

The Holocaust: Exploring Active Citizenship through Resistors and Rescuers

Overview

In this activity, participants will explore the active citizens who resisted the tyranny and atrocities committed by Hitler and the Nazi party, as well as those who worked to assist and rescue those targeted. Upon exploring these brave people, students will choose a person from the Holocaust who exhibited active citizenship, deliver a speech in their honor, and present them with a citizenship award at a mock reception.

Grade

7

North Carolina Essential Standards for 7th Grade

- 7.H.1.1 - Construct charts, graphs, and historical narratives to explain particular events or issues over time.
- 7.H.1.2 - Summarize the literal meaning of historical documents in order to establish context.
- 7.H.1.3 - Use primary and secondary sources to interpret various historical perspectives.
- 7.H.2.1 - Analyze the effects of social, economic, military and political conflict among nations, regions, and groups (e.g. war, genocide, imperialism and colonization).

Essential Questions

- What are the characteristics of an active and effective citizen?
- What are some ways people resisted the tyranny of Hitler and the Nazi party during WWII?
- In what ways did active citizens assist those targeted during the Holocaust?
- Why did some citizens exhibit apathy or choose not to resist Hitler and the Nazis?

Materials

- A large strip of paper (bulletin board or butcher paper)
- Markers
- Analogy graphic organizers (attached)
- Photo of milk can used by the Oyneg Shabbos resistance group (attached)
- Reading excerpts and questions attached
- “Excellence in Citizenship” Award, assignment attached
- Examples of Resistors and Rescuers, list attached

Duration

- 2+ class periods
- Time varies depending on the amount of class time provided for working on “Excellence in Citizenship” Award Assignment

Student Preparation

This lesson should be introduced after students have developed an understanding of the events of the Holocaust as well as its contributing factors. Please see “Introduction to the Holocaust” and “Hate & Anti-Semitism in the Holocaust” in the Database of K-12 Resources.

Teacher Preparation

Teachers should create one or more outlines of a human body on bulletin board paper (depending on class size): this will be written on by students during the warm-up activity. Place the title of “The Active Citizen” on each paper.

Procedure

Exploring Active Citizenship

1. Begin by leading the class in a verbal brainstorm of the word ***citizen***. Encourage them to explore all aspects of the word that come to mind. As a group, create a common definition.
2. Ask participants to silently think of what it means to be an ***active citizen***. Encourage their thinking by asking:
 - What type of person makes a community a good place to live and go to school?
 - How does an active citizen act and behave? How does an active citizen affect where you live (your neighborhood, your school, your entire city and county, etc.)?
 - What is their attitude like? What do they value?
3. Direct student’s attention to a large piece of paper with the outline of a body drawn on it. (Teacher’s may want to place these on the floor so all students can easily access it.) While students think, direct their attention to the body outline. The outline should be as large as possible, ideally student sized, and titled *The Active Citizen*. If your class is larger, you may divide the class in half, with a human outline for each group.
4. Explain to students that they are going to illustrate an active citizen by filling up the inside of the body outline with all the traits and behaviors of an active citizen. Tell students that they may write words, draw pictures, use symbols, etc. Allow students to begin, monitoring their work as they write and draw on the inside of the human outline. As they work, continue to ask questions to facilitate further thinking and details. (For example, if a participant has written “responsible”, ask the group to consider specific actions that exhibit civic responsibility, and instruct them to add those specifics onto their citizen).
5. Once finished, ask the class to step back and view their “active citizen.” Instruct them to point out the attributes and/or actions that they believe are most important and explain why. See if the class can come to a consensus on the top 5 traits or behaviors an active citizen should have/exhibit.
6. Next, following the same process as above, instruct students to consider the type of citizen who would have a negative outlook on being a responsible citizen. Encourage students to again brainstorm what traits, characteristics, behaviors, actions, ideas, values, etc. this negative person would encompass. Have students return to the large paper, and write words, pictures, symbols, etc. on the outside of the human drawing that represent a negative citizen.
7. Once finished, discuss:
 - Looking at everything on the outside of our citizen, which comment, symbol, picture, etc. represents what you believe to be the most damaging characteristic, trait, or behavior of a negative citizen and why?
 - What do you think determines whether a person becomes an active citizen, or a citizen who negatively impacts their community?
 - Why do you think it is important to be an active citizen? What consequences might we face if our community is filled with citizens who do not act in a positive manner?
 - How might we encourage fellow community members to be “responsible active citizens?”

