

Note: This chapter is excerpted from Dr. Joan F. Kaywell's latest volume in her series *Adolescent Literature as a Complement to the Classics*.

**ANNE FRANK'S *THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL*:
WORLD WAR II AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE**

Introduction

When I first taught this novel, now required for 8th grade students, I presented it in a very traditional fashion. We read the book, discussed certain sections, and saw the movie. No doubt I did the most work since I was the one leading the discussions while several students simply dismissed the topic as being irrelevant to modern times. Now that adolescent or young adult (YA) literature is readily available, my classes have a depth and breadth about them that I always wanted but didn't know how to achieve. Through YA literature, students are exposed to a myriad of perspectives concerning World War II. In this unit, students will be able to acquire enough background knowledge about the Holocaust to participate in several meaningful class discussions and produce several unique group projects. This is different from the teacher telling students what to think since each student is responsible for reading and sharing something about World War II. In essence, the students are responsible for their learning and the teacher learns too. Through YA literature, all students (even the least motivated) may become engaged with the material.

Joan F. Kaywell is Professor of English Education at the University of South Florida where she has won several teaching awards. She is passionate about assisting preservice and practicing teachers in discovering ways to improve literacy. She donates her time to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and its Florida affiliate (FCTE): She is Past President of NCTE's Assembly on Literature for Adolescents (ALAN) and serves as its Membership Secretary; she is a Past-President of FCTE and is on its Board of Directors. Dr. Kaywell reviews young adult novels for *The ALAN Review*, *The Journal of Adult and Adolescent Literacy*, and *Signal*; and has edited two series of textbooks: five volumes of *Adolescent Literature as a Complement to the Classics*; six volumes of *Using Literature to Help Troubled Teenagers Cope with [Various] Issues* (Family 1999, Societal 1999, Identity 1999, Health 2000, End-of-Life 2000, Abuse 2004); and has written one: *Adolescents At Risk: A Guide to Fiction and Nonfiction for Young Adults, Parents, and Professionals*. Her tradebook *Dear Author: Letters of Hope* was written to help students choose reading as a healthy escape from pain.

There are several different ways to set up a classroom to achieve the same goals. Ideally, you will present the accompanying list of YA novel annotations and let each student choose a different book of choice; choice is key in this unit. For less skilled readers, you can suggest some shorter or less difficult novels such as Chana Byers Abells' *The Children We Remember* (a picture essay) or Hana Volavkova's *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (a collection of drawings and poems produced by children in the camps). Art Spiegelman's graphic novels, *Maus I* and *Maus II*, are so engrossing that even non-readers feel the intensity of this work that won Spiegelman a Pulitzer Prize. These four books allow the least skilled readers in your classes to yield powerful contributions to class projects. Many students, however, will be able to read beyond reading level since this unit is extremely motivational.

Already I am anticipating that many of you are saying, "Yea, right! I have a hard enough time getting my students to read the required book let alone read another one!" The group projects require participation from each group member to be successful; the projects are meaningful, relevant, and fun. Additionally, this unit has built-in peer pressure. If one student chooses to read Aranka Siegal's *Upon the Head of a Goat* and another chooses Siegal's *Grace in the Wilderness*, you can be sure that the class will not be satisfied knowing the life of Piri at nine when another classmate was supposed to read about her life at 17 years of age; the same holds true for Graham Salisbury's *Under the Blood Red Sun* and its sequel, *House of the Red Fish*.

After the students select the book they want to read outside of class, group them according to topic with no more than five students in one group. For the sake of convenience, I have included the annotations of the books that I would use in clusters depending upon their topic. Group project suggestions will follow the clusters, but students know they are encouraged to develop their own group project if they are interested in a specific subject.

The annotations that are included are not exhaustive. Other good sources for annotations include materials readily available from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) such as *The ALAN Review*, *The English Journal*, and several NCTE publications such as *Books for You: A Booklist for Senior High Students* and *Your Reading: A Booklist for Junior High and Middle School Students*. The International Reading Association (IRA) also has information pertaining to YA literature found in *SIGNAL* and the *Journal of Adult and Adolescent Literacy*. One of the finest collections of resources is a book compiled by Elaine Stephens, Jean Brown and Janet Rubin (1995) entitled, *Learning about the Holocaust: Literature and Other Resources for Young People*. This text provides an amazing list of organizations, books, and teaching strategies relevant for all grade levels.

Finally, teachers are encouraged to refer to the end of this chapter for a list of recommended articles, websites, and movies to enhance this unit of study.

Group One: Jewish Children’s Experiences During World War II

***Anne Frank and Me* by Cherie Bennett and Jeff Gottesfeld (287 pp.)**

The authors have adapted their 1998 play of the same title into this easy-to-read novel where Nicole Burns, a contemporary 10th-grade student who questions why they have to read *The Diary of Anne Frank*, is mysteriously transported in time into the person of Nicole Bernhardt, a 15-year-old Jewish girl living in occupied France. Nicole meets Anne Frank who helps her see the value of studying the Holocaust as she returns as Nicole Burns. (MS)

***London Calling* by Edward Bloor (304 pp.)**

Martin Conway hates his school and all of the snobbery there. When his grandmother dies and leaves him an old Forties radio, he mysteriously teleports back in time to the London Blitz and meets Jimmy who needs his help. Through a series of alternating story lines between the past and present, Martin helps expose various sins committed in both times. (MS-HS)

***We Are Witnesses* by Jacob Boas (208 pp.)**

Boas was born in the Westerbork Concentration Camp in Holland and writes this book from five teenage perspectives he found in reading their diaries: David Rubinowicz, Yitzhak Rudashevski, Moshe Flinker, Eva Heyman, and Anne Frank. As Boas points out, “alongside the other four diaries, Anne’s looks different than when you read it by itself as the sole voice of the Holocaust.” (MS)

***I Am David* by Anne Holm (256 pp.)**

Twelve-year-old David has only known life in a concentration camp in Eastern Europe. When the opportunity to escape presents itself, David seizes it and then begins his journey to Denmark and freedom. Walden Media made a movie of this book, originally published in Denmark in 1963, by the same name in 2004. Since then, it has been mass marketed to educators. For teaching materials, visit their [website](#). (MS)

***Memories of My Life in a Polish Village: 1930-1949* by Toby Knobel Fluek (110 pp.)**

Toby Fluek was a small Jewish girl growing up in Czernica, Poland, when World War II started. She and her family moved to a Jewish ghetto and went into hiding several times to save their lives. By the war's end, only she and her mother had survived. Now an artist in New York City, the author presents her story through her paintings and their descriptions. (MS)

***Room in the Heart* by Sonia Levitin (285 pp.)**

Based on the true events of Germany's invasion of Denmark, this story is told primarily from the alternating perspectives of two young Danes. After learning the Germans have plans to capture all of the Jewish people in Denmark, Julie takes her family to Sweden by boat. Her friend and co-narrator, Niels, joins the resistance when he discovers the Nazi plot while his friend, Emil, is captivated by and admires the power of the Germans. A large cast of characters reveals how the Danes fought the Nazi occupation and saved almost all of Denmark's Jews. (MS-HS)

***Tug of War* by Joan Lingard (208 pp.)**

Hugo and Astra, 14-year-old Latvian twins, are separated when the Russians invade their country in 1944. Hugo ends up in Hamburg, Germany, where a family takes care of him until the end of the war. Meanwhile, his family waits out the war in a refugee camp. When they are finally reunited, his family is disgruntled by Hugo's German girlfriend and places him in a choice situation. (MS-HS)

