



Raab/Goodwin

Esther Raab Holocaust Museum
& Goodwin Education Center

Dear Esther

BY: Richard Rashke

**A COMPREHENSIVE COMPANION
AND STUDY GUIDE FOR THE PLAY *(Dear Esther)* AND BOOK
*(Children's Letters To A Holocaust Survivor: Dear Esther)***

**Compiled and Edited by Esther Raab Holocaust Museum
& Goodwin Education Center**

Updated 2016

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A LETTER TO CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Dear Teachers,

We are so pleased that you are using either the book, *Children's Letters to a Holocaust Survivor: Dear Esther* or attending a performance of *Dear Esther*. Teaching of the Holocaust is extremely challenging in its historical complexity and in its emotional sensitivity. However, the study of the Holocaust presents important lessons for present day. The purpose of this teacher's guide is to support you in the teaching of the Holocaust by providing material that you can tailor based on your student population.

It is suggested that you use the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website (ushmm.org) for the guidelines and rationale for teaching the Holocaust and the film, *Escape From Sobibor*, for historical reference before seeing the play. Some of the material presented in the play are intended for mature audiences, but can be used with middle school and high school students with at least a basic historical, social, religious, and political overview of the Holocaust. It raises difficult questions about human behavior and basic moral issues that our young people face in their lives, including fairness, justice, and peer pressure.

We hope that you can use some of the materials provided and congratulate you in taking the first step of teaching this important subject to your students. If you should need any assistance you are encouraged to contact the Esther Raab Holocaust Museum and Goodwin Education Center in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, any local Holocaust and Genocide Center, or the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Sincerely,
Staff and volunteers of the Raab/Goodwin Center

A Note From Esther

“When I think about the events portrayed in *Dear Esther*, I don’t just remember them, I re-live them. I feel all the sorrow and pain of those times even though they happened more than 50 years ago. Knowing this, you might wonder why I put myself through this experience by speaking about Sobibor all these years. I do it for several reasons: When we were about to escape from Sobibor, Leon made us pledge to speak out and let the world know what happened at Sobibor. I’m sure he is listening now. I do it for those who were martyred, who can’t speak for themselves. But most importantly I speak out to inform students about the awful consequences of hate. Students are our hope for the future, and that is what “*Dear Esther*” is about. And so, I would like to thank the thousands of students across the world who have written to me over the many years.

They hold a special place in my life and my heart. When Richard asked me if he could write a play, I told him yes – as long as students can understand it. My hope is that watching “*Dear Esther*” will make a difference in your life.”

Sincerely,

Esther Raab

In Memorium: 1922-2015

Esther Turner- Raab passed away on April 13, 2015 at the age of 92. Her contribution to humanity and tolerance remain an important part of her legacy through the play, “Dear Esther” and the book, entitled, Children’s Letters to a Holocaust Survivor: Dear Esther

A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT AND AUTHOR

Richard Rashke is an author, playwright, and lecturer. His books include: his most recent, *Children's Letters to a Holocaust Survivor: Dear Esther, Escape from Sobibor, The Killing of Karen Silkwood, Silkwood and Their Quest For the Truth, Runaway Father, The Whistleblower's Dilemma: Snowden, and Useful Enemies: John Demjanjuk and America's Open-Door Policy for Nazi War Criminals*. His plays include *Justice in a Small Town, Asking for It, Love in a Petri Dish, and Dear Esther*. He has taught creative writing at The American University and the University of Maryland.

Dear Students and Audience Members,

I'm flattered that you'll be seeing the performance of my play "*Dear Esther*". I hope you find it challenging and worth your valuable time. If it hadn't been for students, I would never have written the play.

"*Dear Esther*" is based on the life and experiences of Esther Raab, who escaped from a Nazi death camp in eastern Poland more than fifty years ago. When the movie based on my book, *Escape from Sobibor*, was aired on television, schools in New Jersey, where Esther lives, began to invite her to speak. Many of the students who heard her story were so moved by her courage that they wrote her letters and poems. Those letters taught her a lot about hope and love, and she treasures each one. She has them bound in a notebook and proudly shows them to anyone who visits her home.

One day, I was talking to Esther on the phone. "You know," I said, "your letters are so important, we ought to do something with them. How about a play?" She agreed and that's how "*Dear Esther*" was born. She only agreed to let me write about her after I promised that students would be encouraged to see it. She would have loved to visit every classroom in the country and tell each of you her story personally. But that's impossible. The play is the next best thing.

When you watch the play, remember one thing. It's as true as it can be. The events are real. The feelings are real. The issues and doubts are real...and the letters are real. I hope that after you see the play, you will want to talk about it in class, among yourselves, and with your families. You can be proud. It was students who made it all happen.

Sincerely,

Richard Rashke

RATIONALE FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES

New Jersey Mandate on Holocaust and Genocide Education

RE: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-28, Holocaust/Genocide Education

The New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education has received a number of inquiries from educators on whether or not school districts and charter schools must include instruction on the Holocaust and genocides in elementary and secondary education.

As a reminder, in 1994 the legislature voted unanimously in favor of an act requiring education on the Holocaust and genocide in elementary and secondary education and it subsequently signed into law by Governor Whitman. The law indicates that issues of bias, prejudice and bigotry, including bullying through the teaching of the Holocaust and genocide, shall be included for all children from K-12th grade. Because this is a law and in Statute any changes in standards would not impact the requirement of education on this topic in all New Jersey public schools.

This Statute remains current and must be incorporated when developing new or revised curriculum. A review of the English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical subjects suggests that it can be used as a framework in developing a well-articulated multi-disciplinary K-12 Holocaust/genocide program of study.

For recommendations of incorporating Holocaust and genocide education into grades K – 12 curriculum, the Commission encourages educators to use the study guides available on the Commission website at, [New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education - Curriculum](#). Please do not hesitate to contact the Commission at holocaust@doe.state.nj.us if you need more information on the law or additional resources.

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Quotes Relevant to Holocaust Education:

- The late *Chaim Ginott*, who was a principal, as well as a psychologist, wrote the following to his teachers:

“I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: Gas chambers built by learned engineers, children poisoned by educated physicians, infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot and buried by high school and college graduates. So, I am suspicious of education.

My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts should never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmans. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane.

- The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing.

Edmund Burke, 18th Century English Philosopher

- It may be too late for the victims... but not for our children, not for mankind.
- The opposite of love is not hate, but indifference
- For the dead and the living, we must bear witness

Elie Wiesel, Holocaust Survivor, Author, Nobel Laureate

- First, they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out-
Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out-
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me-and there was no one left to speak for me.

Martin Niemoller, Protestant pastor, public foe of Adolf Hitler, spent last seven years of Nazi rule in concentration camps

About *Dear Esther*

Dear Esther is based on the true story of Esther Turner Raab, a Holocaust survivor who escaped from Sobibor, a Nazi death camp in eastern Poland and the site of a rebellion by the death camp workers against their Nazi captors. Created by the author as a result of extensive interviews with Esther and incorporating real letters written to Esther by students who heard her speak, *Dear Esther*, chronicles the main character's personal journey into understanding her past. Through interaction with her own conscience and the reaction of students as written in personal letters to her, Esther confronts many of the themes that define this devastating period in world history.

The play begins with voices spewing racial epithets *, manifestations of prejudice and bigotry that still exist in our modern world. When Esther comments that she never blamed children for the horrible experiences of the Holocaust that so impacted her life, she concludes that children are merely tape recorders. At the end of the first scene in Act I, she states, "*If they (children) repeat what they hear often enough, they begin to believe it. And so the spiral grows.*" *Dear Esther* asks each of us to confront the truth of our past. In doing so, we take the first step in stopping the spiral of prejudice, bigotry and hate that allowed the Holocaust to happen.

Since this play is written predominantly as a dialogue between the main character, Esther, and her conscience or alter ego, Esther 2, a chronological outline of the plot is difficult to create. Furthermore, many of the important philosophical ideas of the play are produced through excerpts of children's letters written to Esther in response to her lectures about her experiences during the Holocaust.

* The students may feel uncomfortable hearing the racial slurs presented in the onset of the play. It is important for the teacher to discuss this with his/her students so that they understand how these cruel and hurtful words can be and how name-calling helps to promote bigotry.

Synopsis of Act I and Act II of the Play, *Dear Esther*

The script of this play is in 2 acts; however, the performance is presented in its entirety without an intermission.

Act I

Following the initial scene of children and adults expressing the reality of prejudice, the play begins with Esther's introduction to students in a school assembly. As a child in Chelm, a small town in Poland near the Russian border, Esther lived a happy, middle class existence. The war seems distant, but ultimately as Jews, Esther's family suffers greatly. Esther's father is murdered, her remaining family is confined to a ghetto, and ultimately are sent to an extermination camp. In Sobibor, Esther confronts the starvation, fear, death and despair of the camp. Eventually she becomes part of an underground rebellion that leads to escape. Esther constantly questions the reasons for her survival and her mother's death. As she tells the story of her experiences during the period of Nazi occupation, Esther reacts to young people's sincere, poignant and emotional letters to the events that have shaped her outlook towards the world today.

Act II

Esther escapes Sobibor but must then try to survive in a Poland that is still hostile to Jews. She is helped by a kind Christian farmer who gives her shelter in his barn. Once the German army retreats from the area in which she is hiding, Esther then

fears being harmed by Ukrainian workers. One worker, rather than giving Esther away, protects her by diverting others away from her hiding place. Questioning why she survived, Esther tries to ascribe her survival to luck. Through further introspection, brought on by conversations with her alter ego, Esther comes to realize that her survival was based on hope, determination, and instinct. With this understanding, she shares her belief that she must go on living for those who died. Esther recognizes that her mother's death had a purpose. Justice must be served, evidenced in Esther's description of the fate of some of the Nazi perpetrators of the crimes committed in Sobibor. Finally, Esther realizes that she must tell her story, because if she does not, the past will be forgotten. Confronting the past will *make the possibility* of evil recurring more difficult.



ORAL TESTIMONY

Personal first-hand testimonies of survivors, witnesses, liberators, and rescuers help our students understand that each survivor's or witness's experience is unique. As our population of survivor's and witness's is dwindling the use of these first-hand accounts are more important than ever. Using survivor testimony presents challenges to teachers due to the disturbing detailed material presented. Thus, it is imperative that students are prepared for such material, and teachers should give students ample opportunities to reflect on their feelings by journaling or discussion. An excellent resource to help prepare our students for listening to oral testimonies can be found on the *Facing History and Ourselves* website.

On pages 12- 28 the actual survivor testimony of Esther Turner Raab from the United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum begins. It can also be found on the USHMM website, under her name and on YouTube (Esther Raab-Sobibor Survivor).

