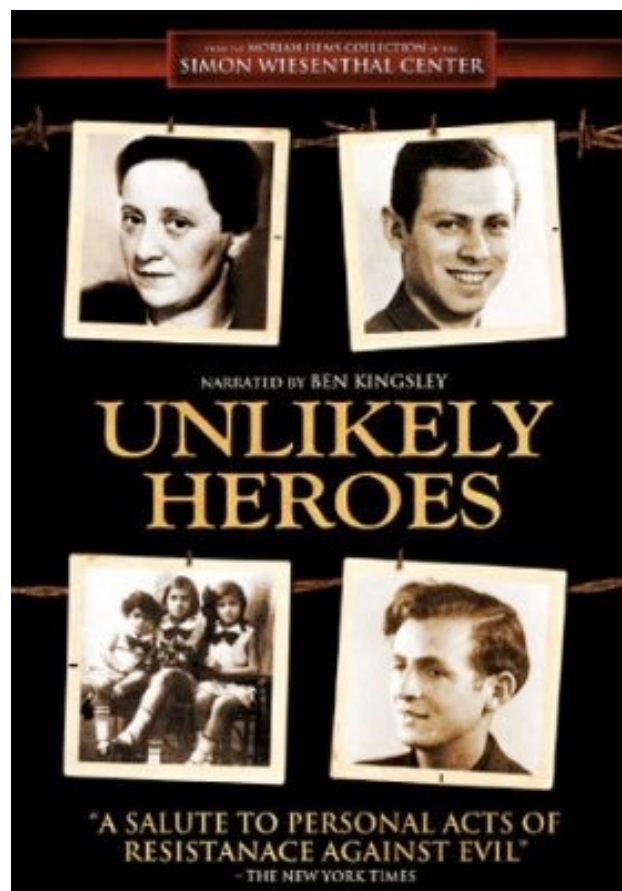

UNLIKELY HEROES

A Teacher's Guide to Jewish Resistance in the Holocaust



The Simon Wiesenthal Center

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Introduction

In a time clouded with baseless hatred, brutality, and destruction, *Unlikely Heroes* recovers the little-known stories of heroic Jews who exemplified courage and humanitarianism in the face of depravity. These individuals joined resistance movements, rebelled against their oppressors, and fought for human rights and dignity. They did not, as a persistent myth suggests, submit to the Nazis like “sheep to the slaughter,” but rather rose above the difficulties, accomplishing incredible feats.

While it is crucial to focus on the overwhelming cruelty and scope of the Nazi persecution, it is also our duty as educators to reinforce the stories of human courage and triumph during this time. *Unlikely Heroes* explores the lesser-known dimension of Jewish resistance in the Holocaust. We must acknowledge that some Jews *did* risk everything to fight for their lives and the lives of their brethren. Focusing on these individuals enables students to grasp the significance of what occurred, and reminds them of the power of personal responsibility and communal values.

How to Use This Kit

We were taught from her to think about beautiful things in life because you couldn't see them in Terezin, but you could imagine what will be when you get out of here. She gave us hope.

-Helga Kirsky regarding her teacher Friedl Dicker-Brandies

This curriculum is about hope. It is about thinking about beautiful things like courage, resistance and resilience. It is about imagining what can be.

Into, Through and Beyond is a common strategy in teaching that gets to the depth of a subject. Into, Through and Beyond strategies assist students in the exploration of a curriculum unit.

INTO the subject involves activating prior knowledge.

THROUGH the content requires comprehension. Students begin to integrate new knowledge with the old.

BEYOND allows students to make personal and curricular connections and creatively apply the knowledge they have gained.

INTO *Unlikely Heroes*

Lesson 1 – The Power of Words and *Lesson 2 – Dehumanization* set the stage for viewing *Unlikely Heroes* and can be easily implemented before viewing the film. The two lessons build upon each other and use a poster activity to tie the two concepts together.

THROUGH *Unlikely Heroes*

Lessons 3-5 introduce the main concepts of this curriculum through the narratives of the seven people portrayed in *Unlikely Heroes*. In *Lesson 3* the students create a classroom graphic organizer in the form of a matrix to synthesize the information. Then, in *Lesson 4 - Resistance* and *Lesson 5 - Resilience*, a matrix element is added to increase the depth of information.

BEYOND *Unlikely Heroes*

Lesson 6 – Theme Art and *Lesson 7 – Essay, Art, Music, or Action* are culminating activities that help students internalize the messages in *Unlikely Heroes* and, more importantly, move those messages to action.

There are many different ways to use the film and curriculum.

- **One Day** – Although they work best together, *Lessons 1-5* can be used as single-day lessons
- **Two-to-Three Days** – Implement *Lessons 3-5*
- **A Week or More** – Implement the entire curriculum
- **Bullying** – *Lesson 1 – The Power of Words* works well to address bullying

Lesson 1: The Power of Words

Framework

Students today may believe they are savvy in regards to the power of words since they are constantly in touch with others on social media platforms. This is also the generation that has grown up with anti-bullying curriculum as an everyday part of schooling. This lesson links hateful language to ever escalating acts of violence to reinforce to today's students that the words we speak or text to each other and the things we say about each other impact all of us in the personal, political, and spiritual realms. This is a particularly important lesson for today's students who are steeped in social media and who use texting as a way to communicate without the nonverbal cues often needed to fully comprehend what someone is wanting to say.

Objectives

Students will:

- Understand the power of hateful language
- Understand the path of hate

Time and Materials

- One class session
- Copies of the *HATE HAS A PATH* Handout for each student

Essential Questions

- Does what we say and/or write matter?
- What is the path of hate?

Suggested Procedures

Step 1

Students are familiar with the old adage that “sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.” Ask them why they know this isn't true today and begin a discussion about the power of words. To get the conversation going, ask them what are common put-downs today that they hear? Ask students if they think that it really is wrong to call someone those names or if they think people overreact and are too sensitive about name-calling.

Step 2

Pass out *HATE HAS A PATH* Handout to each student and read over it together. Inform students that it is clear that the most horrible atrocities we've known first began with hateful language. Hitler first wrote about his hatred of Jews in September of 1919, long before he came to power. Ask students to keep this handout available as they study the Holocaust, as they'll be able to place many events somewhere on the path to hate.

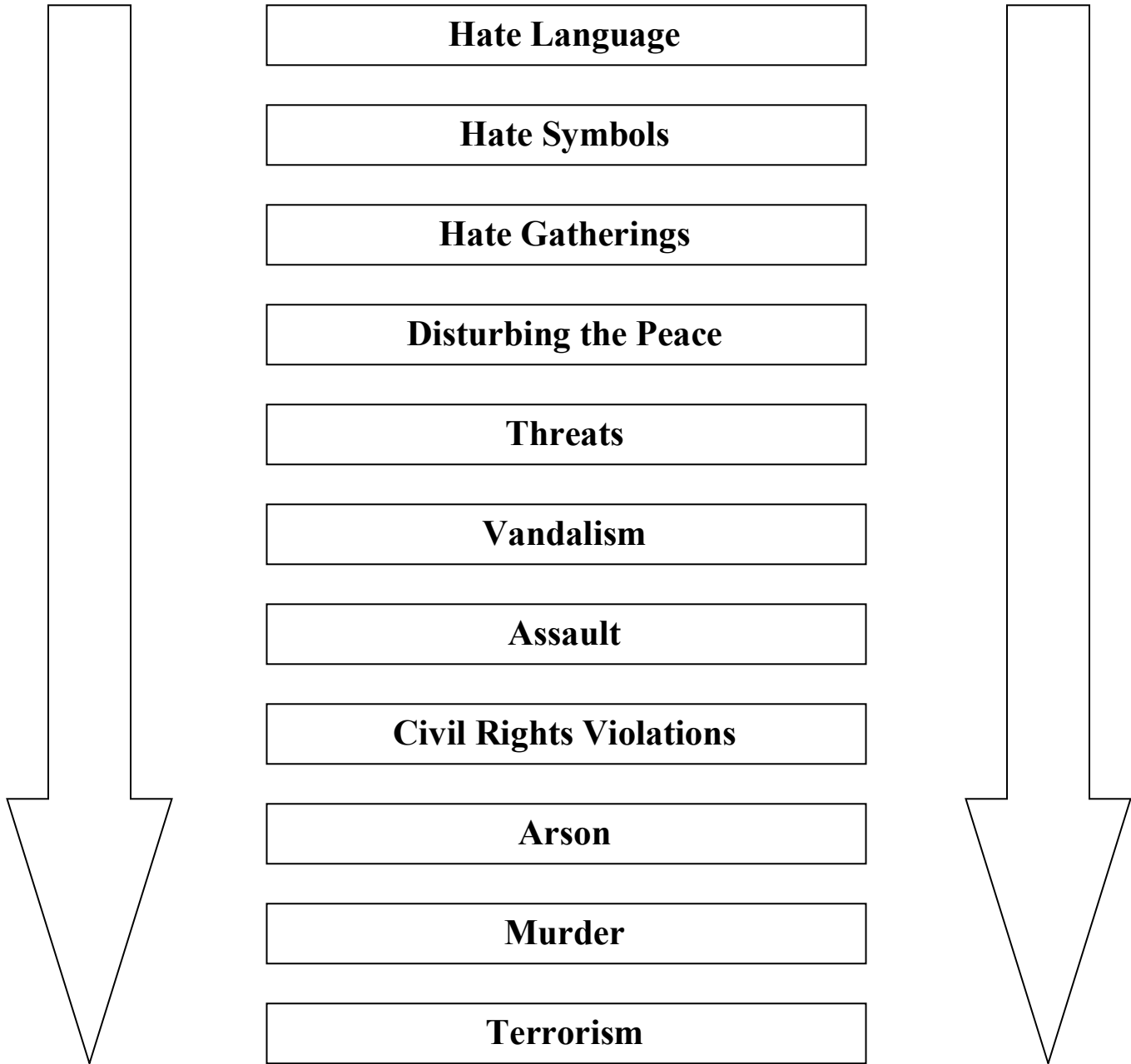
Step 3

If you are doing this with a group, make a large chart with the path to hate written on it, otherwise just have individual learners look at the ***HATE HAS A PATH*** Handout. Have students write events as they are discussed on the chart at the point in the path of hate where they feel the event fits best. Discuss with students what happened before and after the event to show linkage. We've provided an example for you to go over with students based on the violent event that occurred in Charlottesville, VA in 2017. Students could also track hate events in their own school, community and world in the same way, perhaps using a different color marker, seeing where a certain incident falls on the path and discussing what led to the hateful event and where it might lead.

