper, along with the date when it occurred. Then assign students (individually or in pairs) one timeline event to present

to the class. Handout 17.1 (included below) includes questions that can help students prepare for their timeline presentations.

Video: *Into the Arms of Strangers*

The documentary [*Into the Arms of Strangers*](#) tells the story of the kindertransport – the relocation of nearly 10,000 children from Germany and German-occupied Europe, most of them Jewish, to Britain that took place between Kristallnacht and the beginning of World War II. The beginning of this film provides an overview of life in Nazi Germany from the perspective of middle-class Jewish children. As these child refugees (now adults) share how their lives slowly changed as a result of Nazi policies, the documentary also provides relevant historical information about several of the events in the timeline above. While the film does not represent the lives of all German-Jewish children, some of whom grew up in villages and farms as opposed to cities, it does help us think about how the lives of Jewish children changed under the Nazis. We suggest stopping this clip at 14:40, before the “children” recall memories of Kristallnacht. Students can record notes in a [two-column](#) format. Or, you could use the [3-2-1](#) strategy, asking students to record 3 historical facts, 2 questions the film raises for them, and one connection to something they have learned about human behavior.

Resource 18.2:

Reading: Stateless People*Creating Context*

Consider the following questions, and record your thoughts in your journal before reading:

- Which country do you think of as *your* country?
- What are the advantages of being from that country? For instance, what does one gain from being an *American*?
- How do you think your life would change if the country where you are from told you that you no longer belonged there? What consequences might result? What rights might you lose?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

Anschluss	arbitrary
refugee	uninhabitable
deportee	Adolf Eichmann

In his book *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler argued that “the race question not only furnishes the key to world history, but also to world culture.” He went on to say, “There is absolutely no other revolution but a racial revolution. There is no economic, no political, no social revolution. There is only the struggle of the lower races against the dominant, higher races.” As Hitler expanded eastward, he applied these ideas of race to the peoples he now ruled. Austria’s two hundred thousand Jews were the first to discover what that meant.

Within weeks of the Anschluss, observers were reporting hundreds of antisemitic incidents throughout the nation. Some noted the sharp increase in suicides, as thousands of Jews tried desperately to emigrate only to find stumbling blocks wherever they turned. Their difficulty in leaving “Greater Germany” could not be blamed on the Nazis. The Nazis were more than eager to see the Jews go as long as they left their money and possessions behind. Indeed in just six months, Adolf Eichmann, a young SS officer who made himself an expert on the “Jewish question,” had pushed 50,000 Jews out of Austria. The problem lay with other nations. They had no interest in accepting thousands of penniless Jewish refugees.

Shortly after the Anschluss, United States President Franklin Roosevelt called for an international conference to discuss the growing refugee crisis. In July 1938, delegates from thirty-two nations met in Evian, France. There, each representative expressed sorrow over the growing number of “refugees” and “deportees,” boasted of his nation’s traditional hospitality, and lamented its inability to do more in the “present situation.” The British noted that many refugees wanted to go to Palestine, which was under British rule. They would like to admit them, but in view of the ongoing conflict between Jews

and Arabs, it was not a practical solution. The French claimed that their country had already done more than its fair share. The Americans noted that Congress would have to approve any change in immigration. The delegates spoke in general terms and few referred to refugees as Jews.

Only one representative addressed the real issue. M. J. M. Yepes of Colombia told the delegates that there were two central questions. One was a question of fact that each nation had to answer for itself: “How many refugees would it admit?” The other question involved a matter of principle: “Can a state, without upsetting the basis of our civilisation, and indeed, of all civilisation, arbitrarily withdraw nationality from a whole class of its citizens, thereby making them stateless persons whom no country is compelled to receive on its territory?”

Yepes went on to say that as long as the central problem was not decided, the work of the conference would not be lasting and a dangerous example would be set – an example that in his view would make the world “uninhabitable.” Most delegates did not want to deal with either issue.

As the Jewish observer from Palestine, Golda Meir, who later became prime minister of Israel, was not allowed to speak. She later wrote. “I don’t think that anyone who didn’t live through it can understand what I felt at Evian – a mixture of sorrow, rage, frustration, and horror. I wanted to get up and scream at them, ‘Don’t you know that these so-called numbers are human beings, people who may spend the rest of their lives in concentration camps, or wandering around the world like lepers if you don’t let them in?’ Of course, I didn’t know then that not concentration camps but death camps awaited the refugees whom no one wanted.”²

At the Evian Conference, only the Dominican Republic agreed to accept Jewish immigrants. The nation’s leader, Rafael Trujillo Molina, hoped that Jews would marry local inhabitants and “lighten” the race. He also believed that Jews were good at making money and would therefore be an asset to his country. He granted visas to one thousand Jews who were to live in Sosua, a special community established for them. After the conference, Hitler concluded, “Nobody wants these criminals.”

18.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. The countries who sent representatives to the Evian Conference recognized that the Jews in Germany were increasingly in danger. What were their responses to this fact? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
2. Which countries’ responses to the danger Jews faced in Germany were most surprising? Which were most troubling?
3. Countries are sometimes referred to as *states*. How does Yepes define a stateless person? What might happen to one who is stateless? Review your response to the Creating Context prompt above as you think about your answer.

4. How did the countries that attended the Evian Conference define their universes of obligation? What reasons did they give for their definitions? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
5. What are immigration laws? What purpose do they serve? Why do most nations have them?
6. What might be some reasons why nations, including the United States, did not ease immigration quotas to allow more European Jews into the country – even when they were aware that Jews were facing poverty, discrimination and violence? What roles do you think nationalism, racism, and antisemitism might have played?
7. Under what circumstances, if any, do you think a nation should ease immigration restrictions for a particular group of people?
8. Should a state be allowed to withdraw citizenship for an individual? For a whole group of people? If so, under what conditions?

Using Reading 18.2

Discussing Statelessness

The concept of being stateless is important for students to grasp, yet it might be abstract for some students. Use the Creating Context prompt for a short discussion before reading to help students consider the benefits and protections that one receives by being accepted as a citizen of a country. During and after reading you could use the [levels of questions](#) or [text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world](#) teaching strategies to structure students' reading. Or, you could use this reading as the basis of a lecture.

Resource 18.3:
Reading: The Night of the Pogrom

Creating Context

What is a *turning point*? Create a working definition in your journal,

As you read the resource below about the night of violence against Jews that came to be known as Kristallnacht, consider whether or not this event was a turning point. What evidence in the resource supports your view?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

antisocial
expel
pogrom

At the Evian Conference, the delegate from Colombia raised a fundamental question, “Can a state, without upsetting the basis of our civilization, and indeed, of all civilization, arbitrarily withdraw nationality from a whole class of its citizens, thereby making them stateless persons whom no country is compelled to receive on its territory”? It was a question that went unanswered that July. By November, the failure to answer it would lead to yet another crisis.

Throughout 1938, Hitler and his top officials accelerated their campaign against his primary enemy, the Jews. The first step was the mandatory “Aryanization” of Jewish businesses. Up until then, it was voluntary. But now the Nazis required that all Jewish-owned companies be sold to “Aryans,” usually at a fraction of their value. Then in June, the Nazis rounded up Jews “previously convicted” of crimes to remove the “criminal element” from the population. Although many were guilty of nothing more than a traffic violation, about five hundred men described as “antisocial” were sent to a concentration camp at Buchenwald, a town near Weimar, Germany.

In August, a new law required that all Jews have a “Jewish first name” by January 1, 1939. If the name chosen was not on a list of approved “Jewish first names,” the Nazis would add “Israel” to the man’s name and “Sarah” to the woman’s. In September, the government announced that Jewish lawyers could no longer practice their profession. A month later, at the request of Switzerland, which was bombarded by Jews trying to leave Germany, the Nazis began to mark the passport of every Jew with the letter J. The Nazis then turned their attention to Jews who were not German citizens. Their first target was Russian Jews.

After the Nazis expelled every Jew who held a Russian passport, the Polish government feared that Jews with Polish passports would be next. To keep them from returning to Poland, the nation required that they secure a special stamp for their passports. The order

affected about seventy thousand Jews living in Germany. Although few wanted to return to Poland, they needed passports to emigrate to any other nation. Yet when they tried to get the required stamp, Polish officials turned them away.

The crisis came to a head when the Polish government announced that October 31 was the last day it would issue stamps. On October 26, the Nazis responded by expelling all Polish Jews. When Poland refused to accept them, thousands of men, women, and children ended up in refugee camps near the German-Polish border. Among them were the parents of seventeen-year-old Herschel Grynszpan.

Grynszpan was living in France at the time. Angry and frustrated by his inability to help his family, he marched into the German Embassy in Paris on November 7 and shot a Nazi official. When the man died two days later, the Germans decided to avenge his death. The night of November 9-10 came to be known as Kristallnacht (“Night of the Broken Glass”) outside Germany and as the Night of the Pogrom within the nation. That night the Nazis looted and then destroyed thousands of Jewish homes and businesses in every part of the country. They set fire to 191 synagogues, killed over ninety Jews, and sent thirty thousand others to concentration camps.

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s minister of propaganda, held a press conference the next day. He told reporters that Kristallnacht was not a government action but a “spontaneous” expression of German dissatisfaction with the Jews. “It is an intolerable state of affairs that within our borders and for all these years hundreds of thousands of Jews still control whole streets of shops, populate our recreation spots and, as foreign apartment owners, pocket the money of German tenants, while their racial comrades abroad agitate for war against Germany and gun down German officials.” Two days later, the government fined the Jewish community one billion marks for “property damaged in the rioting.”

18.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. This reading describes the events leading up to Kristallnacht. *Go back and underline any important details about Kristallnacht and the events that preceded it.* In your journal, write down any additional questions you have about the events described in this reading.
2. The Germans call Kristallnacht the “Night of the Pogrom.” A *pogrom* is a government-organized or inspired massacre of a minority group, particularly of Jews. It is a Russian word that literally means “riot” or “destruction.” Over one hundred years ago, the nobles of St. Petersburg demanded that the “people’s wrath” be vented against the Jews. The peasants in the nearby town of Elizanetgrad responded with the first pogrom in modern times. A Russian writer has described the subsequent murders, rapes, and looting as the “unending torture” of a religious and ethnic minority. Was Kristallnacht a pogrom? What evidence suggests it was planned? What evidence suggests that the murder of the Nazi official was an excuse for a riot not its cause? To what extent was the Nazi

response to the murder opportunistic?

3. At the time of the first pogrom, the Russian government blamed the Jews for the violence. Whom did the Germans blame? How did racism, nationalism, and antisemitism make it easier for the Nazis to blame the Jews?
4. Trace the steps that led to Kristallnacht. How did each prepare the public for state-sanctioned violence against a minority within the nation? What attitudes and values allowed people to remain silent when their neighbors were deprived of citizenship?
5. What is the significance of the name Kristallnacht? How does the name cloud the fact that it was more a night of broken lives than of broken glass?
6. What happens when a government not only fails to protect those who live within its borders but also commits acts of violence against them? To whom can those people turn to for help?

Using Reading 18.3

Essential Primary Source Documents

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) website provides access to [images of the telegrams sent by the SS headquarters](#) to local police squads with instructions for coordinating the violence on Kristallnacht. These documents can play a crucial role in building student understanding of Kristallnacht and why many historians consider it a turning point. These documents also provide important information that will help students answer Question #2 above more fully.

When you share these documents with your students, consider the importance of the fact that this nationwide pogrom represented the first time that violence against Jews in Nazi Germany was centrally coordinated by the Nazi government. We strongly encourage you to share this resource with your students.

Two additional pages on the USHMM website "[Kristallnacht: The November 1938 Pogroms](#)" contain a variety of additional resources, including photographs and maps, which lend helpful historical context:

- "[Kristallnacht: A Nationwide Pogrom, November 9-10, 1938](#)"
- "[Kristallnacht: The November 1938 Pogroms](#)"

We recommend that you review these resources to deepen your understanding of Kristallnacht, and, when possible, share these resources with the class.

Say Something Literacy Strategy

This reading introduces a significant amount of new history (especially for those who

have not yet studied World War I) in a few paragraphs. Some students may find that the density of information in this reading makes it challenging to comprehend. Therefore, you may need to allow for extra time to read and process this reading in class.

One strategy that is designed to improve comprehension of challenging texts is *Say Something*.³ Have students read the text together in pairs. At the end of each paragraph, the students will pause and do one of the following:

- Make a prediction
- Ask a question
- Clarify something that is confusing
- Comment on what is happening in the reading
- Connect what is happening the reading to something else they know about

If students are unable to accomplish any of these tasks, then that is a sign they need to re-read the paragraph, then ask for help.

Analyzing Cause and Effect

In order to help students analyze the events and factors that led to Kristallnacht, you can have them create a graphic organizer in their journals. An [iceberg diagram](#) is one type of graphic organizer that is appropriate for this reading. This strategy will help students isolate the basic facts about Kristallnacht from its underlying causes.

Resource 18.4:**Readings: The Impact of Kristallnacht*****Creating Context***

Review what you learned earlier in this course about the concept of *universe of obligation*, then consider the following statements:

- A government has the responsibility to protect the lives of people living within its borders, whether they are citizens or not.
- Nations have a moral obligation to accept refugees fleeing persecution.

Which do you agree with? Why or why not? Discuss your responses with your classmates.

This resource includes several readings describing the impact of Kristallnacht. These readings include accounts of the experiences of the victims of the pogrom, the range of choices that people faced when the violence broke out, the reactions of other nations, and the Nazi response to the public outcry after the events of November 9-10, 1938. Keep your answers to the questions above in mind as you explore the documents. Does the information in these readings strengthen your positions, or prompt you to reconsider them?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

**Reichmarks
restitution**

**Heinrich Himmler
bureaucrat**

The Impact of Kristallnacht: Reading A

(Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 19–23.)

Twelve year-old Klaus Langer, a Jew from from Essen, Germany, wrote the following words in his diary as the violence of Kristallnacht unfolded:

November 11, 1938

The past three days brought significant changes in our lives. On November 7 a German [diplomat] was assassinated in Paris. He died two days later. The day following, on November 10. . . came the consequences. At three o'clock the synagogue and the Jewish youth center were put on fire. Then they began to destroy Jewish businesses. . . . Fires were started at single homes belonging to Jews. At six-thirty in the morning the Gestapo came to our home and arrested Father and Mother. Mother returned after one and a half hours. Dad remained and was put in prison. . . .

We . . . returned to our neighborhood by two o'clock . . . When I turned into the front yard I saw that the house was damaged. I walked on glass splinters. . . . I ran

into our apartment and found unbelievable destruction in every room. . . . My parents' instruments were destroyed, the dishes were broken, the windows were broken, furniture upturned, the desk was turned over, drawers and mirrors were broken, and the radio smashed. . . .

In the middle of the night, at 2:30 A.M., the Storm Troopers [also known as the Brownshirts] smashed windows and threw stones against store shutters. After a few minutes they demanded to be let into the house. Allegedly they were looking for weapons. After they found no weapons they left. After that no one was able to go back to sleep. . . . I shall never forget that night. . . . Books could be written about all that had happened and about which we now begin to learn more. But, I have to be careful. A new regulation was issued that the Jews in Germany had to pay one billion reichmarks for restitution. What for? For the damage the Nazis had done to the Jews in Germany. . . .

November 16, 1938

A number of events occurred since my last entry. First, on November 15, I received a letter from school with an enclosed notice of dismissal. This became [unnecessary] since that same day an order was issued that prohibited Jews from attending public schools. . . .

December 3, 1938

Taking up this diary again is not for any pleasant reason. Today, the day of National Solidarity, Jews were not allowed to go outside from noon until eight at night. Himmler . . . issued an order by which Jews had to carry photo identity cards. Jews also are not permitted to own driver's licenses. The Nazis will probably take radios and telephones from us. This is a horrible affair. Our radio was repaired and the damaged grand piano was fixed. I hope we can keep it. But one can never know with these scums.

18.4 Reading A - Comprehension & Connections

1. Langer was an eyewitnesses to the events of Kristallnacht. How does his account differ from the official Nazi government view described in Resource 18.3? Use evidence from both readings to describe the differences.
2. Many Jews saw Kristallnacht as a turning point. What is a turning point? What evidence from his diary suggests that Langer viewed Kristallnacht as a turning point?

The Impact of Kristallnacht: Reading B

(Excerpted from “The Night of the Pogrom,” pp. 263-267 in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*)

Frederic Morton, a writer whose family fled from Vienna shortly after Kristallnacht, never forgot that night. He wrote:

The day began with a thudding through my pillow. Jolts waked me. Then, like an alarm clock, the doorbell rang. It was six in the morning. My father, my mother, my little brother and I all met in the foyer, all in our robes. We did not know yet exactly what. But we knew. We were Jews in Vienna in 1938. Everything in our lives, including our beds, stood on a cliff.

My father opened the door on Frau Eckel, the janitress.
“They are down there...they are throwing things.” She turned away. Went on with her morning sweep. Her broom trembled.

We looked down into the courtyard. Pink-cheeked storm troopers chatted and whistled. Chopped-up furniture flew through the window.

The troopers fielded the pieces sportively, piled them into heaps. One hummed something from “The Merry Widow.”

“Franz! Run somewhere!” my mother said to my father.

By that time we’d gone to the window facing the street. At the house entrance two storm troopers lit cigarettes for each other. Their comrades were smashing the synagogue on the floor below us, tossing out a debris of Torahs and pews.

“Oh, my God!” my mother said.

Something overwhelming wanted to melt down my eyes. I couldn’t let it. All this might not be real as long as real tears did not touch my face. A crazy last-resort bargain with fate.

“All right,” my father said. “Meanwhile we get dressed.”

Meanwhile meant until they come up here. No other Jews lived in the building. It had no back door. But as long as I could keep my tears down, I could keep them down. While they were destroying down there, they would not come up here. As long as the shaking of the floor continued, the axe blows, the sledgehammer thuds, we might live.

I had gym for my first class. I laced on my sneakers. I knew I never would see school that morning. I didn’t care that I knew. I only cared not to cry. I tried to pour my entire mind into the lacing of my sneakers.

We met in the living room. We saw each other dressed with a normality made grotesque by the crashing of the perdition downstairs. It stopped. The shaking and the thudding stopped. Silence. A different sound. Heavy, booted steps ascending. I relaxed my sneakers.

My father had put on his hat. “Everybody come close to me,” he said. “My two sons, you put your hands on top of your heads.”

We put our hands on top of our heads, as hats. My father put his arms around all our shoulders, my mother’s, my brother’s, mine.

“Shema Yisroel,” my father said. “Repeat after me: Shema Yisroel Adonoy Elohenu Adonoy Ehod...” [“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One...”]

The doorbell rang. Once. Ever since the Anschluss, we’d rung our doorbell twice in quick succession to signal that this was a harmless ringing, not the dreaded one.

Now the dreaded ring had come.

“Hansi, you go,” my father said.

“No!” my mother said.

“Hansi is the only one they might not hurt on sight,” my father said. “Hansi, go.”

My brother, a tiny blond eight-year-old, an Aryan-looking doll, went. A minute later he returned. Behind him towered some 10 storm troopers with heavy pickaxes. They were young and bright-faced with excitement. Ten bridegrooms on their wedding day. One had freckles. How could a freckle-faced man kill us? The freckles kept me from crying.

“House search,” the leader said. “Don’t move.”

We all stood against the wall, except my father. He placed himself, hat still on, a foot in front of us.

They yanked out every drawer in every one of our chests and cupboards, and tossed each in the air. They let the cutlery jangle across the floor, the clothes scatter, and stepped over the mess to fling the next drawer. Their exuberance was amazing.

Amazing, that none of them raised an axe to split our skulls.

“We might be back,” the leader said. On the way out he threw our mother-of-pearl ashtray over his shoulder, like confetti. We did not speak or move or breathe until we heard their boots against the pavement.

“I am going to the office,” my father said. “Breitel might help.”

Breitel, the Reich commissar in my father’s costume-jewelry factory, was a “good” Nazi. Once he’d said we should come to him if there was trouble. My father left. My mother was crying, with relief, with terror; she cradled against herself my little stunned brother. I turned away from her. I swore I would do something other than cry.

I began to pick up clothes, when the doorbell rang again. It was my father.

“I have two minutes.”

“What?” my mother said. But she knew. His eyes had become glass. “There was another crew waiting for me downstairs. They gave me two minutes.”

Now I broke down. Now my father was the only one not crying. His eyes were blue glass, relentlessly dry. His kiss felt stubbly. He had not shaved this morning. After one more embrace with my mother he marched to the door, turned on his heel, called out.

“Fritz!” I went to him, sobbing.

“Stop!”

I couldn’t stop.

Harshly his hands came down on my shoulders.

“If I don’t come back – avenge me!”

He was gone. The fury of his fingers stung. It burned into my skin a sense of continuity against all odds. I stopped.

Four months later he rang our doorbell twice, skull shaven, skeletal, released from Dachau, somehow alive.

Forty years later, today, he is practicing the tango with my mother in Miami Beach. My little brother Hansi is chairman of the political science department at Queens College. I am a writer in America with an American family. We are atypically lucky. But to this day we all ring our American doorbells twice.⁴

18.4 Reading B - Comprehension & Connections

1. Morton was an eyewitness to the events of Kristallnacht. How does his account differ from the official Nazi government view described in Resource 18.3? Use evidence from both readings to describe the differences.
2. Why was it so important to Morton to avoid crying? What effect does this detail have on the impact of his story?
3. Morton writes, “Everything in our lives, including our beds, stood on a cliff.” What does he mean? What signs does he provide in his account that indicate that Kristallnacht is a turning point?

The Impact of Kristallnacht: Reading C

(Excerpted from “Taking a Stand,” pp. 268-269 in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. An [extended and enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the Facing History & Ourselves website.)

German Jews saw Kristallnacht as a turning point. So did many “Aryan” Germans. They also made important choices that night and in the days that followed. Dan Bar-On, an Israeli psychologist, describes the decision one family made:

It was the autumn of 1938. Andre was twelve years old and lived with his parents in a small town in northern Germany. One evening he came home from his youth movement meeting.

“Daddy,” he said to his father, “we were told at the meeting that tomorrow we are supposed to throw stones at the Jewish shops in town. Should I take part?”

His father looked at him. “What do you think?”

“I don’t know. I have nothing against the Jews – I hardly know them – but everyone is going to throw stones. So what should I do?”

Their conversation proceeded, the son presenting questions to his father, the father turning the questions back to his son.

“I understand,” said Andre. “You want me to make up my own mind. I’m going for a walk. I’ll let you know what I’ve decided when I come back.”

When Andre returned a short while later, he approached his parents, who were sitting at the table.

“I’ve made up my mind, but my decision involves you too.”

“What is it?”

“I’ve decided not to throw stones at the Jewish shops. But tomorrow everyone will say, ‘Andre, the son of X, did not take part, he refused to throw stones!’ They will turn against you. What are you going to do?”

His father’s sigh was one of relief tinged with pride. “While you were out, your mother and I discussed this question. We decided that if you made up your mind to throw stones, we would have to live with your decision, since we had let you decide, after all. But if you decided not to throw stones, we would leave Germany immediately.”

And that is what they did. The following day, Andre’s family left Germany.⁵

18.4 Part C - Comprehension & Connections

1. Summarize the dilemma that Andre and his family faced. How did they make their decisions? Why do you think the father let Andre make the choice? What values and beliefs shaped their choices?
2. What opportunities and benefits would Andre, and others faced with the same choice, have experienced if he decided to join with others throwing stones?
3. What were the short-term consequences of Andre's choice? What were the long-term consequences? What does Andre and his family's decision tell you about their "circle of responsibility"?

The Impact of Kristallnacht: Reading D

(Excerpted from “Taking a Stand,” pp. 268-269 in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. An [extended and enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the Facing History & Ourselves website.)

Other Germans made other choices. Some protested by resigning their membership in the Nazi party – though many made it clear that they were not objecting to antisemitism but to mob violence. Others sent anonymous letters of protest to foreign embassies. Still others quietly brought Jewish families food and other necessities to replace items that had been destroyed. Neighbors told one Jewish woman that helping her was a way to “show the Jews that the German people had no part in this – it is only Goebbels and his gang.” Most Germans, however, responded much the way Melita Maschmann did. She lived in a small suburb of Berlin and knew nothing of Kristallnacht until the next morning. As she picked her way through the broken glass on her way to work, she asked a policeman what had happened. After he explained, she recalls:

I went on my way shaking my head. For the space of a second I was clearly aware that something terrible had happened there. Something frighteningly brutal. But almost at once I switched over to accepting what had happened as over and done with, and avoiding critical reflection. I said to myself: the Jews are the enemies of the New Germany. Last night they had a taste of what this means... With these or similar thoughts, I constructed for myself a justification of the pogrom. But in any case, I forced the memory of it out of my consciousness as quickly as possible. As the years went by, I grew better and better at switching off quickly in this manner on similar occasions.⁶

Maschmann was not alone in placing the night in perspective. Dietrich Goldschmidt, a minister in the Confessing Church, explains that for most Germans “the persecution of the Jews, this escalating persecution of the Jews, and the 9th of November – in a sense, that was only one event, next to very many gratifying ones. Here the famous stories of all the things Hitler did come in: ‘He got rid of unemployment, he built the Autobahn, the people started doing well again, he restored our national pride again. One has to weigh that against the other things.’”⁷

18.4 Part D - Comprehension & Connections

1. Summarize the dilemma that Melita Maschmann faced. How did she make her decision? What values and beliefs shaped her choices?
2. What is Maschmann’s explanation for how she lived with her choice?
3. What opportunities and benefits would be experienced by those Germans who chose to participate in the violence of Kristallnacht or remain silent about it?
4. What were the short-term consequences of each choice described in the reading?

The long-term consequences? For example, what do you think happened to non-Jews who resigned from the Nazi party? Tried to emigrate? Protested? What does each decision tell you about the person's "universe of responsibility"?

5. Evaluate Goldschmidt's explanation of why public outrage did not last long. Did the good outweigh the "other things"?

The Impact of Kristallnacht: Reading E

(Excerpted from “World Responses,” pp. 270-272 in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*)

Newspapers around the world reported Kristallnacht. The story filed by Otto D. Tolischus of the New York Times was typical of many.

A wave of destruction, looting and incendiaries unparalleled in Germany since the Thirty Years War and in Europe generally since the Bolshevik revolution, swept over Greater Germany today as National Socialist cohorts took vengeance on Jewish shops, offices and synagogues for the murder by a young Polish Jew of Ernst von Rath, third secretary of the Germany Embassy in Paris.

Beginning systematically in the early morning hours in almost every town and city in the country, the wrecking, looting and burning continued all day. Huge but mostly silent crowds looked on and the police confined themselves to regulating traffic and making wholesale arrests of Jews “for their own protection.”

All day the main shopping districts as well as the side streets of Berlin and innumerable other places resounded to the shattering of shop windows falling to the pavement, the dull thuds of furniture and fittings being pounded to pieces and clamor of fire brigades rushing to burning shops and synagogues. Although shop fires were quickly extinguished, synagogue fires were merely kept from spreading to adjoining buildings.⁸

18.4 Part E - Comprehension & Connections

1. How would you evaluate the beginning of Tolischus’s report? Is it accurate? Is it objective? What is the role of a journalist in reporting atrocities to the public? What are a journalist’s most important responsibilities?
2. How does Tolischus’s use of the word *vengeance* affect the impact of his story?
3. If you were a reporter tasked with finishing this story, what additional information would you include? Who would you interview? What perspectives on these events would you want to include?

The Impact of Kristallnacht: Reading F

(Excerpted from “World Responses,” pp. 270-272 in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*)

People everywhere were outraged. As the Archbishop of Canterbury (the leader of the Church of England), Cosmo Gordon Lang, wrote in a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, “There are times when the mere instincts of humanity make silence impossible.” Thousands of Americans agreed. They showed their outrage at huge rallies held in support of German Jews. In reporting these events to Berlin, the German ambassador expressed a fear that these protests might jeopardize the Munich agreement.

Although Kristallnacht strained the policy of appeasement (the agreement between European nations that allowed Germany to annex the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia), it did not end it. When members of Britain’s Parliament pressed Neville Chamberlain to condemn the pogrom, he simply verified that newspaper reports were “substantially correct.” He also acknowledged “deep and widespread sympathy” for those who were made “to suffer so severely” for the “senseless crime committed in Paris.”

Similar attitudes in France led the editor of a newspaper called *La Lumière*, to warn, “In the past, when we protested against massacres in Ethiopia, China, Spain, we were told, ‘Silence! You are warmongering.’ When we protested against the mutilation of Czechoslovakia, we were told, ‘Keep quiet! You are a war party.’ Today, when we protest against the contemptible persecution of defenseless Jews and their wives and children, we are told, ‘Be silent! France is afraid.’”⁹

The only world leader to take a stand was Franklin D. Roosevelt. He did so only after a number of individual and groups had urged him to speak out. On November 15, six days after Kristallnacht, he opened a press conference by stating, “The news of the last few days from Germany has deeply shocked public opinion in the United States. Such news from any part of the world would produce a similar profound reaction among American people in every part of the nation. I myself could scarcely believe that such things could occur in a twentieth-century civilization.” Although he announced that the United States was withdrawing its ambassador to Germany, he did not offer to help the thousands of Jews now trying desperately to leave the Third Reich.

Few Americans criticized Roosevelt’s stand. According to a poll taken at the time, 57 percent of all Americans approved the recall. But 72 percent did not want more Jewish refugees in the United States and over half opposed aid to refugees who wished to settle elsewhere.

18.4 Part F - Comprehension & Connections

1. How did England, France, and the United States respond to the events of Kristallnacht. What reasons did they give for their action or inaction?

2. Which of the responses to Kristallnacht from other nations are most striking to you? Why? Use specific evidence from the reading to explain your answers.
3. Do you think other nations have a responsibility to speak out when a government harms those who live within its borders? Do other nations have a responsibility to do more than speak out? What other options do other nations have?
4. What did the Archbishop of Canterbury mean when he said, “There are times when the mere instincts of humanity make silence impossible”? What are those “instincts”? Do all humans have them? At what times is silence impossible?
5. What does the word *civilization* mean in the context of President Roosevelt’s statement. What does his use of the word imply about how he viewed the violence in Germany?
6. What does the poll suggest about the way many Americans defined their country’s universe of obligation? What does it suggest about the limits of people’s outrage?
7. Compare the way people responded to Kristallnacht in Germany with responses abroad. What similarities do you notice? What differences seem more striking?

The Impact of Kristallnacht: Reading G

(Excerpted from “The Narrowing Circle,” pp. 272-273 in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*)

German leaders also reacted to Kristallnacht and the public outcry that followed. On November 10, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels called a press conference “to remove certain misunderstandings that appear to have their way into reports sent abroad.” He warned that if Jews continued to spread “exaggerations of yesterday’s happening, of the kind contained in the accounts and leading articles of the American press, then they would defeat their own ends, and they would be digging the graves of the Jews in Germany.”

Most government officials, however, were opposed to Kristallnacht and other “undisciplined individual actions.” Indeed, the Night of the Pogrom was the last occasion when Jews had to fear street violence in Germany. After Kristallnacht, writes Richard Rubenstein, “the hoodlums were banished and the bureaucrats took over.” In the weeks that followed, key Nazi officials, led by Heinrich Himmler, saw to it that measures against the Jews were strictly “legal.” On November 15, the bureaucracy excluded all Jewish children from state schools. By December 6, Jews could no longer walk or drive in certain parts of every major city. Jews who lived in those areas had to have a police permit to go home. Jews were advised to move and perhaps even exchange residences with “Aryans” who lived in “Jewish sections of town.”

At about the same time, the government announced that Jews could no longer attend German universities. A few days later, Himmler prohibited them from owning or even driving a car. Jews were also banned from theaters, movie houses, concert halls, sports arenas, parks, and swimming pools. The Gestapo even went door to door confiscating radios owned by Jewish families.

18.4 Part E - Comprehension & Connections

1. A number of Jews who lived in Germany in the late 1930’s spoke of a “narrowing circle.” What do you think they meant? What evidence is there that their “circle” was narrowing?
2. What does Rubenstein mean by the statement that “the hoodlums were banished and the bureaucrats took over”? What are hoodlums and bureaucrats? What power does each group have to change society or create fear?
3. How significant was the decision to banish the “hoodlums” and let the bureaucrats take over? How do you think the outcry over the events of Kristallnacht affected the decision? Was Kristallnacht a turning point for the Nazis?

Using Resource 18.4

Taking a Position

Before reading and discussing this resource, you might prepare students by using the statements in Creating Context as the basis for a [Barometer](#) or [Four Corners](#) activity. As students read this resource (as well as others in this lesson), ask them to highlight evidence they find to support their positions. After students have had a chance to explore the documents and accounts included in this resource, consider repeated the the [Barometer](#) or [Four Corners](#) activity to gauge whether or not students' positions have changed.

Exploring and Analyzing the Impact of Kristallnacht

The readings in this resource can be used to explore the impact of Kristallnacht in a variety of ways. If you have enough time available in class, you could certainly have the class read them in succession, discussing and reflecting in their journals on the Comprehension and Connections questions that follow each reading.

Many teachers find it more efficient to structure this lesson as a [Gallery Walk](#) or [Jigsaw](#) activity with students working in small groups. If students are working with the readings in this way, they can still discuss the Comprehension and Connections questions associated with each reading before moving to the next stage of the activity.

Regardless of how you structure the activity, Handout 18.4 (below) provides a simple format for collecting information from the readings and beginning to analyze the choices individual made in response to Kristallnacht.

Writing a News Report

In 1938, most people around the world would have learned about Kristallnacht from a news report either on the radio or in a newspaper. One way for students to synthesize and analyze what they have learned about Kristallnacht is to craft their own news story for print or radio about the events that transpired. The readings in Resource 18.4 provide the raw materials students will need: basic facts, official government responses both from Germany and around the world, and first-hand accounts.

A variety of primers on writing for newspapers and radio are available on the web. The following sites can get you started:

- Newspaper: [Scholastic's News Writing Home Page](#)
- Radio: [Newscript.com](#)

If you have the technology available, consider encouraging your students to record their radio stories as podcasts.

Using Videos to Explore the Impact of Kristallnacht

The following videos may be used to support or extend the readings in this section:

Into the Arms of Strangers

If you have already started showing this documentary and paused at 14:40, you can start again from this spot (otherwise, show the first twenty minutes of the film). For the next few minutes, “children” recall their experiences on “The Night of the Broken Glass.”

I’m Still Here

Klaus Langer’s diary (excerpted in Reading A) is published in the compilation entitled *Salvaged Pages*. Portions of Langer’s and other young people’s diaries from the compilation are also dramatized in the video *I’m Still Here*. You might show your students the short clip from the video (2:56-4:44) that includes the excerpt from the reading above. (Facing History has developed a [study guide](#) for this video.)

America and the Holocaust

The first 30 minutes of this episode of American Experience examines the reaction in the United States to Kristallnacht, immigration policies of the time, and American antisemitism. It also includes the story of the voyage of the St. Louis, a ship of Jewish refugees that sailed for Cuba, only to be turned back by both Cuba and the United States. (Facing History has developed a [study guide](#) for this video.)

Handout 18.4 - Kristallnacht: The Range of Choices - Note-taking guide

As you read about different responses to Kristallnacht, complete this chart.

Reading # or name	Name of individual or group	How did this person or group respond to Kristallnacht? Include specific details from the text.	What were the consequences of this decision?

Resource 18.5:**Poem: “The Hangman”*****Creating Context***

Before November 1938, violence against Jews in Nazi Germany had been sporadic and regional. Kristallnacht marked the first time such violence was centrally organized by the Nazi government, with citizens across Germany participating. This is why many historians see Kristallnacht as a turning point.

How did the Nazis create a society in which such violence was possible? Reflect on the history you have learned in this course so far before reading “The Hangman,” a poem by Maurice Ogden. The poem is an allegory that can help us consider what happens when injustice goes unchecked.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

diffident**gallows****scaffold****usurer****infidel****henchman**

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

“The Hangman”

by Maurice Ogden

1.

Into our town the Hangman came,
Smelling of gold and blood and flame –
And he paced our bricks with a diffident air
And built his frame on the courthouse square.

The scaffold stood by the courthouse side,
Only as wide as the door was wide;
A frame as tall, or little more,
Than the capping sill of the courthouse door.

And we wondered, whenever we had the time,
Who the criminal, what the crime,
That Hangman judged with the yellow twist
Of knotted hemp in his busy fist.

And innocent though we were, with dread
We passed those eyes of buckshot lead;
Till one cried: “Hangman, who is he
For whom you raise the gallows-tree?”

Then a twinkle grew in the buckshot eye,
And he gave us a riddle instead of reply:
“He who serves me best,” said he,
“Shall earn the rope on the gallows-tree.”

And he stepped down, and laid his hand
On a man who came from another land.
And we breathed again, for another’s grief
At the Hangman’s hand was our relief.

And the gallows-frame on the courthouse lawn
By tomorrow’s sun would be struck and gone.
So we gave him way, and no one spoke,
Out of respect for his hangman’s cloak.

2.
The next day’s sun looked mildly down
On roof and street in our quiet town
And, stark and black in the morning air,
The gallows-tree on the courthouse square.

And the Hangman stood at his usual stand
With the yellow hemp in his busy hand;
With his buckshot eye and his jaw like a pike
And his air so knowing and businesslike.

And we cried: “Hangman, have you not done,
Yesterday, with the alien one?”
Then we fell silent, and stood amazed:
“Oh, not for him was the gallows raised...”

He laughed a laugh as he looked at us:
“...Did you think I’d gone to all this fuss
To hang one man? That’s a thing I do
To stretch the rope when the rope is new.”

Then one cried “Murderer!” One cried “Shame!”
And into our midst the Hangman came
To that man’s place. “Do you hold,” said he,
“With him that’s meant for the gallows-tree?”

And he laid his hand on that one’s arm,
And we shrank back in quick alarm,
And we gave him way, and no one spoke
Out of fear of his hangman’s cloak.

That night we saw with dread surprise
The Hangman's scaffold had grown in size.
Fed by the blood beneath the chute
The gallows-tree had taken root;

Now as wide, or a little more,
Than the steps that led to the courthouse door,
As tall as the writing, or nearly as tall,
Halfway up on the courthouse wall.

3.
The third he took – and we had all heard tell –
Was a usurer and infidel, And:
“What,” said the Hangman, “have you to do
With the gallows-bound, and he a Jew?”

And we cried out: “Is this one he
Who has served you well and faithfully?”
The Hangman smiled: “It's a clever scheme
To try the strength of the gallows-beam.”

The fourth man's dark, accusing song
Had scratched out comfort hard and long;
And “What concern,” he gave us back,
“Have you for the doomed – the doomed and black?”

The fifth. The sixth. And we cried again:
“Hangman, Hangman, is this the man?”
“It's a trick,” he said, “that we hangmen know
For easing the trap when the trap springs slow.”

And so we ceased and asked no more,
As the Hangman tallied his bloody score;
And sun by sun, and night by night,
The gallows grew to monstrous height.

The wings of the scaffold opened wide
Till they covered the square from side to side;
And the monster cross-beam, looking down,
Cast its shadow across the town.

4.
Then through the town the Hangman came
And called in the empty streets my name.
And I looked at the gallows soaring tall

And thought: “There is no left at all

For hanging, and so he calls to me
To help him pull down the gallows-tree.”
And I went out with right good hope
To the Hangman’s tree and the Hangman’s rope.

He smiled at me as I came down
To the courthouse square through the silent town,
And supple and stretched in his busy hand
Was the yellow twist of them hempen strand.

And he whistled his tune as he tried the trap
And it sprang down with a ready snap –
And then with a smile of awful command
He laid his hand upon my hand.

“You tricked me, Hangman!” I shouted then,
“That your scaffold was built for other men....
And I no henchman of yours,” I cried.
“You lied to me, Hangman, foully lied!”

Then a twinkle grew in the buckshot eye:
“Lied to you? Tricked you?” he said, “Not I
For I answered straight and I told you true:
The scaffold was raised for none but you.

“For who has served me more faithfully
Than you with your coward’s hope?” said he,
“And where are the others that might have stood
Side by your side in the common good?”

“Dead,” I whispered; and amiably
“Murdered,” the Hangman corrected me;
“First the alien, then the Jew...
I did no more than you let me do.”

Beneath the beam that blocked the sky,
None had stood so alone as I –
And the Hangman strapped me, and no voice there
Cried “Stay!” for me in the empty square.¹⁰

18.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. What does the image of the growing gallows suggest about the Hangman's power?
2. Why does the Hangman say, "I did no more than you let me do."? What evidence is there in the poem that this is true? Is there any evidence that this is not entirely true?
3. What choices were open to the townspeople when the Hangman arrived? What choices were left by the time he had finished his work in the town? Was there a way to stop the Hangman? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. What is the meaning of the Hangman's riddle: "'He who serves me best,' said he, 'shall earn the rope on the gallows-tree'"?
5. What is a *bystander*? Review your answer to this question from "The 'In' Group" (Resource 5.1). What does "The Hangman" suggest about the power and responsibilities of bystanders?
6. How does the poem relate to Germany in the 1930s? To society today? Use evidence from previous readings or your journal to support your answer.
7. In 1933, Martin Niemoeller, a leader of the Confessing Church, voted for the Nazi party. By 1938, he was in a concentration camp. After the war, he is believed to have said, "In Germany, the Nazis came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak for me." How is the point Niemoeller makes similar to the one Maurice Ogden makes in "The Hangman"? What line in "The Hangman" best summarizes Niemoeller's quotation?
8. In 1776, Thomas Paine said, "He that would make his own liberty secure, must guard even his enemy from oppression, for if he violates this duty, he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself." What does Paine mean? In your journal, rewrite this quotation in your own words. How is the point that Paine makes similar to the one Niemoeller makes? What line in "The Hangman" best connects to Paine's quotation? How does Paine define his universe of responsibility?

Using Resource 18.5

Reflection & Discussion

The poem, along with the quotations from Niemoeller and Paine in *Comprehension and*

Connections are at the heart of the moral dilemmas a Facing History and Ourselves course seeks to explore. Even though the imagery in the poem, and the language in the two quotations, can be challenging to some readers, it is important for them to wrestle with these ideas before they continue to learn the history of the Holocaust. Make sure students have time to reflect, write, and share their ideas with each other about the meaning of “The Hangman,” how it relates to the history of Nazi Germany, and how it applies to their lives today. [Think-Pair-Share](#) and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) are both effective strategies for discussing this reading.

Video: *The Hangman*

A highly-stylized, animated interpretation of [The Hangman](#) is available from the Facing History library and it also can be viewed on YouTube. Many teachers find that this video deepens the discussion of the poem. Teachers who have used the film indicated a need to show it more than once (it is about 10 minutes long) to allow their students the opportunity to identify and analyze the many symbols. After viewing the film, students might discuss the filmmaker’s artistic decisions, such as why he turned the animated people into paper dolls.

¹ DM

² Golda Meir, *My Life* (G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1975), 158.

³ Kylee Beers, *When Kids Can’t Read: What Teachers Can Do* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 105-110.

⁴ Frederic Morton, “Kristallnacht,” *New York Times*, 10 November 1978 (Op-Ed page). Copyright 1978 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission.

⁵ Dan Bar-On, *Legacy of Silence*, 1.

⁶ Melita Maschmann, *Account Rendered*, 56-57.

⁷ Quoted in Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 142.

⁸ Otto D. Tolischus, “The Pogrom,” *New York Times*, 19 November, 1938.

⁹ Quoted in Anthony Read and David Fisher, *Kristallnacht; The Unleashing of the Holocaust* (Peter Bedrick Books, 1989), 155.

¹⁰ Maurice Ogden, “The Hangman,” Regina Publications.

Section 8: The Holocaust

Essential Questions

- *What can we gain by studying the brutality of the Holocaust? What is the difference between understanding these events and confronting them?*
- *How did hatred, prejudice, conformity, and opportunism influence those who participated in mass murder during the Holocaust?*

Lessons

Section 8 includes the following lesson:

- Lesson 19: Mass Murder
- Lesson 20: Resistance

Overview

“Come, take this giant leap with me.” This is how Holocaust survivor Sonia Weitz begins her poem, “For Yom Ha Shoah.” We begin a study of the Holocaust in Lesson 19 by reading “For Yom Ha Shoah” because it helps set expectations for this important and difficult work. Like Sonia, many survivors and scholars of the Holocaust assert that learning about the Holocaust requires us to take an emotional and intellectual leap as we confront a history that defies explanation. One of the challenges of teaching about this history is accepting the idea that there are no clear, logical answers to the question, “Why did the Holocaust happen?” In previous sections students learned about how the Nazis seized power in Germany amidst a crumbling democracy and transformed the nation according to an ideology rooted in racism, antisemitism, and nationalism. Students also examined the roles that the human behaviors of conformity and obedience played in this transformation of Germany. Still, when we look at the darkest moments of the Holocaust, all of these factors feel wholly inadequate to explain the cruelty and violence that took place. This is, perhaps in one sense, the giant leap that Sonia Weitz writes about. The point here is to confront a history, not to come away with a complete understanding of it. The best we can do is to face the complexity and keep asking questions.

The history of the Holocaust is as complex as it is devastating. Seventy years after these events took place, historians continue to uncover new records and accounts that reshape our understanding of this period. While it is not possible in this course to capture the full variety and complexity of the events that comprise the Holocaust, it is important to place the particular accounts included in this section within a broader historical context. Throughout this section we include various materials that describe the isolation, ghettoization, deportation, and mass murder of Jews and other targeted groups during the Holocaust. We have included links to additional resources (film, maps, and readings) to provide historical background so that students can more accurately interpret the testimony that helps animate this history. **It is essential that you supplement the resources included in this section with some of these additional resources in order to**

ground the class in sufficient historical context. *Using Resource 19.2* includes suggestions and links to resources that will help you do this successfully.

Exploring this evidence of human destruction raises many questions and feelings. Some students may begin to wonder what they would have done if they were in the position of the victims. Yet, it is impossible for us to truly imagine what it was like for victims of the Holocaust. As Nobel Prize winner and survivor of the Holocaust Elie Wiesel explains, “Ask any survivor and he will tell you, and his children will tell you. He or she who did not live through the event will never know it. And he or she who did live through the event will never reveal it. Not entirely. Not really. Between our memory and its reflection there stands a wall that cannot be pierced.”¹

Students will also undoubtedly be thinking about what they would have done if they were not a victim but a witness to the victimization of others in Nazi Germany. We need to help them understand that we are looking at human behavior in the most extreme situations, and there is no way to know how we would have responded. It is worth discussing explicitly with students the impossibility of truly knowing what we would have done in such dire circumstances. It is more productive for students to apply their knowledge of Nazi Germany to posing questions they can begin to answer, such as “What were the conditions in Nazi Germany that nurtured an environment in which genocide became acceptable?” For example, it is important to remember that Germans were making choices under the cover of war. How might this have influenced the decisions made by Germans and others to participate in mass murder or to stand by while these atrocities occurred? Other factors that students may bring up include a dictatorial government, the use of propaganda that dehumanized Jews and glorified Germany, and a history of antisemitism. Students can use this list of factors to think about the contemporary world and how they might work to strengthen democracy and combat prejudice today.

Nevertheless, the challenge for teachers is to find a safe and respectful way to help students grasp the fact that thousands of ordinary people participated in unspeakable acts of inhumanity, thousands more participated in running the bureaucracies and organizing the logistics that made such inhumane acts possible, and still thousands more quietly stood by while millions of innocent children, women, and men were murdered. The disturbing nature of this history may cause some teachers to want to rush through this material. Yet, for students’ own intellectual and moral development it is important to proceed at a pace that allows ample time for students’ questions and comments. Teachers need to be prepared for a range of students’ responses, including laughter, or even a lack of emotions while reading or watching a video about this history. If some respond in what appears to be insensitive ways, it may well be because they are struggling with how to process this information on an emotional and intellectual level. To help students reflect on their feelings, questions and ideas, they should be encouraged to write in their journals at many points throughout this lesson.

Incorporating Survivor Testimony

It is during this section of a Facing History and Ourselves course that teachers consider inviting a survivor to speak in their classrooms. Bringing survivors to the classroom, in person or through readings or video testimony, puts a face on this history by offering unique perspectives on the difficult and sometimes impossible circumstances individuals were forced to confront during moments of collective violence and injustice. It is not essential that the timing of a survivor visit correspond specifically to the order of resources, lessons, and sections in this guide. Teachers find such visits most helpful if they fall sometime in this section (Section 8) or the next section (Section 9) of the Facing History course. Contact Facing History and Ourselves for assistance in arranging a visit to your classroom from a survivor.

Before a survivor visits your classroom, it is important to prepare your students for the experience. At a minimum, it is essential to make sure that your students know the name of the speaker, have some general background about him or her, and have prepared questions to ask. It is also highly recommended that you spend some time reflecting with your students on what they expect to gain from the experience of hearing survivor testimony. Appendix 19A provides a series of questions to guide this reflection.

Using Film

If you are not able to schedule a visit with a survivor for your class, many survivors have shared their stories on film. You might choose to weave clips from these films throughout the resources included here, or you may choose to show one or more films of survivor testimony in their entirety in the same class period.

Facing History has produced a 23-minute film called [Challenge of Memory](#) which includes six survivor testimonies, sequenced to accompany Elie Wiesel's Holocaust memoir *Night*. Each testimony covers a different aspect of the Holocaust, from deportation to life in the camps:

- Shari B. begins by sharing how her family could not believe the accounts they heard about the gassing of Jews.
- Edith P. describes being locked in a cattle car on her way to Auschwitz.
- Helen K. recalls an act of courageous resistance by inmates in Auschwitz.
- Leon Bass, a retired U.S. Army sergeant, remembers the shock of entering Buchenwald concentration camp at the end of the war.

You might focus on just one clip, although typically teachers show several to give students a sense of the range of experiences during the Holocaust. An extended, 30 minute version of each of these interviews is also available from the Facing History and Ourselves library, as well as a variety of [additional videos](#) of other survivors telling their stories.

For more information about each clip, as well as background information and discussion questions, we recommend downloading the chapter, "[Montages](#)" from

Facing History's resource book on Holocaust testimonies, *Elements of Time*. To help students comprehend and interpret what they view (and to give you evidence of student learning), here are some ways to structure students' response to the video:

- [3-2-1](#) - After viewing, students can record 3 facts from the video, 2 questions raised by the video, and one feeling they experienced while watching the video.
- [Two-column chart](#). On the left side of a page, students record information presented in the film. On the right side, students record their reactions to this information – a question, a comment, a feeling, a connection to something they know about or have experienced.
- [Levels of questions](#) – By increasing the complexity of the questions students are asked about a text, this strategy helps students deepen their understanding of material.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- Chapter 7 in the resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*.

Lesson 19: Mass Murder

Essential Questions:

- *What do we gain by studying the brutality of the Holocaust? What is the difference between understanding these events and confronting them?*
- *How were Jews dehumanized by the Nazis? How did dehumanization help make systemized, mass murder possible during the Holocaust?*
- *How did hatred, prejudice, conformity, and opportunism influence those who participated in mass murder during the Holocaust?*

Included Resources:

- 19.1 – Poem: For Yom Ha’Shoah
 - * 19.2 – Timeline: Under the Cover of War (1939-1945)
 - 19.3 – Reading: Reserve Police Battalion 101
 - 19.4 – Reading: Obeying Orders
 - 19.5 – Reading: Emptying the Ghettos
 - 19.6 – Reading: A Commandant’s View
 - * 19.7 – Reading: Auschwitz
- * = core resource

Introduction:

In this lesson, students will confront the sheer brutality that the Nazis perpetrated during the Holocaust. Resource 19.1, Sonia Weitz’s poem, “For Yom Ha’Shoah,” serves as the introduction to learning about this brutality. This poem is an apt starting point because it helps students consider the question, “What is the difference between seeking to understand these events and confronting them?” This is an important question to consider with the class because, for the events described in this lesson, there are no easy answers.

The remaining six resources included in this lesson (Resources 19.2-19.7) provide a variety of pathways for investigating the brutality of the Holocaust. The timeline and readings include information about and first-hand accounts of the ghettoization, deportation, and mass murder of Jews. You will also find a significant number of references to additional resources—readings, books, and films—that can be used as alternatives or extensions to the resources included here. Whether you hew closely to the path suggested in this guide or weave in a variety of alternative resources, it is essential to provide time for quiet reflection and small group discussion, as well as opportunities to ask questions, so that students are able to process adequately the challenging and shocking history they are learning. The activities and reflection questions suggested in this lesson deliberately steer away from prompting students to try to draw simplistic conclusions or meanings.

One concept worth exploring with students in the resources in this lesson is dehumanization. Whether considering the mobile killing squads, the gassing procedure at Auschwitz, or the jobs of bureaucrats who organized the transportation of prisoners,

some level of dehumanization of Nazi victims was a constant presence and essential ingredient that helped enable perpetrators to commit heinous acts. All of the resources included in this lesson provide us insight into the power and consequences of such dehumanization.

Pedagogical Note on Essential Additional Topics

One of many significant challenges in teaching the Holocaust is the sheer breadth of the subject. This curriculum document does not include in-depth information about two important topics—European Jewish life before the Holocaust and the “mosaic” of groups victimized by the Nazis—but we highly recommend you find a way to incorporate them into your course all the same. Here are some suggestions for addressing each of these topics in your class:

European Jewish Life Before the Holocaust

The extermination of two-thirds of European Jewry does not only represent the loss of millions of individual lives; it also represents the loss of entire communities. Facing History and Ourselves is currently developing additional resources, including a short film, to help students learn about the Jewish communities and cultures that existed in Europe before the Holocaust. Until these resources are completed, we recommend using resources available on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) website to help students to learn about Jewish life in Germany and Eastern Europe before World War II. These resources include an overview and variety of images.

The USHMM webpage “[Jewish life in Europe before the Holocaust](#)” will introduce you to the resources available on the site. Consider the following ideas for incorporating the images available on the site into your class:

- Before viewing these images, ask students to consider the question, “What might be the value in looking at photographs of Jews in Europe before the Holocaust?”
- Explain that the images students will see provide a small window into the lives of European Jews but do not represent the fullness and diversity of the experiences of all Jews in Europe, just as a few images could not fully represent their community.
- As students look at these images, they can respond to questions such as: 1) What did you see that was universal- that felt familiar to you in these pictures? 2) What do these images tell you specifically about Jewish life in Europe before the war? 3) What do these images tell you about the consequences of the Holocaust?

Mosaic of Victims

The Nazis victimized a variety of groups, in addition to Jews, who did not fit into their narrow vision for German society. These groups included Roma (Gypsies), Poles and other Slavic peoples, Russian prisoners of war, political opponents, the mentally and physically disabled, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and homosexuals. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum refers to the groups persecuted by the

Nazis as the “[Mosaic of Victims](#).” While the lessons and resources in this curriculum focus primarily on Jews as the primary and most numerous targets of Nazi violence, it is important in any study of the Holocaust to devote some time to acknowledging and learning about the other targeted groups.

You might use the following readings from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* as the basis for a Jigsaw activity to explore the “Mosaic of Victims” of the Holocaust:

- “Targeting the Communists” (p.162)
- “Breeding the New German ‘Race’” (p. 183)
- “Isolating Gays” (p.195)
- “Those Considered Unworthy to Live” (p. 279)
- “Opposition to ‘Euthanasia’” (p.282)
- “Targeting the ‘Gypsies’” (p. 284)
- “Targeting Poland” (p. 286)

In addition, the video “[Childhood Memories](#),” available from the Facing History library includes a short clip of Elizabeth D. describing her experiences as a young Jehovah’s Witness attending school in Nazi Germany.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s website also includes some helpful resources for learning about the various groups persecuted by the Nazis. The following two pages will help you get started:

- [“Mosaic of Victims: An Overview”](#)
- [“Mosaic of Victims: In Depth”](#)

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What thoughts, questions, comments and feelings come to mind as you learn about the Holocaust?
- What is dignity? Write about a time when you either observed someone behave with dignity or saw someone behave without dignity.
- What is desperation? Write about a time when you either observed someone act out of desperation.

Additional Core Resource:

Video: [“Genocide”](#) - Part 6 of the *British World at War* television series (available from Facing History Library)

Additional Recommended Resources:

Videos (Available from Facing History Library):

- [Challenge of Memory](#)
- [I’m Still Here](#) ([video](#) and [study guide](#))

Readings (from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* resource book):

- “Taking Austria,” pp. 257
- “Appeasing Hitler,” pp. 261-262
- “Enemies Become Allies,” pp. 278-279
- “Conquests in the East,” pp. 289-291
- “Conquests in the West,” pp. 297-300
- “The Invasion of Russia,” pp. 301-302
- “The United States Enters the War,” pp. 303-304

Readings (Available from the Facing History and Ourselves website or library):

- “[Montages](#)” - a chapter from Facing History’s resource book on Holocaust testimonies, [Elements of Time](#)
- [I Promised I Would Tell](#) by Sonia Weitz
- [Salvaged Pages](#)
- [Night](#) by Elie Wiesel ([book](#) and [study guide](#))

Websites:

- [“Jewish life in Europe before the Holocaust”](#) (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)
- [Images of the German Persecution of Jews from the Holocaust Museum](#)
- [Archival Photographs from A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust](#)
- [Yad Vashem Photo Archive](#)

Resource 19.1:**Poem: For Yom Ha'Shoah***Creating Context*

This poem was written by Sonia Weitz, a survivor of the Holocaust. Born in Krakow, Poland, she was 11 years old when her family and other Polish Jews were herded into ghettos. Of the 84 members of her family, she and her sister Blanca were the sole survivors of years in ghettos and concentration camps. At an early age she turned to poetry to cope with her emotions.