Esther Raab



Esther Raab

Sobibor Death Camp Survivor

Selected Extracts from USHMM Interview

Interview held on the 18 February 1992

(Photo's added to enhance the text)

Can you describe for me the transport to Sobibor and your arrival there, and what it was like and what happened? I didn't come by train; I came by horse and wagon because I came from a small working camp. We were like 800 young girls and men and we rode the whole day to Sobibor and the month it was December 1942, December 22 1943, 42, I'm sorry.

And after riding the whole day in the mud and the wagons got stuck in the mud and we had to go down and pull them out, and on the way the farmers were outside, and they said there's no way you're going, they're going to kill you and they're going to burn you.

As much as we knew before and as much we heard, we didn't believe. It was very hard to comprehend, to believe. Why take innocent people and just kill them with no reason at all, and as the day came to an end, was only 20km's but it took a whole day.

Everybody of us, from us, was so disgusted that we wanted to get it over with. If that's what they're going to do to us, let's do it fast, so we, won't have to suffer.

I mean not physically, we didn't but mentally. You know it was very hard to sit there and think I have 4 hours or 3 and half hours or 3 hours. And as we came close to Sobibor, the whole day naturally without food, without water, but that really didn't bother, we were used to it.

The SS came out with dogs and started barking, I mean they never talked they barked. You could never make out what they are saying. Although I spoke very well in German, I had it in school and I picked it up more experience during the time, and they started barking.

The SS told us to assemble on the platform, the railroad platform, and we all assembled there and I stood in every way, that and, and you felt already the smell

there from the burning bodies and you saw the fire, but you, you didn't believe it.



Gustav Wagner

It's just I couldn't believe it. I myself and so my friends and all of the sudden I saw that girlfriend of mine, with whom I came walks by with a commandant from camp, that was Wagner, the biggest murderer, and the biggest of all the Nazis that ever existed.

He was caught later in 1979 in Brazil. And he picked, she picks up one girl and I said "Mira who you looking for?" and she says, "I looking for girls who know how to knit" and I said,

"That's about my talent" and that was just a split second and she pointed out to me, he said "Raus" and I came out from the whole transport, they took out 8 girls and 2 men which were fathers of the girl – of some of the girls, one was a shoemaker and one was a tailor, and they marched us out to the camp, and we figured we didn't have no idea what's going on, what they are going to do later with us.

And the others marched out and at that moment I don't you're capable of think. You don't plan, you don't think, you don't argue, you don't ... you just numb, and that's how I was, numb.

And then he took us, all the girls with the 2 men, and they marched us into the camp and as we saw the camp was very small, very small because when we came in we made out, up 20 women and 100 men, so was very small and that smell.

I thought to myself "What's that smell?" The smell was..... you couldn't take it anymore. And as he puts us in, in an empty barrack and then came like the commandant, the Jewish commandant of the inmates, he said,



Gustav Wagner (1978 Brazil)

“You know where, where you are?” and we didn’t say boo because you didn’t know who to trust, you didn’t know what to say, so we had to be very careful, and by looking at each other we understood what we are supposed to do, and he explained it right away.

“You see the fire, you see this,” and then they brought us in blankets and bread and coffee and we figured that’s the last meal, and we remained there until the morning, we laid down we slept, we didn’t sleep, but I cannot explain the feelings we had.

If to believe that all those who were with us are not here anymore... or, or not to, we, we didn’t know we were just numb to the whole situation.

Early in the morning, they told us to get up, and they marched us off to the sorting shed, the next morning, where they told us to sort out the belongings of the people, then when we found the belongings and the pictures and the documents of the girls and the young men that were with us, we realized, but it’s very hard to just put it into your head they’re all dead.

Why?

It was very difficult, it was very difficult, it was very hard, and inside it builds up right away such a resentment, such a feeling of revenge, such anger, if I could just kill one.

For that what had happened, I would feel better, but you have to keep your mouth shut, and just pretend you don’t see, you don’t hear, no emotions, no emotions

whatsoever, we didn't even cry not one of us.

Can you describe the transports coming in?

The transports, well, usually most of them used to come in during the night, but there were some in the daytime too. When you heard that whistle from the commandant of the camp, that man, that the transport was coming in, and the men in the camp should get ready to unload the people and so that whistle was like somebody would tear out your insides, you knew here are other people, children, our elder people, people who never did anything wrong in their life, and they're going to go, and you cannot say, you cannot resist, you cannot.



Wagner NSDAP documentation

Inside it built up that revenge and that resentment and that anger, and that pain, sometimes they came in during the day and sometimes so many came that they couldn't handle, so they would put them behind our and we were and tell us just to walk back and forth, and forth and back, so what they told them that they are going to work should seem to them to be the truth and that was hard, it was hard.

You walk by and you look at the face and you know in half an hour won't be here, can't even tell. You just put on a smile, your best face you can, it hurt, it was very hard.

And then some transports usually, when I had to work near the railroad tracks, you know near the there was and, and sometimes when a transport came, we had they sent us all to the compound, except for those who worked with the unloading of the people, but a few times we went to clean the houses of the SS, and there wasn't enough time to run back, so they would lock us in, or we knew ourselves

we are not supposed to walk out and watch it, and sometimes we saw the people the way they were delivered, before they're dead, they torture before they're dead.

We saw them leaving and screaming and children crying and elderly people and I cannot explain the feeling that I had, and I wondered why, why, just why that why was such a big question and nobody could answer. Like for instance once I was called to clean up the..... this is uh, an incident which is going to be with me the rest of my life.

All the people that I saw going, and, and imagining what's going to happen, but once a big shot was supposed to come to Sobibor, usually they brought them, even Himmler was in Sobibor to show them how efficient and how perfect they had killing, and how good, and they brought a transport so they took me to clean up the quarters, the living quarters of the SS, of some of the SS people which the windows face the railroad track.

And when I was there cleaning with another girl, the whistle was there that a train comes and so we knew we have to remain there, we cannot go out, and the transport came in and went everything very fast, the load, unloading of the people, and a mother left a baby, I don't know for what for what reason, in the boxcar and Frenzel who was at that time in charge of the transport, grabbed that little baby and smashed the head, the skull against the boxcar, and they just threw it in like a dead rat and that's just I cannot forget.

I was at this trial for, about 4 times and I told them what he did, he didn't deny it, but he followed orders and this I cannot forget. Why kill that child in such a miserable way? Why? Why?

It was a human being. I just wish that somebody would do to his children and he should have to watch. And this is with me, I cannot for all the gruesome things that I saw, I saw a transport come, the people probably resisted in the boxcar, I don't know, so they threw in chlorine into the boxcar, and the whole transport came, so dead, natural.

All bodies were 3, 4 times the size, some even were busted open, and they just deposited them. It's, it's really difficult to think about it and to talk about it. And all these just built up in me, such an anger, and the feeling of revenge and I remember I came to the camp with a pair of brown leather boots which, not everybody had, probably nobody, and I said to the group that we slept together, I took my boots, wrapped them up nicely, and put them under the bunk-bed, under

my head, but they said,



Frenzel

“Why you put them?” I said “With these boots I’m going to escape from Sobibor.” Don’t ask me why. Don’t ask me how. And maybe it doesn’t even make sense, but I’m going to escape with these boots, and I did escape with these boots.

And things like this, every day was something new. Like they took all the sick people, when we stood in the sorting shed and sorted the things from the people, the belongings, you see the wagons go by, and the older people, or children who were maybe orphans or, were thrown in like cabbages and then at the end rides Gomerski, who was in charge of them with a pistol and just asks,

“Who is tired and who cannot work, and who is sick?” “I am going to help you.” And then bullet and then a bullet and I cannot describe here the feeling. I cannot describe. I don’t think there are words really to describe it. I was at his trial too. He said also he followed orders. And I told the judges,

”If Hitler would come now and give him orders, or somebody else, they would do it again.” And it was very hard just to watch, like winter sometimes came a transport and they were busy and they couldn’t handle so many.

They told the people to undress, in the snow, in Poland it’s very cold in the snow, naked, and they chased them like, like cattle, cattle I think you take better care of, all the way straight to the gas chambers.

Can you talk about uh you talked once about a person named Michel and the

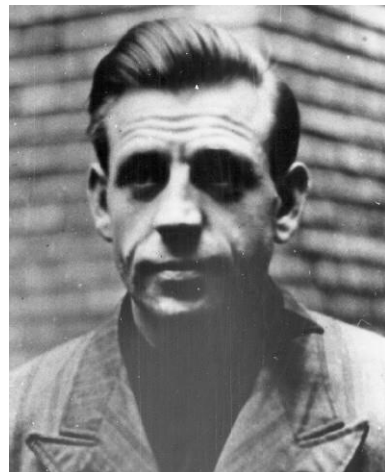
charade that he had telling people to hang their clothes and what he talked about?

This was in the beginning when it first started. They, they weren't as well organized as later on, so the German efficiency, they had a yard, a fenced in yard with hooks to hang up their clothes and they would assemble all the people from the transport and he would go out – Michel, we used to call him the “House Beater” – you know he would say in German,

“Jews you think you're going to die. It won't happen. It won't happen to you. You're brought here, you give up all your belongings with a number, you'll get a number and you hang up your clothes, and you go to the showers, because we are afraid of sickness, and then you'll be sent to work.

The way it was done, with such German efficiency and everything to the minute and to the second and, and you always ask why, why, you cannot ask it.

It wasn't easy to be in Sobibor or any other camp, I suppose, death camp. I don't think you could even think straight. I remember once came a big, when Himmler came to our camp, they brought 400 girls from Majdanek, that was also a death camp, to show him, and that's when they uh, ordered to shave the heads, from those..... and they shaved the hair from them, and he went out and, and ... and they got such reward, that they doing such a good job, that after a while they liquidated Treblinka.



Gomerski

All of a sudden when they closed up Treblinka they brought all the inmates to Sobibor to be killed, they were afraid to do that there. So one afternoon all of a sudden, the whistle, and they lock us in our camp, then we knew something

extraordinary has happened.

And we could hear the train coming in, the Ukrainians took care of it, not our inmates and we could hear shots, and we counted the shots, so much and so much, and after the last shot, they came they let us out and they sent us to sort out the belongings, and as we started we all..... very careful, everything for papers, for documents, for notes, for anything and we saw that they were from Treblinka, and every, and every pocket was almost a note, "Take Revenge.

Take Revenge. We couldn't, maybe you can take the revenge." And in times like this, and you felt they using you and look at what they do to you, the same thing, so why be here? Why? Just for their convenience? Why? And after a while, they brought the people from Belzec, because they closed up Belzec too at that time, and they were in the same story, happened there.

And then they expanded Sobibor and business started booming. Night and day you had transports. You, we used to work 14, 16, 18 hours a day, I mean into the night, just the men took care of the helping to unload, the people, empty the belongings and then you had to sort and they had to ship it to Germany.