Note: This chart is used in *Lesson 2* to build upon this lesson of the power of words.

HATE HAS A PATH Handout

Hate has a path. It begins with hateful language and quickly moves to more and more aggressive, hateful behavior.



HATE HAS A PATH Handout Example Charlottesville, VA - 2017

Hate has a path. It begins with hateful language and quickly moves to more and more aggressive, hateful behavior.

HATE LANGUAGE: (Friday, August 11, 2017) Hundreds of demonstrators gather ahead of a large white Nationalist gathering, set up in part to protest plans to remove a Robert E. Lee statue. The group's chants include "white lives matter," "you will not replace us," and the Nazi-associated phrase "blood and soil." This Nazi slogan was meant to emphasize the racial purity of German blood and their connection to a German homeland.

HATE SYMBOLS: (Saturday, August 12, 2017 at 8:30 a.m.) Demonstrators begin gathering three and a half hours before the event is scheduled to meet. People coming into Emancipation Park were holding white nationalist banners, Nazi flags, and other hate symbols and flags.

HATE GATHERINGS: (9:30 a.m.) The gathering builds. The mayor calls it "a cowardly parade of hatred, bigotry, racism, and intolerance."

DISTURBING THE PEACE: (10:30 a.m.) Violence breaks out between protestors and counter-protestors. Two people get injured. The police say the injuries are "serious but not life-threatening."

THREATS: (10:30 a.m.) By now, the groups were restless and some physical violence – pushing and shoving – had started.

VANDALISM: (10:30 a.m. – 11:22 a.m.) Unite the Right members took up shields and began waving sticks as they moved toward the Market Street entrance to Emancipation Park. Trying to keep them out, counter-protestors formed a line to block their path. Both sides swung sticks and shot pepper spray at each other as the groups met in the street.

ASSAULT: (11:22 a.m.) The violence escalated, and bottles and rocks started being thrown.

CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS: (11:35 a.m.) The event is declared an unlawful assembly by law enforcement.

ARSON: (11:52 a.m.) Gov. Terry McAuliffe declared a state of emergency as scuffles continued in the city's streets.

MURDER: (1:40 p.m.) A car plows into a crowd of people. One counter-protestor, 32-year-old Heather Heyer, is killed. At least 19 other people were sent to the hospital.

TERRORISM: (9:46 p.m.) Police arrest domestic terrorist 20-year-old James Alex Fields, Jr. from Ohio for the car-ramming incident that killed Heyer. He was charged with second-degree murder. He was sentenced to life in prison in 2019.

Lesson 2: Dehumanization

Framework

Dehumanization is a process by which members of a group of people assert the “inferiority” of another group. The Nazi dehumanization process of Jews began with hateful name calling like “rats” and “vermin,” quickly moved to denying Jews basic civil rights such as practicing religion, access to public education, adequate housing, and resulted in mass genocide. This lesson uses photographs and other primary documents to help students visualize and nuance themselves about the process of dehumanization, a process that remains evident today in our communities and throughout the world.

Objectives

Students will:

- Understand systematic dehumanization methods used by the Nazis
- Use photographs and primary documents to get a visual of how Jews were dehumanized

Time and Materials

- One class session
- One copy of *DEHUMANIZATION HISTORICAL BACKGROUND* Handout for each of 3 students
- Copies of Photographs and Primary Documents
- *HATE HAS A PATH* Handout

Essential Questions

- Why would the Nazis want to dehumanize the Jews?
- What are ways the Nazis dehumanized Jews?

Suggested Procedures

Step 1

Give each student a copy of *DEHUMANIZATION HISTORICAL BACKGROUND* Handout and have various students volunteer to read single paragraphs out loud as other students follow along silently.

Step 2

Remind students that hate has a path and that it begins with language and quickly moves to acts of violence. Again, dehumanizing the Jews began with words, with propaganda. Propaganda, the words, images and symbols of hate, was strategically meant to lay the groundwork for elimination of the rights and freedoms of the Jews. The Nazis used education, the media and popular art forms such as films, posters and dramas to teach and project their distorted image of the Jews. Show students the photograph of the poster promoting the Nazi film “The Eternal Jew.” The effects of propaganda like this, combined with the anti-Semitic feelings already existing in Europe, resulted in widespread humiliation, ridicule, violence and persecution of Jews. It set the stage for

mass genocide. Ask students where they'd place the Nazi propaganda poster on the *HATE HAS A PATH* classroom poster. Ask them to explain their rationale.

Step 3

The Nazis encourage Germans to boycott all Jewish businesses and in 1935 they passed the Nuremberg Laws, which increasingly discriminated against the Jews in deliberate, gradual steps. Among other things, these laws prevented Christians from marrying Jews and stripped Jews of their civil rights, removed them from jobs, and restricted their daily living. Eventually, Jews were excluded from society altogether. Ask students where they'd place Photo #9 on the *HATE HAS A PATH* classroom poster. Ask them to explain their rationale.

Step 4

The Nazis forced the Jews to sew the Star of David on their clothing in order to identify them and separate them from the rest of society. The abuse of the Star of David, a symbol of pride that is sacred to Jews, distorted it and was yet another way of dehumanizing them. Ask students where they'd place Photos #2, #5 and #7 on the *HATE HAS A PATH* classroom poster. Ask them to explain their rationale.

Step 5

On October 28 and 29 of 1938, between 6,000 and 10,000 Polish Jews were involuntarily deported from their homes. Thousands of them were murdered shortly after their arrival in camps. Then, on November 9 and 10, 1938, the Nazis burned, looted, and destroyed Jewish stores, synagogues, and homes. 30,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps. These horrible acts are now known as Kristallnacht, or the "Night of Broken Glass," a description of the broken glass that covered the streets following these atrocities. Ask students where they'd place Photo #10 on the *HATE HAS A PATH* classroom poster. Ask them to explain their rationale.

Step 6

Not only were Jews branded in a sense, like cattle, by having to wear the Star of David, the Nazis also loaded them into cattle cars to transport them to concentration camps. This was another strategic step, treating them like animals, in the process of dehumanization. Once in the camps, they shaved their heads, made them wear uniforms, and replaced their individual names with numbers tattooed on their arms in an attempt to erase any kind of individuality they had. Ask students where they'd place Photos #1, #3, #4 and #6 on the *HATE HAS A PATH* classroom poster. Ask them to explain their rationale.

Step 7

Understanding that we don't want to equate what happened during the Holocaust with what is going on today, do this extension activity. Begin a new *HATE HAS A PATH* poster for the classroom and invite students to fill it out with hurtful things they hear other students say in school, hurtful events in their community, and any relevant news articles. As students place new items on the poster, be sure to have another conversation with them about what led up to the event and what might happen as a result of the event.

This will keep emphasizing the impact of language in processes of dehumanization and violence.

DEHUMANIZATION HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Handout

In the early 1930's, Germany was in the midst of a depression. Hitler, running for election with his National Socialist party in 1933, promoted the illogical accusation that minority groups in Germany – mainly the Jews – were responsible for this depression. Social Darwinism, the idea that some racial groups are superior to others, was sweeping through Europe. Germany also wanted to regain its powerful status, after their loss of World War I, and they wanted to retaliate against the countries that had won the war and punished Germany harshly through the Versailles Treaty.

In January of 1933, Hitler was appointed Chancellor – or the head of the government – of Germany, and the Nazi party won the majority of seats in the German parliament in March of 1933. In 1933 and 1934, Hitler established 61 anti-Jewish laws.

On November 14, 1935, Hitler announced the creation of the Nuremberg laws. With these laws, Hitler revoked German citizenship from the Jews and banned marriages between Jews and Christians. Hitler claimed that these laws would help to safeguard Aryan blood from “impure” Jewish blood. The laws excluded Jews from business, in addition to previous laws that had banned them from positions in government and universities, and had even forbidden Jews from sitting on public park benches.

Hitler formulated a plan known as the “Final Solution.” This phrase referred to a plan to slaughter every Jewish man, woman and child in Europe. In order to accomplish this goal, Hitler would have to imprison and then murder not just the Jews of Germany, but also all of Europe.

On November 9, 1938, Nazis destroyed thousands of Jewish homes and businesses throughout Germany and Austria. The Nazis burned hundreds of synagogues, killed over 90 Jews, and sent 30,000 more to concentration camps, which are prison and annihilation camps. This night came to be known as Kristallnacht, the “night of broken glass.” Deportation camps, the sites of sadistic torture and murder, continued throughout the war.

The Nazis employed methods of dehumanization, taking away the human qualities from a person, in order to remove the individual identities of the Jews. The Nazis began in the cities and continued the process through the ghettos and concentration camps. Even though most of these acts did not physically hurt the prisoners, these actions made the victims feel like animals. Many of these people felt worthless. By weakening their spirits and strength to survive, the Nazis made the prisoners feel less like thinking humans, and so they cared less about surviving the war. To make the Jews feel like animals, they shipped them in cattle cars. To make the Jews forget their individual identities, they shaved their heads, made them wear identical uniforms, and gave them numbers instead of names.

When the Nazis realized they were about to lose the war, they deported more and more prisoners to the camps every day. By the war's end, over 6 million Jews and 5 million others had been murdered by the Nazis.

PHOTO 1



Jews being loaded on a cattle car train for deportation.

PHOTO 2



Children with Jewish stars on their clothing.

PHOTO 3



Women in concentration camp with uniforms and shaved heads.

PHOTO 4



Prisoner showing his tattoo number from the concentration camp.

PHOTO 5



Men in a forced labor camp wearing the Jewish star.