“Yom Ha'Shoah” is Hebrew* for the Day of Holocaust Remembrance. In this poem, Weitz, a Holocaust survivor, invites others to learn about her experience while also acknowledging that this is an impossible task.

* Hebrew is the religious language of the Jewish community and the national language of the state of Israel.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

Shoah
Holocaust

FOR YOM HA'SHOAH

Come, take this giant leap with me
into the other world . . . the other place
where language fails and imagery defies,
denies man's consciousness . . . and dies
upon the altar of insanity.

Come, take this giant leap with me
into the other world . . . the other place
and trace the eclipse of humanity . . .
where children burned while mankind stood by
and the universe has yet to learn why
. . . has yet to learn why.

19.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. What does this poem mean to you? What questions does it raise for you?
2. Sonia Weitz has been called “a survivor with a poet’s eye.” How can poetry deepen one’s study of the Holocaust? What can we learn from poetry that more traditional historical accounts might not capture?
3. Re-read the poem and highlight the verbs Weitz uses. How do the verbs help accentuate the idea of “the other world” she describes?
4. Do you think that Weitz believes it is possible to understand the horrors of the Holocaust? What can we gain by studying the brutality of the Holocaust?

Using Resource 19.1

In addition to reading and discussing Weitz’s poem, the following activities are appropriate and useful for beginning your examination of the Holocaust in your class:

Review prior knowledge about Nazi Germany: In addition to World War II, other factors in Germany and German-occupied Europe contributed to the Holocaust.

- Ask students to brainstorm words and phrases that describe conditions in Nazi Germany after Kristallnacht. Example of words they might suggest include: obedience, fear, war, opportunism, antisemitism, dictatorship, desire to belong, nationalism and propaganda.
- Keep this list on the board or wall for students to refer to as they learn about the Holocaust. At the end of this section, students can discuss the question, “How did each of these factors help contribute to the Holocaust?”

Define “Holocaust”: While students are likely familiar with the term *Holocaust* from its use in the media or from prior classes, do not assume that students know what this term actually means or what the event entailed.

- Spend a few moments having students do a “free write” on the word *Holocaust*. In a free write, students record any words, thoughts, questions or feelings that come to mind on a specific topic.
- You could also structure this exercise as a silent [graffiti board](#) activity, inviting students to post facts, comments and questions sparked by the word “Holocaust.”
- See if any students know that the word “holocaust” is of Greek origin meaning “sacrifice by fire.” In other parts of the world, this event is often referred to as the “Shoah” – a Hebrew word meaning catastrophe.

Resource 19.2:**Timeline: Under the Cover of War (1939-1945)***Creating Context*

Before the outbreak of World War II, the German government focused on isolating Jews through discriminatory policies and encouraging them to emigrate to other countries. While the Nazis were pleased for Jews to leave Germany, they forced those who emigrated to leave most of their property and wealth behind. The Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration was even created to facilitate the emigration of Jews from Germany and Germany-occupied territories. But these policies changed once German conquests during the war brought millions more Jews under German rule. Emigration was no longer seen as an efficient way to make Germany “judenfrei” (free of Jews).

During World War II, the focus of German policy concerning Jews changed from emigration to mass murder. Historian Christopher Browning notes: “At the core of the Holocaust was an intensive eleven-month wave of mass murder. The center of gravity of this mass murder was Poland, where in March 1942, despite two and a half years of terrible hardship, deprivation, and persecution, every major Jewish community was still intact; eleven months later, only remnants of Polish Jewry survived.”

The chronology in this resource illustrates the relationships between the events of the war, changes in German policy towards Jews and other targeted groups, and the mass murder of millions of children, women, and men.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

non-aggression	“Final Solution”
sphere of influence	offensive/ counteroffensive
ghetto	deportation
concentration camp	exterminate
labor camp	Sinti/ Roma/ “Gypsy”
death camp	liquidate
Axis	liberate
Allies	crematorium
Einsatzgruppen	

August 23, 1939 — Germany and the Soviet Union sign a non-aggression pact, agreeing to partition Poland between them and respect each other’s “spheres of influence” in Eastern Europe. *To learn more about the Hitler-Stalin Pact, read “Enemies Become Allies,” pages 278-279 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

September 1, 1939 — Germany invades Poland. After creating a series of provocations, Germany attacked Poland on September 1. Two days later Britain, France, India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa declare war on Germany, but they take no military action to defend Poland. *To learn more about the invasion of Poland, read “Targeting Poland,” pages 286-289, and “Conquests in the East,” pages 289-292, in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

September 17, 1939 — Soviet Union invades Poland.

September 27, 1939 — Poland surrenders. Germany takes control of nearly 73,000 square miles of Polish territory, including nearly 2 million Jews who lived there, and Russia takes control of 78,000 square miles. Germans implement anti-Jewish policies in their Polish territory.

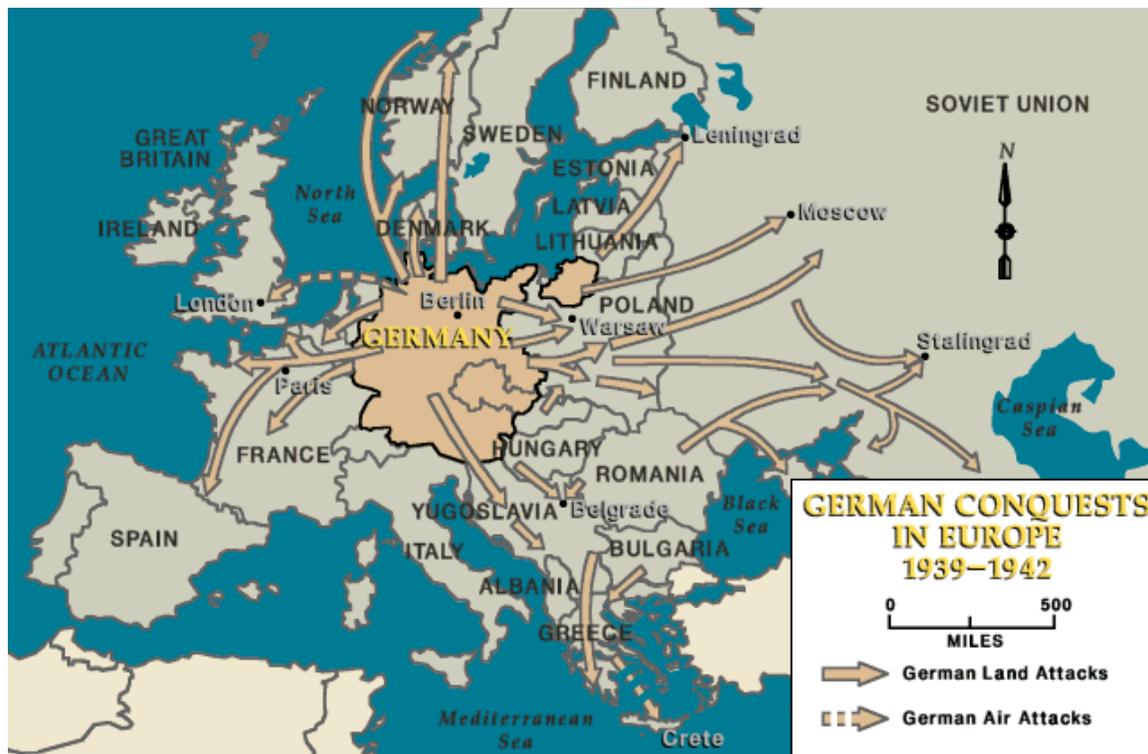
October 8, 1939 — Germany begins establishing ghettos in Poland (the first is in Piotrkow Trybunalski, a town in Central Poland). Congestion, hunger, cold, and poor sanitation lead to mass mortality in ghettos. *To learn more about the ghettos created by the Nazis, read “A Return to the Ghettos,” pages 292-294 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

April 30, 1940 — Germany establishes a ghetto in Lodz, Poland, confining 164,000 Jews inside.

April-June 1940 — German troops occupy Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, and most of France. German anti-Jewish policies are implemented in all countries controlled by Germany. *To learn more about the Western Front of World War II, read “Conquests in the West,” pages 297-301 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

August 8, 1940 — Germany begins its assault on Britain via the air in the "Battle of Britain."

September 27, 1940 — Germany, Italy, and Japan sign the Tripartite Pact, formalizing the Axis partnership. Britain, France, and later the Soviet Union and the United States lead the Allies.



Map courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (ushmm.org)

November 16, 1940 — Germans establish a ghetto in Warsaw, Poland. At first, some 330,000 people are confined there; later, another 120,000 Jews are sent to the ghetto.

April 24, 1941 — Germans establish ghetto in Lublin, Poland, confining more than 34,000 Jews

inside.

June 22, 1941 — Germany begins its invasion of the Soviet Union, breaking the non-aggression pact. As the German army pushes east, soldiers kill thousands of Jewish civilians now under German rule. *To learn more about the invasion of Russia, read, "The Invasion of Russia," pages 301-303 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

June 23, 1941 — German Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) begin mass murders in the Soviet Union as hundreds of thousands more Jews fall under German rule. *To learn more about the Einsatzgruppen, read "A War Within a War" pages 310-313 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

July 1941 — Germans establish ghettos in newly conquered Soviet territory.

August 1941 — The Einsatzgruppen murder thousands of Jews in towns of Pinsk (10,000 victims) and Kamenets-Podolsk (23,600 victims).

September 29, 1941 — The Einsatzgruppen march approximately 34,000 Jews out of Kiev to a nearby ravine, called Babi Yar, where they are shot to death.

October 12, 1941 — German forces reach the outskirts of Moscow.

November 30, 1941 — Einsatzgruppen shoot and kill 30,000 Jews from the Riga ghetto in the Rumbuli Forest.

December 6, 1941 — Soviets launch a counteroffensive at Moscow.

December 7, 1941 — Japanese attack Pearl Harbor; the United States declares war on Japan.

December 11, 1941 — Germany, an ally of Japan, declares war on the United States. *To learn more about the United States' entry into the war, read "The United States Enters the War," pages 303-304 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

January 16, 1942 — Germans begin the deportation of more than 65,000 Jews from the Lodz ghetto to the Chelmno camp begins. All are murdered in gas vans within days of arriving.

January 20, 1942 — At the Wannsee Conference, held near Berlin, German officials discuss the implementation of the "Final Solution," a plan to eliminate all Jews from Europe. Citing slower than expected progress in the conquest of Russia, overcrowded ghettos, and the difficulties experienced by the Einsatzgruppen in murdering Jews one by one, Nazi officials advance a plan to exterminate European Jews quickly and efficiently in gas chambers at a series of extermination camps (or death camps). Within weeks after the Wannsee Conference, six camps in Poland—Treblinka, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, Belzec, and Auschwitz—are designated as death camps. An estimated 2,700,000 children, women, and men are eventually murdered in these camps. *To learn more about the Wannsee Conference, read "Blueprint for the 'Final Solution'," pages 319-321 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

March 27, 1942 — Germans begin the deportation of more than 65,000 Jews from Drancy, France to Auschwitz and other camps.

July 12, 1942 — Germans begin the deportation of about 100,000 Jews from the Netherlands to

Auschwitz.

July-September 1942 — Germans deport more than 500,000 Jews from ghettos in Poland to extermination camps.

December 17, 1942 — Allies issue a statement acknowledging and condemning the mass murder of Jews by the Germans.

February 2, 1943 — After a winter battle lasting several months, Germans surrender at Stalingrad, and Soviet forces begin to push the German forces back towards Germany. Germany's defeat at Stalingrad shifts the momentum of the war.

February 26, 1943 — First transport of Sinti and Roma reaches Auschwitz, where a camp designated especially for them has been established. Harsh conditions await them, and the mortality rate in the Sinti and Roma camp is the highest of any of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps. *To learn more about Nazi persecution of Sinti and Roma, read "Targeting the 'Gypsies'," pages 284-286 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

April 19, 1943 — Warsaw Ghetto Uprising begins as German troops move to liquidate the ghetto. Jews resist the orders to report for deportation, and fighting breaks out in the streets of the ghetto. Germans eventually burn the ghetto in order to force the resisters into the open, where they are killed immediately. The uprising continues until May, when the entire Jewish quarter is destroyed and Warsaw is declared "Judenrein," or free of Jews. *To learn more about resistance in Warsaw, read "The Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto," pages 335-337 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

June 21, 1943 — As the German army continues to lose ground to the Soviets, the Germans order the liquidation of all ghettos in occupied Soviet territories. Residents of ghettos at Bialystok, Vilna, Minsk and Riga are deported to extermination camps in the following months (with some Jewish armed resistance).

July 5, 1943 — German offensive at Kursk fails as Soviet troops continue to push German forces westward.

August 2, 1943 — Prisoners at Treblinka stage an uprising and flee the camp, with only about 70 escapees surviving.

October 1, 1943 — When reports regarding the planned deportation of Danish Jews are leaked by a member of the German delegation in Copenhagen, Danes help Jews go into hiding and eventually escape into Sweden. 7,200 of 7,800 Danish Jews arrive safely in Sweden.

October 14, 1943 — Prisoners, including Soviet prisoners of war, stage an uprising at Sobibor. 300 initially escape, but most are recaptured and murdered along with others who had not escaped. Only 50 escapees survive. *To learn more about prisoner resistance, read "Resistance in the Death Camps," pages 357-359 in Holocaust and Human Behavior.*

November 6, 1943 — Soviet troops liberate Kiev.

March 19, 1944 — German forces occupy Hungary.

May 15, 1944 — Germans begin the mass deportation of about 440,000 Jews from Hungary to

Auschwitz.

June 6, 1944 — Allied troops land in Normandy as part of the "D-Day" invasion of Europe.

July 1944 — Soviet army sweeps west, liberating the cities of Minsk, Vilna, and Lvov from German control, as well as the Majdanek extermination camp. Few Jewish survivors are found.

October 7, 1944 — Jewish prisoners/slave-laborers stage an uprising at Auschwitz. A crematorium is destroyed, but all rebels are killed.

December 16, 1944 — "Battle of the Bulge," a pivotal Allied victory in France takes place.

January 17, 1945 — Soviets liberate Warsaw; few Jews remain.

January 18, 1945 — Germans abandon Auschwitz as Soviet troops move further into Poland. 58,000 Jewish prisoners are forced out of the camp on "death marches" to concentration and labor camps in Germany and Austria.

January 19, 1945 — Soviets liberate Lodz. Of the 175,000 Jews who had lived in this, the second-largest Jewish ghetto, 800 were liberated from the ghetto.

January 27, 1945 — Soviets liberate Auschwitz.

April 1945 — British and American forces liberate concentration camps at Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald.

April 30, 1945 — Hitler commits suicide during the Battle of Berlin.

May 2, 1945 — Soviets occupy Berlin. The great finale of the war, the Battle for Berlin, began on April 21.

May 5, 1945 — Allies liberate Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria.

May 7-9, 1945 — Germany surrenders unconditionally to the Allies.

May 8, 1945 — V-E (Victory-Europe) Day - The war in Europe is officially over.

July 16, 1945 — Churchill, Truman and Stalin meet for the last time at the Potsdam Conference. There, they divide German territory (along with other Eastern European territory) into four sectors, one Soviet, one British, one French, and one American. Berlin is divided in a similar fashion.

August 6, 1945 — United States drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima; Nagasaki is bombed three days later.

August 14, 1945 — Japan surrenders.

Timeline adapted from ["The Holocaust Resource Center"](#) created online by [Yad Vashem](#).

19.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Examine the map included in this resource, “German Conquests in Europe, 1939-1942.” Summarize the information this map provides in one or two sentences. Based on the information in the timeline, what might a map depicting the years 1943-1945 look like? What title would you give the 1943-1945 map?
2. What methods did the Germans use to isolate and eliminate Jews from German-occupied territories during the Holocaust? Base your answers on specific information from the timeline.
3. How did the Wannsee Conference change Germany’s policies that aimed to eliminate Jews?
4. How did each of the following events in World War II affect the Germans’ plans to eliminate Jews from German-occupied territories?
 - The conquest of Poland
 - The invasion of the Soviet Union
 - The German defeat at Stalingrad
 - The series of Soviet victories that pushed the Germans back towards Germany
5. Review your definition of a *turning point* from Section 7. What events in this timeline might be considered turning points in the fighting between the Axis and the Allies in Europe? Which events might be considered turning points in the German policies of mass murder? Explain your reasoning.
6. What attempts to thwart German plans for the mass murder of Jews are included in this timeline? Which of these attempts were successful? What criteria did you use to determine whether or not attempts to resist or rescue were successful?
7. What questions does this timeline raise for you? How can a timeline deepen your understanding of this history? What other types of resources and information can help you further develop your knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust?

Using Resource 19.2

Providing Essential Historical Context

Most of the subsequent resources in this lesson provide specific stories chosen to help students confront the brutality of the Holocaust and consider some of the factors—such as hatred, opportunism, and dehumanization—that enabled perpetrators across German

society to play a role in the mass violence. Before probing the specific stories that follow, however, it is first essential to situate them in a broader historical context. The timeline provided above is only the first step of this process. *It is crucial for you to provide additional context so that students can begin to grasp the many facets of the devastation of the Holocaust.* You might provide this context through one or more short lectures, or by guiding your students through a variety of the additional resources listed below.

At a minimum, the following two short videos are strongly recommended to provide appropriate historical context:

- [“World War II and the Holocaust”](#) from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) website is a six minute animation that chronologically highlights the major events of the World War II in Europe, interweaving general information about all of the facets of the Holocaust listed above.
- The episode [“Genocide” from the BBC’s World at War series](#) (60 min., available from the Facing History library) provides a dramatic and effective overview of the mass murder perpetrated by the Nazis between 1939 and 1945. See the *Using the Film* section below for a recommended clip and detailed suggestions for incorporating this film into your class.

Many of the events in the timeline above are cross-referenced with readings from the Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior resource book that are not otherwise included in this curriculum. We encourage you to consult these readings to deepen your own background knowledge and consider sharing many of them with your students. The USHMM website also includes a variety of background readings, maps, and other resources that you can use to help build historical context. What follows is a list of important topics (all of which are included in the videos above) along with links to relevant resources on the USHMM site:

- [World War II](#)
- [Ghettos](#)
 - [Map of Major Ghettos in Europe, 1939-1944](#)
 - [Animated Map of the Lodz Ghetto](#)
 - [Animated Map of the Warsaw Ghetto](#)
- [Concentration Camps](#)
 - [Map of Major Nazi Camps, 1943-1944](#)
 - [Animated Map of the Dachau Concentration Camp](#)
- [Mobile Killing](#)
 - [Map of Einsatzgruppen \(Mobile Killing Unit\) Massacre Sites in Eastern Europe](#)
- [The Wannsee Conference and the “Final Solution”](#)
- [Killing Centers](#)
 - [Map of Major Deportations to Extermination Camps, 1942-1944](#)
 - [Map of Extermination Camps in Occupied Poland](#)
 - [Animated Map of Auschwitz](#)
- [Death Marches](#)

- [Liberation of Nazi Camps](#)
 - [Animated Map of Liberation of Nazi Camps](#)
 - [Animated Map of the Aftermath of the Holocaust](#)

Using the Map

The first question in Comprehension and Connections asks students both to summarize the information in the map (depicting German conquests, 1939-1942) included in this resource and to describe what a map depicting the next three years of the war (1943-1945) would look like. In fact, such a map already exists ([“The Defeat of Nazi Germany, 1943-1945”](#)) on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website. After students discuss their answers to the first question, consider showing the map to the class and discussing how their expectations compare to the actual map.

Using the Film: World at War - “Genocide”

“Genocide,” part 6 of the British *World at War* television series, is a chronological account of the extermination of Jews under Hitler. It documents the Holocaust through personal testimony from victims, perpetrators and bystanders, interspersed with documentary footage and historical overviews. This film contains graphic images and descriptions of violence. *Preview the film to decide if it is appropriate to show to your students.* We suggest showing the first 30-40 minutes, stopping after the Auschwitz concentration camp is described. Students can further explore experiences in the camps through the readings and survivor testimony we include in this section.

Pre-viewing

While watching documentaries about the Holocaust, like “Genocide,” presents tremendous opportunities, the disturbing nature of this material can also present some challenges for teachers who want to find a safe, respectful way for students to engage with this content. Careful preparation and debriefing help address these concerns. For example, be prepared for a range of students’ responses, including laughter, or even a lack of emotions while reading or watching a video about this history. If some respond in what appear to be insensitive ways, it may well be because they are struggling with how to process this information on an emotional and intellectual level. Before presenting students with this material, inform them about the graphic violence to which they will bear witness. Reviewing the classroom contract is one way to help students think about the norms for a safe, respectful learning community.

During viewing

As students watch “Genocide,” ask them to record words and phrases that stand out to them, as well as questions the material raises for them. We suggest pausing the film after each chapter to give students time to write in their journals. Then allow time for students to share the words and phrases they recorded. If you write them on the board, you can refer to them as part of a debrief activity. Use this time as an opportunity to answer

students' questions and review important historical information covered in that chapter of the film such as the terms *relocation*, *ghettos*, *deportation*, *Einsatzgruppen*, *Wannsee Conference*, *Final solution*, *concentration camps* and *Auschwitz*. When teaching students about the horrors of the Holocaust, Facing History teachers comment on the need to slow down the pace of the class to allow students enough time to process this material and formulate questions.

Post-viewing

Reassure students that it is not their job to try to understand or come to an “answer” about the Holocaust. We recommend that students have the opportunity to write in their journals at the end of this lesson as a way to help them begin to process their ideas, questions and emotions. The prompt, “Respond to what you have learned and viewed about the Holocaust,” is sufficiently open-ended to capture the wide range of questions, from factual to philosophical, that students may have after learning about the Holocaust. The [Question Formulation Technique](#) is another strategy that can be used to help students reflect on this material.

Using Resources 19.3 - 19.6

The following four resources include readings that will deepen students' exploration of the Holocaust:

- Resource 19.3: Reading – “Reserve Police Battalion 101”
- Resource 19.4: Reading – “Obeying Orders”
- Resource 19.5: Reading – “Emptying the Ghettos”
- Resource 19.6: Reading – “A Commandant’s View”

These readings are taken from the resource book and explore different aspects of the Holocaust. Teachers should feel free, time permitting, to include even more readings from Chapter 7 of the resource book in their classes; all of the readings are important in how they represent a particular aspect of this history. The readings included here explore the choices made by perpetrators, the bureaucratization of the mass killing, and the dilemmas faced by Jewish leaders in the ghettos.

There are a variety of ways to incorporate these resources into your class. “Reserve Police Battalion 101” (19.3) and “Obeying Orders” (19.4) both present moral dilemmas which could lend themselves to rich class discussions. You might choose to use the readings together, providing the contrast between supervising the killing of Jews in as the head of a concentration camp and participating as a bureaucrat. We recommend planning a [structured class discussion](#) based on these readings.

“Emptying the Ghettos” (19.5) and “A Commandant’s View” (19.6) can effectively be followed by time for quiet reflection and small group discussions, as the [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy outlines.

Alternatively, you can approach all four readings together, assigning groups one reading each and then asking them to report to the class how their reading contributes to their knowledge about the Holocaust. What new information does it provide? How does it connect to other material they have learned?

Alternatives and Extensions

In addition to or instead of using resources 19.3-19.6, there are a variety of resources and strategies you can use to deepen your students' exploration of the Holocaust. Consider the following suggestions:

Using Diaries of Young People

[Salvaged Pages](#) is a collection of diaries written by young people, ages 12 to 22, during the Holocaust. Some of the writers were refugees, others were hiding or passing as non-Jews, some were imprisoned in ghettos, and nearly all perished before liberation.

A companion film to this anthology, [*I'm Still Here*](#), weaves together excerpts of the young writers' diaries covering the years 1937–1944. Facing History has published a [study guide](#) to accompany this book and film. The study guide aims to help educators use the voices of these young writers from the film and the book as a springboard for discussion and reflection on the value of these diaries as historical sources and literary records. It also provides an avenue for discussing the power of our words to make a difference in the world.

Here are some suggested ways to use video clips from [*I'm Still Here*](#):

- To illustrate ghettoization: “Yitskhok” (16:55–20:20) - In this excerpt, 15-year-old Yitskhok Rudashevski describes his experience living in a ghetto in Vilna, Lithuania. So that students can focus on the idea of residential segregation in ghettos, we suggest you stop showing this clip at 20:20. After this point, Yitskhok describes the next stages on the way to genocide: deportations and mass murders.
- To illustrate deportation: “Petr and Eva Ginz” (26:52–32:46) - In this excerpt, we hear the words of a brother and sister from Czechoslovakia who were deported to the Terezin concentration camp. They describe life in this camp, separated from their parents. In 1944, Petr was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, a death camp.

Using Images

Another way to extend your students' learning about the Holocaust is through a [gallery walk](#) of images. Here are some tips for organizing the gallery walk:

- Select images from one of these websites:
 - [Archival Photographs from A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust](#)
 - [Yad Vashem Photo Archive](#)

Many teachers select images that illustrate different facets of the Holocaust (e.g. ghettoization, deportation, labor camps, death camps, killing fields, etc). Viewing graphic images depicting the horrors of concentration camps and death camps can provoke strong emotional reactions in students. Some teachers assume that because students are surrounded by violent images in the media, they are desensitized to depictions of violence in any form. This may not be the case. Most adolescents can distinguish between fictional acts of violence and authentic acts of inhumanity, and being confronted with the horrors humans can inflict on each other can be truly unsettling. Use your judgment about the images that will best help teach this difficult history in a way that is sensitive to your students' emotional well-being.

- Tape images in the center of large sheets of paper so that students can record comments and questions provoked by the images. Place the large papers on the wall or on tables around the room. Some teachers

arrange the images and quotations in chronological order so that students can begin to process how one step related to the next step.

- Students can tour the “gallery” several times. The first time they observe the images, students can write their ideas and questions. The second time, they can read and respond to the comments posted by their peers. The third time, they can review everything that has been posted. Note: students do not need to start at the first image. This activity works best if students are spaced apart so that at any one time there are several students observing and responding to each image.

Resource 19.3:**Reading: Reserve Police Battalion 101*****Creating Context***

Review your notes about *obedience* and *authority* from Lessons 15, 16, and 17. What factors encourage one to follow orders from an authority? What factors might enable one to ignore such orders? Record your thinking in your journal before you read the story below.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

perpetrator**opportunism****battalion****coward****desensitize**

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

Who were the perpetrators? What kind of person massacres civilians? Slaughters old people? Murders babies? To find answers to such questions, historian Christopher Browning studied interrogations made in the 1960s and early 1970s of 210 men in Reserve Police Battalion 101. The battalion was originally formed from the German equivalent of city policemen and county sheriffs. After 1939, it and other Order Police battalions also served as occupation forces in conquered territory. Battalion 101 was assigned to the district of Lubin in Poland.

Like the National Guard in the United States, battalions were organized regionally. Most of the soldiers in Battalion 101 came from working and lower-middle-class neighborhoods in Hamburg, Germany. They were older than the men who fought in the front lines. The average age was thirty-nine with over half between thirty-seven and forty-two. Most were not well-educated. The majority had left school by the age of fifteen. Very few were Nazis and none was openly antisemitic. Major Wilhelm Trapp, a 53-year-old career police officer who rose through the ranks, headed the battalion. Although he became a Nazi in 1932, he was not a member of the SS, although his two captains were.

The unit's first killing mission took place on July 13, 1942. Browning used interrogations to piece together the events of that day.

Just as daylight was breaking, the men arrived at the village [of Jozefow] and assembled in a half-circle around Major Trapp, who proceeded to give a short speech. With choking voice and tears in his eyes, he visibly fought to control himself as he informed his men that they had received orders to perform a very unpleasant task. These orders were not to his liking, but they came from above. It might perhaps make their task easier, he told the men, if they remembered that in Germany bombs were falling on the women and children. Two witnesses claimed that Trapp also mentioned that the Jews of this village had supported the

partisans. Another witness recalled Trapp's mentioning that the Jews had instigated the boycott against Germany. Trapp then explained to the men that the Jews in Jozefow would have to be rounded up, whereupon the young males were to be selected out for labor and the others shot.

Trapp then made an extraordinary offer to his battalion: if any of the older men among them did not feel up to the task that lay before him, he could step out. Trapp paused, and after some moments, one man stepped forward. The captain of 3rd company, enraged that one of his men had broken ranks, began to berate the man. The major told the captain to hold his tongue. Then ten or twelve other men stepped forward as well. They turned in their rifles and were told to await a further assignment from the major.

Trapp then summoned the company commanders and gave them their respective assignments. Two platoons of 3rd company were to surround the village; the men were explicitly ordered to shoot anyone trying to escape. The remaining men were to round up the Jews and take them to the market place. Those too sick or frail to walk to the market place, as well as infants and anyone offering resistance or attempting to hide, were to be shot on the spot. Thereafter, a few men of 1st company were to accompany the work Jews selected at the market place, while the rest were to proceed to the forest to form the firing squads. The Jews were to be loaded onto battalion trucks by 2nd company and shuttled from the market place to the forest.

Having given the company commanders their respective assignments, Trapp spent the rest of the day in town, mostly in a schoolroom converted into his headquarters but also at the homes of the Polish mayor and the local priest. Witnesses who saw him at various times during the day described him as bitterly complaining about the orders he had been given and "weeping like a child." He nevertheless affirmed that "orders were orders" and had to be carried out. Not a single witness recalled seeing him at the shooting site, a fact that was not lost on the men, who felt some anger about it. Trapp's driver remembers him saying later, "If this Jewish business is ever avenged on earth, then have mercy on us Germans."²

In describing the massacre, Browning notes, "While the men of Reserve Battalion 101 were apparently willing to shoot those Jews too weak or sick to move, they still shied for the most part from shooting infants, despite their orders. No officer intervened, though subsequently one officer warned his men that in the future they would have to be more energetic."

As the killing continued, several more soldiers asked to be relieved of their duties. Some officers reassigned anyone who asked, while others pressed their men to continue despite reservations. By midday, the men were being offered bottles of vodka to "refresh" them. As the day continued, a number of soldiers broke down. Yet the majority continued to the end. After the massacre ended, the battalion was transferred to the north part of the

district and the various platoons were divided up, each stationed in a different town. All of the platoons took part in at least one more shooting action. Most found that these subsequent murders were easier to perform. Browning therefore sees that first massacre as an important dividing line.

Even twenty-five years later they could not hide the horror of endlessly shooting Jews at point-blank range. In contrast, however, they spoke of surrounding ghettos and watching [Polish “volunteers”] brutally drive the Jews onto the death trains with considerable detachment and a near-total absence of any sense of participation or responsibility. Such actions they routinely dismissed with a standard refrain: “I was only in the police cordon there.” The shock treatment of Jozefow had created an effective and desensitized unit of ghetto-clearers and, when the occasion required, outright murderers. After Jozefow nothing else seemed so terrible.³

In reaching conclusions from the interviews, Browning focuses on the choices open to the men he studied. He writes:

Most simply denied that they had any choice. Faced with the testimony of others, they did not contest that Trapp had made the offer but repeatedly claimed that they had not heard that part of his speech or could not remember it. A few who admitted that they had been given the choice and yet failed to opt out were quite blunt. One said that he had not wanted to be considered a coward by his comrades. Another – more aware of what truly required courage – said quite simply: “I was cowardly.” A few others also made the attempt to confront the question of choice but failed to find the words. It was a different time and place, as if they had been on another political planet, and the political vocabulary and values of the 1960s were helpless to explain the situation in which they found themselves in 1942. As one man admitted, it was not until years later that he began to consider that what he had done had not been right. He had not given it a thought at the time.⁴

The men who did not take part were more specific about their motives. Some attributed their refusal to their age or the fact that they were not “career men.” Only one mentioned ties to Jews as a reason for not participating. Browning therefore notes:

What remains virtually unexamined by the interrogators and unmentioned by the policemen was the role of antisemitism. Did they not speak of it because antisemitism had not been a motivating factor? Or were they unwilling and unable to confront this issue even after twenty-five years, because it had been all too important, all too pervasive? One is tempted to wonder if the silence speaks louder than words, but in the end – the silence is still silence, and the question remains unanswered.

Was the incident at Jozefow typical? Certainly not. I know of no other case in which a commander so openly invited and sanctioned the nonparticipation of his

men in a killing action. But in the end the important fact is not that the experience of Reserve Battalion 101 was untypical, but rather that Trapp's extraordinary offer did not matter. Like any other unit, Reserve Police Battalion 101 killed the Jews they had been told to kill.⁵

19.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. What evidence is there that *peer pressure* played a role in the massacre described in the reading? What evidence is there that *antisemitism* played a role? What other factors may have influenced the willingness of the policemen to participate?
2. What evidence is there that *opportunism* played a role in the willingness of the policemen to participate in the massacre? What were the benefits of participating?
3. Nazi propaganda and policies sought to dehumanize Jews in the eyes of others in German society. Did *dehumanization* play a role in the massacre at Jozefow? What evidence does the reading provide to either support or refute the claim that policemen viewed their victims as less than human?
4. The officers described in the reading were concerned for their own psychological well-being and that of their men. Is there any evidence in the reading that they showed any concern for their victims?
5. What does Browning mean when he writes, "After Jozefow, nothing else seemed so terrible"?
6. What insights does Stanley Milgram's research offer in understanding the massacre at Jozefow?
7. In Chapter 5, Philip Zimbardo was quoted as saying: "The question to ask of Milgram's research is not why the majority of normal, average subjects behave in evil (felonious) ways, but what did the disobeying minority do after they refused to continue to shock the poor soul, who was so obviously in pain?"

How do his comments apply to the soldiers who refused to take part in the killing? How do they apply to Major Trapp?

8. Browning writes of the men who took part in the murders, "A few who admitted that they had been given the choice and yet failed to opt out were quite blunt. One said that he had not wanted to be considered a coward by his comrades. Another – more aware of what truly required courage – said quite simply: 'I was cowardly.'"

Write a working definition of the word *coward* in your journal.

9. Scholar Daniel Goldhagen examined this same story and reached a different conclusion from Browning. He asserts that antisemitism, rather than conformity, is a more convincing explanation for why so many men, even when given the choice not to kill, participated in the massacre at Jozefow. For Goldhagen, any explanation outside of what he calls “eliminationsist anti-Semitism” is inadequate. Do you agree? Is desire to conform enough to explain why people would participate in such violence? Or must they also feel hatred for their victims?

Resource 19.4:
Reading: Obeying Orders

Creating Context

In January 1942, representatives from eleven departments of the German government and the Nazi Party met in Wannsee, Germany, a suburb of Berlin, to discuss the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question.” It was in this meeting that the total extermination of the Jews in Europe was planned and coordinated in a calculated, practical manner.

The conference did not mark the start of the Holocaust. Jews were being killed long before the meeting. It was significant, mainly because it turned the “final solution” over to the bureaucrats. The murders of most Jews would now be carried out in a systematic way; Jews would be transported to death camps in an organized manner and killed. The process would take place according to “rules and regulations.”

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

bureaucracy	memorandum
exit visa	rationalize
memento	

The Wannsee Conference made the “Final Solution” a matter of bureaucratic policy. It was now up to the clerks, administrators, guards, and other employees to enforce it. After the war, journalist Bernt Engelmann listened as a friend described one of those administrators, his cousin Klaus-Gunter. According to Engelmann’s friend, Klaus-Gunter later claimed, “I didn’t harm a hair on anyone’s head and none of us believed in that racial nonsense anyway. We were just little cogs in a huge machine – important cogs, true, but on the whole we did nothing different from any general staff officer.”

Engelmann’s friend went on to say, “Imagine he showed me an old-fashioned gold cigarette case shortly before his chauffeur came for him. ‘The woman to whom this belonged was someone I got an exit visa for – it almost cost me my life,’ he told me. ‘You see, we weren’t monsters.’ I looked at the cover, which had the words engraved, ‘In memory of Lieutenant Helmut Lilienfeld,’ or something like that, and then his date of birth, his regiment, and the day on which he fell ‘for his beloved Fatherland.’...” When Engelmann expressed surprise that Klaus-Gunter kept the case, his friend replied:

No – I’m convinced that Klaus-Gunter thinks of himself as not only competent and hardworking, but even decent and kindhearted. I suppose that’s why he always has the cigarette case on him – as a piece of evidence, so to speak. After all, he didn’t save the woman’s life because of the gold cigarette case. He could have simply kept it and shipped her off to Auschwitz. No, there were other reasons: first of all, this was not an anonymous victim, but a living human being standing before him. Somehow the woman had managed to get in to see him. And

then she showed him the cigarette case that had belonged to her dead husband, to prove that she was a war widow. Then he helped her, and he kept the case only to have a memento of his own decency...

Types like my cousin can cold bloodedly murder tens of thousands from their desks, issuing orders on official stationery in standard memorandum form; and they take great pride in their efficiency. But don't think for a moment Klaus-Gunter would have been capable of beating an old man unconscious and dragging him onto the streetcar tracks, or attacking women and children and driving them into the streets... [Yet none] of it would have taken place if it hadn't been ordered from "on high," if there hadn't been experts, most of them with university educations, organizing everything so that the "operation" could be carried out with split-second timing... They sat in their offices and dealt with issues of "political necessity." They dictated telegraph messages and signed lists and special orders – like Klaus-Gunter."

Engelmann agreed, adding "And girls like my cousin Gudrun, from solid middle-class families, assisted them. They sat there with their chic hairdos and pretty white blouses and typed neat lists of the victims – an important service for Führer, Volk, and Vaterland."⁶

19.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. Draw an identity chart for Klaus-Gunter. Use direct quotations and other evidence from the reading to complete the chart.
2. What did Klaus-Gunter mean when he said "I didn't harm a hair on anyone's head."? Was he lying or did he truly believe he was innocent? What evidence is there to support the former or the latter?
3. Why did Klaus-Gunter keep the cigarette case that a woman gave him? What did the case represent to him?
4. What does it mean to *rationalize* one's actions? What Klaus-Gunter rationalizing his actions?
5. Is there a difference between murdering "tens of thousands from their desks" and "shooting Jews at point-blank range" as the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 did?
6. Compare Klaus-Gunter with the SS men at Chelmno described in Reading 19.4. How are they alike? What differences seem most striking?
7. Review Milgram's experiment (Resource 19.1). How does proximity to the victim affect one's willingness to participate in harming an innocent victim? How does

the authority of the person who gives the order affect the situation? For example, are people more obedient to orders if they come from someone who seems to be in authority?

8. How did *opportunism* factor into the decisions of those who were “little cogs in a huge machine”? How might being far removed from the victims make the benefits of doing one’s job well outweigh the consequences to innocent victims?
9. Compare Gudrun’s role to that of her bosses. How is her role similar to theirs? What differences seem most striking? Is she as responsible as they are?

Resource 19.5:
Reading: Emptying the Ghettos

Creating Context

During the Holocaust, the Nazis established nearly 1,000 ghettos in Europe. Initially, the ghettos, surrounded by walls or fences, were used to segregate Jews from the rest of society, forcing them to live in squalid, overcrowded conditions. As the “Final Solution” accelerated, ghettos became more often places where the Nazis held Jews temporarily before moving them to concentration camps or killing centers.

The Nazis created a Judenrat or “Council of Jewish Elders” in each ghetto. The Judenrat gave Jews the impression that they had some measure of authority over their own community, when in fact they did not. The Nazis often tasked the Judenrat with choosing which ghetto residents would next be deported to concentration camps and death camps.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

Judenrat	diary
gentile	deportation
contempt	

Members of every Judenrat had to decide who in their community would be “resettled in the east.” It was the most painful choice each would ever make. Before carrying out a deportation order, Chaim Rumkowski, the head of Lodz Judenrat, told his fellow Jews, “Yesterday I received an order to send over 20,000 Jews out of the ghetto. ‘If you don’t do it, we will.’ And the question arose, ‘Should we do it or leave it to others?’ Even more important is the question of not how many will we lose but of how many can we save?” He then urged that the sick be sacrificed to save the healthy. But no one was willing to make such choices. So when the Judenrat did not supply enough Jews for deportation, the SS and the German police did the job for them. The same was true in other ghettos.

One of the most haunting deportations involved Henryk Goldsmit, a Warsaw physician and one of the most respected men in Poland. Known to Jews and Christians alike as Janusz Korczak, Goldsmit offered advice on child-rearing over the radio before the war. He also ran an orphanage in what became the Warsaw Ghetto.

Once the war began, Goldsmit tried desperately to protect his young charges. Only his diary revealed the depths of his despair. In June, 1942, he noted that “the day began with the weighing of the children. The month of May showed a marked decline. The earlier months of this year were not too bad, and even May isn’t yet all that alarming. But we still have two months or more before the harvest... The children look dreamy. Only their outer skin looks normal. Underneath lurks fatigue, discouragement, anger, mutiny, mistrust, resentment, longing. The seriousness of their diaries hurts.”

When the Nazis ordered Goldsmit and his children deported, a number of Polish Gentiles offered to hide him. He refused, choosing instead to remain with his orphans. One observer wrote:

It was an unbearably hot day. I put the children from the home at the far end of the square, near the wall. I thought that I might manage to save them that way at least until the afternoon, and possibly until the next day. I suggested to Korczak that he come with me to the ghetto officials and ask them to intervene. He refused, because he didn't want to leave the children for even a minute. They began loading the train. I stood by the column of ghetto police who were putting people in the boxcars and watched with my heart in my mouth in the hope that my stratagem would succeed. But they kept packing them in and there was still room left. Urged on by whips, more and more people were jammed into the cars. Suddenly Schmerling – the sadistic ghetto police officer whom the Germans had put in charge of the Umschlagplatz – commanded that the children be brought to the cars. Korczak went at their head. I'll never forget the sight to the end of my life. It wasn't just entering a boxcar – it was a silent but organized protest against the murderers, a march like which no human eye had ever seen before. The children went four-by-four. Korczak went first with his head held high, leading a child with each hand. The second group was led by Stefa Wilczynska [Korczak's assistant]. They went to their death with a look full of contempt for their assassins. When the ghetto policemen saw Korczak, they snapped to attention and saluted. "Who is that man?" asked the Germans. I couldn't control myself any longer, but I hid the flood of tears that ran down my cheeks with my hands. I sobbed and sobbed at our helplessness in the face of such murder.⁷

19.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. What options did the Judenrat think were open to them when the Nazis asked them to select those who would be deported to camps?
2. At one point Rumkowski said that "I have to cut off limbs to save the body?" What did he mean? What were the "limbs?" What was the "body?"
3. What were the likely results if Rumkowski and others refused to cooperate with the Nazis? What were the results if they agreed to go along?
4. Why were observers so moved by deportation of Goldsmit and the orphans? Why did the observer describe the event as "a silent but organized protest against the murderers, a march like which no human eye had ever seen before?" In what sense was it a protest? Record your thoughts in your journal.
5. What details in this reading show the dehumanization of Jews? How did

Goldsmi't's "silent protest" preserve his and the orphans' humanity?

Resource 19.6:**Reading: A Commandant's View***Creating Context*

In addition to the dozens of ghettos and concentration camps, the Nazis began to build camps for the purpose of exterminating Europe's Jews as efficiently as possible after the Wannsee Conference in 1942. By 1944, six extermination camps were in operation, all in Poland: Chelmno, Sobibor, Treblinka, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and Madjanek.

Franz Stangl was the commandant (or director) of the death camp at Sobibor and, later, Treblinka. He escaped Germany at the end of the war and was finally arrested in Brazil in 1971. It was then that journalist Gitta Sereny interviewed him. An excerpt of the interview is below.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

commandant	slaughterhouse
ethos	tins
liquidation	cargo
repress	

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

Q. "You've been telling me about your routines," I said to him. "But how did you feel? Was there anything you enjoyed, you felt good about?"

A. "It was interesting to me to find out who was cheating," he said. "As I told you, I didn't care who it was; my professional ethos was that if something wrong was going on, it had to be found out. That was my profession; I enjoyed it. It fulfilled me. And yes, I was ambitious about that; I won't deny that."

Q. "Would it be true to say that you got used to the liquidations?"

A. He thought for a moment. "To tell the truth," he then said, slowly and thoughtfully, "one did become used to it."

Q. "In days? Weeks? Months?"

A. "Months. It was months before I could look one of them in the eye. I repressed it all by trying to create a special place: gardens, new barracks, new kitchens, new everything; barbers, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters. There were hundreds of ways to take one's mind off it; I used them all."

Q. "Even so, if you felt that strongly, there had to be times, perhaps at night, in the dark, when you couldn't avoid thinking about it?"

A. "In the end, the only way to deal with it was to drink. I took a large glass of brandy to bed with me each night and I drank."

Q. "I think you are evading my question."

A. “No, I don’t mean to; of course, thoughts came. But I forced them away. I made myself concentrate on work, work and again work.”

Q. “Would it be true to say that you finally felt they weren’t really human beings?”

A. “When I was on a trip once, years later in Brazil,” he said, his face deeply concentrated, and obviously reliving the experience, “my train stopped next to a slaughterhouse. The cattle in the pens, hearing the noise of the train, trotted up to the fence and stared at the train. They were very close to my window, one crowding the other, looking at me through that fence. I thought then, ‘Look at this; this reminds me of Poland; that’s just how the people looked, trustingly, just before they went into the tins...

Q. “You said tins,” I interrupted. “What do you mean?” But he went on without hearing, or answering me.

A. “...I couldn’t eat tinned meat after that. Those big eyes... which looked at me... not knowing that in no time at all they’d all be dead.” He paused. His face was drawn. At this moment he looked old and worn and real.

Q. “So you didn’t feel they were human beings?”

A. “Cargo,” he said tonelessly. “They were cargo.” He raised and dropped his hand in a gesture of despair. Both our voices had dropped. It was one of the few times in those weeks of talks that he made no effort to cloak his despair, and his hopeless grief allowed a moment of sympathy.

Q. “When do you think you began to think of them as cargo? The way you spoke earlier, of the day when you first came to Treblinka, the horror you felt seeing the dead bodies everywhere – they weren’t ‘cargo’ to you then, were they?”

A. “I think it started the day I first saw the Totenlager [death camp] in Treblinka. I remember [Christian] Wirth [the man who set up the death camps] standing there, next to the pits full of blue-black corpses. It had nothing to do with humanity – it couldn’t have; it was a mass – a mass of rotting flesh. Wirth said, ‘What shall we do with this garbage?’ I think unconsciously that started me thinking of them as cargo.”

Q. “There were so many children, did they ever make you think of your children, of how you would feel in the position of those parents?”

A. “No,” he said slowly, “I can’t say I ever thought that way.” He paused. “You see,” he then continued, still speaking with this extreme seriousness and obviously intent on finding a new truth within himself, “I rarely saw them as individuals. It was always a huge mass. I sometimes stood on the wall and saw them in the tube. But – how can I explain it – they were naked, packed together, running, being driven with whips like...” the sentence trailed off.

Q. “Could you not have changed that?” I asked. “In your position, could you not have stopped the nakedness, the whips, the horror of the cattle pens?”

A. “No, no, no. This was the system. Wirth had invented it. It worked. And because it worked, it was irreversible.”⁸

19.6 Comprehension & Connections

1. Which of Stangl's statements show that he thought of the prisoners in his camps as less than human? Could Stangl have performed his job without this dehumanization? Compare the role that dehumanization played in Stangl's participation in mass murder with the role it played for the policemen at Jozefow (Resource 19.3). What similarities do you notice? What differences?
2. How did Stangl view his role in the death camps? How much power did he think he had? Which of his statements support your answer?
3. Elie Wiesel has described the process in which the Nazis reduced a person to a prisoner; the prisoner to a number; and the number to an ash, which was itself dispersed. To what extent does Stangl's account explain that process?

Resource 19.7:**Reading: Auschwitz***Creating Context*

Writing about his experiences in the death camp Auschwitz, Primo Levi said that “our language lacks words to express this offence.” Before reading, reflect on his statement in your journal. Is it possible to understand the experiences of the victims of the Holocaust?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

Judenrat	extermination
gentile	crematorium
contempt	

Within months of the invasion of the Soviet Union, Heinrich Himmler, who oversaw the “Final Solution,” transformed what had been a camp for Polish political prisoners into a larger version of a camp in Poland called Majdanek. Auschwitz, known in Polish as Oswiecim, was chosen because even though it was on a major rail line, it was far enough from the battlefields that there was little danger of bombing. Rudolf Hoess, the commandant of Auschwitz, later described the role the camp played in the “Final Solution.”

The extermination procedure in Auschwitz took place as follows: Jews selected for gassing were taken as quietly as possible to the crematoriums, the men being separated from the women, in the undressing rooms, prisoners of the Special Detachment, detailed for this purpose, would tell them in their own language that they were going to be bathed and deloused, that they must leave their clothes neatly together and above all remember where they had put them, so that they would be able to find them again quickly after the delousing. The prisoners of the Special Detachment had the greatest interest in seeing that the operation proceeded smoothly and quickly. After undressing, the Jews went into the gas chambers, which were furnished with showers and water pipes and gave a realistic impression of a bathhouse.

The women went in first with their children, followed by the men who were always the fewer in number. This part of the operation nearly always went smoothly, for the prisoners of the Special Detachment would calm those who betrayed any anxiety or who perhaps had some inkling of their fate. As an additional precaution these prisoners of the Special Detachment and an SS man always remained in the chamber until the last moment.

The door would now be quickly screwed up and the gas immediately discharged by the waiting disinfectors through vents in the ceilings of the gas chambers, down a shaft that led to the floor. This insured the rapid distribution of the gas. It

could be observed through the peephole in the door that those who were standing nearest to the induction vents were killed at once. It can be said that about one-third died straight away. The remainder staggered about and began to scream and struggle for air. The screaming, however, soon changed to the death rattle and in a few minutes all lay still. After twenty minutes at the latest no movement could be discerned. The time required for the gas to have effect varied according to the weather, and depended on whether it was damp or dry, cold or warm. It also depended on the quality of the gas, which was never exactly the same, and on the composition of the transports which might contain a high proportion of healthy Jews, or old and sick, or children. The victims became unconscious after a few minutes, according to their distance from the intake shaft. Those who screamed and those who were old or sick or weak, or the small children, died quicker than those who were healthy or young.

The door was opened half an hour after the induction of the gas, and the ventilation switched on. Work was immediately begun on removing the corpses. There was no noticeable change in the bodies and no sign of convulsions or discoloration. Only after the bodies had been left lying for some time, that is to say after several hours, did the usual death stains appear in the places where they had lain...

The special detachment now set about removing the gold teeth and cutting the hair from the women. After this, the bodies were taken up by the elevator and laid in front of the ovens, which had meanwhile been stoked up. Depending on the size of the bodies, up to three corpses could be put into one oven retort at the same time. The time required for cremation also depended on this, but on an average it took twenty minutes.

During the period when the fires were kept burning continuously, without a break, the ashes fell through the grates and were constantly removed and crushed to powder. The ashes were taken in trucks to the Vistula, where they immediately drifted away and dissolved.⁹

Himmler later ordered the original camp enlarged so that it could contain thirty thousand people (Auschwitz I). He also established a second camp in nearby Birkenau, which was to hold one hundred thousand prisoners-of-war (Auschwitz II). And he called for the construction of a labor camp to provide workers for a factory run by I. G. Farben, one of Germany's leading industrial firms (Auschwitz III). By the summer of 1942, Auschwitz had grown beyond Himmler's original plans. Rita Kesselman recalled her first view of the camp:

For three days and three nights, we were taken. Destination unknown. Trains were stopping in villages and train stations, in cities. We were screaming through the windows, "Water, water." We were hungry. The pail in the corner filled up very quickly. And then people went on the floor. The stink, the smell, in the cattle car was terrible. People were changing positions. One was standing up, and one was

sitting down. I was alone. I didn't have my parents to cuddle up with. I was sitting there by myself.

After three days and three nights, we arrived in a big field. And that was Auschwitz. Auschwitz was a city, and Birkenau was a suburb. In Birkenau went on all the killing, gassing, and burning the people. There were four crematoriums in Birkenau. When I came into Auschwitz, the trains didn't go to Birkenau. They came into Auschwitz. And we were made, the people that were selected..., they made us come off the train. In front of us, SS men with guns and dogs. And on trucks, more SS men with guns, watching us.

And we saw people in striped clothes, helping the people coming off the train. At the time, we didn't know who they were. They were like mutes. They didn't talk. They weren't allowed to talk. They were Jews, most of them, that helped the people come off the train. They were prisoners that had to help the Germans.

We were told to separate the men from the women. On the side were empty trucks waiting. The women and children were told to go on the trucks. And older people. And then, from the younger people were selected, people to go to the right and to the left. At the time, we did not know that the people who were selected to go to the right, would live and the rest would die. About one hundred people were picked from the women to go to work. And we envied the others, because we thought that they would go on the trucks. And after three nights being exhausted and hungry, we had to walk.

It was smoggy and raining. We walked for miles, and as we came closer, we saw like a camp with barbed wires. A band was playing at the gate. And the SS men were watching the camp from towers. A band of women played at the gate. They brought us inside. There were barracks – twenty-five barracks. They put us in an empty barrack on the floor. And we waited all night, not knowing what is going to happen to us.

In the morning, the SS came, women and men SS, and they took us to another barracks. It was a bathhouse. We were made to undress, leave the clothes on one side, and they took us to the other side. Every person was given a tattoo. My number was thirty thousand seven hundred seventy-five...

Our hair was shaved and we were given striped clothes and wooden shoes. And that was our uniform for the two years I was in Auschwitz. I never bathed. I never saw water. I never had water to drink.¹⁰

Primo Levi, an Italian Jew who fought in a resistance unit in Italy, was deported to Auschwitz in 1944. He recalled his first days there:

Then for the first time we became aware that our language lacks words to express this offence, the demolition of a man. In a moment, with almost prophetic

intuition, the reality was revealed to us: we had reached the bottom. It is not possible to sink lower than this; no human condition is more miserable than this, nor could it conceivably be so. Nothing belongs to us any more; they have taken away our clothes, our shoes, even our hair; if we speak, they will not listen to us, and if they listen, they will not understand. They will even take away our name: and if we want to keep it, we will have to find ourselves the strength to do so, to manage somehow so that behind the name something of us, of us as we were, remains.

We know that we will have difficulty in being understood, and this is as it should be. But consider what value, what meaning is enclosed even in the smallest of our daily habits, in the hundred possessions which even the poorest beggar owns: a handkerchief, an old letter, the photo of a cherished person. These things are part of us, almost like limbs of our body; nor is it conceivable that we can be deprived of them in our world, for we immediately find others to substitute the old ones, other objects which are ours in their personification and evocation of our memories.

Imagine now a man who is deprived of everyone he loves, and at the same time of his house, his habits, his clothes, in short, of everything he possesses: he will be a hollow man, reduced to suffering and needs, forgetful of dignity and restraint, for he who loses all often easily loses himself. He will be a man whose life or death can be lightly decided with no sense of human affinity, in the most fortunate of cases, on the basis of a pure judgment of utility. It is in this way that one can understand the double sense of the term “extermination camp,” and it is now clear what we seek to express with the phrase: “to lie on the bottom.”

Haftling: I have learnt that I am Haftling. My number is 174517; we have been baptized, we will carry the tattoo on our left arm until we die. The operation was slightly painful and extraordinarily rapid; they placed us all in a row, and one by one, according to the alphabetical order of our names, we filed past a skillful official, armed with a sort of pointed tool with a very short needle. It seems that this is the real, true initiation: only by “showing one’s number” can one get bread and soup. Several days passed, and not a few cuffs and punches, before we became used to showing our number promptly enough not to disorder the daily operation of food- distribution; weeks and months were needed to learn its sound in the German language. And for many days, while the habits of freedom still led me to look for the time on my wristwatch, my new name ironically appeared instead, a number tattooed in bluish characters under the skin.¹¹

One day, Levi broke off an icicle that hung outside a window. A guard immediately took it away from him. Levi knew enough German to ask why. The guard replied, “There is no why here.”

