

ACTIVITY GUIDE

Target Audience: Grades 9-12
(14-18 yrs)

Time Required: One 60-min
class period

Academic Standards:

International Society for Technology
in Education - NETS

1b, 2a, 3b, 4c, 5b

Common Core State Standards (U.S.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

The basic standard at the 9-10th grade level is indicated here. This Mini Quest can be adapted for higher grades/ages.

NOTE: How to Implement a Mini Quest

IWitness Mini Quests are designed to be flexible based on teacher/student needs and contexts. Mini Quests can be implemented in several ways, but in each case, the content remains standard.

1. Blended (Online/Offline) – Students work online in IWitness and complete handout(s)
2. Offline – Students complete handout(s) as the teacher shares resources from IWitness with students (e.g. clips of testimony, photos, articles). All materials in Mini Quests are available for download by the teacher for classroom use.

Activity Description

In this activity, students will consider the personal experiences of those who arrived on the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. They will explore images from the Auschwitz Album*, showing the arrival of Hungarian Jewish men, women and children in 1944, as well as listen to survivors who endured a similar process.

Learning Aims

As a result of completing this activity, students will:

- Learn to analyze photographs as a primary source.
- Learn how testimony can be used to analyze other primary sources.
- Be introduced to the Auschwitz Album and its historical context.
- Construct a critical analysis of a primary source using evidence

Downloadable Materials

- Arrival at Auschwitz Student Handouts.pdf
- Arrival at Auschwitz Photos.pdf
- Video Clips (more info below)

**Note: The Auschwitz Album is the only known collection of photographs taken by the Nazi SS at Auschwitz-Birkenau.*

Arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau – Images and Individual Experiences

Testimony Video Clips:

Lili Meier - On Obtaining the Auschwitz Album (02:20)

Renée Firestone - On Arriving at Auschwitz-Birkenau (02:51)

Leo Bach - On Arriving at Auschwitz-Birkenau (02:12)

NOTE: Interviewee Biographical information is available in the student handouts download (pdf) and in the online version of the activity under the “More Info” tab on the video player

Photographs:

Available as a separate download for easy printing.

Photo 19: Women and Children

Women and children on the Birkenau arrival platform known as the “ramp”. The Jews were removed from the deportation trains onto the ramp where they faced a selection process—some were sent immediately to their deaths, while others were sent to slave labor. (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/photo_19.asp)

Photo 51: Able Bodied for Work

Women who were classified as “able-bodied for work” and whose heads had already been shaved, being sent to the women’s section of the camp known as BI. After the disinfection and registration process was complete, they were sent for long hours of back-breaking labor in different facilities in and out of the camp. (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/photo_51.asp)

Photo 12: Selection at Auschwitz-Birkenau

Jews undergoing the selection process on the Birkenau arrival platform known as the “ramp”. The people in the background are on their way to Crematorium II, whose building is just visible on the top center of the photo. (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/photo_12.asp)

Source: Auschwitz Album (Photos 19, 51, 12). Digital image. Yad Vashem The Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority. Web. 20 July 2014. http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/index.asp

Vocabulary

Cattle car: freight trains used to transport cattle (cows). Used to transport millions of Jewish men, women, and children across Europe during the Holocaust.

Feeble: without strength; weak

Crematoria: At Auschwitz-Birkenau, the name given to the gas chamber complex. This included an undressing room, gas chamber, and crematoria in which bodies were cremated.

Dugout: A shelter that is dug in the ground and roofed over, especially one used by troops in warfare.

Basin: an open, usually circular vessel, with curving sides used typically for holding water.

NOTE: Additional vocabulary support available online in the Glossary inside your Tool Kit.

Instructional Procedures

The procedures below provide a brief summary of student learning activities in the order students encounter them in this Mini Quest (online and offline versions). Like all activities available in IWitness, Mini Quests are organized around the 4C's framework:

Consider – students consider, reflect, and respond to information.