PHOTO 6



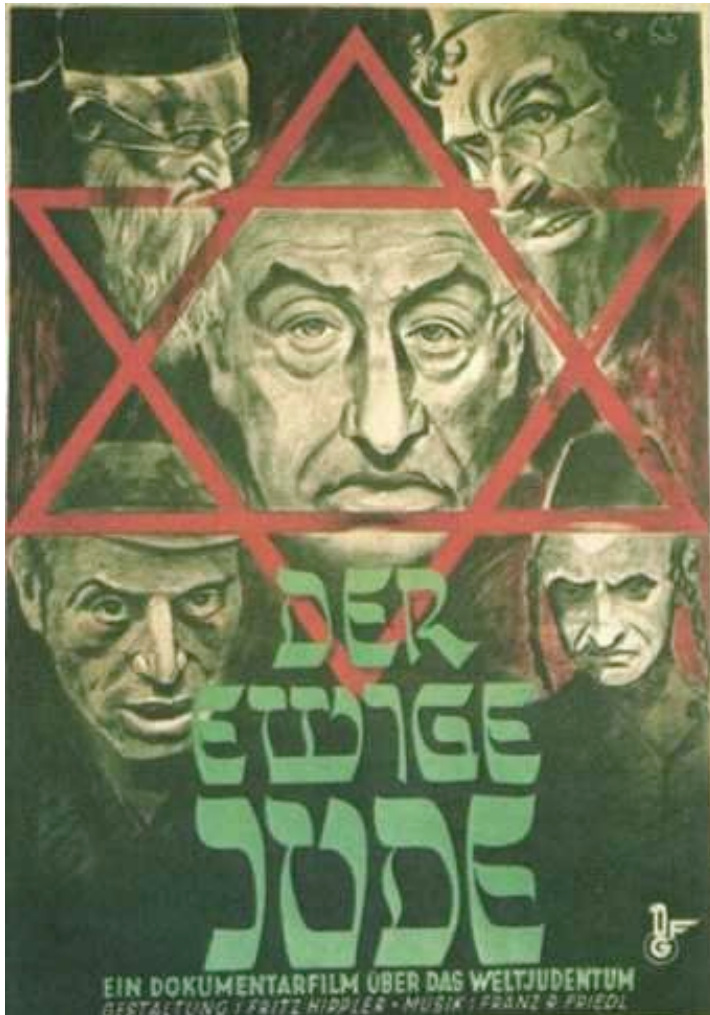
Male concentration camp prisoners in identical uniforms.

PHOTO 7



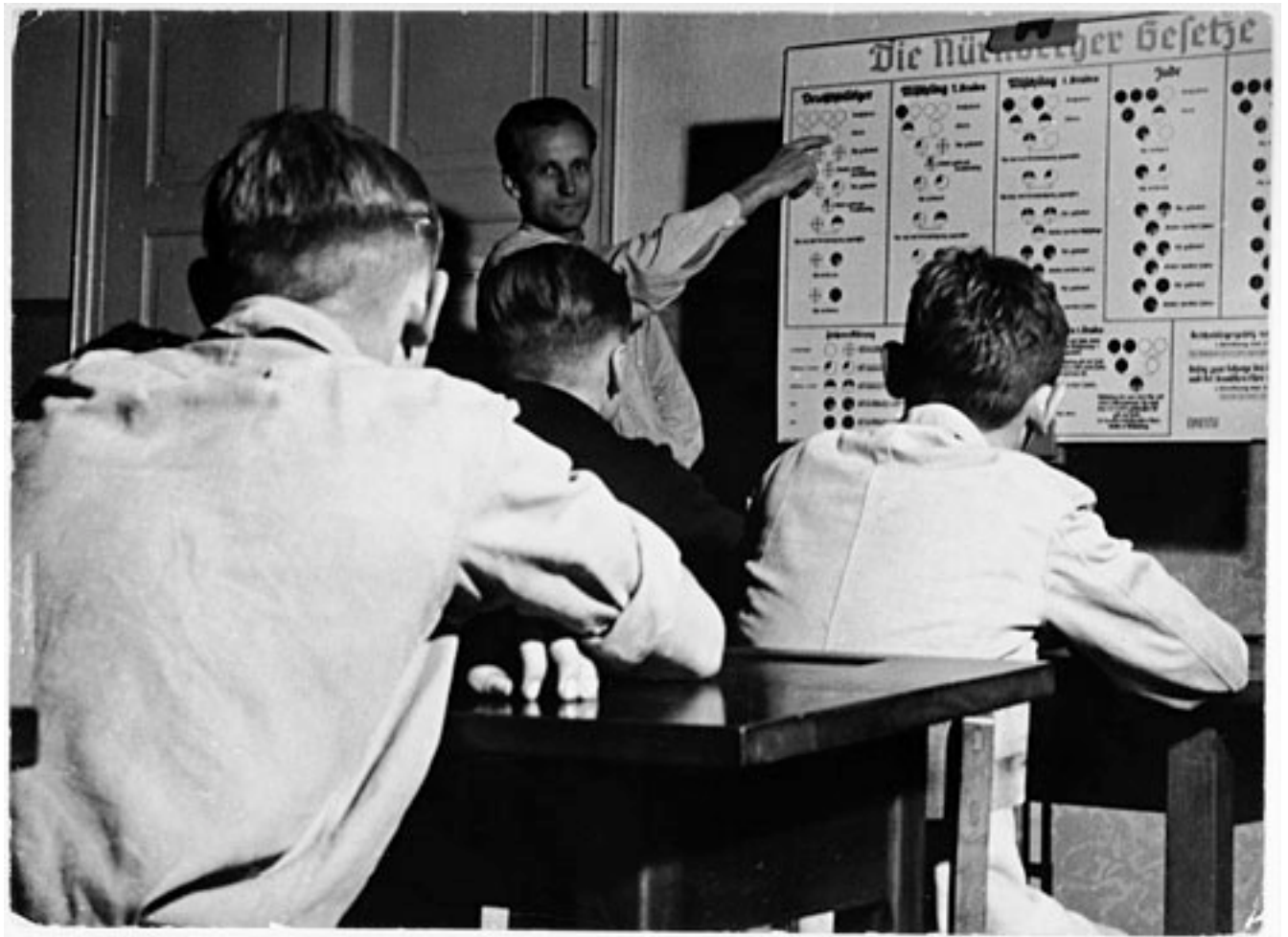
Child wearing Jewish star.

PHOTO 8



A poster advertising the Nazi film “The Eternal Jew” which compared the Jewish people to rats.

PHOTO 9



A Hitler Youth instructor teaching the definitions of race lay down by the Nuremberg Laws. Among other things, these laws classified people with four German grandparents as “German or kindred blood”, while people with three or four Jewish descendants were classified as Jews. A person with one or two Jewish grandparents was classified as a crossbreed of “mixed blood.” These laws deprived Jews of German citizenship.

PHOTO 10



Kristallnacht, the “Night of Broken Glass”

Lesson 3: Matrix Activity

Framework

We often hear about the Jews who went as “sheep to the slaughter,” but what about Jewish stories of honor, courage, reverence, bravery, and fearlessness? What about stories of those who gave up their ration of food so that a father or a grandmother could live another day? What about the stories of those living in places like hell and yet they still organized schools, prayed, studied, painted, composed lyrics and sang songs? This lesson helps students organize and make sense of the narratives in *Unlikely Heroes* by helping them to see patterns inherent in the stories.

Objectives

Students will:

- Synthesize stories from *Unlikely Heroes*
- Draw generalizations about resistance
- Understand the positive outcomes of resistance

Time and Materials

- Two class sessions (one to create the matrix and one to discuss and generalize)
- 8-1/2-by-11 sheets of paper, tape and markers
- Print out the model matrix to use as an example for students
- Copies of Handouts A-G for students

Essential Questions

- What kinds of people resisted the Nazis?
- What are the different ways that Jews resisted Nazi occupation and murder?

Suggested Procedures

Notes: This matrix activity will be built upon in the following lessons on resistance, resiliency, and theme. Each vignette in *Unlikely Heroes* is about 15-20 minutes long. Teachers can show one vignette a day for seven days, two a day for three-to-four days, or any combination that works best. Handouts A-G synthesize the vignettes and allow students immediate access to the content.

Step 1

First, the structural elements of the matrix (Name, Adult or Teenager, Title, Country, Actions, Consequences) are taped across the front of the board using one 8-1/2-by-11 sheet of paper for each element. We have provided these for you. It will look like this:

NAME	ADULT OR TEENAGER	TITLE	COUNTRY	THEIR ACTIONS	THE CONSEQUENCES
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Step 2

After viewing the first vignette on Willy Perl from *Unlikely Heroes*, the teacher can fill out the first row with students so they can see a model of what is to be done. Be sure to be as neat and as aesthetic as possible in your model as students will follow your lead (i.e. use symbols, draw a border, etc.). A printable model is provided in case that works better for you. It will look something like this:

Willy Perl	Adult	The Lawyer	Austria	Organized illegal transports	Around 42,000 Jews saved
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Step 3

After students see the model, break them into groups of three or four. Give each group one of the stories (*Handouts A-G*) from *Unlikely Heroes*. Understanding that there are only seven stories in *Unlikely Heroes* and there may be more than seven groups of three or four students, it is perfectly fine for the same story to go to multiple groups because it can make for interesting conversations if they see different things. In small groups, students fill out the answers to the six elements on 8-1/2-by-11 paper and tape them to the matrix below the teacher's model. It will look something like this:

Constructing the Matrix

NAME	ADULT OR TEENAGER	TITLE	COUNTRY	THEIR ACTIONS	THE CONSEQUENCE
Willy Perl	Adult	The Lawyer	Austria	Organized illegal transports	Around 42,000 Jews saved
Robert Clary	Teenager	The Entertainer	France	Sang & entertained in the camps	Brought joy, beauty & humanity to inmates
Recha Sternbuch	Adult	The Rabbi's Daughter	Switzerland	Rescued Jews	Thousands were saved
Friedl Dicker Brandeis	Adult	The Artist	Czechoslovakia	Taught art to children in the camps	Taught beauty & gave hope to children
Leon Kahn	Teenager	The Partisan	Lithuania	Blew up bridges, dairies, derailed trains	Fought Nazis and kept them at bay
Hanka & Astusha Wajcblum	Teenager	The Sisters	Poland	Blew up Crematorium IV	Tens-of-thousands saved
Pinchas Rosenbaum	Teenager	The Master of Disguise	Hungary	Disguised himself as a Nazi and infiltrated	Saved many Jews from certain death

Invite students to be as creative with each of these elements as possible so that the matrix is as visually pleasing as it is informative. For instance, have them look up the flag of each country on the Internet and paste a picture of it by each country's name.

Step 4

A presenter is chosen from each group to read the elements of the matrix and share the story of the person their group read.

Step 5

The power of this strategy begins once the chart is filled out and created. Now students view the categories vertically and look for generalizations that they see. You may ask the students:

- “What is something we can say about the Jews who resisted the Nazis? Who resisted?”
- “What can we say about the age of resisters?”
- “What do their titles tell us about the forms of resistance?”
- “Where were they from and what does this tell us about those who resisted?”
- “What can we generalize regarding the ways they resisted?”
- “What were some of the outcomes of resistance?”

The teacher can chart responses on a piece of poster. This generalization chart becomes the assessment of this strategy, as students are able to summarize the categories. Also, a generalization chart easily organizes information into a rubric that facilitates students in writing an essay about what they have learned. Below is an example of a generalization chart:

Who Resisted?

- * Men & women
- * Boys & Girls
- * Old & Young
- * People from all walks of life
- * People from all over Europe
- * People in camps & out

How Did They Resist?

