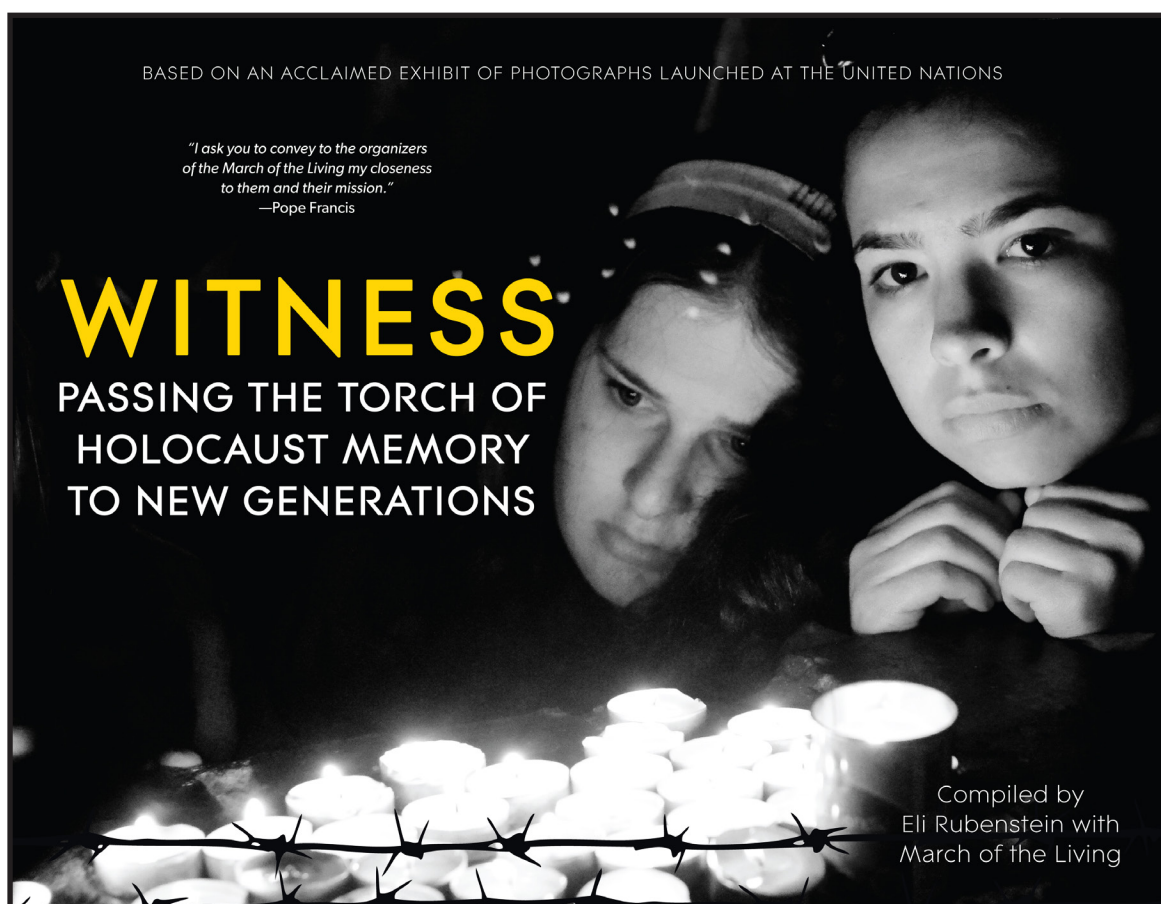


Second Story Press

High-Intermediate/Advanced Level ESL

# TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

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## *Witness: Passing the Torch of Holocaust Memory to New Generations*

ISBN: 978-1-927583-66-1

Lexile: 1220L Guided Reading: Z+

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# Book Summary

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*Witness: Passing the Torch of Holocaust Memory to New Generations* is a hard cover chapter book that combines text and photographs to document a multi-generational pilgrimage called March of the Living. March of the Living is an annual, worldwide educational program that brings together high school students, Holocaust survivors and their families, educators, and other caring individuals. March of the Living groups from around the world travel to Poland to learn about the Holocaust by visiting former concentration and extermination camps, Jewish memorials and cemeteries. A highlight of the program is the participants' march from Auschwitz to Birkenau to remember the thousands of Jews forced by the Nazis to make that death march.

March of the Living was launched in 1988, and since then more than 200,000 adults and teenagers worldwide have made the pilgrimage. This unique event unites Jewish teenagers, Holocaust survivors, and young people from many cultures and walks of life on an emotional journey. Survivors of more recent genocides also participate as part of their own healing process and offer their own insights on how the lessons of the past can eliminate cultural and religious persecution in the future.