***No Pretty Pictures: A Child of War* by Anita Lobel (193 pp.)**

A winner of the Caldecott Award for Illustrators, Anita Lobel writes her memoir growing up in Krakow, Poland, during the Holocaust. She was only five when the Nazis invaded, and she is sent to live with their Catholic nanny in the country. Anita and her brother are eventually discovered and deported to a concentration camp where they live until the liberation. Art and books become her saving grace when she finally comes to America as a teenager. (HS)

***In My Enemy's House* by Carol Matas (167pp.)**

Blond-haired and blue-eyed Marisa loses her family at the hand of the Nazis when the Germans invade Poland. With the papers of a Christian Polish girl, she disguises her identity and goes to work as a servant for a Nazi family. As she spends more time and becomes closer with the family, she has to answer some tough questions about her basic beliefs of humanity. (MS-HS)

***Four Perfect Pebbles* by Lila Perl (130 pp.)**

Five-year-old Marion Blumenthal and her family left Germany and went to Holland in an attempt to travel to America to escape the Nazis. Unfortunately, their ship was delayed three months and the Germans invaded Holland. The Blumenthals became a bargaining chip for the Nazis who wanted German POWs. They are deported to Bergen Belsen, where Marion, clinging to the hope that one day they would all be freed together, collects four pebbles from the camp to symbolize the members of her family. This riveting memoir is a story of determination and survival under the most dire of circumstances. (MS-HS)

***We Were Not Like Other People* by Ephraim Sevela (216 pp.)**

A Russian Jewish teenager is separated from his parents at the onset of World War II. Exhausted and practically starved, he is found and nursed to health by a peasant woman and her daughters. His life is a test of survival as he wanders in search of his parents for six years. This novel is based on the author's own experiences. (MS-HS)

***Milkweed* by Jerry Spinelli (208pp.)**

As a young boy, Misha Pilsudski has had several names—Stopthief, Stupid, Jew, and Gypsy. Uri, another homeless boy surviving in the street of Warsaw during World War II, is a bit older and more aware of what's happening around them. Misha learns from Uri that the “Jackboots,” or the Nazis, are not ones to emulate but to outsmart. (MS)

***Behind the Secret Window: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood during World War Two* by Nelly S. Toll (161 pp.).**

The author was only six years old when the Nazis invaded Poland. She and her mother go into hiding with the help of some Gentiles, but their hiding place happens to be next door to the Gestapo headquarters. For the two years they are in hiding, Nelly records her fears, hopes, and dreams through art and in a journal. (MS)

***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak (560 pp.)**

Death narrates the story of Liesel Meminger as she grows up from the age of 9-13 in a small town outside of Munich, Germany, during the years 1939-1943. The Nazis are in power, rounding up Jews and forcing kids to participate in the Hitler Youth. Liesel goes to live with foster parents after her father is taken away as a communist, her mother disappears, and her brother dies. Her new

family is hiding a Jew from the Nazis, and Liesel steals books because reading is what helps her survive. (HS)

Group Two: The Concentration Camps

***The Children We Remember* by Chana Abells (48 pp.)**

This nonfiction photo essay focuses on the children in the concentration camps during World War II. (E-MS)

***Alicia: My Story* by Alicia Appleman-Jurman (433 pp.)**

Alicia was only 13 years old when she began saving Jewish lives in war-ravaged Poland. In this nonfiction account of the Holocaust, Alicia recalls how she stood on her brother's grave and vowed she would tell his story. (MS-HS)

***The Seamstress* by Sara Tuvel Bernstein (384 pp.)**

This posthumously published memoir tells of young Sara's resistance to anti-Semitism while growing up in Romania. For awhile, she was able to escape the Nazis by her blonde hair and blue eyes but eventually was caught and sent to Ravensbruck, a German concentration camp for female prisoners. (HS)

***I Have Lived A Thousand Years* by Livia Bitton-Jackson (224 pp.)**

Livia Bitton-Jackson a.k.a. Elli Friedmann was only 13 years old when the Nazis invaded Hungary. She recounts her struggle to survive with her mother, first in the ghetto, then in the Plaszow Concentration Camp (the one shown in Stephen Spielberg movie, *Schindler's List*), and then while working in a factory in Augsburg. (MS-HS)

***Torn Thread* by Anne Isaacs (188 pp.)**

After hiding for weeks from the Nazis in Poland, the father of 12-year-old Eva sends her to a labor camp in Czechoslovakia to join her sister Rachel and avoid deportation to Auschwitz where she would face certain death. Suffering from starvation and disease, they are forced to make clothing for the German soldiers as they struggle to survive from one hour to the next. The girls rely on each another and their friendships with other prisoners as they wait for the camp to be liberated in this tension-filled story of human triumph based on the real-life experiences of the author's mother-in-law. (MS)

***Always Remember Me: How One Family Survived World War II* by Marisabina Russo (48 pp.).**

Rachek always begs her Grandmother Oma to tell the story of Oma's two lives: the one before American and the one after. The first part recounts her marriage prior to World War I and then her family's move from Poland to Germany to seek safety. Ironically, two of her three daughters spent time in concentration camps but all survived and were reunited in the United States. The illustrations really add to readers' understanding of this horrible time in history. (E-MS)

***Fatelessness* by Imre Kertesz and translated by Tim Wilkinson (272 pp.)**

As a youth, Kertesz spent one year in Auschwitz and so develops this novel about a 14-year-old Hungarian boy's ability to see beauty even in a horrific concentration camp. *Publisher's Weekly* called its prequel *Fateless* (191 pp.) one of the best 50 books in 1992 and this one won him a Nobel Prize.

***All But My Life* by Gerda Weissmann Klein (261 pp.)**

Little did Gerda know that her father's insistence that she wear her hiking boots one hot, summer day would be her salvation from death. Gerda was able to see good even in the darkest of moments while struggling to survive in several concentration and slave labor camps. From January through April 1945, it was those boots that saved her from the cold during a brutal, 300-mile death march from a labor camp in western Germany to Czechoslovakia where she was the only one of 120 women who survived. (HS)

***Fragments of Isabella* by Isabella Leitner and Irving A. Leitner (128 pp.)**

This ALA Best Book for Young Adults is the true, heart-wrenching, and unforgettable story of the author's experiences at Auschwitz during the Holocaust. The reader will be shocked by the atrocities and the horror that she faced but will be moved by her courage and willpower to survive. (HS)

***I Am Rosemarie* by Marietta D. Moskin (256 pp.)**

Drawn from the author's own experiences, this is the moving story of a young Jewish girl, Rosemarie Brenner, and her experiences in a concentration camp during World War II. (HS)

***The Cage* by Ruth Minsky Sender (224 pp.)**

This is the memoir of a Nazi Holocaust survivor. This grandmother speaks from her experiences in the Lodz ghetto in Poland and Auschwitz when she was a teenager. Riva Minska vividly shares how the Nazis destroyed her family, her community, and her way of life and tells how she managed to survive the death camps of World War II. (HS)

***Upon the Head of the Goat: A Childhood in Hungary 1939-1944* by Aranka Siegal (192 pp.)**

Piri is nine years old at the onset of World War II, and her life becomes a nightmare when the Nazis invade Hungary. Her Jewish family is placed into a ghetto to await the trains that will take them to the concentration camps. Although the Nazis have little to no regard for them as people, Piri's mother courageously attempts to instill the values of human dignity and respect in her family. This sensitive fictionalized autobiography depicts the value of life in direct contrast to others' total disregard for humanity. In the end, Piri survives the horrors of Auschwitz. (MS)