8. Next, tell students that they will be focusing on citizens who exhibited active citizenship during the Holocaust. Remind students of the definition of the Holocaust (i.e. “the mass slaughter of European civilians and especially Jews by the Nazis during World War II.”) Discuss:
- Do you think the Holocaust could have been prevented or could its negative impact have been lessened in some way? Explain.
 - We have studied a number of people who were victimized during the Holocaust as well as those who were responsible for the mistreatment. Do you think there were any additional categories of people? What do you know about resisters or rescuers during the Holocaust?

Resisters of the Holocaust

9. Explain to students that while there were many Germans who conformed to the unjust ideals promoted by the Nazis rather than speak out (see Carolina K-12’s lesson “The Crime of the Bystander in the Holocaust” located in the Database of K-12 Resources), there were some active citizens who contributed to resistance efforts, and helped rescue and assist victims when possible.
10. Ask students to think about a time they assisted a fellow citizen or resisted injustice of some kind. Perhaps they stood up for someone being teased or helped a stranger in need. Give students a few minutes of free-write time to explain such a time; encourage student thinking by asking:
- Explain the event or situation.
 - How did you assist or resist? What method did you use? (i.e. silent protest, verbal disagreement, etc.)
 - What was your rationale in assisting or resisting? (Why did you make the choice to get involved in this way?)
 - What was the impact of your assistance or resistance?
 - Based on our discussion regarding what constitutes an active citizen, do you think you were being an active citizen? Why or why not?
 - Would you have done anything differently? Explain.
- **Teacher Note:** It is possible that some students will not be able to identify such a moment. Teachers can also tell students to remember a time when they wished they would have resisted or assisted and to describe that event and explain what they would have done differently.

11. As students ponder their answers, tell them that there were many ways that people resisted Hitler and the Nazis. Ask students to first brainstorm some ways that Jews, other victims of the Holocaust and non-victims may have resisted. Compile these on the board and then share the following quote with students:
- “In every ghetto, in every deportation train, in every labor camp, even in the death camps, the will to resist was strong, and took many forms. Fighting with the few weapons that would be found, individual acts of defiance and protest, the courage of obtaining food and water under the threat of death, the superiority of refusing to allow the Germans their final wish to gloat over panic and despair. Even passivity was a form of resistance. To die with dignity was a form of resistance. To resist the demoralizing, brutalizing force of evil, to refuse to be reduced to the level of animals, to live through the torment, to outlive the tormentors, these too were acts of resistance. Merely to give a witness of these events in testimony was, in the end, a contribution to victory. Simply to survive was a victory of the human spirit.”

Source: GILBERT, MARTIN. *The Holocaust. The Jewish Tragedy*. London: Fontana. 1987

12. Have students add to the class list based on what they heard in the quote. Ways of resistance may include:
- Fighting
 - Praying
 - Hiding

- Disguise
- Fleeing the country
- Protesting
- Exhibiting great feats of courage
- Refusal to allow spirit to be broken
- Survival
- Being passive
- Assisting others

13. Ask students to discuss how these various choices represent active citizenship.

Oyneg Shabbos

14. Project the attached photo of a milk can (or copy and hand out if a projection is not available) and discuss:
- What do you see here?
 - What do you think this item might be? What might it have been used for? What evidence makes you think this?
 - This item actually contributed to resistance efforts during the Holocaust. Does anyone have any predictions as to how?

15. After students have shared their thoughts, explain to them that the picture is of a milk can that was used by a resistance group during the Holocaust called the Oyneg Shabbos. Give students background information on the group such as:

- “Oyneg Shabbos was the code name of a group led by Jewish historian Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Nazi-German occupation of Warsaw in World War II. The group, which included historians, writers, rabbis and social workers, was dedicated to chronicling life in the Ghetto. They worked as a team, collecting documents and soliciting testimonies and reports from dozens of volunteers of all ages. The materials submitted included essays, diaries, drawings, wall posters, and other materials describing life in the Ghetto. The collection work started in September 1939 and ended in January 1943.

The members of Oyneg Shabbos initially collected the material with the intention that they would write a book after the war about the horrors they had witnessed. As the pace of deportations increased, and it became clear that the destination was the Treblinka death camp and few of Warsaw's Jews were likely to survive, Ringelblum had the archives stored in 3 milk cans and ten metal boxes, which were then buried in three separate locations in the Ghetto. Two of the canisters, containing thousands of documents, were unearthed in 1946 and a further ten boxes in 1950. The third cache has yet to be uncovered, but is rumored to be buried beneath what is now the Chinese Embassy in Warsaw. However, a search attempt in 2005 failed to locate the missing archival material.

