

# Children of the Holocaust:

## A Guide to Teaching Holocaust Curriculum in the Elementary Classroom

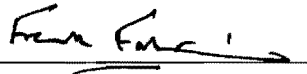
An Honors Thesis

By

Erin Stassen

Thesis Advisor:

Dr. Frank Felsenstein



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Ball State University  
Muncie, Indiana

July 2007

Graduation: July 21, 2007

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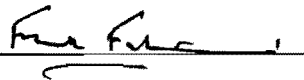
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## **Abstract**

I will be focusing on the need for teaching about the Holocaust in the elementary classroom. I will explain the reasons for Holocaust curriculum in the elementary classroom and provide lesson plans for lower elementary and upper elementary that implement Holocaust studies.

I will use memoirs and non-fiction resources to uncover the stories of children during the Holocaust. Along with non-fiction literature, I will also be looking at a variety of fictive literature based on true stories. This meaning that the stories are based on true events, but may use fictional characters or settings.

Along with using children's literature to uncover stories of children who lived during the Holocaust, I will focus on how I as a teacher—as well as other teachers—can use children's literature to teach the Holocaust in the elementary classroom.

With this said, I will be addressing issues including, but not limited to, children's maturity and vulnerability, age appropriate literature and curriculum, the appropriate age to introduce the history of the Holocaust to students, and the relevancy of teaching the Holocaust in today's school systems.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Frank Felsenstein for advising me through this project. He was also my professor for the colloquium *Remembering the Holocaust* which is what led me to connect my major of Elementary Education with Holocaust Studies. He has been a tremendous resource of knowledge and a strong encouragement to not walk away from difficult subjects, lest we forget and open ourselves up to repeating the same mistakes we have made in the past. Writing this thesis has been difficult emotionally, but has made me grow in my knowledge of Holocaust curriculum.

I would also like to thank Dr. Joanne Edmonds for assisting me in beginning my thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank survivors of the Holocaust for the heroic stories which have brought many individuals out of the shadows of ignorance and into the light of understanding.

# Children of the Holocaust: A Guide to Teaching Holocaust Curriculum in the Elementary Classroom

## **Introduction**

Children of all ages across all nations have experienced horrors, but none like the ones seen through the eyes of the children of the Holocaust. These innocent beings experienced terrors that many of us will never know beyond the pages of books and the voices of survivors who lived through the Holocaust.

Through the experiences and examples of Holocaust survivors and other individuals looking in on the devastation of what occurred not so long ago, I will be looking into the lives of real people who were forever transformed by Nazi inhumanity and cruelty, and who found the internal strength and used the strength of their loved ones to be resurrected into new beings, people who are more than just “Holocaust survivors.”

I have chosen several selections of children’s books to focus on in order to understand the Holocaust through the eyes of a child. With this knowledge, I have created a Holocaust curriculum that I can teach in my own elementary classroom.

## **The Relevance of Teaching Holocaust Curriculum in Today’s Classroom**

Many children experience persecution, cruelty, inferiority, and injustice. Children experience bullying and persecution daily for how much money they

have or do not have, what type of book bag they carry, or if they own a cell phone. Yet, are our children learning what it means to be persecuted for just believing in something that others do not believe in? Do they truly understand what prejudice is? Are they learning the skills to relate to others in this world we share, or just learning how “bad” others are for believing in something different and acting upon those beliefs?

In the age of “war on terror,” we teach our students that it is wrong to be “extremist” about one’s beliefs. We tell students it is wrong to hurt others because they do not believe what you believe. We show students how others are bad for doing harmful things to innocent people. How do we make sure this cycle of harming others ends? Are we preparing our students with the skills necessary to cope in a world where there are a vast number of religions and belief systems? Are we teaching our students what it means to understand others’ beliefs and live together in peace with one another or merely to tolerate what we do not understand? If we only tolerate others’ beliefs, instead of learning about them, we are continuing the ignorance that brings hate to the forefront in our world.