***Maus I: A Survivor's Tale* (160 pp.) and *Maus II* by Art Spiegelman (144 pp.)**

In these graphic novels, Spiegelman writes of his father's struggle as a Jew in Poland during World War II. In comic book form, the Jews are depicted as mice, the Nazis as cats, and those who side with the Nazis are pigs. *Maus II* continues the story with his father's and Anja's struggle in Auschwitz and Birkenau with Americans portrayed as dogs and the French as frogs. Spiegelman won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for this work. (MS-HS)

***I Never Saw Another Butterfly* edited by Hana Volavkova (80 pp.)**

This is a collection of drawings and poems that were done by children who grew up in the Terezin Concentration Camp in Czechoslovakia between 1942 and 1944. The terror, the pleas for rescue, and the reflections of beliefs and values of these children who lived during World War II are vividly captured. (E-MS)

***Night* by Elie Wiesel and translated by Stella Rodway (112 pp.)**

This short autobiographical novel is Wiesel's rendering of his terrifying experiences as a teenager at Auschwitz and Buchenwald, Nazi death camps. A winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, Wiesel graphically describes his witnessing the death of his father, his innocence, and his God. (MS-HS)

***The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen (176 pp.)**

For students who resist studying the Holocaust, this is a must read. The protagonist, 12-year-old Hannah, is really over her Grandfather's stories about the Nazis and wishes he'd just stop bringing it up. When asked to open the door for the prophet Elijah during her family's Seder dinner at Passover, Hannah is transported back to 1942 Poland and assumes the life of a young girl named Chaya. Hannah as Chaya learns first hand about the dehumanizing life in a concentration camp and why we must never forget. For a similar book that links the story of Briar Rose, also known as Sleeping Beauty, to the Holocaust and the Chelmno Extermination Camp consider Yolen's *Briar Rose* (176 pp.). (MS)

NOTE: FOR TEACHERS ONLY: Because it is a good idea to read something new while your students are reading, I highly recommend *Etty Hillesum: An Interrupted Life/The Diaries, 1941-1943 and Letters from Westerbork* (376 pp.). Regarded as the adult counterpart of Anne Frank, Etty Hillesum's diary and letters capture two years of her life between the ages of 27 and 29 before she died in Auschwitz.

Group Three: Those Who Risked Their Lives

***Rescuers Defying the Nazis: Non-Jewish Teens Who Rescued Jews (Teen Witnesses to the Holocaust)* by Toby Axelrod (64 pp.)**

Rescuers Defying the Nazis actually includes three short texts: "In the Ghettos," "Rescuers," and "Hidden Children" replete with photo documentation. The stories of Jewish teenagers who were assisted by gentiles in Poland, Denmark, and Germany are told as well as the harrowing accounts written by the courageous survivors of the Lodz, Theresienstadt, and Warsaw ghettos. (E-MS)

***Postcards from No Man's Land* by Aidan Chambers (312 pp.)**

Jacob Todd, a British soldier wounded in World War II, falls in love with Geertrui, a Dutch teenager who hides him from his pursuers in 1944. Now his 17-year-old grandson, also named Jacob Todd, has traveled to Holland to visit the grave of the grandfather he never met. Upon arriving in Amsterdam, Jacob is not prepared for the perplexing experiences of the city, seeing Anne Frank's house in Amsterdam, or for the shocking story that reveals family secrets. Two stories, Jacob Todd's and Geertrui's, from two different times are intertwined throughout the book and raise some very thought-provoking questions. (HS)

***Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry (144 pp.)**

One day in 1943 Annemarie and Ellen are playing in German-occupied Copenhagen, and the next day Ellen and her family face the possibility of relocation since they are Jewish. Annemarie decides that she must help her best friend escape from Norway and go to Sweden where they will be safe. Before she knows it, 10-year-old Annemarie finds herself involved in a dangerous mission. (MS)

***The Good Liar* by Gregory Maguire (129)**

Three girls trying to complete a school assignment on World War II contact Marcel Delarue, an artist who grew up in France when it was occupied by the German army. In the letter he writes to the girls—that makes up the bulk of the book—Marcel describes how he and his two brothers, Ren and Pierre, took pride in their ability to successfully tell outrageous lies; the boys even befriend a Nazi soldier. What Marcel doesn't know, though, is that the best liar in the family is his mother, who was hiding a Jewish family in their rural home for over a year without the boys knowing it. This sometimes humorous, sometimes sad story shows how ordinary people can become extraordinary heroes. (E-MS)

***The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom, Elizabeth Sherrill and John Sherrill (272 pp.)**

This nonfiction work is the description of how this heroine of the anti-Nazi underground in Holland and her family hid persecuted Jews in their home. Eventually they were betrayed, and they, too, spent some time in concentration camps. (MS)

***A Coming Evil* by Vivian Vande Velde (213 pp.)**

As a measure of safety, 13-year-old Lisette Beaucaire is sent away from her home in Nazi-occupied Paris to live with an aunt in the country. Disappointed she won't be with her friends to start a new school year, Lisette is disconcerted about having nothing to do but spend time with her annoying cousin, Cecile. She quickly realizes, however, that her time in the country will be anything but ordinary when she discovers that her aunt is hiding Jewish and Gypsy children from the Nazis. In addition to preparing for the day the Germans come looking for them, she meets Gerard, the ghost of a 14th-century knight, who ends up playing a significant role in the outcome of this story. (MS)

Group Four: The Japanese, Japanese-American, and American Perspectives

***Remembering Manzanar* (96 pps.) and *Fighting for Honor* by Michael Cooper (128 pp.)**

Ten thousand Japanese Americans were sent to the Manzanar relocation camp in eastern California between March 1942 and November 1945. In the first book, Cooper shares what life was like for these imprisoned Americans. The second book examines the treatment of Japanese Americans before, during, and after World War II by the U.S. government. From Pearl Harbor to the Japanese Internment camps, and the victories attained by an all Asian battalion, these stories give readers insight into the dichotomy felt by Japanese Americans during this shameful time in history. Photographs capture much what cannot be adequately expressed in words. (MS-HS)

***Lily's Crossing* by Patricia Reilly Giff (180 pp.)**

Lily is looking forward to spending another summer at her family's vacation home with her grandmother on the shore in Rockaway, New York, when her father drops the news that he must go to Europe with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II. Angry at her widower father for leaving, Lily refuses to say goodbye to him and is certain that this summer will be lonely. Then she meets Albert, a Hungarian refugee who lost most of his family to the war and had to leave his sickly sister behind in Europe. The two friends rely on each other to overcome their feelings of guilt in this story of how war affects the children at home. (MS)

***Looking Like the Enemy: My Story of Imprisonment in Japanese-American Internment Camps* by Mary M. Gruenwald (240 pp.)**

This is Mary Matsuda's memoir beginning when she was 16 years old. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, this teenager's typical life on a farm in Vashon Island, Washington, is completely changed when she and her family are relocated to an internment camp because of her Japanese ancestry.

