One-Month Unit Outline for Holocaust and Human Behavior

**Introduction**

This outline guides you through a unit using readings, videos, and other resources from *Holocaust and Human Behavior*. The unit is organized to follow the Facing History scope and sequence.

As you prepare for and teach this unit, it is important to refer to the book *Holocaust and Human Behavior* for context necessary to help guide students from lesson to lesson and to answer their questions. We also recommend you read the Get Started section for important suggestions about how to foster a reflective classroom community and how to support students as they encounter the emotionally challenging history of the Holocaust.

Each lesson below corresponds roughly to one day of instruction time. Since schedules, class-period length, and the needs of individual classes and students vary, teachers will likely need to make adjustments to this plan to best suit their needs and circumstances. The “teaching notes” accompanying each lesson often provide suggestions for making adjustments to the lesson in order to abbreviate or go deeper.
In this first series of lessons, students begin the unit by examining the societal factors that shape how we think about our own identities and how we define others. After a broad introduction to the concept of identity, these lessons look closely at how one factor, religion, influences the way many people see themselves and others, and they explore the way that stereotypes can distort our perceptions of others.

**Essential Questions**

- What factors shape our identities? Which parts do we choose for ourselves and which are determined by others, society, or chance?
- What dilemmas may arise when others view us differently than we view ourselves?

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<td><strong>1. Charting Identity</strong></td>
<td>Reading: The Bear That Wasn’t</td>
<td>Students create, share, and discuss identity charts for the bear in The Bear That Wasn’t and for themselves.</td>
<td>See the lesson <a href="#">The Complexity of Identity</a> for more detailed suggestions. Background information: Chapter 1 Introduction</td>
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<td><strong>2. Stereotypes and “Single Stories”</strong></td>
<td>Reading: The Danger of a Single Story</td>
<td>Students read The Danger of a Single Story, create an identity chart for author Chimamanda Adichie, and discuss the “single stories” they have encountered in their lives.</td>
<td>Excerpt the reading as necessary to make accessible for your class, or show the video from ted.com. Connect the idea of “single stories” to the concept of stereotypes.</td>
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<td><strong>3. The Influence of Religion</strong></td>
<td>Reading: Religion and Identity</td>
<td>Students read Religion and Identity and then make Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World connections with the experiences the text describes. Focus the discussion on the question: What dilemmas may arise when others view us differently than we view ourselves?</td>
<td>Tell students that the connections they write about do not necessarily have to be about religion. You can broaden the range of experiences represented in this activity by supplementing the lesson with additional readings from Chapter 1 that are relevant to your class.</td>
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**We & They [~3 Days]**

Students now turn their attention from individual to group identity. These lessons introduce the human tendency to create “in” groups and “out” groups, and they look at the way humans have created such groups throughout history on the basis of race and religion, among other factors.

**Essential Questions**

- How have societies distinguished between who can be a member and who must remain an outsider, and why have those distinctions mattered?

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| **4. Differences and Belonging** | **Reading:** What Do We Do with a Difference?  
**Reading:** Universe of Obligation  
**Handout:** Universe of Obligation | Students read and discuss the two readings (using Connection Questions) and then use the handout to illustrate Universe of Obligations for themselves and for a group to which they belong. | See the lesson Understanding Universe of Obligation for more detailed suggestions.  
**Background information:** Chapter 2 Introduction |
| **5. The Concept of Race** | **Reading:** Defining Race  
**Video:** Race: The Power of an Illusion (The Story We Tell) | Students read aloud Defining Race and discuss Connections Questions. Then, they watch the video and record something they found surprising, something they found interesting, and something they found troubling to discuss with a partner afterwards. | Connect the emerging understanding of race with the way it has been used to define societies’ universes of obligation.  
**Background information:** Chapter 2 readings 3-8, and 11 |
| **6. Defining Antisemitism** | **Reading:** Anti-Judaism before the Enlightenment  
**Reading:** From Religious Prejudice to Antisemitism | Students learn about the history of anti-Judaism and how it evolved into antisemitism from readings and videos. Then, they discuss the Connections Questions following each reading using Think-Pair-Share. | The video The Ancient Roots of Anti-Judaism can be substituted for the reading, if desired. If you use the video, you can still follow it up with the Connections Questions for Anti-Judaism before the Enlightenment.  
**Background information:**  
Chapter 2 readings: Religion, Loyalty, and Belonging, Creating the German Nation, Anti-Judaism before the Enlightenment, From Religious Prejudice to Antisemitism |
Case Study: Nazi Germany and the Holocaust [~13 Days]

In this series of lessons, students dive deeply into a historical case study about the Holocaust, practicing historical thinking skills while finding links to the universal themes of human behavior they examined in the first two stages of the unit. In this case study students explore the idea of democracy and what is essential to support and sustain it. They examine how it is possible that some groups within a society could be discriminated against, dehumanized, and eventually targeted for mass murder. They are also challenged to think about the choices available to individuals in times of injustice and the factors that influence their decision-making. The dramatic and sometimes painful stories told in these resources require students to respond to history with not just their intellects but also with their hearts.

