

Creating Visual Representations of Student Knowledge of the Holocaust & WWII

Lesson Plan Description: How do students evaluate major events of the Holocaust and WWII? This lesson will allow them to discuss their understandings and create a visual representation of their ideas.

Class period objective: By the end of this class period, each student will have worked with a team of students and created a poster of what they consider most significant about the Holocaust and WWII.

1. Begin the class with an activity called “The Two Deaths.”
 - a. Explain to the students that the rabbis describe each of us as having two deaths. The first is the death of our physical bodies. This brings grief and sadness for those family and friends left to mourn the loss of their loved one. Yet the second death is the far more tragic loss.
 - b. To explain the second death idea, give the students the following instructions: Pair up with another student sitting next to you. In a few seconds tell them one thing that you enjoy doing. When you have finished, thank them for telling you and then be quiet. Next tell your partner something about your parents and when you are finished, thank them and then be quiet. Next tell your partner something about your grandparents (maternal and/or paternal) and when you are finished, thank them and then be quiet. Next tell your partner

something about your great grandparents (maternal and/or paternal). At this point there typically is not a lot of talking going on. Students might say, “I don’t know anything about my great grandparents.” Some might even say, “I don’t know anything about my grandparents.” This is a demonstration of the “Second Death”: Being forgotten by your family and friends. It is very sad because those family members and their histories are not known anymore. Instruct the students that as they work today with other students, try to remember that what we will be examining are images of fellow human beings with families and histories. The events that lead to many of their deaths will not be forgotten nor will they. This is part of the reason we study the Holocaust: to remember always those who died and have no one to remember them.

2. Now explain to the students that they will be working in groups of 6 students. Each group will examine thirty images of various Holocaust and the WWII moments.
 - a. They will choose eight images from the thirty provided. Their eight images can be chosen on whatever criteria they agree upon. They might choose on the basis of moments in chronological order. They might choose on the basis of most significant events. They will need to come to a consensus on which images they will end up with.
 - b. After they have chosen their images, they will place them on a poster paper and label the images with a brief explanation. They may be placed on the poster in whatever order they deem appropriate.
 - c. They will present their posters to the class and explain how they were chosen and what each of them depicts. They might also disclose how their group decided on their criteria for including and excluding certain images for their poster.

- d. Explain to the students that their posters will be placed on their classroom walls throughout their discussion of the Holocaust.
- e. Before the Holocaust unit is concluded, they will revisit these posters and see if their group would change anything about them.