Collect – students gather, evaluate and reflect on information (e.g. testimony, photos, documents, newspaper clippings)

Construct – students use new knowledge and skills to apply to representations of learning (e.g. brief written responses, graphic organizer, creative expression, multimodal essay)

Communicate – students share their work and ideas clearly and persuasively with their peers. They consider and evaluate their ideas and those of their peers.

CONSIDER

Materials Required:

Photographs

Auschwitz Album Photo 19:
Women and Children on the
Birkenau arrival platform

Auschwitz Album Photo 51:
Able Bodied for Work

Auschwitz Album Photo 12:
Selection at Birkenau

Testimony Video Clip

Leo Back - On Arriving at Aus-
chwitz (02:12)

Step 1. Have students look at **Auschwitz Album Photo 19**. (All photographs in the online activity are also available as a Photos handout.pdf) Students should notice the people, the objects and physical settings in the photograph. Then, students write their first impressions of the photograph. *Note: students will be required to analyze this photograph a second time at the end of this lesson.

The teacher should engage students in a discussion of point of view and bias in meaning making, particularly as it relates to primary sources such as photographs.

Step 2. Point students to read the brief text about primary sources - what they are and where they originate. The teacher should then ask students to consider how photographs are a primary source of information about a historical point in time or event.

Step 3. Provide students the **Auschwitz Album Photo 12** and direct them to consider the following questions:

- **What do you already know about the time, people objects, physical setting and activities shown?**
- **What can you infer from the photograph?**
- **What questions does the photograph raise in your mind?**
- **Where could students find answers to these questions?**

Step 4. To close this section, turn students' attention to another form of primary source material - testimony. Discuss how testimony provides a first person perspective on events in history. Direct students to read Leo Bach's biography and then watch his testimony. Students should write about what Leo is describing and his point of view, including questions such as:

- **How do his voice, tone, body gestures and other qualities of the testimony help you understand Leo's story?**
- **How does the testimony help you understand the contents of the photographs you analyzed earlier in the lesson?**

Arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau – Images and Individual Experiences

COLLECT

Materials Required:

Video

Lili Meier, on Obtaining the
Auschwitz Album (02:20)

Renée Firestone, on Arriving at
Auschwitz (02:51)

Step 1. To continue to build students' analytic skills and knowledge, direct students to gather more information. First, have students read with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum encyclopedia article, **Auschwitz**, available online at: <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005189>

Step 2. Students now prepare to gather more information about the source of the photographs they have been analyzing, the Auschwitz Album. Direct students to read the biography of Lili Meier and to watch her testimony. Students should collect information on their handout that helps them understand:

- The origins of the photograph
- The historical context of the photograph
- What it was like to experience the arrival at Auschwitz

Step 3. Direct students to read the biography of Renée Firestone and watch her testimony. The teacher could engage students in a discussion about how the testimony helps them understand the previous photographs they analyzed.

Students should collect information about what Leo is describing and his point of view, including questions such as:

- **How do voice, tone, body gestures and other qualities of the testimony help you understand Renee's story?**
- **How does the testimony help you understand the contents of the photographs you analyzed earlier in the lesson?**

CONSTRUCT

Photograph

Auschwitz Album Photo 19:
Women and Children on the
Birkenau arrival platform

Tell students that they will now analyze the first photo they encountered in this lesson. Encourage students to use what they learned in the lesson to their analysis of the photograph this time around. Students will write an analysis using the following guiding questions:

- **What more can you now infer about the photograph?**
- **What questions do you still have about the photograph?**
- **Where could you find more information to help you answer these questions?**

COMMUNICATE

Tell students that they will now share their work with each other. First, direct students to find a partner or table group to work with. Encourage students to share how their understanding of the photograph changed as a result of the lesson. They should include at least 3 points of evidence from the source material they encountered in this lesson - photographs, testimony, historical literature, and personal experience.

For more information on the Auschwitz camps, visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum website: <http://en.auschwitz.org/m/>