



LESSON PLAN: Independent Research on Resistance

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, students engage in independent research to deepen their understanding of Jewish resistance efforts during the Holocaust. In groups, students examine visual history testimony, primary source texts, and other resources on a topic, and create an artifact that represents what they have learned. Students gather their artifacts into a class exhibit and consider the meaning and impact of the actions taken by Jews to preserve their lives and humanity.

PART 1: WHAT ARE ADDITIONAL WAYS IN WHICH JEWS RESISTED DURING THE HOLOCAUST?

Post the supporting question above for students as you begin this part of the lesson.

1 In pairs, students discuss the following prompt: “What is an *artifact*? What is the role of an artifact in studying history?” Pairs share their thoughts with the larger class. The following ideas are highlighted:

- Artifacts are objects made by people that have cultural or historical meaning.
- Artifacts are essential parts of particular times or places that bring memory to life and make history real.
- Artifacts tell stories and provide evidence that can help people to understand the past.

2 Students learn that they will complete an independent research project on a topic related to Jewish resistance, and create an artifact that represents what they have learned. The artifacts will be gathered into a class exhibition on Jewish resistance during the Holocaust. The handout ***Artifacts of Resistance*** is distributed and reviewed by the class.

3 Students form small groups and select a research topic from the ***Research Topics and Sources*** handout. In class and/or at home, they review the source material for their topic, record notes, and design their artifact and accompanying object descriptions. Students are encouraged to consult additional sources as needed to better understand their topic.

PART 2: WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT OF JEWISH RESISTANCE DURING THE HOLOCAUST?

Post the supporting question above for students as you begin this part of the lesson.

4 Groups’ artifacts are gathered into a class exhibit. The ***Artifact Reflection*** handout is distributed. Students participate in a “gallery walk” as follows: Half of the groups stand by their work and provide a brief tour or explanation of their artifacts to the other half, who circulate and observe; students then switch roles so that the tour guides become the observers. Students observe at least three artifacts in this way, completing the ***Artifact Reflection*** for each.

5

Following the gallery walk, the class debriefs using the following questions:

- What is one story or example of resistance that made a lasting impression on you? Explain why.
- What was the immediate effect of resistance efforts? What was the long term impact?
- Beyond survival or revenge, what conclusions did you reach about why Jews resisted during the Holocaust?
- Holocaust survivor and scholar, Elie Wiesel, once wrote: “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 would you answer this question?

6

As a summative task, students imagine they are preparing an informational brochure and write a “Fact” to counter the “Myth” below. Their fact should explain why the statement is false and convey at least three ways in which Jewish people resisted during the Holocaust, drawing upon unit sources for evidence.

Myth: Jewish people were passive during World War II. They didn’t fight back or actively resist their own destruction.

Fact:

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 90 MINUTES