19.7 Comprehension & Connections

1. What does the information and descriptions in this reading make you think about and feel? What questions does it raise for you? Take a few minutes to record your thoughts in your journal.
2. Primo Levi writes about “the demolition of a man. What are the different ways, according to the reading, that Auschwitz was set up to demolish the humanity of its prisoners?
3. What did Levi mean when he said that “our language lacks words to express this offence”? What did the guard mean when he told Levi, “There is no why here”? How are the two comments related?
4. How would describe the tone of Hoess’s description of the gassing procedure? Does he express any emotions about the “extermination procedure” that he oversaw at Auschwitz?
5. In describing “improvements” to the camp, Hoess noted that the first cremations took place in the open and then explained why a change was needed:
During bad weather or when a strong wind was blowing, the stench of burning flash was carried for many miles and caused the whole neighborhood to talk about the burning of Jews, despite official counterpropaganda. It is true that all members of the SS detailed for the extermination were bound to the strictest secrecy over the whole operation, but, as later SS legal proceedings showed, this was not always observed. Even the most severe punishment was not able to stop their love of gossip.¹²

What was Hoess’s concern about the cremations that took place in the open? Why did he fear gossip among the SS soldiers in the camps?

Using Resource 19.7

Reflection and Discussion

While it is important to learn about Auschwitz in studying the Holocaust, many teachers find that the nature of the discussion inspired by this reading is different from other readings in this curriculum. As indicated by the guard’s statement to Levi (“There is no why here”), analysis of the killing procedures and the experiences of the prisoners at Auschwitz is difficult. Still, it is important to give students the opportunity to process this reading in some way. You might start by simply giving students time to write in their journals in response to one or more of the Connections questions above. Remind students that they are likely to generate more questions than answers in their responses. You might then follow the [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy, recording comments and questions

on the board as the students share out to the whole group in the final step.

Extension: Holocaust Memoirs

Elie Wiesel's [*Night*](#) and Primo Levi's *The Drowned and the Saved* both offer powerful first-hand testimony of the experiences of Holocaust victims. Both books describe the impossible physical and moral conditions confronting Jews and other victims in the Nazi death camps. Facing History has a [study guide for *Night*](#) that you can borrow from the library or download from the website.

*Appendix 19A**Preparing to Hear Survivor Testimony*

One of the most powerful ways to learn about the Holocaust is through survivor testimonies - firsthand accounts from individuals who lived through the genocide. Whether your class hears a survivor's story in person or through readings and videos, the experience puts a face on this history. Every survivor's story offers a unique perspective on the difficult and sometimes impossible choices individuals were forced to confront during the Holocaust.

Before you bear witness to survivor testimony, think about the following questions, and record your thoughts in your journal:

- If you could speak with someone who survived the Holocaust, what would you ask? What would you most like to know from someone who was there?
- Why do you think many survivors have chosen to tell their stories to the world? What do you think they expect you and others to learn from their stories?
- Speaking to students about hearing survivor testimony, Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Elie Wiesel says, "...the idea of telling these stories is to sensitize people- that you should become more sensitive- to yourselves, to your friends, even to strangers...become sensitive: not only to the story of what we try to tell, but about what happens even today- because what happens even today is always related to what happened then."
 - What message is Wiesel trying to express to students?
 - What does it mean to "become sensitive"? Is it important to be sensitive to others' stories? Why or why not?
 - If you are having a survivor visit your classroom, what does it mean for you to be sensitive to your guest. What are examples of "sensitive" questions? What does it mean to be a "sensitive" listener?
- *Record the name of the survivor whose story you will hear, and then write down at least three questions you would like to ask him or her.*

Lesson 20: Resistance

Essential Questions:

- *What can we gain by studying the brutality of the Holocaust? What is the difference between understanding these events and confronting them?*
- *What is a "choiceless choice"? Is it possible or appropriate to judge this kind of choice?*
- *What factors made resistance during the Holocaust difficult? What is the meaning and importance of acts of resistance by Jews and other victims of the Holocaust?*

Included Resources:

- * 20.1 – Reading: Choiceless Choices
- * 20.2 – Reading: Deception, Terror, and Resistance
- 20.3 – Reading: The Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto
- 20.4 – Reading: In Hiding
- 20.5 – Reading: Resistance in the Death Camps

* = core resource

Additional Recommended Resources:

Video (Available from Facing History Library): [Helen K.](#), part of the [Elements of Time](#) series

Introduction:

Elie Wiesel has observed, “The question is not why did all the Jews not fight, but how so many of them did. Tormented, beaten, starved, where did they find the strength – spiritual and physical – to resist?” Indeed, many Jews did not go to their deaths passively during the Holocaust, and this lesson provides several stories of resistance for students to consider. Learning about these stories provides the opportunity for students to consider the variety of ways Jews resisted during the Holocaust, from simply keeping diaries to armed rebellion. It is important to note that in the vast majority of instances, resisting or rebelling did not increase the chances of survival of a victim of the Nazis. In fact, it often hastened their deaths and sometimes brought on the deaths of others. Given this reality, it is worth exploring with your class why these stories hold such resonance with us as we study this dark history.

Wiesel’s statement, of course, alludes to the possibility that some might wonder why more Jews did not resist. That is why it is important to begin this lesson with Resource 20.1, which explores professor Lawrence Langer’s concept of *choiceless choices*. It is important to give students time to reflect on this challenging concept, the idea that the victims of the Nazis were thrust into a world in which the normal moral and ethical framework most of us are accustomed to no longer applied. Langer warns against allowing overly sentimentalized stories of resistance to cause us to judge less charitably those prisoners and victims who did not resist. *We encourage teachers to heed Langer’s*

warning as they teach this course. The circumstances of Holocaust victims were often so dire that normal standards for moral behavior became meaningless.

It would be a mistake to romanticize stories of resistance at the expense of the stories of other victims of Nazi brutality who did not have the same opportunity or strength to fight. At the same time, there are numerous stories of victim's resisting the Nazis and they should not be ignored. The website of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum notes, "Jewish civilians offered armed resistance in over 100 ghettos in occupied Poland and the Soviet Union. In April-May 1943, Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto rose in armed revolt after rumors that the Germans would deport the remaining ghetto inhabitants to the Treblinka killing center." However, what they teach us about dignity in the face of brutality and the will to survive in the most dire conditions is difficult to measure.

According to the Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation "Jewish resistance took on different forms. Physical resistance by the partisans was something that hurt the Germans. Spiritual resistance may not have affected the Germans and their collaborators directly, but it was important to the Jews, since the Nazis wanted to take away their dignity and self-respect.

In defiance of the laws, the Jews held prayer services, or taught children to read Hebrew; those who performed in theater groups or in concerts, who painted pictures and wrote poems, were part of the resistance, though they had no guns."

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What thoughts, questions, comments and feelings come to mind as you learn about the Holocaust?
- How might we respond to the stories of those who lived in circumstances that were so desperate that they are beyond our imagination? What do you think is the purpose of learning about these stories?

Resource 20.1:**Reading: Choiceless Choices***Creating Context*

In this lesson you will learn about stories of resistance and revolt by victims of Nazi oppression during the Holocaust. While it is important to observe that the victims of the Nazis did not necessarily accept their fate passively, it is also important to note the limits of the choices available to them. Prisoners in the camps had no control over their lives, and the choices or dilemmas they faced in the camps ultimately had little or no effect on their fate. This reading explores the concept of a “choiceless choice,” an oxymoron that helps describe the context in which some victims decided to try to resist. This context defies our conventional logic and experience.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

oxymoron**crematoria****kapo****“choiceless choice”****Special Squads**

Nothing in one’s previous existence prepared an individual for the camps. Although some were luckier than others, no inmate had any control over his or her life. Primo Levi often thought about the pressures individuals faced in the camps. He reflected on those who became kapos – prisoners in charge of other inmates. He also wondered about another group of prisoners.

With this duly vague definition, “Special Squad,” the SS referred to the group of prisoners entrusted with running the crematoria. It was their task to maintain order among the new arrivals (often completely unaware of the destiny awaiting them) who were to be sent into the gas chambers, to extract the corpses from the chambers, to pull gold teeth from jaws, to cut women’s hair, to sort and classify clothes, shoes, and the contents of the luggage, to transport the bodies to the crematoria and oversee the operation of the ovens, to extract and eliminate the ashes. The Special Squad in Auschwitz numbered, depending on the moment, from seven hundred to one thousand active members.

These Special Squads did not escape everyone else’s fate. On the contrary, the SS exerted the greatest diligence to prevent any man who had been part of it from surviving and telling. Twelve squads succeeded each other in Auschwitz, each remaining operative for a few months, whereupon it was suppressed, each time with a different trick to head off possible resistance. As its initiation, the next squad burnt the corpses of its predecessors.¹³

Levi concluded that people in Special Squads were not collaborators but victims. They were not making choices in a world where individuals can choose among various

options. Lawrence Langer agrees. He argues that behavior in the camps “cannot be viewed through the same lens we used to view normal human behavior since the rules of law and morality and the choices available for human decisions were not permitted in these camps for extermination. As important as it is to point out situations of dignity and morality which reinforce our notions of normal behavior, it is all the more important here to try to convey the ‘unimaginable,’ where surviving in extremity meant an existence that had no relation to our system of time and space and where physical survival under these conditions resulted in ‘choiceless choices!’”¹⁴

20.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. What is a “choiceless choice?” Is it a choice?
2. How did the actions of kapos and members of the Special Squads embody the experience of “choiceless choices”?
3. Summarize Lawrence Langer’s point in the last paragraph of this reading. What can we hope to learn by analyzing the behavior of prisoners in Nazi camps? Is it possible to fully understand their experiences?
4. Langer believes it is not fair or even possible to judge the actions of prisoners in Nazi camps because they were operating within circumstances so unimaginable that our standards of “normal behavior” do not apply. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Using Resource 20.1

Discussing “Choiceless Choices”

The concept of being stateless is important for students to grasp, yet it might be abstract for some students. You might ask them to think about different situations they have learned about in this history and consider which, if any, might fit the criteria of what Langer describes as a choiceless choice. Students may benefit from strategies that give them time to think about this concept with smaller groups of classmates before discussing it as a whole group. The [Think-Pair-Share](#) and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) strategies can provide an appropriate structure for students to think deeply about “choiceless choices” in both small groups and in a whole group discussion with the teacher.

Using Resources 20.2 – 20.5

The following four resources include readings that will deepen students' exploration of the resistance during the Holocaust:

- Resource 20.2: Reading – “Deception, Terror, and Resistance”
- Resource 20.3: Reading – “The Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto”
- Resource 20.4: Reading – “In Hiding”
- Resource 20.5: Reading – “Resistance in the Death Camps”

These readings are taken from the resource book and explore different forms of resistance by victims of the Nazis in a variety of circumstances. It is important that students acquire a basic understanding of the variety of forms of resistance that occurred during the Holocaust and consider the meaning and significance of resisting. You might choose to use these readings in succession, exploring each reading in depth. Many teachers find that they are able to explore the concept of resistance deeply, while making efficient use of available class time, by having students work in small groups to consider different readings simultaneously, following the [Jigsaw](#) strategy.

Alternatives and Extensions

The Facing History library offers an extensive collection of videos about specific examples of resistance during the Holocaust. The video testimony of [Helen K.](#), who witnessed both the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and acts of resistance in Auschwitz, is especially relevant to Resources 20.3 and 20.5. The list of videos under the “Resistance” heading on the library’s [Holocaust Video Resources](#) page contains several other options you might use as an alternative or an addition to the readings below.

Resource 20.2:**Reading: Deception, Terror, and Resistance***Creating Context*

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

gentile**intimidation****deportation****Heydrich**

Resistance by victims of the Nazis was complicated by a variety of factors. Some victims were unable to believe what lay ahead. They were easily deceived by the slivers of hope the Nazis offered their victims. Sometimes it was the possibility of a ghetto run entirely by Jews; at others it was the hope of resettlement in the east. Often people were willing to believe on the strength of little more than the need to buy a railroad ticket. Surely people being shipped to their deaths would not have to buy a ticket!

The Nazis also used fear and intimidation to prevent resistance. Anyone who challenged them could expect immediate retaliation. In May 1942, for example, two Czech resistance fighters parachuted into their country from a British plane and assassinated Nazi official Reinhard Heydrich. The Nazis executed not only the two soldiers but also five other members of the Czech resistance. Then claiming that Lidice had served as a base for Heydrich's killers, the Nazis murdered every male in the town and set fire to every building. When the fire burned out, they dynamited the ruins and leveled the rubble. Czechs were not the only ones to pay. The day Heydrich died, the Nazis executed 158 Jews in Berlin and shipped three thousand others from Theresienstadt, a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, to death camps farther east.

Resistance was also complicated by the way many non-Jews regarded Jews. In 1944, Isabelle Leitner was a teenager living in Kisvarda, an Hungarian town of about 20,000. She recalls her last day.

On Monday morning, May 29, 1944, the ghetto was evacuated. Jews, thousands upon thousands of Jews – every shape and form, every age, with every ailment, those whose Aryan blood was not Aryan enough, those who had changed their religion oh, so long ago – dragged themselves down the main street toward the railroad station for what the Germans called “deportation.” Upon their backs, bundles and backpacks – the compulsory “50 kilos of your best clothing and food” (which the Germans could later confiscate in one simple operation).

And the Hungarian townspeople, the gentiles – they were there too. They stood lining the streets, many of them smiling, some hiding their smiles. Not a tear. Not a good-bye. They were the good people, the happy people. They were the Aryans.

“We are rid of them, those smelly Jews,” their faces read. “The town is ours!”¹⁵

Leitner later wondered, “You could have thrown a morsel of sadness our way but you didn’t. Why?” Similar scenes were repeated throughout Europe. Yet Jews in every part of Europe fought back. Even in places where resistance seemed impossible, it occurred. In the Vilna ghetto, where the Nazis had been killing Jews since the fall of 1941, Abba Kovner issued this call in January 1942:

Let us not be led like sheep to the slaughter!

Jewish youth!

In a time of unparalleled national misfortune we appeal to you!

We do not yet have the words to express the whole tragic struggle which transpires before our eyes. Our language has no words to probe the depths to which our life has fallen...

Let us defend ourselves during a deportation!

For several months now, day and night, thousands and tens of thousands have been torn away from our midst, men, the aged, women, and children, led away like cattle – and we, the remainder, are numbed. The illusion still lives within us that they are still alive somewhere, in an undisclosed concentration camp, in a ghetto.

You believe and hope to see your mother, your father, your brother who was seized and has disappeared.

In the face of the next day which arrives with the horror of deportation and murder, the hour has struck to dispel the illusion: There is no way out of the ghetto, except the way to death!

No illusion greater than that our dear ones are alive.

No illusion more harmful than that. It deadens our feelings, shatters our national unity in the moments before death.

Before our eyes they led away our mother, our father, our sisters – enough!

We will not go!

Comrades! Uphold this awareness and impart to your families, to the remnants of the Jerusalem of Lithuania.

--Do not surrender into the hands of the kidnappers!

--Do not hand over any other Jews!

--If you are caught, you have nothing to lose!

--Let us defend ourselves, and not go!

Better to fall with honor in the ghetto than to be led like sheep to Ponary!¹⁶

To succeed, the Jews of Vilna needed weapons. Yet their efforts to secure arms were repeatedly blocked. Many gentile resistance groups refused to help them, arguing that the Jews had a different agenda. Resistance also required an organization and a people united in the belief that there was no other alternative. Jews could not agree on much. They were divided politically, economically, and religiously. Still, the Jews of Vilna were eventually able to put aside these differences and work together. So did Jews in Warsaw, Kovno, Bialystok, Bedzin-Sosnowiec, Cracow, and eleven other cities.

20.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. What obstacles limited victims' ability to resist. *Go back and underline the three obstacles that you think are most significant.* Which factors were most surprising? Which were most troubling? In your journal, write down any questions you still have about this reading.
2. Elie Wiesel has observed, "The question is not why all the Jews did not fight, but how so many of them did. Tormented, beaten, starved, where did they find the strength – spiritual and physical – to resist?" How might Kovner answer Wiesel's question? How would you answer it?
3. In Resource 19.7, a witness saw the march of the orphans as testimony to the human spirit. Here Kovner likens a similar march to "sheep being led to slaughter." Which view comes closest to your own?
4. Because of Nazi reprisals, anyone who resisted put others at risk. Does one have the right to endanger others in this way? How does threat of reprisal contribute to the "choiceless choices" faced by those victimized by the Nazis?

Resource 20.3:**Reading: The Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto***Creating Context*

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

deport	howitzer
ZOB	armament works
Passover	artillery
howitzer	

When the Nazis began to deport Jews from Warsaw in the summer of 1942, many Jews there called for open resistance. That fall, some of them organized the ZOB (its initials in Yiddish stand for the Jewish Fighting Organization). When the Nazis began a new round of deportations in January 1943, the ZOB struck back. Surprised by the move, the Nazis stopped deportations for a time, but the Jews had no reason to rejoice. It was only a matter of time until they began again.

On April 19, 1943, the first day of the Jewish holiday of Passover, General Juergen Stroop arrived in Warsaw. He came prepared to wipe out all opposition by the following day, Hitler's birthday. Stroop had 2,100 soldiers with 13 heavy machine guns, 69 hand-held machine guns, 135 submachine guns, several howitzers, and 1,358 rifles. The 1,200 Jewish resisters had 2 submachine guns and 17 rifles. A week later, Stroop reported to his superiors in Berlin:

The resistance put up by the Jews and bandits could be broken only by relentlessly using all our force and energy by day and night. On 23 April 1943 the Reichsfuehrer SS issued through the higher SS and Police Fuehrer East at Cracow his order to complete the combing out of the Warsaw Ghetto with the greatest severity and relentless tenacity. I therefore decided to destroy the entire Jewish residential area by setting every block on fire, including the blocks of residential buildings near the armament works. One concern after the other was systematically evacuated and subsequently destroyed by fire. The Jews then emerged from their hiding places and dug-outs in almost every case. Not infrequently, the Jews stayed in the burning buildings until, because of the heat and the fear of being burned alive, they preferred to jump down from the upper stories after having thrown mattresses and other upholstered articles into the street from the burning buildings. With their bones broken, they still tried to crawl across the street into blocks of buildings which had not yet been set on fire or were only partly in flames. Often Jews changed their hiding places during the night, by moving into the ruins of burnt-out buildings, taking refuge there until they were found by our patrols. Their stay in the sewers also ceased to be pleasant after the first week. Frequently from the street, we could hear loud voices coming through the sewer shafts.¹⁷

Simha Rottem, a survivor, later told filmmaker Claude Lanzmann:

During the first three days of fighting, the Jews had the upper hand. The Germans retreated at once to the ghetto entrance, carrying dozens of wounded with them. From then on, their onslaught came entirely from the outside, through air attack and artillery. We couldn't resist the bombing, especially their method of setting fire to the ghetto. The whole ghetto was ablaze. All life vanished from the streets and houses. We hid in the cellars and bunkers. From there we made our sorties. We went out at night. The Germans were in the ghetto mostly by day, leaving at night. They were afraid to enter the ghetto at night...

I don't think the human tongue can describe the horror we went through in the ghetto. In the streets, if you can call them that, for nothing was left of the streets, we had to step over heaps of corpses. There was no room to get around them. Besides fighting the Germans, we fought hunger and thirst. We had no contact with the outside world; we were completely isolated, cut off from the world. We were in such a state that we could no longer understand the very meaning of why we went on fighting. We thought of attempting a breakout to the Aryan part of Warsaw, outside the ghetto.

Just before May 1 Sigmund and I were sent to try to contact Antek [second-in command of the Jewish Combat Organization, whose real name was Itzhak Zuckermann] in Aryan Warsaw. We found a tunnel under Bonifraterska Street that led out into Aryan Warsaw. Early in the morning we suddenly emerged into a street in broad daylight. Imagine us on that sunny May 1, stunned to find ourselves in the street, among normal people. We'd come from another planet. People immediately jumped on us, because we certainly looked exhausted, skinny, in rags. Around the ghetto there were always suspicious Poles who grabbed Jews. By a miracle, we escaped them. In Aryan Warsaw, life went on as naturally and normally as before. The cafes operated normally, the restaurants, buses, streetcars, and movies were open. The ghetto was an isolated island amid normal life.¹⁸

The Jews managed to hold out for nearly a month. When the Nazis finally put down the uprising on May 16, they destroyed the ghetto and killed many of the rebels. Others took their own lives before the Nazis could reach them. Only a few managed to escape through the sewers that lay beneath the ghetto to join other Polish resistance fighters.

20.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. This reading describes one of the most significant uprisings against the Nazis by their victims. *Go back and underline at least three details about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising that you think are significant.* What did you find most surprising

about the uprising? Why? What did you find most troubling? In your journal, write down any questions you still have about this reading.

2. Some have called resistance a choice Jews made about how to die rather than about how to live. Others argue that resistance is more about the will to live and the power of hope than it is about death. Which view is closer to the description of “choiceless choices” from Resource 20.1? Which view is closest to your own?
3. Compare Rottem’s description of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto with Stroop’s. What differences are most striking?
4. “I was very immature, a very sheltered little girl. And when the world war came I grew up overnight. I really did.” recalls Helen K., a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and Majdanek. What do you think she means when she says that she grew up overnight?

Resource 20.4:**Reading: In Hiding***Creating Context*

How do you define the words *courage* and *resistance*? Take a few minutes to write a working definition of each word in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

poignant	ration book
deportation notice	“black market”
prefabricated	

Historian Deborah Dwork believes that uprisings like the one in the Warsaw Ghetto were “spectacular, awe-inspiring, and monumentally courageous.” Yet in her mind there were other forms of courage and resistance in the ghettos that were equally spectacular. What were they?

The policy, for example, of Czerniakow in Warsaw and Gens in Vilna to educate, feed, and protect children out of proportion to their ghettos’ resources was another way in which Jews opposed the press of Nazism and held fast to their principles and responsibilities. The activities of Jewish networks throughout Nazi-occupied Europe to save the children is also too frequently forgotten. And, most poignant, the decisions taken by the children’s parents on behalf of their daughters and sons is an overwhelmingly painful form of courage and resistance. It cannot be stressed too fervently that it was the parents who took the first step and the most terrifying step in the protection of their children, as it was they who had to determine whether it was best to send them into hiding, to try to smuggle them out of the country, or to keep them at their side.¹⁹

Among those who went into hiding was the Frank family in the Netherlands. Otto and Edith Frank chose to “disappear” with their two daughters soon after Margot, their eldest child, received a deportation notice. In the summer of 1942, Otto Frank led the family into a hiding place in his business. His youngest daughter, thirteen-year-old Anne, called it the “Secret Annex” in her diary. The Franks were later joined by the van Pels family and later still by a dentist, Dr. Pfeffer. (In the diary, the van Pelses became the van Daans and Pfeffer became Dussel.) The eight remained hidden for twenty-five months. In her diary, Anne poured out her feelings to Kitty, an imaginary friend:

As you can easily imagine we often ask ourselves here despairingly: “What, oh, what is the use of the war, why can’t people live peacefully together, why all this destruction?” The question is very understandable, but no one has found a satisfactory answer to it so far, yes, why do they still make more gigantic planes in England, still heavier bombs and then prefabricated houses for reconstruction?

Why are millions spent daily on the war and not a penny on medical services, artists or on poor people? Why do some people have to starve while there are surpluses rotting in other parts of the world? Oh, why are people so crazy? I don't believe the big men, the politicians and the capitalists alone are responsible for the war, oh no, the little man is just as guilty, otherwise the people of the world would have risen in revolt long ago! There's in people an urge simply to destroy, an urge to kill, to murder and rage and until all mankind without exception undergoes a great change wars will be waged, everything that has been built, cultivated and grown will be cut down and disfigured to begin all over after that!²⁰

Anne and the others stayed alive with help of four former employees of Otto Frank: Miep Gies (born Hermine Santrouschitz), Victor Kugler, Johannes Kleiman, and Elli Voskuijl.

They have pulled us through up till now and we hope they will bring us safely to dry land. Otherwise, they will have to share the same fate as the many others who are being searched for. Never have we heard one word of the burden which we certainly must be to them, never has one of them complained of all the trouble we give. They all come upstairs every day, talk to the men about business and politics, to the women about food and wartime difficulties, and about newspapers and books with the children. They put on the brightest possible faces, bring flowers and presents for birthdays and bank holidays, are always ready to help and do all they can. That is something we must never forget; although others may show heroism in the war or against the Germans, our helpers display heroism in their cheerfulness and affection.²¹

For those who sheltered Jews, finding a safe hiding place was only a part of the problem. Food was rationed during the war. So rescuers had to find extra ration books or buy supplies on the "black market." Illness posed a special risk. Miep Gies later wrote that by the winter of 1943, "all Jews in Amsterdam were gone. About the only way a Jew was seen now was floating face down in a canal. Jews were thrown there by the very people who had hidden them, for one of the worst situations that could arise for us helpers was if someone in hiding died. What to do with the body? It was a terrible dilemma, as a Jew could not properly be buried."²²

Anne followed the course of both wars: the one between the Nazis and the Allied troops and the one against the Jews. Some events gave her nightmares. Others offered hope. On July 15, 1944, she wrote:

That's the difficulty in these times: ideals, dreams, and cherished hopes rise within us, only to meet the horrible truth and be shattered. It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too, I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think

that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquillity will return again.

In the meantime, I must uphold my ideals, for perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to carry them out.²³

Three weeks later, on the morning of August 4, 1944, the Nazis marched into the “Secret Annex” and captured everyone. Only Miep Gies, a native of Vienna, was not arrested – possibly because the officer in charge was also Viennese. All eight Jews were shipped to death camps. Only Otto Frank survived. When he returned to Amsterdam after the war, Miep Gies gave him some papers found after the arrests. Anne’s diary was among them.

The Franks were not the only ones to go into hiding. In the Netherlands alone, twenty-five thousand people tried to find a safe place. Most hid alone and few stayed in one place longer than a few weeks. Max Gosschalk recalls:

I came from a safe home. I had to understand so many things which I could not understand. You had left all your safety, all your security. You had to grow up in a week; it’s not possible. But you felt so insecure. If you took something with you it was always fear; fear of being caught, fear of being tortured, fear of betraying other people. Those are three of the worst. You never got any love from anyone. As a young person, I’ve been in the houses of wonderful people. And I never could trust them because today I was there – how long? One week, two weeks, nobody ever said anything. Then suddenly, something new. Never a chance of getting attached to someone.²⁴

20.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. How do you think historian Deborah Dwork would define the words *courage* and *resistance*? Compare her ideas to the working definitions you recorded in your journal. What similarities and differences do you notice?
2. What specific acts of courage and resistance are described in this reading? *Go back and underline at least three examples.*
3. Which passage from Anne Frank’s diary do you find most striking? *Go back and highlight it. What draws your attention to that particular passage?*
4. The diaries of dozens of young people who lived and died during the Holocaust, like Anne Frank, have been found and published. Was keeping a diary or journal an act of resistance? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think Anne Frank has become a symbol of the millions of men,

women, and children who died in the Holocaust?

6. A man hidden as a boy during the Holocaust describes the experience as “all of a sudden a way of life without life.” What is he saying about the experience? Do you think Anne Frank would agree? Would Max Gosschalk? To what extent was going into hiding another “choiceless choice”?

Using Reading 20.4

Additional Stories of Hiding

In addition to Anne Frank and her family, many others went into hiding in an attempt to escape Nazi persecution. [Dr. Maurice Vanderpol](#) survived by hiding from the Nazis in Amsterdam. Dr. Vanderpol frequently visits Boston-area Facing History classrooms, and the [Facing History website](#) contains a variety of resources, including images and videos, to help share his story.

Additional Diaries of Adolescents During the Holocaust

A variety of diaries written by adolescents during the Holocaust have been published, and reading them can be a powerful experience for students of the Holocaust today. [Salvaged Pages](#) is a collection of diaries written by young people, ages 12 to 22, during the Holocaust. Some of the writers were refugees, others were hiding or passing as non-Jews, some were imprisoned in ghettos, and nearly all perished before liberation.

A companion film to this anthology, [I'm Still Here](#), weaves together excerpts of the young writers' diaries covering the years 1937–1944. Facing History has published a [study guide](#) to accompany this book and film. The study guide aims to help educators use the voices of these young writers from the film and the book as a springboard for discussion and reflection on the value of these diaries as historical sources and literary records. It also provides an avenue for discussing the power of our words to make a difference in the world.

Extension: Discussing Anne Frank's Reflections

Many teachers find that the quotations in this reading from Anne Frank's diary prompt significant reflection and discussion among students. You might cut out these paragraphs and use them as the basis for a Big Paper discussion. You may even supplement the excerpts in this reading with additional clips from her diary. Do the students agree or disagree with Frank's analysis of the world?

Resource 20.5:**Reading: Resistance in the Death Camps***Creating Context*

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

petrol	armory
crematoria	garrison

In the death camps, resistance was far more difficult than in the ghettos. Yet even there, individuals fought back and a handful even managed to escape. These were last-ditch efforts by men and women who had nothing left to lose. The rebellion in Treblinka began in August 1943 in the camp's repair shop where inmates duplicated the key to the camp armory. The plan was to take the weapons stored there, kill as many guards as possible, and then escape into the forest. All seven hundred Jews in the camp took part. Stanislaw Kon described what happened after a pistol shot signaled the start of the revolt:

Exactly at four in the afternoon, emissaries are sent to the groups with the order to come immediately to the garage to receive weapons. Rodak from Plock is in charge of distributing them. Everyone who comes to receive a weapon is obliged to state the password: "Death!" To which comes the answer: "Life!" "Death-life," "Death-life" – the ardent messages are repeated in quick succession and hands are stretched out to grasp the longed-for rifles, pistols, and hand grenades. At the same time, the chief murderers in the camp are being attacked. Telephone contact is immediately cut off. The guard towers are set alight with petrol. Captain Zelomir attacks two SS guards with an axe and breaks through to us. He takes over command. By the garage stands a German armored car whose engine Rodak has immobilized in good time. Now the car serves him as shelter, from which he fires at the Germans. His shots fell Sturmfuehrer Kurt Meidlar and several of Hitler's hounds. The armory is captured by force by Sodovitz's group. The weapons are divided up among the comrades. We have two hundred armed men. The remainder attack the Germans with axes, spades, and pickaxes. The crematoria are set alight. The false railway station with its signs "Bialystok-Volkowisk," "Ticket Office," "Cashier," "Waiting Room," etc. burns. The Max Bull barracks also burn. The flames and the echoes of the shots summon Germans from all around. SS men and gendarmes from Kosov, soldiers from the nearby airfield, and even a special SS unit from Warsaw arrive. The order is given to destroy and to breach the siege to the nearest forest. Most of our warriors fall, but Germans fall as well. Few of us are left.²⁵

About 150 prisoners escaped. The rest were murdered but not before they killed sixteen guards. By the end of September, Treblinka was closed. An armed revolt at Sobibor took place two weeks later. The Security Police sent the following report to Berlin:

On October 14, 1943, at about 5:00 P.M., a revolt of Jews in the SS camp Sobibor, twenty-five miles north of Cholm. They overpowered the guards, seized the armory, and, after an exchange of shots with the camp garrison, fled in unknown directions. Nine SS men murdered, one SS man missing, two foreign guards shot to death.

Approximately 300 Jews escaped. The remainder were shot to death or are now in camp. Military police and armed forces were notified immediately and took over security of the camp at about 1:00 A.M. The area south and southwest of Sobibor is now being searched by police and armed forces.²⁶

The SS tracked down most of the prisoners. Local residents turned over others to the Nazis. Only a few individuals reached resistance groups. Some were turned away because they were Jews. No more than a few dozen were able to find groups willing to accept them. As in Treblinka, the Nazis closed the camp after the revolt.

A revolt also occurred in Auschwitz-Birkenau in October of 1944. There the Special Squad organized the break-out by working with Jewish women employed in an ammunitions factory at Auschwitz. The women smuggled explosives into the death camp so that the inmates could blow up a crematorium and kill the guards. The odds were against the revolt from the start. The few who managed to escape were immediately captured and then executed.

20.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. This reading describes several uprisings against the Nazis by prisoners in death camps. *Go back and underline at least three details about the uprisings that you think are significant.* What did you find most surprising about the uprising? Why? What did you find most troubling? In your journal, write down any questions you still have about this reading.
2. Some have called resistance a choice Jews made about how to die rather than about how to live. Others argue that resistance is more about the will to live and the power of hope than it is about death. Which view is closer to the description of “choiceless choices” from Resource 20.1? Which view is best supported by the examples of uprisings in this reading? Which view is closest to your own?
3. Sonia Schreiber Weitz spent her adolescence in concentration camps. She and a sister were the only survivors in a large family. She recalls:

One... day, I sneaked into my father's barracks on the other side of the barbed wire fence. While I was there, I met a boy who was about my age – 14 or 15. The boy was playing a harmonica, an offense punishable by death. My father and I listened to the music and my father said to me,

“You and I never had a chance to dance together”... and so we danced. It is such a precious image, a bizarre and beautiful gift.²⁷

Why would Sonia Weitz, her father, and the young harmonica player risk death for a few moments of pleasure? Why does Weitz call those moments “a bizarre and beautiful gift”? Were they also an act of resistance?

Using Reading 20.5

Video Testimony

The testimony of Auschwitz survivor [Helen K.](#) provides an alternative or an extension to the examples of resistance in this reading. In this thirty minute video, part of the [Elements of Time](#) series available from the Facing History library, Helen relates her experiences in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and in Auschwitz, where she witnesses the execution of women involved in the plot to blow up the crematoria.

¹ Dm

² Christopher R. Browning, "One Day in Jozefow: Initiation to Mass Murder" in *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 174-175.

³ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 181-182.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁶ Bernd Engelmann, *In Hitler's Germany*, 127-128.

⁷ Quoted in *The Holocaust Years*, ed. Nora Levin, 272,273.

⁸ Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness* (Pan Books, 1977), 200-202.

⁹ Rudolf Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz* (World Publishers, 1959), 222-223.

¹⁰ "Rita Kesselman at South Boston High School," transcript of a videotape (Facing History and Ourselves, 1987).

¹¹ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 26-27.

¹² Rudolf Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz*, 217.

¹³ Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (Summit, 1988), 50-51.

¹⁴ Lawrence Langer, *Versions of Survival*.

¹⁵ Excerpt from pages 3-4 of *Fragments of Isabella: A Memoir of Auschwitz* by Isabella Leitner, edited and with an Epilogue by Irving A. Leitner (Thomas Y. Crowell, Publishers) copyright 1978 by Isabella Leitner and Irving A. Leitner. Reprinted by permission.

¹⁶ Quoted in *A Holocaust Reader*, ed. Lucy Dawidowicz, 334-335.

¹⁷ Quoted in *The Holocaust Years*, ed. Nora Levin, 259-260.

¹⁸ Quoted in Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah*, 197-198.

¹⁹ Deborah Dwork, *Children With a Star* (Yale University Press, 1991), 255.

²⁰ *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Pocket Books, 1952), 201.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 131-132.

²² Miep Gies, *Anne Frank Remembered*, 166-167.

²³ *The Diary of Anne Frank*, 237.

²⁴ Quoted in Deborah Dwork, *Children with a Star*, 79-80.

²⁵ Quoted in Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 484.

²⁶ Quoted in Raul Hilberg, *Documents of Destruction*, 223.

²⁷ Sonia Weitz, *I Promised I Would Tell* (Facing History and Ourselves, 1993), 34.

Section 9: Upstanders and Bystanders

Essential Questions

- *What is a bystander? What factors prevent one from taking action in the face of injustice?*
- *What is an upstander? What factors encourage one to behave as an upstander?*

Lessons

Section 9 includes the following lesson:

- Lesson 21: Bystanders and the Question of Complicity
- Lesson 22: Upstanders, Empathy, and Altruism

Overview

Section 8 focused on the victims of the Holocaust and the perpetrators. Section 9 considers the choices open to everyone else once the Holocaust began. “Most contemporaries of the Jewish catastrophe were neither perpetrators nor victims,” writes Raul Hilberg. “Many people, however, saw or heard something of the event. Those of them who lived in Adolf Hitler’s Europe would have described themselves, with few exceptions, as bystanders. They were not ‘involved,’ not willing to hurt the victims and not wishing to be hurt by the perpetrators.” Hilberg says of these bystanders, “The Dutch were worried about their bicycles, the French about shortages, the Ukrainians about food, the Germans about air raids. All of these people thought of themselves as victims, be it of war, or oppression, or ‘fate.’”¹

Were they “victims of fate”? Or did they still have choices? Albert Camus, a French writer who joined the resistance, believed that individuals can always make a difference.

I know that the great tragedies of history often fascinate men with approaching horror. Paralyzed, they cannot make up their minds to do anything but wait. So they wait, and one day the Gorgon monster devours them. But I should like to convince you that the spell can be broken, that there is an illusion of impotence, that strength of heart, intelligence and courage are enough to stop fate and sometimes reverse it.²

And Cynthia Ozick warns, “When a whole population takes on the status of bystander, the victims are without allies; the criminals, unchecked, are strengthened; and only then do we need to speak of heroes. When a field is filled from end to end with sheep, a stag stands out. When a continent is filled from end to end with the compliant, we learn what heroism is.”³

In Section 9, students will read stories of bystanders, resisters and rescuers. These stories complicate our notions of good and evil in human behavior. Through his experience writing about French Huguenots in the town of Le Chambon who rescued thousands of Jews during the Holocaust, Phillip Hallie shares, “I learned that ethics is not simply a matter of good and evil, true north and true south. It is a matter of mixtures, like most of

the other points on the compass, and like the lives of most of us.”⁴ Categorizing people and their behavior is often difficult. For example, someone may act as a bystander in one situation and an upstander in another, or even as a perpetrator and a rescuer. It is essential to acknowledge this complexity as we share this history with our students; “perpetrator,” “bystander,” “victim,” and “upstander” are not unchanging identities, but roles that can be inhabited by the same person in different circumstances. It is also essential to explore with students the range of behaviors that might make one an upstander. Being an upstander does not always involve dramatic and dangerous rescue; in fact it may more often involve working quietly and out of sight to aid victims of injustice and support those in need.

Because of this complexity, many Facing History teachers find that the moral dilemmas examined in this section are particularly intriguing to students. The goal of this section is for students to confront the choices people made while the Holocaust was happening, to analyze, to wrestle with, and to debate important questions about the complicity of bystanders, the value of empathy, and the meaning of altruism. These three concepts—*complicity*, *empathy*, and *altruism*—will be explored in depth in this section. By analyzing these stories and naming the factors that encourage people to behave as bystanders or upstanders, students can begin to view in a different way their own decisions in response to the moral dilemmas they face in their lives. In the final reading of this section, students are asked to consider how we might go about creating a “culture of upstanders.” By starting to think about this question here, students will be ready to think more deeply about the issues of judgment, responsibility, historical legacy, and democratic participation in the sections to come.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- Chapter 8 in the resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*.

Lesson 21: Bystanders and the Question of Complicity

Essential Questions:

- *What is a bystander? What factors prevent one from taking action in the face of injustice?*
- *What is complicity? To what extent are bystanders complicit in the crimes and injustices they witness?*

Included Resources:

- * 21.1 – What Did People Know?
 - * 21.2 – Bystanders at Mauthausen
 - 21.3 – The Response of the Allies
 - * 21.4 – From Bystanders to Resisters
- * = core resource

Introduction:

This lesson begins Section 9’s exploration of the choices made by individuals and nations during the Holocaust. We begin by examining bystanders and considering the factors that encourage many who witness injustice to do nothing. Earlier in this curriculum, after reading both “The ‘In’ Group” (Resource 5.1) and “The Hangman” (Resource 18.5), students were asked to reflect on the power and responsibilities of bystanders. This lesson explores these ideas more deeply. An important premise is introduced in the resources below and presented for students to evaluate. This is the idea that choosing *not* to act in the face of injustice can be as powerful a decision as choosing to act.

The words of German aristocrat Helmuth von Moltke serve as bookends for the four readings in this lesson. In a 1941 letter, Moltke wrote that knowing about the persecution and murder of the Jews and doing nothing about it makes him complicit in the crimes of the Nazis. These materials will help students to explore the concept of complicity as well as to discuss and debate its application to bystanders of crime and injustice. Moltke’s words help create context for the first reading in this lesson (“What Did People Know?”), and they are repeated in the context of the final reading (“From Bystanders to Resisters”), as they help explain Moltke’s motivation for helping disseminate anti-Nazi pamphlets created by the White Rose.

Students are also asked to examine Ervin Staub’s contention that bystanders exert powerful influences that help shape the societies in which they live. This is, of course, one of the most important ideas for student to consider in this course. As they learn about rescuers in the next lesson, examine their own participation in society, and think about how to create a “culture of upstanders,” students will revisit Staub’s ideas about bystanders in a variety of forms throughout the rest of this course.

Additional Recommended Resources:

Readings (from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* resource book):

- “Is Knowledge Enough?” p. 367
- “A Matter of Courage,” p. 372
- “Fateful Decisions,” p. 378
- “Should Auschwitz Have Been Bombed?” p. 407

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Identify a time when you went out of your way to help somebody else—a friend, a family member, a neighbor, or a complete stranger. What factors prompted you to act?
- Identify a situation when you knew something was wrong or unfair, but you did not intervene to improve the situation. What factors prevented you from intervening?
- Under what circumstances, if any, do you think it is unwise for someone to intervene in the face of violence or injustice? Why?
- Under what circumstances, if any, do you think it is necessary for someone to intervene in the face of violence and injustice? Why?

Getting Started with Lesson 21

Personal Reflection

To begin this lesson, consider asking students to recall previous resources in which they explored the meaning of the term *bystander*. In particular, bystanders were discussed in the Comprehension and Connections questions following “The ‘In’ Group” (Resource 5.1) and “The Hangman” (Resource 18.5).

Next, to prepare students to explore decision-making during the Holocaust, ask them to reflect on their own decision-making process by responding to the following prompts in their journals:

- Identify a time when you went out of your way to help somebody else—a friend, a family member, a neighbor, or a complete stranger. What were the consequences of your actions for you and for others?
- Identify a situation when you knew something was wrong or unfair, but you did not intervene to improve the situation. What were the consequences of your actions for you and for others?
- Compare these two situations. What led you to act in one situation but not to intervene in the other?

It is essential to emphasize with students that, while these reflections provide a way to analyze the factors that encourage bystander behavior, *the goal of this exercise is not to compare students’ experiences to the experiences of those who lived during the Holocaust*. Because the students’ stories might be personal, before they begin writing inform them that they will not be required to publicly share what they write. You can also reassure students that many people choose to act as bystanders, and that there are sometimes very good reasons for choosing not to intervene in a particular situation. Another way to help students feel more comfortable writing honestly is to share your own answer to this journal prompt.

Focus a discussion of this prompt on the third question—the reasons why students acted in some situations, but not on others. You can record their reasons on a two-column chart, where one column is labeled *reasons for bystander behavior* and the other column is labeled *reasons for upstander behavior*. Let students know that in this lesson, you will be exploring bystander behavior, and in the next lesson you will focus on upstander behavior.

Reviewing Key Terms

This is a good time to introduce or review other key terms that help describe the range of responses individual responses people made to the injustices of the Holocaust. Students should either review or create working definitions in their journals for the terms *bystander*, *upstander*, *resister*, *rescuer*, *perpetrator*, and *opportunist*. Encourage students to apply these terms, and other words from their glossaries, as they interpret the

readings about decision-making during the Holocaust.

Weaving Together Resources 21.1 - 21.4

You might find that your class investigation of bystanders and complicity is deeper or more efficient by weaving two or more of the four resources included here into one activity. If you do so, you can plan a discussion or debate around any of the questions posed in the Creating Context sections or the Comprehension and Connections questions using the [SPAR \(Spontaneous Argumentation\)](#) or [Town Hall Circle](#) strategies. Both strategies provide suggestions for assigning resources to small groups for analysis.

Resource 21.1:**Reading: What Did People Know?***Creating Context*

In 1941, German aristocrat Helmuth von Moltke (who you will learn more about in Resource 21.4) wrote in a letter to his wife:

How is one to bear the burden of complicity?... In France there are extensive shootings while I write. Certainly more than a thousand people are murdered in this way every day and another thousand German men are habituated to murder. And all this is child's play compared with what is happening in Poland and Russia. May I know this and yet sit at my table in my heated flat and have tea? Don't I thereby become guilty too? What shall I say when I am asked, and what did you do during that time?⁵

What is *complicity*? Look up the definition and record it in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

ignorance	pension
accomplice	patent
clerical worker	bureaucracy/ bureaucrat

Holocaust survivor Primo Levi was often asked, “Did the Germans know what was happening?” He replied with a question of his own. “How is it possible that the extermination of millions of human beings could have been carried out in the heart of Europe without anyone’s knowledge?” He concluded:

In spite of the varied possibilities for information, most Germans didn’t know because they didn’t want to know. Because, indeed, they wanted not to know. It is certainly true that State terrorism is a very strong weapon, very difficult to resist. But it is also true that the German people, as a whole, did not even try to resist. In Hitler’s Germany a particular code was widespread: those who knew did not talk; those who did not know did not ask questions; those who did ask questions received no answers. In this way the typical German citizen won and defended his ignorance, which seemed to him sufficient justification of his adherence to Nazism. Shutting his mouth, his eyes and his ears, he built for himself the illusion of not knowing, hence not being an accomplice to the things taking place in front of his very door.⁶

In *The Destruction of European Jews*, Raul Hilberg proved that many had the opportunity to know about the killings:

Organizing the transportation of victims from all over Europe to the concentration camps involved a countless number of railroad employees and clerical workers

who had to work the trains and maintain the records. National Railroad tickets were marked for a one-way trip. Currency exchange at the borders had to be handled.

Finance ministers of Germany moved to seize the pensions of victims from banks, yet the banks requested proof of death. Many building contracts and patents for ovens and gas chambers were required...

The railroads were an independent corporation which was fully aware of the consequences of its decisions.

The civilian railroad workers involved in operating rails to Auschwitz were simply performing their daily tasks. These were individual people making individual decisions. They were not ordered or even assigned.

Orders from the SS to the railroads were not even stamped “secret” because that would admit guilt of something abnormal in the bureaucracy. The many clerical workers who handled these orders were fully aware of the purpose of Auschwitz.⁷

For the film Shoah, Claude Lanzmann interviewed Walter Stier, the person responsible for “special trains.”

What’s the difference between a special and a regular train?

A regular train may be used by anyone who purchases a ticket. Say from Krakow to Warsaw. Or from Krakow to Lemberg. A special train has to be ordered. The train is specially put together and people pay group fares...

...but why were there more special trains during the war than before or after?

I see what you’re getting at. You’re referring to the so-called resettlement trains.

“Resettlement.” That’s it.

That’s what they were called. Those trains were ordered by the Ministry of Transport of the Reich. You needed an order from the Ministry...

But mostly, at that time, who was being “resettled”?

No. We didn’t know that. Only when we were fleeing from Warsaw ourselves, did we learn that they could have been Jews, or criminals, or similar people.

Jews, criminals?

Criminals. All kinds.

Special trains for criminals?

No, that was just an expression. You couldn’t talk about that. Unless you were tired of life, it was best not to mention that.

But you knew that the trains to Treblinka or Auschwitz were –

Of course we knew. I was the last district; without me these trains couldn't reach their destination. For instance, a train that started in Essen had to go through the districts of Wuppertal, Hannover, Magdeburg, Berlin, Frankfurt/Oder, Posen, Warsaw, etcetera. So I had to...

Did you know that Treblinka meant extermination?

Of course not!

You didn't know?

Good God, no! How could we know? I never went to Treblinka. I stayed in Krakow, in Warsaw, glued to my desk.

You were a...

I was strictly a bureaucrat!⁸

21.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. This reading contains a variety of details about how arrangements were made to transport Jews to death camps. What details are most significant or surprising to you? Why is knowing these details important?
2. How does Primo Levi describe the code that Germans adhered to in response to the atrocities of the Holocaust? How did this code enable Germans to claim they were not aware of these atrocities?
3. What does it mean to “win and defend” one’s ignorance? Is ignorance something one can actively seek? Under what circumstances would someone prefer to be ignorant?
4. Go back and re-read the interview with Stier carefully. What exactly does he deny knowing? Are there any indications that he knew more than he was letting on? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
5. Consider Stier’s language when describing who was being “resettled.” How does his choice of words reflect antisemitic beliefs?
6. Suppose officials like Stier had acknowledged what they knew. Would they have had to act on that knowledge? If so, what could they have done? If not, how might they have justified their failure to stop the killings?
7. Were the various people that Hilberg writes about *complicit* in the murders of Jews during the Holocaust? Was Stier complicit?
8. Scholar David Gushee writes, “From a moral point of view there may be no such

thing as a bystander. If one is present, one is taking part." Do you agree? Why or why not? Record your thinking in your journal.

Using Resource 21.1

Reflection and Discussion

This reading, as well as most of the readings in Section 9, is likely to prompt energetic discussion in your class. The challenge of analyzing the moral and ethical choices of individuals in this history is one that most adolescents readily accept. As always, it is important to plan the class so that students have an opportunity to gather their thoughts in quiet reflection and then to provide a structure for the discussion that follows.

For this resource, consider conducting a class discussion based on the Comprehension and Connections questions using the [Fishbowl](#) strategy. If you prefer your students to have discussions in smaller groups, use the [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) strategy.

Taking a Stand

Students often find the quotation from David Gushee in *Creating Context* to be ripe for discussion. You might use the [Barometer](#) or [Four Corners](#) strategies to invite students to take and defend a position on the question. After reading this resource, or after completing all of Lesson 21, you might use the Barometer or Four Corners strategy again to inquire whether any students' views changed.

Resource 21.2:**Reading: Bystanders at Mauthausen***Creating Context*

Professor Ervin Staub believes that bystanders play a far more critical role in society than people realize.

Bystanders, people who witness but are not directly affected by the actions of perpetrators, help shape society by their reactions... Bystanders can exert powerful influences. They can define the meaning of events and move others toward empathy or indifference. They can promote values and norms of caring, or by their passivity of participation in the system, they can affirm the perpetrators.⁹

Review your previous notes about bystanders, especially your reflections after reading “The ‘In’ Group” (Resource 5.1) and “The Hangman” (Resource 18.5). Do Staub’s ideas change your definition of *bystander*? Refine your definition and record it in your journal.

Do you agree with Staub’s assessment of the power of bystanders? How do bystanders shape society and define the meaning of events?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

political prisoner **hermetically sealed**
euthanasia

Events in Mauthausen, a small town ninety miles from Vienna, support Staub’s argument. After Austria became part of the Third Reich, the Nazis built a labor camp for political prisoners there. As the camp’s operations expanded, the Nazis took over buildings in a number of nearby villages. One of those buildings was Hartheim Castle. Until the Nazis closed it for remodeling in 1939, it was a home for children labeled as “retarded.” In the 1980s, historian Gordon I. Horwitz asked townspeople about the castle’s renovation. A man he identifies as Karl S. wrote to the chairman of a euthanasia trial held in 1969. That letter stated in part:

[The] house of my parents was one of the few houses in Hartheim from which one could observe several occurrences. After Castle Hartheim was cleared of its inhabitants (around 180 to 200 patients) in the year 1939, mysterious renovations began which, to an outsider, however, one could hardly divine, since no [local] labor was used for it, and the approaches to the castle were hermetically sealed. Following completion of the renovations, we saw the first transports come and we could even recognize some of the earlier residents who showed joy at returning to their former home.

Karl watched the buses arrive from a window in his father's barn. He recalled that transports of two to three buses came as frequently as twice a day. Soon after they arrived, "enormous clouds of smoke streamed out of a certain chimney and spread a penetrating stench. This stench was so disgusting that sometimes when we returned home from work in the fields we couldn't hold down a single bite."¹⁰

Sister Felicitas, a former employee, has similar memories:

My brother Michael, who at the time was at home, came to me very quickly and confidentially informed me that in the castle the former patients were burned. The frightful facts which the people of the vicinity had to experience at first hand, and the terrible stench of the burning gases, robbed them of speech. The people suffered dreadfully from the stench. My own father collapsed unconscious several times, since in the night he had forgotten to seal up the windows completely tight.¹¹

Horwitz notes, "It was not just the smoke and stench that drew the attention of bystanders. At times human remains littered parts of the vicinity. In the words of Sister Felicitas, 'when there was intense activity, it smoked day and night. Tufts of hair flew through the chimney onto the street. The remains of bones were stored on the east side of the castle and in ton trucks driven first to the Danube, later also to the Traun.'"¹²

As evidence of mass murders mounted, Christopher Wirth, the director of the operation, met with local residents. He told them that his men were burning shoes and other "belongings." The strong smell? "A device had been installed in which old oil and oil by-products underwent a special treatment through distillation and chemical treatment in order to gain a water-clear, oily fluid from it which was of great importance to U-boats [German submarines]."

Wirth ended the meeting by threatening to send anyone who spread "absurd rumors of burning persons" to a concentration camp.¹³ The townspeople took him at his word. They did not break their silence.

21.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. What words does Karl S. use to describe the people who came to the castle? What does his word choice reveal about his attitude towards the role he played during the Holocaust?
2. Why do you think the townspeople chose to believe Wirth despite evidence that he was lying? Did they "win and defend" their ignorance as Primo Levi explained in Resource 21.1? If the townspeople had acknowledged the truth, what would they have had to do?

3. Who was a part of the town's "circle of responsibility"?
4. According to Staub, what choices do bystanders have? What choices did people in Mauthausen make? What were the consequences?
5. How do the people of Mauthausen support Albert Einstein's observation: "The world is too dangerous to live in – not because of the people who do evil, but because of the people who sit and let it happen"?
6. Were the people of Mauthausen *complicit* in the deaths of those the Nazis murdered there? Might opportunism have been a factor in their responses? Use evidence from the text to support your answers.
7. A concentration camp was located in Ravensbrueck, Germany. The townspeople knew about the camp; some local shopkeepers even used prisoners as slave labor. Yet very few people in the town expressed concern for the inmates until the war was over. Only then did local women aid prisoners dying of typhus.
 - How do you account for efforts to help the sick prisoners only after the war had ended?
 - Was it terror that kept people from helping earlier?
 - What role might opportunism have played?

Using Resource 21.2

Reflection and Discussion

This reading, as well as most of the readings in Section 9, is likely to prompt energetic discussion in your class. The challenge of analyzing the moral and ethical choices of individuals in this history is one that most adolescents readily accept. As always, it is important to plan the class so that students have an opportunity to gather their thoughts in quiet reflection and then to provide a structure for the discussion that follows. Focus the class discussion around the Connections questions, as well as Staub's assertions about bystanders in *Creating Context*. How do bystanders shape society and define the meaning of events?

For this resource, consider conducting a class discussion based on the Comprehension and Connections questions using the [Fishbowl](#) strategy. If you prefer your students to have discussions in smaller groups, use the [Save the Last Word for Me](#) strategy.

Resource 21.3:**Reading: The Response of the Allies***Creating Context*

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

extirpation	infirm
ruthless	acquiescence
obsolete	remedial
economic sanctions	surreptitious
nonrecognition	

Soon after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, rumors of mass murders began to circulate in the United States. To many, the stories were too incredible to be true. On the front page of its June 14, 1942 edition, the *Chicago Tribune* ran this headline:

HITLER GUARDS STAGE NEW POGROM, KILL 258
 MASSACRED BY BERLIN GESTAPO IN “BOMB PLOT”
 Families Herded for Deportation

The story that followed described the murder of 258 Berlin Jews on an obviously trumped-up charge. The Nazis were claiming that Jews planted bombs in Berlin at a time when their movements were restricted and they were subject to a strict curfew. The story came from “various trustworthy sources” in Berlin – sources with access to officials in the SS and the Propaganda Ministry.

On June 16, 1942, the same paper ran a story on page 6 under this headline: “25,000 LATVIAN JEWS VICTIMS OF NAZIS.” The information for this story came from the Federation of Jewish Relief Organizations. Exactly two weeks later, also on page 6, readers encountered this headline: “One Million Jews Victims of Nazis.” The World Jewish Congress was the source for this story.

Deborah Lipstadt, the author of *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust*, argues that the first story made the front page because “258” sounds authoritative. It is precise, unlike “about 260” or “over 250.” On the other hand, a number like “25,000” is more “difficult” to accept and “one million” is simply “incredible.”

Lipstadt notes that the larger numbers were harder to accept for another reason – they came from groups that represented the victims. Recalling atrocity stories during World War I that later proved to be false, publishers were cautious about claims of mass murder. So even though they printed the reports, they did not feature them and they carefully qualified claims. On November 26, 1942, the following appeared on page 16 of the *New York Times*:

SLAIN POLISH JEWS PUT AT A MILLION

One-third of Number in Whole Country Said to Have Been Put to Death by Nazis

Nearly a third of Poland's Jewish population – 1,000,000 persons – has perished in three years of German occupation, Dr. Ignacy Szwarcbart, Jewish member of the Polish National Council in London, told this correspondent today, amplifying Polish Government information on the new Nazi onslaught on the Jews.

Plans outlined by Dr. Alfred Rosenberg – Germany's race theorist, who says that the Jewish problem of Europe will be solved when no Jews are left – are systematically carried out. The victims of executions by mass-murder and gassing are only part of the thousands dying through "the organized spreading of diseases and artificial creation of conditions in which children, elderly people and the sick cannot survive," as Dr. Szwarcbart described it.