*Witness: Passing the Torch of Holocaust Memory to New Generations* was written and compiled in 2015 by Rabbi Eli Rubenstein, who has himself led many March pilgrimages. March of the Living has received the support of Pope Francis who offers a heartfelt message at the beginning of the book.

Middle school teachers in Jewish separate and supplementary school classes can use the text to enhance their instruction of the Holocaust and *Yom Hashoa*, Holocaust Remembrance Day. Also, they can introduce the March of the Living Program as a way for young Jews to understand the Holocaust in a meaningful way. Middle school students who read the book will understand the Holocaust not as a distant chapter in their history, but as a living memory of suffering, loss, and survival.

*Witness: Passing the Torch of Holocaust Memory to New Generations* is an appropriate supplementary text for adolescents and adults studying World Studies, World Issues, and Canadian History credit courses from grades nine to twelve. It will enhance students' knowledge of past societies, skills in historical inquiry and perspective, disciplinary thinking, and world citizenship. Finally, *Witness* could be used as a supplemental text in a secondary credit advanced ESL or Senior English course where students have already studied a work of literature about the Holocaust such as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Survival in Auschwitz*, and *Night*. The themes that can be explored using this text are anti-Semitism, the effects of racism and persecution, righteous response to injustice, and survival.

*Witness: Passing the Torch of Holocaust Memory to New Generations* is an interactive 130-page text where students can use their smartphones and other technology to view survivor testimony, images, and other videos of participants on the March.

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PART A

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Pre-Reading Activities

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## ACTIVITY 1

# Group Discussion

*This is a group exercise for students to discuss and share their ideas about racism, its causes and effects. The activity also allows students who have immigrated from countries because of racism to share their feelings and opinions about being victims of racial, cultural, or religious persecution.*

*Give out this worksheet.*

 ACTIVITY 1

## Understanding Racism: Group Discussion

### Directions:

- a. Work in groups of four to six people. Try to make the groups as multicultural as possible.
  - b. Discuss each of these questions in your groups and make point-form notes of your answers.
  - c. After you finish your group discussion, we will take up the answers as a class.
1. In your own words, give a good definition of the word *racism*. Do not use a dictionary to come up with that definition.
  
  2. What are some insulting words that people who are racist use when they are referring to certain groups of people?
  
  3. Have you ever witnessed any situations of racism? If you did, briefly describe them. How did you react when you saw someone being racist to someone else? Did you try to protect or help the victim in some way? If so, how?
  
  4. Has anyone ever said or done anything to you which you thought was racist? Describe that situation. Why did you feel that way? How did you feel? How did you react to that situation?

5. If your first country is not Canada, have you or anyone else from a specific group ever experienced racism? Identify that group and what happened to them because of that racism.
  
6. Do you know of any time in history when racism against one or more than one racial, cultural, or religious group caused great suffering and death? Explain that situation.
  
7. “Institutional racism” occurs when the leaders of a country pass laws that target one or more racial, cultural, or religious groups. Identify any countries that have used institutional racism against one or more groups of its citizens.
  
8. What horrible things happen to groups that become targets of institutional racism?
  
9. Do you know the names any people who tried to fight or resist racism, either in Canada or any other country? What actions did those people take?
  
10. If a person experienced racism and a terrible life in his first country because of it, why would that person choose to return to that place? Make a list of some reasons.

 ACTIVITY 2

# Introduction to Vocabulary about the Holocaust

*Do this activity to ensure that students know and understand the meaning of the book's vocabulary about the Holocaust.*

*Give out this worksheet to students and have them work in groups so that they can complete it more quickly.*

 ACTIVITY 2

## Vocabulary In *Witness*

### Directions:

- a. Work in a group of four or five students.
- b. Below is a list of vocabulary that you will need to know to as you are reading *Witness*.
- c. Work together with your group members to discuss and write notes for the meanings of these names and terms.
- d. Do not use a dictionary to find the meaning.
- e. We will take up this work together as a class.

1. Holocaust: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Adolf Hitler: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Nazism: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Nazis: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Gestapo: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



6. Concentration camps: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Genocide : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Extermination Camps: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Ghettos: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Deportation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Partisans: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## ACTIVITY 3

### Tracking the March of the Living

*The purpose of the activity is to have students track the March of the Living. Photocopy the “Europe Under Nazi Occupation” map on page 18 of the book or have the students use the Internet or any subscription databases available in your school to find a similar map. As the students are reading the book, have them circle the location of the camp or memorial visited. They could also write the names of the people profiled in the book who survived their experiences in that location.*

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## ACTIVITY 4

### In Their Shoes: What Would You Do?

*Many non-Jewish citizens of occupied countries didn't say or do anything to stop the injustices and genocide of Jews and other targeted groups. This is a values clarification exercise appropriate for middle school students to discuss how they would have felt, what they would have said or done if they had been faced with the same predicaments.*

 ACTIVITY 4

## In Their Shoes

### Directions:

- a. Organize yourselves in groups of four or five students.
- b. Have one student be the note taker for your group or choose different students.
- c. Read each of the situations below. Then discuss the questions at the end of each situation.
- d. After your discussion, each group will be asked to present one situation and summarize their group's ideas and opinions about it.