- * Illegal transports
- * Entertained
- * Rescued
- * Blew up things
- * Derailed trains
- * Taught art
- * Fought
- * Infiltrated

What were Outcomes?

- * Thousands saved & rescued
- * Humanity in the camps
- * Information
- * Joy
- * Destroying Nazi plans

NAME

**Adult OR
Teenager**

Title

Country

Their

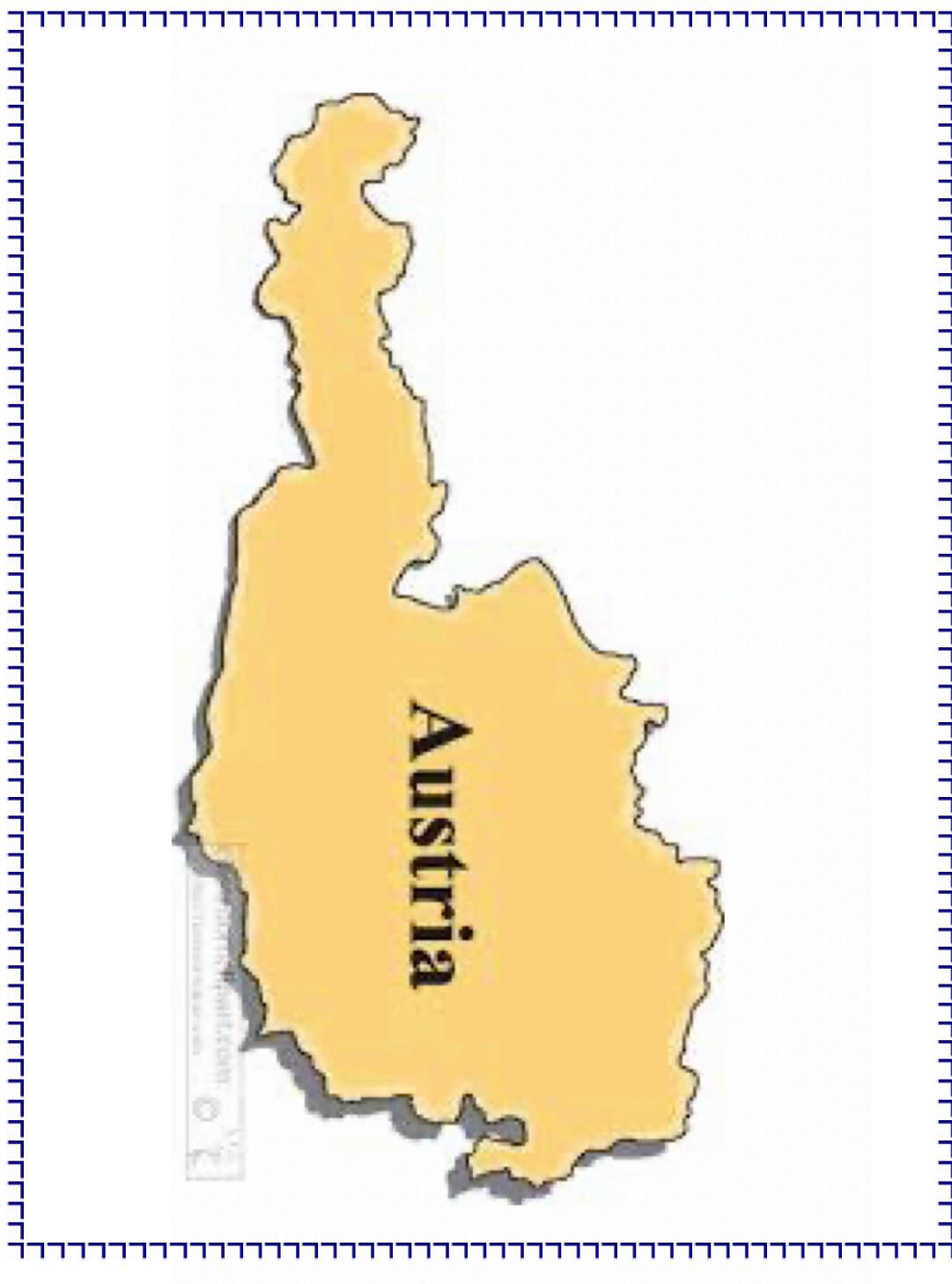
Actions

The Consequences

Willy Perl

Adult





Organized illegal transports



**Around 42,000
Jews saved!**

HANDOUT A

Willy Perl, The Lawyer (Austria)

Dr. Willy Perl, a Viennese lawyer, saw the writing on the wall long before the Nazis invaded Austria. Even when he married his wife Lore, who had converted from Catholicism to Judaism to marry him, they kept their marriage secret because even though the Nuremberg Laws were not in affect in Vienna, everyone knew they'd be part of Austrian law eventually. Willy began organizing illegal transports of Jews to Palestine. By 1937, Greek smugglers had already accomplished three successful shipments of Jews.

Lt. Adolf Eichmann, a German Nazi and one of the major organizers of the Holocaust, was sent to oversee Jewish affairs in Austria. The first thing he did was asked to see all of the Jewish leaders, including Willy. When Eichmann asked Willy for information on other people and Willy refused, Eichmann threatened Willy with a gun. Quickly thinking on his feet, Willy told Eichmann that he had something more important to tell him, a way to make Vienna pure of Jews. Eichmann was ambitious and, thus, interested. Willy's idea was that every Jew who wanted to leave Austria would have to pay an exit fee, making Germany a lot of money as well as ridding the country of Jews. Eichmann thought it was a trick, but Willy went to Berlin and went over his head to Eichmann's superiors.

Willy, with the permission granted to him to move forward, quickly put together a new transport of about 400 Jewish teenagers. Willy, with a furious Eichmann by his side, addressed the teenagers upon their departure. "As you enter these railroad cars you leave behind a country and a people that do not want you. You are going home to the country in which we will shape our own future and one day you will make it your own state, the Jewish state." The crowd burst into song with the Jewish National Anthem. Willy continued the transports and in less than three years his efforts led to many Jews escaping Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. The official British count for Willy's rescue was 42,000. Willy died in 1998 at the age of 92. Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin said of him, "Your deeds will be remembered forever by the Jewish people, indeed by all men of good will."

HANDOUT B

Robert Clary, *The Entertainer* (France)

Born on March 1, 1926, Robert was the 14th child in his family. As a child he loved jazz and entertaining his family with songs and plays. On September 23, 1942, he and his family were told they had ten minutes to gather their belongings and they were put on cattle cars and sent to concentration camps. While on the train, his mother told him to write a letter to his brother Jacque. He wrote of what was happening and threw the letter out of the moving train. His mother died three days later in a gas chamber.

After deportation from the French camp Drancy, he managed to survive when his singing skills came to the attention of the Jewish girlfriend of the camp commandant. Singing became his lifeline in the camps and he often had to sing for the SS and to take part in concerts put on by other fellow inmates. He had to make 4,000 pairs of wooden heels a day in the shoe factory where he was a forced laborer, and when he was not working he was entertaining, even though singing and performing used up a lot of calories and physical energy that most other prisoners would have preferred to have stored up.

Once he sang a song in Yiddish to the SS about the Jews wanting to go home. "I'm leaving. I'm going home. I want to be with the Jews, that's where I was born. I'm going to stay with the Jews." The SS had no idea what he was singing as he was singing in Yiddish with his French accent! His singing entertained the inmates and this allowed them to escape where they were for a short time. For those who heard him, it was a moment in their day, a moment in their lives when the harshness of the daily regime was not foremost in their thoughts. It was a moment of grace, a moment of beauty.

Robert and the 4,000 inmates of Blechhammer were forced on a death march to the Buchenwald Concentration camp and only 1,500 survived. Robert's singing had been a great moral booster to other inmates. As one survivor put it, "It was something you looked forward to because it was a little hole of light in all that darkness. For those one or two hours we lost track. We thought we were still human beings."

Robert returned to Paris after the war and continued to perform. Ironically, he got an acting part in a television series called *Hogan's Heroes*, about life in a German P.O.W. camp.

HANDOUT C

Recha Sternbuch, The Rabbi's Daughter (Switzerland)

After her marriage to Yitzchak Sternbuch, Recha joined the rescue committee of American Orthodox rabbis. From her home in St. Gallen, Switzerland, she, an Orthodox Jewish woman, took on the task of personally saving thousands of lives. Her activities lasted the entire length of the War, from 1938-1945.

Because Switzerland was neutral territory during World War II, Recha and her family were fortunate enough to live beyond the borders of Nazi persecution. Recha could have chosen to sit comfortably in her home and maintain her family's safety; instead, she risked her life to rescue thousands of Jewish refugees facing Nazi extermination in a time when even neutral Switzerland was failing to do so. Recha often drove across the Swiss border to rescue others, though it put her in grave danger despite her Swiss passport. Along with her husband, she founded the "Relief Organization for Jewish Refugees Abroad."

Though Recha encountered many physical and moral obstacles, she never faltered in her dedication and persistence in her rescue missions. She helped Jews escape to Shanghai and sent packages to Jews in Poland and Czechoslovakia. She was in touch with members of many foreign embassies, attempting to obtain visas that would help Jews escape.

Recha galvanized the now-famous Musy negotiations, in which she bribed a Nazi official in exchange for Jewish lives. Through these negotiations, Recha saved over 1,200 Jews from the concentration camp Theresienstadt.

After the war, Recha remained in Switzerland, and devoted herself to Jewish refugees. She refused all honors and died in 1971 at the age of 66. Israel Singer, Chairman of the World Jewish Congress, said of Recha, "Most people who were in a neutral place behaved in a neutral manner. She decided that neutrality was indifference. And she took neutrality and changed it from indifference to activity. That activity saved people's lives."

HANDOUT D

Friedl Dicker Brandeis, The Artist (Czechoslovakia)

Friedl's resistance activities spanned the years 1942-1944. She was a talented artist who studied at the famous Bauhaus School in Germany. On June 1, 1939, Czechoslovakia adopted racial laws nearly identical to those in Germany and Austria. In October of 1939, Czech Jews began to be deported to concentration camps in Poland.

In November 1941, the town of Terezin (translated in Czech as Theresienstadt and pronounced The-raze-ee-an-sh-dat), located in northern Czechoslovakia, was converted into the Terezin ghetto. Important Jewish veterans from World War I were brought to Terezin. Many artists, musicians, scholars, scientists, judges and actors were also transported to Terezin in the summer of 1942.