Essential Questions

- What choices and circumstances enabled the Nazi Party to rise to power in Germany?
- What is the Holocaust? How did the choices of individuals, groups, and entire nations help to make it possible?
- What can we learn about human behavior from confronting this history? What can we learn about ourselves? What new questions does this history raise for us in the twenty-first century?

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| 7. The End of War and the Beginning of Democracy | Video: Preconditions for the Holocaust: Prejudice in 20th Century Europe  
Reading: Creating a Constitutional Government  
Reading: Rumors of Betrayal | Students watch the video, which ends with Germany’s loss in World War I.  
The class begins a concept map (or identity chart) for democracy and uses it to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution.  
The class reads aloud Creating a Constitutional Government, and then students work in pairs to analyze the Weimar government, comparing it to the democracy concept map.  
Optional: Students read Rumors of Betrayal and reflect on how rumors about the end of the war affected Germans’ trust in their new government. | For more teaching resources on the effects of World War I, see the lesson Analyzing the Effects of World War I.  
Background information:  
Chapter 2 readings: “Expansion Was Everything”, Imperialism, Conquest, and Mass Murder  
All of Chapter 3  
Chapter 4 readings: The November Revolution, Rumors of Betrayal, Creating a Constitutional Government |
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| **8. Art and Culture in the Weimar Republic** | Visual Essay: Free Expression in the Weimar Republic  
Teaching Strategy: Identity Charts  
Handout: Which Political Party? | Students analyze images from the visual essay using the Analyze Visual Images strategy, Big Paper-style. In pairs, students silently write their observations, questions, and conclusions as annotations around the image. Finish with a whole-group discussion focusing on the following questions:  
What do these images suggest about art and culture in Weimar society?  
What reactions might individual Germans have had to these images?  
What is the role of free expression in democracy? | Background information: Chapter 4 |
Reading: Hard Times Return  
Handout: Which Political Party? | Students watch the video to provide/deepen historical context.  
Students then discuss in pairs or small groups which party platforms (listed in Hard Times Return) would be most appealing to one or more of the individuals profiled in the Which Political Party? handout. | For more teaching resources on the politics in the Weimar Republic, see the lesson Choices in Weimar Republic Elections.  
Background information: Chapter 4 |
| **10. From Democracy to Dictatorship** | Video: Hitler’s Rise to Power: 1933-1934  
Reading: “The Battle for Work”  
Reading: Outlawing the Opposition  
Reading: Storm Troopers, Elite Guards, and Secret Police  
Reading: Shaping Public Opinion  
Reading: Targeting Jews  
Reading: “Restoring” Germany’s Civil Service  
Reading: Isolating Homosexuals  
Reading: A Wave of Discrimination  
Reading: Breeding the New German “Race”  
Reading: Where They Burn Books... | The class reviews the characteristics of democracy from the concept map they created in lesson 7.  
Then, small groups of students each works with one reading and analyzes how the reading adds to their understanding of how democracy was destroyed in Germany. Small groups each report out to the whole class.  
Finally, the class begins a concept map (or identity chart) for Nazi dictatorship. | While it is important to illustrate the variety of ways in which the Nazis attacked democracy in Germany, the size of your class and the needs of your students may dictate that you choose not to use every suggested reading in this lesson.  
Background information: Chapter 5 |
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| 11. Choosing between Conformity and Dissent     | Reading: Working Toward the Führer  
Reading: Pledging Allegiance  
Reading: Do You Take the Oath? | Students read and discuss the readings, and then hold a fishbowl discussion on the interplay between Hitler and individual Germans in creating and sustaining the new dictatorship. The discussion focuses on the following questions:  
To what extent did Germans choose to conform or consent to the dictatorship, and to what extent were they coerced?  
What kinds of pledges and oaths do people take today? For what reasons? How do they affect people's choices? How should they?  
Students add to their concept maps for Nazi dictatorship. | Background information: Chapter 5                                         |
Image: The Eternal Jew  
Handout: Image Analysis Procedure | Using the visual essay's introduction, the class records a definition for propaganda.  
As a whole class, they analyze The Eternal Jew poster using the Analyzing Visual Images strategy.  
Then, students work in small groups to use the same strategy to analyze additional images from the visual essay. They can use the Image Analysis Procedure handout to guide analysis.  
The class ends with a whole-group discussion about what students observed, what makes propaganda effective or ineffective, and how it adds to their understanding of conformity and consent in Nazi Germany. | Throughout these activities, help students connect what they are learning about propaganda to the influence of media today. Ask students if they can think of examples of propaganda in society today. How do they think propaganda influences the attitudes and actions of people today?  
Background information:  
Chapter 3 reading: Building Support on the Home Front  
Chapter 5 reading: Shaping Public Opinion  
Chapter 6 readings: Chapter 6 Introduction, Propaganda at the Movies |
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| 13. Youth in Nazi Germany | **Reading:** Joining the Hitler Youth  
Reading: The Birthday Party  
Reading: Models of Obedience  
Reading: Disillusionment in the Hitler Youth  
Reading: Rejecting Nazism  
Reading: “Heil Hitler!”: Lessons of Daily Life  
Reading: Youth on the Margins  
Reading: Schooling for the National Community | Students work in pairs to read and discuss one or more readings about youth in Nazi Germany. Their discussion should focus on what evidence the readings provide to answer the following questions:  
What role did youth play in the Nazis’ attempt to build a “racially pure and harmonious national community”?  
What difficult choices were young people faced with—at home, in school, and in their communities—during this period? How did these choices challenge the way these young people saw themselves and understood their identities?  