Here are the situations:

1. Your best friend has just found out that she is no longer allowed to go to school because of her religion. All students who follow that religion have been expelled from school. What words would you use to describe what happened to her? How would you feel if this happened to you? What would you do to help your friend?
2. You are in a store owned by one of your neighbours when a group of wild kids come in, yelling foul language at the owner, turning over all the furniture and displays and throwing things around. You try to stop them but you can't. The storeowner confronts the kids but then gets beaten up. Why would these kids believe that they could be violent to the storeowner? How would the storeowner feel? If you witnessed this behaviour, what would you do or say?
3. In the middle of the night you hear noises coming from your next-door neighbour's home. Looking out your window, you can see that your neighbour and his family are being driven away in a truck and that other people are also in the truck. Would you stop this from happening? Would you try to find out what happened to them? Would you do or say anything to help them? Why or why not?
4. One day, you and everyone in your family are ordered by your government to do several things: wear a religious symbol on your clothes to identify yourself to others; hand over all of your cellphones, phones,

televisions, and computers; give up your family cars and bicycles; and obey a curfew to be home by 6 pm every night. Why do you think your government is imposing these prohibitions and restrictions? How would you feel about how you were being treated? Would you obey everything that you were told to do? Would you protest in some way? Why or why not?

5. You are an excellent student in your grade 8 class, and have the best marks in many subjects. Several months ago, you were told that at graduation you would be given three academic achievement awards. One week before graduation, your principal tells you that you are not allowed to attend graduation and that your awards will be given to someone else. How would you feel about what happened to you?



## ACTIVITY 5

### In Their Shoes: Role Plays

*To differentiate instruction, the teacher could also have students work in small groups to create role plays of the situations described in Activity 4. Assign each group a role play, and have students create the characters and the script for it. After the role play is completed, students would still be asked to answer the questions for each situation.*

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PART B

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Reading and Writing Activities

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 ACTIVITY 6

## Chapter Questions

*There are many chapter questions because there are many stories of Holocaust survivors in the book. The teacher should consider a variety of methods to deal with them, which would include small group and class discussion, individual and group oral presentations, creating charts or other graphic organizers, and journaling.*

## Chapter Questions

### Introduction (pages 3-5)

1. In what ways did Germany excel or progress in the first half of the 20th century?
2. Who were other groups of people besides Jews, who were targeted for discrimination and extermination by Nazis? What would be some reasons that the Nazis chose these specific groups?
3. Why did many young people need to wait until 1989 to travel to Poland and other parts of Europe?
4. Why have so many young people travelled to Europe to visit the places where the Holocaust took place?
5. The fifth paragraph of page 3 poses many questions about the Holocaust. Why should we ask these questions right at the beginning of the book?
6. Why do both Holocaust survivors and students of the Holocaust continue to convey important messages and stories about it?
7. The second paragraph on page 4 has a series of contrasting statements. Create a chart for these statements.

For example:

THE NAZIS

wanted to build a world of hatred

STUDENTS AND HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

will build a world based on love

After you have completed the chart, answer this question:

What is the overall mission of students and Holocaust survivors?

Write a thesis or a mission statement for this book.

8. “The Holocaust happened because of its twisted and evil perpetrators and because most of the world’s good people did not stand up tall enough and soon enough.” (page 4 ) According to this quote, what are two human causes of the Holocaust? What is your opinion of the second part of this statement? Using the Internet or your school’s subscription databases, research Canada’s response to the Holocaust.
9. Summarize the mission and activities of The March of the Living and The March of Remembrance and Hope.



10. According to the author, “the listeners become the tellers” (page 4) of Holocaust history. Why would it be necessary for the listeners to become another generation of tellers?

## Chapter One: What Happened and to Whom (pages 6–13)

11. What other cultural or religious groups have been victims of genocide?
12. What is a good definition of classical anti-Semitism? How did it occur?
13. Do you think that Jews living in Canada, the United States and Europe were victims of classical anti-Semitism before the Holocaust? Give a specific example.
14. What are two differences between classical anti-Semitism and Nazi racial ideology?
15. Why was Nazi anti-Semitism more vicious and catastrophic than classical anti-Semitism?
16. Why did the Nazi ideology focus on the extermination of Jews?
17. What was the Nazis’ Final Solution?
18. Who were other groups targeted by the Nazis?
19. Although there are many examples of genocide in world history, why is the Holocaust “uniquely, unique”?
20. In the author’s opinion, how is studying the Holocaust an extension of our humanity?
21. The photographs on pages 10, 11, and 12 were taken by the Nazis to record their brutal treatment of Jews during the Holocaust. Look at the pictures and captions under them. What would motivate the Nazis to take them?
22. The picture on page 13 of liberated concentration camp survivors was taken by an American army photographer. Why did he want to take this picture?
23. Eli Wiesel, Holocaust survivor, humanitarian and author of the memoir *Night* is pictured alone on page 13, but also in the group picture on the same page. Find him in the group picture. What could have motivated the orphaned Holocaust survivor to become a writer, humanitarian, and educator?

