

## Lesson 5 THE “FINAL SOLUTION”

### Making Connections

The additional activities and projects listed below can be integrated directly into the lesson or can be used to extend the lesson once it has been completed. The topics lend themselves to students' continued study of the Holocaust as well as opportunities for students to make meaningful connections to other people and events, including relevant contemporary issues. These activities may include instructional strategies and techniques and/or address academic standards in addition to those that were identified for the lesson.

1. Visit IWitness ([iwitness.usc.edu](http://iwitness.usc.edu)) for activities specific to Lesson 5: The “Final Solution.”
2. Distribute the student handout, *The First Ones*, available on the website in the **Additional Resources** section of the **Lesson Components**. Read the short biography of Yitzhak Katzenelson together. You may then choose to have students read the poem silently, in groups, or as a whole class. Once they have read the poem, discuss it together, using some or all of the discussion questions below.
  - Why do you think the Nazis would go after the children first?
  - How could children be “dangerous” to the Germans?
  - Katzenelson describes the two-year-old girl he sees as looking like a “grandma of a hundred years.” Why might such a little child seem like an old person?
  - Why do you think he says that his people “drew consolation” from the children? How might their children be a consolation to Jews?
  - How does Katzenelson end the poem? Is he hopeful or hopeless? How do you know?
3. Provide students with a copy of the *Pyramid of Hate* available on the website (Lesson 3: Nazi Germany under **Download Lesson Resources**). After reviewing the material together, tell students that you want them to consider whether “genocide” should be added to the top of the pyramid or if there are other changes to the graphic that they feel are warranted after learning about the “Final Solution.” Instruct students to prepare a revised “pyramid of hate” or prepare a completely different graphic representation that they feel more accurately depicts the escalation of hate. The revised graphic should be accompanied by a short explanatory text that explains the reasoning behind adding genocide to the top of the pyramid or changing the graphic entirely. Students should also be given the option of keeping the graphic exactly as it currently appears, but they must explain why they feel there shouldn't be any changes.
4. Professional and amateur artists of all genres recorded what they saw and experienced during the Holocaust. Some inmate art was sanctioned by camp or ghetto authorities for propaganda purposes or to satisfy Nazi officials who demanded inmates produce personal works of art for their satisfaction. Clandestine art was created at great risk to the artist's life. Thousands of these clandestine pieces, created by children and adults, were discovered in ghettos and camps after liberation. Artists who survived the Holocaust often created works following liberation to document what they had experienced or to share their interpretations of what the Holocaust meant not only to them personally, but to humanity.

Have students research art that was created either during or following the Holocaust and

identify one piece that is particularly significant or moving to them. In a written, oral, or multimedia report, instruct students to share information about the artist and the piece of art they chose, provide background on the circumstances under which the piece of art was created, the medium used, etc. and explain why they chose this particular work of art. Artists that students might want to consider researching include Felix Nussbaum, Fernand Van Horen, Yehuda Bacon, Esther Lurie, Alexander Bogen, Hirsch Szyllis, Samuel Bak, Bedrich Fritta, and Petr Ginz.

5. Divide students into small groups and have them research one of the topics below or identify their own topic and prepare a presentation in a format of their choice to share with the class or post on the class website or wiki. Encourage students to include primary source materials in their lessons. In addition to the **Supplemental Assets** available on the website in the **Additional Resources** section of the **Lesson Components**, encourage students to use the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website ([ushmm.org](http://ushmm.org)) and IWitness ([iwitness.usc.edu](http://iwitness.usc.edu)).

Topic #1: Resistance in the Camps

Topic #2: Culture, Religion, and Education in the Camps

Topic #3: Community and Teamwork in the Camps

Topic #4: Children in the Camps

Topic #5: Survival in the Camps

Topic #6: Information about a specific extermination camp

[**NOTE:** Encourage students to learn about all six of the extermination camps—Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, and Treblinka.]

6. Many works of fiction have been written that center on a person's experiences during the Holocaust. These texts often evoke strong emotion, heighten awareness, and provide opportunities for the reader to ask him/herself complex questions—all positive outcomes. Even though such books are clearly identified as fiction, many may still reflect historical inaccuracies in terms of time, place, and events that can lead to an erroneous understanding or representation of what took place during the time period.

Have students work together to develop a rubric for assessing the historical accuracy of works of fiction about the Holocaust. They should identify what specific dimensions (chronology of events, language, depictions of people and places, etc.) upon which a work should be judged and a scale for scoring how successful the author is in achieving each of the characteristics they have identified. After the rubric that has been developed, have students read or re-read—either individually or in groups—one of the books listed below or another similar title and apply the rubric they have developed. If they are unsure if something is accurate, they will need to conduct the necessary research to make an informed decision. After completing the assignment, have students compare their findings/completed rubrics and draw conclusions regarding the possible benefits and challenges of using fiction to learn about the Holocaust.

Possible texts:

- *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak
- *Milkweed* by Jerry Spinelli
- *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne
- *Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen
- *Friedrich* by Hans Peter Richter