

Holocaust and WWII Visual Timeline

Many students understand and internalize information more efficiently when they are able to visualize the history they are studying. This lesson is designed to help students understand the correlation of Holocaust events to WWII military events. The goal is to equip them with an accurate chronology but also to show them how the military war impacted and changed Nazi policy toward the Jews, how WWII in the Pacific may have impacted the news and information people were focusing on, and how long survivors remained homeless in the displaced persons camps following liberation.

Lesson Plan:

Run 1 set of each of the following:

- Photo timeline of the Holocaust without dates
- Photo timeline of World War II without dates
- Dates to hang on the wall

Instructions for Classroom Exercise:

1. Hang the dates in a timeline throughout the room at eye level and jumble each set of photographs (keeping them in their set).
2. Break the class into two groups. Give one group the Holocaust photos and the other group the World War II photos.
3. Have each group work without the use of resources to reach a consensus on the order of their set of photographs. Once consensus is reached, they should hang them by dates on the timeline. Holocaust events hang above the timeline, WWII events hang below the timeline.
4. When you are ready to conclude the activity (either that day or at the end of your entire unit) have the groups work with resources or lead a discussion to help them correct their timeline. You may want to allow the groups to switch topics and try to correct the other group's images.
5. As a class discuss the events, how they correspond to and impact each other, and fully correct the timeline.

Options for Teachers:

1. This lesson could be the introductory AND final lesson of your Holocaust unit (correcting at the very end, you could allow the students to make corrections to the timeline as you study the history, or it could be a more concentrated activity completed in 1-2 class period).
2. If you are unable to complete the activity, but like the concept of a visual timeline, you can post the version with dates so that your students still benefit from the information.
3. Literature teachers can take the exercise a step further and have students add information about a specific testimony you are reading (Anne Frank for example) to the timeline.