**Holocaust Lesson Plan** developed by LF Patton for the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education 1/2025

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| Topic | **Hitler Youth** |
| Grade Level | Middle School – Grades 6 through 8 |
| Introduction | Students will be working with secondary source documents created by LF Patton – with information primarily taken from the websites maintained by the youth organizations that will be scrutinized during the lesson. In the case of the Hitler Youth, students will be working with a document that is a synthesis of several sources. Sources are noted on the bottom of each student handout or “card.” This lesson does not ask students to locate and evaluate the quality of information on these organizations; the author of the lesson has done that work.  The goal of this lesson is to ask students to compare and contrast the organizations – particularly evaluating the Hitler Youth – and think critically about the purpose and value of each and the effects they have on the youth who participate. |
| Common Core Standards | Applicable Common Core Standards for Grades 6-8:  RI.1, RI.2, RI.4 SL.1, SL.2, SL.4  L.4, L.6 RH.1, RH.2, RH.4, RH.7 |
| Time Required | Two class periods. |
| Materials  Needed | Student handouts:   1. Hitler Youth card 2. 4-H card 3. FFA card 4. Girl Scouts card 5. Scouting card   Compare – Contrast note-taking sheet  chart paper  sticky notes  notebook paper & pens/pencils to write reflections |
| Preparation | 1. Divide the class into small cooperative groups or pairs. 2. Assign each group one of the youth organizations listed above (b-e) AND the Hitler Youth. Try to distribute the four groups as equally as possible amongst the class. 3. Photocopy an appropriate number of handouts. |

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| Process | **Step One**   * Ask students to move into assigned small groups/pairs. * Give at least one Hitler Youth handout and one other youth organization handout to each group. Groups should be homogeneous; for example, all the members within a group should be working on Hitler Youth and 4-H. * Ask students to read both cards about their assigned youth groups,  1) identifying important characteristics about each group, and 2) noticing similarities and differences between the two groups. Give students permission to mark up their handouts and discuss their observations with group members. Ask students to capture essential ideas on their notesheets. * Specific things students should notice:   + Date the organization was founded   + Purpose of the organization   + Who may participate? Membership rules about age? gender? ethnicity? social class? religion?   + Relationship between the organization and the government   + Is the organization run by adults for youth or by youth with adult guidance?   + What sort of oath, promise, law, pledge, mission, or motto does the organization expect youth to make? Are these statements something you generally agree with? Would the adults who love you want you to make these sorts of commitments? * Give students a time limit for reading, discussing, and note-taking – 15 to 20 minutes. Set a countdown timer that the students can see. * Caution students to be ready for one member to be called upon to share the group’s conclusions with the whole class.   **Step Two (if time allows)**   * Ask students to regroup in heterogeneous groups – one representative from each American-founded youth organization in each group. * Ask students to share with each other the key ideas about the organization they studied. * Ask students to discuss with each other their observations about the Hitler Youth and the four American-based youth organizations.   **Step Three**   * Reconvene the class as a whole. * Call on one member from each homogeneous group to briefly share conclusions from their group. If there are several groups assigned to the same youth organizations, you might limit the number of facts each can share so that the groups called on later still have information to add. * Record the information as students share – if possible, in a manner that allows the students to see the ideas as they are shared (chart paper & marker, white board, document camera, SMART board).   Alternative recording method: Ask group members to record their three most important conclusions on sticky notes. After sharing, ask students to categorize their conclusions by placing the sticky notes on pieces of chart paper labeled with the names of the youth organizations.  Continued…  **Step Four**   * Once a good amount of information about the groups has been verbalized, the teacher should begin to draw the students into discussion and analysis – focusing on both the pros and cons of these groups. The primary focus of this lesson is learning about the Hitler Youth. * What were the intentions of the Nazi government for the Hitler Youth? What were their goals? Did the Nazis accomplish their goals concerning the Hitler Youth? Is more information needed to answer these questions?\* * Were there any benefits and harms to the youth because of their participation in Hitler Youth? Is more information needed to answer this question?\* * Generally speaking, what is the purpose of youth organizations. Do they work toward goals that are in the best interests of young people? Could they be used against youth for the goals of a government, church, or other powerful entity? How could a young person tell the difference between a “good” and a “bad” youth organization? What would be the warning signs?   \*Viewing excerpts of the short film Heil Hitler could be a source of information on the benefits and harms of participation. See Sources listed below.  **Step Five**   * **Written Reflection**: At the end of the film, *Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth*, Alfons Heck said, “The experience of the Hitler Youth in Nazi Germany constitutes a massive case of child abuse. Out of millions of basically innocent children, Hitler and his regime succeeded in creating potential monsters. Could it happen again today? Of course it can….”   What do you think about Alfons Heck’s warning? What do you know now that could help you avoid getting involved with a Hitler Youth-type organization? |
| Additional  Sources | Sources of information for the handouts (or “cards”) are noted at the bottoms of those documents.  Common Core Standards <https://corestandards.org/>  *Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth*  <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/heil-hitler-confessions-hitler-youth> |
| Books for  Middle School  Students | Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler’s Shadow*. New York: Scholastic Nonfiction, 2005. (Newbery Honor Book.)  Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *The Boy Who Dared*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2008. |