On December 14, 1942, Friedl and her husband Pavel were deported to Terezin. Friedl was allowed to take 110 pounds of her possessions with her. She chose mostly art supplies. On December 17th, they arrived in Terezin. When Friedl saw the children of Terezin, she used all of her art supplies to teach a class for the many students.

Even though education was forbidden in Terezin for children over the age of 14, Friedl was allowed to give her class to girls between the ages of 10 and 16 because art was considered a "cultural leisure activity." The Nazis wanted to make Terezin into a "model concentration camp" to fool the rest of the world into believing that Hitler was treating the Jews well. Therefore, in Terezin, Jews were allowed to participate in cultural activities. However, Friedl was not provided with art supplies or teaching materials. When her own supplies ran out, she had to use scraps of old paper, used notebook paper, and other sorts of garbage.

On October 6, 1944, Friedl boarded a transport, with 30 of her students, in order to follow her husband, who had been taken to Auschwitz. On October 9th, most of the 1,550 women and children who had arrived from Terezin were murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Friedl and all 30 of her students were murdered together. Friedl's theories of using art for therapy still influence therapists today.

HANDOUT E

Leon Kahn, The Partisan (Lithuania)

Leon was a young boy when the Nazis came to his town. Leon and his brother, suspecting a trap, hid in an old Catholic cemetery when the Nazis and Lithuanian collaborators rounded up all of the Jews. They watched in horror at the murder, rape, and slaughter of their family and friends. Although his parents, sister, and grandmother managed to escape this massacre and flee to Poland where they had relatives who took them in, their luck was short-lived.

Not long after the massacre, they had to go to another ghetto. Leon's mother elected to stay behind with her mother and were sent to the camps and murdered. Leon, his father, and two siblings escaped again and joined a community of around a hundred people who were living in the woods.

One day they got into a fight with Polish partisans called the Home Army, a violently anti-Jew and anti-Nazi group whose slogan was, "Poland without Jews." His father and siblings were killed during this fight. His father's last breath was to ask Leon to avenge their deaths. All of this death and tragedy caused Leon to have a crisis of faith. "Where is God?" he thought.

Leon joined a group of partisans who blew up bridges, cut down utility poles, blew up dairies that produced milk and butter for the Nazi army, and derailed trains, as well as killing Nazis and their Lithuanian, Polish, and Belarussian collaborators.

At the end of the war he was only 19-years-old and already a veteran Jewish partisan. Leon regained his faith and died on June 8, 2003 at the age of 78-years-old.

HANDOUT F

Hanka and Estusia Wajcblum, The Sisters (Poland)

Sisters Hanka and Estusia had fought during the Warsaw uprising. “If we have to die, let us die with meaning. Some Germans are coming with us,” was the sentiment of those involved in the Warsaw uprising.

In the summer of 1944 they were both in Auschwitz. The summer of 1944 was the bloodiest time in Auschwitz, with 435,000 Jews shipped into the camp and 400,000 being immediately murdered.

Hanka and Estusia, along with their friends Ala Gertner, Róża Robota, and Regina Safirsztajn, came up with a plan to blow up one of the crematoriums where they murdered Jews. For over a year they built up a supply of gunpowder to be smuggled to the Sonderkommandos, the work unit of Jewish prisoners who were forced to aid with the disposal of gas chamber victims. The gunpowder was to be used to blow up Crematorium IV and to make grenades to use against the SS when they tried to put down the uprising. The gunpowder was eventually traced back to their factory and all of the women working there were tortured. Ala, Róża, Regina, and Estusia were betrayed and hung. Hanka’s friend Marta protected her and she managed to escape the fate of the others.

According to calculations by the German authorities, 768 corpses could be burned in Crematorium IV every 24 hours. According to the testimony of former prisoners, the figure was higher. The Birkenau revolt’s blowing up of Crematorium IV saved tens-of-thousands of lives that would have been killed.

Hanka became a social worker working with children in crisis. No one knew of her extraordinary life until she published her memoir *Never Far Away: The Auschwitz Chronicles of Anna Heilman*.

HANDOUT G

Pinchas Rosenbaum, The Master of Disguise (Hungary)

For ten months, during the years 1944-1945, Pinchas disguised himself as the enemy in order to save fellow Jews. He was born in November 1923 to a family of distinguished rabbis in Kisvarda, Hungary.

As the war was nearing an end in 1944, Nazi Germany took over Hungary, which had been a Nazi ally. Despite facts and rumors about Nazi brutality all over Europe, the Hungarian Jews, having been spared the horrors until this point, placed their faith in God and time, believing that the war would end without their extermination. Pinchas and other youth knew better – they knew that the Nazis would indeed persecute the Hungarian Jews.

They formed a resistance group in Hungary, which, unaided by community support or a national resistance, would serve to save hundreds if not thousands of Hungarian Jews. With his creativity and courage, Pinchas outwitted the German and Hungarian Nazis at their own schemes; he wore their uniforms, walked among them, and boldly rescued Jews from Nazi arrests, torture, and murders. “To beat the enemy, you must look like the enemy. Externally,” Pinchas said. Pinchas had the ability to not only look like one of them, but to act like a sadistic Nazi officer as well.

Because he was able to dress up as Nazi officers and impersonate them, Pinchas was able to attend their meetings and learn their plans. Then he would pretend to arrest the Jews, while in reality he was bringing them to safety. In this way, a band of young people helped outsmart Hitler’s plan for Hungary’s extermination. They were an incredibly unique group; Jews with SS badges on their shoulders, Aryan papers in their bags, and purpose in their hearts. Pinchas did all of this by his 21st birthday.

Pinchas survived the war and moved to Geneva, Switzerland. He continued to help world Jewry and the state of Israel. He died in 1980 at the age of 57. He reached the highest degree a person could achieve, a Jew who risked his life to save other Jews.

Lesson 4: Resistance

Framework

Unlikely Heroes is about resistance. It is a counter-narrative to the dominant thought that the Jews submitted to the Nazis as “sheep to the slaughter.” Resistance during the Holocaust took on many different forms. This lesson explores resistance as lived by the subjects in *Unlikely Heroes*.

Objectives

Students will:

- Understand resistance during the Holocaust
- Learn that resistance took on many different forms

Time and Materials

- One class period
- Three Copies of the TEN Resistance Handouts for student groups
- Copy of *APPLYING RESISTANCE TO TODAY* Handout for each student
- Copy of *DEFINING YOUR OWN RESISTANCE* Handout for each student

Essential Questions

- What is resistance?
- What kinds of resistance were there during the Holocaust?
- What is organized armed resistance?
- What is spiritual resistance?

Suggested Procedures

Step 1

This lesson helps students name specific types of resistance. First, ask students to come up with their own definition of resistance. What do they think it means? What are key principles of resistance? What is an example of resistance? After they define it themselves and give multiple examples, read the definition of resistance that is found on the top of each of the resistance handouts:

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.

Step 2

Break students into groups of three, with each group of three getting ONE of the ten *Resistance* Handouts. A single handout can be given to each group of three and they can read it out loud together. Pass out the TEN *Resistance* Handouts so that each group has a

different one. Have one student in the group read it out loud for the others. One student from each group will then report out to the whole class about their particular form of resistance.

Step 3

An easy extension for the previous Matrix lesson is to simply add on one more category titled “Forms of Resistance.” Have each group of three approach the Matrix and add their form of resistance to wherever and whomever they think exercised that particular form of resistance. The chart will gradually become full. Below is an example of what the added element might look like:

NAME	FORMS OF RESISTANCE
Willy Perl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Imagination ▪ Spiritual ▪ Forgery ▪ Assistance and Rescue
Robert Clary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Memory ▪ Imagination ▪ Spiritual ▪ Music
Recha Sternbuch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Imagination ▪ Spiritual ▪ Forgery ▪ Assistance and Rescue
Friedl Dicker Brandeis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identity ▪ Memory ▪ Imagination ▪ Spiritual ▪ Music
Leon Kahn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Imagination ▪ Armed ▪ Spiritual ▪ Music
Hanka & Astusha Wajcblum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Imagination ▪ Armed ▪ Spiritual
Pinchas Rosenbaum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identity ▪ Imagination ▪ Armed ▪ Spiritual ▪ Forgery ▪ Disguise

Step 4

As a comprehension check and to show that the forms of resistance are still relevant today, give each student an *APPLYING RESISTANCE TO TODAY* Handout. Have a conversation with students about forms of resistance that they see in today's culture and society. The example given is one from a high school student that writes about what his little sister did to boycott a restaurant that discriminates against Black people.

Step 5

The last step provides a chance for students to define their own act of resistance. Students today are savvier than ever about activism and resistance because of the influence of social media. The example given here is from a high school student who speaks about her grandmother and how her grandmother divorced her abusive grandfather as an act of resistance.

Make the point that resistance to injustice and evil has always been a part of the lives of those who work for peace and justice. It was true during the Holocaust and it is still true today. Resistance has a long history and a bright future.

IDENTITY AS RESISTANCE Handout

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

The Nazis employed methods of dehumanization, taking away the human qualities from a person, in order to remove the individual identities of the Jews. To make the Jews forget their individual identities, they shaved their heads, made them wear identical uniforms, and gave them numbers instead of names. One form of resistance used by Friedl Dicker Brandeis had nothing to do with fighting the Nazis with weapons. Instead, Friedl combated the dehumanization at the Terezin concentration camp by making her students write their names on their paintings. Friedl demanded that students put their names on their drawings and paintings instead of using their concentration camp number. Sometimes, she told them to make large designs, called a monogram, with their names or initials. This naming helped students combat dehumanization by reestablishing their personal identities. Also, the most common form of art was a portrait, art that captured the identity of each individual.



(Above) Art by Edita Fischl. Born March 30, 1932. Deported to Terezin September 8, 1942. Survived. *The Jewish Museum, Prague*. #131.836

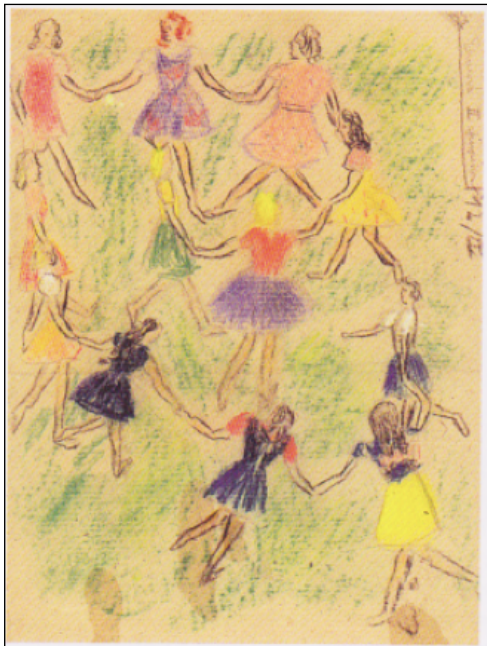
(Left) Art by Ruth Weiss. Born March 16, 1931. Deported to Terezin November 20, 1942. Deported to Auschwitz May 18, 1944. Perished. *The Jewish Museum, Prague*. #130.507

MEMORY AS RESISTANCE Handout

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

Friedl Dicker Brandeis often told her students to draw their favorite memory of home, or favorite cultural activity. Using paint, crayons, clay and other art supplies helped the children to express hidden feelings and to overcome emotional disturbances. She had her students draw their favorite memories so that they would remember the normalcy of their pasts and remember a time without suffering. The same was also true for the music that Robert Clary sang to fellow inmates in the camps. The memory of songs from happier times lifted the spirits of those in the camps and gave them a psychological and spiritual break from their oppression.