It was very difficult, I cannot explain that feeling, and the resentment and the hate and the revenge. The revenge was so great the.....

Can you talk about the choices that the guards had versus the choices that you prisoners had?

First of all, the guards had all the privileges. They could do whatever they wanted. They didn't have to account if they killed somebody or hit somebody, or mistreated somebody.

We didn't have no privileges. We were there to serve the Germans, probably as long as they would have needed us, and then it would be the end. The guards could go outside, the guards could have furlough, the guards had enough food. It's altogether a different ballgame.

Did you have choices?

No I didn't have no choices. Whatever, I was told I had to do, and maybe better than I could and whatever they gave me to eat, and that's it. The only thing we had in our favour in Sobibor, which other camps didn't have, I don't know about

Treblinka and Belzec that they didn't shave our hair, the inmates, and that we could take clean clothes from the transports, and change and we could wash ourselves.

And I think this was keeping ourselves clean wasn't so dehumanizing that people had in other camps with the dirt and filth. They did it only for one reason. First of all was as a propaganda, if some transports came in, they should see we still look like human beings, and second of all they lived so close to our quarters, the German quarters, that they were afraid for diseases.

And there were enough clothes so we could take and keep ourselves clean. This was one of the biggest things that kept us going. We were hungry. Not enough, sometimes we stole something from the transport, the people used to bring bread or, whatever, but there that was very risky, because most of the time when we walked to the barracks from the working place, they used to check us.

They used to check us if we didn't take something or so, but we tried, sometimes we were successful, but the main thing that we could keep ourselves clean, and that's why we had the courage and that will to do something, because when you way down physically, and filthy and dirty and shaven and this, you give up very fast, but I feel that kept us going.



Leon Feldhendler

And that's why we thought even if one makes it and go out, he'll look normal, he won't be right away suspicious. He has a striped outfit, he doesn't have no hair, that was one plus that they didn't think about that we had in our favour to think about uprising and about taking revenge and so forth.

Once a partisan group approached the camp and they wanted, I don't know, liberate, or whatever they wanted to do, but we knew it was a partisan group and during the night a whistle came, we had all to run out, whatever we had on, and stay barefooted in the snow, probably 2,3 hours or more, surrounded by machine guns and everything.

They figured if they should happen to go through, they'll kill us all, but they left the Partisans and we went back, and at that time, they made mine fields around the camp, before there were no mine fields.

We were so deep in the woods, that nobody could even know that something goes on. So we started thinking about uprising and about revenge, and I think that kept us going, although it was silly thought, but you know that gave us the courage to survive, to do, because we planned, we planned.

The plans weren't worth it, maybe in the beginning, five cents, but we planned and we saw ourselves outside, and we saw all the Nazis killed and this kept us going every day. In 1943 probably in February or well, Leon Feldhendler was picked out from a transport and brought in. We were cousins by marriage and after we told him what's going on, everybody who came in or they took him out, if they killed ten from us, they picked out another ten from the next transport.

We told them and he said, "We have to escape." and we asked "How?" he said "There must be a way and we're gonna escape." And we tried started planning and going to meetings, which only a few went because you had to be very careful, and coming back you felt like you doing something, you planning something, you trying something.

If you succeed it would be wonderful, if not you'll get a bullet in the back – it's better than going to the gas chambers. I promised myself I'll never go to the gas chamber, I'll start running. I'll start do – they have to waste a bullet.

And we started organizing and talking and it kept us alive again, you know that maybe we'll be able to take revenge for all those who can't, who already burned there. And, and we promised ourselves it didn't matter if we survive or not, but to do something, not the, the world shouldn't say "the Jews went like sheep to the slaughter."

It's not true. We saw a lot of incidents in camp where women hit the SS people.

They hit once the Untersturmführer Niemann, they almost popped out the knife for him, he was all bandaged up. They did, they did but they're not here to tell the story.

And I feel that the resistance, in general, not talking about Sobibor, which Sobibor had a successful revolt. The others tried and didn't succeed you know. This was the only successful revolt. But people fought back. They fought back in the woods, they fought back on the train stations, they fought back every step of the way, but they, they are not here to tell.

And that hurts, it hurts. And, and the uh, and time runs out on the survivors too.

Tell me what a death camp is? Assume that I don't know. Just define a death camp as opposed to other kinds of camps.



Ukrainian guard Ivan Demaniuk
Identification papers

You see our ca- the other camps were half slave labour camp, and half death camp. There were no such thing as slave labour camp. That was only strictly the inmates that were picked out from the trains – they just took care of the killing of the

people.

I mean they didn't kill them, but they helped you know they had to. And of the work in the camp of taking care of the SS people, that's the difference. From Sobibor to Auschwitz let's say, Auschwitz was a half slave labour camp and a death camp. Sobibor was just a death camp. No slave labour there, no work, no producing, no nothing doing.

Can you tell me about the seamstress and her baby?

She was there, she came with a transport in my time already, with her husband. She was a seamstress and he was a tailor, but during the film she says that he was in the Partisan group, but she came with her husband and she had that baby about 2 weeks and then they finally found it, because they used to come in unannounced.

Unannounced?

Unannounced and they walked in and saw the baby. They gave her a choice, it's true. They gave her a choice that they're going to take the baby and she can remain because she was very good seamstress.

They used to wear underwear only from silk, from the parachutes. They didn't use plain materials, the SS. So, and she was excellent making shirts and underwear from those parachutes.

We have to reload. Okay start again and do that whole thing again

With the.....

Seamstress, tell me about what her work was, what she did, what did they ..

She came into the camp with her husband, he was a good tailor, and she was an excellent seamstress and the Nazis didn't wear underwear just from plain material, everything had to be made from silk, the shirts, the underwear, so she was excellent. They brought a lot of silk from the parachutes and she used to be able, if you told her out of this piece has to come out 3 shirts and 3 underwear – it came out. I don't know how she did it, but it came out.

And after she had a baby and we all pitched in to help. I mean first of all was the baby. Second of all, again, to do something against the Nazis, you know maybe we'll be able. It was a challenge at the same time.

And so, she kept it for two weeks. And once Wagner walked in unannounced, unexpected and he heard the baby and he gave her a choice, he gave her a choice just because they needed her, otherwise they wouldn't have.

And which mother would give up her baby. And she just spit in his face right then and there and they shot them both. But they were such murderers that he had to shoot the baby first, so the mother should, should die with more pain, and so I mean, I cannot explain what went on in the mind of those people, of those SS people. I mean a human being was nothing as we know, but they took such a joy in seeing blood and hurting. They weren't people, they were animals, hound dogs.

I always said they bark like dogs, and they act like wild dogs. It's, it's very difficult and we were very hurt at that time, when you see things like that, and especially when they took one of us.

We were a small group and you felt like they tear out a piece of you. That here she was, and here and the baby was here, and you know there was a little life, and the, uh, seamstress too and they tore it out completely and you just have to put up a face, but inside everything is boiling and boiling and boiling and it was very hard.



Survivors from Sobibor, Esther Turner Raab sitting
2nd from the right

Not once we said to ourselves we wish they would finish up. But then one encouraged the other, especially when Leon came. You'll see, we'll get out and we'll get out and one looked at the other, and figured the other one is crazy, you know, thinking even about it.

And that's how, every day passed by with the hope of revenge.

Tell me about escapes and punishments for escapes that went on.

First there escaped two people, they were.... they were plasterers, like and, at that time, there were no uh, there were no mines around the camp. So, they dug a hole underneath the first fence and they escaped.

When they escaped they always explained why they're doing things to us, they assembled us, and they said every tenth and they took out every tenth and they shot them in front of us, and if somebody escapes that's what's going to happen, and those two marauders didn't make it, they didn't make it.

Then we had, they used to take out people to the woods because they, as Sobibor was announced the best, the most efficient death camp, so they had to expand and they had to build and they had to always keep busy.

The Nazis didn't want to go to the Russian front, so they built and they expand, and they said they need this and they took out more people in order to escape from the Russian front.

And they took out some people to the woods to cut woods and they used to make their own logs, everything was done on the premises, and two escapes. They lived a while and they are not alive anymore. They went with the guards for water and they hid and escaped.

They survived the war even. And when they escaped that day, I was in the weaponry. They were low on ammunition, so they brought some bullets which they got from the Russians and they were rusty, so a few girls, we sat there and we sanded them down, and filled the barrels with the ammunition and all of a sudden, the guy who watched us, the wachmann, he was a Ukrainian, but he was a nice guy, but we didn't trust him.

He said to us, "You'll see what I'm going to do, one will get killed because of me." And it was true, but you don't know who to trust. And he came running in and said, "I have to lock you up, something is going on and there's not enough time for you to go back to your compound, and we saw those people walking in from the main gate, underneath with their hands like this.

They were beaten up, you couldn't tell their faces anymore. And then, all of the sudden, as they walked out by the veterinary, we heard the whistle, and he came in here, opened the door, and we had to run to the compound.

And, assembling right away, and as we assembled uh.... was such a dog, such a miserable character, I went to his trial too. He followed orders too. And they marched us off to Camp 3. Camp 3 was where the gas chambers, and they told us to assemble in a half moon, and all those poor guys were standing there. You couldn't tell who was who. That's how they were beaten up.

And they told them to pick out another 25 from us. And they were going to be shot with them. First they held a long speech that some guys of ours killed two, uh, one wachmann, one Ukrainian, and for this we have to pay.

On the way to Camp 3 they told us that we're all going to be shot. But as we came there, they probably changed their mind, or I don't know why, and they told them to pick out.



Photo Gustav Wagner's body
(reported suicide in Brazil 1980)

And I can imagine how hard it was on those guys to go over and choose that you have to be killed. I mean, in the morning he was my friend and now I have to, it was a difficult time. The – if not, they said they're going to take 50.

So some stepped out, and they picked blindly and they shot them all in front of us, in their faces. They wouldn't have let them and Frenzel went over, whoever he may be, uh, botched or something, another bullet.

And these things were so hard on us, harder than a transport, because here we're like a family, we planned together, we suffer together, we do together and we hoped together. And if you take out such a part from us, it's like tearing out your own heart. It was the hardest but you had to go away and pretend again, that you didn't see it. Or maybe what happened happened, it wasn't easy, it wasn't easy.

I always said to myself if they would kill me, it would be easier for me than to watch somebody that I knew and maybe, and ate together and stayed together and suffered together, and planned, it was very difficult, was very difficult.

Were almost, we only have one minute left, why don't you just describe for me Wagner or Frenzel

I think Wagner, he was caught in 1979 in Brazil. Wagner was illiterate, that's what they said. But he was such a devoted Nazi. And there were days when he needed blood. Like a dog, like uh, needs blood. He needed it. When he used to walk in with his thumbs in his pocket, we need that somebody's going to go. Otherwise he won't ask.