I as a future elementary school teacher can teach my students about the horrors of the Holocaust, but if the students do not really understand and comprehend what occurred during the Holocaust—the hate, the persecution, the cruelty—then I am doing nothing more than allowing history to repeat itself. If I do not help my students to learn how to deal with issues in ways other than fighting with hatred, I am merely setting the stage for this hatred to continue. I do not think that by teaching communication skills and love and equality of others to one classroom of students every year is going to miraculously or

immediately change our world, but it can make an impact felt across the world as those students grow into adults and teach, through words and example, that this hatred and ignorance will not be tolerated.

Although there are many images and texts that are too graphic for young eyes and ears, there are still ways for elementary students to learn about the Holocaust in school. The job of the teachers of students in lower elementary grades, primarily Kindergarten through third grade, is to lay the ground work necessary for teachers in upper grades to expand upon. Teachers in the youngest elementary grades should begin by discussing fairness and equality and respect for others around them. Children learn at a very young age how others are different from them: different churches or places of worship, different clothes, different hairstyles and lengths, different rules at home, etc. Since children learn these differences at such a young age, it is important for them to learn to be not only tolerant of others' differences, but to really try to understand why others are different and how to respect those differences.

The term "tolerance" tends to bring the connotation of merely existing side by side with someone who believes and acts differently than how you have been raised. Students are not being taught in a clear manner the true definition of tolerance. I prefer to use the word acceptance because its connotation is that of understanding others' perspectives, as opposed to just knowing others are different. Teachers must focus on acknowledging their students' differences and celebrating the unique differences of each child. This will lead to the building of knowledge of others' beliefs instead of the ignorance of strictly knowing others are "different."

As students get older (reaching grades 4-6), teachers can focus more on the historical aspects of the Holocaust, being certain to still not be too lax on the very graphic words and imagery in some Holocaust texts. It is important to focus on the reality of the Holocaust by discussing the Jews being herded and ghettoized into concentration camps. Attention may also be brought upon the non-Nazi supporters, in Germany, Denmark, and other European countries where the Nazis entered and took over, who helped to hide Jews from Nazi Germans.

### **Examples of Children's Literature about the Holocaust**

There are many authors who have written non-fictional and fictional books based on the Holocaust or even memoirs of their own stories. When choosing books for elementary students or books to have in an elementary classroom, it is important to focus on what messages the books are sending. There are many picture story books for young children now that are either based on true stories of Holocaust survivors or based on events that happened during the Holocaust. There are stories of Jewish families, specifically Jewish children, hiding from Nazi Germans, as well as stories of families who helped to hide Jewish families from the Nazis.

While many of these stories may be exciting for students to read, it is crucial to differentiate between fiction and non-fiction stories about the Holocaust. Before reading stories of the Holocaust to students or before they begin reading, it is important to cover the terminology used in many of these books that students will most likely be unfamiliar with—examples: ghetto, concentration camp, inhumanity, Aryan. Below is a list of examples of books that

can be used to teach about a child's point of view of the Holocaust for the elementary classroom.

Title and Author of Reading Material: *Behind the Bedroom Wall* by Laura E. Williams

Summary of Reading Material: This is a fictive story about a young girl in Hitler's youth camp who finds out that her parents are harboring Jews in their home.

Grade Level: Grades 4-5

Title and Author of Reading Material: *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry

Summary of Reading Material: Lowry writes a fictional story based on the real life events that occurred in Denmark in September of 1943 when the Danish people helped to get over 7,000 Jews to safety in Sweden. The story surrounds a young girl and her family who hide her Jewish friend from the Nazi Germans.