(Left) Eva Schur. Born June 2, 1935. Deported to Terezin December 9, 1942. Deported to Auschwitz May 15, 1944. Perished. *The Jewish Museum of Prague*. #133.159. (Right) Art by Chava Winkler. Born October 12, 1930. Deported to Terezin April 6, 1942. Survived. *The Jewish Museum of Prague*. #129.018.

IMAGINATION AS RESISTANCE Handout

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

Friedl Dicker Brandeis believed that art could allow the students of Terezin to develop fantasies and imaginations, as well as authentic self-expression. She wanted to restore the shaken consciousness of the children of Terezin. She had children draw their biggest fears to confront the present and draw their own dreams to give them hope for a better life in the future. Master of Disguise Pinchas Rosenbaum also exhibited great imagination in his bold imitation of Nazi officers. Likewise, Willy Perl and Recha Sternbuch used incredible imagination in the creative and ingenious ways they rescued fellow Jews.



(Above) Art by Ruth Weiss. Born March 16, 1931. Deported to Terezin November 20, 1942. Deported to Auschwitz May 18, 1944. Perished. *The Jewish Museum of Prague*. #133.238.

ARMED RESISTANCE Handout

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

Armed resistance is resistance through force and one of the most well known acts of this during the Holocaust was the 1942 Warsaw ghetto uprising. In the summer of 1942, 300,000 Jews were deported from the Warsaw ghetto in Poland to the Treblinka death camp. When a few of the young surviving Jews within the ghetto found out about the deportation, they decided to rebel against the Nazi troops and to refuse to accept death. First, they issued a proclamation mandating that all Jews refuse to enter trains going to extermination camps. They also began to smuggle weapons into the ghetto. Approximately 750 fighters, with nothing but a few weapons, fought against the well-trained German soldiers for almost a month until they were defeated and taken to concentration and death camps. This type of resistance is easily recognized and therefore better known. In *Unlikely Heroes*, examples of armed resistance are portrayed by Partisan Leon Kahn when he and others sabotaged the Nazis, by sisters Hanka and Astusha Wajcblum when they blew up Crematorium IV, and by Master of Disguise Pinchas Rosenbaum when he armed himself to rescue other Jews.



(Above) German soldiers direct artillery against a pocket of resistance during the Warsaw ghetto uprising.
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

SPIRITUAL RESISTANCE Handout

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

Spiritual resistance includes acts that allowed individuals to maintain their humanity, integrity and dignity in the face of Nazi degradation. Those people that employed spiritual resistance refused to have their spirits broken in the midst of persecution. Certain cultural and educational activities had to be done in secret. Underground newspapers were printed and distributed in many ghettos. Classes were given in many concentration camps against Nazi orders. If the Nazis found out, all the people involved would be severely punished. Religious observance, much of it hidden, was also common. Even though prayer was forbidden in most of the ghettos and in the concentration camps, synagogue services were run quite often. Even though observing Jewish law, such as conforming to the Jewish dietary guidelines, was forbidden, many people observed these laws with fervor. All of those portrayed in *Unlikely Heroes* exhibited great spiritual resistance because their individual acts of resistance not only helped them each maintain their humanity and dignity, but thousands of fellow Jews as well.



(Above) Warsaw, Poland, Jews around a Seder table in the ghetto, reading from the Passover Haggada.

FORGERY AS RESISTANCE Handout

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.

Recha Sternbuch provides a good example of the forgery of official documents as a form of resistance. Switzerland, her home, refused to take part in the war and was neutral territory, and this is why Recha worked tirelessly to bring Jews across the Swiss border to safety. The Nazis made this increasingly difficult and, in 1938, decreed that a “J” stamp be added to passports of Jews. Through this policy, a simple passport could identify someone as a Jew so that any country could immediately turn away all Jews fleeing to safety. Pinchas Rosenbaum often used a *Schutzpass*, a “protective passport,” in his resistance work. Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who worked tirelessly to save thousands of Jews, invented the *Schutzpass*. It was a colorful, imposing, official looking document. With permission from no one, he announced that it granted the holder immunity from deportation to the death camps. The *Schutzpass* alone is credited with saving 20,000 Jewish lives.



(Above) An example of a *Schutzpass*.

ASSISTANCE AND RESCUE AS RESISTANCE Handout

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

Recha Sternbuch was courageous in her rescue efforts. She would often take herself out of safety by leaving the safety of Switzerland and crossing the border into Nazi territory to rescue Jews. Once she even violated the Sabbath by using a telephone and getting into a car to go to the aid of three men who were in danger of being deported to a labor camp. Recha and her husband, Isaac, were so renowned for their rescue efforts that their names and telephone number were scratched into the walls at the railroad stations so that incoming Jews could find them. Others in *Unlikely Heroes* who assisted and rescued fellow Jews were Lawyer Willy Perl and Master of Disguise Pinchas Rosenbaum.



(Above Right) Recha Sternbuch

DISGUISE AS RESISTANCE Handout

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

Pinchas Rosenbaum boldly impersonated Nazi officers in order to attend their meetings, learn their plans, and rescue Jews from Nazi arrests, torture, and murders. Once, when Pinchas learned of the arrest of a prominent Jewish religious leader, he disguised himself as an Arrow Cross member, forced his way to the captured Jewish leader and arrested him. Once in the Arrow Cross truck, the Jewish leader and his family were relieved to find out they'd been rescued, not arrested, and were taken to safety. Another time they heard of a partisan who had been captured and tortured to give up information on the resistance. He had been taken to an SS hospital in hopes of resuscitating him enough to allow more torturing to occur. Pinchas and his friends went on a rescue mission where they shot two SS men, took their identification papers, used them to enter the SS hospital where they used falsified release papers to rescue their partisan friend. Pinchas often dressed as an SS officer to be able to take food to the Jews in the ghettos. "To beat the enemy," he stated, "you must look like the enemy. Externally."



(Above) Some in the Jewish Resistance wore this symbol.

MUSIC AS RESISTANCE Handout

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

It times of persecution, many resistance groups used song and music in order to sustain their spirits as they went about their difficult work. Often, the songs gave them their strength to go on. During the Holocaust, a resistance anthem was composed called “The Partisan Song.” A partisan is a member of a resistance group operating within enemy lines using hit-and-run guerrilla tactics against the enemy. All members of the partisan groups sang this anthem. Partisan Leon Kahn probably heard or sang The Partisan’s Song. Robert Clary, the entertainer from *Unlikely Heroes*, is a great example of someone who used music as a form of resistance because his songs combated the systematic strategies that the Nazis used to dehumanize the Jews. Friedl Dicker Brandeis often used music as well by playing a song and having children draw what they heard.

The Partisan’s Song

Never say that you are going your last way,
Though lead-filled skies above blot out the blue of day.
The hour for which we long will certainly appear,
The earth shall thunder beneath our tread that we are here!
From lands of green palm trees to lands all white with snow,
We are coming with our pain and with our woe,
And wherever a spurt of our blood did drop,
Our courage will again sprout from that spot.
For us the morning sun will radiate the day,
And the enemy and past will fade away,
But should the dawn delay or sunrise wait too long,
Then let all future generations sing this song.
This song was written with our blood and not with lead,
This is no song of free birds flying overhead,
But a people amid crumbling walls did stand,
They stood and sang this song with rifles held in hand.

Words by Hirsh Glik
Music by Dmitri Pokrass
Translated by Elliot Palevsky
www.shoaheducation.com

OTHER FORMS OF RESISTANCE Handout

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

There are many other forms of resistance that *Unlikely Heroes* does not document. Here are a few examples:

Writing as Resistance – Most underground resistance groups published illegal newspapers and bulletins to keep people informed and to keep up morale.

Information Gathering as Resistance – There were many couriers – those that delivered messages and documents – during the war and they worked under tremendous risk to bring news and information into and out of the various ghettos.

Secret Political Organizations as Resistance – Secret resistance groups formed in many of the concentration camps and captured members of national resistance groups often provided leadership. Under extreme danger, they met to share information about the war.

Sabotage as Resistance – Many Jews who were working as forced laborers made any effort they could to undermine the Nazis. They stole documents, tampered with machinery, produced ammunition that wouldn't work, slowed down production and set fires in the factories.

Compassion as Resistance – Many resistance activities focused on alleviating the day-to-day suffering of those imprisoned in the camps. If, say, someone had a position in the infirmary, they would have access to what little medicine there was available and steal some of it for inmates.

Telling The World as Resistance – There were many efforts in concentration camps that focused on informing the world about the brutality and cruelty of the Nazis and the systematic annihilation of Jews.

Documenting as Resistance – The Nazis were famous for the efforts to hide the truth about what they were doing to the Jews. Another form of resistance had Jews gathering documentary evidence of what was happening around them. Groups in many ghettos established secret archives and wrote about their experiences.

APPLYING RESISTANCE TO TODAY Handout

_____ as Resistance

re·sist·ance /ri 'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

Looking at the forms of resistance that you've learned about, take one and apply it to a contemporary example:

APPLYING RESISTANCE TO TODAY Example

Letter Writing & Boycotting as Resistance

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

Looking at the forms of resistance that you've learned about, take one and apply it to a contemporary example:

My little sister got upset when she heard that Denny's restaurant has a history of discrimination against Black people and she wrote them a letter.