Besides what he did with the transport, and we knew also. But at the same time as illiterate he was, he was so shrewd, that he knew what you think, not what you saying.

Please tell me about the Uprising?

We planned all the time, and we talked about it, and we had the plan ready. It was just a matter of time, because we had to plan when Wagner is on vacation. Because we knew on furlough, if he'll be in the camp he'll smell it, there's no two ways about it. So we waited. In the meanwhile we knew their schedule with furloughs.

By being there, we knew about everything. So and before Wagner had to go 28 days before, they brought in a Russian unit from POW's. At first we did – couldn't understand why, but then we found out they were all Jews.

They were POW's and we got in touch with one of the leaders – every group had a leader and we told them our plans, and we asked them because, if we didn't know what's going on outside, how far the front is and what's going on in general, and he told us approximately what's going on, and how far, and he, we needed that encouragement, and they gave us.

And I said, “Your plan is good and it’s going to work, and it has to work, and we have to try, we don’t have ... what to lose.”

And we decided the date when Wagner left and the, the date was original the 13 of October and that day we all got ready, put on two sweater, and my boots I put on for the first time again and I got dressed with a coat and a kerchief and you know you didn’t take no luggage with you, you didn’t know where you were going, or if you’ll make it.

And then some units from military Gestapo came to the camp, never used to come on that day and we thought somebody maybe slipped out, but they left, and the next day exactly the plan was, at 4 o’clock should start, everybody has to kill his SS man, and his guard at his place of work.

And it started working and I was like messenger girl, going here, oh I killed them, five. I killed just throwing signals, not talking, but we couldn’t find Frenzel and we thought although the electric wire was cut, the telephone wire was cut, we were afraid that somehow he got out on the outside and, and went for help.

And this was before decided in case anything goes wrong, everybody on his own. And whoever, wherever one can run, or wherever one can jump, should go. Maybe one will survive and will be able to tell the world. And we assembled like on a normal day and then Sasha and Leon, the organisers went up on the table and they said,

“We can’t find Frenzel. Something – everybody on his own.” But a lot of people were panicky right away. A lot of people didn’t want to go, they gave up. And those who felt they want to try, just run in all directions. I saw that somebody put a step-ladder behind the carpenter’s shed and that people climbing up, no one explained that this was all split second.



Esther Turner Raab at the time of the USHMM
interview

And I just jumped up that step-ladder, and as I was on top I noticed a lot of bodies already on the mines, some people went before me. I got a bullet shot from the tower right here, and I fell down.

As I fell down I was so much aware that the will to live was so great, there's no measurement to it, that I started hopping on dead bodies and soon as reached the woods, we were in the woods, it, it was I felt I did it, I made it.

For all those I just looked back to the fire, the fire was still burning, and to the people in the back and I figured I did it for you. We took revenge. What's going to happen from now on, it's a different story because the war was still on. And I had to survive another 9 months.

When you said everyone had to kill an SS man, what was the plan for that, how did you

If he came in, let's say they called him in, they said his suit is ready to try on, his uniform, so when he came in he put it on, we had everybody, everybody had sand in his pockets, and a knife, this we all had, because we felt if you throw sand in the face, then its easy to stick in the knife, because the person get's blinded. So that's what they did.

The minute he came in, they threw sand, they stuck a knife in, and they hit him, hit him. And that's how we did it. We didn't have no weapons. The original plan was

to assemble, to go to the weaponry, take out all the weapons and march out through the main gate.

But we didn't succeed, the plan didn't succeed, the plan didn't succeed because we couldn't find Frenzel and had to be everybody on his own, so we did the best we could with whatever we had.

Notes:

The original transcript has not been checked for accuracy nor spelling by USHMM.

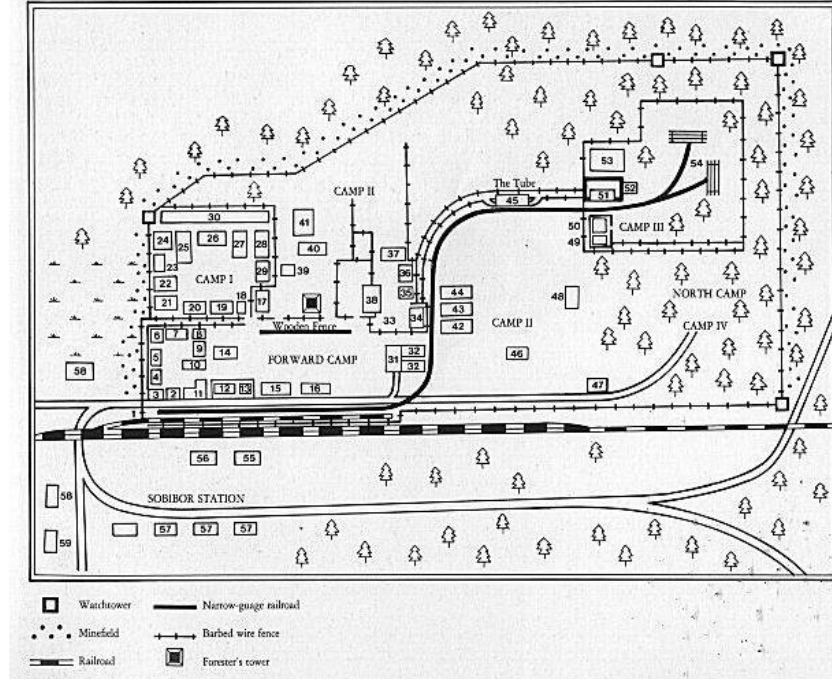
There are a number of spelling mistakes in the transcript, mainly the names of the German staff which have been amended for the sake of accuracy:

Original Text	Amended Text
Gomersky	Gomerski
Mitchell	Michel
Belglitz	Belzec
Midonik	Majdanek
Leinfeld Hendler	Leon Feldhendler
Neuman	Niemann

SOBIBOR: LOCATION AND CAMP LAYOUT



THE SOBIBOR DEATH CAMP



SOBIBOR: CHRONOLOGY

- GLOBOCNIK HEADS LUBLIN SS AND POLICE November 1, 1939-September 1943

Reichsfuehrer-SS and Chief of German Police Heinrich Himmler appoints SS General Odilo Globocnik SS and Police Leader in Lublin District on November 1, 1939. On July 17, 1941, Himmler appoints Globocnik Commissioner for the Establishment of SS and Police Bases in the Occupied Eastern Territories. In early autumn of that year, Himmler tasks Globocnik with organizing the mass murder of Jews residing in the Generalgouvernement (that part of German-occupied Poland not annexed directly to Germany, attached to German East Prussia, or incorporated within the German-occupied Soviet Union). This operation later became known as Operation Reinhard (also called Aktion Reinhard), named after Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Security Main Office. Three killing centers—Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka II—are constructed for the sole purpose of killing Jews. Between March 1942 and November 1943, the personnel of Operation Reinhard kill approximately 1.7 million Jews.

- CONSTRUCTION OF SOBIBOR March 1942 - May 1942

Under the supervision of SS Captain Richard Thomalla, SS and police authorities

construct the Sobibor killing center in the spring of 1942 in an isolated area not far from the local Chelm-Wlodawa rail line.

- **STANGL BECOMES CAMP COMMANDANT** April 28, 1942

After the construction of the killing center, SS First Lieutenant Franz Stangl arrives in Sobibor to take up the position of camp commandant. Stangl had been the deputy supervisor of the so-called "euthanasia" killing center at Hartheim, near Linz, Austria. As the purpose of the "euthanasia" operation was to murder institutionalized persons with physical and mental disabilities in gas chambers at facilities like Hartheim, Stangl was familiar with using carbon monoxide gas for killing large numbers of people.

- **FIRST DEPORTATIONS TO SOBIBOR** May 3, 1942

The SS deports 2,400 Jews from the Rejowiec, Chelm county in Lublin District in early April 1942, the first deportation to Sobibor, and murders almost all of them upon arrival. Regular transports began on May 3, with the arrival of 200 Jews from Zamosc. The camp staff conducts gassing operations in three gas chambers located in one brick building. Some 400 prisoners are selected to survive, temporarily, to supply manual labor necessary to support the mass murder function of the killing center. During this first phase of deportations, from early May until the end of July 1942, the Sobibor killing center authorities kill at least 61,400 Jews. Many of them were deported from cities and towns in the north and east of Lublin District; the majority were Jews deported from the German Reich, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and Slovakia either directly or via the transit camp-ghetto in Izbica. At the end of July, the SS halts deportations to Sobibor in order to modernize the railway spur into the camp.

- **HIMMLER ACCELERATES KILLING OPERATIONS** July 19, 1942

In Lublin, Himmler meets with Operation Reinhard manager Odilo Globocnik and with SS General Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger, the Higher SS and Police Leader for the Generalgouvernement. They discuss the killing operations. Himmler orders the "resettlement"—a euphemism for deportation and murder—of all Jews in the Generalgouvernement by the end of 1942. An estimated 1,200,000 Jews reside in the Generalgouvernement. Himmler's order accelerates the killing program.

- **DEPORTATIONS TO SOBIBOR RESUME** October 1942

During the first week of October 1942, the camp authorities resume mass murder operations in the gas chambers of Sobibor with the arrival of more than 24,000 Slovak Jews between October 8 and October 20 from the transit camp-ghetto Izbica in the Lublin District of the Generalgouvernement. The camp authorities kill

virtually all of the deportees upon arrival in reconstructed and newly added gas chambers, completed during the two month lull in transports to Sobibor. The improvements in capacity enable the camp authorities to kill up to 1,300 people at a time. Newly constructed as well was a narrow railway trolley from the reception platform to the burial pits in order to facilitate the transfer of the sick, the dead, and those unable to walk directly to the open ovens. Those still alive after this journey are shot by the SS staff or the Trawniki-trained guards.

- **DEPORTATIONS FROM THE NETHERLANDS** March 5, 1943

German SS and Police authorities begin deportations of Dutch Jews from the police transit camp at Westerbork in the Netherlands to Sobibor. In 19 transports from this date until July 1943, SS authorities in Westerbork deport over 34,000 Jews to Sobibor. Camp staff and guards kill almost all of them in the gas chambers or by shooting on arrival in the camp.

DEPORTATIONS FROM FRANCE April 1943

Two transports containing a total of 2,000 Jews from France arrive at Sobibor from the police transit camp Drancy, outside Paris. Deportations from France to camps in the east, primarily Auschwitz, began in March 1942 and continue until August 1944.