Grade Level: Grades 4-5; Grades 2-3 Read-A-Loud\*

Title and Author of Reading Material: *Anna Is Still Here* by Ida Vos; Translated by Terese Edelstein and Inez Smidt

Summary of Reading Material: Ida Vos was a Jewish-Dutch author. Her stories are based on experiences she had during the Holocaust in the World War II era. This novel is a story of a Jewish girl named Anna who was in hiding for three years during the Nazi regime. This story takes place after her deliverance. It strikes the pangs of dealing with resurrection of life after being "dead" in hiding for three years.

Grade Level: Grades 3-5

Title and Author of Reading Material: *The Hidden Children* by Howard Greenfeld

Summary of Reading Material: This book, which is a compilation of stories of thirteen men and women who had their childhoods stripped from them during the Holocaust, is a phenomenal force for students to relate to what life was like for the “Hidden Children” of the Holocaust. This book would be highly recommended for students to use as a resource if they were to journal what they imagined life as a Jewish child in the Holocaust was like.

Grade Level: Grades 4-6

Title and Author of Reading Material: *The Holocaust Causes* by Pat Levy

Summary of Reading Material: *The Holocaust Causes* is a good resource for educators and students alike. There are some grotesque pictures, which are questionable for the students to view, but this book explains what happened—how the path was paved—leading up to the Holocaust. The book would be a good reference for teachers to discuss why the Holocaust happened, who was involved, terminology that students are unfamiliar with, and times and locations.

Grade Level: Teacher resource

Title and Author of Reading Material: *Always Remember Me: How One Family Survived World War II* by Marisabina Russo

Summary of Reading Material: Marisabina Russo based this story on her grandmother’s experiences growing up as a Jew, born in Poland, who later moved to Germany due to “less discrimination” of Jews in Germany at the time. This story is how her grandmother, Oma, had two photo albums—one album while she was living in Germany before the war and during the war, and one after she and her daughters survived the Holocaust and came to America. This book is good for younger students because it still shows pictures of Jewish identity cards and

concentration camps, but the illustrations are drawings, so they are not as graphic for younger students; though the stories are still realistic, explaining how Jews were shot and killed in the concentration camps (it does not explain methods of murder further than this).

Grade Level: Grades 2-4

Title and Author of Reading Material: *Hiding to Survive: Stories of Jewish Children Rescued from the Holocaust* by Maxine B. Rosenberg

Summary of Reading Material: Maxine Rosenberg's book, *Hiding to Survive*, is a compilation of stories of Jewish children who were hidden during the Holocaust in order to survive, even though life and childhood were being taken away from them. This book would be a wonderful way to introduce lives of real men and women who lived through the Holocaust to younger students. It would also be another good reference, as *The Hidden Children* by Howard Greenfeld, for older students to choose a person's story to study and to journal about their experiences in the Holocaust and how the student would feel being in the same situation. It is important to constantly draw lines of comparison for students so they can relate to real life stories and events of the Holocaust.

Grade Level: Grades 4-6; Grades 3+ Read-A-Loud

Title and Author of Reading Material: *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti

Summary of Reading Material: This book is also a compilation of stories of Hitler's Youth leading up to the Holocaust and during the Holocaust. There are also stories of Jewish children and children who were non-Nazi sympathizers and rebelled against Hitler's Youth. In order for students to fully understand what

occurred during the Holocaust, they must not only read stories of Jews during the Holocaust, but also of Germans who were supportive of the Nazi Regime and Germans who were against the Nazi Regime. This book has some disturbing photographs of young children and teachers saluting Hitler with their arms raised high.

Grade Level: Grades 5+

Title and Author of Reading Material: *One Eye Laughing, The Other Weeping: The Diary of Julie Weiss* by Barry Denenberg

Summary of Reading Material: This novel is part of a series titled *Dear America*. It is a story of a young Jewish girl in Austria before the time of the German invasion in Austria. Due to the length of the novel, it is most suitable for grades 4-6, but could be read aloud to grade 3. This story paints a good picture of what it must have been like to live as a Jew before the war, and then to suddenly have your entire life disappear around you as you are being torn away from your family and friends.

