

Introduction: These lessons were created for use in 8th grade ELA classes. The plans could be used in higher grades with readers and writers who are working below grade level. *Surviving Hitler* is a non-fiction biography written at 820 Lexile, making it accessible for students who are learning English or who have reading challenges. The main character, Jack Mandelbaum, is a Polish Jew who faces brutal treatment and slave labor at the hands of the Nazis. The content is appropriately challenging for and interesting to 8th graders but is not overly graphic or violent. The book was honored with a [Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal](#).

Because I am a secondary reading specialist, my approach to teaching literature—whether fiction or non-fiction—always includes a strong focus on reading skills. *Surviving Hitler* also lends itself well to instruction in thesis construction and essay writing. In addition to ordinary class discussion, this unit also incorporates a Socratic Seminar.

Instructional Texts:

Warren, Andrea. *Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

Bachrach, Susan D. *Tell Them We Remember: The Story of the Holocaust*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1994.

Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth. Documentary video relating the testimony of Alfons Heck, a former Hitler Youth. Available with a transcript through the Resource Library at Facing History & Ourselves. Also generally available on YouTube.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/heil-hitler-confessions-hitler-youth>

Sources for Student Research:

Audio Glossary. Echoes & Reflections. https://echoesandreflections.org/audio_glossary/

Holocaust Encyclopedia. USHMM. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/>.

Timeline of the Holocaust. Echoes & Reflections. <https://timelineoftheholocaust.org/>

Professional Resources:

- Beers, Kylene and Robert E. Probst. *Reading Nonfiction: Notice & Note Stances, Signposts, and Strategies*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2016. Print.
- Beers, Kylene and Robert E. Probst. *Notice & Note: Strategies for Close Reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2013. Print.
- Silver, Harvey F., R. Thomas Dewing, and Matthew J. Perini. *The Core Six: Essential Strategies for Achieving Excellence with the Common Core*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2012. Print.
- Tovani, Cris. *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?: Content Comprehension, Grades 6-12*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2004.
- Tovani, Cris. *I Read It, But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2000.
- Warren, Andrea. *The Author's Guide to **Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps** and Its Alignment with the Common Core and State Standards*. Self-Published, 2013. Andrea@ AndreaWarren.com. Print.

Pertinent 8th Grade ELA Common Core Standards

L.8.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words and phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

RI.8.1: Make inferences and draw conclusions by analyzing information from the text.

RI.8.1: Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports inferences drawn from text.

RI.8.2: Determine the central theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas.

RI.8.4: Analyze the impact of an author's specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to texts.

SL.8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on other's ideas and expressing their own clearly.

W.8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and supporting evidence.

W.8.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow multiple avenues of exploration.

W.8.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research by applying grade 8 reading standards to literature and to literary nonfiction.

W.8.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Essential Questions for *Surviving Hitler*.

- Which of Jack Mandelbaum's character traits helped him to survive his ordeal? Support your answer with evidence.
- How much of Jack's survival was due to his own initiative and how much was attributable to sheer luck? Provide evidence.
- Are some people inherently evil and some inherently good, or do all people have the capacity for both good and evil behavior? Provide support.
- Genocide was first recognized by the UN as a crime under international law in 1946—in response to the Nazis' actions. What evidence supports the assertion that the Nazis were guilty of genocide? <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>
- Could a genocide like the Holocaust happen again today? Why or why not? What actions can be taken to prevent genocide?

Key Holocaust Concepts to Consider Teaching:

- The USHMM definition of the term *Holocaust*.
- A basic understanding of *antisemitism*, its history, and currently-recommended spelling of the word.
- Groups of people other than Jews were persecuted. Some of these groups were, like Jews, targeted for murder by the Nazis.
- Jews were falsely regarded as a race during the 1900s – 1940s throughout Europe and the US.
- Hitler gained power legally.
- The murder of 6 million European Jews was not inevitable.
- Death was the most common experience for European Jews—and Polish Jews particularly—during the Holocaust. Was Jack Mandelbaum's family typical or atypical of Jewish experience?
- Jack, his mother, and brother lived for a time in a *ghetto*. Why did the Nazis use ghettos, how many there were, what was their organizational structure, and what were typical experiences of ghetto life?
- Although Jack did not experience *deportation* on a train, this was a traumatic experience for most Holocaust victims. Why?
- Jack lived in a variety of concentration camps but was never deported to a killing center. Students will learn about the six *killing centers* – their purpose, process, similarities and differences.
- There were obstacles that prevented effective Jewish resistance. Nevertheless, *armed and unarmed resistance* did happen.
- The Nazis used *death marches* and *death trains* toward the end of the war. Why? What conditions did prisoners experience?
- *Liberation* was not always a joyful experience for the survivors. Why?
- Many survivors lived in *displaced persons camps* for years after the war. What were these camps? Where were they located? Why did the Jews stay there for such a long time after the war?
- How did the *Nuremberg Trials* influence modern international law?
- How and why did *immigration* policies to the U.S. and Palestine change at the end of WWII? How was the State of Israel created?