Pairs share summaries of their readings and their conclusions in a whole-group discussion. | **Background information:** Chapter 6  
Introduction |
| 14. Understanding Kristallnacht | **Video:** “Kristallnacht”: The November 1938 Pogroms  
Reading: The Night of the Pogrom  
Reading: Opportunism during Kristallnacht  
Reading: A Family Responds to Kristallnacht  
Reading: Thoroughly Reprehensible Behavior  
Reading: A Visitor’s Perspective on Kristallnacht  
Reading: World Responses to Kristallnacht | The class watches the video for an overview of Kristallnacht and its significance.  
Introduce terms to describe the roles people can play in times of crisis: perpetrator, victim, bystander, upstander.  
Students then work in groups to analyze readings that describe different responses to Kristallnacht, identifying evidence they find of perpetrator, bystander, and upstander behavior. | **Emphasize that perpetrator, victim, bystander, and upstander are roles, not identities. A single individual can slip in and out of each of these roles depending on circumstances and choices.**  
**You will need to provide context for this lesson about the rearmament of Germany, the Anschluss, and the annexation of the Sudetenland. Consider creating a mini-lecture about events in the following Chapter 7 readings: Rearming Germany, Taking Austria, Crisis in Czechoslovakia, Beyond Any Nation’s Universe of Obligation**  
**Background information:** Chapter 7 |
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| **15. A War for Race and Space** | **Video:** Hitler’s Ideology: Race, Land, and Conquest  
**Reading:** Taking Austria (excerpt from Mein Kampf)  
**Reading:** Colonizing Poland (excerpt from December 1939 report)  
**Reading:** “Cultural Missionaries” (Melita Maschmann excerpt)  
**Reading:** The Invasion of the Soviet Union (Hitler and Hoepner excerpts) | Students watch the video for an introduction to the Nazi “race and space” ideology.  
Then they analyze the reading excerpts in a Big Paper discussion. In groups, students silently discuss how one of the excerpts relates to the “race and space” ideology.  
Then they rotate to other groups’ big papers to read the other silent conversations and contribute their thoughts. | You will need to provide students with context about the Nazi-Soviet alliance and the invasion of Poland. Consider creating a mini-lecture about events in the following Chapter 8 readings: The War against Poland: Speed and Brutality, Dividing Poland and Its People  
**Background information:** Chapter 8 Introduction |
| **16. Ghettos: Confronting the Suffering Caused by the Nazis** | **Reading:** The Jewish Ghettos: Separated from the World  
**Reading:** Voices From the Warsaw Ghetto | Students learn about the confinement of Jews in ghettos in Poland by reading The Jewish Ghettos: Separated from the World.  
Then they read the diary of a teenager imprisoned in a ghetto and reflect on the emotional challenges of this history.  
Students respond privately to the following prompt in their journals or notebooks: Accounts like this one are disturbing and painful to read. They prompt us to ask many questions, some of which may be unanswerable. What questions do these events raise for you about history and human behavior?  
Finally, they read about the Oyneg Shabes archive in Voices from the Warsaw Ghetto and reflect on the struggle to maintain a sense of identity, dignity, faith, and culture as a form of defiance and resistance. | See the lesson Confronting the Suffering Caused by the Nazis for more detailed suggestions.  
**Background information:** Chapter 8 |
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Map: Main Nazi Camps and Killings Sites  
Reading: Identity in the Camps (Primo Levi’s testimony)  
Reading: Survival in Hiding (Otto Wolf’s testimony)  
Reading: A Basic Feeling of Human Dignity (Hanna Lévy-Hass’s testimony)  
Reading: A Transport to Bergen-Belsen (Hanna Lévy-Hass’s testimony)  
Featured Collection: Survivors and Witnesses: Using Video Testimony in the Classroom  
Handout: Creating a Found Poem | Students watch the video for an overview of the phases of the Holocaust, and then examine a map illustrating the locations and the variety of methods Nazis used to perpetrate mass murder.  
Students then learn about a variety of experiences of those targeted by the Nazis during the Holocaust by reading testimonies. They create a found poem based on one testimony.  
Finally, students respond privately to the following prompt in their journals or notebooks:  
How did working so closely with the words of a survivor affect you?  
What did these words make you think and feel? | See the lesson Responding to the Stories of Holocaust Survivors for more detailed suggestions.  
Consider ending this lesson by having students complete Exit Cards to give you a sense of how they are responding to this emotionally challenging content.  
**Background information:**  
Chapter 8 reading: Invasion of the Soviet Union  
Chapter 9 readings: Mobile Killing Units, The Wannsee Conference, Establishing the Killing Centers |
| 18. Perpetrators: Choosing to Murder | Reading: Reserve Police Battalion 101  
Video: Obedience: The Milgram Experiment  
Reading: A Commandant’s View (optional)  
Reading: “Proving Oneself” in the East (optional) | Students examine a variety of factors that might have helped make it possible for individuals to participate in the mass murder of the Holocaust.  
First, they read aloud Reserve Police Battalion 101 and discuss the reading and Connection Questions using a Fishbowl or simple Think-Pair-Share format.  
Students then learn about the Milgram Experiments conducted in the 1960s and watch a short clip from the film Obedience. Using the same discussion format, they discuss what they observed in the video and the factors that encouraged the “subject” of the experiment to proceed. Then they discuss what insight Milgram might provide for understanding the motivations of the members of Police Battalion 101. | You will need to provide the class a brief overview of the way the Milgram Experiments were set up. Use the reading A Matter of Obedience? to prepare the overview.  
Help students understand the variety and complexity of perpetrator motivations, noting that experiments like Milgram’s can provide insight but not necessarily the whole story. Encourage students to challenge the ideas of Milgram, Browning, and Goldhagen.  
Time permitting, introduce one or both of the optional readings and discuss with students how those stories extend, deepen, or complicate their discussion of perpetrator behavior.  
Consider ending this lesson by having students complete Exit Cards to give you a sense of how they are responding to this emotionally challenging content |
### Lesson Name: 19. Resisters, Rescuers, and Bystanders