## Chapter Two: Where It Took Place and Who Let it Happen (pages 14–33)

24. Why did the mass murder of Jews start at the beginning of World War II?
25. What was ghettoization during the Holocaust?
26. Who were *Einsatzgruppen* and how did they participate in the genocide of Jews?

27. What were other ways that the Nazis incarcerated Jews?
28. What happened at the Wannsee Conference in 1942?
29. Why do you think the Nazis forced Jews to go on Death Marches near the end of World War II?
30. What happened to Jewish people living in Albania and Denmark?
31. How did the King of Morocco protect his Jewish citizens?
32. Why do you think most countries in Europe allowed their Jewish citizens to be persecuted and killed by the Nazis, while three countries were able to save their Jewish populations?
33. What was proof of the “callous indifference” of Canada and the United States to the persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe?
34. What was the context and meaning of “None is too many” stated by a Canadian immigration official?
35. What was Auschwitz? Why was it important in Operation Reinhard?
36. Why were Auschwitz and Birkenau situated close to each other?
37. Who were the *Sonderkommando*? Why would a Jewish prisoner do this job?
38. Imagine that you are the two students looking at the hair and suitcases pictured on pages 22 and 23. How would you react to what you saw?
39. What is a mausoleum? Why was one erected in Majdanek?
40. Why was it important to Anna Heilman to find her parents’ grave? What bigger meaning did that grave symbolize to her?
41. How did the Nazis desecrate Jewish people and religion when they built Plaszow concentration camp?
42. What was the purpose of Treblinka in the Final Solution?
43. Why do you think Treblinka was chosen as the site of a memorial of all Polish Jewish communities in the Holocaust?
44. Why did the Nazis destroy Belzec concentration camp?
45. Explain how the life of Deborah Katz symbolizes the tragedy of Jewish families during the Holocaust.

### **Chapter Three: Who Resisted? And How? (pages 34–56)**

46. Why is it important to know about the individuals and groups who resisted the Nazis and the soldiers who liberated survivors?

47. What is a good definition of “spiritual resistance”? (page 35) What were different ways that Jews spiritually resisted what was happening to them?
48. Read the fourth paragraph on page 35, which describes several individuals who offered spiritual resistance in the Holocaust. Which of the people mentioned in that paragraph do you admire the most? Give a reason for your choice.
49. Why did the leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising choose April 19, 1943 for the uprising? How long did it last?
50. Who initiated the Warsaw uprising of 1944? How long did the uprising last?
51. What was the work of partisans?
52. What was the “armed Jewish resistance”? How did these people fight Nazis?
53. Why did the Nazis lose control of occupied European countries at the end of World War II?
54. Who are “Righteous Among the Nations”? How are they honoured in Israel?
55. What is a diplomat? Who were the diplomats who saved many Jews? What power would a diplomat have to save people’s lives?
56. Explain how Oskar Schindler saved many Jews from being deported to concentration camps.
57. How did Irena Sendler save the lives of many Jewish children?
58. “It has been aptly stated that the Righteous Among the Nations not only saved Jews during the Holocaust, they also saved the reputation of humanity.” (page 37) What is the meaning of that statement? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?
59. On each March of the Living trip, Holocaust survivors and their grown children travel along with young people. Why is it important for these three generations to make the trip together?
60. Why did Bronka Krygier want children to “witness the truth of the past” and be “watchful and certain that the world does not forget.” (page 43) What did she expect of the people who were on the trip with her?
61. How did Bronka’s intelligence save her life during the Holocaust?
62. How did Dr. Janusz Korczak dedicate his life to Polish children?
63. Why is Jerzy Kozminski considered Righteous Among the Nations?
64. How did Sidney Zoltak survive for 14 months?
65. Why was it so important for Sidney to reunite with the son of his rescuer?
66. Holocaust survivor Felix Zandman was inspired by his grandmother’s words, “What we have is what we

give. If you give to somebody, you give yourself. Nobody can take it away from you, even after your death. If you give, this stays with you forever.” (page 50) How has this philosophy motivated Zandman to make significant contributions to society?

67. Why was Czeslawa Zak named Righteous Among the Nations?
68. Why do you think Joe Mandel said, “Now I feel I can live forever.”? (page 52)
69. Read “What the Messiah Looks Like” on page 54. Who does Irving Roth compare to the Messiah? Why did he make this comparison?