***Shadows on the Sea* by Joan Hiatt Harlow (244 pp.)**

Based on historical fact, this is a story that brings World War II home, just off the coast of Maine where Jill Winters has been sent to live with her grandmother. With her mother traveling the Atlantic to visit a sick brother and German submarines stalking in the nearby waters, Jill is feeling very nervous about the war, especially after finding a carrier pigeon transporting a note written in German. After she hears her grandmother and a German friend repeat the message on the note, she

becomes suspicious. Determined to find the Nazi spy and solve the mystery, Jill finds herself in her own deep waters. (MS)

***Hiroshima* by John Hersey (152 pp.)**

Pulitzer Prize winner John Hersey interviewed survivors of Hiroshima's bomb while the ashes were still warm. Hersey describes the lives of six people--a clerk, a widowed seamstress, a physician, a Methodist minister, a surgeon, and a German Catholic priest--shortly before and for about a year after the bombing. While describing the ordeals of these individuals, Hersey manages to convey the devastation and the suffering experienced by the people of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. A final chapter was added in 1985 that continues with the lives of these six people. (MS)

***Beyond Paradise* by Jane Hertenstein (165 pp.).**

Fourteen-year-old Louise Keller and her family leave Ohio for the Philippines in order to join a missionary camp in 1941. Soon after their arrival, the Japanese have invaded and established internment camps that Louise avoids for a time in the jungle but is later captured. This story is a bit different in that it is an American version of being held in a Japanese Internment camp established by the Japanese in the Philippines. (HS)

***Aleutian Sparrow* by Karen Hesse (160 pp.)**

In June of 1942, Japanese forces attack the Aleutian Islands of Alaska. In an effort to protect these native islanders, the U.S. military move the people to relocation centers in Alaska's southwest. Not only are the conditions in these camps deplorable, but many are treated much worse than POWs and many died. Hesse combines poetry and prose to tell young Vera's story from May 1942 until April 1945, the time the Aleuts were held by the U.S. government. (MS)

***Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston (208 pp.)**

This is the true story of one spirited Japanese-American family's attempt to survive the indignities of forced detention as seen through the eyes of Jeannie, the youngest daughter of the Wakatsuki family. The family was detained for four years at the Manzanar Internment Camp during World War II. (MS-HS)

***Weedflower* by Cynthia Kadohata (272 pp.)**

Sumiko and her family are shipped to a Japanese internment camp in one of the hottest places in California after the events of Pearl Harbor. She was raised in California on a flower farm and now instead of flowers, she must endure dust storms regularly. In her old life she was accustomed to being the only Japanese girl in her class. Now they find themselves on an Indian reservation and are as unwelcome there as anywhere. She finally finds a friend in one Mohave boy. There they do their best to rebuild their lives and create a community. (MS)

***Dear Miss Breed: Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian Who Made a Difference* by Joanne Oppenheim (287 pp.)**

This nonfiction book is a collection of letters written to a librarian in San Diego by the name of Miss Breed. These actual letters, replete with spelling and grammar mistakes, show how one person can make a positive difference in the lives of so many. (MS-HS)

***The Quilt* by Gary Paulsen (96 pp.)**

A 6-year-old boy whose mother is working in a munitions factory in Chicago during World War II is sent to live in Minnesota with his grandmother, Alida. Since all of the men are in Europe fighting, the women have to work the farm, and there are plenty of animals to look after to keep the young boy busy. But he is out of his element when his cousin, Kristina, goes into labor. While waiting for the delivery, the women work on a quilt that reveals the family stories of love and loss. (E-MS)

***House of the Red Fish* by Graham Salisbury (288 pp.)**

Readers first met Tomi Nakajo in *Under the Blood Red Sun*(256 pp.), and this sequel continues his story a year after this young teen was left in charge of the house after his father and grandfather were arrested after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Prejudice abounds for Japanese Americans living in Hawaii in 1943, and Tomi meets it head on when a former friend becomes his nemesis. (MS)

***Journey Home* by Yoshiko Uchida (144 pp.)**

Readers first met young Yuki and her Japanese American family in *Journey to Topaz* (160 pp.), a story based on the author's experience of having her own family uprooted and sent to the

Relocation Center in Topaz, Utah. This novel continues their story after they are released into a society full of prejudice and fear. (MS)

Group Five: The Soldiers' Stories

***Parallel Journeys* by Eleanor H. Ayer, Helen Waterford, and Alfons Heck (244 pp.)**

Ayer presents two alternating perspectives of the Holocaust—one from Helen Waterford, a Jewish woman and her struggle to survive and one from Alfons Heck, a Hitler Youth whose ambition is to climb in rank. After meeting in the United States long after the war, this Aryan and Jew befriend one another and, remarkably, join forces to educate the youth of America to prevent this atrocity from ever happening again. (MS) (NOTE: Interested students may want to find both of Alfons Heck's autobiographies: *Child of Hitler: Germany in the Days when God Wore a Swastika* (228 pp.) and *The Burden of Hitler's Legacy* (266 pp.).)

***Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (176 pp.)**

This Newbery Honor book shows how Hitler manipulated the German youth and created the Hitler Youth, or *Hitlerjugend*, in 1926. Kathrin Kana narrates the stories of 12 young people and their evolution into being patriotic supporters of the Third Reich. An epilogue tells what became of them when they realized their belief in Hitler was misguided and the very antithesis of the evil they thought they were eliminating. (MS)

***Under a War Torn Sky* by L. M. Elliott (288 pp.)**

Although Hank a.k.a. Henry Forester is an older teenager at 19, he's still in the teens in terms of the number of bombings he's participated in as an American pilot during World War II. His luck runs out when he is shot down and parachutes into German-occupied territory. With the help of the French Resistance, he overcomes a number of perils and learns many lessons as he seeks safety in England. (MS-HS)

***Summer of My German Soldier* by Bette Greene (208 pp.)**

In this ALA Notable Book, Patty Bergen is an abused girl who befriends an escaped German prisoner of war. In spite of what her parents and others say about the Germans, Patty gets to know Anton and falls in love with his gentle spirit. (MS)

***Children of the Swastika: The Hitler Youth* by Eileen Heyes (96 pp.)**

This nonfiction book is carefully researched and includes photos and source notes to add to its credibility. It is fascinating to see how Hitler managed to brainwash children into doing things totally contrary to their parents' values. (MS-HS)

***The Last Mission* by Harry Mazer (188 pp.)**

In this ALA Best of the Best Books for Young Adults and *New York Times* Outstanding Book of the Year, Jack Raab, uses an older brother's identification in order to lie his way into military service during World War II. This 16-year-old American-Jewish boy vividly shares his experiences, including his harsh imprisonment and release from a German camp. The horrors of a war that Jack never should have fought in make him an adult before his time. (HS)

***Hansi, The Girl Who Loved the Swastika* by Maria Anne Hirschmann (243 pp.)**

This is the true story of a young, orphaned Czechoslovakian girl, raised in a Christian German home, who is chosen to serve in Hitler's Nazi Youth leadership. She eventually immigrates to the United States, but readers won't forget her story. (HS)

***And No Birds Sang* by Farley Mowat (256 pp.)**

Mowat retells his own experiences as a young soldier during World War II. At first he was very idealistic and romanticized the war effort but after exposure to many atrocities, Farley grows and learns painfully to see war as it is. (HS)

***Soldier X* by Don L. Wulffson (240 pp.)**

Based on a true story, this is a teacher's recollection of how his life was as a teenager fighting on the side of the Germans as a Hitler Youth. At 16, Erik Brandt was made to fight on the Russian front as a Nazi because of his ability to speak Russian. It doesn't take long for him to realize that he wants out of this war, especially after he sees the cruelty done to the Jews. After a particular brutal attack on the Germans by the Russians, Erik switches his uniform with that of a dead Russian soldier and feigns amnesia. It is as Soldier X that Erik escapes with a nurse and lives to tell about his inner torment. (MS-HS)

Group Six: Other Holocausts

***Forgotten Fire* by Adam Bagdasarian (272 pp.)**

This is a chilling recollection of 12-year-old Vahan Kenderian's struggle as an Armenian refugee during the Armenian holocaust (1915-1918) where 1.5 million men, women, and children were systematically murdered by the Turks. Based on the author's great uncle's recollections, this historical novel is a vivid account of the Armenian atrocities told from a young boy's perspective. (MS-HS)