Writing Craft & Structure: Students should identify and utilize:

- Techniques the author uses to build background knowledge about the Holocaust without disrupting the narrative flow.
Example: “I remember my father replying...hated the Jews. This hatred went back to ancient rivalries and misunderstanding...made the Jews the scapegoats for Germany’s loss of World War I and for its economic problems...it would be the Jews’ fault...result in the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe”(15).
- Warren’s use of context clues for unfamiliar vocabulary. Teach students the types of context clues.
Example: “For the first time in Jack’s life, food was **rationed**. His uncle kept all food under lock and key. When dinner came, you got your portion. If you wanted more, too bad” (32). *See support materials on context clues: instructional PowerPoint and student handout.*

Reading Comprehension & Critical Thinking:

- **Core Six Strategies** as described by Silver, Dewing, and Perini in *The Core Six: Essential Strategies for Achieving Excellence with the Common Core*.
 - 1) Reading for Meaning
 - 2) Compare & Contrast
 - 3) Inductive Learning
 - 4) Circle of Knowledge
 - 5) Write to Learn
 - 6) Vocabulary’s CODE
- “Comprehension constructors” as described by Tovani in *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* and *I Read It, But I Don’t Get It* such as **double-entry diaries** (DEDs) to record inferences, questions, analysis of text, connections, and research that answers questions. Note: A double-entry diary is simply a text annotation strategy that happens on paper rather than inside the book. DEDs prevent defacing school-owned books and provide more space for students to write than they would have in the margins of the pages.
- **Signposts** in texts as described by Beers and Probst in *Notice & Note: Strategies for Close Reading*. Students are asked to watch for these moments in text and ask critical questions at these signposts to aid comprehension:
 - 1) Contrasts & Contradictions
 - 2) Aha Moment
 - 3) Tough Questions
 - 4) Words of the Wiser
 - 5) Again and Again
 - 6) Memory Moment

Making Connections: Companion texts for building background knowledge, making connections, and additional research.

Suggested chapters from a companion history text:

Tell Them We Remember

by Susan D. Bachrach

- Jewish Life in Europe... p.2-5
- Antisemitism p. 6-7
- Hitler Comes to Power p.8-9
- Nazi Terror Begins p.10-11
- Nazi Racism p.12-13
- Enemies of the State p.20-21 (other victims)
- Ghettos in Eastern Europe p.38-39
- Life in the Ghetto p.40-41
- The Wannsee Conference p.46-47
- Deportations p.48-49
- On the Train p. 50-51
- At the Killing Centers p.52-53
- Auschwitz-Birkenau p.54-57
- Prisoners of the Camps p.58-59 (other victims)
- Resistance Inside Germany p.68-69
- Warsaw Ghetto Uprising p.70-71
- Killing Center Revolts p.72-73
- Jewish Partisans p.74-75
- Death Marches p.76-77
- Liberation p.78-79
- The Nuremberg Trials p.80
- The Survivors p.82-85

Note: If access to this text is not available, the online *Holocaust Encyclopedia* at USHMM offers short articles, videos, and survivors testimonies on these topics.