## Chapter Four: We Who Survived (pages 56–71)

70. How have many survivors chosen to preserve their memories of their lives and lost family members?
71. What is a Holocaust denier? Since witnesses to the Holocaust are still alive, how could a Holocaust denier possibly make that argument?
72. List countries that deny that the Holocaust ever occurred. If you are not sure, use the Internet or your school’s subscription databases to find that information.
73. Elie Wiesel has said, *“To be a survivor after the Holocaust, is to have all the reason in the world to destroy and not to destroy. To have all the reasons in the world to hate and not to hate...to have all the reasons in the world to mistrust and not to mistrust. To have all the reasons in the world not to have faith in language, in singing, in prayers, not in God—but to go on telling the tale, to go on carrying on the dialogue and have our own silent prayers and quarrels with God.”* This is a statement full of contradictions. What was Elie Wiesel saying about how Holocaust survivors lead their lives?
74. Why do you think most Holocaust survivors did not become angry and bitter?
75. What are the three roles or responsibilities that many survivors take?
76. Read Jeffrey Cymbler’s account of his father on page 59. What role did his father take? On the other hand, what role did Jeffrey assume? Why do you think Jeffrey took on that role?
77. Read, “Do Not Create the Same Hatred That Was Done to Us” on page 60. What was Max Glauken’s role as a survivor? How did Max’s view of dogs change when he went on the March of the Living?
78. Read “Drop by Drop” on page 63. Pinchas Gutter described his special relationship with Moses, who survived the genocide in Rwanda. Explain how their bond could “make the world a better place.”
79. Read “Under This Same Sky” on page 67. Why was Frank Lowy drawn to return to Birkenau? How did Frank’s return to the spot where he last saw his father strengthen his religious faith?

80. Read “Like a Hand Reaching Out” on page 69. What memory of the Czech people restored his faith in the world in the midst of the horror that he was experiencing?
81. Read “A True Love’s Kiss” on page 70. What was Halina Birenbaum’s thought as she struggled to survive as a fourteen-year-old? In your opinion, was her thought understandable or extraordinary in her situation?
82. Read, “Why I March, Why I Speak” on page 71. Why did David Shentow go on The March of the Living? Why would his reason make sense?
83. Why was it important for David to walk into Auschwitz with a young student?

## Chapter 5: Survivors and Students: Passing the Torch of Memory (pages 73–98)

84. What was the Iron Curtain? When did it fall? If you are not sure, research the answers using the Internet or your school’s subscription databases.
85. Why is it now possible to visit the places in Eastern Europe where the Holocaust occurred, when it was not possible until fairly recently?
86. Explain why the journey of young people and Holocaust survivors is a “cry of protest over the injustices of the past.” (page 73) What does this statement mean?
87. Why or how does “touching and entering history” make the experience more meaningful than just learning history?
88. Sally Wasserman was a hidden child from Poland. What was the experience of a hidden child during the Holocaust? If you do not know, use the Internet or your school’s subscription databases to find the information.
89. Why do you think Sally, who is not religious, insisted that someone say Kaddish in the Lupochowa forest?
90. The young people who go on The March of the Living make this pledge to the Holocaust survivors: **“Your struggles will be remembered and your loved ones will not be forgotten. We, a new generation of young people, commit to a better world for all humanity, a world far different than the one that sought to destroy your generation.”** (page 74) In your opinion, what are different ways that young people who go through this experience can keep this promise?
91. There is a saying, “When you listen to a witness, you become a witness.” (page 76) What is the meaning of this saying?
92. Read “Blind Love and Blind Hate” on page 78. Why did Liron Artzi write a thank you letter to her guide dog?

93. Why would the participation of blind people on The March of the Living be symbolic and significant?
94. At Auschwitz Concentration Camp, the sign above the camp entrance reads “*Arbeit Macht Frei*” (Works Makes You Free). What was the cruel irony of those words?
95. Some people who go on The March of Remembrance and Hope are not Jews. What are some reasons that people who are not Jewish or Holocaust survivors would want to go on this journey?
96. Nate Leipziger, a child Holocaust survivor, said about Nazi soldiers, “There’s a difference between hating and holding them responsible. They are two different feelings. I don’t have to like them, but I don’t hate them. Because hate will destroy the person doing the hating.” (page 82) How or why is it possible for Nate to feel this way?
97. Read “Stones of Memory” on page 85. Why does Bill Glied say that all who visit Auschwitz are “the little stones”?
98. Read “I Was a Lonely Rock” on page 88. Why was it necessary for Asher Aud to become a “lonely rock”? For Asher, how does talking about his experiences help him?
99. Read “You Become our Survivors” on page 89. What important message does Trudy Album give to the young people who are with her on the trip?
100. Read “To Honor and to Remember” on pages 90–91. Why did Sally Wasserman have resentment toward her mother? How did her visit to Poland and an old letter change her opinion of her mother?
101. Read “Your Baby Survived, Mama” on page 92. Explain how the young people and fellow survivors on the trip helped Robbie Waisman to deal with his childhood trauma of survival.
102. Read “Her Last Words” on page 97. Who was Josef Mengele and what did he do in Auschwitz? If you are not sure, research information about him on the Internet or your school’s subscription databases.
103. Summarize Eva Gelbman’s story. Why was it important for Eva to believe that her mother’s eyeglasses were in the museum at Auschwitz?