Grade Level: Grades 4-6; Grade 3 Read-A-Loud

Title and Author of Reading Material: *My Brother's Keeper: The Holocaust Through the Eyes of an Artist* by Israel Bernbaum

Summary of Reading Material: Israel Bernbaum's book and illustrations are astounding. Bernbaum dedicated his book to the more than one and a half Jewish children killed in the Holocaust and to the survivors of the Holocaust and their children. In the beginning of his book, Bernbaum says, "There is no limit to the questions we can ask about the Holocaust, but to one question we must find

an answer: How can we prevent it from happening again?" (Bernbaum, 7) This is the entire goal of teaching about the Holocaust in today's classrooms.

**Grade Level:** Grades 3-6; Grades 2-4 Read-A-Loud

\*Read-A-Loud: If the grade level is listed alone, then the book is grade level appropriate for a student to read on his/her own. If the book is listed as a grade level at the Read-A-Loud stage, then the teacher should read the book aloud to the class due to vocabulary or names that the students would otherwise struggle with.

### **Resources for the Elementary Classroom**

In a classroom, if you as the teacher do not provide literature for your students, some students will never have the opportunity to read certain books. Some students have never gone with a parent or relative to the library on the weekend or have never been read to before bed. It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide literature on many different topics for your students to read. This is a heavy responsibility because it means that we as teachers must provide our students with books that in some cases could be viewed as "controversial." This does not mean that young students should be reading about the gruesome details of the deaths of Holocaust victims, but it does mean that students should be introduced to the lives of the Jewish men, women, and children who were in the Holocaust.

The difficulty in choosing resources for an elementary classroom is mainly the graphic imagery introduced to students at such a young age. Some people may say that students are introduced to death and horror in science fiction books at a young age, but memoirs about the Holocaust are true stories that happened

to real people, and real lives were lost. Students need to be taught to differentiate between fictional stories and memoirs.

When teaching about the Holocaust in an elementary classroom, it is important to lay the groundwork in the younger grades (Kindergarten through third) for understanding others' beliefs and traditions and for explaining that being different does not make someone bad or strange. It is the teacher's responsibility to teach students about their unique differences and to celebrate their students' differences.

A responsible teacher also needs to provide himself/herself and peers (other teachers, faculty, and staff) with the resources to teach the Holocaust to themselves and in their own classrooms.

There are also many other types of resources available for teachers to instruct their students about the Holocaust. As explained above, there are fictional novels, non-fiction novels, memoirs, art, and music. Introducing younger students to Jewish culture using art and music is a great way to tie multiculturalism into the classroom. It is also a stepping stone to introducing events leading up to the Holocaust while the students are younger, before reading novels and memoirs at an older age.

Through the venues of art and music, children can share experiences and emotions that they otherwise might not be able to explain in words to adults. Psychologists use children's artwork from school and home to gather information about what is going on in the home lives' of children who are abused or otherwise mistreated.

Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, hosted a program in February of 2000 titled “Art, Music and Education as Strategies for Survival,” displaying artwork from children in the Holocaust. Below is an example of the artwork displayed at Moravian’s program.



(Artwork: Moravian)

This piece of art was from a concentration camp established by the German Nazis in the area of land formerly known as Czechoslovakia. Theresienstadt, the “internment camp,” had twelve thousand children pass through its walls, but fewer than “one hundred under the age of fifteen survived.” (Moravian) The exhibit displaying the children’s artwork at Moravian was titled, “The Arts as Strategies for Survival: Theresienstadt 1941 – 45” and was the first time that the children’s art was displayed in the United States. (Moravian)

In Theresienstadt, this “model ghetto,” as named by the German Nazis in a propaganda stunt to mislead other countries to what they were doing, many Jewish leaders rose up to help educate their children and youths in the camp. (Jewish Museum) It was during this time that so many of the pieces of art were brought to life by the hands of children whose innocence was stripped from them.