Dear Denny's:

I am writing to you because I am 10-years-old and I am a Black girl. There is a Denny's really close to our house and I have always wanted to eat there. I have lived in this house for 10 years and we drive by your Denny's all the time. I asked my parents why we could not eat there and they told me about how you have often treated Black folks in your restaurant. I could not believe it. So, I did some research and I found tons of articles that said this was going on in different Denny's restaurants around the country. These were not articles from a long time ago either; they were as recent as days before I write this very letter. There were lots of articles about how really mean you are to Black people. I don't really understand it at all because I am a really nice person and now I would be scared to eat at Denny's. My question for you is what is you going to do about this? Can you write me back and let me know what you will do to make this better? If you don't write back, then I will just think you prove that you don't like Black girls like me. I mean it. I am waiting for your answer.

Concerned,

H. D. S.

DEFINING YOUR OWN RESISTANCE Handout

_____ as Resistance

re·sist·ance /ri 'zistəns/ Noun

5. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
 6. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
 7. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
 8. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.
-

Write about your hero and how they resisted oppression:

Illustrate your hero and resistance with a primary document of some kind here:

DEFINING YOUR OWN RESISTANCE Example

Divorce as Resistance

re·sist·ance /ri'zistəns/ Noun

1. The refusal to accept or comply with something.
2. The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
3. A force that opposes or works against the motion of another.
4. An underground organization that leads the struggle for national liberation in a country under the control of military forces or oppressive governments.

Write about your hero and how they resisted oppression:

I know this isn't anything like what went on during the Holocaust, but my hero – or should I say “shero” – was my Grandmother because she divorced my Grandfather. I know that it must sound weird to say that divorce is a form of resistance, but in our family, it really was. My Grandfather was pretty bad from what I hear. He used to drink a lot and was not around very much. He would take the money that was meant for my Dad and his brothers to have food and he would go use it for drinking. My Dad is the youngest of his brothers so he didn't get beaten, but I guess from what I hear that my uncles used to get beaten really badly with belts. So my Grandmother divorced my Grandfather in the 1950's and it wasn't as common as it is now, I think. My Grandmother had never had a job and she got one and raised all of my uncles and my Dad by herself. She made sure every one of them went to college and no one in our family had ever even graduated high school before. I think my Grandmother used resistance to liberate herself and her boys from an abusive situation. That is why she is my “shero” and that is why I love her so much and want to do well to make her proud.

Illustrate your hero and resistance with a primary document of some kind here:

(left) That is a photo of my Grandmother and her boys in 1960. My Dad is the boy on her lap, the youngest. She was already divorced from my Grandfather by this time. I think my Grandmother exhibited spiritual resistance because she refused to let her situation break her spirit. She kept her humanity and Dignity.



Lesson 5: Resiliency

Framework

One of the concepts demonstrated throughout *Unlikely Heroes* is resiliency. Resiliency is the ability to spring back from and successfully adapt to adversity. One 15-year-old high school student described it this way: “Bouncing back from problems and stuff with more power and more smarts.” There are specific factors that facilitate resiliency and many of them were dynamically demonstrated through the stories in *Unlikely Heroes*. In this lesson, students will learn about personal resiliency factors, identify their portrayal in the film, and reflect on which ones they personally use in their own lives.

Objectives

Students will:

- Define resiliency
- Learn about factors that facilitate resiliency
- Identify factors of resilience in the film and in their own lives

Time and Materials

- One class period
- Copies of Handouts for students

Essential Questions

- What is resilience?
- What personal resiliency factors helped those in the film be resilient?

Suggested Procedures

Step 1

Explain the concept of resiliency to students. Emphasize that this is a major life skill that has the potential to help them immediately, as well as aiding them throughout their lives as they navigate the ups and downs that come their way. Mention common scenarios of crises that people face: the death of a loved one, rejection, failure, or abuse. Lead students in a conversation using the following questions as a guide.

- What do you think it is that allows two people to go through the exact same crisis, say abuse, and one of them can’t get past it and the other one can? What factors do you think help one person to be resilient and another to not be resilient?
- Is the ability to be resilient something internal, external, or a combination of both? Explain. What are internal characteristics that might help someone be resilient? What are external factors that might help someone be resilient?
- Think of someone you know personally who has gone through a great crisis and come out of it better and stronger. What was it about them that made them able to bounce back from tragedy?

Step 2

Give each student a copy of *PERSONAL RESILIENCY BUILDERS* Handout. Quickly read over and discuss the sixteen personal resiliency-building factors to make sure students understand them. Ask students if they see themselves in any of these factors. Have a few students either share which ones they think describe them or which ones they think describe a peer; use this as a chance to affirm each other.

Step 3

The *RESILIENCY MATCHING* Handout allows students to make connections from *Unlikely Heroes* to concepts of resiliency. Choose one narrative in *Unlikely Heroes* and use it as a model of what you want students to do. For instance, write Pinchas Rosenbaum's name on the board and ask students to help you identify which personal resiliency-building factors his life and story demonstrated. Examples might include: competence, because he was good at disguise; perseverance, because he would go into the most dangerous situations to save fellow Jews; and perceptiveness, because he was able to take on the demeanor of SS officers to fool the Nazis. After this model, tell students that they must identify the resiliency factors of those in *Unlikely Heroes*. Break students into groups of three or four and let them spend a few minutes filling out the *RESILIENCY MATCHING* Handout together. As each group shares out their ideas, **add another column** to the class Matrix so that students can see how the people in *Unlikely Heroes* exhibited resiliency. The end result will look something like this:

NAME	RESILIENCY FACTORS DEMONSTRATED
Willy Perl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service ▪ Positive View of Personal Future ▪ Self-Motivation
Robert Clary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service ▪ Humor ▪ Positive View of Personal Future ▪ Flexibility ▪ Creativity
Recha Sternbuch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relationships ▪ Service ▪ Perceptiveness ▪ Spirituality
Friedl Dicker Brandeis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relationships ▪ Service ▪ Flexibility ▪ Love of Learning ▪ Creativity
Leon Kahn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-Motivation ▪ Spirituality ▪ Self-Worth ▪ Perseverance

Hanka & Astusha Wajcblum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-Motivation ▪ Perseverance ▪ Inner-Direction ▪ Self-Worth
Pinchas Rosenbaum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perceptiveness ▪ Competence ▪ Perseverance ▪ Creativity ▪ Self-Worth

Step 4

The *STRENGTHENING YOUR OWN RESILIENCY* Handout is the culminating activity in this lesson that brings the courage and strength of the resilient narratives in *Unlikely Heroes* home to students. What can we learn from *Unlikely Heroes*? How can we take the character traits portrayed to us in the film and incorporate them into our own lives on a daily basis? How can we each build our repertoire of resiliency factors so that we have more to draw from in times of trouble?

Extension Activity

It's a great idea to make a poster that has the sixteen factors of resiliency on it for the classroom wall. Regularly, as the teacher in the room, refer students to the poster, especially when you see a student exhibit a particular factor. Say an affirmation like, "I appreciate you exhibiting the resiliency factor of humor." This way, you can hone in on specific factors that students demonstrate to help build up the resiliency of students in your classroom.

PERSONAL RESILIENCY BUILDERS Handout

Can people learn to be more resilient, or are some people just born with the ability to bounce back better than others? Researchers believe that the ability to be resilient can either be helped or hindered by both personal factors and environmental factors. The following is a list of factors that can help with resiliency building. Researchers believe that most people develop a cluster of three or four of these that he or she uses most often in difficult times. What do you think are the three or four that you most often use? Circle them.

- **Relationships** – Sociability/ability to be a friend/ability to form positive relationships
- **Service** – Gives of self in service to others and/or a cause
- **Life Skills** – Uses life skills, including good decision-making, assertiveness, and impulse control
- **Humor** – Has a good sense of humor
- **Inner Direction** – Bases choices/decisions on internal evaluation (internal locus of control)
- **Perceptiveness** – Insightful understanding of people and situations
- **Independence** – “Adaptive” distancing from unhealthy people and situations/autonomy
- **Positive View of Personal Future** – Optimism/expects a positive future
- **Flexibility** – Can adjust to change; can bend as necessary to positively cope with situations
- **Love of Learning** – Capacity for and connection to learning
- **Self-Motivation** – Internal initiative and positive motivation from within
- **Competence** – Is “good at something”/personal competence
- **Self-Worth** – Feelings of self-worth and self-confidence
- **Spirituality** – Personal faith in something greater
- **Perseverance** – Keeps on despite difficulty; doesn’t give up
- **Creativity** – Expresses self through artistic endeavor, or uses creative imagination, thinking, or other processes

*Adapted from Henderson, N. (Ed.). (2003). *Resiliency in action: Practical ideas for overcoming risks and building strengths in youth, family, and communities*. Ojai, CA: Resiliency in Action.

RESILIENCY MATCHING Handout

Think about the seven stories you've learned about in *Unlikely Heroes* and the factors of resiliency that they demonstrated. Use the list here and match as many as possible with the person.

FACTORS OF RESILIENCY: Relationships, Service, Life Skills, Humor, Inner Direction, Perceptiveness, Independence, Positive View of Personal Future, Flexibility, Love of Learning, Self-Motivation, Competence, Self-Worth, Spirituality, Perseverance, and Creativity

Will Perl
The Lawyer

Robert Clary
The Entertainer

Recha
Sternbuch
The Rabbi's
Daughter

Hanka &
Astusha
Wajcblum
The Sisters

Friedl Dicker
Brandeis
The Artist

Pinchas
Rosenbaum
The Master of
Disguise

Leon Kahn
The Partisan

STRENGTHENING YOUR OWN RESILIENCY Handout



Each one of the personal resiliency-building factors you can draw upon gives you one more link in a chain that will give you strength to bounce back from problems and trouble with more power and intelligence.

You can become *more* resilient by reflecting upon these four questions:

When faced with a crisis or major life difficulty, which of the individual resiliency factors do you use most often? Why?

How can you strengthen your individual “resiliency builders”?

Can you use them now in problems you are facing?

Is there another one you think would be helpful for you? If so, how can you develop it?

Lesson 6: Theme Art

Framework

Often in stories there are common themes that stretch across place and time to link otherwise different experiences. A theme can be defined as a recurrent idea and there are many themes in the seven narratives in *Unlikely Heroes*. In this lesson students will identify the themes that reveal themselves through the stories of resistance in *Unlikely Heroes* and connect them with the themes they see in their own lives.

Objectives

Students will:

- Identify themes from *Unlikely Heroes*
- Identify themes from their own lives
- Understand their inherent strength

Time and Materials

- Three class sessions
- A copy of the *THEME ORGANIZER* Handout for each student
- Access to www.wordart.com or any word cloud art creator to create theme art

Essential Questions

- What is a theme?
- What themes do you see in the stories of *Unlikely Heroes*?
- What do you see as current themes in your own life?