A million more persons, at least, are menaced by starvation and the lack of medical supplies. The Nazis make it plain that all Jews not wanted for military reasons must die. Poland is now a mass grave. Jews from all Europe are brought to the Warsaw ghetto and separated into two groups: the able-bodied young and the children, old and sick, who are dispatched eastward to meet sure death. Lublin, indeed, has two ghettos, one for able workers, the other for the useless condemned to destruction.

One hundred twenty thousand have been brought from Czechoslovakia and tens of thousands from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Holland, Belgium and France. The Lodz ghetto, containing many Jews from the West, has been completely closed for several weeks and no news has been allowed to penetrate through its walls...

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, acting as chairman of a special conference of Jewish organizations, announced here yesterday that the organizations were convinced of the authenticity of a rumored Hitler order for the immediate extirpation of all Jews in German-controlled Europe...

These organizations, Rabbi Wise said, had authorized him to invite the aid of any Christian organization ready to speak out on behalf of the Jewish victims. They had also set Sunday, Dec. 13, as a day of mourning, to be observed by fasting and prayer by Jews "in all the lands where Jews are still free."

By the end of 1942, the CBS radio network had picked up the story. In a broadcast from London on December 13, Edward R. Murrow bluntly reported, "What is happening is this. Millions of human beings, most of them Jews, are being gathered up with ruthless efficiency and murdered. The phrase 'concentration camps' is obsolete, as out of date as economic sanctions or non-recognition. It is now possible only to speak of extermination camps."

Four days later, the governments of the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union issued joint declarations stating that “the German authorities, not content with denying to persons of Jewish race in all the territories over which their barbarous rule has been extended the most elementary human rights, are now carrying into effect Hitler’s oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe.”

The declaration contained very specific charges:

Jews are being transported, in conditions of appalling horror and brutality, to Eastern Europe. In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German invaders are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labour camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions. The number of victims of these bloody cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women and children.

Thus, the Allies acknowledged the mass murders for the first time. Yet they continued to do nothing. Golda Meir, who later became prime minister of Israel, described Britain’s response to her demands and those of other Jews in British-controlled Palestine:

What was it that we demanded of the British and that they so stubbornly refused to give us? Today the answer seems incredible even to me. The truth is that all that [we] wanted from 1939 to 1945 was to take in as many Jews as could be saved from the Nazis. That was all. Just to be allowed to share the little we had with men, women, and children who were fortunate enough not to have been shot, gassed or buried alive by the very people to whose downfall the entire British Empire was in any case committed...

[Yet the] British remained adamant. They went on to fight like lions against the Germans, the Italians, and the Japanese, but they couldn’t or wouldn’t stand up to the Arabs at all – although much of the Arab world was openly pro-Nazi...

After all, what would have happened if the British had [allowed Jews to find refuge in Palestine]? A few Arab leaders might have made threatening speeches. Perhaps there would have been a protest march or two. Maybe there would even have been an additional act of pro-

Nazi sabotage somewhere in the Middle East. And maybe it would have been too late to save most of the Jews of Europe anyway. But thousands more of the [millions murdered] might have survived. Thousands more of the ghetto fighters and Jewish partisans might have been armed. And the civilized world might then have been freed of the terrible accusation that not a finger was lifted to help the Jews in their torment.⁵⁵

The United States took a stand similar to Britain's until January 1944 – fourteen months after news of the mass murders reached the Allies and thirteen months after the Allied resolution. Then on January 13, 1944, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau received a memo entitled, "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of this Government in the Murder of Jews." It was prepared by a young Treasury Department lawyer, Josiah DuBois, and signed by his superior, Randolph Paul. The memo stated:

One of the greatest crimes in history, the slaughter of the Jewish people in Europe, is continuing unabated.

This Government has for a long time maintained that its policy is to work out programs to save those Jews of Europe who could be saved.

I am convinced on the basis of the information which is available to me that certain officials in our State Department, which is charged with carrying out this policy, have been guilty not only of gross procrastination and willful failure to act, but even of willful attempts to prevent action from being taken to rescue Jews from Hitler.

I fully recognize the graveness of this statement and I make it only after having most carefully weighed the shocking facts which have come to my attention during the last several months.

Unless remedial steps of a drastic nature are taken, and taken immediately, I am certain that no effective action will be taken by this Government to prevent the complete extermination of the Jews in German controlled Europe, and that this Government will have to share for all time responsibility for this extermination.

The tragic history of this Government's handling of this matter reveals that certain State Department officials are guilty of the following:

- (1) They have not only failed to use the Governmental machinery at their disposal to rescue Jews from Hitler, but have even gone so far as to use this Government machinery to prevent the rescue of these Jews.
- (2) They have not only failed to cooperate with private organizations in the efforts of these organizations to work out individual programs of their own, but have taken steps designed to prevent these programs from being put into effect.
- (3) They not only have failed to facilitate the obtaining of information concerning Hitler's plans to exterminate the Jews of Europe but in their official capacity have gone so far as to surreptitiously attempt to stop the obtaining of information concerning the murder of the Jewish population of Europe.
- (4) They have tried to cover up their guilt by:
 - (a) concealment and misrepresentation;
 - (b) the giving of false and misleading explanations for their failures to act and their attempts to prevent action; and

(c) the issuance of false and misleading statements concerning the “action” which they have taken to date.

Morgenthau, whose father served as ambassador to Turkey during the massacres of the Armenians in World War I, condensed the report and then sent it to the president with a few comments of his own. Within days of receiving it, the president set up the War Refugee Board, under Morgenthau’s supervision. It saved about two hundred thousand Jews through diplomacy, bribery, and trickery. John Pehle, Jr., the man who headed the group, later remarked that “what we did was little enough. It was late. Late and little, I would say.”

21.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. Summarize the responses of the United States, England, and the Soviet Union—according to the sources quoted in the reading—to their knowledge of mass murders committed by the Nazis. When did they acknowledge the atrocities carried out by the Nazis? What did they do and say in response? Use evidence from the reading to support your answers.
2. What questions do you have about their responses? What other sources would you turn to in order to develop a more complete understanding of the responses of the Allies to news of Nazi atrocities?
3. Why would articles about the mass murders fail to make the front pages of newspapers around the world? How did newspapers, magazines, and television treat events in Sudan? When do stories about “ethnic cleansing” and genocide make headlines? When are those stories reduced to a brief mention? How do you account for the difference?
4. Why does Edward R. Murrow use the word *obsolete*? What is he implying? What effect might this choice of words have had on his audience?
5. What words and phrases in Golda Meir’s statement reflect a tone of resentment?
6. Compare the charges Meir made with those in Morgenthau’s memo. What could the United States have done? What could Britain have done? Could either have stopped fate or even reversed it?
7. Would you classify the United States and its allies as bystanders to the mass murder of civilians the Nazis perpetrated during the Holocaust? Why or why not? Were the allies complicit in the Nazi mass murders?
8. One of the reasons often cited for the failure of Americans to respond to the Holocaust was inadequate coverage in the media. Another was widespread antisemitism in the United States in general and within the State Department in

particular. “Indication that hostility toward Jews was reaching an ominous level,” writes historian David Wyman, “came from a series of ten surveys conducted between 1938 and 1941.” Based on those polls, he concludes that “as much as one third of the American population was prepared to approve an anti-Jewish movement, nearly the same proportion would have stood against such action, and the remainder would have been little concerned.”

When the United States failed to take an aggressive stand against “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia in 1993, a number of state department officials resigned. What else can individuals do to express their outrage? What can individuals do to influence public policy?

Using Resource 21.3

Using a Graphic Organizer

The next page includes a graphic organizer that you can give your students to help them answer Comprehension and Connections question #1.

Reflection, Discussion, and Debate

This reading, as well as most of the readings in Section 9, is likely to prompt energetic discussion and debate in your class. The challenge of analyzing the moral and ethical choices of individuals, as well as other nations, in this history is one that most adolescents readily accept. As always, it is important to plan the class so that students have an opportunity to gather their thoughts in quiet reflection and then to provide a structure for the discussion that follows.

For this resource, consider conducting a class discussion based on the Comprehension and Connections questions using the [Fishbowl](#) strategy. If you prefer your students to have discussions in smaller groups, use the [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) strategy.

Taking a Stand

Students may find Connections Question #4 (“Would you classify the United States and its allies as bystanders to the mass murder of civilians the Nazis perpetrated during the Holocaust? Why or why not? Were the allies complicit in the Nazi mass murders?”) ripe for discussion. You might use the [Barometer](#) strategy to invite students to take and defend a position on the question.

Handout 21.3

Response of the Allies

After you read Resource 21.3, use this chart to summarize the responses of the United States, England, and the Soviet Union to their knowledge of mass murders committed by the Nazis. In each column, list 3-5 details about that country's response to the Holocaust. At the bottom of each column, list any questions you have about that country's response.

<u>United States</u>	<u>England</u>	<u>Soviet Union</u>
Details:	Details:	Details:
Questions:	Questions:	Questions:

Resource 21.4:**Reading: From Bystanders to Resisters***Creating Context*

What is a *resister*? What actions can one take to help resist injustice? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

leaflet	complicity
bestial	habituate
guillotine	arrogance
behead	materialism
contrition	monarchist
penance	“the eleventh hour”
depravity	

Among the few Germans to act on what they knew were Hans Scholl and his younger sister Sophie. In the spring of 1942, they and a friend, Christoph Probst, formed a small group known as the White Rose. In July, the group published a leaflet that boldly stated: “We want to inform you of the fact that since the conquest of Poland, 300,000 Jews in that country have been murdered in the most bestial manner. Here we see the most terrible crime against the dignity of man, a crime that has no analogy in human history... Why do the German people react in such an apathetic way to these revolting and inhuman crimes?”

The following February, the Nazis arrested the Scholls and Probst and brought them to trial. The three freely admitted that they were responsible for the leaflets. Sophie Scholl told the judges. “Somebody, after all, had to make a start. What we wrote and said is also believed by many others. They just don’t dare to express themselves as we did.” She, her brother Hans, and Probst were found guilty and guillotined later that same day. Soon after their deaths, three other members – a university professor named Kurt Huber and two students, Alexander Schmorell and Willi Graf – were also tried, convicted, and beheaded.

Although the Nazis were able to destroy the White Rose, they could not stop their message from being heard. Helmuth von Moltke, a German aristocrat, smuggled copies to friends in neutral countries. They, in turn, sent them to the Allies who reproduced each leaflet and then dropped thousands of copies over German cities. The information in the leaflets came as no surprise to Moltke. As a lawyer who worked for the German Intelligence Service, he had been aware of the murders for some time.

After the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Moltke wrote to his wife of “reports that in transports of prisoners or Jews only 20 percent arrive, that there is starvation in the prisoner-of-war camps, that typhoid and all the other deficiency epidemics have broken

out, that our own people are breaking down from exhaustion. What will happen when the nation as a whole realizes that this war is lost, and lost differently from the last one? With a blood-guilt that cannot be atoned for in our lifetime and can never be forgotten, with an economy that is completely ruined? Will men arise capable of distilling contrition and penance from this punishment, and so, gradually, a new strength to live? Or will everything go under in chaos?"¹⁴

In September, in yet another letter, he observed:

An officer reports that ammunition produced in violation of international law was found on Russians: dum-dum bullets. That they were such could be proved by the evidence of the Medical Officer, one Panning, who used the ammunition in a large-scale experimental execution of Jews. This produced the following results: such and such was the effect of the projectile when fired at the head, such when fired at the chest, such in abdominal shots, such when limbs were hit. The results were available in the form of a scientific study so that the violation of international law could be proved without a doubt. That surely is the height of bestiality and depravity and there is nothing one can do.¹⁵

By late October, Moltke was asking, "How is one to bear the burden of complicity?... In France there are extensive shootings while I write. Certainly more than a thousand people are murdered in this way every day and another thousand German men are habituated to murder. And all this is child's play compared with what is happening in Poland and Russia. May I know this and yet sit at my table in my heated flat and have tea? Don't I thereby become guilty too? What shall I say when I am asked, and what did you do during that time?"¹⁶

Moltke sought an answer to that question by meeting secretly with a number of other prominent Germans at Kreisau, his country estate. There they considered ways of fighting the Nazis and building a new Germany after the war. By the summer of 1944, a few members of the Kreisau circle were ready to act, but not Moltke. He argued, "Let Hitler live. He and his party must bear responsibility to the end of the fatal destiny for which they have prepared for the German people; only in this way can the National Socialist ideology be obliterated."

On July 20, a member of the group, Claus von Stauffenberg, placed a briefcase containing explosives under a massive table around which Hitler and his staff were scheduled to meet later that day. The bomb exploded as planned, but the table blunted the damage. As a result, Hitler and other top officials survived the explosion. They promptly retaliated by executing nearly twelve thousand people, including Moltke who knew of the plan but did not take part in it. Before his execution in January, 1945, Moltke wrote his sons, ages six and three.

Throughout an entire life, even at school, I have fought against a spirit of narrowness and unfreedom, of arrogance and lack of respect for others, of intolerance and the absolute, the merciless consistency among the Germans,

which found its expression in the National Socialist state. I exerted myself to help to overcome this spirit with its evil consequences, such as excessive nationalism, racial persecution, lack of faith, and materialism.¹⁷

21.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. Which of the acts of resistance in this reading do you think is most significant? Why? Which, if successful, might have made the biggest impact towards helping the victims of the Nazis?
2. Friederich Reck-Malleczewen, a staunch monarchist who fought in World War I, kept a journal from 1936 until his murder at Dachau in 1944. In March 1943, he wrote of the Scholls:

I never saw these two young people. In my rural isolation, I got only bits and pieces of what they were doing, but the significance of what I heard was such that I could hardly believe it. The Scholls are the first in Germany to have had the courage to witness for the truth... On their gravestones let these words be carved, and let this entire people, which has lived in deepest degradation these last ten years, blush when it reads them:... “He who knows how to die can never be enslaved.” We will all of us, someday, have to make a pilgrimage to their graves, and stand before them, ashamed.¹⁸

Why do you think Reck-Malleczewen believes that it takes courage to “witness for the truth?” What does he mean when he says, “We will all of us, someday... stand before them, ashamed?” What is he suggesting about the responsibility of bystanders? Would Moltke agree?

3. Moltke wrote, “Certainly more than a thousand people are murdered in this way every day and another thousand German men are habituated to murder.” Why do you think he looks at murder in terms of its effect on both the victim and the perpetrator? What does it mean to live in a society where thousands have been “habituated to murder”?
4. Moltke asked, “How is one to bear the burden of complicity?” Why did Moltke view himself as complicit in the mass murder perpetrated by the Nazis? What actions did Moltke take to rid himself of this complicity? Use evidence from the reading to support your answers.
5. Compare the choices open to individuals like Hans and Sophie Scholl, Moltke, and Stauffenberg in the 1920s and 1930s with those in the 1940s. What options were no longer possible? What choices were now more risky? What evidence does this reading provide that the environment was much more restrictive in the 1940s? What do your answers suggest about the difficulties of taking a stand at the eleventh hour?

6. How do you account for the fact that some in Germany were able to resist the antisemitic, nationalistic, and racist ideology of which the Nazis took advantage and promoted? What factors might make one less susceptible to such hateful ideologies?

Using Resource 21.4

Closing the Loop

In addition to facilitating reflection and discussion around some of the Comprehension and Connections questions, you might provide the class another opportunity to look deeply at the quotation from Moltke about complicity, which appears both in this reading and in the Creating Context section of Resource 21.1.

The quotation from Moltke could form the basis of a [Big Paper](#) activity. During the activity, students can reflect on the following questions:

- How does Moltke's belief about complicity affect his decision whether or not to act?
- What opportunities for action were available to people in the 1940s?
- Does the number of available options affect one's level of complicity?

Lesson 22: Upstanders, Empathy, and Altruism

Essential Questions:

- ***What is an upstander? What factors encourage one to behave as an upstander?***
- ***What is empathy? Is feeling empathy enough to inspire one to act on behalf of others?***
- ***What is altruism? What impulses and beliefs lead one to act selflessly?***

Included Resources:

- * 22.1 – Reading: Protest at Rosenstrasse 2-4
 - * 22.2 – Reading: Choosing to Rescue
 - * 22.3 – Reading: Links in a Chain
 - * 22.4 – Reading: The Courage of Le Chambon
 - * 22.5 – Reading: A Nation United
- * = core resource

Additional Recommended Resources:

Videos (Available from the [Facing History Library](#)):

- [*Pigeon*](#)
- [*Weapons of the Spirit*](#)
- [*The Power of Good*](#)
- [*Schindler's List*](#) (video and study guide available)

Readings (from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* resource book):

- “The Mysterious Major,” p. 388
- “Schindler’s List,” p. 390
- “A Man With a Mission,” p. 408
- “As the War Ended,” p. 412

Readings (Available from the Facing History and Ourselves website or library):

- “From Sympathy to Action,” Reading 5 in Facing History’s [Choosing to Participate Study Guide](#)

Websites:

- [“Facing Today”](#) links to stories of upstanders in the news.

Introduction:

While the mass murder perpetrated by the Nazis during the Holocaust claimed millions of lives, those who behaved as upstanders and rescuers were unfortunately the exception, not the rule. In this lesson, students will explore the stories of individuals who made momentous choices during the Holocaust to help some of those target by the Nazis survive.

Why is it important to study the choices made by upstanders and rescuers during the Holocaust? Elie Wiesel offers one answer in the preface to *The Courage to Care*: “Let us not forget, after all, that is always a moment when the moral choice is made. Often because of one story or one book or one person, we are able to make a different choice, a choice for humanity, for life. And so we must know these good people who helped Jews during the Holocaust. We must learn from them, and in gratitude and hope, we must remember them.”

Another answer is that by delving into the circumstances in which individuals made courageous choices, we can consider the question, “Why do some individuals choose to put themselves at risk for the benefit of others?” We also might ask if being an upstander always requires one to put himself or herself at risk. What is the range of actions one can take in order to help others in need? The resources in this lesson present several reasons why rescuers and other upstanders act as they do. These motivations include relationships that exist between victims and potential rescuers, strong moral or religious convictions, empathy, altruism, and a “culture of upstanding.” Importantly, students will probe whether or not any of these factors, individually, are enough to inspire one to act courageously on behalf of another person who is in jeopardy.

When learning and analyzing stories of upstanders and rescuers during the Holocaust, it is important to caution your students about the limitations of this endeavor. It is not possible to reduce complex human behavior to a formula or to isolate a specific set of factors that, when combined, will reliably lead one to act courageously on behalf of others. The ability and willingness of people to act as upstanders during the Holocaust was also largely dependent on circumstances. There were certain times and particular places in Europe when acting on behalf of Nazi victims was less risky than at other times and places. Also, one’s wealth, occupation, and social status might have granted him or her more freedom to subvert Nazi policies and plans. We do not intend to minimize the bravery of rescuers, but it is important to keep in mind that we share the particular stories in this lesson in hopes of learning something more universal about human behavior without assuming an equivalency between the circumstances in which each of these stories took place.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Why do some people stand by in the face of injustice while others choose to intervene?
- What does it mean to be an “upstander?” Identify someone you know (or someone you know about) who is an upstander. What did this person do to deserve this label? What if you learned that this person did not act as an upstander all of the time? Would you remove this label? Why or why not?
- How do you decide when is the best time to speak up against injustice? Can speaking out against what seem to be relatively minor acts of injustice help prevent more significant actions from taking place in the future?

- What might influence how someone defines his or her universe of responsibility? Do you think someone's universe of responsibility is fixed or might it change over time? What factors, if any, might motivate someone to change how they define his or her universe of responsibility (by expanding it, restricting it, etc.)?
- Whom do you feel you have a responsibility to care for and protect? How can your answer to this question help you make decisions about how to act and how to treat others?

Getting Started with Lesson 22

Personal Reflection/Building on Lesson 21

As the class transitions from exploring the choices made by bystanders to the actions of resisters and rescuers, ask them to review their reflections from the beginning of Lesson 21. If they ended the reflection by making lists of *reasons for bystander behavior* and *reasons for upstander behavior*, ask them to take a few moments and review these lists, revising them as they see fit. You can then ask students to talk to a partner or share out with the entire class about any changes they made to their lists and what prompted their revisions.

Beginning with Identity Charts

One way to prepare students for their exploration of the upstander behavior is to have them draw two identity charts in their journals. The first is an identity chart for bystanders, and the second is for upstanders. They can begin with what they learned in Lesson 21. Encourage them to use any specific quotations or other evidence from the readings in Lesson 21 that they think might apply to bystanders or upstanders in general. Students may also draw upon their own experiences and intuitions as well. They should be able to add several characteristics to each chart. As the students explore the resources in this lesson, invite them to revisit these two identity charts, adding and subtracting characteristics as they see fit.

Using Films

The Facing History library offers a variety of films about rescuers during the Holocaust. Their [Holocaust Video Resources](#) webpage provides a comprehensive list (look under the “Rescue” heading).

Showing the short film, *Pigeon*, is an especially effective way to begin the lesson about rescuers. This 11 minute film is based on a true story that took place in German-occupied France during World War II. It is short enough that you can show it twice, giving students the opportunity to record details and analyze parts of the film that might have symbolic meaning. (See the teaching strategy [Media Literacy: Analyzing Visual Images](#).) After watching the film, give students the opportunity to consider their identity charts for rescuers. What ideas and evidence might they add after watching the film?

Weaving Together Resources 22.1 – 22.5

You might find that your class investigation of rescue during the Holocaust is deeper or more efficient by weaving two or more of the four resources included here into one activity. If you do so, you can plan a structured discussion around any of the questions posed in the Creating Context sections or the Comprehension and Connections questions using the [Town Hall Circle](#) or [Jigsaw](#) strategies. Both strategies provide suggestions for assigning resources to small groups for analysis.

Resource 22.1:**Reading: Protest at Rosenstrasse 2-4***Creating Context*

Is there a difference between making a sacrifice or taking a risk to rescue someone you know and acting to save a stranger? Is there a difference between refusing to rescue someone you know and refusing to save a stranger? Why or why not? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

intermarriage

universe of obligation

mixed marriage

universe of responsibility

There is evidence of only one successful protest in Germany against the Nazis. According to historian Nathan Stoltzfus, it began on Saturday, February 27, 1943.¹⁹ It was the day the SS rounded up the last Jews in Berlin – about ten thousand men, women, and children. Most were picked up at work and herded onto waiting trucks. Others were kidnapped from their homes or pulled off busy streets. It was not the city’s first mass deportation, but this one was different from any other. This time, two thousand Jews in intermarriages were among those targeted. The Nazis had excluded them from earlier deportations, but now they were to be treated like other Jews.

When these “privileged” Jews did not return home as expected, their “Aryan” relatives began to make phone calls. They quickly discovered that their loved ones were being held at the administration building of the Jewish community at Rosenstrasse 2-4. Within hours, relatives began to gather there. Most were women. (A Jewish woman who married an “Aryan” did not have to wear a yellow star, but a man did. So the only females picked up in the raid were the daughters of mixed marriages.)

As the women arrived at Rosenstrasse 2-4, each loudly demanded to know what crimes her husband and children had committed. When the guards refused to let the women enter the building, the protesters vowed to return until they were allowed to see their relatives. They kept their word. In the days that followed, people blocks away could hear the women chanting. Charlotte Israel, one of the protesters, recalls:

The situation in front of the collecting center came to a head [on March 5]. Without warning the guards began setting up machine guns. Then they directed them at the crowd and shouted: “If you don’t go now, we’ll shoot.”

Automatically the movement surged backward in that instant. But then for the first time we really hollered. Now we couldn’t care less. We bellowed, “you murderers,” and everything else that one can holler. Now they’re going to shoot in any case, so now we’ll yell too, we thought. We yelled “Murderer, Murderer,

Murderer, Murderer.” We didn’t scream just once but again and again, until we lost our breath.

Then I saw then a man in the foreground open his mouth wide – as if to give a command. It was drowned out. I couldn’t hear it. But then they cleared everything away. There was silence. Only an occasional swallow could be heard.

The next day, Joseph Goebbels ordered the release of all Jews married to “Aryans.” Why? A man who worked for Goebbels later claimed the Jews were released “so that others didn’t take a lesson from it, so that others didn’t begin to do the same.”

22.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. Draw an identity chart for the protestors in the Rosenstrasse. Use quotations and other evidence from the reading to complete your chart. How does their chart differ from those of Germans not married to Jews? Who was a part of each group’s “universe of responsibility”?
2. In December, 1943, Himmler ordered the deportation of all Jews in intermarriages whose spouses had died or divorced them. The only exceptions were those who had children. Why do you think Himmler made those exceptions? What do they suggest about the importance the Nazis placed on public opinion?
3. While the crowds gathered at Rosenstrasse 2-4, eight thousand Jews who did not have “Aryan“ relatives were shipped to death camps. No one spoke on their behalf. Why were the protesters silent when those Jews were sent to their death?
4. The women at Rosenstrasse 2-4 were linked to those they protested for by marriage. What other types of connections between people might make them more likely to take risks and make sacrifices for each other?
5. What is the difference between a *resister* and a *rescuer*? Which were the protestors in the Rosenstrasse? Use evidence from the reading to support your response.

Using Resource 22.1**Reflection and Discussion**

Given the unique circumstances of the protest at Rosentrasse 2-4, as well as the fact that the Nazis capitulated to the protesters, this reading might raise some interesting questions for students. As a result, it might be a fruitful exercise to conduct a class discussion using the [Save the Last Word for Me](#) strategy with one variation. Instead of having students copy quotations from the reading for discussion, ask them to think about two or three “probing” questions the reading raises for them. (A “probing” question is interpretive and evaluative. It can be discussed and has no clearly defined “right” answer, as opposed to clarifying questions which are typically factual in nature.) Students answer one of their questions on the back of a card. In small groups, they select one of their questions for the other two students to discuss.

Resource 22.2:

Reading: Choosing to Rescue*Creating Context*

How does the dictionary define the word *empathy*? Look it up and record the definition in your journal. What does the word mean to you? Add your thoughts to the definition in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

empathy**hero**

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

In Germany, the government imprisoned anyone caught sheltering a Jew. In Poland, the penalty was death. Yet, about 2 percent of the Polish Christian population chose to hide Jews. They did so in a nation with a long history of antisemitism. After the war, sociologist Nechama Tec interviewed a number of the rescuers. One factory worker told her sadly that she had done very little during the war. She had saved only one Jew and she had rescued that person only by chance. As her story unfolded, Tec discovered that Stefa Dworek had gone to incredible lengths to save a stranger.

It all began in the summer of 1942, when Stefa's husband, Jerezy, brought home a young Jewish woman named Irena. A policeman involved in the Polish underground had asked him to hide her for a few days. The woman looked too "Jewish" to pass for a Christian. So the couple decided to keep her concealed in the one-room apartment they shared with their infant child. To shield her from unexpected visitors, the Dworeks pushed a freestanding wardrobe a few inches from the wall. The space between the wall and the wardrobe became the woman's hiding place.

A "few days" stretched to a week and the week, in turn, became a month and still the unexpected guest remained. The policeman was unable to find another hiding place for her. After several months, Jerezy Dworek demanded that Irena leave. His wife Stefa, however, insisted that the woman stay. The quarrel ended with Jerezy stomping out of the apartment and vowing to denounce both Irena and his wife. What did Stefa do?

I called Laminski [the policeman]... [and] he went to talk to my husband. He told him, "Here is my pistol; if you will denounce them you will not live more than five minutes longer. The first bullet will go into your head." After that my husband stopped coming... This ended my marriage. But Ryszard Laminski continued to come, helping us, warning us about danger. He never abandoned us.

Was Stefa aware of the danger to herself and her baby?

Sure I knew. Everybody knew what could happen to someone who kept Jews... Sometimes when it got dangerous, Irena herself would say, "I am such a burden to

you, I will leave.” But I said, “Listen, until now you were here and we succeeded, so maybe now all will succeed. How can you give yourself up?” I knew that I could not let her go. The longer she was there the closer we became.²⁰

Then in 1944, the people of Warsaw rebelled against the Germans. As the fighting spread, it became too dangerous to stay in the apartment. So Irena bandaged her face and Stefa introduced her to neighbors as a cousin who had just arrived in the city. When the Germans finally put down the uprising, a new threat developed. Irena later described it to a commission:

Before the end of the war there was a tragic moment... We learned that the Germans were about to evacuate all civilians. My appearance on the streets even with my bandaged face could end tragically. Stefa decided to take a bold step which I will remember as long as I live. She gave me her baby to protect me. [The Germans did not evacuate mothers with young children.] As she was leaving me with her child, she told me that the child would save me and that after the war I would give him back to her. But in case of her death she was convinced that I would take good care of him... Eventually we both stayed.²¹

What motivated Stefa Dworek? “I knew I could not let her go. What could I do? Even a dog you get used to and especially to a fine person like she was. I could not act any other way... I would have helped anyone. It did not matter who she was. After all I did not know her at first, but I helped and could not send her away. I always try to help as best as I can.”²²

22.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Did Stefa Dworek feel empathy for Irena? What evidence does the reading provide to help you answer the question?
2. Is feeling empathy enough to make someone take action on behalf of others? What other factors might be necessary?
3. In his study of rescuers, Ervin Staub states, “Goodness, like evil, often begins in small steps. Heroes evolve; they aren’t born. Very often the rescuers make only a small commitment at the start – to hide someone for a day or two. But once they had taken that step, they began to see themselves differently, as someone who helps. What starts as mere willingness becomes intense involvement.”²³

In your journal, write a working definition of the word *hero*. Was Stefa Dworek a hero? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.

4. Nechama Tec and Ervin Staub both agree that the decision to rescue Jews had little to do with the rescuer’s religion, nationality, schooling, class, or ethnic heritage. Most rescuers were independent individuals who refused to follow the

crowd. They also had a history of performing good deeds and did not perceive rescue work as anything out of the ordinary. How does Stefa Dworek fit their description?

Using Reading 22.2

Reflection & Discussion

The concepts of empathy and heroism in this reading provide the opportunity for deep and thoughtful discussion among students in pairs and small groups. Use the Comprehension & Connections questions to start your class discussion. Consider using one of a variety of effective discussion strategies, depending on the size and the needs of your particular class. [Think-Pair-Share](#), [Fishbowl](#), and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) are all strategies that could work well discussing this reading. Also, consider using the Ervin Staub quotation in Question #3 above as the basis for a [Big Paper](#) activity.

Additional Resources About Rescue

The USHMM website contains the following additional resources about rescuers during the Holocaust that you might consider sharing with your students:

- [“Rescue”](#): A short article that gives an overview of several rescue efforts
- [Animated Map Depicting Locations of Several Rescue Stories](#)

Resource 22.3:**Reading: Links in a Chain***Creating Context*

How does the dictionary define the word *altruism*? Look it up and record the definition in your journal. What does the word mean to you? Add your thoughts to the definition in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

altruism**undertaker****ration card****rationalize**

In their book *The Altruistic Personality*, Samuel and Pearl Oliner quote Johan, a Dutch teenager who rescued Jews. “My father said the world is one big chain. One little part breaks and the chain is broken and it won’t work anymore.” The Oliners went on to observe, “Rescuers did not simply happen on opportunities for rescue; they actively created, sought, or recognized them where others did not. Their participation was not determined by circumstances but their own personal qualities. Chance sometimes provided rescuers like Johan with an opportunity to help, but it was the values learned from their parents which prompted and sustained their involvement.”²⁴

The experiences of Marion Pritchard, a graduate student in 1940 – the year the Germans invaded the Netherlands – confirms the Oliners’ view that the decision to rescue was a conscious choice. One morning in 1942, as she was riding her bicycle to school, she passed a home for Jewish children. What she observed that day changed her life.

The Germans were loading the children, who ranged in age from babies to eight-year-olds, on trucks. They were upset, and crying. When they did not move fast enough the Nazis picked them up, by an arm, a leg, the hair, and threw them into the trucks. To watch grown men treat small children that way – I could not believe my eyes. I found myself literally crying with rage. Two women coming down the street tried to interfere physically. The Germans heaved them into the truck, too. I just sat there on my bicycle, and that was the moment I decided that if there was anything I could do to thwart such atrocities, I would do it.

Some of my friends had similar experiences, and about ten of us, including two Jewish students who decided they did not want to go into hiding, organized very informally for this purpose. We obtained Aryan identity cards for the Jewish students, who, of course, were taking more of a risk than we were. They knew many people who were looking to *onderduiken*, “disappear,” as Anne Frank and her family were to do.

We located hiding places, helped people move there, provided food, clothing, and ration cards, and sometimes moral support and relief for the host families. We registered newborn Jewish babies as gentiles... and provided medical care when possible.²⁵

The decision to rescue Jews had great consequences. Pritchard described what happened when she hid a man with three children.

The father, the two boys, and the baby girl moved in and we managed to survive the next two years, until the end of the war. Friends helped take up the floorboards, under the rug, and build a hiding place in case of raids. These did occur with increasing frequency, and one night we had a very narrow escape.

Four Germans, accompanied by a Dutch Nazi policeman came and searched the house. They did not find the hiding place, but they had learned from experience that sometimes it paid to go back to a house they had already searched, because by then the hidden Jews might have come out of the hiding place. The baby had started to cry, so I let the children out. Then the Dutch policeman came back alone. I had a small revolver that a friend had given me, but I had never planned to use it. I felt I had no choice except to kill him. I would do it again, under the same circumstances, but it still bothers me, and I still feel that there “should” have been another way. If anybody had really tried to find out how and where he disappeared, they could have, but the general attitude was that there was one less traitor to worry about. A local undertaker helped dispose of the body, he put it in a coffin with a legitimate body in it. I hope the dead man’s family would have approved.

Was I scared? Of course the answer is “yes.” Especially after I had been imprisoned and released. Then were times that the fear got the better of me, and I did not do something that I could have. I would rationalize the inaction, feeling it might endanger others, or that I should not run a risk, because what would happen to the three children I was now responsible for, if something happened to me, but I knew when I was rationalizing.²⁶

22.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. Marion Pritchard says that her goal was to *thwart* Nazi atrocities. Is *thwart* an appropriate word to use to describe her actions? Why or why not?
2. What experiences convinced Marion Pritchard to become a rescuer? Did she feel empathy for the victims of the Nazis? Is empathy enough to inspire one to act? If not, what other factors might influence one’s decision on whether or not to help?
3. How was Pritchard’s decision similar to that of Stefa Dworek? How did it differ? Was Pritchard altruistic?

4. In reflecting on her decision and the choices others made during the war, Pritchard is troubled by a tendency to divide the general population during the war into the few ‘good guys’ and the large majority of ‘bad guys.’ That seems to me to be a dangerous oversimplification... The point I want to make is that there were indeed some people who behaved criminally by betraying their Jewish neighbors and thereby sentenced them to death. There were some people who dedicated themselves to actively rescuing as many people as possible. Somewhere in between was the majority, whose actions varied from the minimum decency of at least keeping quiet if they knew where Jews were hidden to finding a way to help them when they were asked.²⁷

Why do you think Pritchard sees the oversimplification as dangerous? Do you agree?

5. Pritchard says of her own decision: “I think you have a responsibility to yourself to behave decently. We all have memories of times we should have done something and didn’t. And it gets in the way of the rest of your life.” She notes that she has always had “a strong conviction that we are our brothers’ keepers. When you truly believe that, you have to behave that way in order to live with yourself.” Whom does she include in her “universe of responsibility”?
6. The Oliners contrast Nazi *resisters* with *rescuers*.
For most rescuers... helping Jews was an expression of ethical principles that extended to all of humanity and, while often reflecting concern with equity and justice, was predominantly rooted in care. While other feelings – such as hatred of Nazis, religion, and patriotism, or even deference to an accepted authority whose values the rescuer shared – influenced them, most rescuers explain their actions as responses to a challenge to their fundamental ethical principles. This sense that ethical principles were at stake distinguished rescuers from their compatriots who participated in resistance activities only. For these resisters, hatred of Nazis and patriots were most often considered sufficient reasons for their behaviors; for rescuers, however, such reasons were rarely sufficient.²⁸

Was Pritchard a resister, a rescuer, or a perpetrator? What about Stefa Dworek? The Scholls? Moltke? Use evidence from the readings in this section to support your answer.

7. Some scientists assert that altruism evolved in humans because it gave groups whose members were willing to sacrifice their individual needs for the good of the group an advantage over other groups whose members acted selfishly.²⁹ Is this idea, that altruism is a characteristic that strengthens some groups as they compete with other groups, consistent with the definition you recorded in your journal?

Can you be altruistic and only be willing to sacrifice for those within your universe of responsibility?

Using Resource 22.3

Reflection, Discussion, and Debate

Students will likely respond energetically to questions about the possibility of altruism. You might explore this concept, confirming students' understanding by conducting a class discussion using one or more of the Comprehension & Connections questions and the the [Fishbowl](#) or [Save the Last Word for Me](#) strategy.

Time permitting, you can follow up the class discussion by asking students to take and defend a position on a more fundamental question about altruism: "Do humans ever act entirely selflessly, or is there always some personal benefit to their actions?" Students can use what they have learned in this course so far, as well as their own experiences, to support their positions. The [Barometer](#) and [SPAR \(Spontaneous Argumentation\)](#) strategies both provide potential formats for this activity.

Resource 22.4:**Reading: The Courage of Le Chambon***Creating Context*

In Resource 17.4, a college professor who lived in Nazi Germany says he had “no time to think,” amidst the changes taking place in Germany. Look back at that reading, or in your journal notes, and review what he meant by that statement. How did having no time to think affect the decisions he made?

In the reading below, a French woman, Magda Trocme, is also faced with choices in circumstances in which there was “no time to think.” As you read, think about how her choices differed from the college professor’s.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

Protestant	hero
Catholic	altruism
gospel	

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

In a tiny mountain town in south-central France, people were also aware that Jews were being murdered and took action to save as many people as possible. The people of Le Chambon were Protestants in a country where most people are Catholic. They turned their community into a hiding place for Jews from all over Europe. Magda Trocme, the wife of the local minister, explained how it all began.

Those of us who received the first Jews did what we thought had to be done – nothing more complicated. It was not decided from one day to the next what we would have to do. There were many people in the village who needed help. How could we refuse them? A person doesn’t sit down and say I’m going to do this and this and that. We had no time to think. When a problem came, we had to solve it immediately. Sometimes people ask me, “How did you make a decision?” There was no decision to make. The issue was: Do you think we are all brothers or not? Do you think it is unjust to turn in the Jews or not? Then let us try to help!

When asked of the risks she faced, Magda Trocme replied:

In the beginning, we did not realize the danger was so big. Later, we became accustomed to it, but you must remember that the danger was all over. The people who were in the cities had bombs coming down and houses coming in on their heads, and they were killed. Others were dying in the war, in battles. Other people were being persecuted, like those in Germany. It was a general danger, and we did not feel we were in much more danger than the others. And, you see, the danger was not what you might imagine.

You might imagine that the people were fighting with weapons in the middle of the square, that you would have had to run away, that you would have to go into a little street and hide. The danger was not that kind at all. The danger was in having a government that, little by little, came into the hands of the Germans, with their laws, and the French people were supposed to obey those laws.³⁰

Early in the war, the police arrested Trocme's husband Andre and his assistant, Edouard Theis. Although they were later released, the Gestapo continued to monitor their activities. In the summer of 1943, the Gestapo forced Andre Trocme into hiding for ten months by offering a reward for his capture. Many knew his whereabouts but no one turned him in. When they were interviewed forty years later, the people of Le Chambon did not regard themselves as heroes. They did what they did, they said, because they believed that it had to be done. Almost everyone in the community of three thousand took part in the effort. Even the children were involved. When a Nazi official came to organize a Hitler Youth camp in the village, the students told him that they "make no distinction between Jews and non-Jews. It is contrary to Gospel teaching."

The people of Le Chambon drew support of people in other places. Church groups, both Protestant and Catholic, helped fund their efforts. People in nearby towns also helped. For example, a group known as the Cimade led hundreds of Jews across the Alps to safety in Switzerland.

Pierre Sauvage, a Jew whose parents were hiding at the time he was born, believes that the villagers' courage must never be forgotten.

If we do not learn how it is possible to act well even under the most trying circumstances, we will increasingly doubt our ability to act well even under less trying ones. If we remember solely the horror of the Holocaust, we will pass on no perspective from which meaningfully to confront and learn from that very horror. If we remember solely the horror of the Holocaust, it is we who will bear the responsibility for having created the most dangerous alibi of all: that it was beyond man's capacity to know and care. If Jews do not learn that the whole world did not stand idly by while we were slaughtered, we will undermine our ability to develop the friendships and alliances that we need and deserve. If Christians do not learn that even then there were practicing Christians, they will be deprived of inspiring and essential examples of the nature and requirements of their faith. If the hard and fast evidence of the possibility of good on earth is allowed to slip through our fingers and turn into dust, then future generations will have only dust to build on. If hope is allowed to seem an unrealistic response to the world, if we do not work towards developing confidence in our spiritual resources, we will be responsible for producing in due time a world devoid of humanity – literally.³¹

Magda Trocme also saw the rescuers as teaching a lesson. After the war, she told an interviewer, "When people read this story, I want them to know that I tried to open my door. I tried to tell people, 'Come in, come in.' In the end, I would like to say to people,

‘Remember that in your life there will be lots of circumstances that will need a kind of courage, a kind of decision of your own, not about other people but about yourself. I would not say more.’”

22.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. Magda Trocme wrote, “We had no time to think. When a problem came, we had to solve it immediately. Sometimes people ask me, ‘How did you make a decision?’ There was no decision to make. The issue was: Do you think we are all brothers or not? Do you think it is unjust to turn in the Jews or not? Then let us try to help!” Contrast her response with that of the professor Milton Mayer interviewed (Resource 17.4), who also said he had no time to think. Use evidence from both readings to highlight the differences between their responses to having no time to think. How might the time and place of their stories have affected their responses?
2. What experiences did the people of Le Chambon share that might have increased the empathy they felt for the plight of the Jews? How did those experiences encourage them to respond as a community? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
3. Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist who lived in the early 1900s, believed that no society can survive unless its members are willing to make sacrifices for one another and their community. He argued that altruism is not a “sort of agreeable ornament to social life” but the basis of society. Would the people of Le Chambon agree? Do you agree? What evidence do you have to support your answers to these questions?
4. Can altruism, as Durkheim suggests, be limited only to the members of one’s community? Or, must one who acts altruistically be willing to make sacrifices for anyone?
5. What does Magda Trocme mean when she says the decision she and others made was not about other people but about oneself? What circumstances today require that kind of courage? For what reasons?
6. What characteristics about the people and culture of Le Chambon enabled them to act collectively to save the lives of so many Jews? What do you think Le Chambon so different from other towns in Europe who did not offer the same kind of extraordinary help to those persecuted by the Nazis? Go back and underline any evidence in the reading you can find to support your thinking.
7. What in your life guides your decisions when you are confronted with difficult choices? Where did those principles, morals, or beliefs come from? How does our identity help shape the decisions we make?

Using Resource 22.4

Locating Le Chambon

The USHMM website includes a [map of France that highlights the location of Le Chambon](#). Consider showing this map to your students to help them locate where this reading takes place.

Film: *Weapons of the Spirit*

Weapons of the Spirit is a short documentary (28 minutes) available from the Facing History library that tells the story the rescuers in Le Chambon. Several of the townspeople of Le Chambon, including Magda Trocme, are interviewed by the filmmaker. You might show this film in class as an alternative or an extension of this reading.

Resource 22.5:**Reading: A Nation United***Creating Context*

How can upstander behavior become a part of the culture of a nation, community, or school? What are the essential characteristics of such an “upstander culture”? Record your thoughts in your journal, then look for evidence to support your ideas as you read about the actions of the people of Denmark during the Holocaust.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

cantor**pastoral****pastor**

In Le Chambon, people responded as a community. In Denmark, they responded as a nation. The Germans conquered Denmark in the spring of 1940. Although Hitler allowed the prewar government to stay in power and kept only a token military force in the nation, the Danes deeply resented the occupation of their country and some struck back with acts of sabotage, riots, and strikes. In the summer of 1943, the Nazis decided to retaliate. They limited the power of King Christian X, forced the Danish government to resign, and disbanded the Danish army. They also ordered the arrest of a number of Christian and Jewish leaders.

Leo Goldberger’s father, the chief cantor at Copenhagen’s Great Synagogue, was among those the Nazis planned to arrest. They arrived at the family’s apartment before dawn one morning. Goldberger recalls what happened next:

My father came into my brother’s and my room and whispered that the Germans were outside and that he would not under any circumstances open the door. For me, this was the most terror-filled moment I had ever experienced. The insistent knocks of rifle butts. Fearing that they would break down the door any minute, I implored my father to open it, but he was determined not to. Then in the nick of time, we heard our upstairs neighbor’s voice telling the German soldiers that we – the Goldbergers – were away for the summer, and that three o’clock in the morning was in any case no time to make such a racket!³²

Although the Germans posted a guard outside the building before they left, the family managed to escape. By the middle of September, the crisis seemed to be over and the family returned to Copenhagen. A few weeks later, the Goldbergers and other Jews in Denmark learned that the Germans were planning to round them all up for deportation. The news came from Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, a German diplomat stationed in Norway. When he received secret orders to prepare four cargo ships for transporting Danish Jews, he passed on the information to leaders in the resistance. They, in turn, informed Copenhagen’s Jewish community. The Jews were urged to hide and then

prepare for evacuation to Sweden. Goldberger, who was just thirteen years old at the time, remembers:

Where to hide? Our first night was spent as guests of a wealthy Jewish family who lived in Bedbaek, on the coast some 35 miles away. To our chagrin the family took off for Sweden during the night without even telling us or their Jewish refugee maid. Apparently my father had been asked by our host whether he wanted to chip in for a boat to take us all to Sweden but had been forced to decline. He simply did not have that kind of money. Near panic but determined to “get tough” and to find a way somehow, my father took a train back to the city; he needed to borrow money, perhaps get an advance on his salary and to see about contacts for passage on a fishing boat. As luck would have it, on the train a woman whom he knew only slightly recognized him and inquired about his obviously agitated facial expression. He confided our plight. Without a moment’s hesitation the lady promised to take care of everything. She would meet my father at the main railroad station with all the information about the arrangements within a few hours. It was the least she could do, she said, in return for my father’s participation some years back in a benefit concert for her organization – “The Women’s League for Peace and Freedom.”

True to her word, she met my father later that day and indicated that all was arranged. The money would be forthcoming from a pastor, Henry Rasmussen... The sum was a fairly large one – about 25,000 Danish crowns, 5,000 per person, a sum which was more than my father’s annual salary. (Though it was ostensibly a loan, I should add that pastor Rasmussen refused repayment after the war.) The next step was to head for a certain address near the coast, less than an hour from Copenhagen. After hurriedly getting some things together from our apartment – a few clothes, some treasured papers and family photos, and, in my case, [a] newly acquired police flashlight – we were off by taxi to our unknown hosts for the night and our uncertain destiny.

The following night we were standing, huddled in some low bushes along the beach near Dragur, an outskirt of Copenhagen’s island of Amager. It was a bitter cold October night. My youngest brother, barely three years old, had been given a sleeping pill to keep him quiet. My brave and stoic little mother was clutching her bag with socks and stockings to be mended which she had taken along for reasons difficult to fathom rationally. We were anxiously and eagerly waiting for the promised light signal. As we were poised to move toward the signal, I could not help but wonder why this was happening. What had we ever done to be in hiding, escaping like criminals? Where would it all end? And why in God’s name did the signal not appear? Then finally the lights flashed. We were off. Wading straight into the sea, we walked out some 100 feet through icy water, in water that reached up to my chest. My father carried my two small brothers on his arm. My mother held on to her bag of socks. And I clutched my precious flashlight. My older brother tried valiantly to carry the suitcases but finally had to drop them in the water. We were hauled aboard the boat, directed in whispers to lie concealed in

the cargo area, there to stretch out covered by smelly canvases; in the event the German patrols were to inspect the boat, we would be passed over as fish. There seemed to have been some 20 other Jews aboard. As we proceeded out toward open sea my father chanted a muted prayer from the Psalms.

A few hours later, bright lights and the pastoral scenery of Skane along the coast outline of Sweden appeared. Wonderful, peaceful Sweden. A welcoming haven, never to be forgotten, where we remained until our return to Denmark at the end of the war in 1945.³³

Hundreds of other fishing boats carried nearly every Jew in Denmark – 7,220 men, women, and children – to safety. It was a community effort – organized and paid for by hundreds of private citizens – Jews and Christians alike. The money was used to pay fishermen to transport the Jews to Sweden. Although a few offered their boats for nothing, many could not afford to lose a day’s pay. The money also went for bribes. It was no accident that all German patrol ships were docked for repairs the night of the rescue.

Not everyone managed to get out. Some were captured as they waited for a boat, while others were picked up at sea. But in the end, the Nazis were able to deport only 580 Jews. They were sent to Terezinstadt, the “model” concentration camp. Still, no Dane was shipped to a death camp, in part because the Danish government constantly questioned the Nazis about their status.

22.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. Did the Danes have an “upstander culture”? What evidence did you find in the reading to support your ideas from Creating Context?
2. Look at a [map of Denmark and Sweden](#). What role might have geography played in Denmark’s ability to save its Jewish population?
3. Author Suzanne Goldsmith defines community in the following way:

Communities are not built of friends, or of groups with similar styles and tastes, or even of people who like and understand each other. They are built of people who feel they are part of something that is bigger than themselves: a shared goal or enterprise, like righting a wrong, or building a road, or raising children, or living honorably, or worshipping a god. To build community requires only the ability to see value in others, to look at them and see a potential partner in one’s enterprise.

Do the Danes in this story fit her definition of community? What evidence in this reading can you find to support your answer? Do the residents of Le Chambon fit

her definition? What evidence in Resource 22.4 can you find to support your answer?

4. Thomas Merton, a theologian, said of the Danes:

The Danes were able to do what they did because they were able to make decisions that were based on clear convictions about which they all agreed and which were in accord with the inner truth of man's own rational nature, as well as in accordance with the fundamental law of God in the Old Testament as well as in the Gospel: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The Danes were able to resist the cruel stupidity of Nazi anti-Semitism because this fundamental truth was important to them. And because they were willing, in unanimous and concerted action to stake their lives on this truth. In a word, such action becomes possible where fundamental truths are taken seriously.³⁴

What "fundamental truth" did the Danes take seriously? Why is it important that they all agreed on this truth? What difference did that make in the way they responded to the Nazis?

5. What "fundamental truths" help guide the choices you make in your life? What convictions do you share with your community or your nation?

Using Resource 22.5

Reflection and Discussion

After reflecting on and discussing the idea of "fundamental truths" brought up in the reading and the Connections questions above, this would be an ideal time to revisit the question posed in Creating Context at the top of the reading: How do you create an "upstander culture"? In such a discussion, it is especially important to make sure that every student has the opportunity to have his or her voice heard. Choose a discussion strategy that provides enough structure for this to happen. [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) is a strategy that is especially helpful in ensuring that students practice listening to their classmates.

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- ¹ Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945* (HarperCollins, 1992), xi.
- ² Albert Camus, *Notebooks*.
- ³ Cynthia Ozick, Prologue to *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust*, by Gay Block and Malka Drucker, (Holmes & Meier, 1992), xiii.
- ⁴ DM
- ⁵ Helmuth James von Moltke, *Letters to Freya*, 175.
- ⁶ Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*.
- ⁷ Raul Hilberg, *The Documents of Destruction*, 148-149.
- ⁸ Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah*, 133, 134-135.
- ⁹ Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 86-87.
- ¹⁰ Gordon I. Horwitz, *In the Shadow of Death: Living Outside the Gates of Mauthausen* (The Free Press, 1990), 59.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 60.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 60-61.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 61-62.
- ¹⁴ Helmuth James von Moltke, *Letters to Freya, 1939-1945*, ed. and trans. Beate Ruhm von Oppen (Knopf, 1990), 155-156.
- ¹⁵ Helmuth James von Moltke, *Letters to Freya*, 160.
- ¹⁶ Helmuth James von Moltke, *Letters to Freya*, 175.
- ¹⁷ Quoted in *The Nazi Years*, ed. Joachim Remak, 170.
- ¹⁸ Friederich Reck-Malleczewen, *Diary of a Man in Despair*, trans. Paul Rubens, (Collier Books, 1970), 178-181.
- ¹⁹ Based on information in Nathan Stoltzfus, "Civil Disobedience and Mass Protest as Successful Resistance in Nazi Germany (unpublished manuscript).
- ²⁰ Nehama Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (Oxford University Press, 1986), 54.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 55.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 176.
- ²³ Quoted in Daniel Goldman, "Is Altruism Inherited?" *Baltimore Jewish Times*, 12 April, 1985, 70.
- ²⁴ Samuel and Pearl Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*, (The Free Press, 1988), 142.
- ²⁵ Marion Pritchard in *Courage to Care*, ed. C. Rittner and S. Myers, 29.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 29-31.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 32-33.
- ²⁸ Samuel and Pearl Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality*, 170.
- ²⁹ Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*.
- ³⁰ *Courage to Care*, ed. C. Rittner and S. Myers, 102.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 135.
- ³² Leo Goldberger in *Courage to Care*, ed. C. Rittner and S. Myers, 92.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 93-95.

³⁴ Ibid.

Section 10: Judgment and Memory

Essential Questions

- *How does a society start to repair itself and restore justice after episodes of mass violence and oppression?*
- *How do our individual and collective memories shape who we are today and influence our future?*

Lessons

Section 10 includes the following lesson:

- Lesson 23: Justice and the Nuremberg Trials
- Lesson 24: Memory and Denial

Overview

By investigating concepts such as justice, responsibility, and historical memory after the Holocaust, this section truly engages students as moral philosophers. Lesson 23 begins by posing the question: How do societies attempt to repair themselves after episodes of traumatic violence and oppression? The answer the Allies put forth after defeating the Nazis was the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. The Nuremberg Trials consisted of thirteen trials held between the fall of 1945 and 1947 that prosecuted many top Nazi officials.

We have suggested numerous resources, including readings from the resource book, pages on the online module [Transitional Justice: Reconstructing Self and Society](#), and a documentary called *Nuremberg Remembered*, that can help students learn about these important trials, the first of their kind in the history of international jurisprudence. As students explore these materials, they answer questions about how their own ideas about justice and responsibility align with the outcomes of the Nuremberg trials:

- Who do they think should be held responsible for crimes committed during the Holocaust? Why?
- Should bystanders have been prosecuted for the “crime of silence”?
- Is it fair to bring individuals to trial when they did not break any laws, as defined by their government?
- What do students’ answers reveal about how they think about justice and responsibility?

These conversations provide an opportunity for students to develop their capacity to make nuanced arguments about right and wrong. They will be given multiple opportunities to develop their own positions on these important and provocative questions; *it is essential that we push them to defend their positions with sound reasoning and evidence, especially from the texts and films they encounter.*

As Lesson 23 draws to a close, students will be asked to place the Nuremberg Trials within the context of retributive justice (which often focuses on trials, imprisonment, and fines) and restorative justice (which often focuses on establishing the truth about what

happened, rebuilding relationships within the community, and seeking or granting forgiveness). After the war, the Allies had to deal with questions of restitution. What claims did the victims have on the perpetrators? On Germany itself? What could be done, if anything, to compensate the victims and to help Germany heal? The online module [Transitional Justice: Reconstructing Self and Society](#) will help us learn about how Germany attempted to answer these questions. This resource also includes material on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), a process established in post-apartheid South Africa. Learning about the TRC can expand our thinking about the strategies that can be employed to achieve justice. As we evaluate different responses – trials, truth-seeking commissions, reparations, etc. - we have the opportunity to fine tune our own thinking about justice, judgment and healing. What is justice? Is justice more than just vengeance? After massive crimes, should there be a process for truth-telling, reconciliation and even forgiveness? How might different forms of justice apply to situations in our own schools and communities?

By making evidence of the Nazi's crimes public, the Nuremberg trials were a step toward another stage of the post-war process: remembrance. Students will begin to examine the importance of remembrance by first considering its opposite: denial. Hitler's comments in 1939, the year that the Nazi government began to support and implement state-sanctioned violence against Jews, dramatically illustrate the stakes. As he was planning how to rid Germany of Jews, he asked, "Who after all speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"¹ Hitler was referring to the mass murder of over a million innocent Armenians by the Turks during World War I. Nearly twenty years after that genocide, the perpetrators had gone unpunished, the Turkish government denied these murders had occurred (and continues to do so), and this tragic episode was largely forgotten by the media and those outside of the Armenian community.

Despite the overwhelming breadth and depth of evidence documenting the Holocaust (and other genocides), recent events demonstrate that groups, individuals and nations will continue in their efforts to convince others that the Holocaust did not happen. To be sure, in December 1991, the governing council of the American Historical Association (AHA), the nation's largest and oldest professional organization for historians, unanimously approved a statement condemning the Holocaust denial movement, stating, "No serious historian questions that the Holocaust took place."² What is the purpose of denial? What might deniers have to gain politically or psychologically? Some scholars refer to denial as the "final stage of genocide."³ Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel refers to Holocaust denial as "double killing." What do these labels help us understand about the consequence of denial for the victims of these atrocities? What are the costs when genocides, like the Holocaust, are not preserved in society's collective memory? How can a rigorous study of the history of the Holocaust, like the journey suggested in this course outline, provide a powerful tool to help students identify and confront Holocaust denial?