Suggested websites:

Audio Glossary. Echoes & Reflections.
https://echoesandreflections.org/audio_glossary/

Timeline of the Holocaust. Echoes & Reflections. <https://timelineoftheholocaust.org/>

Holocaust Encyclopedia. USHMM.
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/>

Resources on antisemitism:

Definition – US Department of State
<https://www.state.gov/defining-antisemitism/>

Why the Jews? 13-minute video from USHMM on the history of antisemitism with transcript
<https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/what-is-antisemitism/why-the-jews-history-of-antisemitism>

Recommended websites for student research:

<https://mchekc.org/resources/student-resources/recommended-holocaust-websites-for-students/>

Primary sources for student research:

<https://mchekc.org/resources/primary-source-documents/>

Suggested videos:

The Holocaust: Through Our Own Eyes. MCHE. Classroom Version. Holocaust overview. Includes testimony from Jack Mandelbaum.
<https://youtu.be/NbQdHwOaxcE>

Jack Mandelbaum – video testimony & supporting resources
<https://mchekc.org/testimonial/jack-mandelbaum/>
Located on the MCHE website under the “Survivor Testimonies” tab.

Witnesses to the Holocaust series – especially:

Kristallnacht (47 minutes)

<https://youtu.be/xEyGR3aHI-E?si=zKcvy1FBe9xiWwvS>

The Ghettos (30:34 minutes)

<https://youtu.be/a0iOw1U1wbs?si=KBC5PgSTrvIzPwnm>

Auschwitz (44:12 minutes)

<https://youtu.be/bCmaQrgbEgs?si=VMimKxPIlbsUrYhD>

Liberation and After (38:34 mins)

<https://youtu.be/JKzgtjuEhAk?si=Z0T6hTa4PwO7NtU1>

The videos above may be found under the “Videos & Documentaries” tab on the MCHE website.

Escape From Sobibor - 1987 film (2:28:37)

Show clip (1:04:20—1:11:51) to illustrate *collective responsibility*

https://youtu.be/rQLQ1DrnvO0?si=I0OKd2obZ_25QpJU

Vocabulary to Consider Teaching

(A good portion of this list comes from Andrea Warren's study guide for *Surviving Hitler*.)

General	Content Specific
<p> mischievous (12) eavesdropped (14) persecuted (15) nationality (15) newsreels (15) cavalry (19) foreboding (19) lice(31) curfew (33) bedraggled (50) truncheons (50) infraction (59) ration (60) inoculation (70) retribution (79) deliberation (83) atrocities (87) marmalade (88) intolerable (89) reveries (93) debris (93) liberation (99) invincible (114) looted (116) accomplices (118) </p>	<p> ethnic cleansing (3) Nazi (14) scapegoat (15) Yiddish (15) immigration quotas (17) anti-Semitic vs. antisemitic (17) – See notes below. no-man's-land (18) Star of David (27) occupied/occupation (27) concentration camp (27) food rationing (32) Polish Resistance (34) forced labor (36) ghetto (40) deport/deportation (43) selection – happens on p.46 but term not used kapo (54) crematorium (57) typhus (62, 70) dysentery (62, 81) colored triangle (64) “Work Makes One Free” (74) collective responsibility – described on p.79 but term not used resistance – happens on p.88 but term not used commandant (97) displaced persons' camp (112) </p>

anti-Semitic v antisemitic: consult...

ADL <https://www.adl.org/spelling-antisemitism-vs-anti-semitism>

IHRA <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/antisemitism/spelling-antisemitism>

The Times of Israel <https://www.timesofisrael.com/whats-in-a-hyphen-why-writing-anti-semitism-with-a-dash-distorts-its-meaning/>

Reading Assignments

	Chapters	Chapter Titles	Page Range	Total Pages
1	Introduction & Ch.1	Intro & Rumors of War, 1939	pp. 1-19	18
2	Ch. 2	Occupation	pp. 20-30	10
3	Ch. 3	A Growing Fear	pp. 31-40	9
4	Ch. 4 & Ch. 5	Despair & The Right to Die	pp. 41-53	13
5	Ch. 6 & Ch. 7	Learning the Rules & The Game	pp. 54-70	17
6	Ch. 8—Ch. 11	Hour by Hour, Death's Door, Moniek & The Miracle	pp. 71-98	28
7	Ch. 12—Ch. 14	Liberation, The Search & Creating a New Life	pp. 99-127	29
	Supplementary Text		pp. 133-137	5

Surviving Hitler on 2 audio discs

From Johnson County Library

CDAUDIO

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Disc 1 of 2		Disc 2 of 2	
Track Number	Chapter Title	Track Number	Chapter Title
1	Introduction	1	Ch.8 Hour by Hour
2	Ch.1 Rumors of War, 1939	5	Ch.9 Death's Door
8	Ch.2 Occupation	7	Ch.10 Moniek
11	Ch.3 A Growing Fear	11	Ch.11 The Miracle
15	Ch.4 Despair	15	Ch.12 Liberation
18	Ch.5 The Right to Die	19	Ch.13 The Search
20	Ch.6 Learning the Rules	27	Ch.14 Creating a New Life
24	Ch.7 The Game		
Each track is 2 minutes long. 2 hours, 30 minutes total.			