Suggested Procedures

Step 1

First, have students define what a theme is and facilitate a conversation where they identify the various themes they see in *Unlikely Heroes*. It is best to offer an example to get them thinking: “*One theme I see is that of taking action. The seven people in this film were not bystanders; they saw injustice and immediately took action against it.*” Have students record these themes on the *THEME ORGANIZER* Handout in the first box.

Write themes in another column on the class Matrix, adding yet another complex layer to the Matrix for discussion. It might look like this:

NAME	THEME
Willy Perl	Give unselfishly!
Robert Clary	Music Lifts the Spirit!
Recha Sternbuch	Be Firm in Your Convictions!
Friedl Dicker Brandeis	Art Heals and Inspires!
Leon Kahn	Be Fearless!
Hanka & Astusha Wajcblum	Step-by-Step Patience!
Pinchas Rosenbaum	Be Bold!

Step 2

Next, have students use the second box to fill out the themes that they feel are dominant in their own lives right now. You might offer some themes from your own life as an example or ask students to volunteer some common themes that they think many in the class might be experiencing. Examples might include themes like friendship, planning for the future, responsibility, or self-esteem.

Step 3

Students will use the themes in the two boxes to create word art at www.wordart.com. If you have the capability in your classroom, show students how easy it is to create their theme art by doing a model of it. Either do this art in class or assign it as homework.

Step 4

Hang students' individual theme art around the classroom to visually reinforce that the themes in *Unlikely Heroes* are similar to many of the themes we experience today. If that feels too personal for students, be sure to respond individually to them about the themes they see and affirm that you see them as well.

THEME ORGANIZER Handout

List some themes you see from *Unlikely Heroes*:

Circle the theme above that you think is the most powerful to you. Why?

What do you think are the current themes of your own life?

Circle the theme above that you think is the most dominant theme for you today? Why?

Use www.wordart.com to create theme art pieces.

Reflection

How are the themes similar to acts of resistance? How are they similar to factors of resiliency?

Lesson 7: Essay, Art, Music or Action Menu Project

Framework

As a culminating assignment for *Unlikely Heroes*, students have an opportunity to choose from a menu of projects to express what they feel they've best learned from the film.

Objectives

Students will:

- Synthesize what they have learned from *Unlikely Heroes*
- Create authentic projects that identify which *Unlikely Heroes* stories impacted them the greatest

Time and Materials

- On-Going project lasting two weeks
- One copy of the *Menu Project* Handout for each student

Essential Questions

- Who impacted you the most from *Unlikely Heroes*?
- What is the form of resistance and/or resilience that you can use today? How would you use it?

Suggested Procedures

Pass out the *Menu Project* Handout to students and tell them they have a choice in their culminating assignment. Go over the four options and give as many examples as possible. The essay may be the choice many students opt for because it is a form of assessment they are most familiar with, but offering students choices to express themselves through art and action is in-line with aspects of *Unlikely Heroes*. Leave the assignment open-ended and allow students to create whatever they wish as long as it fits within the framework given on the *Menu Project* Handout.

To monitor the progress of the projects, you could have students sign-up for which one of the menu projects they choose. Then, at least twice a week, remind them that their menu projects are due on whatever date you choose.

When students hand in their final projects, make a special day of it. Have students share out what they've done as a way to honor the stories and impact of *Unlikely Heroes*.

MENU PROJECT Handout

Choose one of the following projects.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ESSAY</u></p> <p>If you choose this option, you'll write an essay based on the following outline: Introduction – What is the most powerful theme for you from <i>Unlikely Heroes</i>? Why? Paragraph 2 – What is the most dominant theme for you in your life right now? Why is it significant for you right now? Paragraph 3 – Are these two themes similar or different? How so? Paragraph 4 – How can you incorporate the theme you chose from <i>Unlikely Heroes</i> into your own life? Conclusion - How can knowing a dominant theme in your life help you live a life of integrity and courage?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ART</u></p> <p>If you choose this option, you'll do an original piece of art that portrays resistance and/or resilience. You may draw, paint, sculpt, do a collage, or any kind of art form.</p> <p>Tag your art piece with the following description: Art by... Title of Piece Portrayal of...(name the form of resistance and/or resilience) Dedicated to...(which <i>Unlikely Heroes</i> character do you dedicate it to?)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MUSIC</u></p> <p>If you choose this option, you'll write or find a piece of music that best explains one of the forms of resistance and/or resilience. You could write your own original lyrics and music, write only the lyrics (in other words, a poem), or find a song that has already been written that you feel best explains something you've learned from <i>Unlikely Heroes</i>. The choice is yours.</p> <p>Accompanying your music selection should be the following description: Music by... Title of Music This music addresses which form of resistance and/or resilience? Dedicated to ...(which <i>Unlikely Heroes</i> character do you dedicate it to?)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ACTION</u></p> <p><i>Unlikely Heroes</i> is about people of action! If you choose this option, you will be acting in some way that mirrors the actions of some of the individuals in the film. You must give of your time, your energy and your talents. Is there a way, like Robert Clary, that you can entertain others and lift their spirits? Is there a way, like Friedl Dicker Brandeis, that you can use or teach art to give others hope and beauty? Is there a way, like Willy Perl and Recha Sternbuch, that you can alleviate the suffering of others? After your action, turn in a reflection that answers these questions: How does your action honor those in <i>Unlikely Heroes</i>? Which aspects of resistance and/or resilience does your action address? Which <i>Unlikely Heroes</i> character do you dedicate your action to?</p>

Recommended Resources

BOOKS AUTHORED BY OR ABOUT THOSE IN *UNLIKELY HEROES*

Heroine of Rescue: The Incredible Story of Recha Sternbuch Who Saved Thousands From The Holocaust

Rabbi Joseph Friedenson
ISBN# 0899064604
Mesorah Publications Ltd.
(800) 637-6724
www.artscroll.com

Fireflies in the Dark: The Story of Friedl Dicker Branden and the Children of Terezin

Susan Goldman Rubin
ISBN# 9780823416813
Holiday House
(212) 421-6134
www.holidayhouse.com

From the Holocaust to Hogan's Heroes: The Autobiography of Robert Clary

Robert Clary
ISBN# 1589793455
Taylor Trade Publishing
(800) 462-6420
www.rlptrade.com

Never Far Away: The Auschwitz Chronicles of Anna Heilman.

Anna Heilman
ISBN# 9781552380406
University of Calgary Press
(403) 220-7736
www.uofcpress.com

ADDITIONAL BOOKS ABOUT JEWISH RESISTANCE

Never Again: A History of the Holocaust

Martin Gilbert
Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.
ISBN# 0789304090
(800) 522-6657
www.rizzoliusa.com

A Promise To Remember: The Holocaust in the Words and Voices of its Survivors

Michael Berenbaum
Hachette Book Group

ISBN# 0821228285
(800) 759-0190
www.hachettebookgroup.com

WEBSITES

Anti-Defamation League
www.adl.org/education

Facing History and Ourselves
www.facinghistory.org

Jewish Partisans
www.jewishpartisans.org

Simon Wiesenthal Center
www.wiesenthal.com

Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation
www.vhf.org

The Museum of Tolerance
www.museumoftolerance.com

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
www.ushmm.org

USC Shoah Foundation Institute
www.college.usc.edu/vhi

Yad Vashem
www.yadvashem.org

Standards – *Unlikely Heroes*

These standards are drawn from the *Compendium of K-12 Standards*, 4th ed., available through www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp.

Art Connections

Standard 1.

Understands connections among the various art forms and other disciplines

Civics

Standard 22.

Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another, and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy

Standard 23.

Understands the impact of significant political and nonpolitical developments on the United States and other nations

Historical Understanding

Standard 1.

Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns

Standard 2.

Understands the historical perspective

Language Arts

Standard 1.

Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Standard 4.

Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Standard 5.

Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

Standard 8.

Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

Standard 9.

Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

Life Skills

Thinking and Reasoning, **Standard 2.** *Understands and applies basic principles of logic and reasoning*

Working with Others, **Standard 1.** *Contributes to the overall effort of a group*

Self-Regulation, **Standard 4.** *Demonstrates perseverance*

U.S. History

Standard 25.

Understands the causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs

World History

Standard 41.

Understands the causes and global consequences of World War II

Standards – *The Museum of Tolerance*

These standards are drawn from the *Compendium of K-12 Standards*, 4th ed., available through www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp. All of the standards above apply to visiting *The Museum of Tolerance* because of its Holocaust Exhibit. Visitors to *The Museum of Tolerance* will also experience other exhibits, like The Tolerancenter, and the following standards apply.

Behavioral Studies

Standard 4.

Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions

Civics

Standard 4.

Understands the concept of a constitution, the various purposes that constitutions serve, and the conditions that contribute to the establishment and maintenance of constitutional government

Standard 9.

Understands the importance of Americans sharing and supporting certain values, beliefs, and principles of American constitutional democracy

Standard 10.

Understands the roles of voluntarism and organized groups in American social and political life

Standard 11.

Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society

Standard 13.

Understands the character of American political and social conflict and factors that tend to prevent or lower its intensity

Standard 14.

Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life

Standard 24.

Understands the meaning of citizenship in United States, and knows the requirements for citizenship and naturalization

Standard 25.

Understands issues regarding personal, political, and economic rights

Standard 26.

Understands issues regarding the proper scope and limits of rights and the relationships among personal, political, and economic rights

Standard 27.

Understands how certain character traits enhance citizens' ability to fulfill personal and civic responsibilities

Standard 28.

Understands how participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals

Standard 29.

Understands the importance of political leadership, public service, and a knowledgeable citizenry in American constitutional democracy

Music**Standard 7.**

Understands the relationship between music and history and culture

U.S. History**Standard 29.**

Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties

Standard 31.

Understands economic, social and cultural developments in the contemporary United States

Service Learning

Service Learning standards are drawn from the *Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service-Learning* from the Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform and can be found at www.servicelearning.org.

Standard 1.

Effective service-learning efforts strengthen service and academic learning

Standard 2.

Model service learning provides concrete opportunities for youth to learn new skills, to think critically, and to test new roles in an environment that encourages risk-taking and rewards competence.

Standard 3.

Preparation and reflection are essential elements in service learning.

Standard 4.

Youths' efforts are recognized by those served, including their peers, the school, and the community

Standard 5.

Youth are involved in the planning

Standard 6.

The service students perform makes a meaningful contribution to the community

Standard 7.

Effective service learning integrates systematic formative and summative evaluation

Standard 8.

Service learning connects the school or sponsoring organization and its community in

new and positive ways

Standard 9.

Service learning is understood and supported as an integral element in the life of a school or sponsoring organization and its community

Standard 10.

Skilled adult guidance and supervision are essential to the success of service learning