## **Chapter Six: The Commitment of a New Generation of Witnesses (pages 98-125)**

104. In your own words, what are two reasons that young students want to go on The March of the Living?
105. Why would a young man whose grandfather had been a Nazi want to go on the March?
106. How can the students who attend this trip be “repairing history”? (page 99)
107. An African-American student wrote this about her participation, “They say that history repeats itself as if that is an unchangeable reality. But the truth is, history does not repeat itself—it is people who repeat the

mistakes of the past. But they don't have to and we don't have to." (pages 100–101) In your opinion, how could this experience will change this young woman and her relationships with different people?

108. Muslim student, Ayesha Siddiqua Chaudhry, said this when she returned from the journey: "I think the trip to Poland...forced us all to transcend our religious, political, and cultural boundaries in order to bear witness to the common humanity we all share. This common humanity is what should unite us when injustice is inflicted upon any of us." (page 101) Explain this student's new insight or understanding of her relationships with people who do not share her cultural or religious beliefs.
109. Why will students who have gone on the March of the Living become effective leaders in their communities? What ideas or principles will these participants encourage in everyone they work with?
110. Look at page 104. What physical work are the students in the photograph doing? What spiritual or emotional benefit will this work give them?
111. Look at the photograph on page 111. Who is Juliet Karugahe? Read "Hitler Can Be Defeated." In Julie's opinion, what are two important gains that she has made by participating in the trip.
112. Look at the photo and caption at the bottom of page 113. Why would a student participant on The March of the Living keep a diary of her trip? How would that diary help that student before during and after that experience?

## **Faces of the March (pages 115-125)**

113. Read the paragraph on page 115, which is about all of the participants on the March. What do the words, "They leave as one" mean?
114. Look at the faces of the participants from pages 115 to 125. How would you describe their emotional reactions to the experiences of being on the March of the Living? With a partner, write one or two sentence captions for each picture. In your caption, describe these participants, their actions and their feelings about the experience and each other.

## **The March of the Living (pages 126-127)**

115. Look at the two pictures on pages 126 and 127. What is one similarity between what the people in the pictures are doing?
116. What are several differences between the people in the two pictures and the reasons for what they are doing?
117. When is Holocaust Remembrance Day, also called *Yom Hashoa*? If you are not sure, find the date on the Internet or your school's subscription databases.

118. Why do you think the participants of the March of the Living walk from Auschwitz to Birkenau on that exact day? How is this action symbolic?
119. In your opinion, is “The March of the Living” an appropriate title for this event? Give reasons for your opinion.
120. Would you ever consider being a participant on a March of the Living”? Give your opinion and reasons to support it.



 ACTIVITY 7

## Artistic Response to the Holocaust: The Butterfly

*This activity has students examine a poem created by a concentration camp prisoner and analyze its significance. The poem was written by a young adult, but the language level is not high. Middle school students could easily read and analyze the poem. It can be given as an evaluated assignment, or used for class or group discussion.*

 ACTIVITY 7

## Poetry During the Holocaust: “The Butterfly”

Read the poem “The Butterfly” and answer the questions that follow.

### **The Butterfly**

The last, the very last,  
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.  
Perhaps if the sun’s tears would sing  
against a white stone...

Such, such a yellow  
Is carried lightly ‘way up high,  
It went away I’m sure  
because it wished to  
kiss the world goodbye.

For seven weeks I’ve lived in here,  
Penned up inside this ghetto  
But I have found my people here.  
The dandelions call to me  
And the white chestnut in the court.

Only I never saw another butterfly.  
That butterfly was the last one.  
Butterflies don’t live here,  
In the ghetto.

PAVEL FRIEDMAN, 1942

Pavel Friedman was born on January 7, 1921 in Prague, Czechoslovakia and died in Auschwitz concentration camp on September 29, 1944. This poem survived because Pavel was also imprisoned in Terezin, another camp where many prisoners who were artists, writers, poets, and musicians created their own responses to the Holocaust. Some of this art was hidden from the Nazis and rescued by survivors at the end of World War II.