(Artwork: Jewish Museum)

A way to connect students' thoughts and feelings to the children who were in the Holocaust is to look through pieces of artwork created by children who were in the Holocaust, and by reading their stories (both non-fiction and fiction), and then having the students in your own classroom share their feelings by drawing pictures of how they feel after hearing these stories as well as what they could do to prevent mistreatment of their friends today. Relating past to present is a major key when teaching children about the Holocaust. If a child can hear a story of a Jewish child who was stripped away from his/her friends and school and taken to a concentration camp where he/she was mistreated and hated and possibly killed, then that child can understand that the boy or girl who was taken away could be his/her friend sitting right next to him/her. That way the student can understand that there was not something "wrong" or "different" about the Jewish children who were in the Holocaust.

I also think it is important to convey the mistreatment of the children who were in the Holocaust. There are ways to teach about the Holocaust to students at the elementary level without explaining the gruesome details of death and malnutrition at such a young age.

## **Age Appropriate Curriculum**

Children's maturity and vulnerability is different for each individual child in each grade level. That is why the responsibility of the teacher is so great to be able to introduce topics relating to the Holocaust before reading stories of the lives of children in the Holocaust. However, if you feel that your students can handle a novel, but may not be able to read through all the words themselves, you may choose to read the novel aloud during Reading Aloud time. Then you can use Reading Aloud time as an introduction into Social Studies and multiculturalism and history.

Even at a young age, students usually are very interested and excited about "scary stories" where characters have to hide from "the bad guys." The main goal in reading these stories aloud to your students is to make sure the students are at a maturity where they can understand that although hiding from the bad guy might sound "cool" or exciting, real people really had to hide from *real* bad guys. And that although these are exciting stories, we must keep in mind that real people really lived like this and that we would not want to have to live every day scared.

There are many questions raised about Holocaust curriculum in the classroom. How should the Holocaust be taught in our schools today? How old must children be in order to fully understand the events that took place during the Holocaust? When should Holocaust curriculum be introduced? What is the relevance of teaching the Holocaust in schools today? Should Holocaust curriculum be mandatory in schools? What school systems already have a Holocaust curriculum implemented? How does Holocaust curriculum in US

schools differ from other countries' Holocaust curriculum? There are so many questions and often times we can not answer them all. But for the preservation of future generations, we must delve into these questions and try to find meaning to the questions and understanding.

As stated above, students need to learn the skills to cope with others around them peacefully, even through disagreements or differences of opinions. They will not learn these skills unless the skills are taught to them, and they have an opportunity to practice these skills.

When introducing the tragic events of the Holocaust to young students, there will undoubtedly be many questions that arise. Not all questions have simple answers or answers at all. However, discussion of these questions and topics will lead to understanding and knowledge the students will build.

Teachers must be prepared for difficult questions such as, "Why did people just sit back and allow Jews to be taken from the friends and homes and killed?"

### **Mandatory vs. Non-Mandatory Curriculum**

Developing a curriculum of Holocaust education may seem daunting to teachers and educators who have not been formally educated in a class focused on Holocaust studies or the remembrance of the Holocaust. The New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education has a phenomenal curriculum established to bring light and understanding to the topic of Holocaust curriculum in the classroom. In the New Jersey K-4 curriculum, titled "Caring Makes a Difference," the authors wrote: "We, too, must teach—teach lessons beyond tolerance to the overwhelming importance of the simple human dignity bestowed upon each of us if we practice respect for all and develop our own self-respect

through our thoughts, words, and actions. The vast numbers of victims of the Holocaust and genocide are almost beyond our ability to comprehend them. What we—each of us—can comprehend, is the single face, the single human life, behind each of those vast numbers. That is how we will reach the children—one child at a time through one story of one life at a time. It is an awesome responsibility that each of us carries. Yet no richer reward exists than seeing the wholesome fruition of the lives of the children who pass through the rooms and corridors of our schools and our own lives.” (NJDE)

The focus of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education is that of bringing attention to the events surrounding the Holocaust and bringing awareness and education to peoples throughout the world so that the Holocaust will never be forgotten. It is through forgetting that we allow tragedies of such enormous measure to occur again.