More often, those who learn about the Holocaust make efforts to preserve its memory. Some governments have encouraged or mandated education about the Holocaust. German schools are required to teach their students about the Nazi era and the Holocaust,

and in addition to classroom learning, most German students visit either a concentration camp or a Holocaust memorial.⁴ Another way that communities around the world have remembered the Holocaust is through building memorials. These structures are created for many reasons: to preserve the past, to honor heroes, to commemorate tragedies, and to inspire action or reflection. Studying the monuments posted on Facing History's online module [Memory, History and Memorials](#) helps us explore questions such as these:

- What are the different ways individuals, groups and nations attempt to remember the Holocaust?
- What messages do these monuments express about the past?
- Who should decide how the Holocaust is represented and remembered—what symbols are used, what facts are presented, and whose stories are told?

We encourage you and your students to grapple with these questions as a catalyst to constructing your own memorial to this history.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- Chapter 9 and 10 in the resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*.

Lesson 23: Justice and the Nuremberg Trials

Essential Questions:

- *Are there moral values that are more important than the laws of any particular nation?*
- *How does a society start to repair itself and restore justice after episodes of mass violence and oppression?*
- *What is justice? What are the limitations and advantages of holding trials in order to provide justice to a society?*

Included Resources:

- * 23.1 – Reading: Justice and the Rules of War
 - * 23.2 – Reading: “Humanity’s Aspirations to Do Justice”
 - 23.3 – Reading: Obedience to Orders
 - * 23.4 – Reading: A Man of Words
 - 23.5 – Reading: Restoring Right and Wrong
- * = core resource

Additional Recommended Resources:

Videos (Available from Facing History Library):

- [Nuremberg Remembered](#) (11 min.)
- [Nuremberg Trials](#) (American Experience, 60 min.)
- [Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth](#) (Chapters “Germany’s Loss,” “Captivity and Trials,” and “Ending”)

Readings (from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* resource book):

- “Dogma Makes Obedient Ghosts,” p. 420
- “Betraying the Children,” p. 430
- “We Were Not Supposed to Think,” p. 432
- “The Scientists of Annihilation,” p. 434
- “Making Good Again,” p. 443
- “Eichmann in Jerusalem,” p. 455

Readings (available from the Facing History and Ourselves website):

- The following readings from Facing History’s study guide [Totally Unofficial: Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention](#):
 - “Genocide: A New Term and New Conception for Destruction of Nations” (p. 25)
 - “Lemkin and the Nuremberg Trials” (p. 28)

Websites:

- [Transitional Justice: Reconstructing Self and Society](#),

Introduction:

Lesson 23 includes a core of readings to help students consider the concepts of judgment and responsibility as well as the intentions of the Allies in setting up the Nuremberg Trials after World War II and the Holocaust. In addition to these readings, the lesson includes numerous additional resources, including video suggestions and handouts (Appendices 27A-27D) that provide teachers the flexibility to examine issues of justice after the Holocaust in considerably more depth.

The lesson begins with a reading (23.1) that traces the evolution of the rules of war, helping students begin to think about whether there are laws or principles that transcend the laws of any particular nation. The next three readings (23.2 - 23.4) provide historical background for the Nuremberg Trials, and they introduce students to some of the moral, ethical, and legal dilemmas faced by the prosecutors: Who should be held responsible for crimes committed during the Holocaust? Will the trials make the Nazi leaders into martyrs for the German people? Are words as powerful as weapons?

This lesson concludes by introducing Simon Wiesenthal's book *The Sunflower* along with an examination of the roles that forgiveness and reconciliation might play in the administration of justice. Many believe that forgiveness and reconciliation are impossible after the horrors of the Holocaust. What do students think? What about after other episodes of violence and oppression? The terms *retributive justice* and *restorative justice* are introduced, and teachers are encouraged to use Reading 23.5 as a springboard into looking with students at other models of transitional justice, including the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in South Africa. Facing History's website [Transitional Justice: Reconstructing Self and Society](#) provides a wealth of resources, including additional readings and video clips, to help teachers facilitate this exploration.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Identify a time when someone wronged you or someone you care about. It might be a situation in which you or someone you love was treated unfairly, or it might be an accident that resulted in a loss or injury. After this event, what would have needed to happen for “justice to be served”?
- What is the purpose of a trial? Is it to punish the guilty? Repair the damage done to the victims? Warn those who might commit similar acts in the future?
- Can words be used as weapons? Can they turn neighbor against neighbor? To what extent should a person be held responsible for his or her words?
- What does it mean to forgive someone? How does receiving forgiveness benefit the perpetrators? How might being able to grant forgiveness benefit victims? Is it fair to ask victims of the Holocaust to forgive?
- Think of a time when an injustice occurred in your life. It could have been a time when you wronged someone or a time when someone wronged you. What was the role, if any, of forgiveness in this situation? Was this ideal? Why or why not?

- After genocide should there be a process for truth-telling, reconciliation or forgiveness? Why or why not?

Resource 23.1:**Reading: Justice and the Rules of War*****Creating Context***

Identify a time when someone wronged you or someone you care about. It might be a situation in which you or someone you love was treated unfairly, or it might be an accident that resulted in a loss or injury. After this event, what would have needed to happen for “justice to be served”?

Describe this event briefly in your journal, and then write a working definition for *justice*.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

atrocities	tribunal
international law	conspiracy
chivalry	crimes against peace
indict	war crimes
genocide	crimes against humanity
absentia	deterrent

Toward the end of the war, as rumors of Nazi atrocities were confirmed, many people were convinced that the individuals responsible had to be tried before an international court. They wanted each to take personal responsibility for his or her actions. At first, the British resisted the idea. Winston Churchill argued that the Nazis ought to be summarily hanged. Only after considerable pressure from the Russians and the Americans did he and other British officials change their stand.

Still, before a trial could take place, the Allies had to work out a number of issues. Trials decide questions of law. But what laws had the Germans broken? The Allies argued that the Germans had violated international law – a body of rules that has evolved out of centuries of encounters among the peoples of the world. Although some insist that “all’s fair in love and war,” most recognize that there are limits to what soldiers can do in wartime. During Europe’s Middle Ages, for example, the rules of chivalry guided a knight’s behavior in battle. Over the years, such rules were expanded and refined. In 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, the United States became one of the first nations in the world to give its soldiers a code “authorized by the laws and usages of war.” Compiled by Frances Lieber, a legal expert and based on “principles of justice, honor and humanity,” the Lieber Code detailed how civilians, prisoners of war, and spies were to be treated. Later, other nations – including Germany, France, and Britain – prepared similar manuals. As new weapons were introduced, those manuals were updated and revised.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a number of international conferences furthered the idea that there are accepted rules of war. Delegates to a 1907 meeting in the Hague, in the Netherlands, focused on the rights of civilians and soldiers who have surrendered. They

also set rules for the occupation of enemy territory. A series of conferences held in Geneva, Switzerland, established how prisoners-of-war were to be treated and called for the protection of the wounded.

Over the years, however, people have found it easier to establish rules in peacetime than to enforce them during or even after a war. For example, a commission established after World War I concluded that even though Germany's attack on Belgium was unprovoked, international law had not yet reached a point where German leaders could be tried for "aggression" or violations of the "laws of humanity." Still, the Treaty of Versailles held Kaiser Wilhelm II responsible for the attack and ordered that he stand trial. But that trial never took place. The treaty also called for the indictment of German soldiers accused of atrocities. But the German government refused to try them.

The various international laws set forth in military manuals and treaties dealt only with crimes committed as a part of a war. They did not address genocide – "the crime with no name." The first attempt to do so occurred in 1915, just after the massacre of the Armenians. In May of that year, the Allies formally accused Turkish leaders of a "crime against humanity and civilization." Although a new Turkish government agreed to bring the nation's former leaders to justice, it had to try them in absentia. The defendants had fled the country. Because they were not present for the trial, the proceedings did not command worldwide attention.

This time, the Allies were determined to punish anyone who violated international law. On January 13, 1942, representatives of nine Nazi-occupied nations signed a declaration vowing to hold accountable not only those who ordered "war crimes" but also those who participated in them. On October 20, 1943, the United Nations War Crimes Commission was established to carry out those aims. Less than two weeks later, the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union issued a declaration reaffirming their commitment to those goals.

In October of 1945, at Nuremberg, an International Military Tribunal (IMT), created by Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union, indicted 24 Nazis for one or more of the following crimes:

1. **Conspiracy** – Leaders, organizers, instigators, and accomplices in the formulation or execution of a common plan, or conspiracy to commit any of the following crimes are responsible for all acts performed by any persons in execution of such a plan;
2. **Crimes Against Peace** – namely, planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances, or participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the foregoing;
3. **War Crimes** – namely, violations of the laws or customs of war. Such violations shall include, but not be limited to, murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labor or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of

- hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity;
4. **Crimes Against Humanity** – namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war; or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated.

John Fried said of the trials that followed, “The story of Nuremberg tribunals offers a concrete instance in which an individual’s responsibility for a terrible crime is examined before the world. Not an abstract debate, but a life and death matter for the defendants, those age-old questions converged in the city of Nuremberg, and the standards established in that trial have become part of the unwritten law of nations in the years since.”⁵

23.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. What dilemmas did the Allies need to address before they could put captured Nazi leaders on trial? How did they solve these dilemmas? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
2. Re-read the crimes that 24 Nazis were charged with in the first trial at Nuremberg. In your journal, summarize each charge in your own words. What questions arose for you as you summarized the charges?
3. What are the limits to what soldiers can and cannot do in the midst of war? How important is it to establish rules of warfare? Does the knowledge that those rules cannot always be enforced affect your response?
4. Every nation has its own values and beliefs. Each also has accepted standards of behavior. How then can one nation judge the actions of another? Are there moral values that are greater than the laws of a particular nation?
5. Who should be put on trial and judged after the Holocaust? The individuals who gave orders? The people who carried out those orders? Those who allowed it to happen?
6. The Allies held the international war crimes trials in Nuremberg. What role did Nuremberg play in Nazi Germany? Why do you think the Allies decided to locate the trials there?
7. As Hitler prepared for the “final solution of the Jewish question,” he asked, “Who after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?” What was he saying about international law? What was he saying about the “rules of war”? Professor

Richard Hovannisian maintains that had the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide been more vigorously prosecuted and punished for their crimes, the case might have served as a deterrent for the Holocaust. Do you agree?

Using Resource 23.1

Bridging Sections

Time permitting, you may decide it is important to provide additional continuity between the end of Section 10 and the beginning of Section 10. The USHMM website includes an [animated map and slideshow](#) that provides a five minute overview of the end of the war and the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust in Europe.

Also, the reading “As the War Ended” (p. 412 of the *Holocaust and Human Behavior* resource book) includes some details about the end of the war and Germany’s defeat. The reading also includes testimony of Americans who witnessed or helped liberate Nazi camps as the war ended. Consider sharing passages of this reading with your student or assigning it for independent reading.

Extension: Exploring Transitional Justice

In exploring the issue of judgment after the Holocaust, this lesson focuses specifically on one aspect of justice: trials. It is important for students to understand that such judicial responses are one of many types of responses to periods of injustice and atrocity such as the Holocaust. Facing History’s website ["Transitional Justice: Reconstructing Self and Society"](#) places trials within a broader “Toolbox of Approaches” to achieving justice.

This toolbox includes:

- Education
- Institutional Reform
- Cultural Responses
- Judicial Responses
- Reconciliation
- Restitution & Reparations
- Truth Seeking

The Transitional Justice website includes a variety of readings, video clips, activity suggestions, and other resources that you can use to introduce the components of this toolbox to your students. These approaches are explored through brief case studies including Northern Ireland, Rwanda, South Africa, as well as Germany. We encourage you to take advantage of these resources to introduce one or more of these approaches to transitional justice, in addition to trials, to your students.

Providing an Overview of the Nuremberg Trials

Resources 23.1 – 23.4 provide detailed information about the history as well as the

political, moral, and philosophical issues at stake in Nuremberg Trials. As the class works with these resources, they may find Appendix 23A, “Nuremberg Trials Fact Sheet,” to be a useful reference. You may also decide to use the fact sheet in place of one or more of the readings in this section so that you can explore fewer resources in greater depth with the class.

Say Something Literacy Strategy

This reading introduces a significant amount of new history in a few paragraphs. Some students may find that the density of information in this reading makes it challenging to comprehend. Therefore, you may need to allow for extra time to read and process this reading in class.

One strategy that is designed to improve comprehension of challenging texts is *Say Something*.⁶ Have students read the text together in pairs. At the end of each paragraph, the students will pause and do one of the following:

- Make a prediction
- Ask a question
- Clarify something that is confusing
- Comment on what is happening in the reading
- Connect what is happening the reading to something else they know about

If students are unable to accomplish any of these tasks, then that is a sign they need to re-read the paragraph, then ask for help.

Analyzing Justice After the Holocaust

Appendix 23B “Justice After the Holocaust: Anticipation Guide” provides a series of questions for students to consider as they learn about the Nuremberg Trials. After each question, students are prompted to take a position and provide an explanation. Questions 1-5 pertain to the content in this reading. The final three questions connect to ideas in the following four resources in this lesson.

Resource 23.2:**Reading: “Humanity’s Aspirations to Do Justice”***Creating Context*

What is the purpose of a trial? To what extent is its purpose to

- punish the guilty?
- avenge the victims?
- warn those who might commit similar acts in the future?

What other purposes do trials serve? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

malignant	serfdom
stay	poisoned chalice
vengeance	detachment
temperately	intellectual integrity
inalienable rights	posterity
scapegoat	defendant
free labor	

The first Nuremberg trial began on November 14, 1946. The chief prosecutor was Robert H. Jackson, a justice on the United States Supreme Court. He opened the trial with a speech.

The privilege of opening the first trial in history for crimes against the peace of the world imposes a grave responsibility. The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored because it cannot survive their being repeated. That four great nations, flushed with victory and stung with injury, stay the hand of vengeance and voluntarily submit their captive enemies to the judgment of the law is one of the most significant tributes that Power ever has paid to Reason.

What these men stand for we will patiently and temperately disclose. We will give you undeniable proofs of incredible events... They took from the German people all those dignities and freedoms that we hold natural and inalienable rights in every human being. The people were compensated by inflaming and gratifying hatreds toward those who were marked as “scapegoats.” Against their opponents, including Jews, Catholics, and free labor, the Nazis directed such a campaign of arrogance, brutality and annihilation as the world has never witnessed since the pre-Christian ages. They excited the German ambition to be a “master race,” which, of course, implies serfdom for others. They led their people on a mad gamble for domination. They diverted social energies and resources to the

creation of what they thought to be an invincible war machine. They overran their neighbors. To sustain the “master race,” in its warmaking, they enslaved millions of human beings and brought them into Germany, where these helpless creatures now wander as displaced persons.

Jackson went on to say, “We must never forget that the record on which we judge these defendants today is the record on which history will judge us tomorrow. To pass these defendants a poisoned chalice is to put it to our own lips as well. We must summon such detachment and intellectual integrity that this trial will commend itself to posterity as fulfilling humanity’s aspirations to do justice.”

Only twenty-four Nazis were indicted and two of them never stood trial. Robert Ley, the head of the Nazi labor movement committed suicide before the trial began. And the court ruled that Gustav Krupp, an industrialist, was too ill to be tried. Many other top Nazis leaders, including Hitler and Goebbels, killed themselves in the final days of the war. Others, like Heinrich Himmler and Adolf Eichmann, managed to disappear during the confusion that marked Germany’s defeat. The defendants were the most prominent the Allies could find at the time.

Of the men actually brought to trial, five were military leaders and the rest were prominent government or party officials. Their trial was organized much the way criminal trials are organized in the United States. The defendants were made aware of all charges against them. Each was entitled to a lawyer and had the right to plead his own case, offering witnesses and evidence in his own behalf.

Throughout the trial, the prosecution used the Nazis’ own records as evidence. Jackson himself was amazed not only at the quantity of records available but also at the incredible detail in those records. He did not think “men would ever be so foolish as to put in writing some of the things the Germans did. The stupidity of it and the brutality of it would simply appall you.”

23.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. In his four-hour opening speech, Jackson listed several purposes for the trials at Nuremberg. Consider the following quotations:
 - “The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored because it cannot survive their being repeated.”
 - “That four great nations, flushed with victory and stung with injury, stay the hand of vengeance and voluntarily submit their captive enemies to the judgment of the law is one of the most significant tributes that Power ever has paid to Reason.”
 - “We must summon such detachment and intellectual integrity that this trial will commend itself to posterity as fulfilling humanity’s

aspirations to do justice.”

Rewrite each quotation in your own words. What is Jackson saying in each quotation about the purposes of the trials?

2. Examine Jackson’s language closely. What words and phrases does he use to relay his belief in the urgency of the Nuremberg proceedings?

Using Resource 23.2

Analyzing Justice After the Holocaust

Appendix 23B “Justice After the Holocaust: Anticipation Guide” provides a series of questions for students to consider as they learn about the Nuremberg Trials. After each question, students are prompted to take a position and provide an explanation. Questions 6 and 7 pertain to the content in this reading.

Extension: *Genocide* and Nuremberg

The term *genocide* was used in the third count of the Nuremberg indictment to describe the war crimes committed by Nazi leaders. The term was coined by Raphael Lemkin to describe the destruction of a nation or ethnic group. Facing History’s study guide [*Totally Unofficial: Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention*](#) details the history of the United Nations Genocide Convention. The following two readings will help deepen your students’ exploration of the Nuremberg Trials:

- “Genocide: A New Term and New Conception for Destruction of Nations” (p. 25)
- “Lemkin and the Nuremberg Trials” (p. 28)

Resource 23.3:

Reading: Obedience to Orders*Creating Context*

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

infantryman	directive
sphere of influence	martyr

Throughout the trial, the defendants vehemently denied responsibility for crimes against humanity. They argued that wars have always been brutal and this war was much like any other. They also insisted that the victors were equally guilty. After all, in wartime, both sides commit “excesses.” And they maintained that they were only obeying orders. General Alfred Jodl’s attorney summarized that argument by telling the court, “It is true that without his generals Hitler could not have waged the wars... If the generals do not do their job, there is no war. But one must add: if the infantryman does not, if his rifle does not fire... there is no war. Is, therefore, the soldier, the gunsmith... guilty of complicity in the war? Does Henry Ford share in the responsibility for the thousands of accidents which his cars cause every year?”

The judges disagreed with that argument. Ruling that orders from a superior do not excuse a crime, they convicted all but three of the men on one or more of the charges. Of the twelve sentenced to die, one – Martin Bormann, Hitler’s secretary – was tried in absentia and never captured. The leading defendant at the trial itself was Hermann Göring. According to the judges, he was “the moving force for aggressive war, second only to Hitler.” He was also “the creator of the oppressive pogrom against the Jews and other races, at home and abroad.” And it was he who “developed the Gestapo and created the first concentration camps.” Apart from other anti-Jewish measures, “by decree of July 31, 1941, he directed [Heinrich] Himmler and [Reinhard] Heydrich to ‘bring about a complete solution to the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe.’” His death sentence came as no surprise, but the court was never able to carry it out. He committed suicide first.

Jochaim von Ribbentrop, Hitler’s foreign minister, was also found guilty of having “played an important part in Hitler’s ‘final solution’ of the Jewish question.” The judges cited his role in “deporting” Jews from occupied countries “to the East.” They noted that it was he who informed Hungarian leaders on April 17, 1943, that the nation’s Jews “must either be exterminated or taken to concentration camps.”

Alfred Rosenberg, the author of one of the most widely read Nazi texts, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, was also hanged. As the Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, the court ruled, “his directives provided for the segregation of Jews, ultimately in ghettos. His subordinates engaged in mass killings of Jews... In December,

1941, he made the suggestion to Hitler that in a case of shooting 100 hostages, Jews only be used.”

Arthur von Seyss-Inquart, an Austrian, was also considered a top Nazi official. He served as an administrator in Czechoslovakia, deputy governor general in Poland and, more importantly, as Reich Commissioner in the Netherlands. In that position, the judges pointed out, he was responsible for “the mass deportation of almost 120,000 Jews to Auschwitz.”

23.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. Was the defendants claim that they were only following orders a convincing argument? Why or why not?
2. How would you respond to the questions Jodl’s lawyer raised: “Is, therefore, the soldier, the gunsmith... guilty of complicity in the war? Does Henry Ford share in the responsibility for the thousands of accidents which his cars cause every year?”
3. During the trial, von Ribbentrop argued, “I assure you, we are all appalled by all these persecutions and atrocities. It is simply not typically German! Can you imagine that I could kill anyone? Tell me honestly, do any of us look like murderers?” What does a murderer look like? Is someone who plans and then orders a murder as guilty as the person who pulls the trigger? Use evidence from the readings and resources you have encountered in this course so far to support your answer.
4. Were the Nuremberg Trials vindictive? Why or why not? What evidence from the readings in this lesson supports your response?

Using Resource 23.3

Using Films to Teach about Nuremberg

Two documentaries, both available from the Facing History library, provide engaging overviews of the Nuremberg Trials. Consider using them to supplement your exploration of this history:

- [Nuremberg Remembered](#) (11 min.) combines both archival footage and modern-day interviews with trial participants.
- [Nuremberg Trials](#) (American Experience, 60 min.) draws upon rare archival material and eyewitness accounts to re-create the tribunal. This film includes engaging biographical segments on Robert Jackson and Hermann Göring.

Exploring Denazification

It is important to consider the allegiances and beliefs of the German public at the end of

the war. The Allies carefully considered how to denazify Germany, meaning to rid the country of Nazi ideology and beliefs. They did not want Nazism to be rekindled after the war, and they designed the Nuremberg Trials with this in mind. Question #2 above introduces the idea that trials not only decided the fate of Nazi leaders, but they also sought to establish how the Nazis would be remembered.

You might choose to show the final three chapters of the video [*Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth*](#) (“Germany’s Loss,” “Captivity and Trials,” and “Ending” - about ten minutes) in which Alfons Heck describes his experiences as the war ended and after Germany’s defeat. In particular, he describes how the Nuremberg Trials prompted him to reconsider the beliefs he had learned in the Hitler Youth.

Resource 23.4:**Reading: A Man of Words***Creating Context*

If you were a judge, how would you assess the responsibility of these people for what happened in German-occupied territories between 1933 and 1945. Is each person not *responsible*, *minimally responsible*, *responsible*, or *very responsible*? Record your thinking about each in your journals.

- A person who served as a concentration camp guard
- One of Hitler's direct subordinates, such as Heinrich Himmler or Joseph Goebbels
- A teacher who taught Nazi propaganda to children
- A German businessman who financially supported Hitler's rise to power
- A manufacturer who used concentration camp inmates as slave labor in his factories
- Parents who sent or allowed their children to attend Hitler Youth meetings

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

vermin**punitive****disseminate****incite**

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

Among the twenty-two men who stood trial at Nuremberg was Julius Streicher, the publisher of *Der Stuermer*, an antisemitic newspaper with over six hundred thousand readers. Week after week, month after month, he described Jews as “vermin in need of extermination.” In a typical article he ranted that the Jew was not a human being, but “a parasite, an enemy, an evil-doer, a disseminator of diseases which must be destroyed in the interest of mankind.” In May of 1939 (four months before the war began and twenty-five months before the invasion of Russia), Streicher told his readers, “A punitive expedition must come against the Jews in Russia... the Jews in Russia must be killed. They must be exterminated root and branch.”

In the early days of the war, as the Germans conquered more and more territory, Streicher intensified his efforts to incite persecution of the Jews. Between August 1941 and September 1944, he published twenty-four articles, twelve of which he wrote himself, demanding the extermination of the Jewish people. By 1943, the magazine was openly suggesting that a “Final Solution” was underway, despite an official policy to keep the mass murders a secret.

At Nuremberg, the judges found Streicher guilty of “inciting of the population to abuse, maltreat and slay their fellow citizens... to stir up passion, hate, violence and destruction among the people themselves aims at breaking the moral backbone even of those the

invader chooses to spare.” They sentenced him to death because his “incitement to murder and extermination at the time when Jews in the East were being killed under the most horrible conditions clearly constitutes persecution on political and racial grounds... and (therefore) a Crime against Humanity.”

23.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. Summarize the charges for which Streicher was found guilty. How were his crimes similar to those of other high ranking Nazis like Göring, von Ribbentrop, and Jodl? How were they different? Use evidence from this reading as well as Resource 23.3 to support your answers.
2. Streicher was not a government official. He did not set policy nor carry out orders. His only weapons were his words, and he was punished for using those words to turn citizen against citizen. Can words be used as weapons? Can they turn neighbor against neighbor? Should a person be held responsible for his or her words?
3. What did the judges mean when they found Streicher guilty of “breaking the moral backbone” of a nation? Does a nation have a moral backbone? By finding Streicher guilty, what message were the judges sending to others who would stir up hatred in similar ways?
4. At what point do classifications based on race, religion, and nation become dangerous? How can we make people less susceptible to beliefs that can lead to discrimination, destruction, and mass murder?
5. If you were a Nuremberg judge, how would you assess Streicher’s responsibility. Would you find him *not responsible*, *minimally responsible*, *responsible*, or *very responsible* for the Crimes Against Humanity committed by the Nazis?
6. In the United States, the First Amendment to the Constitution protects freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Does that mean that individuals have the right to incite hatred? Do individuals have the right to publish symbols of hatred and to spread racism?

After discussing your answers to these questions, find out how the United States courts have answered those same questions. Compare your opinion to theirs.

Using Resource 23.4

Activity: Assessing and Defining Responsibility

Appendix 23C includes an expanded version of the Creating Context exercise above. The appendix includes 30 short descriptions of people, and it asks students to consider the degree of responsibility each holds for atrocities committed during the Holocaust. Many teachers find this exercise provides a springboard into thoughtful and spirited discussion and debate between students. It is important, however, for teachers to remind students to approach this exercise in judgment with humility.

As an alternative, you might use any of the items from Creating Context or Appendix 23C as the basis for a [four corners debate](#).

Including Additional Readings

Several readings from Chapter 9 of the Holocaust and Human Behavior resource book also profile Germans who participated in the Holocaust in different ways. You might choose to include some of these additional readings, such as “We Were Not Supposed to Think” (p. 432) and “The Scientists of Annihilation” (p. 434), in a [jigsaw activity](#) with this reading. Another approach is to assign each student a different reading and ask him or her to evaluate the degree to which the individuals described are responsible for crimes committed during the Holocaust.

Exploring the Limits of Freedom of Speech

Connections questions #2 and #5 might provide the basis for a meaningful debate about freedom of speech and one’s responsibility for his or her words. You might have students take different sides of this debate using the [SPAR strategy](#). Once all ideas are out in the open, students can engage in an open dialogue about how to balance the right to free speech against the safety of the community.

Resource 23.5:**Reading: Restoring Right and Wrong***Creating Context*

Trials such as those that were held in Nuremberg represent one prominent way to think about justice known as *retributive justice*. This type of justice focuses on punishment; offenders should suffer to make up for the crimes they committed. Retributive justice often focuses on trials, imprisonment, and fines.

Another way to think about justice is through the concept of *restorative justice*. The focus of this form of justice is on compensating victims and healing the society in which violence and injustice has occurred. Restorative justice often focuses on establishing the truth about what happened, rebuilding relationships within the community, and seeking or granting forgiveness.

What do you think can be achieved by each type of justice? What are the limits of each? Which do you think is more difficult to achieve? Record your thoughts in your journal.

This reading introduces the challenges of both restoring a more just society and granting forgiveness after the horrors of the Holocaust.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

retributive justice	subsume
restorative justice	unprecedented
conscience	absolution
atonement	

An [enhanced version of this reading](#) is available on the *Facing History & Ourselves* website.

If a government orders an individual to do something that, in normal circumstances, is illegal and, even more to the point, morally wrong, must the individual obey?

As she watched the trial of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann in 1961, philosopher-historian Hannah Arendt observed: "Eichmann said he recognized that what he had participated in was perhaps one of the greatest crimes in history, but, he insisted, if he had not done so, his conscience would have bothered him at the time. His conscience and morality were working exactly in reverse. This reversal is precisely the moral collapse that took place in Europe."

Arendt concluded that the act of resistance was extraordinarily difficult during World War II. There were no acceptable role models and little support. "Those few who were still able to tell right from wrong went really only by their own judgments, and they did so freely; there were no rules to be abided by, under which the particular cases with which they were confronted could be subsumed. They had to decide each instance as it arose, because no rules existed for the unprecedented."⁷

Simon Wiesenthal was a Holocaust survivor who dedicated his life to finding Nazi perpetrators who after the war had escaped into hiding. Known as the "Nazi Hunter," Wiesenthal played a role in finding Eichmann, who was ultimately captured in 1959 in Buenos Aires where he had been living under the alias of Ricardo Klement.⁸ Wiesenthal wrote a story called *The Sunflower* that raises many of the same questions Arendt raises. The jacket of the book in which it appears summarizes the tale.

A young Jew is taken from a death-camp to a makeshift army hospital. He is led to the bedside of a Nazi soldier whose head is completely swathed in bandages. The dying Nazi blindly extends his hand toward the Jew, and in a cracked whisper begins to speak. The Jew listens silently while the Nazi confesses to having participated in the burning alive of an entire village of Jews. The soldier, terrified of dying with this burden of guilt, begs absolution from the Jew. Having listened to the Nazi's story for several hours—torn between horror and compassion for the dying man—the Jew finally walks out of the room without speaking. Was his action right? Or moral?⁹

23.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. What does Arendt mean when she refers to a “moral collapse”? What did Eichmann mean when he said his conscience would have bothered him at the time if he had not participated in the crimes of the Holocaust? How can such a society, in which participating in evil seems normal and expected to some, be repaired?
2. How would you answer the questions Wiesenthal raises? Did the prisoner do the right thing by walking out without answering the Nazi’s plea for forgiveness?
3. In *The Sunflower*, Wiesenthal's tale is followed by the responses of theologians, philosophers, historians, politicians, human rights activists and survivors of genocide to the two questions. The writers respond to the questions from a variety of perspectives: ethical, religious, legal, and personal. In his response to the questions, Hans Habe (an Austrian journalist at the time of the Anschluss whose books were banned by the Nazis) wrote:

One of the worst crimes of the Nazi regime was that it made it so hard for us to forgive. It led us into the labyrinth of our souls. We must find our way out of the labyrinth—not for the murderers' sake but for our own. Neither love alone expressed in forgiveness, nor justice alone, exacting punishment, will lead us out of the maze. A demand for atonement and forgiveness is not self-contradictory; when a man has willfully extinguished the life of another, atonement is the prerequisite for forgiveness. Exercised with love and justice, atonement and forgiveness serve the same end: life without hatred. That is our goal: I see no other.¹⁰

How does receiving forgiveness benefit the perpetrators? How might being able to grant forgiveness benefit victims? Is it fair to ask victims of the Holocaust to forgive? Why does Habe believe that "We must find our way out of the labyrinth—not for the murderers' sake but for our own?"

4. Primo Levi argued that it was right to refuse to pardon the dying man because it was "the lesser evil: you could only have forgiven him by lying or inflicting upon yourself a terrible moral violence."

What "moral violence" would the man have inflicted upon himself through forgiveness? How do you think Habe would respond?

5. When asked about forgiveness, Elie Wiesel replied, "No one asked for it." What is he saying about the perpetrators? What is he saying about the bystanders? Is restorative justice possible when no one seeks forgiveness?

Using Resource 23.5

Exploring Other Responses to the Holocaust

The Nuremberg Trials were not the only response to the Holocaust. In future lessons, students will be learning about laws and institutions that were established in reaction to the devastation of World War II and the Holocaust. After introducing the terms *retributive* and *restorative* justice (from Creating Context), you might ask students to brainstorm other approaches, besides a trial, that could help achieve justice and healing after the Holocaust.

After students share responses, you can use this as an opportunity to provide them with additional information about steps taken to achieve justice after the Holocaust. Appendix 23D, "Beyond Nuremberg: Achieving Justice after the Holocaust," includes very brief descriptions of four steps taken to promote healing and justice. You can also have students read the following texts, possibly using the [jigsaw strategy](#) so that students are exposed to all of these responses to the Holocaust:

- "Making Good Again," pp. 443-444
- [Willy Brandt's Silent Apology](#) on the Facing History online module, "Memory, History and Memorials"
- "Germans Confront the Past," pp. 482-484
- "Accepting Responsibility," pp. 486-487
- "Education and Memory," pp. 489-490

Introducing Transitional Justice in Other Historical Periods

Facing History has created a website, [Transitional Justice: Reconstructing Self and Society](#), that provides additional resources for exploring the issues of retributive and

restorative justice after episodes of mass violence.

You can use the website to deepen your class's consideration of important questions around responsibility, judgment, forgiveness, reconciliation and justice. It offers additional readings and videos about justice after the Holocaust, as well as resources about three other case studies in transitional justice: Northern Ireland, Rwanda, and South Africa.

Extension: Reading *The Sunflower*

Before the war, Simon Wiesenthal was a skilled architect in Lvov, Poland. During World War II, he was a prisoner in several ghettos and concentration camps. In [*The Sunflower*](#) (available from the Facing History library), Wiesenthal is called away from his work detail to visit the bedside of a dying member of the SS. This young soldier confesses to Wiesenthal the atrocities to which he was an accomplice in hopes that Wiesenthal will absolve him of his sins. It is this question of forgiveness that becomes the central theme of the book. Does the Jew have a moral obligation to forgive the Nazi soldier?

In the second half of this book, Wiesenthal brings together the responses of respected scholars, Holocaust survivors and philosophers. Students can read the story or you can describe the situation to them. Then, you might select several of the responses for students to read, or perhaps pair up students and have them read a response together. After students present this particular perspective on forgiveness they can discuss the questions, "What is the purpose of forgiveness? Who is forgiveness for?"

Professor Larry Langer suggests that victims of the Holocaust were under no obligation to forgive the Nazis and that it is inappropriate to even expect them to do so. What do your students think of his argument? Finally, you might ask students to create their own response to Wiesenthal's situation.

To prepare students to read *The Sunflower*, some teachers have students first think about their own experience with forgiveness. Here is a prompt you might use to guide journal writing: Identify a moment when you granted forgiveness to someone. Next, identify a moment when you were seeking forgiveness. Then, answer the following questions:

- Why do people seek forgiveness?
- Why do people grant forgiveness?
- What do you actually "give" when you grant forgiveness?
- What actions, if any, are unforgivable?

Students can share their ideas about forgiveness with a partner using the [think-pair-share](#) strategy.

Appendix 23A:**Nuremberg Trials Fact Sheet**

(Adapted from the *Transitional Justice: Reconstructing Self and Society* online module)

Overview

In 1945 the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust became known to the world through an international military tribunal—now commonly called the Nuremberg trials—when dozens of Nazi officials were tried for their crimes. The first Nuremberg trial began on November 20, 1945. The trials were set up by an International Military Tribunal (IMT), created by Britain, France, the United States, and the former Soviet Union.

Process

Each of the four nations prosecuting at Nuremberg (the United States, Great Britain, France, and the former Soviet Union) had a judge and its own prosecutorial team. Throughout the trials immediately after the war, the prosecution used the Nazis' own detailed records as evidence. Holocaust survivors were rarely asked to testify. (It was not until the trial in Israel of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 that victims of the Holocaust were encouraged to tell their stories in a courtroom.)

Defendants

There were a total of 24 men indicted. Two of them never stood trial. Robert Ley, the head of the Nazi labor movement, committed suicide before the trial began. And the court ruled that Gustav Krupp, an industrialist, was too ill to be tried. Many other top Nazi leaders, including Hitler and Goebbels, had killed themselves in the final days of the war. Of the 22 men actually brought to trial, 21 were present (Martin Bormann fled before he could be captured and was tried despite not being present). They were:

- Martin Bormann: Secretary to Hitler, Head of the Nazi Party Chancellery
- Karl Doenitz: Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy
- Hans Frank: Governor-General of occupied Poland
- Wilhelm Frick: Minister of the Interior
- Hans Fritzsche: Head of the Wireless News Service (radio produced by the Reich)
- Walther Funk: Minister of Economics
- Hermann Goering: Second-in-command to Hitler, Luftwaffe (Air Force) Chief, President of Reichstag
- Rudolf Hess: Deputy to Hitler, Nazi Party Leader
- Alfred Jodl: Chief of Operations for the German High Command (Army)
- Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Chief of Security Police, Chief of RSHA (an organization containing, among other things, the Austrian branches of the SS and the Gestapo)
- Wilhelm Keitel: Chief of Staff of the German High Command
- Erich Raeder: Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy (before Doenitz)
- Alfred Rosenberg: Minister of the Eastern Occupied Territories, Chief Nazi Philosopher
- Fritz Sauckel: Head of Slave Labor Recruitment
- Hjalmar Schacht: Minister of Economics (pre-war), President of Reichsbank
- Arthur Seyss-Inquart: Chancellor of Austria, Reich Commissioner of the Netherlands

- Albert Speer: Minister of Armaments and Munitions, Hitler's architect and friend
- Julius Streicher: Editor of Der Sturmer (anti-Semitic publication)
- Konstantin von Neurath: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Reich Protector for Bohemia and Moravia
- Franz von Papen: Chancellor of Reich before Hitler, Vice Chancellor under Hitler, Ambassador to Turkey
- Joachim von Ribbentrop: Foreign Minister, Ambassador to Great Britain
- Baldur von Schirach: Head of the Hitler Youth

Counts

There were four charges against the defendants. The first was Conspiracy to Wage Aggressive War. The second charge was Crimes Against Peace, including the violation of treaties (i.e., Versailles, Kellogg-Briand Pact) and other agreements. The third count was War Crimes, such as the use of slave labor and the unfair treatment of prisoners of war. The fourth count was Crimes Against Humanity, which involved the events in concentration and death camps, as well as other vicious attacks on civilians. Of the 22 defendants, all 22 were tried on Count 1, 16 were tried on Count 2, 18 were tried on Count 3, and 18 were tried on Count 4.

Convictions

Nineteen of the 22 defendants were convicted on at least one charge. Of the 19 defendants who were convicted, two were convicted on just one count, seven were convicted on two counts, four were convicted on three counts, and six more were convicted on all four counts. On Count 1 (Conspiracy to Wage Aggressive War), eight of the defendants were found guilty. On Count 2 (Crimes Against Peace), 12 defendants were convicted. On both the third Charge (War Crimes) and the fourth charge (Crimes Against Humanity), 16 defendants were convicted.

Sentencing

Three of the defendants were acquitted and released. Of the nineteen that were convicted, 12 (11 of whom were present) were sentenced to death by hanging. The other seven defendants were given prison sentences ranging from ten years to life in prison. Hermann Goering committed suicide the day before his execution by ingesting a cyanide pill.

Subsequent trials at Nuremberg

After the first set of trials ended, the United States held twelve others at Nuremberg. Among those brought to trial were:

- 26 military leaders, including five field marshals;
- 56 high-ranking SS and other police officers, including leaders in the Einsatzgruppen (mobile death squads) and key officials in Heinrich Himmler's central office which supervised the concentration camps and the extermination program; and
- 14 officials of other SS organizations that engaged in racial persecution.

Appendix 23B: Justice After the Holocaust: Anticipation Guide

Do you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) with the following statements about justice after the Holocaust?

Fact	Statement	What do you think?
<p>#1 Winston Churchill, the British leader, thought that Nazi leaders should be hanged. But other leaders thought they should go to trial.</p>	<p>Those responsible for the Holocaust should be killed or jailed; they do not have the right to a fair trial in a court of law.</p>	<p>Circle one: SA A D SD</p> <p>Explain your choice:</p>
<p>#2 The Allied countries agreed to put Nazi leaders on trial for two reasons: 1) to punish those responsible, and 2) to prevent future crimes against humanity. Those who organized the trials wanted future leaders to know that if they acted like Hitler and other Nazi leaders, they would be punished for their actions; they could not just get away with murdering their own citizens.</p>	<p>Bringing perpetrators to justice in courts is an effective way to prevent future crimes.</p>	<p>Circle one: SA A D SD</p> <p>Explain your choice:</p>
<p>#3 Beginning in November, 1945, an international trial—a court case involving many countries—was held in the city of Nuremberg in Germany, so, the trials were called the Nuremberg trials. The trials included judges and lawyers from each of the winning countries (Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union). The Nazis held on charges (the defendants) also had lawyers to defend them. Some argued that it was unfair for the Allied powers to bring the Nazis to trial because they had not broken any laws. (At this point, there were no international laws forbidding a government from murdering its own citizens.)</p>	<p>Since each country has its own laws, citizens should be brought to trial by the courts of their own country. It is unfair for some nations to push their laws on other nations.</p>	<p>Circle one: SA A D SD</p> <p>Explain your choice:</p>
<p>#4 Twenty-four men were indicted (charged with a crime) during the first set of trials at Nuremberg. These included military leaders, Nazi party leaders, and officers who worked at concentration camps. Hitler and several other Nazi leaders were not indicted because they had committed suicide or escaped at the end of the war. Some lower-ranking officers, soldiers, and bureaucrats who participated in the Holocaust were indicted in later trials.</p>	<p>Bystanders allowed the Holocaust to happen. If more people had stood up, rather than looked the other way, millions of lives could have been saved. The bystanders should have been punished along with the perpetrators.</p>	<p>Circle one: SA A D SD</p> <p>Explain your choice:</p>

Bystanders were also not put on trial at Nuremberg or in future trials.		
<p>#5</p> <p>The defendants were charged with four different crimes. One of these crimes was “crimes against humanity.” One of the men charged with “crimes against humanity” was Julius Streicher. He was Minister of Propaganda of the Nazi Party. He was responsible for spreading hateful lies about Jews in the newspaper and in other forms, such as children’s books.</p>	Spreading hateful lies that result in harm to individuals is a crime against humanity.	<p>Circle one: SA A D SD</p> <p>Explain your choice:</p>
<p>#6</p> <p>Many Nazis charged with “crimes against humanity” argued that they were only following orders and that they had not broken any laws by their actions.</p>	Top Nazi leaders were responsible. Nazi leaders were following the laws of their country and the orders of their elected leader. They should not be punished.	<p>Circle one: SA A D SD</p> <p>Explain your choice:</p>
<p>#7</p> <p>Nineteen of the defendants were found guilty. Twelve were sentenced to death by hanging. Seven were given prison sentences. Between 1946 and 1949, many more trials of Germans were held in Nuremberg. In these trials, 97 additional Germans were found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including business leaders who used slave labor, doctors who conducted experiments on concentration camp victims, and Nazi judges who sent innocent people to concentration camps.</p>	It is possible to achieve justice for the crimes committed during the Holocaust.	<p>Circle one: SA A D SD</p> <p>Explain your choice:</p>
<p>#8</p> <p>After the war, the Allied powers also had to consider what Germany should do to “pay back” the survivors of the Holocaust and the families of the victims. After all, the Nazis had taken all of their money and property and had caused immeasurable suffering. A program was set up to provide money (reparations) to those who could prove they were victims of the Nazis, and Germany was supposed to give back stolen property to its rightful owners (if they were still alive).</p>	Germany should continue to give money to survivors of the Holocaust, the families of the victims, and Jewish organizations, even though most of the individuals living in Germany today were small children or were not alive during the Holocaust.	<p>Circle one: SA A D SD</p> <p>Explain your choice:</p>

**Appendix 23C:
Assessing and Defining Responsibility**

If you were a judge, how would you assess the “responsibility” of these people for what happened in German-occupied territories between 1933 and 1945? Be prepared to defend your answers with specific evidence. Indicate one of the following:

- 1. Not Responsible**
- 2. Minimally responsible**
- 3. Responsible**
- 4. Very Responsible**

- ___1. One of Hitler’s direct subordinates such as Heinrich Himmler or Joseph Goebbels
- ___2. A German who voluntarily joined Hitler’s special elite, SS
- ___3. A German industrialist who financially supported Hitler’s rise to power and continued to support him verbally
- ___4. A judge who carried out Hitler’s decrees for sterilization of the “mentally incompetent” and internment of “traitors”
- ___5. A doctor who participated in sterilization of Jews
- ___6. A worker in a plant making Zyklon B gas
- ___7. The Pope who made no public statement against Nazi policy
- ___8. An industrialist who made enormous profits by producing Zyklon B gas
- ___9. A manufacturer who used concentration camp inmates as slave labor in his plants
- ___10. American industrialist who helped arm Hitler in the 1930’s
- ___11. A person who voluntarily joined the Nazis in the late 1930’s
- ___12. A person who agreed to publicly take the Civil Servant Loyalty Oath (swearing eternal allegiance to Hitler in 1934)
- ___13. A person who complied with the law excluding Jews from economic and social life
- ___14. A person who regularly, enthusiastically attended Hitler rallies
- ___15. A person who always respectfully gave the “Heil Hitler” salute

- __16. A person who served as a concentration camp guard
- __17. A person who turned the lever to allow the gas into the chambers
- __18. A driver of the trains that went to the concentration camps
- 19. A diplomat for the Nazi government
- __20. The American Government, which limited emigration of Jews to the U.S. in the 1930's
- __21. The "little guy" who claimed, "he doesn't get involved in politics" and thus went about his business as quietly as he could in the Hitler regime
- __22. The soldier who carried out orders to roust Jews from their homes for "evacuation and resettlement"
- __23. The German couple that took up residence in a home evacuated by Jews
- __24. The gentiles who took over a store just abandoned by Jews
- __25. The German who refused all pleas to participate in hiding and smuggling of Jews
- __26. The policeman who helped round up escaping Jews
- __27. A teacher who taught Nazi propaganda
- __28. Children who joined the Hitler youth
- __29. Parents who sent or allowed their children to attend Hitler Youth meetings
- __30. The Protestant clergyman who gave the Nazis lists of members of his congregation who were "non-Aryan."

Appendix 23D:**Beyond Nuremberg: Achieving Justice After the Holocaust**

- **Denazification:** The Allied governments administered a denazification program after the war. This included policies such as banning former Nazis from civil service jobs and removing all Nazi symbols and language from German society.
 - *Why might people have believed that ridding Germany of all signs of the Nazis' existence was a good idea?*
 - *What might removing signs of Nazism have accomplished?*
 - *What can't be achieved by the removal of Nazi symbols and language from Germany society?*
- **Wiedergutmachung:** In 1953, West Germany established a program called "Wiedergutmachung" which means "making good again." This program compensated those who could prove that they suffered discrimination or persecution at the hands of the Nazis.
 - *How can people be compensated for the loss of a loved one, for the loss of years of their lives, for the loss of all of their property?*
 - *Is it worth it to even attempt to "make good again"? Why or why not?*
 - *Should a nation be responsible for paying back victims of crimes committed by its leaders?*
- **Apologizing:** On December 7, 1970, West German Chancellor Willy Brandt travelled to Warsaw, Poland and dropped to his knees before the monument to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943. The image of this gesture of repentance was published in all of the major newspapers in the region and around the world.
 - *What is the purpose of an apology? Who is it for?*
 - *What might this apology have meant to the victims of the Holocaust? What might this apology have meant to Germans, including former Nazis?*
 - *What can an apology by a German leader achieve? What can't it achieve?*
- **Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP):** ARSP is a German volunteer service organization founded after World War II to confront the legacy of the Nazi regime. The work of German volunteers was intended to serve as a form of atonement— as a way to begin to make up for the crimes committed by the Nazis. Today, volunteers continue to work on service projects around the world, such as working on memorial sites or cleaning Jewish cemeteries. The mission of the organization has expanded to include helping volunteers take a stand against racism and antisemitism.
 - *How can providing service be a way to repair the damage caused during the Holocaust?*
 - *What kinds of services might be appropriate to help repair the damage inflicted by the Nazis?*
 - *Is this program still important today, even though none of the participants were alive during the Holocaust? Why or why not?*

Lesson 24: Memory and Denial

Essential Questions:

- *How do our individual and collective memories shape who we are today and influence our future?*
- *What are the effects of denying or forgetting as a society attempts to recover from a period of mass violence and oppression?*

Included Resources:

- * 24.1 – Reading: “Putting the Past Behind Us”
 - * 24.2 – Reading: Confronting Genocide Denial
 - * 24.3 – Reading: Memory, Monuments, and Memorials
 - 24.4 – Images: American Memorials and Monuments
 - 24.5 – Images: Holocaust Memorials and Monuments
- * = core resource

Additional Recommended Resources:

Videos (Available from the [Facing History Library](#)):

- [“Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision”](#)
- [The Armenian Genocide](#)

Readings (from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* resource book):

- “Education and Memory,” p. 489
- “Denial and the Holocaust,” p. 490
- “The First Amendment and Denial,” p. 494
- “Truth: The Last Victim of Genocide,” p. 500
- “The Politics of Denial,” p. 501
- “In Commemoration,” p. 516
- “Education and the Future,” p. 519

Readings (Available from the Facing History and Ourselves website or library):

- [The Giver](#) by Lois Lowry with Facing History’s [study guide](#)
- The following readings from Facing History’s resource book [Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians](#):
 - “Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization,” p. 155
 - “Acquitting the Assassin,” p. 165
 - “Rewriting History,” p. 167
 - “The Legacy of a Witness,” p. 170
 - “Remembrance and Denial,” p. 174
 - “Denial, Free Speech, and Hate Speech,” p. 177

Websites:

- [“Confronting Genocide Denial”](#)
- [“Memory, History and Memorials”](#)

Introduction:

Lesson 24 explores the complex issues surrounding the ways that history is remembered, denied, and forgotten. The first reading introduces the assertions by historian Tony Judt and legal scholar Martha Minnow that both remembering and, to some extent, forgetting are necessary for a society to be repaired after episodes of mass violence and oppression. This is a challenging idea that is ripe for exploration through reflections and discussions in class.

The lesson continues by examining a pernicious, intentional form of “forgetting”: genocide denial. Reading 24.2 begins with Elie Wiesel’s assertion that genocide denial is a form of “double killing.” He writes: “Denial murders the dignity of the survivors and seeks to destroy remembrance of the crime.” Many teachers find that Holocaust denial is a topic that is both shocking to their students and difficult to explain. The reading included here is designed to provide an overview of the motivations of genocide-deniers, the effects of their denial, and the responses by historians, artists, and elected officials. Teachers may choose, if class time permits, to dig deeper into some of the complexities surrounding the denial of genocide. A variety of suggestions for doing so are included after the reading. The laws in many European countries that criminalize Holocaust denial often spark spirited debate in classrooms. Teachers might also extend the discussion by providing students the opportunity to learn more about the continued denial by the Turkish government of the Armenian Genocide. A variety of resources for this extension are listed in Using Resource 24.2.

This lesson concludes by turning from denial back to historical memory. Resource 24.3, while temporarily stepping away from the history of the Holocaust, tells the story of a memorial created by Rodin for the town of Calais, France, to illustrate how the choices made by the designers of memorials shape the way that history is remembered. This reading is followed by photographs of additional memorials for students to analyze. Students are also encouraged to analyze the designs of monuments and memorials they have visited, and teachers, when possible, are encouraged to take students to monuments and memorials near their schools. This analysis of memorials and historical memory culminates in a project in which students will design and build their own memorials to commemorate some aspect of the history they have learned in this course.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Why is remembering the Holocaust important? To whom is it important?
- Think about a memorial you have visited. Why do you think it was built? What purpose does it serve? What did you learn from visiting it?
- Have you ever denied something even though there was plenty of evidence to the contrary? If so, why?

- Should people be allowed to deny that the Holocaust ever took place? What are the costs and benefits of establishing laws that make Holocaust denial a crime?
- What are the most powerful memories in your life? Take a few minutes to describe in detail one of these memories in your journal. How has this memory impacted who you are today?

Resource 24.1:**Reading: “Putting the Past Behind Us”***Creating Context*

How do countries deal with difficult moments in their pasts? Is it ever important to forget? Why might remembering difficult histories be important as well?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

amnesia	oblivion
denazification	disposition
Federal Republic of Germany	serviceable
atone	foundation myth
incapacity	unavailing
reconstruction	

At the end of the war, according to some critics, a "collective amnesia" of the Nazi past and the Holocaust began to form in Europe. Historian Tony Judt argues that this process may have provided a necessary foundation for rebuilding. In his book *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, he writes:

In his first official address to the parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany, on September 20th 1949, Konrad Adenauer had this to say about denazification and the Nazi legacy: ‘The government of the Federal Republic, in the belief that many have subjectively atoned for a guilt that was not heavy, is determined where it appears acceptable to do so to put the past behind us.’ There is no doubt that many Germans heartily endorsed this assertion. If denazification aborted, it was because for political purposes Germans had spontaneously ‘denazified’ themselves on May 8th 1945 [the day Germany surrendered to the Allies].

And the German people were not alone. In Italy the daily newspaper of the new Christian Democratic Party put out a similar call to oblivion on the day of Hitler's death: ‘We have the strength to forget!’ it proclaimed. ‘Forget as soon as possible!’ In the East the Communists' strongest suit was their promise to make a revolutionary new beginning in countries where everyone had something to forget—things done to them or things they had done themselves. All over Europe there was a strong disposition to put the past away and start afresh, to follow Isocrates's recommendations to the Athenians at the close of the Peloponnesian Wars (of Ancient Greece): ‘Let us govern collectively as though nothing bad had taken place.’

This distrust of short-term memory, the search for serviceable myths of anti-fascism—for a Germany of anti-Nazis, a France of resisters or a Poland of victims—was the most important invisible legacy of World War Two in Europe.

In its positive form it facilitated national recovery by allowing men like Marshal Tito, Charles de Gaulle or Konrad Adenauer to offer their fellow countrymen a plausible and even prideful account of themselves.¹¹

Judt goes on to say:

Without such collective amnesia, Europe's astonishing post-war recovery would not have been possible. To be sure, much was put out of mind that would subsequently return in discomfiting ways. But only much later would it become clear just how much post-war Europe rested on foundation myths that would fracture and shift with the passage of years. In the circumstances of 1945, in a continent covered with rubble, there was much to be gained by behaving as though the past was indeed dead and buried and a new age about to begin. The price paid was a certain amount of selective, collective forgetting, notably in Germany. But then, in Germany above all, there was much to forget.¹²

24.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. What does Judt mean by the phrase “collective amnesia”? What role does he suggest “collective amnesia” might play as a country or community attempts to recover from after a period of violence or oppression?
2. What types of events, when remembered clearly, might make it difficult for the members of a country or community to move forward together after a period of violence or oppression? What types of events must not be forgotten?
3. Harvard Law professor and author Martha Minow identifies paths between “too much memory and too much forgetting” in her book *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence*. She writes, “dwelling in the frozen space of inability and incapacity is unacceptable, unresponsive to victims, unavailing to the waiting future.”¹³ Is forgetting doing something? Is it ever possible to truly “forget” a painful history? What role does forgetting play in the process of coming to terms with the past?
4. From the United States to all countries, reconstruction is necessary in the aftermath of past instances of injustice, oppression and violence. One aspect of reconstruction is how the historical narrative of a nation will be created, interpreted and taught to future generations. What are some ways that a nation’s historical narrative could be distorted or abused during a period of reconstruction? What are some ways to try to ensure that historical narratives become tools of reconstruction, rather than becoming tools to perpetuate inequalities or misinformation?

Using Resource 24.1

Deepening Comprehension

This reading contains ideas that are abstract and even counterintuitive. Therefore, some readers might find the reading particularly challenging. To help all readers deepen their comprehension of Judt's and Minnow's ideas, the [Two Column Note Taking](#) strategy will prompt them to slow down their reading and process the ideas they encounter more carefully.

Connecting to Literature: *The Giver*

In Lois Lowry's novel, *The Giver*, the author creates a society where one person alone is given the responsibility of knowing history, while all other citizens feel no pain, seemingly unburdened by choice or by challenging memories. Read Lowry's book in light of the issues in this section. What would a society look like if it took *The Giver* as a road map for post-conflict reconstruction? What do we learn about transitional justice from Lowry's story?

The Giver is written for adolescent readers. It may provide a more accessible extension or alternative to the readings in this lesson to help you class consider questions of remembering, forgetting, and denying history. Classroom sets of [The Giver](#) are available to teachers in our network through Facing History and Ourselves lending library. In addition, Facing History has created a [free online study guide](#) that accompanies *The Giver*, which is available to everyone.

Resource 24.2:

Reading: Confronting Genocide Denial*Creating Context*

Have you ever denied something even though there was plenty of evidence to the contrary? If so why? Describe the situation and record your thinking about it in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

defense mechanism**allegation****notoriety****credible****valid****scholarship****curtail****incarcerate****EU****reversionism****media literacy**

Denial of genocide is the final stage of genocide. It is what Elie Wiesel has called a "double killing." Denial murders the dignity of the survivors and seeks to destroy remembrance of the crime. In a century plagued by genocide, we affirm the moral necessity of remembering.