<p>Estimated Class Periods</p>	<p>BRIEF PLANS</p> <p>NOTE: All documents are separate files. Their titles are boldfaced in the plans to make them easier to locate. In most cases you will need to refer to <i>The Core Six</i> for background information and directions about how to complete a particular activity. <i>Surviving Hitler</i> = <i>SH</i>. <i>Tell Them We Remember</i> = <i>TTWR</i>. A class period is approximately 50 minutes.</p>
<p>Lesson One 2 periods</p> <p>pre-reading predictions</p>	<p>Before starting to read <i>Surviving Hitler</i> or even learning the title of the book...</p> <p>Learners will work in small groups to complete Ch.1 Inductive Learning Exercise:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sort terms from <i>SH</i> Ch.1 into categories. 2. Make predictions about the book based on the terms and categories. Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. genre b. setting c. characters d. conflict <p>(See Ch. 3 and Sample Lesson 1 on pp.10-11 of <i>The Core Six</i>.)</p>
<p>Lesson Two 2 periods</p> <p>Introduction & Chapter 1</p>	<p>Learners will read the “Introduction” and chapter one “Rumors of War, 1939” of <i>Surviving Hitler</i> by Andrea Warren. Learners will complete the Ch.1 Support-Refute Table, gathering evidence from the book that both substantiates and discredits the predictions they made during the inductive learning exercise.</p> <p>Teacher choice whether students work alone, in pairs, or in small groups. Or you may choose to construct this table as a class with input from the students. I often allow students to work in pairs or triads, especially when the learning is unfamiliar or particularly rigorous. As students become more practiced at discerning evidence from the text, they ought to be held accountable for performing this skill with greater independence. Scaffold the activity as needed for your learners. Provide feedback./Allow students to check their work.</p> <p>Note: Although I have provided a Ch.1 Support-Refute Table KEY, my advice is to use it as an example. Structure your table with the predictions that your students generate from their work in the Inductive Learning Exercise and adapt your answer key as needed.</p>

<p>Lesson Three 2 periods</p> <p>Chapters 2 & 3</p>	<p>Learners will read Chapters 2 & 3 of <i>SH</i>.</p> <p>Learners will complete the Chs.2&3 Support-Refute Table, gathering evidence from the book that both substantiates and discredits the statements on the table. Scaffold as needed. Provide feedback./Allow students to check their work. See Chs.2&3 Support-Refute Table KEY.</p> <p>Note: I provided the statements on this table because these were ideas that I wanted students to investigate. Feel free to change these however you wish.</p>
<p>Lesson Four 1 period</p> <p>Chapters 1-3</p>	<p>Teach a lesson that compares & contrasts the lives of Jews in Europe before WWI. Use Chs.1-3 East v West European Jews KEY as your guide. Working with students, create a “Top Hat” graphic organizer using notebook paper. (See <i>The Core Six</i>, p.18, Figure 2.1.)</p> <p>Use these texts to gather details to compare & contrast:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Read “Jewish Life in Europe Before the Holocaust” from <i>TTWR</i> pp.2-5. 2) Review Chs.1-3 <i>SH</i> looking for descriptions of Jack’s family’s life in Gdynia v how Jack’s grandfather and uncle (and their neighbors) lived in eastern Poland. <p>When students’ tables are finished, pose this question for pondering, discussion, and further consideration while reading:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">How might the differences between the lifestyles of Western and Eastern Jews matter once the Nazis target them for murder?</p>