Other states have begun mandatory Holocaust curriculum programs, such as California, Illinois, New York, and Florida. If the state you are living in does not have a mandatory Holocaust curriculum established, it may be a little more difficult to begin such a curriculum, but there are many resources for elementary and middle and high schools educators as well.

### **Remembering the Holocaust**

In the book *My Brother's Keeper: The Holocaust through the Eyes of an Artist*, author Israel Bernbaum asks the difficult question that every soul should strive to answer: “How can we prevent it [the Holocaust] from happening again?” (Bernbaum, 7) The goal of learning about the events in the Holocaust and the lives of the Jews who were murdered and the lives of the Jews who survived is to

remember their lives and remember what happened so that it may never happen again. Once we forget, once we turn away our focus from educating this world against inhumanity, injustice, cruelty, and prejudice, we allow it to creep back into our communities. In doing so, we are just setting the stage or preparing the way for another leader who does not view all as equal to take over. Are we at that point now? Have we forgotten?

How do we make sure we do not forget? As Bernbaum says in the closing of *My Brother's Keeper*, "The answer may be found in ourselves. We must reject all racial theories about differences of human qualities among people as false, inhuman and immoral. We must not prejudge people because of the color of their skin, religion or origin. Instead we must practice the principle of absolute equality and justice for all. We must learn to be tolerant and accept differences among people. Instead of erecting walls and fences separating human beings from each other, we will open gates of mutual understanding and open our hearts for mutual respect. Instead of hating we will listen and learn from each other. May no children of any nation suffer again from such tragedy as the Holocaust." (Bernbaum, 63)

### **Explanation of Lesson Plans**

Topic: Fairness and Equality

Grade Level: First

Objective: The students will build a collage that expresses their own personality and interests and share their collages with their peers in order to compare similarities and differences among peers.

Indiana Academic State Standards:

- 1.5.1 Identify one's own individual talents, interests, and hobbies, as well as the talents and interests of others.
  - 1.5.4 Demonstrate the importance of treating others as they would wish to be treated and practice ways of resolving differences peacefully.
  - 1.5.5 Compare similarities and differences in customs, foods, play, recreation, and celebrations of families in the community.
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Topic: *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry and *A Different Story: About a Danish Girl in World War II* by Emilie Roi

Grade Level: Fourth to Fifth

Objective: The students will compare and contrast the stories *Number the Stars* and *A Different Story*.

Indiana Academic State Standards:

- 4.5.1 Identify ways that social groups influence individual behavior and responsibilities
- 4.5.2 Identify the different types of social groups to which people belong and the functions these groups perform

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<http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/curriculum/index.html>

## **Lesson Plans**

**Topic:** Fairness and Equality

**Grade Level:** First

### **IN Academic Standards:**

- 1.5.2 Identify one's own individual talents, interests, and hobbies, as well as the talents and interests of others.
- 1.5.6 Demonstrate the importance of treating others as they would wish to be treated and practice ways of resolving differences peacefully.
- 1.5.7 Compare similarities and differences in customs, foods, play, recreation, and celebrations of families in the community.

**Objective:** The students will build a collage that expresses their own personality and interests and share their collages with their peers in order to compare similarities and differences among peers.

### **Materials:**

- Art supplies for collages: Construction paper, scissors, glue, markers, crayons
- Note to Parents (to explain project and to ask for parents to send family artifacts to school with students)
- Artifacts from home
- Variety of traditional music, games, and food of different religious groups and cultures

### **Motivation:**

I will begin by having the students sit in a circle on the carpet. I will show the students several illustrations. The illustrations will be of different families celebrating holidays. These families will be of different races, colors, and religions. I will use this time to discuss what each family is doing and why they are participating in this particular holiday. I will ask the students, "Are each of these families the same?" "What is different about each family?" "Do any of the

families in the pictures celebrate in a way that you are not familiar with?" "Does that make their celebrations wrong?"