***When the Rainbow Goddess Wept* by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard (272 pp.)**

Nine-year-old Yvonne Macaraig's family flees their pleasant home in Ubec City to join a guerrilla movement in the jungle during the 1941 Japanese invasion of the Philippines. She grows to realize that even if her family survives and retires to their home that nothing will ever be the same. (HS)

***Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Wartime Sarajevo* by Zlata Filipovic (240 pp.)**

First published as *Zlata's Diary* in 1994, this revised version includes additional photos. When Zlata Filipovic, "the Anne Frank of Sarajevo," began her diary entries on September 2, 1991, her life was typical of most 11 year olds. By the time she ended her diary entries on October, 13, 1991, the Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim warlords had changed her life forever. Her diary may prompt readers to find additional information on Sarajevo, Bosnia, the Geneva Agreement, Anne Frank, and Icarus. (MS)

***The Other Victims: First Person Stories of Non-Jews Persecuted by the Nazis* by Ina R. Friedman (224 pp.)**

The Jews were not the only people persecuted under Hitler's orders. This nonfiction book is organized into these categories: "Those Unworthy of Life," "The War Against the Church," "Racial Purification: Breeding the Master Race," "Mind Control," and "Slaves for the Nazi Empire." (MS-HS)

***The Stone Goddess* by Minfong Ho (208 pp.)**

Set during the Sixties during the Vietnam War, this story is about 12-year-old Nakri when the Khmer Rouge takes over Cambodia. She and her siblings are forced to work in a labor camp until the Vietnamese army liberates the camp, and two surviving family members go to a refugee camp on

Thailand's border. Eventually they immigrate to the U.S. and it is Nakri's prowess in dancing that helps her survive the trauma. (MS-HS)

***The Aquariums of Pyongyang: Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag* by Chol-hwan Kang and Pierre Rigoulot (238 pp.)**

Kang recounts his life as a boy growing up in Pyongyang during the Sixties after his Korean family returns to North Korea from their affluent lives in Japan. After Kang's grandfather is accused of high treason, Kang spends ten years of his life surviving in a remote labor camp or gulag. Kang was only nine years old when he was first imprisoned at the Yodok camp in 1977. (HS)

***The Road from Home: A True Story of Courage, Survival and Hope* by David Kherdian (242 pp.)**

Many people are ignorant of the Turks' Armenian Genocide that occurred in 1915, killing over a million innocent people. David captures the voice of his mother, Vernon Dumehjian Kherdian, who was born into a fine family just prior to the systematic killings. (MS)

***Dawn and Dusk* by Alice Mead (160 pp.)**

Thirteen-year-old Azad knows nothing but war while growing up in a predominantly Kurdish town in Sardasht, Iran. Iran's new religious leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini wants to eliminate the Kurds while Iraq's Saddam Hussein's would like to occupy that part of Iran. Readers get a glimpse into the heart of this young Kurdish refugee and will experience the loss and hope of emigration. (MS-HS)

***Under the Persimmon Tree* by Suzanne Fisher Staples (288 pp.)**

Najmah and Nusrat alternate the telling of the post 9/11 Afghan War on their lives until their tales eventually intersect. Najmah actually witnesses the kidnapping of her father and older brother by the Taliban and then survives the horror of her mother's and little brother's death in an unexpected American air raid. She disguises herself as a boy and decides to walk to Peshawar, Pakistan, in hopes of finding a refugee camp. Nusrat's story begins with her waiting for the return of her husband, Faiz, who went to help the wounded in Northern Afghanistan while she stayed behind to help the refugee children. Nusrat's American name was Elaine until she converted to Islam and followed Faiz to help those hurt by religious fanaticism. (MS-HS)

***Teenage Refugees from Rwanda Speak Out* by Aimable Twagilimana (64 pp.)**

Eight teenagers who fled from Ethiopia and Rwanda tell how they got to America and Canada only to receive more prejudicial treatment. (E-MS)

Group Seven: After the War/The Effects on Families/ Contemporary Prejudice

***Fire from the Rock* by Sharon M. Draper (231 pp.)**

Imagine being asked to be one of the first black students to integrate an all-white school in the Fifties. Such is the case for Sylvia Patterson when she must decide whether or not to be an agent of social change or to stay in the comfort of her inferior all-black school. (MS-HS) Readers may want to refer to Melba Pattillo Beals's memoir *Warriors Don't Cry* (312 pp.), for her personal account of what happened when she was one of the nine teenagers who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. (MS-HS)

***Silver Rights* by Constance Curry (258 pp.)**

Mae and Matthew Carter want something more for their children than life on the cotton fields, so they decide to send 7 of their 13 children to an all-white school for a better education when Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is passed in Sunflower County, Mississippi. Unfortunately, the Carter children were the only blacks who chose to integrate and claim their civil rights. (HS)

***Child of Dandelions* by Shenaaz Nanji (214 pp.)**

In 1972, President Idi Amin had a dream that he believed was a message from God. Based on that dream, this dictator decides to eliminate all foreign Indians—the “Jews of Uganda”—in 90 days. Fifteen-year-old Sabine thinks that she and her family will be spared since they are citizens of Uganda, but eventually no one is spared from the effects of this mandate. When there is a governmental shift in power by an extremist, NO ONE is spared by the change of attitudes as pointed out by Gloria Miklowitz's YA novel, *The War between the Classes* (158 pp.) and Todd Strasser's, *The Wave* (138 pp.). (HS)

***Let Sleeping Dogs Lie* by Mirjam Pressler and translated by Erik J. Macki (207 pp.)**

Originally written in German, this English translation sets the stage for a contemporary controversy that could erupt in any unsuspecting family of German descent. When the protagonist, Johanna, goes on a class trip to Israel, she learns about the anti-Semitic laws that enabled her

grandfather, Erhard Riemenschneider, to “acquire” their family business from a Jewish family. What would you do if you discovered your grandfather was an enthusiastic Nazi supporter? (MS-HS)

Note: This novel is very similar to M.E. Kerr’s *Gentlehands* (208 pp.) where Buddy finds out that his grandfather might have been the Nazi murderer “Gentlehands” in a World War II concentration camp. (MS-HS)

***Never Mind the Goldbergs* by Matthue Roth (368 pp.)**

Seventeen-year-old New Yorker Hava Aaronson is an Orthodox Jew who lives an unorthodox lifestyle in the world of punk. She’s “discovered” and given the chance to go to Hollywood in order to play the part of an Orthodox Jew on a TV show about a modern American Orthodox Jewish family. The problem is she is the only Jewish person on the show which forces her to examine her beliefs more closely. (HS)

***Grace in the Wilderness: After the Liberation 1945-1948* by Aranka Siegal (220 pp.)**

Piri, now 17, resides with a Swedish family while she searches for news of family and friends who also might have survived the Nazi concentration camps. Although the Swedes accept her as their own daughter, she strives to hold on to her own identity and dreams of finding her blood relatives. The novel is dedicated to the many people who assisted the Jews in their efforts to find their families after the war. (MS)

***Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi (160 pp.)**

This autobiography recounts the author’s struggle as a young girl, ages 10-14, during the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the Iran-Iraq War. The story uses black-and-white illustrations to express a rebellious teen’s struggle with this religious war and totalitarianism. Readers may wish to continue Marjane’s story as a teenager in *Persepolis 2: The Story of a Return* when she leaves Iran but then returns (192 pp.). (MS-H)

***The Wave* by Todd Strasser (138 pp.)**

Based on a true story, this book will show contemporary students that the Holocaust could happen again—even today. (MS-HS)

***The Revealers* by Doug Wilhelm (207 pp.)**

For those students who just don't understand how the desensitization of people for people begins, this book will show bullies in action and the complicit nature of others who allow it to happen. A reference to Anne Frank is made midway through the book. For another book that examines the inner workings of the bully mentality, consider Jerry Spinelli's *Crash* (176 pp.). (MS)

Activities To Extend Learning

There are several possible projects that students may construct as part of their collaborative group assignments. Allow students to choose the ones that work best for their respective novels and topics. I have included examples when possible.

