Holocaust Packet 1: Understanding the Holocaust

In this project you will learn background knowledge about the Holocaust. You will study various primary documents, poems, biographies, videos, and other resources in order to understand the experiences of victims of the Holocaust, perpetrators of the Holocaust, bystanders, and heroes.

Part 1: Understanding the Holocaust

1. Definition of Important Terms
2. Suitcase Activity
3. Holocaust Background Web Quest
4. Poem
5. Survivor Testimony

Part 1: A: Definitions of Important Terms:

1. Holocaust – term for the persecution and genocide of European Jews during WWII. The word Holocaust literally means “to destroy by fire.” The Holocaust resulted in the deaths of about six million Jews and about 4-5 million other groups, including: homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, mentally and physically handicapped, Slavic peoples, gypsies, and others who challenged the Nazis.
2. Genocide – term for the organized and systematic destruction of a group of people based on their race, religion, or other criteria.
3. Aryan – a mythical Germanic race, thought to be the original inhabitants of Germany and Scandinavia. Hitler’s idea of the highest evolved form of humanity—super race or master race.
4. Anti-Semitism – a specific type of racism directed at Semitic speaking peoples (Jewish). Anti-Semitism had existed in Europe since the Middle Ages, particularly in Eastern Europe.
5. Nazis – An acronym which stands for the National Socialist German Workers Party. A fascist group who controlled the government and society of Germany from 1933 until 1949, and led by dictator Adolf Hitler. This group was characterized by aggressive military expansion, social engineering, and intense racism.
6. Ghetto – A town, city or area of a city used as a temporary holding area for individuals before they were deported to a concentration camp. Conditions were terrible and many died from starvation and disease. In the ghetto, there was still some personal freedom and families were allowed to live together.
7. Deportation – The forced transport (often by crowded cattle car) of Holocaust victims from one location to another.
8. Concentration Camp – a term for a location in which Holocaust victims were kept in terrible conditions against their will usually in barracks. There were slave labor camps, which focused on forcing victims to work in terrible conditions (many died of starvation, disease, and over-work), and extermination camps, which were designed to kill as many people as quickly and efficiently as possible (gas chambers, starvation, etc.)
9. Enzatzgruppen (Mobile Killing Squads) – Mostly used in Eastern Europe, these groups were organized of local men and German soldiers. These groups travelled around and massacred large groups of Jewish civilians.
10. Final Solution – The Nazi’s ultimate “solution” to the “Jewish Question.” It meant the systematic murder of millions.

Part 1: B: Holocaust Suitcase Activity

Imagine that you and you’re family are awoken in the middle of the night. Soldiers enter your home with guns and tell you that you have 5 minutes to pack only what you can carry in a single suitcase. You have no idea where you are going or if you will return. What would you pack? List your items in the suitcase below.



Part 1: C: Holocaust Background WebQuest

Please use the web links (either type in or follow links on my web page ([www.mrsvworldgeo.weebly.com](http://www.mrsvworldgeo.weebly.com)) to answer the questions below. If the web link is a video or animated map, please watch with the sound turned down (or use headphones). If the question says TPS next to it, please discuss with your group members and answer. Please answer all questions with complete sentences.

* Overview of the Holocaust
	+ Animated Map of World War II & the Holocaust: <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_nm.php?MediaId=7827>
		1. According to the video/ map, when did the Nazis institute the first systematic round ups of the Jews?
		2. Why did the Germans kill or re-settle Polish people?
		3. What ratio of Jews did Nazis kill in Europe (approximate)?
* Ghettos
	+ Life in the Ghettos: <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007708>
		1. Describe what life was like in the ghettos (3 sentence minimum).
* Concentration Camps
	+ Forced Labor: <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007732>
		1. About how many factories did the Nazis open?
		2. About how many hours a day did Jewish forced laborers work?
	+ At the Killing Centers: <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007714>
		1. **TPS**: Describe how prisoners were divided when they arrived at the killing centers? Why do you think this was?
		2. When did Germans start killing those considered to be “lives unworthy of life?”
	+ Auschwitz: <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007718>
		1. **TPS**: What does “Arbeit Macht Frei” mean? What did it mean for prisoners at Auschwitz?
		2. Describe life in Auschwitz (3 sentence minimum).
		3. About how many total Jews were killed at Auschwitz?
* Final Solution
	+ The Wansee Conference and the Final Solution: <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007712>
		1. What was the “Final Solution?” How was this a historical or unique decision?
* Deportation
	+ Deportations: <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007716>
		1. What were the names of the six camps in Poland that Jews were deported to?
		2. What was the main method of execution at these camps? Why?
* Survivors, Liberation & Aftermath
	+ Death Marches: <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007734>
		1. Describe the death marches using specific examples from the article (3 sentence minimum).
		2. **TPS**: Why do you think the Germans wasted so much time and manpower on the death marches?
	+ Liberation: <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007724>
		1. About how many prisoners at Auschwitz died even after being freed? Why?
		2. **TPS**: The true extent of the Holocaust was not known by most countries until the end of the war. What do you think the Allied soldiers who liberated the camps might have thought as they discovered what the Nazis had been doing?
	+ The Survivors: <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007736>
		1. Describe what happened to many survivors after the war (3 sentence minimum).
		2. **TPS**: If you had been a survivor would you have wanted to live in your old home/ hometown after the war? Why or why not?

Part 1: D: The Butterfly

The Butterfly by Pavel Friedman

Written April 6, 1942

Pavel Friedman was born on January 7, 1921 he Died in Auschwitz on September 29, 1944

The last, the very last,

So richly, brightly, dazzling yellow.

Perhaps if the sun’s tears would sing

against a white stone . . .

Such, such a yellow.

It is carried lightly ‘way up high.

It went away I’m sure because it wished to

kiss the world good-bye.

For seven weeks I’ve lived in here,

Penned up inside this ghetto.

But I have found what I love here.

The dandelions call to me

And the white chestnut branches in the court.

Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.

Butterflies don’t live in here,

in the ghetto.

Questions for The Last Butterfly: Please answer in complete sentences.

1. What is this poem about? How does it make you feel? How do you think the author felt?
2. What information does this poem give you about the ghetto? Is it all bad? Explain.
3. What kind of words and images come to mind when you think of a butterfly? Why do you think the author chose a yellow butterfly as the main image in his poem?

Part 1: E: One Survivor Remembers

Please watch the video One Survivor Remembers about Gerda Weissman Klein and her Holocaust Experiences and answer the following questions in thoughtful, complete sentences. <http://www.tolerance.org/kit/one-survivor-remembers>

1. What was life like for Gerda before the war? (Where did she live? What was her family like? Etc.)
2. How did things change for Gerda and her family after the Nazis invaded Poland?
3. What was life like for Gerda after she was deported?
4. What part of Gerda’s story stands out the most to you? Why? (Please include very specific details of the story and how your reaction)
5. Do you think it is important for people like Gerda to share their stories? Why or why not?