- **DEPORTATION OF JEWS FROM GHETTOS IN THE OCCUPIED SOVIET UNION** July - October 1943

Following Himmler's order of July 1943 to liquidate the ghettos in Reichskommissariat Ostland, SS and police units liquidate ghettos in Minsk, Lida, and Wilno (Vilnius, Vilne) and deported those who survived to Sobibor. The first transports from Minsk and Lida leave for Sobibor on September 18. Included in the first deportation from Minsk is Alexander (Sasha) Pechersky, a Soviet-Jewish prisoner of war, who, because of his military training, came to play a central role in the resistance movement in Sobibor. In September 1943 alone, SS and police authorities transported at least 13,700 Jews from ghettos in the occupied Soviet Union to Sobibor. The camp authorities gas or shoot most of them upon arrival.

- **UPRISING IN SOBIBOR** October 14, 1943

Prisoners carry out a revolt in Sobibor, killing nearly a dozen German staff and Trawniki-trained guards. Of 600 prisoners left in Sobibor on this day, 300 escape during the uprising. Among the survivors was [Esther Terner-Raab] and Alexander Pechersky, the Soviet prisoner of war who played a key role in planning the revolt. Of those prisoners who escape, SS and police personnel from Lublin district recapture and shoot some 100. Some of the prisoners selected for temporary survival in Sobibor organized an underground resistance organization in early

summer of 1943 as it became apparent that gassing operations at Sobibor were slowing. Once the gassing operations were finished, the SS planned to dismantle the killing center and reconfigure the facility first as a holding pen for women and children deported from villages in Belarus, which had been destroyed in the course of so-called anti-partisan operations, and, later, as an ammunition depot. Though no further prisoners arrived after the killing center was remodeled, the facility was guarded by a small Trawniki-trained detachment until at least the end of March 1944. During the year and a half in which the Sobibor killing center operated, camp authorities and the Trawniki-trained guards murdered at least 170,000 people. Virtually all of the victims were Jews.

- **OPERATION REINHARD ENDS** November 4, 1943 - January 5, 1944
In correspondence with Reichsfuehrer-SS Heinrich Himmler, Odilo Globocnik files the final reports on the conclusion of Operation Reinhard, the dismantling of the killing centers, and the accounting of the personal possessions, currency, and valuables stolen from the murdered victims. Within the framework of Operation Reinhard, the SS and police killed approximately 1.7 million people.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Introduction to the Holocaust." Holocaust Encyclopedia. le.. Accessed on July 31, 2016.

VOCABULARY/TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

Some understanding of the following terms will enhance the viewer's understand of the play, book or interview:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Belzec | a killing center using gas vans and later gas chambers where more than 600,000 persons were killed |
| Gestapo | the secret police organization in Nazi Germany; the Gestapo used torture and terror to subjugate any opposition to the regime and to any of its policies |
| Ghetto | walled off areas in existing cities and towns where Jews were forced to live before exportation to concentration camps; often multiple families were housed in one small apartment; the most famous ghetto and the site of a massive rebellion was in Warsaw, Poland |

Holocaust	The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.
Kaddish	The Jewish prayer for the dead; the prayer sanctifies God's name in honor of those who have died; mourners recite the Kaddish for one year following the death of a loved one and then yearly on the anniversary of the death
Kapos	inmate guards in the camp who helped to carry out the Nazi plans; some kapos were former prisoners who colluded with the Nazis; others were forced into such positions
Kosher	Jewish dietary laws
Nazi	short for the National Socialist German Workers Party, a right wing political organization headed by Adolph Hitler
Nuremberg Laws	the Nuremberg Race Laws, issued on September 15, 1935 after the Party rally in Nuremberg, laid the official grounds for the persecution of Jews. The Race Laws were comprised of two separate laws: <i>The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor</i> and <i>The Reich Citizenship Law</i> . One of the most important aspects of these laws was the establishment of a legal definition for Jew. The Laws also outlined different levels of Jewish individuals, depending on the number of Jewish grandparents an individual had.
Partisans	underground resistance groups formed to help regular Allied forces defeat the Germans
Righteous Gentile	individuals who through their courage and heroism risked their lives to save a Jew from the terror of the Nazis
SS	the secret police that was part of the special security forces given the task of enforcing Hitler's policies
Sobibor	an extermination camp was located in the Lublin district of Poland, close to the village and railway station of Sobibor. The Germans established the camp in March 1942. Between April

1942 and October 1943, approximately half a million Jews were murdered there. The camp was closed down at the end of 1943 after a prisoners' uprising in October of that same year.

Treblinka another of the largest concentration camp “killing centers” located in Poland and the site of a camp rebellion in August 1943; at least 750,000 persons were killed there

Ukrainian citizens of the Ukraine, an area of the former Soviet Union. Some Ukrainians served as guards in Nazi concentration and death camps

Waldkommando forest brigade; concentration camp inmates who were forced to perform jobs in the woods

Yiddish language of Eastern European Jews, generally combines Hebrew, Russian and German

Zyklon B gas pellets used in the gas chambers; a type of crystalline prussic acid, also used as an insecticide in some camps

PRE-VIEWING QUESTIONS

Before watching the play, consider the following questions: (You might have students respond to these questions in journal entries or as part of open-ended discussions. One class period might be devoted to dividing the class into small groups. Assign each group one of the questions to examine and report a response to the rest of the class.)

1. Does prejudice still exist in our world?
2. What have you observed as examples of prejudice and discrimination?
3. How should we combat prejudice and discrimination?
4. Is it important for human beings to examine the past? Why do you feel the way you do?
5. Should people try to forget painful events from their past?
6. Should children be shielded from painful events? When is the shielding appropriate?
7. In difficult situations, what causes some people to persevere and others to give up?

8. Are all people capable of evil actions? What causes some people to commit unspeakable crimes and others to act compassionately?
9. How can one individual make a difference in the course of historical events?
10. What constitutes justice? Can true justice ever be achieved?

SUGGESTED POST- ACTIVITIES

I. The main character often interacts with her alter ego, her conscience, Esther 2.

Consider the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between Esther and Esther 2?
2. What seems to be the difference in the way Esther and Esther 2 confront life?
3. Why do you think the author created these two characters?
4. How did the existence of the two Esthers impact on the meaning of the play? Was the creation of the two Esthers an effective dramatic device?
5. Esther says that it takes more than luck to survive and credits her survival to hope, determination, and instinct. What traits do you think are the basis for survival?
6. Leon, the leader of the Sobibor revolt, said “if you survive, tell the world...there once was a place called Sobibor, carved out of a forest in eastern Poland...the ashes of a million Jews are buried there...we fought back...we won.” Why is it so important for the story of Sobibor to be told?
7. In Act 1, a boy tells Esther that as he listens to her story about the Holocaust, he wonders about what is happened in Bosnia and [in other countries today]. What do you believe that the United States should do to have an impact on human rights abuses occurring in other parts of the world? What is our responsibility for involvement?
8. In Act II, Esther states that, “No one escapes hell. That’s what hell is – a place of no escape. There is no escape from Sobibor. Not for me..not for Poland..not for Germany...not for the world. Even God can’t escape Sobibor.” What does Esther mean by this statement? How is Sobibor a metaphor for the meaning of the Holocaust? What is that meaning?

9. Why does Esther maintain her belief in God, even after undergoing such horrors in the concentration camps?

II. A number of themes are examined in *Dear Esther*, including the following:

Survival

Remembering, Confronting the Truth

Prejudice, Bigotry, and Intolerance

Forgiveness

Responsibility

The Role of Conscience

Inhumanity

Role of God

Power of a Leader

Hope

Kindness and Compassion

Justice

Family

1. How does the author portray each of these themes?
2. Which theme is most important to you in understanding the Holocaust?

III. What events in the play represent a certain sense of justice? Does justice ultimately prevail in this play?

IV. LETTER WRITING

Since much of the play focuses on letters written to Esther, continue the idea by having students complete one of the following:

1. Write a letter to Esther in which students describe what they learned as a result of watching the play. Have students focus on one of the important themes and elaborate on the personal meaning of that theme.
2. Write the letter that Esther might send to her mother explaining what Esther, as an adult now understands about her mother's motivation.

3. Write the letter that Esther might write to one of the individuals who helped to protect her after she escaped from Sobibor.
4. Write the letter that Esther might write about her life since she came to America.
Write the same letter as Esther 2 might write about the same experience.
5. *Dear Esther* raises the important and provocative question of how we should confront prejudice and discrimination, what we should do when we see evil in the world.
Discuss with your students the importance of making their voices heard. Often that can best be done by writing a letter to a person in a position of authority.
Have students write hypothetical letters to the President or the Secretary of State of the United States.

V. ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS

1. Write a short poem in which the student expresses the main feeling of the play. Illustrate the poem with pictures that reflect the main mood created by the author.
2. At the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, there is a wall of tiles created by children that depict different views of the Holocaust. Create a tile size drawing that reflects the impact of the play, *Dear Esther*. Consider final words that Esther might want to leave with the viewer. Put all of the tiles together, as a wall of remembrance in your classroom.
3. The squares of a quilt would be another vehicle for sharing outstanding images generated by the play. Give each student an 8 inch square of construction paper and have each person create a quilt square that would point out an important theme or idea from the play. Tape the squares together to create a memory of ideas related to *Dear Esther*.
4. Make an illustrated picture book with chronological events from the play, book, or interview: for example, Esther's escape from the camp, finding herself in the forest, meeting the farmer, etc. Give each student one of the events and have each student illustrate the event on equal size pieces of

paper. Bind the pages together to create an illustrated version of Ester Raab's life.

VI. SUGGESTED RESEARCH TOPICS

Assign students either individually or in groups to find information on one of the following topics:

- Polish Partisan resistance movements
- Soviet Partisans
- Jewish Partisan Units in Forests of Eastern Europe
- Vilna Ghetto Fighters
- Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
- Treblinka Concentration Camp Resistance
- Auschwitz-Birkenau Resistance
- Anti-Nazi Activities in Germany
- The Response of the Christian Opposition to Nazism
- The “White Rose”
- The American Response to the Concentration Camps during WWII
- Western European Response to Concentration Camps
- The Nuremberg Trials

Some suggested websites:

<http://www.historyplace.com>

<http://www.yadvashem.org>

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE HOLOCAUST

I INTRODUCTION

Holocaust (Greek holo, “whole”; caustos, “burned”), originally, a religious rite in which an offering was entirely consumed by fire. In current usage, holocaust refers to any widespread human disaster, but when written Holocaust, its special meaning is the almost complete destruction of the Jews in Europe by Nazi Germany.

II PRE-WORLD WAR II PERSECUTION OF GERMAN JEWS

When the Nazi regime came to power in Germany in January 1933, it immediately began to take systematic measures against the Jews. One early decree of the Nuremberg Laws was a definition of the term Jew. Crucial in that determination was the religion of one’s grandparents. Anyone with three or four Jewish grandparents was automatically a Jew, regardless of whether that individual was a member of the Jewish community. Half-Jews were considered Jewish only if they themselves belonged to the Jewish religion or were married to a Jewish person. All other half-Jews, and persons who had one Jewish grandparent, were styled *Mischlinge* (half-breeds). Jews and Mischlinge were “non-Aryans.” In Nazi doctrine, such emphasis on descent was regarded as an affirmation of “race”, but the principal purpose of these categorizations was the clear delineation of a target for discriminatory laws and directives.

