

Primary & Secondary Holocaust Sources for Reading/ELA Classrooms

Developed by:

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What is HERC?

HERC, a program of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation, engages and serves middle and high school as well as college students and adults through educational programs and Holocaust survivor testimonials.

- Speakers Bureau
- Holocaust Education Map (lesson plans)
- Writing & Art Contest (grades 7-12)
- Field Trips
- Teacher Professional Development

[Holocaustcentermilwaukee.org](https://holocaustcentermilwaukee.org)

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Holocaust Education Map

[Teachholocaust.org](https://teachholocaust.org)


117 Lesson Plans

Sortable by:

- Grade Level
- Standard
- Lesson Length
- Primary/Secondary Source
- Topic



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Testimonies

- Answer the questions around the room
 - Do you have to do something that people tell you to do? Why or why not?
 - If someone in authority tells you to do something, do you have to do it? Why or why not?
 - Agree or disagree – people always have a choice in their behavior and what they choose to do.
 - Who decides who gets to be in control/in an authority role?
- Read through Wilhelm Bahr's testimony from his trial in Hamburg
- Note how many times he says he is only following orders
- Discuss questions on the wall as a group

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<p>From the testimony of SS-Unterscharfuehrer Wilhelm Bahr in his trial at Hamburg (Quoted in <i>Truth Prevails</i>. ISBN 1-879437-00-7, p. 99):</p> <p>Q: Is it correct that you have gassed 200 Russian POW's with Zyklon-B?</p> <p>A: Yes, on orders.</p> <p>Q: Where did you do that?</p> <p>A: In Neuengamme [concentration camp].</p> <p>Q: On whose order?</p> <p>A: The local doctor, Dr. Von Bergmann.</p> <p>Q: With what gas?</p> <p>A: With Prussic acid [another name for Zyklon-B].</p> <p>Q: How long did the Russians take to die?</p> <p>A: I do not know. I only obeyed orders.</p> <p>Q: How long did it take to gas the Russians?</p> <p>A: I returned after two hours and they were all dead.</p> <p>Q: For what purpose did you go away?</p> <p>A: That was during lunch hour.</p> <p>Q: You left for your lunch and came back afterwards?</p> <p>A: Yes.</p> <p>Q: Were they dead when you came back?</p> <p>A: Yes.</p> <p>Q: Did you look at their bodies?</p> <p>A: Yes, because I had to load them.</p> <p>Q: Why did you apply the gas to the Russians?</p> <p>A: I only had orders to pour in the gas and I do not know anything about it.</p> <p>https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/testimonies-of-ss-men-regarding-gassing-of-prisoners</p>	<p>From the testimony of SS-Unterscharfuehrer Wilhelm Bahr in his trial at Hamburg (Quoted in <i>Truth Prevails</i>. ISBN 1-879437-00-7, p. 99):</p> <p>Q: Is it correct that you have gassed 200 Russian POW's with Zyklon-B?</p> <p>A: Yes, on orders.</p> <p>Q: Where did you do that?</p> <p>A: In Neuengamme [concentration camp].</p> <p>Q: On whose order?</p> <p>A: The local doctor, Dr. Von Bergmann.</p> <p>Q: With what gas?</p> <p>A: With Prussic acid [another name for Zyklon-B].</p> <p>Q: How long did the Russians take to die?</p> <p>A: I do not know. I only obeyed orders.</p> <p>Q: How long did it take to gas the Russians?</p> <p>A: I returned after two hours and they were all dead.</p> <p>Q: For what purpose did you go away?</p> <p>A: That was during lunch hour.</p> <p>Q: You left for your lunch and came back afterwards?</p> <p>A: Yes.</p> <p>Q: Were they dead when you came back?</p> <p>A: Yes.</p> <p>Q: Did you look at their bodies?</p> <p>A: Yes, because I had to load them.</p> <p>Q: Why did you apply the gas to the Russians?</p> <p>A: I only had orders to pour in the gas and I do not know anything about it.</p> <p>https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/testimonies-of-ss-men-regarding-gassing-of-prisoners</p>
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Children's Books

Why should you use children's books to teach tough subjects?