<p>Lesson Five 1 period</p> <p>Building Schema: antisemitism</p>	<p>Every time I teach the Holocaust a student asks, “Why did Hitler (or the Nazis) hate the Jews?” This is an important question. The Holocaust would not have happened in an environment free of pervasive antisemitism. Hitler—and the Nazi Party—could not have carried out their goal to make Germany “<i>Judenrein</i>” without the support of the general public and the help of many collaborators.</p> <p>Therefore, it is important to address two big questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is antisemitism and why is it wrong? 2) Can we learn about Jews and their religious traditions, cultivating attitudes of respect and appreciation? <p>I have not written a lesson plan to address these questions. I leave it to you to know your community and develop your own approach to this topic. Instruction about Jewish culture and religious observance can be woven into instruction of <i>SH</i>. But addressing antisemitism is worthy of its own lesson.</p> <p><u>Antisemitism resources:</u> US Department of State. Definition of Antisemitism. https://www.state.gov/defining-antisemitism/. USHMM. What Is Antisemitism. https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/what-is-antisemitism. Facing History & Ourselves. https://www.facinghistory.org/search?keys=antisemitism. ADL (Anti-Defamation League). https://www.adl.org/what-we-do/fight-antisemitism. See also the “Resources” tab.</p> <p><u>Resources on Jewish traditions:</u> American Jewish Committee (AJC). A Short Guide to Jewish Religion and Culture. https://www.ajc.org/news/a-short-guide-to-jewish-religion-and-culture CEPOL. A Practical Guide to Judaism. https://www.cepol.europa.eu/api/assets/Guide_to_Judaism_EN.pdf Pew Research Center. Jewish Americans in 2020. https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/</p>
<p>Lesson Six 2 periods</p> <p>Chapters 4 & 5</p>	<p>Learners will read Chapters 4 & 5 of <i>SH</i>. Suggested companion text: Chapters from <i>TTWR</i>: pp. 38-40 and 46-61.</p> <p>Learners will complete the Chs.4&5 Process Chart, gathering evidence from the book.</p> <p>The goal of this lesson is 1) to have students identify a series of events that happened to Jack’s family, and 2) to learn that these events were typical. The Nazis used a common process—with variations for particular circumstances—to consolidate Jews, sort or separate them, transport them, then murder them immediately or kill them slowly through slave labor. Scaffold the assignment as needed. Provide feedback./Allow students to check their work. See Chs.4&5 Process Chart KEY.</p>

<p>Lesson Seven 2 periods</p> <p>Chapters 6 & 7</p>	<p>Learners will read Chapters 6 & 7 of <i>SH</i>.</p> <p>By this point, my students were generally hooked by the book. They really just wanted to be left alone to read. However, there were important ideas that I wanted to make sure they understood. Therefore, I constructed a Double-Entry Diary (DED) called Chs.6&7 Reading Guide that has questions on the left side and note-taking space on the right side. The answers can be found in <i>SH</i>, but students will need to read carefully, looking for evidence and making inferences as they read. When finished, provide feedback./Allow students to check their work. See Chs.6&7 Reading Guide KEY.</p> <p>To help students get started, I asked them to create a set of sticky notes. (See Chs.6&7 SH Sticky Notes.) These sticky notes allowed the students to mark the places where they found info about the prompts on the DED and then keep on reading. This made it easier for them to go back into the text to make their notes.</p>
<p>Lesson Eight Part One 1 period</p> <p>Building Schema: Jewish resistance</p>	<p>Before reading Chapters 8-11 of <i>SH</i>.</p> <p>Another question that students usually ask during a study of the Holocaust is, “Why didn’t the Jews fight back?” This portion of <i>SH</i> provides an opportunity to teach about Jewish resistance and to examine examples of resistance performed by Jack and his friends.</p> <p>First, teach a brief lesson about resistance and the obstacles to resistance. See the file titled Resistance Notes.</p> <p>Also refer to the following sources: ADL. “Resistance During the Holocaust.” https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/Resistance-During-the-Holocaust-NYLM-Guide.pdf USHMM. Holocaust Encyclopedia. “Jewish Resistance.” https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-resistance Jewish Partisans Educational Foundation. “What is a Jewish Partisan?” https://www.jewishpartisans.org/what-is-a-jewish-partisan</p> <p>You will notice that there are many terms used to classify types of resistance: armed, unarmed, active, physical, spiritual, cultural. I don’t think these classifications are the most important point. I generally only use two: armed and unarmed. The most important ideas—from my point of view—are 1) that resistance was anything that helped maintain Jewish life, and 2) the Nazis used multiple and significant methods to deter resistance.</p>

