

Researching the Children of the Holocaust: a Webquest based on *Surviving Hitler*

A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps
by Andrea Warren



Jack Mandelbaum, 1945
photo courtesy of Midwest Center for Holocaust Education

A WebQuest for 5th – 8th Grade (Language Arts/Social Studies)

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Introduction

You have just finished reading *Surviving Hitler*. You became so interested in the book that you wrote letters to the author and the publisher. The publisher was so impressed with your interest in children of the Holocaust that she has asked you to write a book based on the life of another child involved in the Holocaust. As a writer, you will need to find a subject for your book and research pertinent information to include in your story. Your book will be like *Surviving Hitler* in that it will be based on a real person and real events in history. Your job in this webquest is to begin the research process that an author would follow to write a book about a child of the Holocaust, keeping a writer's notebook as you research.

The Task

To create a writer's notebook, you will need to develop a hardcopy scrapbook or a digital scrapbook (a PowerPoint, for example) where you keep the required resources and research in an organized manner. You will present your notebook to the other class members at the end of your project.

The Process

Before you begin, read the entire webquest. In the Evaluation section, you will find the scoring guide that your teacher will use to evaluate your writer's notebook. Be sure you complete all the requirements to earn the grade you desire. For each specific assignment below, there are suggested websites. You may use other sources (websites, books, etc.). As a writer researching historical events, it is critical that you find/use accurate information. Be sure to consult with your teacher about the sources you are using. The final page of your notebook should be a bibliography listing all sources you used for the project. Use Landmarks Citation to create a citation for each source you use. Copy and paste each citation onto your bibliography page. Keep the citations in alphabetical order.
http://www.landmark-project.com/citation_machine/index.php

1. Andrea Warren, a successful writer, has many helpful tips for aspiring writers at her website, <http://www.andreawarren.com/qawriting.html>. Read what she has to say and explore the other pages of her website. Email her with your comments about *Surviving Hitler* and a question or two about becoming a writer. Put a copy of your email and her reply as the first page(s) in your writer's notebook.



Photo from www.ushmm.org

2. You will need to choose a child as the subject of your book. Go to www.wiesenthal.com and select the link to the Museum of Tolerance. To find a child, select the “Children of the Holocaust” icon on the right hand side of the page. Choose one of the children you find there. Print out a copy of his/her story and a photo of him/her. The next page(s) of your notebook should include the photo and ten facts you read about him/her that you want to include in your book.



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was invaded?

Use the links from the following site to help you research the answers to those questions.

<http://www.mchekc.org/holocaustwebsites.htm>

3. The next page(s) of your writer's notebook should include your research to answer the following questions about your child:

- a) What original country did your child come from?
- b) What was life like for Jews in that country before the war?
- c) When was that country invaded by the Germans?
- d) What happened to Jews once the country

was invaded?

Use the links from the following site to help you research the answers to those questions.

<http://www.mchekc.org/holocaustwebsites.htm>

4. You need to find photographs to help illustrate your child's story just as Andrea Warren used photos of Jack Mandelbaum and others in her book. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum allows the use of their photos for educational purposes (like this webquest). Go to the museum site at www.ushmm.org, and choose 5 photographs to use. Print a copy of each photo. For each photo, complete the following questions:

- a) Who are the people in the photo and what are they doing?
- b) How old do they appear to be?
- c) Describe their facial expressions.
- d) Does it seem as if they are aware that a photograph is being taken?
- e) Describe the setting of the photograph.
- f) Is an event taking place?
- g) Can you tell anything about the perspective of the photographer by what has been included in or omitted from the photograph?
- h) What do you think might be happening outside the frame of the photograph?
- i) A caption is a short description or explanation of a photograph or picture. It often included information about what is happening in the picture, where and when the picture was taken, and who is in the picture. Using the information gathered above, write a caption for the photograph. How would the caption have been different if it had been published in a Nazi newspaper in 1940 or in an American newspaper in 1940?



Photos from www.ushmm.org

1. You now need to research what happened to your child during the war. Was your child in hiding, in a camp, saved by rescuers? Use the MCHE site links to complete this research. www.mchekc.org

You may also use other sites and/or books suggested by your teacher. Keep all your notes in your writer's notebook. Be sure you note the sources from which you took the notes. The notes should be in your own words. Be sure to correctly punctuate any direct quotations you use.

6. Research what happened to your child after the war. If you cannot find specific information on your child, research what might have happened to a child in similar circumstances. If your child did not survive, research what happened in your child's country after the war. Use the MCHE site links to complete this research.

www.mchekc.org

You may also use other sites and/or books suggested by your teacher. The book, *From the Heart*, and the presentation, *Mosaic of Memory*, both of which are available through the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education, would be useful sources of information. Keep all your notes in your writer's notebook. Be sure you note the sources from which you took the notes. Be sure to correctly punctuate any direct quotations you use.

7. By now you should know a good deal of information about your child and his/her story. Your next task is to write penpal letters that Jack and your child might have written each other before or after the war. Include copies of both letters in your notebook.

8. Your final activity to complete your notebook is to create a title for your book and design its cover. The cover should include the title, your name as author, and an illustration or photo. Use this cover as the cover of your writer's notebook or the first slide in your digital notebook.

You have completed all the prerequisites for writing the story of another child of the Holocaust. Before you present your work to the class, check the scoring guide one final time to be sure you completed all the requirements. You will then be ready to present your child's story, through your eyes as the author, to your class and teacher.

