

**This poem was written by an unknown girl who was left alone in the Lodz ghetto with her brother. Their fate is unknown, but it must be assumed that both brother and sister perished in the Holocaust.**

**Childhood, precious days,**

**Alas, how few they were!**

**I will remember them as if in a fog.**

**Only in dreams at night can I**

**Identify days long gone.**

**Brief, brief is the happiness of a person in this world of ours.**

## **GENOCIDE AND THE POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD: DIARIES, MEMOIRS AND PROPAGANDA**

### **OVERVIEW: DIARIES**

Through the ages, people have kept diaries as a record of the daily events in their lives. A diary allows the writer to express feelings and thoughts about personal life experiences. From the following lesson plan, students will explore two young diarists living more than 50 years apart, yet their lives are connected by their shared experiences of war.

This lesson is designed to enhance the student's understanding of the diaries of Dawid Sierakowiak who lived in the Lodz ghetto in Poland during World War II and Zlata Filipovic, who lived during the Bosnian War in Sarajevo. The students will gain insight into the diarist's state of mind, the time period the diary was written and have an understanding of the importance of diaries as primary documents. The duration of this lesson will vary but most likely it will take 2-4 class periods.

This lesson could be used as a conclusion activity for a unit on the Holocaust. It would be a good lesson in making connections between the Holocaust and other genocides.

### **Objectives:**

- Students will learn about the lives of children during war
- Students will evaluate primary documents from historical periods
- Students will discuss the different ways the diarists dealt with the realities of war
- Students will compare and contrast the two diarists
- Students will use a VENN diagram to make comparisons of the diary entries

**Resources:** excerpts from the Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak and Zlata's Diary; a copy of a VENN diagram; work sheet for problem/solution; and discussion questions for the diary entries.

**Standards:** Missouri Standards-Grade 8-Reading Standards for Literature

1. Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports analysis of what text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text.
3. Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story reveal aspects of a character.
5. Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and the purpose of the writers.

Missouri Standards-Grade 8-Writing Standards

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization and analysis of relevant content.

Kansas Standards-Grade 8

Benchmark 4: The student comprehends a variety of texts

Indicator 1. The student identifies characteristics of *narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts*.

Indicator 3. The student uses prior knowledge, content, and text type features to make, to revise, and to confirm predictions.

Indicator 4. The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, synthesizing, and *critical thinking* questions before, during, and after reading the text.

Indicator 5. The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

Indicator 6. The student analyzes how text structure (e.g., *sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, description, cause-effect*) helps support comprehension of text.

Indicator 7. The student compares and contrasts varying aspects (e.g., *characters' traits*)

and motives, *themes, problem-solution, cause-effect* relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints, *authors' purposes, persuasive* techniques) in one or more appropriate-level texts.

**Introduction:** Power point of Bosnian War and the Lodz Ghetto

**Plan:** Have students pair read the two diary excerpts. They are to fill out the worksheet on the problem and solution (if any) for each entry. They are to discuss the entries using the discussion questions provided.

They are to then fill out two VENN diagram focusing on the life experiences of each diarist and the personality of each writer.

**Assignment:** The students will use the VENN diagrams to help them in their writing of a five paragraph essay comparing and contrasting the two diarists. Their essay should contain specific references from the diaries.