A The “Aryanization” of Businesses

From 1933 to 1939, concerted efforts were made by the Nazi Party, agencies of the government, banks, and business enterprises to eliminate Jews from economic life. Non-Aryans were dismissed from civil service positions, and Jewish lawyers and doctors lost their Aryan clients. Jewish firms were either liquidated and their inventory disposed of, or they were purchased for much less than their full value by companies that were not owned or operated by Jews. The contractual transfer of Jewish enterprises to new German owners was called “Aryanization”. The proceeds of any sales, as well as Jewish savings, were subjected to special property taxes. The Jewish employees of liquidated or Aryanized firms lost their jobs.

B ‘THE NIGHT OF BROKEN GLASS’

The proclaimed objective of the Nazi regime was Jewish emigration. In November 1938, following the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris by a young Jew, all synagogues in Germany were set on fire, windows of Jewish shops were smashed, and thousands of Jews were arrested. This *Kristallnacht* (German for “Night of Broken Glass”) was a signal to Jews in Germany and Austria to leave as soon as possible. Several hundred thousand people were able to find refuge in other countries, but a similar number, including many who were old or poor, stayed to face an uncertain fate.

III THE OCCUPATION OF POLAND

When World War II began in September 1939, the German army occupied the western half of Poland and thereby added almost 2 million Jews to the German power sphere. Restrictions placed on Polish Jewry were much harsher than those in Germany. The Polish Jews were forced to move into ghettos surrounded by walls and barbed wire. The ghettos were like captive city-states. Each ghetto had a Jewish council that was responsible for housing, sanitation, and production. Food and coal were to be shipped in and manufactured products sent out. The food supply allowed by the Germans, however, consisted mainly of grains and such vegetables as turnips, carrots, and beets. In the Warsaw ghetto, the official ration provided barely 1200 calories to each inhabitant. Some black-market food, smuggled into the ghettos, was sold at high prices, but unemployment and poverty were widespread. Housing was overcrowded, with six to seven people to a room, and typhus was common.

IV INVASION OF THE USSR

At the time of ghettoization in Poland, a drastic undertaking was launched farther to the east. In June 1941, German armies invaded the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and at the same time the Reich Security Main Office—an agency of the police and the Nazi Party guard, known as the SS—dispatched 3000 men in special units to newly occupied Soviet territories to kill all Jews on the spot. These mobile detachments, known as *Einsatzgruppen* (action squads), were soon engaged in incessant shootings. The massacres usually took place in ditches or ravines near cities and towns. Occasionally, they were witnessed by soldiers or local residents. Before long, rumors of the killings were heard in several capitals of the world.

V THE 'FINAL SOLUTION'

A month after the beginning of mobile operations in the occupied USSR, the second in command of Nazi Germany, Hermann Goring, sent a directive to the chief of the Reich Security Main Office, Reinhard Heydrich, charging him with the task of organizing a "final solution to the Jewish question" in all of German-dominated Europe. By September 1941, the Jews of Germany were forced to wear badges or armbands marked with a yellow star. In the following months, tens of thousands were deported to ghettos in Poland and to cities wrested from the USSR. Even as that movement was under way, the stage was set for another innovation: the death camp.

Camps equipped with facilities for gassing people were erected on the soil of occupied Poland. Most prospective victims were to be deported to these killing centers from ghettos nearby. From the Warsaw ghetto alone, more than 300,000 were removed. The first transports were usually filled with women, children, or older men, who could not work; Jews capable of labor were retained in shops or plants, but they too were eventually killed. The heaviest deportations occurred in the summer and fall of 1942. The destinations of the transports were not disclosed to the Jewish communities, but reports of mass deaths eventually reached the surviving Jews, as well as the governments of the United States and Britain. In April 1943, the 65,000 remaining Jews of Warsaw offered resistance to German police who entered the ghetto in a final roundup. The battle was fought for three weeks.

A Deportations

Throughout Europe, the deportations generated a host of political and administrative problems. In Germany itself, extensive discussions were held about the *Mischlinge*, and eventually they were exempted. In countries allied with Germany, such as the satellite states of Slovakia and Croatia, diplomatic negotiations were conducted to bring about deportations. The government of Vichy France, which had already extended its anti-semitic laws, began imprisoning Jews before Germany's request to do so. The Italian Fascist government refused to cooperate with Nazi Germany until after Italy was occupied by German forces in September 1943, and the Hungarian government was similarly reluctant to give up its Jews until after German troops entered Hungary in March 1944. Although the Romanian government had been responsible for several large-scale massacres of Jews in the occupied USSR, Romania also declined to deliver its Jews to the Germans. In occupied Denmark, Danes from all walks of life resolved to save that

country's Jews from certain death, ferrying thousands of them in small boats to neutral Sweden.

Whenever possible, the Germans collected the belongings of the deportees. In Germany, bank accounts and the contents of apartments were confiscated, and from occupied France, Belgium, and Holland furniture was shipped to Germany for distribution to bombed-out persons.

Transportation of victims to the death camps was generally by rail, and the police had to pay the German State railways a one-way third-class passenger fare for each deportee. When as many as 1000 persons were loaded on a train, a group rate that was half the normal tariff was allowed. The trains, consisting of freight cars, moved slowly on special schedules to their destinations. Often, the sick and the elderly died en route.

B THE DEATH CAMPS

The arrival points in Poland were Kulmhof (Chelmno), Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek (Lubin), and Auschwitz (Ocewiecim), Kulmhof, northwest of the Lodz ghetto. Belzec had carbon monoxide gas chambers in which 600,000 Jews, mostly from the populous Galician area, were killed. Sobibor's gas chambers accounted for 250,000 dead and Treblinka's for 700,000 to 800,000. At Majdanek, some 50,000 were gassed or shot; in Auschwitz, the Jewish dead totaled more than 1 million.

Auschwitz, near Krakow, was the largest death camp. Unlike the others, it used quick-working hydrogen cyanide for the gassings. The victims of Auschwitz came from all over Europe: Norway, France, the Low Countries, Italy, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Greece. A large inmate population, Jewish and non-Jewish, was employed by industry; some prisoners were subjected to medical experiments, particularly sterilization. Although only Jews and Roma (Gypsies) were gassed routinely, several hundred thousand other Auschwitz inmates died from starvation, disease, or shooting. To erase the traces of destruction, large crematories were constructed so that the bodies of the gassed could be incinerated. In 1944 the camp was photographed by Allied reconnaissance aircraft in search of industrial targets; its factories, but not its gas chambers, were bombed.

VI RESULTS OF THE HOLOCAUST

When the war ended, millions of Jews, Slavs, Roma, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Communists, and others targeted by the Nazis, had died in the Holocaust. The Jewish dead numbered more than 6 million: over 3 million in killing centers and other camps, 1.4 million in shooting operations, and more than 600,000 in ghettos. Pressure was placed on the Allied powers to establish a permanent haven in Palestine for Jewish survivors. The establishment of Israel, three years after Germany's defeat was thus an aftereffect of the Holocaust.

In 1993 two museums were opened in the United States to commemorate the Holocaust: the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

REVOLT AND RESISTANCE

Resistance during the Holocaust was demonstrated in a variety of ways:

Unarmed resistance –underground movements, newspapers, radios, couriers

Armed resistance*

Spiritual resistance – attempts by individuals to maintain their humanity and dignity in the face of degradation and dehumanization by the Nazis. This includes cultural, educational, documentation of community life, and secretive religious activities

*Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust

1. Warsaw Ghetto Uprising 1943
2. Sobibor Uprising 1943 (film: *Escape From Sobibor*)
3. The Bialystok Ghetto Uprising 1943
4. Czestochowa Ghetto Uprising 1943
5. Treblinka Rebellion 1943
6. The Auschwitz Sonderkommando Revolt 1944
The Bielski Partisans 1942-45 (film: *Defiance*)

Further Reading and Watching

There are many books on the topic of **resistance** during the Holocaust, almost all available at the bookstore of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. The following are some titles your students might find interesting:

- Flender, Harold. *Rescue in Denmark*. New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1963.
- Friedman, Ina R. *Flying Against the Wind: The Story of a Young Woman who Defied the Nazis*. Brookline, MA: Lodgepole Press, 1995.
- Laird, Christa. *Shadow in the Wall*. New York: Greenwillow, 1990.
- Pettit, Jane. *A Place to Hide; True Stories of Holocaust Rescuers*. New York: Scholastic, 1993.
- Rappaport, Doreen. *Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust*. Massachusetts: Candlewick, 2012
- Rashke, Richard. *Escape from Sobibor*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995.
- Richter, Hans P. *Friedrich*. New York: Puffin Books, 1987.
- Rittner, Carol,
and Meyers,
Sondra, eds. *The Courage of Care: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust*
New York: New York University Press, 1989.
- Sender, Ruth M. *The Cage*. New York: Macmillan, 1986.
- Tec, Nechama. *Defiance*
- Wiesel, Elie . *Night*. New York: Bantam, 1982.

Movies:

- | | |
|--|--------|
| <i>Among the Righteous</i> | (2010) |
| <i>Defiance</i> | (2008) |
| <i>Le Chambon: Weapons of the Spirit</i> | (1989) |
| <i>Miracle at Midnight</i> | (1998) |
| <i>Rosenstrasse</i> | (2003) |
| <i>Sophie Scholl –The Final Days</i> | (2005) |
| <i>The Pianist</i> | (2002) |
| <i>Uprising</i> | (2001) |

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Abrahamsen, Samuel. *Norway's Response to the Holocaust*. New York:: Holocaust Library, c1991. For adults or mature readers.

Ackerman, Karen. *Night Crossing*. New York: Random House, 1994. Grade 3 and up. The journey of a young Jewish girl and her family when they flee Austria to get away from the Nazis.

Adler, David A. *We Remember the Holocaust*. New York: Henry Holt, C1989. Chronicles the Holocaust in the voices of those who survived it. Tells of Jewish Life In Europe before the 1930's about Hitler's rise to power, the humiliations of Nazi rule, survival in the ghettos and the concentration camp. Good book for beginning collections.

Child of the Warsaw Ghetto. New York: Holiday House, c1995. Grades 3-8. Tells the story of the Warsaw Ghetto through the eyes of a 13 year old boy, who along with his family is imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Allen, Peter. *The Origins of World War Two*. New York: The Bookwright Press, c1991. Explores the political and economic factors that contributed to the outbreak of World War Two.