The name Oyneg Shabbat means joy of the Sabbath in Hebrew and usually refers to a celebratory gathering held after Sabbath services, often with food, singing, study, discussion, and socializing. This name was selected because the group tended to meet on Saturdays to discuss the progress of their collection and documentation efforts.” Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oyneg_Shabbos_\(group\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oyneg_Shabbos_(group))

16. Discuss with students:

- How can the actions of the Oyneg Shabbos be viewed as a form of resistance?
- What were the Oyneg Shabbos risking by documenting what was occurring during 1939-1943?
- Why do you think the Oyneg Shabbos risked their life to chronicle the atrocities of the Nazis? Why was this documentation so important to them?

Rescuers During the Holocaust

17. As students ponder the importance of resistance to the Nazi campaign, introduce them to another important group; citizens who served as rescuers. Ask students to brainstorm and jot down current forms of rescue, then share their ideas. (Students may mention general local government entities such as police or firefighters; they may refer to current event rescue efforts, such as rescues connected to recent hurricanes or earthquakes, the government's economic rescue package/bailout may come up, etc.) Explore the concept of "rescue" further by discussing:
- What does it mean to rescue someone or something?
 - Why do you think people choose to rescue others?
 - What part does risk play in the act of rescue? (i.e. risking your safety or security for that of another.)
18. Focus student thought on the years of the Holocaust and point out that although there were a large number of bystanders during WWII, there were also citizens who risked their own life to rescue Jews and non-Jews persecuted by the Nazis. For example, the Yad Vashem, (the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority), located in Israel was created to recognize "the Righteous among the Nations." The Righteous are defined as non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. To earn the title "Righteous," one must fulfill several criteria including but not limited to repeated or substantial assistance and assistance without any form of payment expected. Tell students that some "Righteous" include:
- Varian Fry – He was an American journalist who risked his life by saving 2,000 - 4,000 Jews, including many prominent artists and intellectuals. He and a small group of volunteers hid people at the Villa Air-Bel until they could be smuggled out.
 - Giovanni Palatucci – He was an Italian police official who risked his life and career when he saved several thousand Jews by forging documents and visas to Jews threatened by deportation. He managed to destroy all documented records of the some 5,000 Jewish refugees living in the town, issuing them false papers and providing them with funds.
 - Raoul Wallenberg – He was a Swedish diplomat who saved up to 100,000 Jews by issuing "protective passports" (German: *Schutz-Pass*), which identified the bearers as Swedish subjects awaiting repatriation and prevented their deportation. Wallenberg knew his life was in danger and had to stay in different homes to avoid capture from the Arrow Cross Members.

Jigsaw: Rescuers and Resisters

19. Tell students they are going to learn about other rescuers and resisters who worked to save those persecuted during the Holocaust. Divide students into five cooperative groups and assign each group one of the five attached excerpts from various sources about different rescuers and resisters. If possible, print the various excerpts on five different colors of paper – this will make the excerpts easier to decipher as well as make the transition to the second group easier. (Teachers can break students up into more or less groups than the recommended five; just ensure each group initially works on a different excerpt.) Pass out the attached *Group Instructions & Discussion Questions ...* Teachers should assign one student in each group to be the "Facilitator." This student will be responsible for keeping the group on track and facilitating the discussion of the reading.
20. Tell students that the excerpt provided to their group discusses either resisters or rescuers during the Holocaust. Explain to students that they are to carefully read their excerpt as a group following the instructions provided. They should then answer the discussion questions provided in as much detail as possible. Let students know that each of them must individually have a comprehensive understanding of their group's excerpt, since in the second step of this jigsaw activity they will each be teaching a different group of students about their excerpt and the group of people it discusses.
21. Give groups approximately 15 minutes to work together on their excerpt. After all groups are finished, ask the students to "jigsaw," so that new groups are re-formed with one person representing each excerpt in

every group. (If the five excerpts were copied on different colors of paper, each new group will have at least one person with each color of paper.) Once students are settled in their new groups, have each member take 3-4 minutes to teach their new group members about the people described in their excerpt. Students should take notes as they learn from their classmates.