[-Statement by Concerned Scholars and Writers in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide of 1915](#)

Holocaust survivor and Nobel Prize winning author of [Night](#), Elie Wiesel emphasizes the personal, political and moral consequences of genocide denial. Thus, recent incidents of genocide denial raise serious concern. In November 2006, Sudan's president, Lt-Gen Omar al-Bashir, [rejected claims](#) that hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians have been killed in Darfur. One month later, Iran's president, Mahmud Ahmadinejad, who has referred to the Holocaust as a "myth," sponsored a [conference for Holocaust deniers](#). Then, in January 2007, Hrant Dink, a Turkish-Armenian journalist, was [assassinated](#), in part, for speaking openly about the Armenian Genocide.

What is the purpose of denial? Despite an overwhelming amount of evidence, why might individuals and groups claim a genocide did not happen? For psychologists, "denial" is an unconscious defense mechanism individuals use to protect themselves from painful memories or feelings. In legal terms, "denial" is a statement made by the defense in opposition to an allegation by the prosecution. Historians and philosophers might say that "denial" is the refusal to grant the truth of a statement. How is denial of something as morally atrocious as genocide different than the denial of other events?

Israel Charney, editor of the *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, identifies many common arguments used by genocide deniers as well motivations for individuals, groups or states to deny genocide. For example, he writes, "denying that a case of mass killing constitutes

genocide is to avoid responsibility for doing something about it."¹⁴ Antisemitism and other discriminatory beliefs often provide a foundation for genocide denial. Moreover, political interests can fuel genocide denial. A nation might not recognize an event as genocide in order to avert responsibility for taking action to stop it. [Indeed, most United Nation's members have signed the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, a treaty which holds signatories responsible for acting to prevent and stop acts of genocide.] Scholars have even been known to deny genocides in order to gain notoriety and advance their own careers.

To be sure, Charney points out that some individuals, perhaps more than we expect, might be "innocent" in their denial of a genocide - in the sense that "the denier truly does not know the facts of the genocide."¹⁵ According to a [recent poll in Great Britain](#), 28% of 18- to 29-year-olds responded that they did not know if the Holocaust was a "myth" or if the statement "six million Jews had been killed" might be exaggerated.

Understanding the motivations behind genocide denial helps us recognize the work of genocide deniers as propaganda masquerading as history. While history is the use of evidence to help explain events of the past, propaganda is a type of message that uses specific tools and techniques to manipulate its audience. Responsible historians provide information that is credible, reliable, and valid. Propagandists intentionally distort facts and provide misleading information in order to suit their aims. In a letter to the Prime Minister of Turkey, the International Associate of Genocide Scholars label the denial of the Armenian Genocide as "propaganda" as opposed to "scholarship:"

We note that there may be differing interpretations of genocide-how and why the Armenian Genocide happened, but to deny its factual and moral reality as genocide is not to engage in scholarship but in propaganda and efforts to absolve the perpetrator, blame the victims, and erase the ethical meaning of this history.
-Open Letter to the Prime Minister of Turkey

How do people respond to incidents of genocide denial? Scholars, artists, and elected officials answer this question using the tools at their disposal. For example, Iranian scholars, including [Azar Nafisi](#), published [a letter](#) condemning their government's decision to sponsor a conference for Holocaust deniers. Artists, from novelist Elif Shafak to the punk rock band System of a Down, [discuss the Armenian Genocide](#) in their work and speak about the consequences of its denial. Recently, elected officials have attempted to curtail genocide denial by making it illegal. In October 2006, the French Parliament passed a law making it a crime to deny the Armenian Genocide. In January 2007, Germany proposed that the European Union should pass a law that would [incarcerate deniers of the Holocaust](#). (Currently, nine EU member states - Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia- have laws against Holocaust denial.) And, on January 26, 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a [resolution condemning any denial of the Holocaust](#).

Despite the overwhelming breadth and depth of evidence documenting past genocides, most notably the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, recent events demonstrate that

groups, individuals and nations will continue in their efforts to convince others that these atrocities were not genocidal in nature.

While genocide denial raises universal issues of prejudice, propaganda, morality, and freedom of speech, it is also a deeply personal issue for those touched by genocide. As Professor Henry Theriault, a descendant of Armenian genocide survivors, explains:

Deniers operate as agents of the original perpetrators [of the genocide], pursuing and hounding victims through time. Through these agents, the perpetrators reach once again into the lives of the victims long after their escape from the perpetrators' physical grasp.¹⁶

24.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. According to this reading, what is the difference between history and propaganda?
2. Holocaust deniers often refer to themselves as "historical revisionists." What does it mean to "revise" history? How might this be done in a legitimate matter? What is the line between "historical revisionism" and genocide denial?
3. Explain how one can be an "innocent denier," according to Israel Charney? What is the role of media literacy in preventing individuals from becoming "innocent deniers?"
4. How do people learn to tell the difference between trustworthy and untrustworthy sources of information? To be responsible consumers of information, what do we need to know about a source in order to determine if it is trustworthy? Does the internet make it easier or more difficult to determine whether or not information is reliable?
5. The internet allows genocide deniers to spread misinformation to a global audience. What responsibility, if any, do search engines have to filter websites that disseminate harmful lies about genocide? If you were an executive at a search engine, how might you respond to someone who asked you to remove genocide denier websites from your search engine? Ultimately, who do you think has a responsibility to challenge genocide deniers?
6. Should genocide denial be illegal? Where is the line between protecting free speech and banning genocide denial? What is the role of government in stopping genocide denial?

Using Resource 24.2

This resource provides an overview of genocide denial, its effects, and the motivations of deniers. Many Facing History teachers find that their students have a high level of curiosity about this topic, and, if class time is available, there are numerous opportunities to extend your exploration of genocide denial. What follows are suggestions for strategies and activities to do so:

Deepening Comprehension and Reflection

This reading contains a significant amount of information about genocide denial that might elicit questions and reactions from students. The [Two Column Note Taking](#) strategy will help students slow down and sort through the ideas they are reading about. It will also give them a structure in their journals to respond to the various facets of genocide denial with their own thoughts and opinions.

Taking a Stand

Have Students think about how we should respond to genocide denial. One question raised in this reading is whether or not Holocaust denial should be illegal. Considering the following questions can help you prepare for a [barometer activity](#):

- To what extent can and should societies use law to combat denial?
- Can forbidding genocide denial be justified in the context of freedom of speech?
- Where is the line between freedom of speech and outlawing hate speech?
- Should genocide denial be against the law?
- What are the costs and benefits associated with making genocide denial an illegal act?

To prepare, you might have students read the following article, which describes the debate over making denying the Holocaust punishable by prison sentences, and base their responses on ideas they find in the texts:

- "[Germans push Europe on Holocaust](#)" by Dan Bilefsky, *New York Times*, January 14, 2007

Building Media Literacy

Given that anyone can post information on the Internet, it is especially important for students to know how to ask questions about the origins of sources before taking information at its face value. If you have access to a computer lab, you might have students surf the web for sites about the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide or Darfur. Ask students to gather information from these sites about the publishers or authors. What can they find out about the bias of a website? How might they determine if they can trust the information on this site?

Weighing Politics and Morality

In your discussions in class about genocide denial, you might consider these two events:

- In the fall of 2000, the United States House Foreign Relations Committee approved a resolution acknowledging the Armenian Genocide and sent it to the full House for a vote. The State Department and the Clinton Administration prevented the resolution from coming to a vote in the face of threatened military and economic retaliation from the Turkish government, and this was repeated in the administration of George W. Bush.
- In 1994, while hundreds of thousands of people were being slaughtered in Rwanda, the US government, under the leadership of President Clinton, refused to use the label "genocide" to describe these mass murders. In 2004, President Bill Clinton apologized to the people of Rwanda for his failure to "[fully appreciate the depth and speed \[of\] this unimaginable terror](#)." In her book, *The Problem from Hell*, genocide scholar Samantha Power suggests that Clinton, in addition to other world leaders, was reluctant to use the word "genocide" when describing events in Rwanda because then they would be compelled to take action in accordance with the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Ask students: In these examples, was the decision to formally recognize the genocide a moral or a political decision? Should it be a moral or political decision? Does it make a difference if you are talking about a past genocide or an ongoing genocide? Is deciding not to formally recognize genocide a form of genocide denial? Why or why not?

Denying the Armenian Genocide

As he was planning how to rid Germany of Jews, Hitler asked, "Who after all speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"¹⁷ He was referring to the mass murder of over a million innocent Armenians by the Turks during World War I. Nearly twenty years after that genocide, the perpetrators, for the most part, had gone unpunished, the Turkish government denied these murders had occurred, and this tragic episode was largely forgotten by the media and those outside of the Armenian community.

The Turkish government continues to deny the occurrence of the Armenian Genocide within their borders during World War I. Facing History's resource book [Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians](#) includes several readings you might use to explore the legacy of the 20th century's first genocide:

- "Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization," p. 155
- "Acquitting the Assassin," p. 165
- "Rewriting History," p. 167
- "The Legacy of a Witness," p. 170
- "Remembrance and Denial," p. 174
- "Denial, Free Speech, and Hate Speech," p. 177

Resource 24.3:**Reading: Memory, Monuments, and Memorials***Creating Context*

Countries and communities often create monuments and memorials to remember important people or events in their histories. Building monuments is one way that people make sure certain histories are not denied or forgotten. They are also built to influence *how* future generations remember certain people and events.

In your journal, describe a monument or memorial that you have visited, and then consider the following questions:

- What person or event did it commemorate?
- What did you know about that person or event before you visited the monument?
- Did you learn anything new or different from the monument?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

monument**memorial****siege****burgher****blockade****irresolute****self-absorbed**

One way a people remembers the past is by building monuments that honor its heroes or commemorate its tragedies. In creating any memorial, the individuals involved must answer a variety of questions. These questions include:

- What is the purpose of the memorial?
- Who is the audience?
- Who or what should be remembered, and why?

In 1884, the Municipal Council of Calais, France, addressed those very questions, when the group decided to erect a monument to a tragic event in the town's history. In 1346, the English had laid siege to Calais. After eleven months of hunger and suffering, six burghers – prominent citizens of the town – decided to end the blockade by offering themselves as hostages. Jean Froissart, a French writer, created a poem commemorating the event. It tells of how the six leading citizens of Calais marched out of town with “bare heads and feet, with ropes round their necks, and the keys of the town and castle in their hands.” All six were killed, but their sacrifice saved the city and its people.

The poem caught the imagination not only of the Municipal Council but also of a famous sculptor, August Rodin. Hired to create a memorial, Rodin researched the story carefully and then decided to depict the six burghers at the very moment they surrendered themselves to King Edward III of England. A historian says of the six statues the artist created:

Dressed in garments which fall in heavy folds and add a physical burden to their gestures and uncertain bearing, they seem in transition between life and death, between sleeping and waking... Powerless to alter the inevitable consequence of their decision, united only by their common resolve, each participant enacts his own drama, irresolute, deeply self-absorbed, and infinitely sad.¹⁸

Members of the town's monument committee were disappointed. They expected a more heroic view – one that featured the most famous of the burghers. They also visualized a memorial that would prompt passers-by to look up in awe. Instead Rodin placed his statues at eye-level. Each resembled an ordinary man caught in a tragic dilemma.



The artist and the committee battled over the work for months. When the finished product was finally unveiled in June of 1895, the compromises each side made were clearly visible. Rodin had succeeded in overcoming the Committee's objections to the way the figures looked. But he was unable to persuade them to place the monument in front of the Town Hall so that it could be integrated into daily life in the community. Instead, the

committee located the memorial on the edge of a public garden and surrounded it with an iron grill. Only in 1925 were the statues moved to Town Hall Square.

24.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. How did the Municipal Council of Calais learn about the story of the surrender of the six citizens, over five hundred years after it occurred? What made the story so important to them that they wanted to commemorate it with a monument?
2. In designing a monument, architects and other artists must consider:
 - What is the purpose of the memorial?
 - What is its audience – that is, who will visit it and why?
 - Who or what will be remembered and for what reasons?

How did Rodin answer each of those questions? How did the townspeople want the burghers remembered? How did Rodin want them remembered? Use evidence from the reading to support your answers.

3. What made the Calais monument so important that Rodin and the Municipal Council fought about it for months? What was at stake for the way that future generations in Calais think about themselves and their history? Support your response with evidence from the reading.

Using Resource 24.3

Introducing Memorials and Monuments

In addition to the reflection prompts in Creating Context above, you might choose to provide a more robust introduction to the topic of Memorials and Monuments. You can do so by leading a discussion based on the following questions:

- Thus far in this course, what have you learned that has been particularly meaningful to them?
- What ideas about history and human behavior do you hope to remember years from now?

Give students ample time, at least ten minutes, to really think about these questions. We encourage you to share your answers to these questions with students as a model for deep reflection. Remind students that there is no “right” answer to these questions. The best answers are honest, thoughtful reflections on what they hope to take away from studying this history. To help students get started, you can have them look through their journals at past entries. What did they write that stands out to them?

Project: Creating Memorials

At this point in the course, many Facing History teachers have students create a memorial that represents the important themes they have learned about in this unit. Examples of [student-created memorials](#) can be found on the [Memory, History and Memorials](#) online module. It can take several class periods for students to plan and create a memorial, especially if the memorial involves a longer artistic process. If you have limited time, you might only have students plan their memorial and share their ideas with the class. Some teachers allow students several weeks to plan and build their memorials. In this case, students can present their memorials at the end of the course.

As students prepare to design their memorials, they will benefit from taking some time to see how individuals, groups and nations have built thousands of memorials to help preserve the memory of the Holocaust and other historical events. Looking at several examples can help students think about how memorials can be used to express different messages about this history. This exercise can also help students identify the aspects of this history – the messages, concepts or questions – that they would want to preserve. You might structure this project in the following way:

1. Journal writing / brainstorm: Begin by having students think about the different purposes of memorials. Why do people build them? What memorials have they seen? What purpose do they think these memorials have served?

2. Analyze and compare memorials: Then have students look at a variety of memorials. Resource 24.4 includes photos of two memorials relating to American history. Resource 24.5 includes photos of two Holocaust memorials. You are also encouraged to explore with your students Facing History’s online module [Memory, History and Memorials](#) to see many more examples of memorials. *Also consider visiting with your students memorials near your school, if possible.*

Students can compare these memorials, answering questions such as:

- What do you see?
- What do you think this means?
- What message does the memorial send?
- Who created this memorial and what was their purpose?

For more information on structuring this process, refer to the [Media Literacy: Analyzing Visual Images](#) strategy.

3. Plan, design, and build: After spending some time viewing and analyzing various examples of memorials, students can begin to design their own. It is up to individual teachers to define the parameters, materials, and schedule for this assignment. You might dedicate a single class period to this project, or you might occasionally provide time for students to work on their memorials throughout the final weeks of this

course.

Regardless of the parameters you set, students should answer each of the following questions about their memorial design:

- What would you like people to feel or think about when they visit the monument that you are designing?
- Who is it built for? What will be the audience?
- What message will it convey? What point of view will it assume?
- What media will you use (e.g. poetry, sculpture, painting, drawing, drama, music, etc.) to express this message?
- Where will your monument be located? How will people visit or interact with it?

**Resource 24.4:
Images: American Memorials and Monuments**



Figure 1: Minuteman Statue in Lexington, MA (loc.gov)



Figure 2: Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. (dc.about.com)



Figure 3: Vietnam Memorial (lostlampshades.com)

24.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. Take a few moments and record what you notice about the two memorials in these photos in your journal. Try to refrain, for now, from interpreting the ideas and emotions the monuments convey, and only describe what you see.
2. What do the artists who designed these memorials want their audiences to think, experience, and feel after visiting them? What decisions did they make in their designs in order to elicit those thoughts and feelings?
3. What people or events in the history of your community or country do you think deserve to be remembered with a memorial? In your journal, sketch or describe the design of a memorial to one of these people or events. Make sure to record your thinking about the following questions:
 - What is the purpose of the memorial?
 - Who is the audience?
 - Who or what should be remembered, and why?

Using Resource 24.4

Analyzing Visual Images

Many Facing History teachers find it useful to take the time to look closely at memorials and monuments such as these. The [Analyzing Visual Images](#) teaching strategy provides an excellent framework for doing so by separating observation, questioning, and interpretation into discrete steps. This process slows down student thinking and often leads to deeper insight and richer class discussion of the impact of memorials and monuments on a community's memory and identity.

You might also use this same strategy to analyze any memorials or monuments near your school. If possible, take your students to see in person local examples of memorials and monuments.

Finding and Using Additional Images

You are encouraged to explore alternative or additional images of memorials and monuments in your lesson. Numerous examples can be found online, and you might choose to include images or memorials that have specific resonance with your class, school, community, city, or country.

Facing History's online module [Memory, History and Memorials](#) also includes additional images, activities, and discussion questions for you to use with your class.

Resource 24.5:
Images: Holocaust Memorials



Figure 4: Treblinka Monument (www.holocaustresearchproject.org)



Figure 5: Warsaw Ghetto Memorial (acfr.org)

24.5 Comprehension & Connections

1. Take a few moments and record what you notice about the two memorials in these photos in your journal. Try to refrain, for now, from interpreting the ideas and emotions the monuments convey, and only describe what you see.
2. What do the artists who designed these memorials want their audiences to think, experience, and feel after visiting them? What decisions did they make in their designs in order to elicit those thoughts and feelings?
3. What do these two memorials suggest about how one should remember the victims of the Holocaust?
4. What people or events in the history of you have learned about in this course do you think deserve to be remembered with a memorial? In your journal, sketch or describe the design of a memorial to one of these people or events. Make sure to record your thinking about the following questions:
 - What is the purpose of the memorial?
 - Who is the audience?
 - Who or what should be remembered, and why?

Using Resource 24.5

Analyzing Visual Images

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¹ Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization During the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 4.

² <http://www.adl.org/holocaust/academic.asp>

³ <http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/facingtoday/confronting-genocide-denial>

⁴ "Holocaust Education in Germany: An Interview", PBS website,

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/germans/germans/education.html>

(accessed January 23, 2009).

⁵ John Fried, *Trial at Nuremberg: Freedom and Responsibility*.

⁶ Kylee Beers, *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 105-110.

⁷ *Eichmann in Jerusalem* by Hannah Arendt (Viking Press), 1963, p. 2.

⁸ The Simon Wiesenthal Center: **Source**.

⁹ *The Sunflower* by Simon Wiesenthal (Schocken), 1976.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "The Rehabilitation of Europe," from *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* by Tony Judt (The Penguin Press), 2005, p. 61. Used by permission of The Penguin Press, a division of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

¹² Ibid, pp. 61-62

¹³ Minow, p. 4.

¹⁴ Charny, *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, 179-81.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Henry C. Theriault, "Denial and Free Speech: The Case of the Armenian Genocide," in Richard Hovannisian ed. *Looking Forward, Moving Backward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, Transaction Pub., 2003) pp. 231-262.

¹⁷ Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization During the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 4.

¹⁸ Abraham Lerner, Introduction to *Auguste Rodin: The Burghers of Calais* (Museum Press, Inc., 1976).

Section 11: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Civic Dilemmas

Essential Questions

- *What laws and institutions remain today as legacies of the Holocaust? Are these legacies useful and effective?*
- *What roles can laws and institutions play in preventing genocide and protecting human rights?*
- *How do differences within societies continue to create civic dilemmas that challenge nations today?*

Lessons

Section 11 includes the following lesson:

- Lesson 25: Genocide and the International Criminal Court
- Lesson 26: Universal Rights
- Lesson 27: Contemporary Civic Dilemmas

Overview

There are many legacies of the Holocaust: psychological, political, economic and social – the communities destroyed, emotional damage wrought on the victims and their families, stolen property, and more. One might also count among the legacies of the Holocaust this question, posed by Eleanor Roosevelt after visiting survivors in displaced persons camps in Germany: “When will our consciences grow so tender that we will act to prevent human misery rather than avenge it?” This section examines laws and institutions that were created in attempts to answer this question as well as contemporary civic dilemmas relating to membership and difference that persist in today’s world.

The Holocaust has left its mark on international law and diplomacy, as individuals, groups and governments attempted to create a global environment that would prevent such horrid crimes from occurring again and punish the perpetrators when they do occur. The establishment of the United Nations, an international organization designed to prevent further aggression and war, was one response to the brutality and devastation of World War II and the Holocaust. The treaties and declarations ratified by U.N. members soon after the Holocaust represent more of its legacy.

The first lesson in this section looks closely at the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (also called the “Genocide Convention”), which was adopted on December 9, 1948. The convention is significant because it was the first time the international community defined the term *genocide* and classified it as a crime. The lesson explores why it matters how we define this term. It also explores issues of enforcement and deterrence, first by examining the concept of sovereignty. What right does the international community have to interfere in the internal affairs of a country, and how can international law be enforced without such a right? The lesson ends by looking

at the International Criminal Court and its role in trying and punishing those who violate international law. It is important to note that prevention of and punishment for genocide continues to be a particularly vexing challenge for the international community. Students will examine not only how international laws and institutions seek to address the challenge but also how those very same laws and institutions might contribute to it.

The second lesson of this section introduces the Universal Declaration of Universal Rights (UDHR). This declaration, while not binding international law, represents another significant legacy of the Holocaust and World War II. Deeply moved by her visits to displaced persons camps after the war, Eleanor Roosevelt chaired the UN commission that negotiated and drafted the declaration. While different countries and cultures had previously created documents and practices in support of “rights” this effort was unique in its universal scope. As with the Genocide Convention, students will learn that negotiating, drafting, and enforcing the UDHR was and remains fraught with dilemmas. In the lesson, students are invited to unpack the complexity of negotiating rights that are truly universal.

This section ends with a lesson that focuses on the contemporary world, because, nearly seventy years after the Holocaust, differences within countries around the globe continue to create significant dilemmas and tensions. In Section 2, students considered the question, “What do we do with a variation?” and traced its relevance throughout the history of the Holocaust. Here, they look at the question’s continued relevance as they learn about the recent controversy over wearing Islamic headscarves in French schools. Throughout the lesson, important concepts from previous lessons—stereotypes, prejudice, nationalism, religious identity—recur as students wrestle with the idea that the way that individuals, groups, and nations respond to difference must be negotiated continuously. In this way, students will be encouraged to make connections between the particular events in France and the dilemmas and tensions they face in their own countries and communities. While there is no one answer to the questions raised by these issues, the conversation about how a society negotiates difference is important and should be encouraged.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- [*Totally Unofficial: Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention Study Guide*](#)
- [*Teaching The Reckoning*](#), a study guide to accompany the documentary film, *The Reckoning: The Battle for the International Criminal Court*.
- [*Fundamental Freedoms: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*](#)
- [*What Do We Do with a Difference? France and the Debate over Headscarves in Schools*](#)

Lesson 25: Sovereignty, The Genocide Convention, and the International Criminal Court

Essential Questions:

- ***What is sovereignty? Under what conditions, if any, should the international community be able to intervene in the affairs of another country?***
- ***What is genocide? How can definitions help or hinder our ability to identify, prevent, and punish actions that cause inhumanity and suffering?***
- ***How can international laws be enforced? Can laws be useful without someone to enforce them?***

Included Resources:

* 25.1 – Reading: “Sovereignty cannot be conceived as the right to kill millions”

* 25.2 – Reading: The United Nations and Genocide

25.3 – Reading: The International Criminal Court - Law or War?

* = core resource

Introduction:

How can we prevent genocide? This lesson explores conceptual, legal, and institutional legacies of the Holocaust that were designed to help answer this question. In Resource 25.1, students will learn about Raphael Lemkin and his outrage over the lack of accountability for the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide. It is this outrage, along with his own personal experiences during the Holocaust, that prompted Lemkin to lead the effort to establish genocide as an international crime. Perhaps the biggest challenge toward doing so was the concept of sovereignty, the idea that a government has the right to act however it pleases within its own borders without interference from other countries. Resource 25.1 helps students understand this idea and the challenge it poses to the enforcement of any international law.

Establishing genocide as an international crime also required defining the term itself. Prior to the Holocaust, the word *genocide* did not yet exist. Lemkin coined the term himself, in order to describe what Winston Churchill called “a crime without a name” and further the cause of making the acts that constitute genocide criminal. In Resource 25.2, students will learn about the milestone Lemkin helped achieve in the 1948 adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Students will also consider the irony that, while defining genocide was an essential step towards making it an international crime, the definition of genocide has also been used by nations as an excuse for inaction in the face of much violence and human suffering.

The final resource in this lesson extends the class’s exploration of international law by looking at the more recent history of the establishment of the International Criminal Court. By watching a short clip from the film *The Reckoning*, students will learn about the history of the court, its jurisdiction, and how it operates. More importantly, students will consider the relationship between punishment and prevention, and they will have the

opportunity to debate whether or not the United States should join the ICC. The debate will shed additional light on what's at stake for countries trying to balance their own sovereignty with the benefits of having international laws and institutions.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Describe an example of a “legacy.” Think about people or events when answering this question.
- What is genocide? Who is responsible for preventing and stopping genocide when it occurs? How might this be done?
- Are people less likely to commit crimes (or do the wrong thing) if they think they will be caught and punished? Explain your answer.
- Under what conditions, if any, should the international community be able to intervene in the affairs of a particular country?

Additional Recommended Resources:

Resource Books (available from the Facing History and Ourselves website):

- [Totally Unofficial: Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention Study Guide](#)
- [Teaching The Reckoning](#), a study guide to accompany the documentary film, *The Reckoning: The Battle for the International Criminal Court*.

Videos (Available from Facing History Library):

- The Reckoning, Module 1, “[Law or War: The Creation of the International Criminal Court](#)”
- The Reckoning, Module 2, “[Seeking Peace and Seeking Justice: The ICC & Uganda](#)”
- The Reckoning, Module 3, “[International Law, Testing the Limits: The ICC and Darfur](#)”
- Alan Ryan, “[Clarifying the Definition of Genocide for International Law](#),”
- Alan Ryan, “[Redefining Genocide](#)”

Websites:

- [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#)
- [United Nations website](#)
- [The International Criminal Court website](#)

Facing Today Articles

- “[Some Things We Know about Genocide - 10 Years, 10 Lessons](#)” (May 8, 2009)
- “To Catch a War Criminal” (April 7, 2009)

Resource 25.1:**Reading: “Sovereignty cannot be conceived as the right to kill millions”***Creating Context*

When the government of a country turns against its own people, do other countries have the right to intervene? Do they have the responsibility to do so? What are the possible consequences of intervention, for the victims and for the country that steps in? What factors might prevent a country from deciding to intervene? Record your thoughts in your journal before reading.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

legacy**international law****lynching****sovereignty****populace****war crimes****bayonet**

They were a respected couple. The man, known as Said Ali Bey, was dignified, highly educated, and thought to be very rich; his wife was an attractive, modern Muslim woman with refined tastes and an independent mind.¹ They were Turkish and had come to Berlin three years earlier, at the end of World War I. Their neighbors often saw them strolling together after dinner.

On the evening of March 15, 1921, they were walking in the elegant Charlottenburg district when a young Armenian man came up to Bey and tapped him on the shoulder. He then drew a revolver and shot both of them, hitting Bey in the head, killing him at once and wounding his wife.

Passersby who had seen the murder immediately seized the young man and came close to lynching him on the spot.² When the police arrived, the assassin pointed at the man he had shot and declared, “It is not I who am the murderer. It is he!”³

Soon the whole world learned what this puzzling statement meant and who the two men were. The young Armenian, Soghomon Tehlirian, said the man he had killed was not Said Ali Bey. His real name was Mehmed Talaat, and he had been the minister of the interior of the Ottoman Empire (now Turkey). During World War I, Talaat, who was known as the “Big Boss,” had conducted a ruthless campaign against the Armenian people, a Christian minority in the empire. At his trial, Tehlirian described the events he had seen in his own town:

In 1915 the Armenian populace of Erzerum was suddenly alarmed by the news that the Turkish Government planned violent measures. Shortly afterward the populace was herded together and driven off in columns under the conduct of Turkish soldiers.

After being robbed of their money and belongings[,] the massacre, in which my family were victims, took place. After I had seen my brother's skull split, I was hit on the head and lay unconscious probably [for] one or two days.⁴

Evidence presented at Tehlirian's trial showed that in 1915 alone, Talaat had "presided over the killing by firing squad, bayoneting, bludgeoning, and starvation of nearly 1 million Armenians."⁵ The plans had been methodically drawn up and carried out. First the Armenian leadership was murdered. Then Armenian men of military age were driven from their villages and either immediately executed or sent to death camps. Then the children, women, and old men were evicted from their homes and forced to make death marches, during which special units attacked them, butchering tens of thousands of people. Those who survived the rapes, the beatings, the murderous attacks, and the hardships of the marches were sent to the desert to die of thirst and hunger.⁶

Germany had been an ally of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. During Tehlirian's trial, it was also revealed that despite the terrible crimes committed by Talaat and his subordinates, the German government had sheltered him and other Ottoman leaders after the war. In Germany, they had enjoyed the comfortable and respectable lives of retired state officials.⁷

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Raphael Lemkin, a young Polish Jew who had recently begun studying at the University of Lvov, read about Tehlirian's trial in the newspaper. Horrified, he talked with one of his professors about the case. He asked whether Tehlirian had tried to have Talaat arrested for the massacre of the Armenians before deciding to shoot him himself.

His professor shook his head and stated the awful truth about the lack of international laws to try perpetrators of state-sanctioned crimes: "There was no law under which he [Talaat] could be arrested. . . . Consider the case of a farmer who owns a flock of chickens. He kills them, and this is his business. If you interfere, you are trespassing." Lemkin was shocked. "But the Armenians are not chickens. Certainly—"

The professor coolly went on, "You cannot interfere with the internal affairs of a nation without infringing on that nation's sovereignty."

To Lemkin, this did not make sense. "It is a crime for Tehlirian to kill a man, but it is not a crime for his oppressor to kill more than a million men. This is most inconsistent."⁸ But Lemkin's professor simply stated facts: After World War I, when the victorious states sought to charge Turkey and Germany for crimes they committed against their own

citizens, they had no law on which to rely. While war crimes were already defined by the international community, no agreement on crimes such as the ones the Ottoman Empire perpetrated against its Armenian citizens was in existence.⁹

Tehirian was eventually acquitted on the grounds of temporary insanity, but Lemkin remained haunted by the case. How could the world ignore the fact that known murderers were living happily in democratic nations? Lemkin began to study the background of the Talaat case. He learned that after World War I, a Turkish court had actually found Talaat and other Ottoman leaders guilty of mass murder and had sentenced them to death. But he also discovered that many of these condemned officials, including Talaat, had fled before their sentences could be carried out; the others had been released.¹⁰ Was it really possible that nearly everyone responsible for one of the greatest massacres in history had escaped without any consequences?

The more he learned about the Armenian massacre and what had happened after it, the more outraged Lemkin felt. He could not accept the idea that a man could be punished if he killed another man, but a man who had killed millions could not be prosecuted for this crime. In his autobiography, Lemkin asked, “Why was killing a million people a less serious crime than killing a single individual?”¹¹ The two things were completely contradictory.

It seemed clear to Lemkin that the ideal of sovereignty described by his professor—a nation’s right to determine what happens to its citizens and within its borders—should not be used as a shield for nations that persecuted and murdered their own people. He thought that sovereignty should be redefined to mean all the things a nation does for the benefit of its own people—such things as conducting relationships with other countries as well as internal activities like building schools and roads. But, he said, “Sovereignty cannot be conceived as the right to kill millions of innocent people.”¹²

To cure the illness of a world where men like Talaat went free, strong medicine was needed. Lemkin soon came to believe that the cure for mass murder and gross abuses of human rights would have to come through international law. But he discovered that very few international laws existed to deal with such crises. In addition, no international court had jurisdiction over crimes committed within a sovereign nation’s borders. This seemed wrong to Lemkin, and he began to think about how it could be changed.

25.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. What evidence was presented at Tehirian’s trial that the Turks systematically killed Armenians during World War I?
2. Why is Lemkin confused by the idea of national sovereignty? How is his understanding of the word different from others’ understanding? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.

3. The answer Lemkin received from his professor reflected the state of international law in the beginning of the twentieth century: back then there were no laws that gave states authority to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries. To do so would undermine the idea of sovereignty, that is, the right of every country to conduct its internal affairs independently. What limits would you set on a nation's sovereignty? When should the international community impose laws on other countries?
4. Lemkin wondered, "Why is the killing of a million a lesser crime than the killing of a single individual?" What can be done to stop nations that turn against their own people?
5. Lemkin was outraged when he heard that the mass murder of the Armenians went unpunished. How could he turn his moral outrage into action? What could he do?
6. Without a court to judge the perpetrators, what options did the Armenians have after the genocide?
7. What is an international law? How can international laws be enforced? Can laws be effective without someone to enforce them?

Using Resource 25.1

Considering Legacies

One way to begin this lesson is by having students focus on the meaning of the term *legacy*. Because this is an abstract concept, you might want to start by having students describe examples of legacy. It might be the legacy of a famous individual (e.g. a politician, activist, musician, athlete, etc.) or an event. It might be the legacy of someone in their families. Ask volunteers to share these examples as a springboard to helping students create working definition for *legacy*. Invite students to consider the different ways that people or events leave a legacy behind, for example, through relationships, through their work, or through influencing public policy.

Then you can guide the discussion towards the legacy of the Holocaust. Based on prior lessons, students may be able to identify how the Holocaust has left its legacy in the lives of survivors and people with whom survivors share their stories. This history can also be felt to this day through the films, books, memorials and museums dedicated to preserving its memory. The birth of the state of Israel is considered by many to be a legacy of the Holocaust. In this lesson, students will be exploring the imprint that World War II, in general, and the Holocaust, specifically, has left on international law.

In small groups or as a [think-pair-share](#), have students brainstorm what the legacy of the

Holocaust might be. What impact do they think this event might have had on individuals, groups and nations? How can the impact of this history still be felt today?

Inform students that this lesson will focus on the legacy the Holocaust has left on prevention and punishment through international law and institutions. After the Holocaust, what do they think the nations of the world could do to prevent other genocides from occurring? What laws or international policies or treaties do you think could be put in place to prevent crimes against humanity?

Generating Questions to Guide the Lesson

An excellent strategy to foster student engagement with the content in this lesson is to use the [Question Formulation Technique](#). You can focus the activity around the prompt, “You want to prevent genocide from ever happening again.” Students will then work in groups to brainstorm, analyze, and prioritize questions about this prompt (follow the strategy as outlined on the [Facing History website](#)). Post the final questions from each group around the classroom so that the class can revisit them as they encounter each of the resources in this lesson. As they work through this lesson, students might find answers to some questions, but they might also revise other questions or generate entirely new ones. Students should understand that it is expected that they will finish the lesson with some questions unresolved.

Taking a Stand

The questions posed in Creating Context are questions that remain very much alive in current events and international politics today because in practice they do not have easy answers. You might engage your students in the complexity of these questions by beginning this lesson by using the barometer or four corners strategies. If you choose to use the barometer activity, you could ask students to take positions on either or both of the first two questions. For the four corners activity, again pose the first two questions from above, and use the following four positions:

- “Yes, nations have a right and a responsibility,”
- “Nations have a right, but not a responsibility,”
- “Nations don’t have the right, but should find a way to intervene anyway,”
- “No, nations have neither the right or responsibility.”

Resource 25.2:**Reading: The United Nations and Genocide***Creating Context*

On August 24, 1941, Prime Minister Winston Churchill addressed the people of Great Britain in a radio broadcast. He spoke of the “barbaric fury” of the German troops who were savaging Europe. The Nazis, he said, had linked “the most deadly instruments of war science . . . to the extreme refinements of treachery and the most brutal exhibitions of ruthlessness.” He told his listeners that

whole districts are being exterminated. Scores of thousands—literally scores of thousands—of executions in cold blood are being perpetrated by the German police troops upon the Russian patriots who defend their native soil. Since the Mongol invasions of Europe in the sixteenth century, there has never been methodical, merciless butchery on such a scale, or approaching such a scale. . . We are in the presence of a crime without a name.”¹³

At the time of Churchill’s speech, the word *genocide* had yet to be coined to name the crimes he described. How does naming a crime make change how people think about and respond to it?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

United Nations	incite
atrocities	enumerate
unanimous	constitutionally responsible
genocide	ratification
contracting	vague
convention	collectivity
intent	proscription
conspiracy	socialization

As the horrors of the Third Reich unfolded, people everywhere resolved that such things must never be allowed to happen again. The United Nations was created partly in response to Nazi atrocities, as was the unanimous affirmation of the Nuremberg Principles, making “wars of aggression” and “crimes against humanity” punishable offenses.

During World War II, Raphael Lemkin, a lawyer, coined the term *genocide* to describe “crimes against humanity.” It combined a Greek word *gens* meaning “a race or tribe” with the Latin *cide* meaning “to kill.” Thus the word *genocide* refers to the deliberate destruction of a group of people. On December 9, 1948, the United Nations adopted the Genocide Convention which classified genocide as a crime under international law. It states in part:

Article I

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and punish.

Article II

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article III

The following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- (e) Complicity in genocide.

Article IV

Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

The United Nations also created a permanent international criminal court to handle cases of genocide. In doing so, the organization was declaring its determination to protect individuals and groups against abuse by the state. Yet in the years that followed, no one has been tried for genocide despite repeated charges of the crime. In the 1960s, at least a half million East Timorese were slaughtered in Indonesia. In the 1970s, three million Bangladeshis and over a million Khmers in Cambodia were also victims of genocide, as were thousands of Native Americans living in the Amazon Valley in Brazil. In the 1980s, the Chinese were accused of genocide in Tibet. The same charge was leveled against the Serbs for their treatment of the Croats and the Muslims in the former Yugoslavia. In Rwanda, the Hutu majority was accused of genocide against the Tutsis in 1994, and in the past decade the government of Sudan has been charged with genocide against part of the population of the country's Darfur region.

The questions Senator George McGovern of South Dakota raised concerning mass murders in Cambodia might be asked of any these incidents: "How can or should the international community react in the face of the knowledge that a government is

massacring its own people? Where do human rights supersede those of sovereignty? What lesson, if any, can be derived from the world's inaction over the murder of the Jews? How can we now meet the promise of 'never again' made in 1945?"

No nation came to the aid of Cambodians, Tutsis, Darfuris, or other victims of genocide. Indeed the United States did not ratify the Genocide Convention until 1986 even though a number of Americans had helped draft the document. When it finally passed, Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin, who had worked hard for its passage, told fellow senators, "This treaty has tremendous symbolic import. There's no question about it... The first step we need to take is to adopt implementing legislation – making genocide a crime under U.S. law – which will complete the ratification process." The following year, Congress did complete the process by passing the Genocide Convention Implementation Act, also known as the Proxmire Act.

American participation has not made the punishment of genocide easier to enforce. Part of the difficulty stems from the definition of the term. Many have argued that it is too vague. Yet neither lawmakers nor scholars have been able to agree on a more precise definition. Helen Fein, an expert on the subject, offered this definition:

Genocide is a series of purposeful actions by a perpetrator to destroy a collectivity through mass or selective murders of group members and suppressing the biological and social reproduction of the collectivity through the imposed proscription or restriction of reproduction of group members, increasing infant mortality, and breaking linkage between reproduction and socialization of children in the family or group of origin. The perpetrator may represent the state of the victim, another state, or another collectivity.¹⁴

Other scholars have tried shorter definitions. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, who have also written on the subject, suggest that genocide is "a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator." After studying other definitions and finding them lacking, Henry Huttenbach concluded in 1988 that genocide could most profitably be defined as "any act that puts the very existence of a group in jeopardy."

25.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. According to the Genocide Convention, what acts—when committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnical, racial or religious group—constitute genocide? How do each of these acts contribute to the destruction of a group?
2. According to the Genocide Convention, who should be held accountable for genocide? Does one have to directly inflict physical harm to be accountable? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

3. Besides the United Nations definition, what other definitions for *genocide* are included in this reading? Choose one and compare and contrast it with the Genocide Convention. Which definition is more specific? Which is more clear? Use examples of specific words and phrases to support your answer.
4. What is the difficulty in using a definition for genocide that is too vague? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
5. Is there a disadvantage in using a definition for genocide that is too precise? How might such a definition get in the way of our ability to identify and acknowledge inhumanity and suffering?
6. The countries that have ratified the Genocide Convention, according to the language of the convention itself, have pledged to “prevent and punish” genocide. How do you explain the fact that several genocides have occurred since the Genocide Convention was written and ratified? How might any definition of genocide become an impediment to prevention and punishment?
7. How would you answer the questions raised by Senator McGovern?
8. Many claim that each of the following is an example of genocide:
 - the destruction of the native American population by various European colonial powers and later by the United States;
 - the enslavement of Africans in the United States;
 - Iraq’s treatment of the Kurds after the Gulf War;
 - Serbia’s policy of “ethnic cleansing” in what was once Yugoslavia;
 - the anarchy in Somalia that has led to mass starvation;
 - the attacks on residents in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Investigate one of these cases or an example cited in the reading, including the reasons leaders used to argue that the case either was or was not genocide. Then decide whether or not you think it was genocide. Present your findings to the class. Do your classmates agree with your assessment? What difficulties did the class encounter in trying to reach a consensus on what constitutes genocide?

Using Resource 25.2

Understanding the United Nations

The United Nations itself is a legacy of World War II and the Holocaust that you might choose to explore in more depth with your students. Founded by 44 nations in 1945, the UN has four main purposes. According to the UN website, they are:

- To keep peace throughout the world;

- To develop friendly relations among nations;
- To help nations work together to improve the lives of poor people, to conquer hunger, disease and illiteracy, and to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms;
- To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations to achieve these goals.

Today, the UN has 193 member states, and it carries out its mission through the work of several bodies, including the General Assembly, Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council. With so many member nations, the United Nations is often challenged to find consensus on important issues in the world. Its peacekeeping mission is often enforced through military-style units of "UN Peacekeepers." But the UN must rely on member countries to contribute soldiers to these missions. As a result, the United Nations' power and authority are limited by the members nations themselves.

In order to help students understand more deeply the historical context of the founding of the United Nations and its mission, you might share the following resources with the class:

- "United Nations" (p. 103) in the Facing History resource book [*Fundamental Freedoms: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*](#)
- [The United Nations Charter](#)

Revisiting Student Questions

If you are using the [Question Formulation Technique](#) recommended after Resource 25.1, make sure that you revisit the questions students have generated after reading this resource. Has the class learned anything from this resource that will help them answer any of their questions? Has the information in this reading helped them further prioritize their questions? Has the reading prompted them to ask any new and important questions?

Resource 25.3:**Reading/Film: The International Criminal Court - Law or War?*****Creating Context***

Are people less likely to commit crimes (or do the wrong thing) if they think they will be caught and punished? Explain your answer in your journal before viewing this resource.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this resource:

criminal justice	jurisdiction
tribunal	rule of law
deter	
auspices	
operational	

Introduction to the Film Module *Law or War: The Creation of the International Criminal Court* (adapted from the film *The Reckoning*)

This film module explores the creation of the first permanent international court in history created to investigate and prosecute individual perpetrators, no matter how powerful, for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. When the court was established in 2002, the idea of international criminal justice was still relatively new. As long ago as 1899, 26 nations convened for an International Peace Conference, where they drafted the *Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, one of the first formal statements of international laws related to war and war crimes. Nearly 50 years later, it took the atrocity of the Nazi Holocaust to bring the international community together to hold perpetrators responsible for war crimes. The prosecution of Nazi leaders at the Nuremberg Tribunals marks the first time that an international criminal court was established. This tribunal set a precedent for the creation of later temporary tribunals, such as the tribunals for perpetrators of genocide in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

In the hope of deterring future crimes, representatives from a wide range of nations met under the auspices of the United Nations to craft a draft treaty for a permanent international criminal court. That draft was formally presented at a 1998 conference in Rome, now known as the Rome Conference. A total of 120 national representatives voted for the treaty, but the Court could only become operational after a minimum of 60 nations ratified the treaty through their state legislatures—a goal that was accomplished in 2002. As the International Criminal Court (ICC) began investigating its first cases in 2004, the international community has had to confront difficult decisions about how to balance important, yet often competing, values of justice, peace, and sovereignty.

For more information about the ICC, refer to the frequently-asked-questions page of the ICC's website (www.icc-cpi.int).

25.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. Describe the development of international law and justice since World War II. What factors and key moments led up to the establishment of the International Criminal Court? Why do you think it took 50 years after Nuremberg for nations to come together to establish the Court?
2. The Genocide Convention classifies genocide as a crime under international law. What does it mean for law to be “international”? How is that different from a “national” law? How are national laws enforced? What challenges might exist in enforcing international laws?
3. What can nations do to prevent genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes? To what extent does joining the ICC support this goal of prevention? Why or why not?
4. What does the ICC do? What is the jurisdiction of the court? What crimes can the ICC prosecute?
5. What are three ways that cases get to the ICC? Under what conditions would a genocide or war crimes case *not* come before the ICC?
6. What is the Complementarity Principle? Under what conditions, if any, are national systems more powerful than the ICC? Under what conditions, if any, is the ICC more powerful than national legal systems? Under what conditions, if any, should an international court like the ICC be more powerful than a national court?
7. What beliefs or experiences have inspired young people from all over the world to join the staff of the ICC? What are some beliefs or experiences that have been especially significant in shaping your life? How might these beliefs or experiences influence your future career choices?
8. One ICC staff member comments on how working at the court has taught her that “justice is easier said than done.” Based on what you know about the workings of the ICC and with evidence from the film, to what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? What could happen to make justice easier to achieve?
9. Fatou Bensouda, the ICC Deputy Prosecutor, explains the purpose of the ICC as follows:
During the previous century millions of people, many of them children, were victims of unimaginable atrocities. The International Criminal Court symbolizes the hope that by ending impunity for such crimes we might prevent their occurrence and contribute to the peace, security and well-being of the world.
10. Why might many supporters of the ICC believe that the establishment of a

permanent international criminal court would help prevent future crimes? To what extent do you believe that perpetrators might think twice about their actions if they know that they can be caught and punished? Consider examples from your own life or your knowledge of history when answering this question.

11. At the end of this module, Benjamin Ferencz states, “It is so obviously correct that law is better than war.” Do you think it is possible for legal systems to prevent violent conflict? Can you identify any examples, from history or from your own experience, of when rules have prevented violence? What kind of laws would best help communities and nations avoid violent conflict?

Using Resource 25.3

Revisiting Student Questions

If you are using the [Question Formulation Technique](#) recommended after Resource 25.1, make sure that you revisit the questions students have generated after reading this resource. Has the class learned anything from this resource that will help them answer any of their questions? Has the information in this reading helped them further prioritize their questions? Has the reading prompted them to ask any new and important questions?

Debate: Should the United States Join the ICC?

Appendix 25B provides three documents you can use to engage students in a debate over whether or not the U.S. should join the ICC:

1. A brief introduction to the debate
2. A statement by John Bolton, former American ambassador to the UN, arguing against American membership in the court
3. A statement by Ben Ferencz, Chief Prosecutor in the Nuremberg Trials, arguing for American membership

You can use these documents in a variety of ways. You might assign students to craft a written argument for or against the United States joining the ICC. You might also plan a [SPAR-styled class debate](#). Either way, it is essential that the students both compare and contrast the two perspectives and support their arguments with specific evidence from the documents.

Deepening the Discussion

You might choose to guide your students through a deeper exploration of the International Criminal Court and its work. The following are some suggestions for doing so:

- Begin the exploration with the anticipation guide provided in Appendix 25A below to introduce some of the concepts and issues that are at the heart of the court’s work.
- Show additional clips from the film *The Reckoning*. Two additional clips can be

found on [the website Facing History created for the film](#), and additional classroom materials and discussion questions can be found in [*Teaching The Reckoning*](#), the study guide for the film.

Appendix 25A**Anticipation Guide For *Law or War: The Creation of the International Criminal Court***

Directions: Read the statement in the left column. Decide if you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. Circle your response and explain your answer.

Statements	What do you think?
1. A strong judicial system can deter individuals from committing crimes.	SA A D SD Explain:
1. The international community has the obligation to prosecute perpetrators of crimes against humanity if those perpetrators are not being held accountable in their own nation.	SA A D SD Explain:
2. When a conflict is ongoing, achieving justice is equally as important as achieving peace.	SA A D SD Explain:
3. After grave crimes have been committed, justice can best be achieved through reparations for the victims rather than punishment for the perpetrators.	SA A D SD Explain:
4. Achieving justice for crimes committed against one group advances the civil and human rights for all people.	SA A D SD Explain:

Appendix 25B**Should the United States Join the ICC?**

Excerpted from pages 21-24 of the study guide [Teaching The Reckoning](#).

Background

On July 17, 1998, the Rome Statute, the founding document of the International Criminal Court, was overwhelmingly approved by the countries attending the Rome Conference. One hundred twenty voted in favor of the document. While representatives from the United States made many important contributions to the Rome Statute, the United States was ultimately one of only seven nations who voted against it.* President Bill Clinton signed the treaty in the last days of his presidency in 2000. However, it was never submitted to the Senate for ratification. The fact that the United States is not a member of the ICC has sparked strong opinions on both sides of the issue. In this reading you will find two documents that exemplify the debate around the United States decision not to join the ICC.

In a speech in November, 2003 (excerpted below), John Bolton, an under-secretary of State who was later appointed Ambassador to the United Nations by President George W. Bush, expresses concerns that while the United States agreed with goals of the court, he believed that the court itself was flawed. While Bolton supported temporary international courts, he feared that membership in the ICC threatens United States sovereignty and could put American citizens and leaders in danger. In a statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Bolton explains his belief that the United States should not join, or even support, the ICC:

We should isolate and ignore the ICC. Specifically, I propose for the United States policy . . . the Three No's: no financial support, directly or indirectly; no collaboration; and no further negotiations with other governments to improve the Statute. [. . .] This approach is likely to maximize the chances that the ICC will wither and collapse, which should be our objective.⁹

Since Bolton made this statement, American opposition to the ICC has decreased. As of 2009, United States officials have not indicated that they would adopt the Rome Statute, but they have demonstrated increasing support for the court.** Secretary of State Hillary Clinton explains the current United States position toward the ICC as follows: “Whether we work toward joining or not, we will end hostility toward the ICC and look for opportunities to encourage effective ICC action in ways that promote U.S. interests by bringing war criminals to justice.”¹⁰

Benjamin Ferencz is one of many Americans who have been trying to convince government officials to ratify the Rome Statute and officially join the ICC. In 1946, he served as Chief Prosecutor of Nazi criminals at the Nuremberg Tribunals. This experience had a profound influence on Ferencz. He shares, “Nuremberg taught me that creating a world of tolerance and passion would be a long and arduous task. And I also learned that if we did not devote ourselves to developing effective world law, the same cruel mentality that made the Holocaust possible might one day destroy the entire human race.”¹¹ After his success at Nuremberg (22 defendants charged with murdering over one million people were convicted) Ferencz has made the pursuit of international justice his life’s work. In his 2002 statement, “Know the truth about the International Criminal Court,” he attempts to counter arguments made by Bolton and others that the ICC is a threat to national sovereignty, and instead offers up reasons to support the ICC.

Appendix 25B, continued

**“American Justice and the International Criminal Court”
John Bolton (November, 2003)**

The problems inherent in the ICC are . . . matters that touch directly on our national interests and security, and therefore also affect the security of our friends and allies worldwide.

For numerous reasons, the United States decided that the ICC had unacceptable consequences for our national sovereignty. Specifically, the ICC is an organization that runs contrary to fundamental American precepts and basic Constitutional principles of popular sovereignty, checks and balances, and national independence.

U.S. military forces and civilian personnel and private citizens are currently active in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in almost 100 countries at any given time. It is essential that we remain steadfast in preserving the independence and flexibility that America needs to defend our national interests around the world Subjecting U.S. persons to this treaty, with its unaccountable Prosecutor and its unchecked judicial power, is clearly inconsistent with American standards of constitutionalism. Our concerns about politically motivated charges against U.S. persons are not just hypothetical Without sufficient protection against such frivolous charges, responsible officials may be deterred from carrying out a wide range of legitimate functions across the spectrum, from actions integral to our national defense to peacekeeping missions or interventions in humanitarian crises or civil wars Simply launching criminal investigations has an enormous political impact. Although subsequent indictments and convictions are unquestionably more serious, a zealous independent Prosecutor can make dramatic news just by calling witnesses and gathering documents, without ever bringing formal charges.

Accumulated experience strongly favors a case-by-case approach to resolving serious political and military disputes, rather than the inevitable resort to adjudication The international effort should encourage warring parties to resolve questions of criminality within national judicial systems, as part of a comprehensive solution to their disagreements.

We strongly support states fulfilling their sovereign responsibility to hold perpetrators of war crimes accountable rather than abdicating that responsibility to the international community. In matters of international justice, the United States has many foreign policy instruments to utilize that are fully consistent with our values and interests. We will continue to play a worldwide leadership role in strengthening domestic judicial systems and promoting freedom

Appendix 25B, continued

**“Know the Truth about the International Criminal Court”
Ben Ferencz (July 2002)**

On July 1, 2002, for the first time since the Nuremberg war crimes trials, a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) was created to hold accountable those leaders responsible for major war crimes and crimes against humanity. As part of an ongoing campaign against the ICC, the United States threatened to withdraw its peacekeeping forces unless the new international court was divested of any authority to try Americans The main argument made by the US is that American peacekeepers might be subjected to politically motivated prosecutions by the new tribunal There is no such danger.

Only crimes committed after July 1, 2002, can be considered by the ICC. Jurisdiction of the court is limited to genocide, crimes against humanity and major war crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. Surely, American soldiers do not intend to commit such crimes Only leaders responsible for planning or perpetrating the major crimes are the intended targets and only if their own state is unable or unwilling to give them a fair trial. The US is not in that category The American Bar Association . . . and the leading international lawyers in the country, including every living former Nuremberg prosecutor, all agree that it is in the interest of the US and its military to support the ICC. . .

. . . The US inspired the world at Nuremberg by demanding that never again would crimes against humanity be allowed to go unpunished. We weaken our standing in the world when we insist that law applies to everyone else but not to the United States. No nation and no person has a sovereign right to commit crimes against humanity with impunity.

The best way to protect our military, and the peace of the world, is through universal and equal enforcement of the rule of law for everyone.

Lesson 26: Universal Rights

Essential Questions:

- *What is a human right? Are human rights universal – are they the same for all people?*
- *Who is responsible for protecting human rights? What should happen when human rights are violated?*

Included Resources:

- 26.1 – Reading: Eleanor Roosevelt Visits a Displaced Persons Camp
 - * 26.2 – Reading: The Universal Declaration of Universal Rights
- * = core resource

Introduction:

Lesson 26 extends the discussion of international law and sovereignty from the previous lesson while introducing another important legacy of the Holocaust and World War II, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The lesson begins with a newspaper column from Eleanor Roosevelt in which she reflects on her experiences visiting Holocaust survivors in Displaced Persons Camps after the war. Roosevelt, who chaired the commission that drafted the UDHR, provides in her reflections indications of how she believes all nations should define their universes of obligation. Her writing also provides a glimpse of her deep sense of mission in creating a statement about the rights all humans deserve. She writes: “I think the most important thing for us to realize is the great responsibility that lies upon our shoulders and the fact that we must give something beyond what we have ever given before in the world—something that is no longer for ourselves at all, but for humanity as a whole.”¹⁵

This lesson concludes by examining the full text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A variety of approaches to reading and analyzing this document are suggested. Students will be challenged to think about the meaning of a human right that is truly universal. The class will also need to consider, again, the issue of enforcement, for the UDHR is not international law, but rather a declaration of agreed upon ideas. What purpose does it serve? How can it be enforced? Without the force of law, in what ways can such a document as the UDHR help prevent human suffering? These are important questions for students to consider as they wrestle with the ongoing challenges of promoting and defending human rights in the contemporary world.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- List and describe at least three fundamental rights that you believe all people in the world are entitled to.
- Are any rights truly universal? How can culture influence which rights one believes all people deserve? Which rights do you think are most likely to be affected by culture?

- Where do human rights come from? Under what circumstances, if any, is it possible for one to forfeit his or her rights?
- Who is responsible for protecting human rights? What should happen when human rights are violated?
- Which rights are most relevant to your life? Which are most important to you? Why?

Additional Recommended Resources:

Resource Books (available from the Facing History and Ourselves website):

- [*Fundamental Freedoms: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*](#)

Videos (Available from Facing History Library):

- [Mary Ann Glendon and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(6:07\)](#)
- Mary Ann Glendon, U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See and author of *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, talks about how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights came to be and the meaning and role it plays in our world today.