Single-entry Literature/Composition Activities

Have students select a poignant passage from the book they have read. Have them copy the passage verbatim, including all bibliographic information. Then have them create three to five possible composition prompts that can be responded to without their having to read the entire book. The following example was created by Jerri Norris (See Example 4.1):

Example 4.1

Richter, Hans Peter. (1987). *Friedrich*. Translated by Edite Kroll. New York: Viking Penguin/Puffin Books. 149 pp. (ISBN: 0-14-032205-1)

“Jews are accused of being crafty and sly. How could they be anything else? Someone who must always live in fear of being tormented and hunted must be very strong in his soul to remain an upright human being.” (p. 63).

Directions: Select one of the following writing assignments to complete. Peer response groups will meet tomorrow, and your first draft is due the following day. Be sure to provide examples whenever possible.

- 1) What minority groups can you think of whose title could be substituted for “Jews” in the above paragraph? In what ways have they been tormented or hunted to your knowledge?
 - 2) Define an upright human being. Do most people fit into this category? What happens to the ones who don't? What are the rewards, if any, for the ones who do?
 - 3) Teacher Neudorf speaks of being strong in the soul. What does he mean, specifically? Give your opinion of what “strong in the soul” is, and include examples of people that you feel best illustrate this description and explain why.
-

Besides learning how to cite material accurately, students get exposed to lots of reading material. Some students might choose to read some additional works beyond the class requirements. By having students spend five minutes doing free-writes, meaningful discussions can ensue.

Double-Entry Literature/Composition Activities

Have each student select a poignant passage from his or her book and team up with another class member. By juxtaposing the passages, students are able to generate some provocative writing prompts (See Example 4.2).

Example 4.2

In *Fire from the Rock*, Sylvia is treated as an inferior because she is black:

“I still feel like I’ve been hollowed out like a Thanksgiving turkey and stuffed with sharp knives instead of soft dressing. . . . I don’t understand why people are so mean to each other, why one group of people can hate another group of people so much. It makes my head hurt to think about it, but I see it everywhere now. I can see it in the eyes of the bus driver who really doesn’t want me on his bus, and the man at the Rexell drugstore, who thinks I’ll probably steal something. I can feel it in the whispers of people who walk behind me on the street” (p. 130).

In *Summer of My German Soldier*, Anton, an escaped prisoner of war, gives Patty, an abused girl, a gift:

“The greater the value, the greater the pleasure in giving it. The ring is yours, P.B.”

Then in the darkened silence, I heard him breathe in deeply. “Am I still your teacher?” Without pausing for an answer, he continued, “Then I want you to learn this, our last, lesson. Even if you forget everything else I want you to remember that you are a person of value, and you have a friend who loved you enough to give you his most valued possession” (pp. 134-135).

- 1) Hitler believed that the Germans were the Master Race, better than any other human beings; Sylvia faces an all-white school so she can get a better education; and Patty, who was verbally and physically abused by her parents, thinks she is a worthless human being. What makes people believe that they are better or worse than somebody else? Is there such a thing as a person who is better or worse than another? For someone who thinks that way, how do they treat others or how are they treated?
 - 2) We have all been told to “love one another as ourselves.” Why is that so hard to do? What makes people be so hateful and hurtful to other human beings?
-

Lines to Create a Feeling

Have each student choose five passages of one to three lines. Working in groups, they should discard two lines apiece and organize the remaining passages to evoke some kind of mood. Encourage them to add a visual or auditory touch to enhance the effect. The following poem entitled “God or No God” was created by Amanda Burke, Shelley Perfect, Stacy Pelham, and Joan Kaywell (See Example 4.3).

Example 4.3

Elliott’s *Under a War Torn Sky* (The French Resistance during World War II), Rylant’s *But I’ll Be Back Again: An Album* (Losing a father, twice—not WWII), Staples’ *Under the Persimmon Tree* (The war in Afghanistan), and Wiesel’s *Night* (Living in a concentration camp during World War II) were the books used.

Four people are needed to read this poem, alternating spoken lines. Persons #1 and #2 are to speak with dread in their voices while looking at a nearly dead plant. Persons #3 and #4 are standing and listening behind them. Persons #3 & #4 interrupt using forceful, determined voices and direct #1 and #2’s attention to a pretty tree drawing #3 & #4 created.

God or No God

- #1) “From the depths of the mirror, a corpse gazed back at me.” (Wiesel, p. 9)

- #2) “I sit in the dirt beside them quietly, not crying, not thinking, not even aware that I am breathing, and it occurs to me I might be dead, too.” (Staples, p. 83)

- #1) “He lies facedown in the mud as the truck rolls forward, and he does not move. As the truck gathers speed, I think how short the distance is between life and death. (Staples, 158)

- #2) “It is hard to lose someone, even harder to lose them twice, and beyond description to lose him without a goodbye either time. If I have any wish for my own life, it is a chance to say all my goodbyes.” (Rylant, p. 8)

- #1) “Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live.” Wiesel, p. 32)

- #2) “. . . the only thing they live on is dreams of their farms, which no longer exist.” (Staples, p. 186)

- #1) “A sob tears itself from her deepest part, and she realizes. . .the world is ending. (Staples, p. 221)

- #2) “Here, every man has to fight for himself and not think of anyone else. Here there are no fathers, no brothers, no friends.” (Wiesel, p. 105)
 - #3) “Suck it up, boy. A whiner won’t last long in this world.” (Elliott, p. 4)
 - #4) “If you are a child who is never told the truth, you begin to make up your own.” (Rylant, p.5).
 - #3) “The drain and pallet and the tubful of warm water look complicated and unimaginably extravagant to her.” (Staples, p. 198)
 - #4) “She had an aura of knowing sadness that she counterbalanced somehow with a determined generosity and hope for happiness.” (Elliott, p. 99)
 - #3) “I’m not about to die here after what I’ve been through and after all that people have sacrificed to save me because some lazy, spoiled Yankee good-for-nothin’ hasn’t got the guts to get up and walk.” (Elliott, p. 192)
 - #4) “We shall see the day of liberation. Have faith in life. Above all else, have faith.” (Wiesel, p. 38)
-

Dioramas

Have students create a visual representation of a memorable scene in their books using a shoe box as the stage. After reading *Alicia, My Story*, one of my students created a diorama of one of the bunkers (a small space dug underneath a room) Alicia hid in during one of the Nazi actions. Because Nazis would shout and fire their guns to try to make babies cry, babies were hidden elsewhere since their crying could give away their hideout. In Chapter Eight, Alicia goes up to give baby Shmuel more chamomile tea to make him sleep and faints when she finds him shot to death by a German soldier. Her family and friends are beneath her unaware of the tragedy they’ll discover when they reemerge.

Memorabilia Bags

While reading their novels, students gather a minimum of 15 objects representative of their stories. I have students number their objects and provide a brief explanation for each. After reading *Summer of My German Soldier*, Laurie A. Van Zant created the following bag with these items (See Example 4.4).