1. What proof do we have that Pavel has not always been a prisoner?
2. How does the poet feel about nature?
3. Why does Pavel think that he has to stay in a ghetto, even though the conditions are terrible?
4. Why does Pavel love the butterfly, the dandelions, and other nature that he sees?
5. On the other hand, what are Pavel's negative feelings about the butterfly? Why does he have these feelings?
6. The literary device "personification" is when a writer gives objects human characteristics. List the phrases in the poem that are examples of personification. What is the meaning of these phrases?
7. Why would a person who is a prisoner in a ghetto write a poem like this? List some reasons.
8. In your opinion, what is the theme, main idea, message, or moral of the poem? Give a reason for your opinion.
9. What is your opinion of the poem? Give some reasons for your opinion.



## ACTIVITY 8

# Humanistic Response to the Holocaust: “First They Came”

*“First They Came” is another landmark poem written during the Holocaust by a German anti-Nazi theologian who was imprisoned from 1937 to 1945 and liberated in Dachau concentration camp. The language is not difficult, but its message is more complex. It would be appropriate for grade 11 or 12 English students who have read and studied Witness and other Holocaust-themed literature such as Night or Survival in Auschwitz. Hand out this activity.*

 ACTIVITY 8

# Responding to the Holocaust: “First They Came”

## Directions:

Read the poem “First They Came” and answer the questions that follow.

### First They Came

First they came for the Communists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Communist.  
Then they came for the Socialists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Socialist.  
Then they came for the trade unionists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a trade unionist.  
Then they came for the Jews  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Jew.  
Then they came for me  
And there was not one left  
To speak for me.

PASTOR MARTIN NIEMOLLER (1892–1984)

(Martin Neimoller was a German Lutheran minister and theologian. Initially a pro-Fascist, Neimoller gradually understood the evils of Nazism, was arrested by the Germans and imprisoned in Dachau concentration camp. He survived and after his liberation in 1945 became an anti-war and nuclear disarmament activist.)

You may work in pairs or small groups, but answer these questions using your own words.

1. What is the meaning of these terms? If you aren't sure, use the Internet or your school's subscription databases to research and write clear definitions.
  - a. Communists
  - b. Socialists
  - c. Trade Unionists
2. What is the role or function in society of the three groups named above? Why do people become members of these groups? In a country like Canada or the United States, how does the government in power treat or behave toward these groups?
3. Who or what is the "they" referred to in the poem?
4. Predict what happened to the different groups of people when "they" came for them.
5. What line is repeated several times? What mood or tone is created by the repetition of this line?
6. Why does the writer blame himself?
7. What is the result of the poet's inability to act?
8. What is the theme of the poem?
9. Do you think the poet should blame himself? Why or why not?
10. In our society or our everyday lives, is there anything that we can blame ourselves for?



## ACTIVITY 9

# Creating your own “First They Came” Poem: Group Oral Presentation

*This could be an evaluated group work activity where students use “First They Came” as a template to create their own poem on personal or social responsibility. The object would be to put the meaning of the poem into a modern context and would also allow many ESL students from war-torn or politically volatile countries to make these connections.*

 ACTIVITY 9

## Creating Your Own “First They Came” Poem: Oral Presentation

1. Organize yourselves into groups of three to five people.
2. Below there is another copy of “First They Came,” however, some key words and phrases are missing.
3. As a group, agree on the new theme of your poem and the language to go in the blanks.
4. Practise presenting your poem as a group. Decide on the lines that each group member will recite.
5. Also, decide if your presenters need to be dressed differently, or need props or music to accompany your presentation.
6. Your presentations will be evaluated for content, language, and originality.



## First They Came

First they came for the \_\_\_\_\_

And I \_\_\_\_\_

Because \_\_\_\_\_

Then they came for the \_\_\_\_\_

And I \_\_\_\_\_

Because \_\_\_\_\_

Then they came for the \_\_\_\_\_

And I \_\_\_\_\_

Because \_\_\_\_\_

Then they came for the \_\_\_\_\_

And I \_\_\_\_\_

Because \_\_\_\_\_

Then they came for \_\_\_\_\_

And \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## ACTIVITY 10

# Poetic Responses to the Holocaust: Poetry Analysis

*In this assignment, students use their skills to analyze one of the poems in the book. It would be an appropriate oral or written assignment for a Grade 11 or 12 student who has had previous instruction and practise in poetry analysis. However, when you introduce this assignment, stress that the “poets” are not professional writers, but young people who went on the March of the Living.*

## Analyzing a Poem in *Witness*

### Directions:

Here is a list of some of the poems in *Witness*.

JUST LIKE ME (page 18)  
FROM ONE WHO HAS TASTED ASHES (page 27)  
SO WRONG (page 31)  
ALL AROUND ME ARE STONES (page 31)  
TO EACH OF THEM (page 39)  
SURVIVORS (page 64)  
MARCH ON (page 75)  
NOT EVER AGAIN (page 87)  
THE FIRE WITHIN ME (page 100)

Choose one of these poems to analyze. Answer these questions to complete your analysis.