Altman, Linda Jacobs. Genocide: The Systematic Killing of a People. Springfield, N. J.: Enslow Publishers, Inc., c1995. Tells what genocide is and of the Holocaust, the war against Native Americans, the

Altshuler, David A. Hitler's War Against the Jews. New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1978. Good book for students. Deals with anti-Semitism, Hitler's rise to power, the "Final Solution", the ghettos, deportations and concentration camps.

Appleman-Jurman, Alicia. Alicia My Story. New York: Bantam Books, c1988. Grades 6 and up. The autobiography of a young woman, who at age 13 escaped alone from a firing squad, and while hiding from collaborators and the Nazis, began to save lives of strangers. At age 14 she started her own orphanage for other children whose families had been murdered and started smuggling Jews to freedom when she was 15.

The Armenian Genocide 1915-1923. Glendale, California: Armenian National Committee, 1988. A handbook for students and teachers.

Arnothy, Christine. I Am Fifteen and I Don't Want to Die. New York: Scholastic, c1956. The true story of a fifteen year-old girl and her family living in Budapest, Hungary during the Second World War.

Atkinson, Linda. In Kindling Flame. New York: Beech Tree Books, c1966. The biography of a Jewish girl who worked with the resistance during World War Two. The story of Hannah Senesh, 1921-1944.

Attema, Martha. A Time to Choose. Custer, Washington: Orca Book Publisher, c1995. Fictional account of a young boy whose father is a collaborator with the Nazis. He chooses to work with the Dutch Resistance. Excellent book, good for teaching choices.

Auberbacher, Inge. I Am A Star: Child of the Holocaust. New York: Prentice-Hall, c1986. Account of a child survivor of the concentration camp.

Ayer, Eleanor. Parallel Journeys. New York: Atheneum Books, c1995. Follows the lives of two individuals. One is a Jewish girl and the other a German boy who joins the Hitler Youth. Excellent book for comparing and contrasting people's lives during the Holocaust.

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Baldwin, Margaret. The Boys Who Saved the Children. New York: Julian Messner, c1981. Describes the courage and strength that held a family together during the years in the Lodz ghetto until they were separated in Auschwitz. The story of Ben Edelbaum.

Banet, Chana Marcus. They Called Me Frau Anna. New York: CIS publishers, c1991. The second volume in "The Holocaust Diaries". The story of a woman who wandered through war-torn Europe with her two small children until she found refuge as a housekeeper for a high-ranking Nazi official.

Bard, Mitchell G. Forgotten Victims: The Abandonment of Americans in Hitler's Camps. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, c1994. This book relates that

thousands of American soldiers and civilians were confined to concentration camps and many died, but the government failed to help them.

Bauer, Yehuda. A History of the Holocaust. New York: Franklin Watts, c1983. Adult account of the Holocaust. Good for teacher's information about the Holocaust.

Berenbaum, Michael. The World Must Know. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, c1993. Gives excellent background for the Holocaust. Could be used as a textbook.

Bergman, Tamar. Along the Tracks. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company c1991. A young Jewish boy flees with his family from Nazi-occupied Poland. He is separated from his family when the train he is on is bombed. All alone he struggles to survive in war-torn Europe. Book is based on the true adventure of a friend of the author's.

Bernbaum, Israel. My Brother's Keeper. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, c1985. The Holocaust Through the Eyes of an Artist.

Bernheim, Mark. Father of the Orphans. New York. Lodestar Books, c1989. Tells the story of Janusz Korczak who ran a home for orphans in the Warsaw ghetto.

Bishop, Clare Huchet. Twenty and Ten. New York: Puffin Books, c1952. Based on a true story. Twenty children are sent to a refuge in the mountains with Sister Gabriel. When ten Jewish children arrive at the school they are hidden from the Nazis. Available on VHS video format as Miracle at Moreaux. Book and video are excellent.

Block, Gay and Drucker, Malka. Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., c1992. Forty-nine rescuers tell about their lives before the war, during the war and after the war. They tell how they helped Jews to hide and escape and question why they acted to help the Jews and would they do it again today.

Boar, Jacob. We Are Witnesses. New York: Henry Holt, c1995. Five diaries of teenagers who died in the Holocaust.

Boom, Corrie Ten. The Hiding Place. New York: Bantam Books, c1971. True account of a lady who helped Jews escape.

Breshath, Haim and others. Introducing the Holocaust. New York: Totem Books, c1993. Introduces the Holocaust in comic book form.

Bunting, Eve. Terrible Things. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publications Society, c1980. Excellent for an introduction to the Holocaust for all ages.

Bush, Lawrence. Rooftop Secrets. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, c1986. Stories of anti-Semitism.

Butler, Rupert. An Illustrated History of the Gestapo. Osceola, Wisconsin, c1993. Contains photographs, documents and accounts of witnesses who survived the Holocaust. Gives the history of the Gestapo from 1933 to the death of Hitler.

Chaikin, Miriam. A Nightmare in History: The Holocaust 1933-1945. New York: Clarion Books, c1987. Excellent book that tells about the Holocaust. Could be used as a textbook.

Cholawski, Shalom. Soldiers From the Ghetto. New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, Inc., c1980. Story of the author's escape from the ghetto to the forests of Eastern Europe where he joined a Russian partisan unit fighting against the Nazis.

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Drucker, Malka and Halperin, Michael. Jacob's Rescue: A Holocaust Story. New York: Dell Publishing, c1993. True account of a young Jewish boy who slipped through a hole in the ghetto wall and the Christian family who hid him.

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Landau, Elaine. We Survived the Holocaust. New York: Franklin Watts, c1991. The true stories of sixteen people who survived the Holocaust.

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Lesic, Zdenko. Children of Atlantis: Voices from the Former Yugoslavia. New York: Central European University Press, 1995. Young people tell of their

experiences of war, their feelings of loss and uncertainty, and their hopes for a better future.

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Marks, Jane. The Hidden Children. The Secret Survivors of the Holocaust. New York: Fawcett Columbine, c1993.

Marrin, Albert. Hitler. New York: Puffin Books, c1987. Tells of the life of Adolf Hitler from a young boy to the powerful leader of the Nazi Party.

Marvin, Isabel R. Bridge to Freedom. New York: Jewish Publication Society, c1991. Historical novel about two fifteen-year-olds, one who deserted from his German army unit and the other a Jewish girl who escaped from Berlin. The two young people must learn to trust each other and devise a plan to escape.

Marton, Kati. Wallenberg: Missing Hero. New York: Arcade Publishing, c1982. The true story of the Swedish diplomat who saved thousand of Hungarian Jews.

Matas, Carol. After the War. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. The fictional story of a fifteen-year-old Jewish girl who after being released from Buchenwald at the end of he Second World War returns home only to find her family and the neighbors do not want her to say. So she helps take a group of young children to Palestine.

Matas, Carol. Daniel's Story. New York: Scholastic, c1993. Fictional account of a boy and his family during the Holocaust.

Matas, Carol. Kris's War. New York: Scholastic, c1989. In hardback as Code Name Kris. Fictional account of a Danish boy who becomes a member of the Dutch resistance. Excellent book.

Matas, Carol. Lisa's War. New York: Scholastic, c1987. Fictional account of a Danish girl who joins the anti-Nazi movement.

Mauro, Robert. Children of the Holocaust. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Contemporary Drama Service. Grades 8-12. A play. Comes in a package of five scripts.

Meed, Vladka. On Both Sides of the Wall. New York: Holocaust Library, c1993. Vladka was seventeen when Hitler's armies conquered Poland and she became a member of the underground. Due to her Aryan appearance and her ability to speak fluent Polish she became a courier. She smuggled weapons across the wall and into the Warsaw Ghetto during the revolt. She also helped Jews to escape from the ghetto and find shelter in Christian homes.

Meinbach, Anita Meyer and Kassenoff, Miriam Klein. Memories of the Night: A Study of the Holocaust. Torrance, California: Frank Schaffer Publications, Inc., c1994.

Meltzer, Milton. Never To Forget: The Jews of the Holocaust. Based on eyewitness accounts-letters, diaries, journals and memoirs.

Meltzer, Milton. Rescue: The Story of How Gentiles Saved Jews in the Holocaust. New York: Puffin Books, c1988. Gives accounts of righteous Gentiles who saved the lives of Jews during World War Two. Excellent book.

Merti, Betty. Understanding the Holocaust. New York: J. Weston Walch, 1995. Explains the facts and significance of the Holocaust, and gives background on anti-Semitism. Each chapter has discussion questions, review activities, vocabulary study and sentence fill-ins.

Merti, Betty. The World of Anne Frank. Portland, Maine: J. Weston Walch Publisher, c1984. Activities that can be used separately or with the book.

Milgram, Avaham and others. Every Day Life in the Warsaw Ghetto 1941. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1993. A study unit for junior high and high school students. A teacher's guide and a student workbook.

Nemetz, Lillian Boraks. The Old Brown Suitcase. Port Angeles, Washington: Ben-Simon Publications, c1994. The story of a 14 year-old Polish girl who went to Canada after the Second World War. As she tries to learn English and Canadian ways, she is haunted by memories of her persecution by the Nazis because she was Jewish. She tells her story of escaping from the Warsaw Ghetto and hiding in the Polish Villages. Fiction.

Neville, Peter. Life in the Third Reich. London: B. T. Batsford, 1992. The author examines the reasons behind the Nazis Party's rise to power and the consequences of Nazi rule for the German people.

Nolan, Han. If I Should Die Before I Wake. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994. Grades 7-12. A sixteen-year-old Neo-Nazi lies in a coma as the result of a motorcycle accident. As she drifts in and out of consciousness, she is transported back in time to Poland at the beginning of the Second World War, where she becomes a young Jewish girl and experiences the Holocaust.

Orgel, Doris. The Devil In Vienna. New York: Puffin Books, c1978. The fictional story of two friends, one who is Jewish and the other a member of the Hitler Youth. Now available in VHS video form.

Oriev, Uri. Lydia, Queen of Palestine. New York: Puffin Books, 1991. Ten-year-old Lydia described her life in prewar Romania, the Second World War, her parent's divorce, and life on a kibbutz in Palestine.

Oriev, Uri. The Man from the Other Side. New York: Puffin Books, c1989. The true story of a 14 year-old young man who lives outside the ghetto walls. He and his grandfather smuggle food to the Jews in exchange for money. The teenager becomes trapped in the ghetto when he helps a Jew to get back into the Warsaw Ghetto after a failed escape attempt.

Ossowski, Leonie. Star Without a Sky. Minneapolis, MI.: Lerner Publications, 1985. Near the end of World War Two, a Jewish boy hiding in a cellar is found by five German boys. The boys are undecided as to whether or not to turn the Jewish boy over to the Nazis as the law demands.

Pearson, Kit. The Sky is Falling. New York: Puffin Books, c1989.