Example 4.4

- 1) A female doll - represents Patty
 - 2) A bag of sand - from Sharon's sandbox
 - 3) A dictionary - Patty read in one every day
 - 4) Small red comb - the one Patty's mother made her use to comb her hair
 - 5) A shoe - from the shoe department in Patty's parents' store
 - 6) A belt - Patty's father beat her with one
 - 7) Cotton balls – the prisoners were made to pick them
 - 8) A train - the train brought the prisoners to town and Anton escaped on the 10:15
 - 9) A post card from Tennessee – represents Patty's trip to her grandmother's
 - 10) Two hard cover books – Patty bought them using the money given to her by her grandmother
 - 11) A monogrammed, blue shirt with a blood stain on it – the one Patty gave to her father for Father's Day, which he never wore, and subsequently gave to Anton to help him escape
 - 12) \$4.67 – the amount of money Patty gave to Anton
 - 13) A gold ring – Anton's prized possession which he gave to Patty
 - 14) A black Bible – the sheriff gave one to Patty
 - 15) A yellow shoe box tied with a red ribbon – Ruth brought Patty chicken breasts in one to eat while she was in the reformatory
-

Collages

Very similar to memorabilia bags, students create a collage of their novels using magazine pictures. Each student is required to explain how each picture relates to the story in an oral presentation. As an added bonus, students often are exposed to different magazines and read many additional articles not required in your class as they browse.

Dictionary of Terms

Have each student select a minimum of five vocabulary words from their individual books. Students are to find others who have identified the same word and derive a common definition for a class vocabulary book. Definitions must be paraphrased (See Example 4.5).

Example 4.5

- 1) **Allies:** The anti-German nations during World War II: Russia, England, and the United States.
 - 2) **Anti-Semitism:** Being hostile to or discriminatory against Jews.
 - 3) **Aryans:** Hitler's master race--tall, blonde, and fair-skinned.
 - 4) **Auschwitz, Treblinka, Maidanek, Kulmhof, Lublin:** death camps in Poland that had gas chambers.
 - 5) **Boche:** an uncomplimentary nickname given to Germans, from the German word meaning "hard skull."
 - 6) Dachau: an infamous concentration camp near Munich.
 - 7) **D-Day:** On June 6, 1944, the combined Allied Forces crossed the English Channel to France to begin retaking occupied Europe.
 - 8) **Deport:** to expel from a country.
 - 9) **Einsatz gruppen (special duty groups):** When Germany invaded Russia in 1941, these groups rounded up the Jews, tortured them, made them dig their own graves, and shot them. Their estimated murders are 1.5 million.
 - 10) **Emigrate:** to leave a county in order to reside elsewhere.
 - 11) **Fuhrer:** Hitler's political title.
 - 12) **Ge(heime) Sta(ats)po(lizei):** Germany's state police, better known as the Gestapo; led by Heydrich.
 - 13) **Judenrate:** Jewish councils in Germany ordered to carry out Nazi orders.
 - 14) **Kristallnacht:** The Night of the Broken Glass, November 9, 1938, when SS members broke windows of Jewish shops and homes in response to the murder of the German ambassador to France by a young Jew whose family had been sent to a concentration camp.
 - 15) **Liberation:** release from oppression such as the freeing of Holland from German control.
-

Additional Annotations of Nonfiction Articles

Each student is to find and write an annotation for at least one outside newspaper, journal, or magazine article that relates in some way to their reading. For someone who read a book in "Group Three: Those Who Risked Their Lives," a possible example might be the following:

- Gies, Miep and Allison Gold. (1987, May 5). “The Woman Who Hid Anne Frank.” *Family Circle*, 88-96. This excerpt from the book includes a detailed account of how Miep hid the Franks and how Anne’s diary was preserved and returned to Mr. Frank.

For someone who read a book in “Group Seven: After the War—The Effects on Families and What We’ve Learned,” a possible example might be the following:

- Kim, Myung Oak. (2007, January 23). “Holocaust Survivors Hope Their Stories Outlive Them.” *Rocky Mountain News*. Fred and Miriam Hoffman survived the Holocaust but now most of the other survivors are either dead or nearing so. They speak about why it is important for them to continue to share their stories about the atrocity.

A Timeline

Take some butcher paper and tape it on two walls or halfway around the classroom at eye level. Segment the paper by year starting with 1938 and ending with 1945, but allow students to extend the timeline in either direction if necessary. Draw a line, horizontally, about one third of the way down the entire length of the paper. While students are reading their respective books, have them jot down on scrap paper all dates and information, paraphrased, about the material they are reading. On the top third of the butcher paper, have students record historic dates with their corresponding events in black ink. On the bottom two thirds, have students write the corresponding vignettes about the people they are reading about. It is helpful to keep the vignettes color-coded by books, and by having students include their initials, those who want to discuss a specific occurrence can consult “the expert.” As material accumulates, the interest level is heightened and students gain a sense of chronology about the war (Example 4.6).

Example 4.6

November 9, 1938 - Kristallnacht

The first act of anti-Semitism hit the Appleman family when Alicia’s oldest brother, Zachary, is attacked by five Polish university students on his way to school in May of 1938. They kicked him in the ribs, treated him like a punching bag, and smashed his violin, all because of his religious beliefs. In 1938, there were 18,000 Jews in the Polish city of Buczacz, which was about one-third of the total population.

December 7, 1941 - the bombing of Pearl Harbor / America’s entry into the war

In 1941, Alicia survives a jump from a moving train en route to a labor camp and learns that her brother, Bunio, has been murdered by the Nazis.

A Map Display

Many of these books refer to specific locations that become confusing after a while. By having students keep records of the locations of the people in their books by charting their progress on maps, students gain a better sense of the story and acquire memorable, geographical information. Maps should be displayed on one or more of the walls in the classroom.

A Classroom Museum

Each student brings in an artifact representative of World War II for display. For example, when a student brings in some zlotys, Polish currency, for others to see, it really makes the time period come alive for others.

Additionally, each student is to bring in at least three pictures depicting the time period. Have students form teams through the creation of logical groupings of the pictures, not exceeding five people per team. Have each team arrange the pictures for display on some room dividers. If room dividers are unavailable, makeshift displays can be made with two-by-fours, sheets of plywood, and wallpaper. Have students research, write, and record information about their pictures on cassette recorders. By attaching headphones, visitors and other students can listen to the recorded information while looking at the photos.

A Documentary

Students prepare a documentary incorporating information from each of the books that were read. Visuals, such as timelines and maps, should be used whenever possible.

Compare and Contrast Then and Now

Not long ago, we experienced the 65th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. There were television documentaries and newspaper accounts of what happened. Students may find it interesting to read actual articles from newspapers dated December 7, 1941, and to view news footage from that time period in order to compare and contrast that information with what we know today.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Council was established in 1980, with Elie Wiesel now serving as its chairman. Additional information about the organization can be obtained by writing to the following address: 2000 L Street, N.W., Suite 588, Washington, DC, 20036, or by visiting www.ushmm.org.

After students interview various World War II veterans about their impressions of the war, have them then ask the same questions of students in another grade level. The difference in attitudes is often frightening and lends itself to discussions on why *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl* is required reading in most schools.

Examples of Prejudice Today

Each student is to find a newspaper or magazine account of some act of discrimination today. Students are often shocked by the many forms of prejudice and become painfully aware of the relevancy of World War II to us today, especially when they read about genocide in Darfur and racist acts in South Africa. Not so long ago for teachers, but probably new for students, is the fact that David Duke won a seat in the 1989 Louisiana State Legislature and a bid for the 1992 Presidential nomination even though he is probably America's best known public racist. There are often extreme examples in their own communities. Florida, for example, has the most hate groups than any other state in the country as identified by the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#). In Tampa, Skinheads or Neo-Nazis have been known to beat up homosexuals; and in Orlando, black churches were burned by arson. It is, unfortunately, easy for students to find current reports about the ill-treatment of people based on various differences such as race, religion, age, gender, sexual preference, disabilities, and diseases, to name a few.