<p>Lesson Eight Part Two 3 periods Chapters 8-11</p>	<p>Second, after teaching the students about resistance and the obstacles to resistance, read <i>SH</i> Chapters 8-11.</p> <p>Hand out Chs.8-11 Support-Refute Table and sticky notes. Ask the students to use sticky notes as they read to mark evidence of the claim: <i>Jack and his fellow inmates did not resist against their Nazi persecutors.</i></p> <p>After finishing their first read, they should re-read and record evidence on their tables. Decide if students should work on this task alone or in small groups. I generally assign them to pairs for this activity. When finished, provide feedback./Allow students to check their work.</p> <p>In Ch.11 of <i>SH</i>, there are clues that Germany is losing WWII. This provides an excellent opportunity to help students practice making inferences. See the notes at the bottom of Chs.8-11 Support-Refute Table KEY.</p>
<p>Lesson Nine 3 periods Chapters 12-14</p>	<p>Learners will read Chapters 12-14 of <i>SH</i>.</p> <p>The title of Ch.12 is “Liberation”—such a joyful and hopeful word. A critical idea of this lesson is that liberation for the Holocaust survivors was an experience of mixed feelings. Of course, they were happy to no longer be prisoners of the Nazis. However, their health was in jeopardy; many who saw liberation day died soon after. They were often far from home and had to face the fact that “home” would never exist again in its previous form. And they had no idea if any of their family members had survived. In addition, most of the survivors were young—in their late teens or early 20s—their educations had been interrupted. They needed to figure out a way to support themselves in the post-war world.</p> <p>The reading guide I created for these last chapters of the book is a combination Support-Refute Table and note-taking guide. Hand out Chs.12-14 Support-Refute Table and sticky notes. Preview the claim on Part One of the table and the information the students will be asked to note in Part Two of the assignment. Ask students to complete a first read, using sticky notes to mark text that they want to take notes about.</p> <p>After finishing their first read, they should re-read and record evidence on their tables. Decide if students should work on this task alone or in small groups. I generally assign them to pairs for this activity. When finished, provide feedback./Allow students to check their work. See Chs.12-14 Support-Refute Table KEY.</p> <p>Note: The start of Ch.12 describes Jack’s experience on a death march. The reasons for these marches are worth a few moments of class time. See the following sources for more information: USHMM. Holocaust Encyclopedia. “Death Marches.” https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/death-marches https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/death-marches-1</p>

**Thesis
Writing
Lessons**

Teaching students to write is teaching students to think—so important, but so difficult!

In addition to helping middle school students create intelligible sentences, my primary focus was on teaching them how to write a thesis statement and defend that thesis with evidence. SH provides plentiful opportunities to practice thesis construction. And all of those Support-Refute Tables and Double-Entry Diaries have helped the students record evidence the students can use to compose a well-supported essay. (You might want to tip the students off that their hard work along the way will pay off for them in the end!)

I can't take credit for the thesis-writing frame you will see at the top of all the **Thesis Statement** files. This idea came from Sarah Brown Wessling, the 2010 National Teacher of the Year (and fellow Iowa State University alumna). I tweaked the frame a bit as I used it with students, but the idea is Sarah's. Using this frame made everything about teaching thesis statements easier.

Although it is not reflected in these plans, I first introduced the thesis-writing frame to students after SH Ch.3. That is all we did at that point; just practiced writing thesis statements as a whole-class activity. **Thesis Statements – Construction** has models on the front side and blanks for practice on the back side. **Thesis Statements – Blank Frame** is a one-sided, empty graphic organizer for student practice. **Thesis Statements – Exs Chs.1-3** shows several examples of thesis statements constructed in cooperation with my 8th grade students.

The file **Thesis Statements – Student Exs Chs.8-11** shows a variety of thesis statements created by my 8th grade students. I think some of these statements are flat out incorrect. I left them on the table because I wanted you to see what students really produced. I also think it can be worthwhile for a student to work with an inaccurate thesis. If they put that statement on a Support-Refute Table and search for the evidence, what do they find? Can they discover for themselves that a thesis is problematic? That is valuable learning!