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<td>Reading: Choiceless Choices</td>
<td>The class reads <em>Choiceless Choices</em> together and discusses Langer’s concept. Then, each student reads and analyzes one of the readings about the choices of those who had varying levels of agency during the Holocaust. They should think about the following questions: What led each individual to make the choices he or she made? How did circumstances of time, place, and opportunity play a role in the choices each person made? Class ends with a discussion of the factors that either seemed to constrain or expand the range of choices available to individuals.</td>
<td>While it is important to illustrate varying levels of agency people experienced and the variety of choices they made during the Holocaust, the size of your class and the needs of your students may dictate that you choose not to use every suggested reading in this lesson. <strong>Background information:</strong> Chapter 8 and Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Reading: A Commandant’s View</td>
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<td>Reading: Bystanders at Hartheim Castle</td>
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<td>Reading: Protesting Medical Killing</td>
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<td>Reading: Difficult Choices in Poland</td>
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<td>Reading: Speaking Out “In the Face of Murder”</td>
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<td>Reading: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising</td>
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<td>Reading: Protests in Germany</td>
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<td>Reading: Deciding to Act</td>
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<td>Reading: Le Chambon: A Village Takes a Stand</td>
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<td>Reading: Diplomats and the Choice to Rescue</td>
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<td>Reading: Denmark: A Nation Takes Action</td>
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Judgment, Memory, and Legacy [~3 Days]

Students consider the challenges the world faced and continues to face in response to the horrors of the Holocaust. First they explore the meaning of justice and whether it was achievable after crimes committed on the scale of the Holocaust. Then they learn about some dilemmas we face today in judging the choices made by those in the past, and they reflect on the “call to conscience” the history of the Holocaust provides in our responses to injustice in the world today.