Additional Lesson Plans (available from the Facing History and Ourselves website):

- [UDHR 1: Exploring the Immediate Historical Context](#)
- [UDHR 2: Universe of Obligation](#)
- [UDHR 3: A Negotiated Document](#)
- [UDHR 4: What is a Right?](#)
- [UDHR 5: Fulfilling the Dream of the UDHR](#)
- [UDHR 6: Legacy, Judgment, and Memory](#)
- [UDHR 7: Universal Rights](#)
- [UDHR 8: Human Rights and Educating Global Citizens](#)
- [UDHR 9: Teaching Youth the Values of the UDHR](#)
- [UDHR 10: Creating a Better World](#)

Websites:

- [Reebok Human Rights Program](#)

Facing Today Articles

- “60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (December 9, 2008)
- “Human Rights Education Associates” (January 9, 2008)

Resource 26.1:**Reading: Eleanor Roosevelt Visits a Displaced Persons Camp*****Creating Context***

In a 1947 survey the United Nations Economic and Social Committee (UNESCO) defined a right as:

"...condition of living, without which...men cannot give the best of themselves as active members of the community because they are deprived of the means to fulfill themselves as human beings."

How would you define a *right*? Is the UNESCO definition too broad? Is it too narrow? What might you add to the UNESCO definition?

Gather in a small group to brainstorm at least three rights that your group unanimously believes are "universal"—that apply to all people from every cultural and political background. Also, consider at least three responsibilities that we all have for each other. How were your ideas similar? How were they different?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this resource:

composite	displaced person
dignity	despair
commission	incalculable
chair	

On December 10, 1948, the day after the Genocide Convention was ratified, the United Nations General Assembly adopted another important legacy of the Holocaust and World War II. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights—a "composite" of international beliefs on the rights, freedoms, and dignity of human beings—was the result of three years of negotiations by the Commission on Human Rights that the United Nations formed in 1946. Eleanor Roosevelt, the widow of United States President Franklin Roosevelt, was appointed as the commission's chair.

Roosevelt's thinking about human rights was influenced by her experiences traveling the world after World War II and observing the devastation wrought by the horrible violence of the war and the atrocities of the Holocaust. Between February 13 and 16, 1946—ten months after American forces liberated Nazi concentration camps—she met some of the thousands of displaced Jews living in camps. These were some of the survivors of the concentration camps Germany had filled during the war.

First, Roosevelt visited the camp at Zeilshheim. It contained some 3,200 people and was located just outside Frankfurt, in an area controlled by the United States Army. When Roosevelt spoke with the refugees, many expressed a longing to emigrate to Palestine. Two days after the visit, Roosevelt reported her impressions in *My Day*, the daily

newspaper column she wrote from 1935 until 1962. Through her *My Day* column and a series of speeches, Roosevelt struggled to comprehend the suffering and perseverance of the survivors. In the excerpts below, she speaks of the survivors who had lost not just their belongings, but so much of what made them human: their physical appearance, their families, their liberties, and their hopes.

My visit to Frankfort was packed so full of emotions, it is hard to give you an adequate idea of what I saw and how I felt. Yesterday morning, we visited the Zeilsheim Jewish displaced persons camp. It is one of the best, since the people are living in houses previously occupied by Germans.*

In these houses, each little family has a room to itself. Often a family must cross a room occupied by another in order to enter or leave the house, but there are doors and walls to separate them. If they like, they may bring food from the camp kitchen to their rooms and eat in what they call “home.”

They made me a speech at a monument they have erected to the six million dead Jewish people. I answered from an aching heart. When will our consciences grow so tender that we will act to prevent human misery, rather than avenge it?

Someone asked a man, who looked old but couldn’t have been really old, about his family. This was his answer: “They were made into soap.” They had been burned to death in a concentration camp.

Outside the school, the children greeted me. They told me a little boy of ten was the camp singer. He looked six. He had wandered into camp one day with his brother, all alone, so he was the head of his family. He sang for me—a song of his people—a song of freedom. Your heart cried out that there was no freedom—and where was hope, without which human beings cannot live?

There is a feeling of desperation and sorrow in this camp which seems beyond expression. An old woman knelt on the ground, grasping my knees. I lifted her up, but could not speak. What could one say at the end of a life which had brought her such complete despair?¹⁶

You can measure the extent of physical damage done to cities, you can restore water supplies, gas, and electricity, and you can rebuild the buildings needed to establish a military government. But how to gauge what has happened to human beings—that is incalculable.

The men and girls in the various services have a feeling of the problem, and the misery which exists all around them. . . . And, later, another soldier said to me: “I

* In other camps, for example, survivors and refugees occupied barracks formerly used by Nazi detainees.

can't think why [Europeans] had to fight each other. The language is a bar; but while our customs are different, all over, we seem to have a lot of things that are just the same." That's really a great discovery—"all over we have a lot of things that are just the same." . . . Those are the things we have to find and build on, and those, I imagine, are the only things that can give us hope.¹⁷

On her return to United States, Eleanor spoke about her experience in the camps to a women's group in New York:

[T]he thing that I feel is not only the physical aspect, but something that I can only describe in this way: what would happen to us if suddenly we had no real right to appeal to a government of our own? . . . Even in the worst days of the Depression, when I went down into the mining areas, at least the people came to one and said, "We want our government to know." And they had the feeling that they had a right to tell their government . . .

I have the feeling that we let our consciences realize too late the need of standing up against something that we knew was wrong. We have therefore had to avenge it—but we did nothing to prevent it. I hope that in the future, we are going to remember that there can be no compromise at any point with the things that we know are wrong. . . . We cannot live in an island of prosperity in a sea of human misery. It just can't be done. . . .

But it is not just that. It is the feeling that there has been a crumbling of the thing that gives most of us a sense of security, the feeling that we have roots, and that—as bad as the situation may be—we have a government to which we can appeal, we have people who are representing us and who can speak for us.

Charity is a wonderful thing, but it does not give one that sense of security. What is important is rehabilitation. The sooner the study is made, and the sooner those people can be taken where they can become citizens and feel that they are actually building a new life, the better it will be for the whole world. . . .

That is the thing I should like to leave with you. I think the most important thing for us to realize is the great responsibility that lies upon our shoulders and the fact that we must give something beyond what we have ever given before in the world—something that is no longer for ourselves at all, but for humanity as a whole.¹⁸

26.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. Review the list of human rights you recorded in your journal. Did this reading prompt you to think of any additional rights you would like to add? Take a moment to revise or expand your list.

2. What does it mean to be a “displaced person”? What does it mean to be a refugee? When you are a refugee or a displaced person, to whom do you appeal for help?
3. How are displaced persons and refugees similar to the “stateless people” discussed at the Evian Conference in the 1930s (See Lesson 18)?
4. Why is having the ability to appeal to a government important? In what ways can Americans appeal to their government, and how is this different from Nazi Germany?
5. In Roosevelt’s opinion, what is hope, and why is it important? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
6. What do you think is the role of hope in democracy? How can civil rights help restore displaced people’s hopes?
7. Roosevelt asks, “When will our consciences grow so tender that we will act to prevent human misery rather than avenge it?” What is the difference between preventing and avenging? In your opinion, what would it take to prevent human misery?
8. What is charity? What is rehabilitation? How does Roosevelt’s see the two as different? In Roosevelt’s opinion, why is charity not enough? Use evidence from the reading to support your answers.
9. What does Roosevelt mean when she says that we “must give something beyond what we have ever given before in the world”? What does it mean to give something “for humanity as a whole”?
10. In a different edition of her column, Roosevelt wrote, "In the end...we are 'One World' and that which injures any one of us, injures all of us."¹⁹ How does she think the universe of obligation for any nation should be defined? What additional evidence can you find in this reading to support your answer?

Using Resource 26.1

Providing Additional Context about Displaced Persons

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) website provides a helpful overview of the experiences of [Jewish displaced persons in Europe](#) in the years after the end of World War II. Consider sharing this page, or at least some of the information it provides, with students to provide additional context for Roosevelt’s column above.

Providing Additional Context About Human Rights

The Facing History website provides a [brief timeline](#) portraying the development of ideas about human rights in history. If you wish to provide additional context to this lesson, or if you wish to situate the UDHR within historical events your students may have already learned about, this timeline can be a helpful resource. You might use the [human timeline](#) strategy to tap into students prior knowledge or prompt them to learn more about the development of human rights.

Creating a Mini-Unit

If you wish to provide a deeper exploration of the UDHR to your class, Facing History and Ourselves has created a resource book, [Fundamental Freedoms: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), and [series of lessons](#) that you can use to create a more extensive unit.

Resource 26.2:**Reading: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights***Creating Context*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted and approved by a large group of international representatives. In order to bring this group to agreement, Eleanor Roosevelt, the Chairman of the UN Committee on Human Rights, painstakingly facilitated a process that would reflect a shared vision from the diverse perspectives of committee members; representatives including Charles Malik of Lebanon, P. C. Chang of China, and Renee Cassin of France negotiated carefully to ensure that their values were reflected in the document and that the document could speak for all people. They repeatedly asked, "Does this reflect our interests well enough? Does it speak for others as well?"

The text of the declaration, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, is included below. *As you read the declaration, underline words and phrases that stand out.*

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this resource:

inalienable**dissolution****recourse****assembly****tribunal****remuneration****penal****compulsory****PREAMBLE**

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal

rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore,

The General Assembly

proclaims

This Universal Declaration of Human Rights

as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

- (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

- (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
- (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

- (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
- (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

[Article 23](#)

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

[Article 24](#)

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

[Article 25](#)

- (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

[Article 26](#)

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

[Article 27](#)

- (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

[Article 28](#)

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

[Article 29](#)

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

[Article 30](#)

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

*Adopted on December 10, 1948
by the General Assembly of the United Nations (without dissent)*

26.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Review the 30 articles of the UDHR and choose two or three that seem the most important. Explain your choices briefly in your journal.
2. Thinking about what you learned about the Genocide Convention, what challenges do you think the United Nations faces in enforcing the UDHR? What can be done when a government takes away one or more of these rights from its people?
3. Some critics argue that if the UDHR had fewer articles, they would be easier to enforce. Look back at the two or three articles you selected in Question 1, and consider the following questions about those articles:
 - If these articles had to be turned into laws, which would be the easiest to enforce?
 - How could they be enforced?
 - Who would have to be involved?
 - What systems would be needed to determine if they were being violated?
 - What would you do with people who violated these laws?
4. Benjamin Ferencz, former prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials, has worked to create structures to preserve world peace. As a consultant to the United Nations, he has also thought about the issue of enforcement with regard to the UN and the UDHR. Ferencz writes:

In every society there will always be law-breakers who will take the law into their own hands-regardless of economic sanctions or other attempts to restrain them by non-violent means. Those willing to use force will almost

always prevail over those who are unwilling or unable to do so. International force may thus be needed as the ultimate guardian of peace...An international police force, under effective UN control-as envisaged in the [UN] Charter-is the best safeguard for world tranquility. But the UN must be given the means to do the job.

What do you think about his suggestion that we should have a United Nations police force? What are his arguments for this? What might be the arguments against his idea? Why might his suggestion be controversial? How do you resolve the dilemmas between the right to national sovereignty and the enforcement of human rights?

Using Resource 26.2

Reading the UDHR

Remind your students to underline key words or phrases as they read the UDHR. Since this is a long document, practicing this active reading habit will help them monitor their comprehension and keep track of what they have read.

In addition, there are a variety of other strategies you might use for reading the UDHR with your students:

- Divide students into three groups, and assign each group a word (*freedom, equal, or everyone*). Give each group the task of annotating the UDHR by highlighting their groups word every time it appears. Groups can then discuss why they think their word was repeated so often and what they repetition says about the meaning and purpose of the document. You can then begin a whole class discussion by asking each group to report the results of their analysis to the entire class.
- Create a Wordle image from the document. [Wordle](http://www.wordle.net) (www.wordle.net) creates "word clouds" from documents by giving greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the document. After displaying the Wordle to the class, ask students the following questions:
 - What are the five most used words in the UDHR?
 - What does this suggest about the meaning and intention of the document?
 - Are these the words you would have predicted?
- Another way to demonstrate understanding of the key ideas embedded in the UDHR is to [create a found poem](#) using key words or phrases from the document. Using the words and phrases they have underlined, or Wordle image, students can combine and repeat significant words and phrases in creative ways to construct a poem about human rights.
- You might also have your students conduct a silent conversation about the text.

Post the text of the document to a large piece of chart paper and while reading it in groups, students will interact and react to the text by writing on the document or in the margins of the chart paper. They can respond to others in writing and begin a conversation and interaction with one another, focusing on the text and the written responses. [The Big Paper](#) and [Graffiti Board](#) strategies can be used in a similar way.

- The [Human Rights Action Center](#) has created an [animated video](#) that brings the text of the UDHR to life. You might consider showing this to your class to introduce the text of the document. First, ask them to review the list of rights they created before reading Resource 26.1 so that they can look for their own suggestions while watching the video.

Exploring Debate and Compromise

The UDHR reflects significant debate, negotiation, and compromise. In some cases, this debate took place over fundamental philosophies about the relationship between the individual, society, and government. To explore these debates and give students a sense of the negotiation that took place in shaping the UDHR, consider sharing the following two documents from the Facing History resource book, [Fundamental Freedoms: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), that reflect disagreements between the United States and the Soviet Union:

- “The Individual or Society: The Human Rights Commission Debates” (p. 185)
- “Social and Economic Rights: Eleanor’s Speech at the Sorbonne” (p. 196)

Considering Universality: Always, Usually, or Never?

Some, including the American Anthropological Association, have suggested that the UDHR reflects the values of Western European and American culture. They question whether or not a list of truly universal rights, representative of all world cultures, can be created. The Facing History website contains [a lesson exploring this debate](#), in which students are asked to categorize the universality of each of the 30 articles in the UDHR. This lesson is recommended as a way to help your students become more familiar with the contents of the UDHR and deepen their critical thinking about the rights it includes.

Lesson 27: Contemporary Civic Dilemmas

Essential Questions:

- *How do differences within societies continue to create civic dilemmas and tensions in nations around the world today?*
- *How should societies integrate newcomers? How do newcomers develop a sense of belonging to the places where they have arrived?*
- *How can nations respond when their traditional national identities are challenged by global migration?*

Included Resources:

- * 27.1 – Reading: Integration and Exclusion in France
 - * 27.2 – Reading: Debating the Ban of the Veil in Public Schools
 - 27.3 – Reading: France Bans the Veil in Public Schools
 - * 27.4 – Reading: Three Parables for Integration
- * = core resource

Introduction:

Eleanor Roosevelt found hope in the similarities between people. “Those are the things we have to find and build on,” she wrote. Yet in the contemporary world, societies continue to be challenged by the differences between their members. How nations negotiate those differences is one way to measure the strength of a democracy. This lesson explores one particular civic dilemma—the recent debate in France over wearing Muslim headscarves in public schools—while simultaneously looking for connections to similar dilemmas in the communities and countries of your students.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, European leaders signed on to Human Rights treaties and made some provisions to protect minority populations—including the few remaining Jews who survived the atrocities of Nazi rule. Each country developed its own strategies for negotiating differences between groups within its borders. And yet, until the end of the 20th century, there remained unspoken assumptions about who was a European, who was a foreigner, and who belonged. Those assumptions began to change in the late 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century, when it became clear that the children and grandchildren of migrants and guest workers, many of them Muslims (practicing or not) from former colonies, were there to stay. National laws in some countries, like France, granted many in the second generation citizenship, while other countries debated their own policies. After Islamic extremists organized terrorist attacks in the U.S. on September 11, 2001, and later in Madrid and London, the debate took on a new urgency. Would and could these newcomers become Europeans, and if they did, would Europe itself change?

The first three resources in this lesson explore the specifics of the French headscarf debate while providing contemporary examples of several concepts students explored in the earlier in the course. Students should recognize contemporary dilemmas about the best way to respond to differences including questions of individual identity, national

identity, and different understandings of religious freedom in these resources. Hopefully, they will find a deeper understanding of what is at stake for both sides in this debate, rather than reflexively taking a position. Additionally, students should be encouraged to think about the tensions and dilemmas in their own country and communities that are reminiscent of the debate in France. How is global migration affecting their communities? What should immigrants be willing to give up in order to assimilate into their new communities? How should communities be willing to change in order to accommodate the differences emerging within them? These are dilemmas that must constantly be negotiated in the contemporary world. In this lesson's final resource, Jonathan Sacks provides the idea of "the home we build together" as a model for how we might aspire to resolve these tensions. Examining these dilemmas will help prepare students for this ongoing work as citizens in a 21st century democracy.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Have you ever been excluded because of your identity? What was the situation? What did you do about it?
- What do clothes say about the people who wear them? When do they become an expression of identity? Can the clothes we wear transform us?
- What kinds of symbols and clothes can generate conflict in your school? Why do you think they cause conflict?
- Who defines what one's clothing symbolizes? What actions and events might change the meaning of a symbol in a society?
- What aspects of your identity do you keep private in order to be accepted? What aspects of your identity are you willing to change to fit in?
- Have you been a guest at someone's home? At a hotel? What is the difference? To what extent do any of these models of integration represent how immigrants are treated in your community? Which model do you prefer? Why?
- How do newcomers learn to adapt to their new communities? To what extent should they have to change their lives, habits, and customs to fit in?
- How has migration changed your community? What might you find on the streets today that would not have been there without immigrants?

Additional Recommended Resources:

Resource Books (available from the Facing History and Ourselves website):

- [*What Do We Do with a Difference? France and the Debate over Headscarves in Schools*](#)
- [*Stories of Identity: Religion, Migration, and Belonging in a Changing World*](#)
- [*Identity and Belonging in a Changing Great Britain*](#)

Videos:

- [*Young, Muslim and French*](#)
- [*Civic Dilemmas Videos and Interviews*](#)

Websites:

- [Civic Dilemmas: Religion, Migration and Belonging](#)

Resource 27.1:**Reading: Integration and Exclusion in France***Creating Context*

In her newspaper column, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote about a soldier who wondered with her after World War II about why the nations of Europe had to go to war:

[A]nother soldier said to me: “I can’t think why [Europeans] had to fight each other. The language is a bar; but while our customs are different, all over, we seem to have a lot of things that are just the same.” That’s really a great discovery—“all over we have a lot of things that are just the same.” . . . Those are the things we have to find and build on, and those, I imagine, are the only things that can give us hope.”²⁰

Finding and building upon the “things that are just the same” continues to be a challenge not only between countries but also within countries. In today’s age of global migration, the shifting and increasingly diverse populations of many countries are challenging national identity and creating dilemmas of integration and exclusion.

France has experienced such civic dilemmas in recent decades as millions of immigrants have come to the country from North Africa. This change in the composition of French society has challenged traditional notions of what it means to be French. One development has been debate and controversy over the headscarf traditionally worn by Muslim women.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this resource:

guest worker	<i>banlieue</i>
assimilate	Maghreb
<i>Beur</i>	second-generation

“How are we supposed to be integrated into France when we are French?”

The majority of Muslim immigrants came to France as “guest workers” after World War II, during the booming economy of the 1950s and 1960s. They came from France’s North African colonies and, to a lesser extent, from Turkey and sub-Saharan Africa. These workers served in the least attractive jobs and were expected to return to their home countries after their work was completed (other European countries also saw similar migration from their former colonies). But despite a severe economic crisis in the mid-1970s and restrictive immigration laws, the French soon realized that the entry of mostly Arab immigrants was not going to stop and that these immigrants were in France to stay.

Although France does not keep public records about religious identity, it is believed that close to five million Muslims live in France today. Roughly a decade later, in the 1980s,

the sons and daughters of the first generation of immigrants came of age and began to assert their identity in France. In an effort to shake off old stereotypes, they called themselves *Beurs* (a slang inversion of the word *Arabe* in French) and demanded equality. But, like their parents, they struggled to assimilate into an inhospitable environment.

Social exclusion was at work as well: The government settled new immigrants and their families on the outskirts of France’s big cities and later gave them small and crowded apartments in housing projects. Recently, the *banlieues*, or suburban ghettos, have become known for crime, social unrest, and unemployment (which is estimated in these suburbs at 40 percent). In the 1980s, when the Beur generation began building its community’s institutions—religious, political, and commercial—its efforts were often met with hostility and resentment.

Many experienced an identity crisis: Were they French, or did they belong to the countries their parents came from? Were they primarily Maghrebian[†], Arab, Muslim, or French?

Houria (last name not given) was three months old when her family moved from Algeria to Lyon in 1954. She grew up between the first and second generations, and she struggled with the conflicts sparked by her Arab appearance in French society. Houria works as an assistant accountant in Paris and lives in a studio apartment by herself. During her interview with the novelist and essayist Tahar Ben Jelloun, she talked about the immigrant’s struggle to find a home:

No, I really don’t want to go to Algeria. It’s the last place I’d go to. Why? Nothing attracts me there. . . . I’d be on my guard all the time there. Here, apart from the cops in the métro, I don’t have to be on my guard. Here I know what to do, what’s expected of me. I know that if anything happens to me there’ll be people who’ll help me. . . .

In ’68 I wanted to go on a demonstration with my friends. My father said, “Do you really think you’re at home in France? What has what’s been going on here got to do with you?” . . . I remember it well. He was scandalized. I soon faced the facts: no, I wasn’t French. Though I don’t feel Algerian anymore.

And when I’m with French people I feel we haven’t much in common, either. Maybe just the lifestyle. Still, I always hang out with the Arabs, not the French. . .

My father thought he was doing the right thing [emigrating with his family to France]. But he really goofed! He wanted to give us an education—in the first place, to make sure we went to school. But now he knows he made a mistake:

[†] The Maghreb is a region of North Africa where three former French colonies are located—Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. Maghrebian immigrants and their sons and daughters form a growing minority in France.

none of his children want to go back to Algeria. And it's his fault if we don't speak Arabic properly. At home we spoke half Arabic and half French. My mother? . . . I believe she thinks it's best to take French nationality.

But we don't talk about that sort of thing at home. She's realized that, even for her, Algeria is a problem. She's always glad to come back to France after the vacation. It's true! What sort of a life is there in Algeria for an Arab woman who's lived in France for twenty-five years? . . .

My future? I've no idea. I can't see it clearly. Yes, I can see a house, with doors and windows and furniture, but I can't see what country it's in. Whenever I try to make out the actual country the whole thing disappears. I sometimes think about Canada or Australia. . . . No, it's just as well to be stateless.

But do they exist—people without a country? Where do they go to? Personally, I need a country—but a country where they don't ask about my family tree, where they don't want to know where I'm from and why I'm dark-skinned. Where they don't wonder if there are any schools and motorcars where I come from. . . .

No, no—I won't become French. . . . And I'll tell you why. Because we are the Jews of immigration, and I'm afraid, yes, afraid, that some day the French will do to us what they did to the Jews during the last war. . . . There are thousands and thousands of us that the immigration program didn't bargain for. And I, with my background, I'm only a drop in the ocean.²¹

Many believe that France's identity is challenged from both inside and out. From the inside, some fear that in the process of asserting their culture and religion, the Muslims in France will fragment their country's identity. From the outside, many fear that a more religious generation of Muslims will prefer ties with Islamic communities outside France. In fact, they are French citizens. But while young Muslims in Europe want to retain their identity, many wish to be integrated, as well.

27.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. In Reading 7.1 (“What is a Nation?”) Charles de Gaulle is quoted describing French national identity. How is de Gaulle's traditional version of French identity challenged by immigration in the past several decades?
2. Some French assert that their nation's identity is defined by the principles of *liberty*, *equality*, and *fraternity*, which were espoused during the French Revolution in the 1790s. How might these three principles guide citizens of

- France to think about their nation’s identity in light of contemporary immigration?
3. Many immigrants in France have come from former French colonies. How does that history complicate the relationship between them and the European French?
 4. Create an identity chart for Houria. What words does she use to describe herself? Use quotations and specific evidence from the reading to complete the chart. What changes can occur in her identity? What events and influences may cause changes in Houria’s chart?
 5. Houria’s speaks about feeling neither fully French nor fully Algerian. In Lesson 3, you learned about several others—Dalton Conley, Diane Chang, Jennifer Wang, Ifemoa Nwokoye, Assia and Iman Boundaoui, and Anna May Wong—who also felt caught between two facets of their identities. What similarities do you find between Houria’s dilemma and those faced by the others? What differences can you point to? Use evidence from the readings to support your response.
 6. Houria states, “it’s just as well to be stateless.” What evidence does Houria provide that suggests she is stateless?
 7. Why was Houria’s father scandalized about her proposed actions? What does this reveal about his views towards membership in France?
 8. What other groups have you learned about in this course that were also stateless? What does it mean to be a person without a country? Why might this be unsettling to Houria and others who share her experience?
 9. Do countries have an obligation to integrate “guest workers”? What about citizens whose parents were immigrants? What can countries do to foster integration?
 10. Have you ever been excluded because of your identity? What was the situation? What did you do about it?

Using Resource 27.1

Making Connections

This reading reintroduces several core themes about identity and membership, but in the context of contemporary France. The dilemmas described here are reminiscent of several of the first-hand accounts and historical narratives the class encountered earlier in the course. Therefore, students should be well-prepared to make a variety of connections. Consider using the [Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World](#) strategy to prompt them to think deeply about this resource.

Reflection and Discussion

Use the Comprehension & Connections questions to start your class discussion. Consider using one of a variety of effective discussion strategies, depending on the size and the needs of your particular class. [Think-Pair-Share](#), [Fishbowl](#), and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) are all strategies that could work well discussing this reading.

Resource 27.2:**Reading: Debating the Ban of the Veil in Public Schools***Creating Context*

In French politics and government, many believe in a tradition of secularism. According to this tradition, France maintains a strict separation of church and state. The people of France have the freedom to follow any faith, but they are asked to practice their religion for the most part in private.

At the beginning of the 1989 school year, three middle school girls decided to wear Muslim headscarves to school. Teachers at their school felt that this was a distraction, if not a violation, of France's tradition of excluding religion from public schools. For years Muslim veils had been a daily sight. But now they stirred up anxiety and anger as the mood in the country turned against this widespread Muslim custom. The controversy over Muslim headscarves in school has lasted for more than two decades since.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this resource:

secular**fundamentalism****radical****integration****terrorism**

“The girls who veil in France, especially the high school and junior high students, it’s first of all a question of identity, because these girls are born in France to foreign parents.” – Isma

French citizens found themselves grappling with a number of pressing issues at the beginning of the new millennium. In predominantly French-Maghrebian neighborhoods, social unrest relating to poverty and discrimination was on the rise, compounding ethnic conflicts stemming from the real and imaginary differences between these North African French and the European French. Meanwhile, religious tensions surrounding the presence of a large Muslim population in a secular state flared, intensified by growing fears of Islamic radicalism following 9/11 and other terrorist attacks in Europe.

While there are many state-funded Jewish and Catholic schools in France, there are only a handful of Muslim schools funded by the state. These tensions were especially sharp in public schools that had large numbers of Muslim students, and they soon seemed to focus on the Islamic veil. In a 2004 survey, roughly 70 percent of the nation felt that the veil was an obstacle to France's national unity, to its secular and democratic tradition, and to its security. Both Left and Right agreed: the veil had to be banned in public schools.

The year before, President Jacques Chirac had called on Bernard Stasi, a former minister, to head a commission to study the veil and other aspects of Muslim life that affected France's secular tradition. Lawmakers, school administrators, and the general public

expected drastic actions. However, little attention was paid to the question of why Muslim girls and women were wearing the veil. Sociologist Caitlin Killian attempted to answer this question. During the debate, she interviewed female Muslim immigrants about a range of related issues including racism, assimilation, school curriculums, and teachers' attitudes toward the veil (or, in the case of men, the beards some Muslims wear). The findings pointed to a broad spectrum of opinions regarding all of these issues. Focusing on the veil, Killian found, on the one hand, women who vigorously defended its ban in schools and, on the other, women who thought that the veil was a legitimate form of self-expression.

Some of the women Killian interviewed argued that there are much more urgent issues at school than the wearing of the veil (violence and poor behavior among them). According to others, the French are specifically targeting Muslim culture. They also thought that the proposed ban on headscarves in schools is driven by prejudice. Yusra, a 31-year-old Moroccan, explained:

I find that it's really an attitude on the part of teachers that is really racist, truly. That, for me, is a racist act. We cannot exclude girls because they wear the headscarf. . . . It's really pointing a finger at them, and then [at] the culture of the child, they say to her "your culture, it's not good." You don't have a right to judge like that.²²

While some of the interviewees viewed the French reaction to the headscarf affair as racist, others questioned the secularity of schools where most of the holidays and vacations revolved around the Catholic calendar.²³ Some went on to suggest that instead of ignoring or banning Islamic traditions, teachers could use them to educate about the cultural and religious diversity of France's students. Below are a few women's reflections:

Besma, a 34-year-old Tunisian:

I'm going to repeat what a lot of Arabs say, there are schools in France, or universities in France, where there are no exams on Saturday because it's the [Jewish] Sabbath, in the public schools, in the secular schools, and nobody talks about it. All that it takes is for the universities to agree. . . . The students manage to make an [informal] arrangement with the teachers. . . . On Friday, they eat a lean meal, meaning a meatless meal because Catholics don't eat meat on Friday. We do Lent Friday in school cafeterias, and nobody protests. Nobody finds anything to say. So I find it completely petty to hide behind arguments that don't hold up, that aren't at all convincing, and all of sudden there are different rules for different groups.

Nour, a 34-year-old Algerian:

[Y]ou know the secular school, it doesn't miss celebrating Easter, and when they celebrate Easter, it doesn't bother me. My daughter comes home with painted Easter eggs and everything; it's pretty; it's cute. There are classes that are over 80 percent Maghrebian in the suburbs, and they celebrate Easter, they celebrate

Christmas, you see? And that's not a problem for the secular school. And I don't find that fair. . . . I find that when it's Ramadan, they should talk about Ramadan.

Honestly, me, it wouldn't be a problem. On the contrary, someone who comes into class . . . with a veil, that would pose a question actually, that we could discuss in class, to know why this person wears the veil. . . . Why is it so upsetting to have someone in class who wears a veil, when we could make it a subject of discussion on all religions? Getting stuck on the veil hides the question. They make such a big deal out of it, the poor girls, they take them out of school; people turn them into extraterrestrials. In the end we turn them into people who will have problems in their identities, in their culture and everything. . . . For a country that is home to so many cultures, there's no excuse.²⁴

Some of the women Killian interviewed argued that the veil is a symbol of a new identity, especially for the second-generation immigrants who experience rejection in their daily life in France. The veil, they suggested, is the response of those who seek alternatives to the French national identity. Isma, a 36-year-old Algerian teacher who now teaches in France, had this to say:

The girls who veil in France, especially the high school and junior high students, it's first of all a question of identity, because these girls are born in France to foreign parents. . . . At a given time an adolescent wants to affirm himself, to show that he's someone, that he's an individual, so he thinks, I'd say, he thinks that it's by his clothes that he shows that he comes from somewhere [else], that he's someone [different]. So then, I think you should let them do it, and afterwards, by themselves, people come back to who they really are.²⁵

But other female immigrants argued that Muslims girls should assimilate or keep their traditions to themselves. Some felt that the veil promotes fundamentalism and intolerance, while others still saw it as a sign of female oppression:

Cherifa, a 44-year-old Moroccan:

I believe that if they have to wear the veil then they should do it at home. Me, I'd be a bit radical. I wouldn't make concessions, because if I want to wear a djellaba [Middle Eastern cloak]. . . then I should stay in my country. I feel that when you are somewhere, you try to blend in. There's an old Moroccan proverb that says "do as your neighbor [does] or leave." That means that I shouldn't come to France to affirm my convictions, be they cultural or religious and all. If I want to wear babouches [Moroccan slippers] and put on the veil . . . well I should stay in my country, or I blend in. Otherwise, if I'm in France, well I'm sorry, I dress like the French. If I eat with them, live with them, if I go to their schools, I don't see why I'd make myself be noticed because I want to wear, um, they should wear it when they're at home or at friends. I don't have anything against it. But when she's at school and everything, I don't think so. . . . No, I would totally agree with them outlawing the veil.²⁶

Deha, a 34-year-old Algerian:

I come from a school [in Algeria] where the veil was already starting. It's not the way she dresses; it's what she is herself. The way she dresses implies a lot of things; so there are no sports, philosophy is forbidden. . . . A girl who wears the veil [thinks that] she's pure and that the other who doesn't wear the veil, she's not pure. It's not that she's not pure; it's that she's a slut. You see? And it's there that you say to yourself, well, okay, the veil represents all of that.

Isma, a 36-year-old Algerian:

I'm not intolerant; myself, I've suffered from intolerance, but dressing like that, you become yourself intolerant, because you want to impose. I'm sorry to say it, but it's often the one who wants to show that he's more Muslim than the other; he wants to impose it.²⁷

Excerpted from "The Other Side of the Veil: North African Women in France Respond to the Headscarf Affair." Copyright © 2003 by Gender and Society. Reprinted with permission.

27.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. What ideas do you hear in the interviews regarding the veil, assimilation, and integration? What explanations did the women Killian interviewed offer for why some Muslim girls wear the veil? Cite evidence from the reading to support your answers.
2. What accounts for the differences in the opinions of the women Killian interviews about why some Muslim girls wear the veil?
3. According to the 2004 poll in France, what did a majority believe were the effects of Muslim girls wearing the veil in public? Do you think the veil is an obstacle to integration? What evidence can you find in the reading to support your answer?
4. In her interview, Nour said that discussing issues such as the veil creates an educational opportunity. What does she think students could gain from these conversations? What is lost when such issues are ignored? How do you create a classroom that allows for those kinds of frank discussions?
5. What do clothes say about the people who wear them? When do they become an expression of identity? Can the clothes we wear transform us?
6. During the civil rights movement in the United States, some African Americans wore a hairstyle called the Afro, which was considered an expression of black history, culture, and pride. When do expressions of identity become a protest?
7. To what extent should newcomers be required to change in order to conform to a nation's identity and become accepted? To what extent should the citizens of a

nation be willing to let their national identity change to reflect the differences that newcomers bring?

8. What aspects of your identity do you keep private in order to be accepted? What aspects of your identity are you willing to change to fit in?

Using Resource 27.2

Reflection and Discussion

Use the Comprehension & Connections questions to start your class discussion. Consider using one of a variety of effective discussion strategies, depending on the size and the needs of your particular class. [Think-Pair-Share](#), [Fishbowl](#), and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) are all strategies that could work well discussing this reading.

Considering Different Perspectives

This reading provides several interview excerpts from women who have a variety of perspectives on the headscarf ban in France. You might provide students the opportunity to consider one or all of the perspectives more deeply by having silent, written conversations. Copy each quotation from the reading onto its own piece of chart paper and let students annotate the text and write their observations and opinions as part of a [Gallery Walk](#) or [Big Paper](#) conversation.

Digging Deeper

The headscarf controversy in France is certainly a topic that warrants further study and discussion. Facing History has created an entire resource book, [What Do We Do With a Difference? France and the Debate Over Headscarves in Schools](#), that provides substantial background information and additional readings about this issue. You might find the following readings particularly useful for your class's examination of this topic:

- “What Does It Mean to Be French?”, p. 89
- “The Veil and a New Muslim Identity,” p. 102
- “A Brief History of the Veil in Islam,” p. 108
- “Public Schools: Where New Citizens Are Made,” p. 113

Recommended Film - *Young, Muslim, and French*

The film [Young, Muslim, and French](#) also provides additional background information about the growing Muslim population in France and the headscarf debate. The film can be [streamed from the PBS website](#) or borrowed from the Facing History library.

The first 19 minutes of the film (Parts 1 and 2 if you are watching online) are particularly helpful in setting up context for the headscarf ban. This clip also briefly profiles several young Muslim women in France who are facing dilemmas of identity similar to many of the women quoted in this lesson.

Resource 27.3:**Reading: France Bans the Veil in Public Schools***Creating Context*

What kinds of symbols and clothes can generate conflict in your school? Why do you think they cause conflict? Record your thoughts in your journal before reading.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this resource:

decolonization	imposition
<i>laïcité</i>	republican
discreet	divisive
ostentatious	conspicuous
proselytism	

“Secularism guarantees freedom of conscience. It protects the freedom to believe or not to believe.” – Jacques Chirac

When the Stasi Commission completed its survey, it recommended a series of actions to combat the social and religious tensions in the suburbs, including adding Jewish and Muslim religious holidays to the school calendar and emphasizing teaching about religion, slavery, and decolonization in North Africa. Other proposals included measures to improve life in immigrant neighborhoods and the implementation of a newly created charter of *laïcité* to be recited at naturalization ceremonies for new citizens.²⁸

Among the Commission’s recommendations was also a proposal to ban the veil in public schools, a measure that many felt should be central to a new law aimed at defending France’s secularity. President Chirac defended the proposal to ban the veil and other large religious symbols in schools. This was the only recommendation that the French legislature ended up adopting.

This was the right decision, Chirac argued, because the veil was an “aggressive” symbol and France could no longer accept “ostentatious signs of religious proselytism [trying to persuade people to follow a particular religion].”²⁹ In a nationally televised speech, Chirac also defended his vision of a unified, secular France:

Splitting society into communities cannot be the choice for France. It would be contrary to our history, traditions and culture. . . . Secularism guarantees freedom of conscience. It protects the freedom to believe or not to believe. It guarantees everyone the possibility of expressing and practicing their faith, peacefully and freely, without the threat of the imposition of other convictions or beliefs. It allows women and men from all corners of the globe, from all cultures, to be protected in their beliefs by the Republic and its institutions. . . .

Like all freedoms, freedom of expression of religious beliefs can be limited only by the freedom of the other and observance of the rules of life in society. Religious freedom, which our country respects and protects, cannot be hijacked. It cannot undermine the common rule. It cannot impinge on the freedom of conviction of others. It is this subtle, precious and fragile balance, patiently built up over decades, which respect for the principle of secularism ensures. And this principle is an opportunity for France. This is why it is set down in Article 1 of our Constitution. This is why it is not negotiable! . . .

We must also reaffirm secularism at school, because school must be completely protected. School is first and foremost the place where the values bequeathed to us all are acquired and passed on. The instrument par excellence for entrenching the republican idea . . . school is a republican sanctuary which we must defend. . . To protect our children, so that our youngsters are not exposed to divisive ill winds, which drive people apart and set them against one another. . . .

In all conscience, I consider that the wearing of clothes or signs which conspicuously denote a religious affiliation must be prohibited at school.

Jacques Chirac served for 12 years as the president of France (1995–2007) and sought legislation that banned the headscarf in French schools, as he felt that it threatened the secularity of the state.

Discreet signs, for example a cross, a Star of David or Hand of Fatima,[‡] will of course remain allowed. On the other hand, conspicuous signs, i.e., those which stand out and immediately denote religious affiliation, must not be tolerated. These—the Islamic veil, regardless of the name you give it, the Kippa, or a cross of a clearly excessive size—have no place in state schools. State schools will remain secular. . . . It is to make the young people involved understand what is at stake and protect them from influences and passions which, far from liberating them or allowing them to make free choices, constrain or threaten them. . . . On the other hand—and the question has been raised—I do not think it necessary to add new national holidays to the school calendar, which already has many. . . .

I very solemnly proclaim: the Republic will oppose everything which divides, everything which discourages participation, and everything which excludes! The rule is “everyone together” because this places everyone on an equal footing, because it refuses to distinguish on the grounds of sex, origin, colour or religion.³⁰

Muslim leaders protested the law as an attack on their religion, and demonstrations took place in France and in other countries. But within a year, the public row subsided. Reporter Adam Sage summarized its effect:

[‡] The Hand of Fatima, or Hamsah (literally means “five” in Arabic and Hebrew), is a charm that looks like a human hand. The name refers to Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad. It is believed to bring good luck and to protect its owner from the “evil eye.”

In the year since the law was implemented 626 girls have arrived for lessons wearing a Muslim headscarf—compared with 1,465 over the previous 12 months and more than 5,000 at the start of the decade. Of these, 496 agreed to remove them when summoned for a talk with the head teacher. A further 45 refused and were expelled.³¹

Many of these girls were placed in Catholic schools, which permit religious symbols. Others accepted the law. Sage interviewed Fathima, who was 16 in 2005. She said that she had learned to respect the law: “In the end I really don’t think it was a bad law at all. I wear my *voile* until I get to the school gates and then I take it off. School is not a place for religion. It is a place where we are all French and we are all equal. After lessons, I put the scarf back on again. There’s no difficulty.”³² Moreover, soon after the law went into effect, the so-called Islamic Army in Iraq kidnapped two French journalists and demanded that President Jacques Chirac overturn the ban if he wished to spare their lives.

The vast majority of French Muslims condemned these actions and called for the unconditional release of the hostages. But while the protest against the law subsided, the social unrest in the *banlieues* did not. On the evening of October 27, 2005, the police attempted to stop a group of French Muslim teenagers who were playing soccer in a field next to high-rise projects in Clichy-sous-Bois (one of the poorest banlieue neighborhoods near Paris). Though no crime was committed, a deadly chase ensued, and two young French Muslims who scaled an electrical substation were electrocuted.³³ News of the deaths spread rapidly via text messages, cell phones, and chat rooms. Sporadic clashes that started in Clichy-sous-Bois quickly spread to the nearby suburbs, then to nearby towns, and finally to all major cities across the country. Over the next two weeks, fires raged across France’s suburbs, leaving behind a trail of charred cars, shopping centers, police stations, schools, and other symbols of the French state. In 2010, two French police officers were accused of failing to help the two teenagers whose deaths touched off the riots, and in 2010 they were charged with a crime as a result. However, in 2011, a French appeals court dismissed their cases. Tensions have remained high in the *banlieues*.

27.3 Comprehension & Connections

1. Why did President Chirac think that public schools must be protected from the influence of religion? Summarize his argument in favor of the ban.
2. What does the phrase “ostentatious signs of religious proselytism” mean? Why did President Chirac think that such signs were splitting French society into separate communities?

3. Analyze Chirac’s language. What words and phrases does he use to make his argument more convincing? Do you think he succeeds?
4. What did the law achieve? What did it fail to achieve? How did the Muslim population respond to it?

Using Resource 27.3

Reflection and Discussion

In this lesson, students have explored a complex civic dilemmas regarding differences in society, and they have been exposed to a variety of perspectives about that dilemma. It is likely, many students have formed their own perspectives about the headscarf ban, and some may have even changed their minds as they have delved deeper into this topic. At this point, it will likely be helpful to structure an activity that gives space for all students to express their opinions, while demanding that others practice listening. Consider using the Comprehension and Connections questions as the basis for a [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) or [Save the Last Word](#) For Me activity.

Bringing the Discussion Up To Date

Since the ban on headscarves in French school went into effect in 2007, the country as also made wearing the Muslim veil, covering a woman’s entire face, in public illegal. Several other countries have also instituted limitations or bans on Islamic veils, burkas, and headscarves. You might extend this lesson by exploring some of these additional laws. The following two articles will help you get started:

- [“French face veil ban goes into effect”](#) (Washington Post)
- [“The Islamic Veil Across Europe”](#) (BBC)

Resource 27.4:**Reading: Three Parables For Integration*****Creating Context***

How should societies integrate newcomers? You have learned about how France answers this question, in part, by asking citizens to put aside some symbols of religious differences in public in order to try to create a shared national identity for all.

What other paths might a society choose to integrate newcomers? How do newcomers develop a sense of belonging to the places where they have arrived? Record your thoughts about these questions before reading how Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, begins to answer them.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this resource:

assimilation

integration

In his book *The Home We Build Together*, Jonathan Sacks, a leader in the Jewish community and an advisor to politicians and policymakers, offers three different parables about the relationship between newcomers and their host societies as a way to provoke discussion about assimilation and integration.

In the first, a hundred strangers have been wandering around the countryside in search of a place to stay. Eventually they arrive at the gate of a large country house. The owner comes to the gate, sees the strangers and asks them who they are. They tell him their story. He gives them a warm smile. “How good to see you,” he says. “As you can see, I have an enormous home. Far too big for me, actually. There are hundreds of empty rooms. Please feel free to stay here as long as you like. I look forward to your company. From now on consider yourself my guests.”

A lovely story. But not entirely so for the strangers in the long run. They have a place to live, and yes, their host is exactly as he seemed at first, welcoming, hospitable. . . . However there is only one thing wrong as far as they are concerned. However generous their host, he remains the host and they are his guests. The place belongs to someone else. That is society as a country house.

The second: A hundred strangers in search of a home find themselves in the middle of a big city. They are there to find a hotel. It is large, comfortable, and has every amenity. The visitors have money enough to pay the hotel bills. They book their rooms, unpack, and stay.

The rules are simple. They are free to do what they like, so long as they don't disturb the other guests. Their relationship with the hotel is purely contractual. They pay money in return for certain services. . . .

The hotel offers the newcomers a freedom and equality they did not have in the first model. They are guests, but so is everyone else. There is only one problem. A hotel is where you stay, not where you belong. You feel no loyalty to a hotel. You don't put down roots there. It doesn't become part of your identity. . . . Yes, after a while you recognize your fellow guests. You bid them good morning. You discuss the weather and football. But it remains a place where everyone is, in the biblical phrase, "a stranger and sojourner." That is society as a hotel.

The third: A hundred strangers arrive at a town. They are met by the mayor, councilors and local residents. The mayor says: "Friends, we welcome you. It is good to have you among us. Sadly, as you can see, there is no country house where we might accommodate you. There is, though, something we can offer you.

"We have a patch of empty land: large enough to accommodate homes for all of you. We have bricks and materials. We have experts who can help you design your homes, and we will help you build them. . . . Let us do this together."

So it happens. Unlike the country house, the newcomers have to build their own long-term accommodation. Unlike the hotel, they do not merely pay. They invest their energies in what they build. . . . They helped build it.

Sacks explains that it won't always be easy.

The newcomers still occasionally seem strange. They speak and act and dress differently than the locals. But those long sessions of working together have had their effect. The locals know the newcomers are serious, committed, dedicated. They have their own ways, but they have also learned the ways of the people of the town, and they have worked out . . . a rough and ready friendship. . . . Making something together breaks down walls of suspicion and misunderstanding. . . . That is society as the home we build together.³⁴

27.4 Comprehension & Connections

1. Sacks offers three parables as metaphors for types of integration. What is the moral he is trying to teach?
2. Have you been a guest at someone's home? At a hotel? What is the difference? To what extent do any of these models of integration represent how immigrants are treated in your community? Which model do you prefer? Why?

3. Which of Sacks's models for integration do you think France uses in affirming a secular society and banning Muslim headscarves and veils? Explain your answer by using specific evidence from all of the resources in this lesson.
4. How do newcomers learn to adapt to their new communities? To what extent should they have to change their lives, habits, and customs to fit in?
5. Visiting Germany in February 2008, Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan encouraged an audience of Turkish immigrants to integrate in German society but stressed that they should resist assimilation. He proclaimed assimilation "a crime against humanity." What do you think he meant? What is the difference between assimilation and integration?
6. Why do you think Sacks advocates for the third parable, the home we build together? What does he see as the advantages of that model? Why does Sacks believe the third model "won't always be easy"? Do you agree? What can be done by either host communities or newcomers to foster integration?
7. Some critics have suggested that Sacks's three models fail to acknowledge the dangers of terrorism and extremist ideology. The transit bombings in Madrid (2004) and London (2005) gave rise to concerns that newcomers may have ideas and values that are dangerous and cannot be integrated. How do you think Sacks would respond to those concerns? How should those concerns influence the way people think about the best way to integrate newcomers? What should communities do if migrants break the rules of their new community?
8. How has migration changed your community? What might you find on the streets today that would not have been there without immigrants?

Using Resource 27.4

Extending Thinking Through Writing

Question 3 above can easily be adapted into a prompt for a [formal writing assignment](#). You might use the other questions (and the Creating Context content) for pre-writing activities, and make sure to provide the opportunity for students to share their conclusions and selections from their writing after the assignment is finished.

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- ¹ “Talaat is Mourned as Germany’s Friend,” *New York Times*, March 18, 1921.
- ² “Talaat Pasha Slain in Berlin Suburb,” *New York Times*, March 16, 1921.
- ³ “Assassin Boasts of Talaat’s Death,” *New York Times*, March 17, 1921.
- ⁴ “Says Mother’s Ghost Ordered Him to Kill,” *New York Times*, June 3, 1921.
- ⁵ Samantha Power, *“A Problem from Hell”: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 1.
- ⁶ Details about the Armenian Genocide can be found in Facing History’s resource book entitled *Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians* (Brookline: Facing History and Ourselves, 2004).
- ⁷ J. Michael Hagopian’s documentary *Germany and the Secret Genocide*, VHS (Thousand Oaks: Armenian Film Foundation, 2003) discusses the involvement of Germany (Turkey’s wartime ally) in the Armenian Genocide. The film is available at the Facing History Lending Library.
- ⁸ Robert Merrill Bartlett, *They Stand Invincible: Men Who Are Reshaping Our World* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1959), 96-97. The story is also vividly told by Power in *A Problem from Hell*, 17.
- ⁹ Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Zed Books, 2004) 185-90.
- ¹⁰ For details on these trials, see Gary Jonathan Bass, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 106-46. On Lemkin’s reaction to the trials, see Steven L. Jacobs, “Raphael Lemkin and the Armenian Genocide,” in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 127.
- ¹¹ Raphael Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial Man: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin*, in *Pioneers of Genocide Studies*, ed. Steven L. Jacobs and Samuel Totten (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 2002), 371.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Winston Churchill, *Never Give In! The Best of Winston Churchill’s Speeches* (New York: Hyperion, 2003), 299-300.
- ¹⁴ Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide*.
- ¹⁵ Eleanor Roosevelt, “Speech before Women’s Division of the United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York,” in *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, ed. Black, 255–58.
- ¹⁶ Roosevelt, *My Day*, February 16, 1946.
- ¹⁷ Roosevelt, *My Day*, February 18, 1946.
- ¹⁸ Eleanor Roosevelt, “Speech before Women’s Division of the United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York,” in *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, ed. Black, 255–58.
- ¹⁹ Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, December 22, 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project Website, George Washington University, <http://tinyurl.com/63lslu>, accessed October 24, 2008.
- ²⁰ Roosevelt, *My Day*, February 18, 1946.
- ²¹ Tahar Ben Jelloun, *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 92–94.
- ²² Quoted in Caitlin Killian, “The Other Side of the Veil: North African Women in France Respond to the Headscarf Affair,” *Gender and Society*, 17, no. 4 (August 2003): 577.
- ²³ Killian, “The Other Side of the Veil,” 577.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 578.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 579.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 582.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 583.
- ²⁸ Paul A. Silverstein, “Headscarves and the French Tricolor,” the Middle East Reports website, January 30, 2004, <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero013004.html> (accessed April 23, 2008).
- ²⁹ Jon Henley, “Something Aggressive About Veils, Says Chirac,” the Guardian (December 6, 2003), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/france/story/0,11882,1101321,00.html> (accessed March 20, 2007).
- ³⁰ Jacques Chirac, “Principle of Secularism in the Republic” (speech, Paris, France, December 17, 2003), Embassy of France in the United States website, <http://www.info-france->

usa.org/news/statmnts/2003/chirac_secularism121703.asp (accessed November 27, 2007). The teaching week—much like the workweek—and the holidays in France follow the Christian calendar.

³¹ Adam Sage, “Headscarf Ban Is Judged Success as Hostility Fades,” the Times Online (September 5, 2005), www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article562622.ece (accessed January 3, 2008).

³² Ibid.

³³ Molly Moore, “Anger Erupts in Paris Suburb after Deaths of Muslim Boys; Teenagers Were Electrocuted While Trying to Avoid Police,” the Washington Post, November 2, 2005,

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2005/11/01/AR2005110101761.html> (accessed November 27, 2007); Thomas Crampton, “Behind the Furor, the Last Moments of Two Youths,” the New York Times, November 7, 2005,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/07/international/europe/07youths.html/partner/rssnyt?ex=1164949200&en=3fbda36a57bfd0e3&ei=5070> (accessed November 27, 2007).

³⁴ Jonathan Sacks, *The Home We Build Together* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 14–15.

Section 12: Choosing to Participate

Essential Questions

- *What actions can we take to make a positive difference addressing problems far away in the world?*
- *What makes a community more respectful and caring for everyone? What actions can take to ensure that your community is a more respectful place?*
- *How has this course helped you become more human and make more humane choices?*

Lessons

Section 12 includes the following lesson:

- Lesson 28: Responding to Human Suffering and Global Injustice
- Lesson 29: Strengthening Community
- Lesson 30: Reflecting on the Journey

Overview

When students studied the Weimar Republic in Section 4, they were asked to think about the following question: “What must citizens do and value in order for a democracy to thrive?” One of our goals for investigating the failure of Weimar and the rise of the Nazis was to help students understand that democracy is a process, not a product. It requires constant participation, voice, action, and upstanding by its citizens in order to thrive. By learning about the mass violence and gross injustices of Holocaust, students glimpsed the high stakes involved in protecting democracy on a daily basis.

In this final section, students will consider what it means to nurture democracy and respond to injustice in their daily lives. Doing so begins by finding the courage to take a stand. At a Facing History event in Los Angeles, Luis, a student from Garfield High School, asked, “How does a person build up the courage to stand up and say, ‘That’s wrong?’” Throughout this Facing History journey, students have been developing a vocabulary they can use to address Luis’ question, and the purpose of this section is to provide opportunities for students to apply what they have learned as they consider what it means to “choose to participate.” What tools do “upstanders” - individuals with the courage to stand up to injustice – employ in their efforts to make change? What is at stake in their decisions to act, for the individual and the larger community? What motivates their actions? How do upstanders define their universes of responsibility?

In this section, students will encounter a variety of resources and case studies that illuminate what Harvard Law School Dean Martha Minow calls the “levers of power”—the tools available to individuals and groups seeking to fight hatred, prevent genocide, and strengthen democracy. While civic education is often limited to instruction about the basic foundations of democratic governance, these case studies reveal how the structures of civil society can be used by individuals and groups in their efforts to create positive change. Clearly, there are many ways to explore questions about participation and

responsibility with students. The lessons in this section focus on “choosing to participate” at a global, national and local levels. We encourage you to use these lessons and resources in a manner that is most appropriate given your students’ interests and your teaching context (i.e. how much time you have, the topics students explore in their other classes, etc).

Lesson 28 focuses on participation in response to mass suffering and injustice on a global scale. The lesson explores why it is difficult to get people involved in movements to prevent or stop genocide and alleviate pain and suffering. Students will also learn about practical, local steps they can take to make a difference in the lives of those in far away countries.

Lesson 29 brings the focus closer to home. How can students become involved in making their communities stronger and their schools safer? This lesson uses case studies of communities responding to hate crimes and teenagers responding to bullying in order to prompt students to think about the variety of actions they can take to make a positive difference.

Finally, Lesson 30 is designed to help students reflect on all that they have learned in this course. A discussion about democracy and choices is framed by the poetry of Langston Hughes and Robert Frost. Students also return to the “Dear Teacher” letter they read in the opening lessons of this course in order to reflect on what they have learned, not only about history but also about how we might become more human and act more humanely.

Background Information

To support the teaching of this section, we strongly recommend reading or viewing the following resources:

- Chapter 11 in the resource book, [*Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*](#)
- The Facing History resource book, [*Choosing to Participate*](#)

Lesson 28: Responding to Human Suffering and Global Injustice

Essential Questions:

- ***What does it take to get people to respond to suffering and injustice?***
- ***What actions can we take to make a positive difference addressing problems far away in the world?***

Included Resources:

- * 28.1 – Reading: From Sympathy to Action
 - * 28.2 – Reading: What Can We Do To Help?
- * = core resource

Introduction:

After learning about the Holocaust and its institutional legacies—the United Nations, the Genocide Convention, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—the fact that genocide, mass violence, and significant human suffering continue to occur in the contemporary world is particularly vexing. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to learn about some examples of human suffering and global injustice in the contemporary world, and they will also learn about the variety of ways that individuals and organizations are confronting these phenomena.

As students engage in the content of this lesson, they will likely wonder: If most nations around the world signed the Genocide Convention, why do genocides still occur? Why isn't more done to stop them?

The scholar Samantha Power, author of *A Problem from Hell: America & the Age of Genocide*, has suggested that one of the reasons genocides continue to occur is because leaders have not placed victims of genocide within their nation's universe of obligation. Just as some individuals may not feel a responsibility to protect all people in all situations, nations, also, make choices about their obligations. She argues that governments have a "toolbox" at their disposal – with each tool in this toolbox representing a different kind of intervention to stop genocide (e.g. economic sanctions, condemnation, military intervention, etc). The problem has been, however, that too often governments and international bodies fail to open these toolboxes.

According to Power, the systems, or toolboxes, that may have been designed to prevent genocide far too often "shut down" at precisely the moment when they need to operate. The goal is to envision "toolboxes" that can stay open, and influence the decision-making process of nations and the international community. An awareness that there are tools available to prevent genocide can lead us to think about the tools that are within our grasp to stop other acts of hate and violence. What are these tools and what might motivate a student, teacher, parent or community member to use them? What might encourage someone to feel responsible for using these tools to improve their community – local, national or global?

