

Kayla Navarro

Professor Mary Warner

English 112B

11 May 2015

Unit of Study: Anne Frank and the Holocaust

RATIONALE

Although *The Diary of a Young Girl*, by Anne Frank, is a text frequently used in eighth and ninth grade instruction, I have rarely seen it used as an effective springboard for students to jump into both the historical time period of the novel and other works of Holocaust literature. Thus, in my unit of study, I hope to encourage students to see the connections between Anne Frank's story and those of the millions others killed in genocide worldwide.

As a classroom is a community made up of diverse learners, an instructor must vary his or her instruction to fit each child's individual needs; I will do so through an inclusion of various resources in my unit of study, including music, film, drama, poetry, short stories, nonfiction articles, online media, illustrations, a graphic novel, memoir, and historical fiction. My historical fiction selections, in particular, vary in text complexity so as to accommodate struggling, grade level, and advanced readers. Additionally, students will respond to texts in a variety of ways besides simply writing essays, including participating in Sustained Silent Writing (SSW), grand conversations, and small group discussions, and composing poetry in multiple forms. Through this variety of instructional resources, applications, and assessments, I hope to interest each student in at least one work of literature and means of expression.

“INTO” RESOURCES

Attention Grabber: Song and “Poem”

I will grab students’ interests by playing for them “Never Again” by Remedy, a Jewish rapper affiliated with the Wu-Tang Clan. I will distribute copies of or project the lyrics onto a screen in the front of the class, and students will follow along as they listen to the song.

After listening to the song and reading the lyrics, I will project on the screen or distribute copies of the following quotation from Martin Niemöller.

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.

Students will then complete a SSW entry responding to both pieces of unconventional “poetry:” how does Remedy (through the genre of rap) extend the experience of Jewish people in the Holocaust to people beyond those who are directly affected by it, much in the way that Martin Niemöller does so in his stylized quotation?

Activating and Building Upon Background Knowledge

After catching the students’ interests, I will activate their background knowledge by constructing a KWL chart about the Holocaust with the class, which will be displayed on a classroom wall or on a classroom website. In this student-centered activity, students will discuss

what they already **know** about the Holocaust and what they **wonder** about the Holocaust; as we move through the unit, we will fill in what they **learn** about the events surrounding Anne Frank and her life.

Because they may not yet have covered World War II in their history classes, I will provide students with an accessible article from [history.com](http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/the-holocaust/print) on the Holocaust (<http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/the-holocaust/print>). They will read and annotate the article, and will then participate in a grand conversation about it and update the “learn” column on our KWL chart.

THE “CENTER PIECE” WORK

I will next introduce *The Diary of a Young Girl* in a book talk. This canonical text details almost two years in the life of Anne Frank, a thirteen year-old Jewish girl, during her time in Amsterdam and in hiding from the Nazis in a secret annex. In her account, Anne touches on several themes that are present in other young adult literature: identity, growing up, love, and family.

As the students progress through the narrative, they will respond to the themes and characters in SSWs. These writings can be used to generate ideas for the students’ final papers for the unit, in which they will compare the characters and themes in *The Diary of a Young Girl* to those in one of the young adult literature texts detailed in the “beyond” section.

“THROUGH” AND “BEYOND” RESOURCES

Film and Stage Adaptations of the Anne Frank Story

When students reach Anne's diary entry from July 9, 1942, where she describes the office building and the secret annex, students will explore The Secret Annex Online, a virtual tour of the space where the Franks and the Van Daans lived (<http://www.annefrank.org/secretannex>).

When entries from Anne's diary coincide with scenes from the movie (and as time allows), I will show the class clips from *Anne Frank: The Whole Story*, a 2001 miniseries adaptation of her story. In similar situations, the class will participate in reader's theater performances of scenes from *The Play of the Diary of Anne Frank*, a 1955 dramatization of Anne Frank's diary by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. Elaina Smith, an 8th grade teacher at LeyVa Middle School whom I observed in her classroom, used the movie to augment her teaching of the play, and I feel that both of these resources are helpful in understanding *The Diary of a Young Girl*.

Short Story

Students will read two short stories by Ida Fink over the course of the unit of study on *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Before students read the July 9, 1942 entry in which the Franks enter the secret annex, they will read "The Key Game," in which a Jewish couple teach their three year-old how to react when the Germans come to take them away by disguising the situation as a game. Students will compare the parents' strategy in "The Key Game" to that of the Franks in SSWs and small group discussions.