Their Own Ideas

By always having this as an option, I have built up my repertoire of useful ideas through the suggestions made by my students. Students in my last class came up with these possibilities:

- Prepare a booktalk.
- Create a dinner party inviting a key character from each book.
- Identify key scenes in each book and rewrite them in play form. Sequence the scenes and perform a readers' theater.
- Like Anne in *A Diary of a Young Girl*, write a week's worth of diary entries for one of the characters in each book.
- Contact one of the authors and invite him or her to speak to the class. [Note: One of my students contacted Alicia Appleman-Jurman and orchestrated a project to raise money to bring her to our school. By contacting your author's publisher, you may be able to arrange him or her to speak for the price of a plane ticket and lodging.]

Conclusion

In previous years, I have been bombarded by students asking, “Why do we have to read this?” while studying *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*. Never have I had that question asked since I began incorporating the use of YA literature with this classic. The 20th century was the most violent period in human history, and it’s time to eradicate violence in the 21st century. Everyone knows about the Jewish Holocaust, but very few people know about the Armenian genocide that followed World War I, the Ukrainian genocide of the 1930s, and the Rwandan genocide that took place in 1994 and the more recent ones: Hutus and Tutsis, ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, Pol Pot’s killing fields.. Our country was involved in each of these tragedies. My students become painfully aware of hierarchies, manipulation, and prejudice involved. In this world of cultural diversity, it is imperative that we teach our students to celebrate—not condemn or simply tolerate—our differences. We must learn from history, or we may repeat it. Next time, a holocaust might be here.

Additional Resources for Teachers

Websites

Lesson Plans

The [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), and its companion site [Teaching Tolerance](#), offer an abundance of resources available to teachers on how to combat hate and promote tolerance. Teachers may subscribe—for free—to their magazine *Teaching Tolerance* that offers teaching tips and important information about the different cultural groups in our schools. The site by the same name offers a detailed search engine to find activities sorted by grade levels, subject, and topic. In general, the Southern Poverty Law Center has been an outspoken and major promoter of civil rights since its founding in 1971.

The Florida Center for Instructional Technology created [“The Teachers Guide to the Holocaust.”](#) This site offers teachers and students with a wealth of information about the people and events of the Holocaust through photographs, documents, art, music, movies, and literature. The California Center for the Book developed [“Caught in the Crossfire: Young People and War,”](#) a new book discussion program designed to help middle and secondary level students understand war’s impact on children and teens. Besides discussion questions, a list of supplemental activities, books, author interviews, articles, and film/DVD titles are included. Similarly, Laura Pringleton from the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute put together an [impressive list of resources and teaching ideas](#) on teaching the Holocaust.

To motivate your students to action, see what the Whitwell Middle School students did in the small town of Whitwell, Tennessee, with the now famous [Paper Clip Project](#). In 1998, these 8th graders could not imagine what 6 million looked like and were in awe with the fact that over 6 million Jewish people were exterminated by the Nazis. Inspired by a lesson involving Europeans who wore paper clips on their lapels as a statement of protest against the Nazis, these students decided to collect 6 million paper clips to get an idea of how many Jews were killed. In the end the students collected over 20 million paper clips and received letters from various people, including victims, showing their support. The students created a “Children’s Holocaust Memorial” which consisted of an authentic German rail car that housed 11 million of the paper clips. A news article about the project is available at http://www.acfnewsresource.org/religion/paper_clip_project.html.

Survivor Interviews

Founded in 1989 and supported by a non-profit organization, [Teen Ink](#) includes a website, books series, and a monthly magazine of material written by teens for teens. Michelle M., a teen from Phoenix, Arizona, shares her [interview with Hungarian Holocaust survivor Helen Handler](#) who was ten years old and survived three death marches. Vicky S., a teen from Randolph New Jersey, [interviews Polish Holocaust survivor Michael Zeiger](#).

Oprah Winfrey interviews 72-year-old Elie Wiesel in this [powerful transcript presentation](#) from the man who's done so much to promote peace in the world. Contemporary pictures of Wiesel and historic ones of the Holocaust are shown as well as a transcript of their interview.

[The Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive](#) began in 1981 by Sidney Bolkosky, a professor in the social sciences and history at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. This archive has steadily grown and now contains over three hundred interviews. By accessing this website, teachers can have their students select from over 50 testimonies where they can read the transcript while listening to survivors' telling their stories.

[The Shoah Foundation Institute Visual History Archive](#) is another great resource that includes both video and audio survivor testimonies but the system requirements might be beyond what most schools can handle.

Journal Articles

“A Review of the Holocaust in Literature for Youth” by Lee Brown (2 pp.).

This journal article provides information about a book that has a review of over 600 print entries about the Holocaust for many different genres. The book that is referenced has journal articles, short stories, electronic resources, and teaching strategies for the Holocaust.

“Educating without Overwhelming: Authorial Strategies in Children’s Holocaust Literature” by S.D. Jordan (20 pp.).

In addition to the strategies and literature mentioned in the chapter, this article “reviews a number of works of fiction about the Holocaust intended for children and young adult readers and discusses the strategies used by their authors to educate their readers without overwhelming them with highly emotional information.”

“Making History Come Alive” by Howard Levin (5 pp.).

In an elective history class, 10-12th graders interviewed Holocaust survivors and published their stories on the Web in a class project entitled, “[Telling Their Stories: Oral History of the Holocaust.](#)”

“Guidelines for Teaching the Holocaust: Avoiding Common Pedagogical Errors” by David H. Lindquist (3 pp.).

This article discusses the use of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and addresses common errors teachers make when teaching about the Holocaust.

Video/Film/Audio

It is assumed that most people are aware of such videos as *Schindler’s List* and *Sophie’s Choice*, but I question whether any teacher would show either of those films to their classes because of their intensity. Two films that were prepared for teacher use and are highly recommended are *I Am David*, starring Ben Tiber (2003, Walden Media) and *Anne Frank - There’s More to Her Story than You Ever Imagined*, starring Ben Kingsley and Brenda Blethyn (2001, Walt Disney Video). By visiting the Walden Media Website, teachers may download [a free teaching guide](#) that corresponds with the film. Another film that teachers may not know about is a documentary entitled, *The Last Seven Months of Anne Frank* by Willy Lindwer. The producer interviewed six women who had known Anne prior to her death. Finally, 60 short video clips of concentration camps and other Holocaust-related sites are available on the Web at these two sites—

<http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/VR.htm> and

<http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/MOVIES.htm>—and are invaluable for their convenience.

Christian Z. Goering has developed LitTunes a great resource of [music that complements the classics](#), Lit Tunes is a collaborative online community designed to serve three purposes: 1) to provide educators with a centralized source of materials and support for using popular music in the classroom; 2) to provide a forum for educators to share their successful experiences and research involving the use of popular music, and; 3) to inspire educators to reach the disenfranchised with music. The site lists the following songs to complement *The Diary of a Young Girl*:

- “Dear Anne” from *Swedish Sessions* by Ryan Adams (Unreleased, 2001)*
- “Tattoo” from *Breaking the Silence* by Janis Ian (Morgan Creek, 1993)
- “Avinu Malkeinu” from *Higher Ground* by Barbara Streisand (Sony, 1997)

* Song was inspired by the artist’s reading of the classic work, confirmed either through album liner notes or published interviews that specifically mention the artist’s sources of inspiration.

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