The lesson begins with an article by *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof that investigates the difficulty of inspiring well-meaning individuals to open these toolboxes and take action. Kristof’s insights not only provide additional detail to our understanding of bystanders (especially in response to incidents from which they are far removed), but he also provides insight to upstanders about how they might more successfully inspire others to join their causes.

The second reading in this lesson features a graduate student, Leana Wen, who won a contest to travel with Kristof around Africa. Students will read a blog post Wen wrote from Africa about how people in the United States can help victims of suffering on the other side of the world. Her suggestions—educate yourself, educate others, take action—provide a simple, but useful framework for students inspired to get involved in efforts to end genocide, fight injustice, and alleviate suffering.

In addition to these readings, this lesson provides a variety of suggested resources you might use to help your students deepen their understanding of contemporary genocides, human rights abuses, and other injustices. One resource we recommend using to call attention to activists’ work in the area of genocide prevention is the documentary *Darfur Now*. This film showcases the different strategies used by six individuals in their struggle to end the suffering in the Darfur region of Sudan, and the factors that motivate their work. Although we do not expect students to draw a direct connection between their experiences and those of the activists in the film, they might be able to connect to specific motivations, values, feelings, and ideas expressed by individuals in the film. For example, students may be motivated to take action because of an event from their family’s history, just as Adam Sterling’s activism is inspired in part by his family’s experience during the Holocaust. Identifying these connections can help students gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the role they hope to play in their community and in the larger society. Thinking about how the activists profiled in *Darfur Now* define their universe of responsibility can encourage students to think about how they define their universe of responsibility. Who do they feel responsible for helping and protecting? Why?

The section at the end of this lesson, “Exploring Contemporary Examples of Genocide, Suffering, and Injustice,” provides links to additional resources that you might use to help your students monitor events in the world today. We encourage you to follow your students’ interests and passions in selecting resources for your class.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What warnings does a study of the Weimar Republic and the steps leading to the Holocaust provide to people living today? How can we respond to these warnings?
- What are the challenges to stopping and preventing genocide?
- What motivates individuals to take action to stop and prevent genocide? What motivates leaders and nations to take action to stop and prevent genocide?

Additional Recommended Resources:

Resource Books (available from the Facing History and Ourselves website):

- [*Teaching Reporter*](#)
- [*Genocide and Eliminationism: A study guide to accompany the film Worse Than War*](#)

Videos (Available from Facing History Library):

- [*Reporter*](#)
- [*Worse Than War*](#)
- [*Darfur Now*](#)

Websites:

- [*The Enough Project*](#)
- [*Nicholas Kristof's New York Times Homepage*](#)
- [*"On the Ground": Nicholas Kristof's blog*](#)
- [*The Genocide Intervention Network*](#)
- [*Committee on Conscience*](#)
- [*Be The Change: Upstanders for Human Rights*](#)

Facing History Lesson Plans

- [*Darfur Now Four-Lesson Unit*](#)

Resource 28.1:**Reading: From Sympathy to Action***Creating Context*

What does it take for people to get involved? In studies of rescuers during genocide, Ervin Staub states,

Goodness, like evil, often begins in small steps. Heroes evolve; they aren't born. Very often the rescuers make only a small commitment at the start—to hide someone for a day or two. But once they had taken that step, they began to see themselves differently, as someone who helps. What starts as mere willingness becomes intense involvement.¹

Sometimes it is difficult to persuade potential upstanders to make even small commitments to act against injustice. *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristoff has been one of the most prominent journalists trying to arouse the consciences of Americans to respond to suffering, injustice, and genocide around the world in the past decade. He was one of the first members of the press to shine the spotlight on the genocide occurring in the Darfur region of Sudan. In the reading below, he explores why it can be so difficult to get people to respond to others' suffering.

Before reading, consider these questions for yourself:

- What does it take to get people to fight against suffering, injustice, and genocide?
- What factors prompt people to get involved?
- What factors might prompt people to turn away?

Review your notes from your journal in *Section 9: Upstanders and Bystanders* to help guide your reflections to these questions.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

humanitarian	indignation
galvanize	psychic
conscientious	innate
famine	rationality
tapestry	empathy
flummox	

Many of us have been in situations where we wanted to help people in need but did not act. When asked why they didn't act, people often say that they were not sure what to do and did not know how to make a difference. Such feelings are often magnified when the injustice is thousands of miles away. In his 2007 article "Save the Darfur Puppy," *New York Times* columnist Nicholas D. Kristof summarizes the challenges of motivating

people to take action during a humanitarian crisis, and he describes the power of individual stories to open people's eyes to greater injustices:

Finally, we're beginning to understand what it would take to galvanize President Bush, other leaders and the American public to respond to the genocide in Sudan: a suffering puppy with big eyes and floppy ears.

That's the implication of a series of studies by psychologists trying to understand why people—good, conscientious people—aren't moved by genocide or famines. Time and again, we've seen that the human conscience just isn't pricked by mass suffering, while an individual child (or puppy) in distress causes our hearts to flutter.

In one experiment, psychologists asked ordinary citizens to contribute \$5 to alleviate hunger abroad. In one version, the money would go to a particular girl, Rokia, a 7-year-old in Mali; in another, to 21 million hungry Africans; in a third, to Rokia—but she was presented as a victim of a larger tapestry of global hunger.

Not surprisingly, people were less likely to give to anonymous millions than to Rokia. But they were also less willing to give in the third scenario, in which Rokia's suffering was presented as part of a broader pattern.

Evidence is overwhelming that humans respond to the suffering of individuals rather than groups

Even the right animal evokes a similar sympathy. A dog stranded on a ship aroused so much pity that \$48,000 in private money was spent trying to rescue it—and that was before the Coast Guard stepped in. And after I began visiting Darfur in 2004, I was flummoxed by the public's passion to save a red-tailed hawk, Pale Male, that had been evicted from his nest on Fifth Avenue in New York City. A single homeless hawk aroused more indignation than two million homeless Sudanese.

Advocates for the poor often note that 30,000 children die daily of the consequences of poverty—presuming that this number will shock people into action. But the opposite is true: the more victims, the less compassion.

In one experiment, people in one group could donate to a \$300,000 fund for medical treatments that would save the life of one child—or, in another group, the lives of eight children. People donated more than twice as much money to help save one child as to help save eight.

Likewise, remember how people were asked to save Rokia from starvation? A follow-up allowed students to donate to Rokia or to a hungry boy named Moussa. Both Rokia and Moussa attracted donations in the same proportions. Then another

group was asked to donate to Rokia and Moussa together. But donors felt less good about supporting two children, and contributions dropped off.

“Our capacity to feel is limited,” Paul Slovic of the University of Oregon writes in a new journal article, “Psychic Numbing and Genocide,” which discusses these experiments. Professor Slovic argues that we cannot depend on the innate morality even of good people. Instead, he believes, we need to develop legal or political mechanisms to force our hands to confront genocide.

One experiment underscored the limits of rationality. People prepared to donate to the needy were first asked either to talk about babies (to prime the emotions) or to perform math calculations (to prime their rational side). Those who did math donated less.

So maybe what we need isn’t better laws but more troubled consciences—pricked, perhaps, by a Darfur puppy with big eyes and floppy ears. . . .²

28.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. In “Save the Darfur Puppy,” Kristof describes a series of studies about why people do not reach out to help victims of genocide or famine. What does the research suggest? Go back and underline the phrases and sentences that summarize the most important findings of these studies.
2. “Save the Darfur Puppy” is an editorial. What words does Kristof use that indicate he is expressing his opinion? What is his reaction to the research findings? How do you know?
3. What do you think Kristof hopes people will do after reading his editorial? What evidence is there to help you answer this question?
4. According to Kristof, what role does one’s conscience play in deciding one’s circle of responsibility?
5. Look back on the stories of upstanders and bystanders during the Holocaust that you learned about in Section 9. Which of those stories are consistent with the suggestions of the research Kristof writes about? Which of those stories seem to refute the research?
6. Do you agree with the suggestions of the research Kristof describes? Do you find numbers and statistics or individual stories to be more powerful in describing suffering and injustice? What does each add to the story? Which is more likely to motivate you to take action?

7. What role does empathy play in creating upstanders? How does one develop empathy? Can it be taught?
8. Why do you think some people reach out to people in need while others remain bystanders? What types of information would you use to try to convince others to act against a specific instance of human suffering and injustice?

Using Resource 28.1

Reflection and Analysis

The research that is summarized in this resource may contain some findings that feel logical to students, some that are surprising, and others that are confusing. To help students organize their thinking about these ideas, consider using the [3-2-1 teaching strategy](#). You can ask students to record in their journals

three important details that they encountered in their reading
two surprising research findings
one question that remains for them about what motivates people to get involved

Follow this activity with a class discussion, using the [Think, Pair, Share](#) strategy to get it started.

Making Connections

By this point in the course, students have encountered numerous stories about people who responded to incidents of injustice and human suffering by either intervening or looking away. Consider asking students (as Question 3 suggests) to think about one or more of those stories in light of the research they learned about from this resource. You might also encourage students to make further connections with the contemporary world and their own lives by using the [Text-Text, Text-Self, Text-World](#) teaching strategy.

Video: Reporter

This resource is excerpted from Facing History’s guide to [the film Reporter](#) (available from the Facing History library), which follows journalist Nicholas Kristof as he researches and writes about human rights for *The New York Times*. To deepen the discussion of why people hesitate to act, consider showing chapters 3 and 4 of the video. In this clip, Stephen Colbert asks Kristof on *The Colbert Report*, “Why should we pay attention to the rest of the world?” Kristof answers this question by referring to social science research about “the psychology of compassion” and explains how he applies this knowledge when writing about the genocide in Darfur.

“Investigation One” (pp. 15-22) from [the Facing History guide to Reporter](#) includes additional background information about the research Kristof cites. This information can

easily be copied and shared with your students.

Video: *Worse Than War*

The documentary [Worse Than War](#) includes a short section (about six minutes) exploring “what moves us to act” to stop genocide. Scholar Daniel Jonah Goldhagen suggests in the film that the “key to getting us to act is to identify with the victims.” He explains that if we could see the victims as members of our own families, we would feel the urgency to demand that our political leaders act to protect the innocent.

The film can be [streamed from pbs.org](#) or [borrowed from the Facing History library](#). Show the clip from, roughly, 1:40 to 1:46. Pages 41-42 of the Facing History guide to the film, [Genocide and Eliminationism](#), can help guide your class discussion of the film.

Resource 28.2:**Reading: What Can We Do to Help?***Creating Context*

Think about the following statement:

Teenagers can make a real difference in the lives of people who need help in far away parts of the world.

Do you agree or disagree? Copy the statement and write a brief explanation of your response in your journal before reading.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

dissident

mobilization

asylum

activism

stigma

In the spring of 2007, Leana Wen, a medical student, applied to win a trip to central Africa with *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof. In her winning essay, she writes, “I want to fight these injustices and change the world.” She believes that traveling with Kristof will give her some tools to do this. Wen’s desire to fight injustice comes from personal experience. She explains:

My upbringing exposed me to injustices firsthand. Raised in a dissident family in China, I came to the US on political asylum after the Tiananmen Square massacre.* We were outsiders in a Communist regime and remained outsiders in predominantly Mormon Utah and then inner-city Los Angeles. Though Shanghai, Logan, and Compton have little else in common, they all bear witness to the differences between the haves and have-nots, and I grew up keenly aware of the impact of political, cultural, and socioeconomic oppression. As a child with life-threatening asthma and debilitating speech impediment, I also confronted the stigma of disability and the challenges of seeking health care with limited resources. Yet the mechanisms to address injustices eluded me.³

Wen decided to become a doctor so that she could “help those most in need.” Yet during her first few years in the medical profession, she “witnessed more problems than found solutions.”⁴ Frustrated, she arrived at the following belief: “Global change requires more

* In 1989, thousands of demonstrators, many of them students, gathered in the largest public square in the world—Tiananmen Square in Beijing—to protest against the Chinese government in favor of democratic reform. The “Tiananmen Square massacre” refers to the government’s crackdown on protesters, which resulted in an unknown number of deaths, with estimates ranging from 100 to 3,000 (<http://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/21/world/a-reassessment-of-how-many-died-in-the-military-crackdown-in-beijing.html>).

than pills and individual-level change: it hinges on concerted education and mobilization.”⁵ While in central Africa with Kristof, Wen elaborated on this idea in the blog entry “What Can We Do to Help?” Her broad suggestions—educate yourself, educate others, and take action—can be applied to help solve any problem, from global poverty to neighborhood hate crimes.

The following post was written by medical student Leana Wen and published on the *New York Times* blog [“Two for the Road: In Africa with Nick Kristof”](http://twofortheroad.blogs.nytimes.com) (twofortheroad.blogs.nytimes.com) on June 27, 2007.

“What Can We Do to Help?”

Posted by: L. Wen Date: 06/27/2007

One of the most common comments we get goes: “What can I do to help? You guys talk so much about the problems, and now I want to do something.” I don’t like to bring up problems without proposing solutions. In this second-to-last entry, I propose concrete action steps to channel passion and idealism into activism and action.

Be forewarned that I don’t think that giving money is usually the best way to help. I believe that education, awareness, and tangible actions multiply many times over. They are actions that, during your lifetime, will far outweigh infrequent monetary contributions. An aid worker at HEAL Africa summarized my thoughts when she said, “It’s too easy to give money and feel like you’ve helped. Doing something shouldn’t be about relieving your guilty conscience.” That said, there are many humanitarian organizations doing great things that rely on donor funds, and I do hope that you consider supporting them. I am just proposing other ways to help beyond monetary contributions.

1) Educate yourself

Exposure to and understanding of issues is the most important and most fundamental step of “doing something” to help. Broaden your understanding through reading and traveling. Your voice as an activist will be much stronger if assertions are backed by evidence, and if your passion and conviction is grounded in reality. . . .

2) Educate others

Once you understand the issues and have spent time abroad, use your social and professional networks to educate others and share ideas. You have more networks than you might think. Forward articles to help educate family and friends. Join discussion forums. If you worked abroad or spent time researching an issue, seek opportunities in your community to give talks. . . .

3) Take action

Assist existing humanitarian aid groups. There are many excellent aid organizations worthy of your investment or volunteer time. . . . Lobby your

legislators. It's not because of politicians that the US is not doing enough to help Africa or to stop the war in Congo. It's because we have not, as a country, expressed interest in global issues. . . . Ultimately it is us who will propel our government to action.

Finally, remember that problems don't exist just in Africa; injustices exist everywhere. Social activism is not limited just to the places "over there"; there are many opportunities to assist no matter where you are. Insecurity is not limited just to war-torn areas; there are destructive people and destructive values that exist in our own backyard. There is a lot we can do by assisting our own communities. Part of being globally conscious involves striving to help all those around us, to the best of our abilities, every single day.

28.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Make an identity chart for Leana Wen. What do you know about her? Use quotations and other evidence from the reading to complete the chart. How do you think her identity has shaped her goal "to solve global problems by educating and motivating the public to action"?⁶
2. How has your identity shaped your beliefs about civic participation—about being involved in your community (local, national, or global)?
3. Wen's first suggestion is to "educate yourself." What do you want to know more about, in terms of problems facing communities near or far? Where might you look to find this information?
4. Wen writes about the need for people to be "globally conscious." In other words, people should know something about what is happening around the world. Yet despite the rise in access to news, the proportion of young people who do not read or watch the news—online, in print, or on television—has actually increased.⁷

What can be done to get more young people to access the news? Besides watching or reading the news, how else might young people learn about what is going on in the world?

5. In an interview with *Teen Ink* magazine, Kristof offers advice about how we should "educate ourselves" about what is happening in the world:

Maybe the biggest thing I would caution against is something that is very human, which is to seek out sources we agree with. There is a deeply ingrained tendency for liberals and conservatives alike to find sources that just seem incredibly reasonable, and tend to be those that confirm our every prejudice. . . . And I think that tends to be bad for democracy and for one's own intellectual

development. So, I would encourage students to bite the bullet and go out and seek out intelligent views that challenge the things they hold dear.⁸

What are the consequences when we only read or watch points of view that affirm our beliefs? Where would you go to seek out views that are different from your own?

6. Wen's second suggestion is for people to "educate others." How might this be done? The website www.halftheskymovement.org (a companion to the book *Half the Sky*, written by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, about the plight of women around the world) provides some ideas. It lists three "simple actions [that] have the potential to reach thousands. . .even millions of people across the planet":
 - a. spread the word via social networking,
 - b. tell a friend by sharing an email, and
 - c. download images and use them on your blog or web page or add them to your email signature.

Have you ever done any of these things? What are other ways you can use the Internet to educate others about a cause that is important to you?

7. Leana's final suggestion is to "take action." She reminds us that "problems don't exist just in Africa; injustices exist everywhere." What injustices exist in your community? What is being done about them? If you were going to take action, what could you do to help?
8. Review your response to the statement in Creating Context above. Has your opinion changed? If so, how? Add your current thinking to your journal.

Using Resource 28.2

Taking a Position

The statement in Creating Context would be an excellent prompt to use for a [barometer activity](#) before reading this resource. Consider repeating the activity after reading and discussing the resource to see if student opinions have changed. Ask students to make observations about any changes in the pattern of opinions before and after. You might also ask individual students who changed their positions about specific parts of the reading that they found persuasive.

Video: Reporter

This resource is excerpted from Facing History's guide to [the film Reporter](#) (available from the Facing History library), which follows journalist Nicholas Kristof as he researches and writes about human rights for *The New York Times*. You might deepen

your exploration of the connection between journalism, education, and action by showing part or all of the documentary to your students. Use the [the Facing History guide to Reporter](#) to plan your viewing.

Exploring Contemporary Examples of Genocide, Suffering, and Injustice

Many Facing History teachers find that, at this point in the course, students are especially motivated to learn more about contemporary examples of genocide, mass violence, and injustice. Frequently, this curiosity also leads students to take action. Depending on available time near the end of your course, as well as the level of interest from your students, you might choose to explore with your students one or more of these contemporary examples. Students should consider how they can put Leana Wen's three steps for responding to genocide and human suffering into action.

We especially recommend the film [Darfur Now](#), which profiles several activists taking different approaches to help end the violence and suffering in this western Sudanese province. The film provides examples of participation and action that can be followed in response to other episodes of mass violence and suffering. Facing History has also created [a series of four lessons for using Darfur Now](#) in your classroom.

As an extension of or alternative to *Darfur Now*, consider the following ideas:

Explore Darfur in More Depth

Facing History has created an [online collection of resources about the genocide and human suffering taking place in Darfur](#) over the past decade. While Darfur has faded from the headlines in recent years, it continues to be a situation worthy of students' attention and action. This [August 2012 New York Times article](#) gives a more recent update on the situation in Darfur.

Investigate Other Trouble Troubled Areas

Ongoing episodes of genocide, suffering, and injustice, including the situation in Darfur, are constantly evolving and changing. There are several organizations that follow these situations closely and can provide your students with the most timely information.

[The Enough Project](#), an organization that seeks to end genocide and crimes against humanity, highlights four dangerous areas (in addition to Darfur) that are worthy of your students' investigation: South Sudan, Eastern Congo, the Lords Resistance Army (led by Joseph Kony), and Somalia.

In addition to these troubling situations, the [Committee on Conscience](#) (an arm of the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)), also continues to monitor tensions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, and Burundi for their potential to

devolve into (or return to) episodes of mass violence and genocide.

The following online resources may also provide useful information for your students:

- [Teaching *The Reckoning*](#): A Facing History guide (used in Section 11) for the film *The Reckoning*, which profiles the ICC's work responding to genocide in Darfur and Uganda.
- [Nicholas Kristof's New York Times Homepage](#) (including a collection of his columns)
- ["On the Ground"](#): Nicholas Kristof's blog
- ["Two For the Road"](#): the 2007 blog written by a student and teacher who travelled with Kristof to Africa
- ["Ripples of Genocide: Journey Through the Eastern Congo"](#): An online exhibit by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- [The Genocide Intervention Network](#): An organization whose mission is to stop genocide and other atrocities worldwide

Lesson 29: Strengthening Community

Essential Questions:

- ***What are the essential characteristics of a strong community?***
- ***What makes a community safe for everyone? What can you do to ensure that your community is a safe place?***
- ***What can be improved about the culture and community in your school? What role can you play in improving it?***

Included Resources:

- * 29.1 – Reading: Not In Our Town
- * 29.2 – Video: Not In Our School – Responding to Bullying
- * = core resource

Introduction:

In the previous lesson, students considered how one might respond to injustice and suffering occurring in far away parts of the contemporary world. Students learned about individuals who are acting to stand up for people in circumstances that may be far removed from their every day lives, and they were introduced to a simple framework for how they can make a difference by educating themselves, educating others, and taking action. In this lesson, students will think about how to apply this framework to the task of strengthening the communities and schools in which they live their daily lives.

Psychologist Ervin Staub explains, “people become brave by doing brave acts. People become compassionate by doing compassionate acts. People become good citizens by engaging in acts of good citizenship.” Lesson 29 focuses on the interactions among young people that occur in schools and communities because this is the context that provides our students with the most frequent opportunities to practice performing brave, compassionate, civically-minded acts.

Most of the resources in this section are related to the [Not in Our Town](#) series of short films produced by The Working Group. Resource 29.1 provides a choice of two stories of communities whose citizens worked together to stand up to hate crimes that occurred in their midst. The reading and video “Not in Our Town” tells the story of citizens of Billings, Montana, coming together to confront the antisemitic actions of white supremacist groups in their community. Alternatively, teachers might choose to show the film *Not in Our Town: Light in the Darkness*, which tells the story of the citizens of Patchogue, New York, coming together to confront anti-immigrant sentiment in their community following the murder of an Ecuadorian immigrant in their town. Regardless of the story you choose to use in your class, students will observe a wide variety of actions that citizens can take, individually and together, to strengthen their communities and nurture democracy. In the process, the class will return to the question first posed in their study of the Weimar Republic: What must citizens do and value for a democracy to be strong?

Resource 29.2 sharpens the focus from the larger communities that students inhabit to the schools that they attend. Specifically, this resource briefly explores bullying using the short video, “Students Map Bully Zones to Create a Safer School,” part of the [Not in Our Schools](#) series. Using the video as a springboard into a deeper conversation, students will learn about the concept of social norms, and they will brainstorm ways in which they can change the social norms for the better in their school community.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- Identify a recent moment when you have witnessed an act of kindness in your school or community. Identify a recent moment when you have witnessed an act of bullying, intolerance or meanness. Which act was easier to come up with? Why do you think this is the case?
- Do you agree or disagree with this statement: You have a greater obligation....to prevent hatred, violence and prejudice in our own communities than to prevent hatred, violence and prejudice in communities that are far away. Explain your answer.
- Who is responsible for preventing bullying?
- What risks are involved in standing up to bullying, prejudice and hate? What can help people overcome those risks? Under what conditions, if any, might it be unwise to stand-up to perpetrators of violence and intolerance?
- Why do people sometimes engage in bullying or mean behavior? Why do people engage in acts of kindness?
- Do you think cyberbullying is as harmful as physical bullying? Why or why not?

Additional Recommended Resources:

Resource Books (available from the Facing History and Ourselves website):

- Chapter 11 in the resource book, [Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior](#)
- [Choosing to Participate](#)
- [A Guide to the Film BULLY: Fostering Empathy and Action in Schools](#)

Videos (Available from Facing History Library):

- [Not In Our Town](#)
- [Not In Our Town: Light In the Darkness](#)
- *Bully* (not yet available as of 8/2012)

Websites:

- [Not In Our Town](#)
- [Creating Safe and Engaging Schools](#) (by Facing History)
- [Bullying and Ostracism](#) (by Facing History)

Facing History Lesson Plans

- [Light In the Darkness viewing guide](#)

- [*Not In Our Schools*](#)

Resource 29.1:**Reading: Not In Our Town***Creating Context*

In Resource 28.2, Leana Wen reminds us that

social activism is not limited just to the places “over there”; there are many opportunities to assist no matter where you are. Insecurity is not limited just to war-torn areas; there are destructive people and destructive values that exist in our own backyard. There is a lot we can do by assisting our own communities. Part of being globally conscious involves striving to help all those around us, to the best of our abilities, every single day.

How do you define *community*? What qualities are essential to create a strong community? What qualities make a community unique? Create a working definition for *community* in your journal.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

community	seder
hate crime	candelabra
Star of David	white supremacist
Chanukah	mimeograph
menorah	

The decade of the 1960s was marked by turmoil in the United States—much of it racially motivated. Although many groups and individuals still struggle for dignity, respect, and rights today, a great deal has changed since the 1960s. Resistance to social change is often expressed through hatred and violence. How a community responds to intolerance is one measure of its citizens’ commitment to democracy.

During the early 1990s, hate groups in Billings, Montana organized a wave of racist and antisemitic violence. In 1994 journalist Claire Safran reported on the community’s response.

On a quiet evening in Billings, Montana, early [in December 1993], a stranger arrived at the home of Tammie and Brian Schnitzer. He stole across the lawn, a cinder block in hand. He stopped at a window decorated with Star of David decals and a menorah, the nine-branched candelabra that is the symbol of the Jewish festival of Chanukah. Then he hurled the stone, sending jagged shards of glass into the bedroom of Isaac, 5.

By chance, the little boy wasn’t there. He’d been in the family room watching TV with his 2-year-old sister, Rachel, and a babysitter. They heard the crash, but

when the sitter searched for a cause, she missed the broken window. That remained for Brian to find when he came home. Shaken, he phoned the police and put the children to bed in the safest spot he could think of—bundled in sleeping bags under the four-poster bed in his bedroom. “We’re playing campout,” he told Isaac.

Not long after, Tammie returned from a meeting of the human rights coalition she co-chaired. Seeing the look on her husband’s face, she asked, “What’s wrong?” He led her to Isaac’s room. Shocked, she stared at the broken window. Tammie had felt a little nervous putting up the Chanukah decorations; in recent months, a string of hate crimes had occurred around town. Now her worst fears had come home.

Waiting for the police to arrive, Tammie huddled in a rocking chair in her son’s room. “I felt so cold,” she recalls. “But it wasn’t the winter air coming through the broken window. It was my sense of being so helpless. It was my fear of what would come next.”

Some 80,000 people live under the big sky of this valley town sheltered by rocky hills. They drive pickups and family sedans, dress in jeans and business suits, and mingle in an easy, relaxed way. They are overwhelmingly Christian and white; about 50 Jewish families live here, and fewer than 500 blacks. Add Hispanics and Native Americans, [and] all told, minorities in Billings make up a meager 7 percent or so of the population.

For some that’s still too many. In 1986 white supremacists declared Montana to be one of five states comprising their “Aryan homeland.” In the years that followed, racist incidents around the state became increasingly frequent; eventually they cropped up in Billings. . . .

By the end of 1992, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and a band of skinheads had become visible presences in Billings. Klan newspapers were tossed onto driveways, and flyers surfaced attacking mainly Jews and homosexuals. One day a bumper sticker that read “Nuke Israel” was placed on a stop sign near the temple. Not long after, Tammie saw a flyer that named Brian, who’d recently become president of the Montana association of Jewish Communities. “I felt sick,” she recalls. “It really hit home.”

At a meeting, temple officers chose not to speak out. Says Tammie, “They seemed to feel that to acknowledge a problem or identify ourselves as being different would make us stand apart.” Tammie refused to stay silent. . . . At the same time, Margaret MacDonald . . . a mother of two and the part-time director of the Montana Association of Churches, was encountering resistance to another effort to draw attention to the problem: a petition that opposed hatred and bigotry. “There’d been an emphatic hard-line stance in the town, like a brick wall, that the less said about the skinheads and other racists, the better,” she says. She

persisted, however, and over the following months, more than 100 organizations and 3,500 people signed the resolution.

In the spring of 1993, after a conversation at a town meeting, Tammie, Margaret, and several others formed the Billings Coalition for Human Rights. “This wasn’t a Jewish issue, it was a human rights issue,” says Tammie. “We wanted to make the community aware of what was going on.”

The hate activity escalated. In September, four days before the start of the Jewish New Year, vandals overturned headstones in the Jewish cemetery. And on the holiday itself, a bomb threat was made to the temple before the start of the children’s service.

Tammie urged synagogue members to speak out. “I wanted to let people know what was happening. But some members felt that we would put ourselves in more danger. We didn’t know what to do.”

In the weeks that followed, several Billings residents—inspired by the Coalition for Human Rights—took action against racism. When skinheads showed up at services of the African Methodist Episcopal Wayman Chapel, small groups of white Christians appeared in response. They sat with the congregation until the skinheads stopped coming. In October an interracial couple awoke one morning to find crude words and a swastika spray-painted on their house. Three days later, volunteers from the local painters union repaired the damage.

But with the arrival of the holiday season, the hate incidents turned violent. In late November a beer bottle was thrown through the window of a Jewish home. And then, on the night of December 2, the Schnitzer home was attacked.

As Tammie spoke with the police officer who’d arrived at her home, she swung between fear and outrage. “This isn’t just mischief,” she said. He agreed and advised her to take down the Chanukah decorations and avoid leaving the children with a babysitter.

Lying in bed that night, sleepless, Tammie thought how ironic it was that the attack on her home had occurred because of Chanukah—a holiday commemorating the Jews’ fight thousands of years ago to worship God in their own way. “I wondered what kind of struggle we were going to be in for, and how we could stop it before it became worse,” she says.

The next day, Friday, Tammie spoke with a reporter from the *Billings Gazette*. She told him how troubled she was by the officer’s advice. “Maybe it’s not wise to keep these symbols up,” she said. “But how do you explain that to a child?” On Saturday morning Margaret [MacDonald] read Tammie’s quote in the paper. She tried to imagine telling her daughter, Siri, then 6, that they could not have a

Christmas tree, or explaining to Charlie, then 3, that they had to take a wreath off the door because it wasn't safe.

Margaret phoned her pastor, Keith Torney. "What would you think if we had the children draw menorahs in Sunday school?" she asked. "If we mimeographed as many pictures of the menorah as we could? If we told people to put them up in their windows?"

Reverend Torney had read the paper that morning too. "Yes," he said. "And yes again." He spent the rest of the day on the phone, enlisting other churches. That week hundreds of menorahs appeared in the windows of Christian homes in Billings. "It wasn't an easy decision," says Margaret. "With two young children, I had to think hard about it myself. We put our menorah in a living room window, and made sure nobody sat in front of it."

One of the first to put up a menorah was Becky Thomas, . . . a Catholic mother of two who lives near the Schnitzers. "It's easy to go around saying you support some good cause, but this was different. It was putting ourselves in danger," she says. "I told my husband, 'Now we know how the Schnitzers feel.'"

Some, nervous about jeopardizing their families, checked first with Wayne Inman, the chief of police at the time. "Yes, there's a risk," he told callers. "But there's a greater risk in not doing it."

On December 7, the *Billings Gazette* published a full-page picture of a menorah to cut out and tape up. Local businesses also distributed photocopies of menorahs, and one put a message on a billboard, proclaiming: "Not in Our Town! No Hate, No Violence. Peace on Earth."

As the Jewish symbol sprouted in Christian windows, the haters lashed out. Glass panes on the doors of the Evangelical United Methodist Church, graced with two menorahs, were smashed. Someone fired shots into a Catholic school that had joined the crusade. Six cars parked in front of homes that displayed menorahs had their windows kicked out; the homeowners received phone calls that told them to "Go look at your car, Jew-lover."

Yet suddenly, for every menorah that was there before, ten new ones appeared. Hundreds of menorahs grew to be thousands. It's estimated that as many as 6,000 homes in Billings had menorahs on display. "All along, our coalition had been saying an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us," says Margaret MacDonald. "And God bless them, the people of this town understood." . . .

The people of Billings kept their menorahs up until the New Year. As Inman says, "The haters could attack a couple of Jewish homes. They could make a second wave of attacks on Christian homes and churches. But they could not target thousands of menorahs."

Confronted by a united town, the Ku Klux Klan and skinheads backed off. The acts of vandalism stopped, the hate literature disappeared, and the anonymous calls ended. But with no witnesses and no strong leads, the police were never able to make any arrests, a fact that leaves the community extremely uneasy. . . .

The town continues to stand together. In April [of 1994] more than 250 Christians joined the Jewish community for a seder, the traditional Passover meal. Not long after, hundreds attended a concert of Jewish music that the Schnitzers helped coordinate to show their appreciation to Billings.

Tammie Schnitzer and Margaret MacDonald are busy organizing meetings and speaking at schools about racial sensitivity. With Chanukah just a few weeks away, they're stepping up their activities and are working on combined holiday events for the temple and local churches.

Soon Tammie's going to be putting up her Chanukah decorations. "I have to make sure my kids are proud of themselves and never have to hide who they are," she says. "Yes, I'm afraid. But I know if something happened again, the community would respond."

Becky Thomas, for one, is prepared. "We saved our menorah, and it's going in our window again," she says. "We need to show commitment for a lifetime."⁹

Roger Rosenblatt of the *New York Times* interviewed Billings residents in 1994 and found that many of them were reassessing their attitudes and beliefs as a result of the menorah campaign. Wayne Inman, former Billings chief of police, told Rosenblatt that although there were no African Americans or Jews in his hometown, he grew up hearing racial slurs.

It was as common as the sun coming up in the morning. Nobody ever confronted the issue. It was "normal." But when I got out into the larger world, I found that it wasn't normal, or if it was normal, it should be opposed. When you have a person present, not just a word, you see that you're talking about a human being whose skin is black. I saw that for myself. I saw the hurt and pain in his eyes. It became a very personal issue for me.¹⁰

Some in the community wondered whether a black or Hispanic family would have received similar community support. Others felt that putting up a menorah was "relatively painless for the community." Rosenblatt goes on to note:

There is discussion, as well, about the difference between encouraging diversity in the community and opposing bigotry. Several evangelical churches did not participate in the menorah movement because it was led by the Human Rights Coalition, whose support of homosexual rights they do not endorse. . . . "Once

there was a visual act of bigotry, it was easy to get people involved,” [Kurt] Nelson says. “Personal tolerance is harder to achieve. . . .”¹¹

Sarah Anthony, a member of the Human Rights Coalition, reflected on the struggle and why it matters to her. She told Rosenblatt:

I mean, what have we done so far? Come up with a plan. Make a few phone calls. Put up menorahs. That’s all we did. Pretty simple stuff, actually. But you have to build the sentiment, to forge the real feeling that goes deep. We did something right here, and we will do it again if we have to. If we don’t, there are people who would break every window in Billings, and we would look out those windows and see ourselves.¹²

Documentary filmmaker Patrice O’Neill captured the story of Billings in “Not In Our Town.” By showing how a community can respond to hate, the half-hour documentary sparked a national and international movement of individuals, schools, and communities organizing grassroots events, educational outreach, and public dialogue. The film’s title has become a motto for those seeking to stand up to racism, bigotry, and intimidation. O’Neill says that she has been taken aback by the response to the film:

The Not In Our Town Project and the Billings story has been one of the greatest gifts of my career as a filmmaker. For nearly fifteen years we have seen how communities across the country and around the world have been inspired by the actions of people in Billings. Civic leaders, citizens, students and teachers have taken this story of resistance to hate and intolerance and made it their own.¹³

Jim Hunt, president of the National League of Cities, believes that one of the keys to opposing hate crimes is working to prevent them in the first place.

We just can’t wait until incidents happen. We have to be out there on a daily basis; we have to be working in communities; we have to be doing education. Personally, I think the power of the video is how we can get our messages out—if we don’t use these resources, if we don’t get out in front of that, we’re just . . . asking for issues to come up.¹⁴

29.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. In what ways did the citizens of Billings respond to the actions of hate groups? Which responses seemed to make the biggest positive difference? What made those responses effective?
2. What does the story of Billings suggest about the way people can get involved in their communities? What examples did they set for other communities? Support your response with evidence from the reading.
3. Review your working definition for *community*. After learning about Billings, how would you revise it? What would you add, subtract, or change?
4. As you learned about the Weimar Republic in Section 4, you were asked, “What must citizens do and value for a democracy to be strong?” How would you answer that question now? How has your thinking changed since you considered this question in Section 4?
5. Police Chief Inman says that it took a long time for his “sense of social justice” to develop. What helped it to develop? Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.
6. What does Anthony mean when she says, “We did something right here, and we will do it again if we have to. If we don’t, there are people who would break every window in Billings, and we would look out those windows and see ourselves”? Marian Wright Edelman believes that “the good people’s silence” can be “as damaging as the bad people’s actions.” Would Anthony agree? Do you agree?
7. What is a hate crime? What distinguishes a hate crime from other crimes? After a rock was thrown through the window of a home that belonged to a Vietnamese family, then-Deputy Superintendent William Johnston of the Boston Police Department noted that the rock did more than shatter glass; it also shattered a family. What do you think he means? How does this idea apply to what happened in Billings?
8. “Hate crimes are not a police problem,” says former Police Chief Wayne Inman. “They’re a community problem. Hate crimes and hate activity flourish only in communities that allow them to flourish.” James Pace, the head of a racist “skinhead” group in Billings, agrees. He told a reporter, “If you have a racist problem, it was here and it’s been here and it’s going to be here if we are here or not.” What do these comments suggest about the role of the bystander in a community? What does they suggest about the importance of how Billings or any other community defines its “universe of obligation”?
9. Think about the community in which you currently live. Who lives in your

community and who does not? Has the makeup of your community changed over time? What accounts for that change? How do people in your community learn who belongs and who doesn't?

10. What makes a community safe for everyone? What makes a place within a community a safe place for everyone? How can you contribute to making your community a safe place?

Using Resource 29.1

Not In Our Town Resource Options

The story of Billings is also told in the video [Not In Our Town](#) (25 min.). You might choose to show the video instead of reading the resource above. If so, you can use the same Creating Context and Comprehension and Connections questions to guide your class discussion of the film.

Not In Our Town: Light in the Darkness is an additional video (60 min.) that tells the story of how the residents of Patchogue, New York, responded to a series of attacks against Latino residents and the murder of Ecuadorian immigrant Marcelo Lucero in 2008. You might choose to use this film instead of both the reading and video about Billings. If so, you can adapt the Creating Context and Comprehension and Connections questions above, or you can use the [Light In the Darkness viewing guide developed by Facing History](#) to guide your class discussion of the film.

Regardless of the resource you choose to use in your class, consider using the “Defining Community” and “Making Connections to Current Events” activities below.

Defining Community

Before reading this resource, use the Creating Context questions to begin a discussion about community, perhaps using the [Think, Pair, Share](#) strategy. You can also extend the discussion by asking students to create an identity chart for the communities in which they live. You can use the following instructions:

Just like individuals, communities have identities, and factors such as geography,

politics, economics, and historical events influence the identity of a community. Create an identity chart for your community by drawing a circle with the name of the town in the middle. Around that circle, write the words and phrases that you use to describe your town.

In a different color pen, add the labels that others, who don't live in your town, might attach to it. Compare your identity chart with your classmates.

Continuing with the [Think, Pair, Share](#) strategy, students can discuss the charts they created. What is similar among their charts? What differences do they notice? How do they account for those differences?

Making Connections to Current Events

Consider introducing stories from current events that might have connections with the story of Billings. As of this writing, two events that might be relevant to your class discussion are [the murder of six people in a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin](#) on August 5, 2012, and the [destruction of a mosque in Joplin, Missouri](#) one day later. Students can compare and contrast the responses of these communities to hate crimes to the responses by the citizens of Billings.

Resource 29.2:**Video: Not In Our School – Responding to Bullying*****Creating Context***

Create an identity chart for your school community. How would you describe it? How would others describe it?

Is your school a safe community? What makes it safe or unsafe? Record your thoughts in your journal before watching the video.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

bullying**cyberbullying****ostracism****social norms****verbal**

At Orange High School in Pepper Pike, Ohio, students are mapping their school to locate the spaces where bullying takes place. After identifying the "bully hotspots," including the cafeteria, media lab, and locker rooms, students created a flash freeze demonstration to raise awareness about bullying, and opened the conversation about how to create a safer school. [Watch the video](#) to learn more about how these students chose to participate in their community and made a difference.

29.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. Experts say that bullying has two key characteristics, repeated harmful acts and in imbalance of power. Education journalism Kim Zarzour explains, "if it involves repeated, malicious attempts to humiliate a helpless victim, if the victim is fearful, does not know how to make it stop, then it's bullying."¹⁵ Do you agree with this definition? How do you define bullying? What kinds of words and actions should be included in your definition? At what point does a conflict between students become bullying?
2. Research shows that many, but not all, of the victims of bullying are singled out because of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or physical or learning disabilities. What are some reasons people might respond to such differences so hurtfully? Why do some differences lead to ridicule more than others?
3. What is the role of the adults in a school in responding to bullying? What is the role of other students? How can adults and students work together to make schools safer?
4. Often offering simple and immediate encouragement to those who have just been

bullied can make a big difference. Psychologist Elizabeth Englander points out that victims of bullying consistently tell researchers that this type of upstander behavior is one of the most helpful responses:

*What helped the most was having somebody who came up to them and said, "Don't listen to him, he talks like that to everyone. There's nothing wrong with you. What don't you come and eat lunch at my table. Don't worry about that."*¹⁶

Why do you think that small, simple gestures of kindness can make a big difference to the victims of bullying? What are some other actions that peers can take to be upstanders against bullying?

5. *Social norms* are accepted standards of behavior within a community. How are the students at Orange High School trying to change their community's social norms?
6. Do you think the flash freeze demonstration at Orange High School might encourage students to take positive actions against bullying more often? Why? What else needs to be done to encourage students to be upstanders?
7. What are some of the social norms in your school? Is bullying an accepted behavior? Is being an upstander an accepted behavior? What steps can a community take to change its social norms?
8. What are the bullying hotspots at your school? How can your school community make those locations safer for students?
9. What strategies does your school use to address bullying? Which strategies are most effective? Which are least effective? What do you do in your school to help combat bullying? In what areas do you need more support from your peers, teachers, parents, or administrators?
10. What can be improved about the culture and community in your school? What role can you play in improving it? How can you make your voice heard?

Using Resource 29.2

Reflection and Discussion

The topic of bullying is likely to prompt energetic discussion in your class, especially if you begin a discussion that emphasizes their ideas and experiences. As always, it is important to plan the class so that students have an opportunity to gather their thoughts in quiet reflection and then to provide a structure for the discussion that follows.

For this resource, consider conducting a class discussion based on the Comprehension and Connections questions using the [Fishbowl](#) strategy. If you prefer your students to have discussions in smaller groups, use the [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) strategy.

Exploring the Power of Individual Connections

Arn Chorn Pond was a refugee from the Cambodian genocide who was adopted by a family in New Hampshire. His story powerfully illustrates the challenges not only of surviving genocide, but also of adapting to a completely new community after such a harrowing experience. He succeeded, in part, because a few individual teachers and students in his new community reached out to him, showing care and respect. Pond's story (from the reading "Everyone Has a Story" in [Facing History's Choosing To Participate study guide](#)) can effectively be paired with the Not In Our School series to broaden the class's consideration of the power of reaching out to individual members of one's community.

Exploring Additional Examples of Student Participation

Facing History has worked with the Not In Our School organization to create four additional short videos and lesson ideas about student efforts to document issues of concern in their schools.

These videos and lessons include:

- ["Students Take on Cyberbullying"](#)
- ["Stand Up, Stand Out: No Checking, No Capping, No Bullying"](#)
- ["No Human Being Was Born Illegal"](#)
- ["New Immigrants Share Their Stories"](#)

All of these videos are less than ten minutes in length. We encourage you to watch the videos, explore the lesson ideas, and incorporate those you find especially relevant into your class.

Creating Safe and Engaging Schools

Facing History has developed a variety of additional resources on bullying, ostracism, and creating safe, engaging schools.

Facing History's [Guide to the Film BULLY: Fostering Empathy and Action in Schools](#) is not only a companion to the documentary by Lee Hirsch, but it also contains a variety of readings and classroom activities that explore the impact of bullying and the importance of a safe, supportive school culture. Additional information about the film and related resources can be found on the site, ["Creating Safe and Engaging Schools."](#)

Facing History has also developed a detailed case study about an incident of ostracism in a middle school classroom. This resource is entitled, ["Bullying: A Case Study in Ostracism"](#). Although the story takes place among students that are likely younger than yours, the issues the students confront will likely feel familiar to high school students.

Lesson 30: Reflecting on the Journey

Essential Questions:

- *What is your dream for the nation and the world? What steps will you and others have to take to make it a reality?*
- *How has this course helped you become more humane and make more ethical choices?*
- *What questions still linger for you at the end of this course? What other histories are you curious about? What still puzzles you about human behavior?*

Included Resources:

- 30.1 – Reading: Reflecting on Choices
 - * 30.2 – Reading: Dear Teacher
- * = core resource

Introduction:

The intellectual, emotional, and ethical growth students have experienced can only be strengthened by the opportunity for deep reflection and the cultivation of self-awareness as the course draws to a close. Frequently the last lesson of any course does not get the class time it deserves. This is especially the case in a course as robust with engaging historical and ethical content as this one. So often, we simply run out of time. We strongly encourage you, however, to preserve significant time for student reflection at the end of this course. The resources included in this lesson can help you guide your students' thinking about their learning and growth.

What do students think they have gained from confronting the difficult history of the Holocaust? What have they learned about democracy? What have they learned about human behavior? What have they learned about themselves? Resource 30.1 includes poems by Langston Hughes and Robert Frost that provide a framework for student reflection on choices and democracy. Resource 30.2 reintroduces “Dear Teacher,” a letter from a principal to his teachers that students encountered in the very first lessons of this course. Returning to this letter provides students an opportunity to revisit their expectations for this course and to measure how their thinking has changed over the course of the semester. When they first read this letter, what did they think the author meant when he wrote about making students more humane? What do they think that phrase means now? Did this course help them become “more humane”? It is important to acknowledge in class that not every question posed over the course of the semester has a simple answer, and you might end the course by asking students what questions they continue to wrestle with.

Ultimately, we hope that students leave a Facing History journey with a greater motivation and capacity to reflect on their role in the larger community and how their choices influence themselves and others. We hope they come away from this experience with a more measured and informed sense of what is possible and the role they can play, however small, in working toward creating a better world.

Journal and Discussion Prompts:

Some teachers have found these prompts helpful to initiate reflections and class discussions about this lesson:

- What questions are on your mind at the end of this course?
- Ten years from now, what do you hope to remember from this course? Why is this important to you?
- Is “Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior” an appropriate title for this course? Why or why not? What other names might you suggest for this course?
- Based on your learning in this course, what is something you want to stop doing, something you want to start doing, and something you hope to continue to do?
- Where does your universe of responsibility begin? Where does it end? How does how you define your universe of responsibility influence your actions?

Additional Recommended Resources:

Resource Books (available from the Facing History and Ourselves website):

- Chapter 11 in the resource book, [*Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*](#)
- [*Choosing to Participate*](#)

Videos (Available from Facing History Library or Online):

- [“A Letter to Teachers: This is Facing History”](#)
- [“Samantha Power speaks with Luis, a Facing History Student”](#)

Resource 30.1:**Reading: Reflecting on Choices***Creating Context*

A Facing History student once wrote at the end of the course:

Life used to be easy. There always seemed to be an answer to everything. Everything fit into place, getting up at seven o'clock, going to school at eight, coming home at four, doing homework at eight, and finally going to bed at eleven. In my tightly scheduled life I left no time to reflect. In these past four months, however, I've been forced to think. It hasn't been easy.

What has this course forced you to think about? How has the way you think about your choices changed? How would you describe your experience taking this course? Record your thinking in your journal before reading.

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

avarice

wretchedness

President John F. Kennedy once said that artists play a special role in a society. They contribute “not to our size [as a nation] but to our spirit; not to our political beliefs but to our insight; not to our self-esteem but to our self-comprehension.”¹⁷ Langston Hughes and Robert Frost are among the many American poets who have reflected on the choices we make as individuals and as citizens.

I Dream a World

by Langston Hughes

I dream a world where man
 No other man will scorn,
 Where love will bless the earth
 And peace its paths adorn.
 I dream a world where all
 Will know sweet freedom's way,
 Where greed no longer saps the soul
 Nor avarice blights our day.
 A world I dream where black or white,
 Whatever race you be,

Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head,
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind.
Of such I dream, my world!¹⁸

The Road Not Taken

by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.¹⁹

30.1 Comprehension & Connections

1. Summarize Langston Hughes's dream for the nation and the world. What democratic ideals are part of that dream? Cite specific phrases and sentences from his poem to support your answer.
2. What part does democracy play in realizing Hughes's dream?
3. What is your dream for the nation and the world? What steps will you and others have to take to make it a reality?
4. In this course, you have studied history that reveals troubling things about both nations and human behavior. Has confronting the history of the Holocaust made you more optimistic or pessimistic about the future? Why? What has this history taught you about the world we live in today? What has it taught you about yourself?
5. Many say it is difficult to confront one's past when it reveals "bad things." For example, some politicians, educators, and parents believe that schools should not confront all of the nation's history. What do you think? What should schools teach about the nation's past?
6. When "two roads diverge," people are forced to make a choice. What is Frost suggesting about the importance of that choice? What is he suggesting about the difficulties in returning to make a different choice at a later time?
7. What individuals have you learned about in this course that have taken the road "less traveled by," the one that "was grassy and wanted wear"? What differences did their choices make?
8. What individuals have you encountered in your own life have taken the road "less traveled by," the one that "was grassy and wanted wear"? Did their choices make "all the difference"? How did those individuals help in some small or large way to make "a world where all/Will know sweet freedom's way"?

Using Resource 30.1

Reading Poetry

Many teachers find it helpful when using poetry in class to read the poem aloud several

times. You might begin by asking students to read it silently. Then you might read it aloud to the class, and then ask for several volunteers to read it again. Often, hearing the poem several times in different voices helps students notice more of the nuances of the language and form a deeper impression of the poem's meaning. It is also helpful to debrief this simple process of hearing the poem. What was the experience like of hearing the poem several times in different voices? How did the voice and style in which the poem was read change its impact?

Reflection and Discussion

In the last class periods of the course, we suggest leaving ample opportunity for reflection. The poetry in this reading can help bring the class into a more reflective state of mind.

After giving students time to read, hear, and absorb the poems, identify the Comprehension & Connections questions you would like to use to begin a class discussion. Give students time to reflect quietly on the questions and write in their journals. Finally, choose a discussion strategy that provides a structure for all students to have ample opportunity to share their thinking and listen to their classmates. [Fishbowl](#) and [Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn](#) are both strategies that could work well discussing this resource.

Inspiring Deeper Reflection

In order to help your students think more deeply about what they have learned from this course, you might also show an example of another student reflecting on his experience in a Facing History class.

At a Facing History event in Los Angeles, Luis, a student from Garfield High School, speaks about how Facing History has helped him think more deeply about the choices he makes. We suggest stopping this [video](#) right after he asks the question, "How does a person build up the courage to stand up and say, 'That's wrong'?"

After viewing, ask students to respond freely in their journal. You can also take a more directed approach by asking students to try to formulate their own responses to Luis's question, "How does a person build up the courage to stand up and say, 'That's wrong'?" How does one build up the courage to take the road "less travelled by"? Give students the opportunity to share their reflections by using the [Think, Pair, Share](#) strategy.

Generating Questions

Luis, in the [video](#) mentioned above, has identified an important question that being a Facing History student raised for him. You can ask students to brainstorm questions that this course has raised for them. Then you might ask them to select one or two questions that are most important to them to share with the class. Students can write their questions on the board or on large pieces of paper for everyone to see. You can conclude this activity with a [Gallery Walk](#) of student questions.

Resource 30.2:**Reading: Dear Teacher*****Creating Context***

At the beginning of this course, you were asked to reflect on what it means to be *humane*. How would you answer the question now? Go back and review the thoughts you recorded in your journal. How has your thinking changed since the beginning of the course?

Knowing the following terms will improve your understanding of this reading:

humane

psychopath

In his book *Teacher and Child*, noted psychologist Haim Ginott includes a copy of a letter that a principal sent to his teachers at the beginning of each new school year.

Dear Teacher,

I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:

Gas chambers built by learned engineers.

Children poisoned by educated physicians.

Infants killed by trained nurses.

Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.

So I am suspicious of education. My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.

Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane.

30.2 Comprehension & Connections

1. What is the point the author of the letter above is trying to make? What does it mean to make students more humane? What kind of education can make a student more humane?
2. What experiences or circumstances might make one seem or feel *less* human?

What can we do to prevent dehumanization?

3. What are the dangers of an education that neglects to cultivate humanity in students? How can we remind ourselves and others to reflect on the words we use and the actions we take that might degrade others' humanity?
4. To what extent does democracy depend on citizens acting humanely?
5. Who should take this course? How would you describe it to another student? What parts of the study do you believe to be essential?
6. What questions still linger for you at the end of this course? What other histories are you curious about? What still puzzles you about human behavior?

Using Resource 30.2

Reflecting On The Journey

The Comprehension & Connections questions can provide the basis for a period of individual reflection and class discussion to conclude this course. You might have students reflect on the questions independently in their journals, and then discuss their thoughts in small groups. You can then conclude the period using the [Wraparound](#) strategy, in which each student will share an overarching thought, message, or question they are taking away from the course.

Facing History teachers also often conclude their courses with projects to help students take stock of their learning. Project ideas might be introduced earlier in the course, giving students time to piece them together and present them in the final days of class. The following are some project ideas:

Measuring Personal Change

Ask students to consider the question: How has this course helped you become more humane and make more ethical choices?

Students might illustrate their answer to this question in a variety of ways. One way is to ask them to create identity charts for themselves at the end of the course. They can then compare these new charts with the ones they created at the beginning of the course. What has stayed the same? What has changed? Why do they think this is the case? Students can then write at least one well-developed paragraph about how and why they have changed over the span of the course.

A more in-depth way for students to represent their reflections on this question is frame their answers within Facing History's pedagogical triangle (Appendix

30A). Provide copies of the pedagogical triangle to the students and discuss the meaning of each part of the diagram. Then ask students to review their journals and collect evidence that shows their learning in each of the areas represented by the triangle's corners: intellectual rigor, emotional engagement, and ethical reflection. Finally, have them use the evidence they chose to write a short personal statement about their own sense of civic agency. How do students define their sense of civic responsibility? Who are they responsible to? Who are they responsible for? How might they “choose to participate” locally, nationally, or globally after taking this course?

Found Poem

Students have created poems based on language selected from their journals, assignments and readings they have explored throughout the course. Sometimes students also write a poet's statement to accompany the poem. In the statement, students explain the message behind the poem and why that message is meaningful to them. You can present this project to students at the beginning of the course and ask that they identify important quotations and excerpts as they encounter them. Each week or for each section, you might ask students to select one or two important lines of text from their journals or from what they have studied and then ask them to reflect on why these words are meaningful to them. These regular assignments will provide the building blocks for their final found poem. For more information, refer to the teaching strategy “[Found Poems](#)” on Facing History's website.

Toolbox

In her book, *A Problem from Hell*, Samantha Power writes about a “toolbox for genocide prevention.” Building off this metaphor, some Facing History teachers have asked their students to create their own toolboxes that draw from material they have learned in the course, such as a “Toolbox for Decision-making.” Other toolbox students can create include:

- Toolbox for Justice
- Toolbox for Participation
- Toolbox for Responsibility
- Toolbox for Violence Prevention
- Toolbox for Caring
- Toolbox for Ethical Choices

Stop, Start, Continue

A less time-intensive way to have students reflect on their learning is to ask them to respond to the question: Inspired by your experience in this course, identify 1) one behavior or action that you will STOP doing, 2) something you will START doing, and 3) an action or actions that you will CONTINUE perform (or choices you will continue to make). To extend this project, you could have students present their STOP, START, CONTINUE responses. In their presentations, students can explain their rationale for these choices, answering questions such

as:

- How did your learning in this course inspire this decision?
- What do you hope is accomplished by this act? What might be the consequence of this choice?
- What challenges might you confront in trying to live up to these goals?
- How might you find support in dealing with these challenges?

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- ³ Leana Wen, "Winning Essay: Leana Wen," *New York Times*, April 29, 2007, accessed September 19, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/29/opinion/29wat-wen.html>.
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- ⁷ "Key News Audiences Now Blend Online and Traditional Sources," The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, August 17, 2008, <http://people-press.org/report/444/news-media>.
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- ⁹ Claire Safran, "Not in Our Town," *Redbook*, November 1994.
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- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Patrice O'Neill, email message to Adam Strom, June 16, 2009.
- ¹⁴ Erika Gossert, email message to Adam Strom, June 12, 2009.
- ¹⁵ Kim Zarzour, *Facing the Schoolyard Bully: How to Raise an Assertive Child in an Aggressive World* (Buffalo, New York: Firefly Books, 2000), 24.
- ¹⁶ Elizabeth Englander, interview with Facing History, July 13, 2011.
- ¹⁷ President John F. Kennedy, "Remarks at Amherst College," October 26, 1963, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Speeches/JFK/003POF03Amherst10261963.htm> (accessed on August 7, 2007).
- ¹⁸ Langston Hughes, "I Dream a World," *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, edited by Arnold Rampersad (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 311.
- ¹⁹ Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken," *Selected Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.), 71–2.