Pettit, Jayne. A Place to Hide. New York: Scholastic, c1993. True stories of Holocaust rescuers.

Pettit, Jayne. A Time to Fight Back. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, c1996. The true stories of eight young people who risked their lives to help others in need.

Provost, Gary and Levine-Provost, Gail. David and Max. Philadelphia, Pa.: The Jewish Publication Society, c1988. A young boy while spending the summer with his grandfather, learns of his grandfather's life during the Holocaust.

Ransom, Candice F. So Young to Die. New York: Scholastic, c1971.

Ray, Karen. To Cross a Line. New York: Orchard Books, c1994. The story of a 17-year-old German Jewish boy during the Second World War. When he is told that the Gestapo is coming to arrest him, he flees from Germany. This is the story of his escape to Denmark and freedom. Excellent fiction book that will help students to understand the Holocaust.

Reiss, Johanna. The Journey Back. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, c1976. Sequel to The Upstairs Room.

Reiss, Johanna. The Upstairs Room. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, c1972. A Gentile family takes in and hides the author and her sister. A Newberry Honor Book. Also comes in VHS video format (it is a transferred from filmstrip video).

Resnick, Abraham. The Holocaust. San Diego, California: Lucent Books, Inc., c1991. Explains the Holocaust in easy terms.

Richter, Hans Peter. Friedrich. New York: Puffin Books, 1970. A young German boy tells what happened to his best friend, a Jew during the reign of the Nazis.

Richter, Hans Peter. I Was There. New York: Puffin Books, c. 1962. Author explores the many reasons why children joined the Hitler Youth.

Rittner, Carol. The Courage to Care. New York: New York University Press, c1986. The true stories of non-Jews who rescued and protected Jews in Europe during World War Two. Also in VHS video format.

Rochman, Hazel & McCampbell, Darlene Z. Bearing Witness. New York: Orchard Books, c1995. Fifteen individuals, such as Elie Wiesel, Ida Vos, and Hans P. Richter tell of the Holocaust as they lived it.

Rogasky, Barbara. Smoke and Ashes. New York: Holiday House, c1988. Excellent for background on the Holocaust. Good for student research

Rol, Ruud van der & Verhoeven, Rian. Anne Frank Beyond the Diary. New York: Viking, c1993. A photobiography of the Franks and their friends from prewar Germany to their capture.

Rosenberg, Maxine B. Hiding to Survive. New York: Clarion Books, c1994. The accounts of fourteen Holocaust survivors who as children were hidden by non-Jews from the Nazis.

Ross, Stewart. Racism in the Third Reich: World War Two. London: B. T. Batsford, c1992. Hitler's racial theories lay behind much of the substance of the

Third Reich's home and foreign policy culminating in the Final Solution and the Holocaust. The author examines the historical causes and relates them to aspects of Nazi rule.

Rossel, Seymour. The Holocaust. New York: Franklin Watts, 1981
Discusses how, between 1938 and 1945, the Nazis planned and carried out a program of extermination against the Jews of Europe. Also discusses how the Holocaust affects our everyday lives.

Rossel, Seymour. The Holocaust, The World and the Jews 1933-1945. West Orange, New Jersey, Behrman House, Inc., c1992. (Comes with student's workbook.) Good book to use as a textbook.

Roth-Hano, Renee. Touch Wood. New York: Puffin Books, c1988. The author's childhood in occupied France

Rubin, Evelyn Pike. Ghetto Shanghai. New York: Shengold Publishers, Inc., c1993. In order to escape from the Nazis, the author and her family travel to Shanghai, China.

Sachs, Marilyn. A Pocket Full of Seeds. New York: Scholastic, c1973. A fictional story. In occupied France, refugees come to stay at the main character's house. Then one day Nicole comes home from school and finds her parents and sister gone, taken by the Nazis. Nicole must now hide to escape the Nazis.

Saunders, Sue. In Holland Stands a House. New York: Collins Educational, c1991. A play script about Anne Frank.

Schiff, Hilda. Holocaust Poetry. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, c1995. Contains 119 thematically arranged poems by 59 poets.

Schnoll, Inge. The White Rose. Munich 1942-1943. Middletown, Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, c1983. The story of the White Rose movement, which was an anti-Nazi movement by some university students in Munich.

Schnur, Steven. The Shadow Children. New York: Morrow Junior Books, c1994. Graded 2-5. A coming of age tale that conveys the Holocaust and talks of the guilt some survivors feel.

Sender, Ruth Minsky. The Cage. New York: Bantam Books, c1986. The true story of a sixteen-year-old girl and her family in Lodz, Poland. When the Nazis take Riva's mother away, she must protect and take care of her younger brothers. However, Rive and her brothers are deported and sent to Auschwitz and separated.

Sender, Ruth Minsky. To Life. New York: Puffin books, c1990. Sequel to "The Cage". Picks up the story of Riva at the time of the liberation and tells of her journey back to her homeland, only to find no family and to find that the neighbors do not want her there. She finds the man who she will marry.

Serrailier, Ian. Escape from Warsaw. New York: Scholastic. The story of young children alone and trying to survive during the Second World War in Poland.

Shapira, Klalonymus Kalman. A Student's Obligation. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., c1991.

Siegel, Aranka. Grace in the Wilderness. New York: Puffin Books, c1985. The true story of a young woman's return and search of her hometown to find family. Piri and her sister went to live with a Swedish couple during the war.

Sim, Kevin. Women at War. New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1982. The true stories of five heroines who defied the Nazis and survived.

Stadler, Bea. The Holocaust. A History of Courage and Resistance. West Orange, New Jersey: Behrman House, Inc., c1973. (Also has a discussion guide). Excellent book for background. Could be used as a textbook.

Steinhoff, Johannes and others. Voices from the Third Reich. New York: Da Capo Press, Inc. 1994. Contains interviews with more than 150 Germans who witnessed, participated in, or resisted the rise of Hitler.

Strasser, Todd. The Wave. New York: Dell Publishing, c1981. A high school teacher formed his own "Reich" (the Wave) to show why the German people so willingly embraced Nazism. This book is based on an actual classroom experiment in a California high school.

Stewart, Gail B. Life in the Warsaw Ghetto. San Diego, California: Lucent Books, c1995. This book tells about life in the Warsaw Ghetto. Available in VHS video format under the title “The Warsaw Ghetto”.

Thalman, Rita and Feinermann, Emmanuel. Crystal Night. New York: Walden Press, c1972. Explains what happened on Kristallnacht. Tells about the time leading up to Kristallnacht and after it.

Thomas, Gordon and Morgan-Witts, Max. Voyage of the Damned. Stillwater, Mn.: Motorbooks, c1974. The voyage of the St. Louis.

Toll, Nelly S. Behind the Secret Window. New York: Dial Books, c1993. Nelly was eight years old when she and her mother went into hiding from the Nazis, in a small bedroom of a Gentile couple in Poland. Twenty-nine of the author’s paintings are included. This is Nelly’s story as she wrote it in her diary.

Vogel, Ilse-Margaret. Bad Times, Good Friends. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, c1992. The story of six friends who hated Hitler and helped anyone who hated Hitler too. They risked their lives printing fake food coupons, identification papers, trading on the black market and giving shelter to people hunted by the Nazis.

Volavkova, Hana, Editor. I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children’s Drawings and Poems from Terezin Concentration Camp. New York: Schocken, 1993. Collection of the children’s poems, drawings, and painting.

Vos, Ida. Anna Is Still Here. New York: Puffin Books. Grades 4-8. This story shows the effects of the Holocaust on the life of a young girl who had been in hiding alone for three years.

Vos, Ida. Dancing on the Bridge of Avignon. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, c1995. The story of a young Jewish Dutch girl and her family during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.

Vos, Ida. Hide and Seek. New York: Puffin Books, c1981. Grades 3-7. Based on the events of the author’s life. Tells the story of a young Jewish girl and her family living in the Netherlands under German occupation.

Watt, Donald Cameron. How War Came. New York: Pantheon Books, c1989. For adults – gives the immediate origins of the Second World War.

Webb, Margot. Shadows at Noon. A True Story of Love, Terror & Escape. Pine Mountain Club, California: Ascendant Publications, c1992. The book tells the story of a young Jewish girl's life in Germany in 1938 to her escape to America with her mother in 1939.

Weinstein, Frida Scheps. A Hidden Childhood. New York: Hill and Wang, c1985. The true story of a Jewish girl's sanctuary in a French convent in 1942-1945.

Wepman, Dennis. Hitler: World Leaders Past and Present. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1985. The life of Hitler. A boy to the Fuhrer. Good for students' reports.

Wiesel, Elie. Night. New York: Bantam Books, c1960. The true story of Eli Wiesel, who survived Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps.

Wiesenthal, Simon. The Sunflower. New York: Schocken Books, c1969. A young Jew is taken from a death-camp to a temporary army hospital. On his deathbed a dying Nazi soldier confesses to having participated in the burning of an entire village of Jews. He asks for absolution from the Jew. The Jew walks from the room without speaking. A symposium of responses follows the story.

Wyman, David S. Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945. New York: Pantheon Books, c1984. Adult book – tells about America's response and lack of response to the Jews during the Second World War.

Yolen, Jane. The Devil's Arithmetic. New York: Puffin Books, 1988. A fictional story of a young girl who opens the door during Passover Seder to symbolically welcome the prophet Elijah and suddenly finds herself in a Polish village in the 1940s.

Zassenhaus, Hiltgunt. Walls: Resisting the Third Reich One Woman's Story. Boston: Beacon Press, c1974. Walls is the moving story of how one German woman, acting alone with the cooperation of a handful of other individuals in wartime Germany, brought sustenance and hope to thousands of political prisoners of the Third Reich.

Zeinert, Karen. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Brookfield, Connecticut: The Millbrook Press, c1993. The story of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1943.

Ziemian, Joseph. The Cigarette Sellers of Three Crosses Square. New York: Avon Books, c1973. The true story of a group of Jewish children who escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942 and managed to survive in the Aryan section of the city.

Zyskind, Sara. Stolen Years. New York: New American Library, c1981. Tells the true account of a young girl between the ages of eleven and seventeen and of living in the ghetto and surviving the Mittelstein slave labor camp.

Petovello, Laura R. *The Spirit That Moves Us*. Palermo, Maine: The Holocaust Human Rights Center of Maine, 1994. Grades Kindergarten through Four. A Literature-Based Resource Guide on Teaching About the Holocaust & Human Rights.

Rabinsky, Leatrice B. and Danko, Carol. *The Holocaust: Prejudice Unleashed*. Ohio Department of Education, 1994. Materials and curriculum committee of the Ohio Council of Holocaust Education. Lesson plans that can be used or adapted.

Zornbergm, Ira. *Classroom Strategies for Teaching About the Holocaust*. New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1995. Ten lessons for classroom use.

