



LESSON PLAN: Kristallnacht: “Night of Broken Glass”

- 1** Tell students that they will be studying several documents related to the same event in order to compare and contrast source material. To prepare them for this assignment, provide students with some or all of the background about the *Kristallnacht Pogrom*¹ in the corresponding **Note**.
- 2** Divide the class into six groups and have each group select a recorder. Distribute one of the **primary source documents** about *Kristallnacht* to each group and provide one group with a textbook that includes a description of *Kristallnacht*. Instruct students to discuss and make notes on what they learn about this historical event from studying the material.
- 3** After allowing ample time to discuss the documents, instruct students to pass their documents to another group. Group members should again discuss and make notes on what they learn about the topic from studying the material. Continue this process until all groups have had an opportunity to analyze all sources.
- 4** Have students share their thinking about the six documents in a whole-group discussion. Following are suggested questions:
 - Which of these materials are primary source documents? Which are secondary source documents?
 - What were some of the things your group noticed while studying the two photographs? What questions, if any, did the photographs raise for your group?
 - How is studying photographs different from studying other types of material?
 - What did you learn about the *Kristallnacht Pogrom* by reading Heydrich’s instructions?
 - What argument does Margarete Drexler use in her letter to the Gestapo to try to get her money returned? Why is this information important to know?
 - How does the *Description of the Riot in Dinslaken* make the story of the *Kristallnacht Pogrom* a “human story”?
 - What, if anything, did you learn from the textbook description of the *Kristallnacht Pogrom* that you didn’t learn from any of the primary sources?

¹ Additional testimony and materials about the *Kristallnacht Pogrom* can be found in the Nazi Germany unit.

5 Explain to students that another source of information about the Holocaust is survivor and witness testimony. Survivor and witness testimonies, unlike documents or words from a book, communicate the crucial role of the individual’s experiences through his or her stories. The interviewees in these testimonies are not “simply” Holocaust survivors and other witnesses. They are students, teachers, brothers, sisters, friends, and family members. They tell stories that recount anger, frustration, humor, surprise, relief, and fear. Viewing first-person, visual history testimony is a personal experience—no two people necessarily react to hearing a particular clip of testimony exactly the same way. Tell students that the visual history testimony that they will hear was collected by USC Shoah Foundation.

6 After introducing students to **Kurt Messerschmidt (bio)**, have them watch his testimony. Follow with a discussion using some or all of the questions below.

- How do you feel after listening to Kurt Messerschmidt talk about his experiences?
- What is meant by the term “testimony”?
- What role, if any, does memory play when giving testimony?
- What, if anything, do you learn about the *Kristallnacht Pogrom* from Kurt’s testimony that you didn’t learn from any of the other materials studied?
- How does Kurt’s testimony reinforce what you learned from other sources?
- What are the benefits and challenges of using visual history testimony?
- What role does the testimony collected by the Shoah Foundation play in the study of the Holocaust? How is this role different from the role and responsibility of historians? How is each important?

7 End this lesson with each student completing a “3-2-1 Assessment.”

- List three things you learned participating in this lesson.
- Name two things that surprised you or that you didn’t understand.
- Identify one question you still have.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 60-90 MINUTES