1. Why was this poem written? What has the writer seen, heard, or experienced that motivated the person to write the poem?
2. Explain the poet's "point of view."
3. What ideas are used to support that "point-of view"?
4. Poets and other writers use these devices to make their work more effective and meaningful:
  - a. alliteration
  - b. assonance
  - c. imagery
  - d. metaphor
  - e. simile
  - f. meter
  - g. onomatopoeia
  - h. personification
  - i. repetition
  - j. rhyme

Explain how the poet has used five of these devices.

5. Why did you choose this particular poem? What personal identification or meaning did it have for you?

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PART C

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Media Literacy And Extension Activities

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## ACTIVITY 11

# Documentary Film Review

*There are many documentary films students should see to broaden their knowledge of the Holocaust. This activity can be used as a major assignment or Culminating Performance Task for grade 11 or 12 English or History students. To differentiate instruction, students can do the assignment in writing or as an oral presentation.*

 ACTIVITY 11

## Documentary Film Review

A documentary is a non-fiction movie that describes a real-life situation or event. It often includes interviews of people involved or affected by that situation and historical film footage. A documentary is useful as an historical record and a teaching tool.

### Directions:

1. Here is a list of documentaries about one or more aspects of the Holocaust. They are all available for viewing on YouTube.

- a. *Blessed in the Match: The Life and Death of Hannah Senesh*
- b. *Defiant Requiem : Voices of the Resistance*
- c. *Inside Hana's Suitcase*
- d. *The Lion of Judah*
- e. *Six Million and One*
- f. *Steal a Pencil for Me*
- g. *Footprints in the Snow*
- h. *Kitty: Return to Auschwitz*
- i. *Night and Fog*
- j. *Kaddish*

(There are many documentaries about the Holocaust. If you wish to choose a film not on this list, please view it and send the link to your teacher to make sure that it is appropriate for your assignment. )

2. Complete these sections of your movie review.

#### **Part A: Introduction**

What is the title of the documentary? When was it made? Who is the director of the film? What country was responsible for producing the film?

#### **Part B: Plot Summary**

Summarize the major plot or story events in the film. Who is it about? When and where does the

story take place? What specific events or aspects of the Holocaust does it document? Does it use the storytelling techniques of “flashback” and “flash forward” to tell the story? (*Do not tell the climax or end of the story.*)

### **Part C: Central Figures**

Who are one or two central figures in the story? What are their important character traits? Explain how their character traits or actions contributed to helping others during the Holocaust.

### **Part D: Conflicts**

Any story must include one or more of these conflicts: Person against Person, Person against Society, Person against Nature, and Internal Conflict. Analyze one significant conflict in the story. What kind of conflict is it? Who is it between? How is it caused? Is it resolved? If so, how?

### **Part E: Themes**

Identify one or two significant themes in the story. For each theme, give one or two examples from the film that support or prove the theme.

### **Part F: Rating and Personal Opinion**

In a rating system of one to five stars, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, which rating would you assign the documentary? Give your rating and at least two reasons for your opinion. What is at least one specific aspect of the Holocaust you learned about by watching the film?



## ACTIVITY 12

# Guest Speaker on the Holocaust

*Invite a guest to speak to your students. Here is a short list of organizations that will provide speakers. You can also contact the Holocaust Education Centre in your area, which may have a Speaker's Bureau.*

- a. *March of the Living* ([www.marchoftheliving.org](http://www.marchoftheliving.org))
- b. *Simon Wiesenthal Center* ([www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com](http://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com))
- c. *Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Center* ([www.holocaustcentre.com](http://www.holocaustcentre.com))



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

Helen Wolfe has been an educator for almost 40 years. She has a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education and has earned professional certification in Senior English, ESL, Law, Special Education, and a Guidance Specialist.

Helen is experienced in all grade levels from Kindergarten to Grade 12. She has taught in a wide variety of public and private school settings. Since 1988, her focus has been as an adult educator in secondary school credit programs. During that time, she has written, revised, and implemented many courses of study in English, Social Science, and English as a Second Language.

In 2011, she wrote *Terrific Women Teachers*, a non-fiction chapter book for young readers that is part of the Women's Hall of Fame Series from Second Story Press. Her belief is that every student, even those with language and other learning challenges, has the right to read and appreciate well-written children's literature. That philosophy of inclusion motivates her to write teacher's guides to help make quality literature accessible to all learners.

Helen lives in Toronto and continues to work in adult education and ESL.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about this guide or would like to get in touch with Helen Wolfe, please send an e-mail to [info@secondstorypress.ca](mailto:info@secondstorypress.ca).

## FEEDBACK

Let us know about your experience using this guide by completing a short online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CQHKZG5>