**Procedures:**

I will begin by explaining to the students that people all over the world have different beliefs and traditions, but that does not make their traditions and beliefs and culture wrong. I will explain that we need to learn about others' cultures, beliefs, and traditions in order celebrate differences and learn true acceptance. (The focus of this lesson plan is broad in understanding that everyone is different, and that we should accept others' differences.)

Next, I will explain the differences in celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa. I chose these particular holidays because all occur around the same time of year, and most first graders are familiar with Christmas and/or Hanukkah, so they will be able to relate to their peers' traditions.

Then I will explain the differences in the types of meals people eat during these holidays. I will also discuss the differing traditions during these holidays including readings, games, gift giving, etc. For example, I will bring in dreidels for the students and teach them how to play. I will also show them a menorah. I will also play a variety of traditional music for the students.

My goal in showing the students the differences between these three holidays is one, to introduce them to the differences, and two, to celebrate the differences and show the students that just because they are not used to celebrating in a certain way, it does not mean that way is strange or wrong.

I will then explain to the students our project for the collages. I will have the students bring in artifacts from home that present their culture, customs, and beliefs. Some examples of artifacts may be flags that display their heritage, food from the heritage, games their families play at holidays and special events, family photographs, etc.

**Evaluation:**

The students will be assessed on the collages, based on completion of the rubric. The students will also be expected to share their collages with their peers. The parents of the students will be extended an invitation to come to see the students share their collages.

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**Topic:** *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry and *A Different Story: About a Danish Girl in World War II* by Emilie Roi

**Grade Level:** Fourth to Fifth

**IN Academic Standards:**

- 4.5.3 Identify ways that social groups influence individual behavior and responsibilities
- 4.5.4 Identify the different types of social groups to which people belong and the functions these groups perform

**Objective:** The students will compare and contrast the stories *Number the Stars* and *A Different Story*.

**Materials:**

- Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- A Different Story: About a Danish Girl in World War II* by Emilie Roi
- Character map
- Conflict chart

-Compare/Contrast Venn diagram

-Student Journals

**Motivation:**

The students will have already read *Number the Stars* and *A Different Story* before beginning the lesson. The students will have already written in their journals about the stories while reading. I will begin the lesson with having students offer to read their journal entries about how they felt as they read the different stories. I will ask the students how the stories were different and how they were similar. We will draw a Venn diagram explaining the similarities and differences of the stories.

**Procedures:**

I will provide character maps for each student. The students will then draw comparisons between the main characters from each story. The students will answer the following questions about each main character. What does the character look like? How does the character act? How do other characters in this story react to this character? The students will answer the following questions about the conflicts in the stories. What is the conflict? Why does this conflict occur? What are some ways the conflict could be resolved? (NCTE)

Note to Teachers: These questions were found from a story mapping website for teachers titled ReadWriteThink.org, but similar questions may be found through other teaching resource websites.

Once the students have completed their character and conflict maps, I will split them into pairs or small groups of 3 to 4 students maximum to share their

character maps and conflicts. I will go around the room and listen to each group discussion.

Then I will have the students come together as a whole group again, and we will discuss what took place in the small group discussions. I will begin by asking the students questions about the text, such as: “How do you think Annemarie felt when the guards came looking for Ellen’s family?” “How would you feel if your best friend was having a sleepover at your house and someone came that wanted to take them away?” Then I will open up the discussion to any questions the students have.

**Evaluation:**

The students will be evaluated on their small group discussions and their character and conflict maps.

**Extension:**

I will have the students imagine they were one of the main characters from either story. Then I will have them write a journal entry as if it was a diary entry and they were in the same position as either lead character.

## Teacher Resources

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