- Easier to comprehend
- Not overly graphic
- Doesn't overwhelm students
- Captivating illustrations lead to good discussions
- Shorter time commitment (depending on curriculum pacing)

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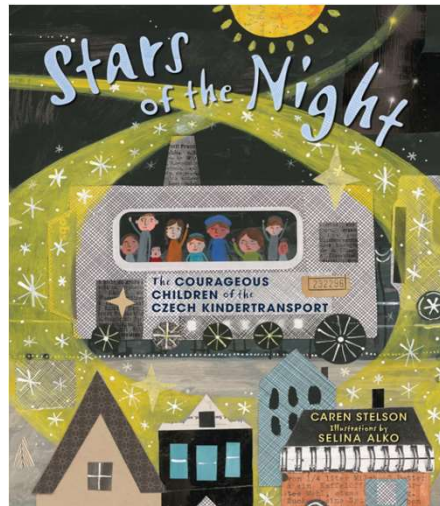
Examples of Children's Books



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Stars of the Night: The Courageous Children of the Czech Kindertransport by Caren Stelson



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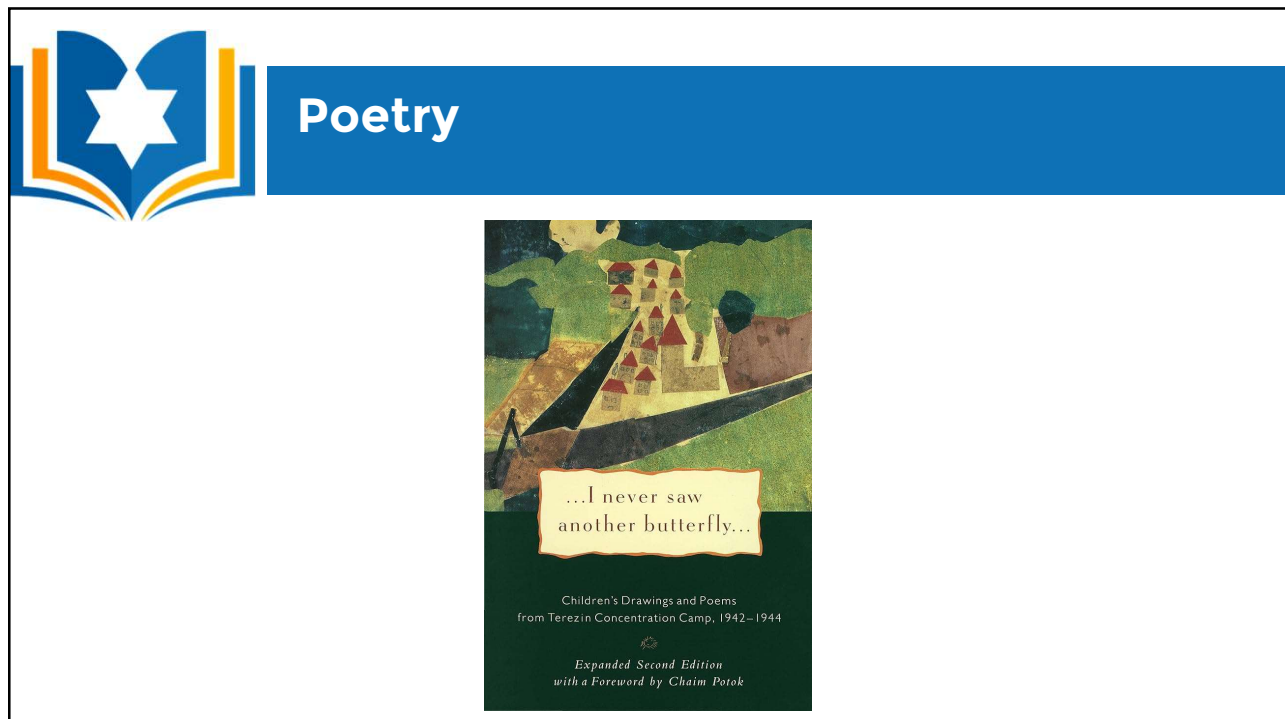
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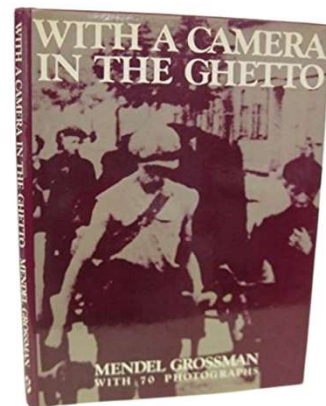
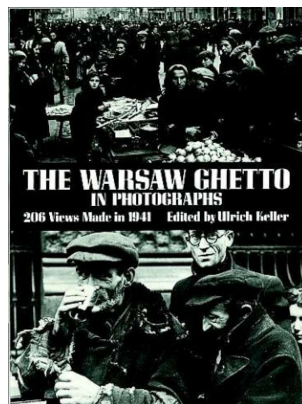
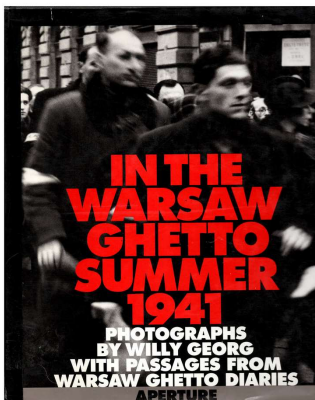