- **Variation:** Teachers who lack class time to complete the jigsaw activity can also select one reading for the entire class to focus on individually or in partners.

22. After groups are finished, debrief as a class:

- What were some of the ways people resisted during the Holocaust?
- What were some of the ways people worked to rescue those persecuted during the Holocaust?
- In what ways did these people exhibit active citizenship?
- Had more people followed their lead, how might the Holocaust have been impacted?
- Why do you think there were so few people who did resist the actions of the Nazis or try and assist those who were being persecuted?

23. Discuss with students that while the number of people who took on the roles of resisters or rescuers was very important, it was relatively small. Why? Some mistakenly assume that when Jews were being forced to go to the ghettos, concentration camps and extermination camps, they went without a fight because they were “weak.” As discussed, some did find ways to resist, but a vast majority did not. It is important to examine the situations they were faced with. Tell students that when asked to place themselves in the position of the Jews being deported to ghettos or concentration camps, many times their natural response is to say “I would have fought!” Or they assume they would have spoken out and rescued others. These are easy answers – but are they the truth? Would we risk our own life, or the life of a loved one, to save a stranger? Would we fight back in the face of ultimate fear, or would we assume that things would get better if we did what we were told? As he spoke at the *Days of Remembrance* conference, Joel M. Geiderman, Vice Chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council addressed this issue (project the excerpt on the board and discuss with students):

- “One theme of today’s ceremony is that of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust. I applaud this because it belies the negative image I ashamedly believed as a youngster that Jews went to the slaughter like sheep because they were too afraid, timid, or weak to fight back. The truth is, faced with incremental decisions as to whether to fight back or be killed on the spot; and unaware of any precedent whereby people were exterminated solely on the basis of their religion or “race,”-- a situation that was only subsequently termed “genocide”—Jews often did not resist. Ultimately they were placed in ghettos, on transports, and in concentration camps, usually not understood ahead of time as death camps, and were destroyed. There should be not one ounce of shame associated with these actions. At every step, they did what they thought was best to save their families and themselves. Who among us would do differently?”
- Discuss:
 - What message is Geiderman conveying? Do you agree or disagree?
 - Knowledge is power. Do you think there would have been more rescue and resistance efforts if more people would have known the full scope of Hitler’s plans? Why or why not?

Create and Present an “Excellence in Citizenship Award”

24. To culminate this lesson, tell students that they have been selected to attend a reception at which active citizens from the Holocaust are being honored and that each of them will be delivering a speech and presenting a citizenship award to a deserving resister or rescuer. Hand out the attached “*Excellence in Citizenship*” Award assignment and go over it with students.

25. A list of rescuer and resister examples that can be assigned is attached. Teachers can also choose to assign other citizens or allow students to choose their own person. Teachers should determine how much class

time (if any) will be allotted for research and completion of the assignment. Ensure students understand that they will be delivering their speech and presenting their award in class at a mock reception in honor of active citizens from the Holocaust. (Teachers should also determine if and how much class time will be given for rehearsing speeches.)

26. On the day students are to make their presentations, teachers may want to set the stage by providing or allowing students to bring in snacks, encouraging students to dress up, etc.)



The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

The Warsaw Ghetto originally contained almost 450,000 people. By January of 1943, it was down to roughly 37,000 people. The rest had already been taken away to slave labor or death camps. Word got out that the Germans were going to finish off the ghetto, clean it out. Those half-starved, disease-weakened ghetto inhabitants decided to fight.

They had actually been preparing for this, and had convinced the Germans to let them build 631 air-raid shelters. Bombing was going on all around them, and the Germans needed their slave laborers so, to keep them safe from Allied bombings, the Germans had allowed them to do this. Now the people used those very shelters to fight against the Germans.

When the Germans came in to clean out the ghetto, much to their surprise, they were met with resistance.

There were over a thousand fighters, including children. They used pistols and Molotov cocktails against the Nazi weaponry, and they successfully repulsed the Germans.

It was a short-lived victory. The Germans returned a short while later. This time they brought major fire power. They started to destroy buildings, bit by bit by bit, knocking everything down. After about a day, they broke into the hospital, shot everyone in their beds, and torched the place. Gradually, they destroyed the entire ghetto.

When the Nazis reached the air-raid shelters, they drilled down, and gassed the people inside. Some fighters escaped to the sewers, and the Germans raised the water levels.

In about three weeks, the main fighting was over.