Essential Questions

• What is justice? Can justice be achieved after mass murder on the enormous scale of the Holocaust?
• What can individuals or nations do to repair, rebuild, and restore their societies after war, genocide, and mass violence?
• Why is it important to remember the past?

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<td>20. Justice after the Holocaust</td>
<td>Handout: Justice after the Holocaust Anticipation Guide</td>
<td>Students consider some of the dilemmas of justice after the Holocaust and World War II by completing an Anticipation Guide in the handout and having a Four Corners debate. Time allowing, they watch the video Nuremberg Remembered, review the readings on Nuremberg, or listen to a mini-lecture about how the Allies addressed those dilemmas after the war.</td>
<td>You should provide a few details about the end of World War II. You might refer to the reading As the War Ended or the short video testimonies (Eyewitness to Buchenwald or The Red Army Enters Majdanek) by American and Russian soldiers who encountered camps as the war ended. Make the debate about justice the focus of the lesson. Depending on available time, teachers might choose to share details about the Nuremberg Trials using the video or suggested readings, or by creating a mini-lecture based on information from the readings.</td>
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<td>21. Dilemmas of Judgment</td>
<td>Video: Monsters and Men: The Nazis at Nuremberg</td>
<td>Students watch the video Monsters and Men and read Moral Luck and Dilemmas of Judgment, then they use the Connection Questions to reflect on the idea of “moral luck” and the role that circumstances play in influencing our choices and judgment. Students share their thoughts in small groups or a brief class discussion. Students then respond on the statement “I am myself and my circumstances” (José Ortega y Gasset). Do they agree? Was it true of the Nazis? How do our “circumstances” influence who we are/our moral choices today? “What would I have done?” is a difficult, if not impossible, question when learning about horrific events such as the Holocaust. In order to foster deep and thoughtful contributions from students in this lesson, avoid that question and instead focus on the factors that influence our choices today.</td>
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| 22. Contemporary Responses to the Holocaust | **Reading:** The International Criminal Court  
**Reading:** Remembering the Names | Half of the class begins by reading The International Criminal Court and the other half by reading Remembering the Names. After reading silently, students find one or two classmates who read the same reading. They discuss the reading’s Connection Questions, and then collaborate on an answer to the question: *How does the action described in this reading offer an important response to the history of the Holocaust?*

Students then meet with new partners who read and analyzed the other reading. In their new groups they share a summary of their readings, and then they discuss the following:

- How are the responses described in the readings similar and different?
- How do they each offer, in their own way, and important response to the history of the Holocaust? | The International Criminal Court is one of a number of new institutions and international laws created in the wake of World War II and the Holocaust. Use background information from Chapter 11 to provide students a brief overview of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Criminal Court.  
**Background information:**  
Choosing to Participate [~1 Day]

Students end the unit by considering their responsibilities to participate as caring, thoughtful citizens in the world around us. They analyze examples of individuals and groups who are seeking to make a difference in order to consider the strategies that they might use to help bring about a more humane, just, compassionate world and a more democratic society.

Essential Questions

- How does learning about history educate us about our responsibilities today?
- What must individuals do and value in order to bring about a more humane, just, and compassionate world and a more democratic society?

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| 23. Choosing to Participate | Reading: Not Just Awareness, But Action  
Handout: Analyzing Levers of Power  
Reading: What Difference Can a Word Make?  
Reading: Bullying at School  
Reading: Not in Our Town  
Reading: Seeking a Strategy that Works  
Reading: Believing in Others  
Reading: Acknowledging the Past to Shape the Present | Students read aloud the reading Not Just Awareness, But Action and respond to Obama’s argument about the need for strategies in order to make change.  
Students then read one or more stories about people who “choose to participate” and use the Analyzing Levers of Power handout to analyze the strategies employed by the individuals described in the reading. | See the lesson Strategies for Making a Difference for more detailed suggestions.  
Background information: Chapter 12 |
Assessment

Historian Doris Bergen writes:

The Holocaust was an event in human history. Everyone involved—victims, witnesses, collaborators, rescuers, and perpetrators—was a human being with human feelings and needs. Recognizing that shared humanity does not excuse the killers or somehow soften the past. If anything it makes studying the Holocaust more painful.

• What does Bergen mean by describing the Holocaust as “human history”?
• What were some of the particular historical circumstances that helped make the rise of the Nazis and the Holocaust possible? What were some of the universal aspects of human behavior that contributed to the choices people made throughout this history?
• How might understanding the Holocaust as a “human history” affect how we think about trying to prevent future episodes of genocide and mass murder?