Photographs

Something to keep in mind when using Holocaust photographs:

- The point isn't to make students cry, so avoid overly graphic images. There are plenty of pictures available that tell the story of the Holocaust without traumatizing students.

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Questions to Accompany Photographs (for discussion or writing)

- What do you see in the picture?
- Who is in the picture?
- What are people doing?
- What do you think is happening?
- What stands out the most?
- What emotion do you feel from seeing the photo?
- What questions do you still have after seeing the image?

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 **Art**

Spiritual Resistance
art from concentration camps

1940
1945

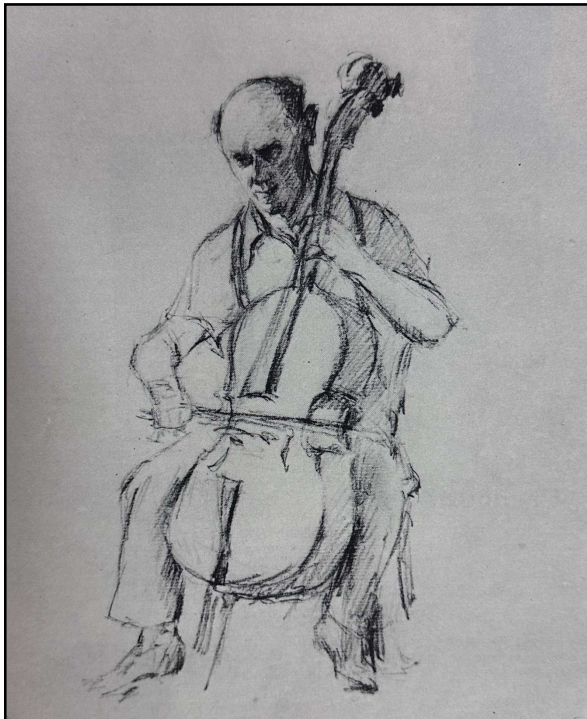
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"The Search" 1943
Irene Awret

- How does this picture make you feel? (mood)
- How do you think the artist feels about the subject? (tone)
- What do you see in this picture?
- What do you think is happening?

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"The Cellist" 1943
Charlotta Burešová

- How does this picture make you feel? (mood)
- How do you think the artist feels about the subject? (tone)
- What stands out to you about this picture?

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"Ballet Costume Design" undated
Charlotta Burešová

- How does this picture make you feel? (mood)
- How do you think the artist feels about the subject? (tone)
- Knowing where the artist was when they created this piece, why do you think they chose the subject that they did?

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"The Camp of Compiègne" 1941-1942
Abraham Berline

- How does this picture make you feel? (mood)
- How do you think the artist feels about the subject? (tone)
- Why do you think the artist chose to use bright colors?

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"Premonition of Death" 1941
Max Van Dam

- How does this picture make you feel? (mood)
- How do you think the artist feels about the subject? (tone)
- How do the shadows help tell a story?
- What kind of people do you see in this picture? Why is that important?

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"Hope" 1940
Uri Kochba

- How does this picture make you feel? (mood)
- How do you think the artist feels about the subject? (tone)
- What is the artist saying about the idea of hope?

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“Portrait of a Young Man” 1943
Leon Landau

- How does this picture make you feel? (mood)
- How do you think the artist feels about the subject? (tone)
- What stands out to you about this picture?


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Additional Resources

Let's take a look at the
primary/secondary resource
packet.

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Any questions?