After reading Anne's last diary entry, students will read "The Tenth Man," a short story that chronicles the homecomings of Holocaust survivors after the war ends. In small group

discussions and compositions of their own short stories, students can imagine the homecomings of the characters in *The Diary of a Young Girl*, whether or not they survived in actuality.

Graphic Novel

Maus I: A Survivor's Tale, a graphic novel by Art Spiegelman, tells the story of Spiegelman's father during the Holocaust framed by the author's accounts of his visits to him. As a class, we will read an excerpt from Spiegelman's novel and discuss the effectiveness of using the graphic novel genre to convey story; students can work in small groups to create a comic strip representation of one episode or diary entry from *The Diary of a Young Girl*.

Poetry and Illustration

I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from the Terezin Concentration Camp, 1942-1944 will help students reading *The Diary of a Young Girl* to further contextualize Anne's experience in the grand scheme of the Holocaust in general. After reading and viewing selected poems and illustrations, students can construct their own found poetry from pieces of different children's works and create their own illustrations to represent their conglomerate poetry. Alternatively or additionally, students can combine excerpts from *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* with quotations from *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Or students can compose a poem as imagined from the perspective of Anne Frank inside Bergen-Belsen.

Young Adult Memoir and Historical Fiction

Any or all of the following texts can be used in conjunction with *The Diary of a Young Girl*. These young adult novels vary in quantitative complexity (from much simpler than to just

as difficult as the core text) and perspective (male and female, Jewish and Gentile); thus, text selection can be individualized to diverse readers within and between classes. I will introduce each text with a short book talk to the class. Here, the texts are briefly described in order from least to most complex.

Night by Elie Wiesel

Wiesel's memoir details his time spent in Auschwitz and Buchenwald with his father during the Holocaust.

The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak

Leisel, a German girl living during the Holocaust, learns to love books and the Jewish man, Max, that her family is hiding in their basement

The Devil's Arithmetic by Jane Yolen

Hannah is transported from the present back in time to the Holocaust, where she is imprisoned in a concentration camp.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas by John Boyne

Bruno, a German boy, befriends a Jewish boy, Shmuel, across the fence that separates the former's backyard from the latter's concentration camp.

In addition to writing an essay to compare themes and characters in *The Diary of a Young Girl* and one of the aforementioned works of young adult literature, students can compose and perform (in pairs) a poem in two voices from the perspectives of a character from each novel (e.g. Otto Frank and Shlomo, Anne and Leisel, Anne and Hannah/Chaya, or Peter and Bruno).

Works Cited

- Anne Frank: The Whole Story*. Dir. Robert Dornhelm. Perf. Ben Kingsley, Brenda Blethyn, Hannah Taylor-Gordon, Tatjana Blacher, Joachim Król, Jessica Manley, Nicholas Audsley and Lili Taylor. Dorothy Pictures, 2001. DVD.
- Boyne, John. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas: A Fable*. New York: David Fickling Books, 2006.
- Fink, Ida. "The Key Game." *A Scrap of Time*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995.
- Fink, Ida. "The Tenth Man." *A Scrap of Time*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995.
- Frank, Anne, Otto Frank, Mirjam Pressler, and Susan Massotty. *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*. New York: Doubleday, 1995. Print.
- Goodrich, Frances and Albert Hackett. *The Play of the Diary of Anne Frank*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1995. Print.
- History.com Staff. "The Holocaust." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 11 May 2015. <<http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/the-holocaust/print>>.
- "Martin Niemöller: 'First They Came for the Socialists...'" *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 20 June 2014. Web. 11 May 2015. <<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007392>>.
- "Remedy: Never Again." *YouTube*. YouTube, n.d. Web. 11 May 2015. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1uMTnXP2dA>>.
- Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986. Print.
- "The Secret Annex Online." *Anne Frank House*. Anne Frank House, n.d. Web. 11 May 2015. <<http://www.annefrank.org/secretannex>>.

Volavková, Hana. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezín Concentration Camp, 1942-1944*. New York: Schocken, 1993. Print.

Wiesel, Elie, and Marion Wiesel. *Night*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, a Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006. Print.

Yolen, Jane. *The Devil's Arithmetic*. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Viking Kestrel, 1988. Print.

Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. New York: Random House, 2006.