<p>Essay Writing</p>	<p>The file Writing Frame for SH is a “3 x 3 Writing Frame” from Chapter 5 of <i>The Core Six</i>. This is a brilliant graphic organizer that I wish I’d had early in my teaching career.</p> <p>The pre-writing (graphic organizer) and essay-drafting steps of this writing process was completed during class.</p> <p>I shaded the second column to emphasize that those parts of the graphic organizer represent the only ideas in the essay that may come from the text. The other three columns represent the thinking of the student. The hardest part for students (once they have a grip on constructing thesis statements) is column three. This is the part where the student has to elaborate/explain/make the connection between the thesis and the evidence from the text. Often, students want to fill up the body of their essay with evidence (i.e. quotes) then leave it to the reader to make the connections between the thesis and the evidence. The blank boxes in column three of this writing frame help make it clear that the students need to do the job of explaining <u>how</u> the evidence from the text supports their thesis.</p> <p>The other tricky part to teach is the closing argument. I will confess that I did not spend a lot of time on that part of the essay while I was teaching <i>SH</i>. I worked for a functional closing rather than a pithy conclusion sparkling with insight and creativity. I saved work on stunning conclusions for another set of lessons.</p> <p>For this set of lessons, I was content if I saw significant improvement in students’ ability to craft thesis statements, choose powerful supporting evidence from the text, and explain how the evidence they chose proved the thesis. A solid ending—even if not brilliant—was satisfactory.</p> <p>I have included a file titled Rubric for SH Final Essay. This is the rubric I used with my students. I always explain the rubric to students before they begin planning their essays, so they know exactly what is expected.</p>
<p>Unit Exam</p>	<p>If you wish to give an end-of-book objective test, I have included one along with an answer key. Look for the files Surviving Hitler Test and Surviving Hitler Test KEY.</p>

<p>Socratic Seminar</p>	<p><i>The Core Six</i> has a wonderful chapter titled “Circle of Knowledge” about fostering higher level thinking skills via class discussions. The last time I taught <i>SH</i>, <i>The Core Six</i> was a new publication and I had just obtained a copy. As you can see by now, it influenced my teaching methods for <i>SH</i>.</p> <p>Also at that time, Socratic Seminars were popular in my school district. I knew my students would be expected to skillfully participate in Socratic Seminars in their high school ELA and social studies courses. Therefore, I wanted to provide practice (and—for some—an introduction) to this instructional method.</p> <p>Although the Circle of Knowledge techniques described in <i>The Core Six</i> are not strictly the same as the methods used in Socratic Seminar, there certainly is overlap and the opportunity for one strategy to benefit the other. I leave it to you to decide whether to include class discussion among your <i>SH</i> lessons and exactly how to structure the lesson. I will provide the documents I created as a place to start.</p> <p>The file titled Socratic Seminar for Surviving Hitler & Heil Hitler is a detailed lesson plan. The file titled Socratic Seminar Preparation Notesheet was created for student use. It is designed to make sure that every student has ideas to contribute to the discussion. (You will notice that parts of the note-taking guide look familiar. Step 2 is a twist on a Support-Refute Table. Step 3 is a Top Hat organizer.)</p>
<p>Additional Lesson Ideas</p>	<p>If you want students to practice annotating text, change out one or more of the activities described above and use a Double-Entry Diary (DED). Provide as much or as little structure on these as your students need. The file Double-Entry Diary for SH is a blank form with directions aligned to the Beers & Probst book <i>Notice & Note: Strategies for Close Reading</i>.</p> <p>If you want students to practice using context clues to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words, <i>SH</i> provides many opportunities. See the files Context Clues PPT and Context Clues Overview for instructional tools. See the vocabulary list above for potential words with which to practice.</p>
<p>A Final Note</p>	<p>In <i>The Author’s Guide to Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps and Its Alignment with the Common Core and State Standards</i>, Andrea Warren shares the story of writing and publishing the book. In the section titled “Why I Wrote About the Holocaust,” Warren shares an anecdote about her last interview with Jack Mandelbaum. I made sure to relate this to my students. I thought it was important for them to know the price Jack was willing to pay to share his story with them.</p> <p>Jack died on 6 August 2023. He is buried in Kansas City, MO.</p>