Most of the remaining Jews were rounded up, but it actually took months and months of combing through the ruins and demolishing the destroyed buildings before the uprising was finally put down.

Although the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was not really very successful, it was the first time in all of German-occupied Europe that there was any organized uprising against the Nazis. Word got out, and it set a climate. And afterwards, there was Jewish resistance in many other places, including some of the camps.

Article taken from: <http://www.aish.com/holocaust/overview/he05n27.htm>

4. Prepare to Teach:

When your group has finished discussing the excerpt, each of you should form a plan of how you will teach fellow classmates about the group of people your excerpt addressed and their experiences during the Holocaust. Write out a draft summary of what you will say on the back of this sheet to teach other students who have not read your excerpt about this important event. **Write your summary to share with others here:**

5. After everyone in your group has written a draft of their summary, practice it with your group and help one another make the summary better. Was anything unclear or left out? Revise your summary so that you are prepared to do the best job possible when teaching your classmates.

6. **Jigsaw:** As you listen to your new group members share information about their excerpts and the people they learned about, take notes on each group:

a. **White Rose:**

b. **Aristides de Sousa Mendes:**

c. **Oskar Schindler:**

d. **Ellen Nielsen:**

The White Rose

The White Rose was a non-violent resistance group in Nazi Germany, consisting of a number of students from the University of Munich and their philosophy professor. The group became known for an anonymous leaflet campaign, lasting from June 1942 until February 1943, that called for active opposition to German dictator Adolf Hitler's regime.

The core of the White Rose was comprised of students from the university in Munich—Sophie Scholl, her brother Hans Scholl, Alex Schmorell, Willi Graf, Christoph Probst, Traute Lafrenz, Katharina Schueddekopf, Lieselotte (Lilo) Berndt, and Falk Harnack. Most were in their early twenties. A professor of philosophy and musicology, Kurt Huber, also associated with their cause.

Between June 1942 and February 1943, they prepared and distributed six leaflets, in which they called for the active opposition of the German people to Nazi oppression and tyranny. Quoting extensively from the Bible, Aristotle and Novalis, as well as Goethe and Schiller, they appealed to what they considered the German intelligentsia, believing that they would be intrinsically opposed to Nazism. At first, the leaflets were sent out in mailings from cities in Bavaria and Austria, since the members believed that southern Germany would be more receptive to their anti-militarist message.

"Isn't it true that every honest German is ashamed of his government these days? Who among us can imagine the degree of shame that will come upon us and our children when the veil falls from our faces and the awful crimes that infinitely exceed any human measure are exposed to the light of day?" — From the first leaflet of the White Rose.

"Since the conquest of Poland three hundred thousand Jews have been murdered in this country in the most bestial way ... The German people slumber on in their dull, stupid sleep and encourage these fascist criminals ... Each man wants to be exonerated of a guilt of this kind, each one continues on his way with the most placid, the calmest conscience. But he cannot be exonerated; he is guilty, guilty, guilty!" — From the second leaflet of the White Rose.

In January 1943, using a hand-operated duplicating machine, the group is thought to have produced between 6,000 and 9,000 copies of their fifth leaflet, "Appeal to all Germans!", which was distributed via courier runs to many cities (where they were mailed). Copies appeared in Stuttgart, Cologne, Vienna, Freiburg, Chemnitz, Hamburg, Innsbruck, and Berlin. The fifth leaflet was composed by Hans Scholl with improvements by Huber. These leaflets warned that Hitler was leading Germany into the abyss; with the gathering might of the Allies, defeat was now certain. The reader was urged to "Support the resistance movement!" in the struggle for "Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and protection of the individual citizen from the arbitrary action of criminal dictator-states". These were the principles that would form "the foundations of the new Europe". The leaflets caused a sensation, and the Gestapo initiated an intensive search for the publishers.

On the nights of the 3rd, 8th, and 15th of February 1943, the slogans "Freedom" and "Down with Hitler" appeared on the walls of the University and other buildings in Munich. Alexander Schmorell, Hans Scholl and Willi Graf had painted them with tar-based paint (similar graffiti that appeared in the surrounding area at this time was painted by imitators).

On 18th February 1943, coincidentally the same day that Nazi propaganda minister Josef Goebbels called on the German people to embrace total war in his Sportpalast speech, the Scholls brought a suitcase full of leaflets to the university. The police were called and Hans and Sophie were taken into Gestapo custody. The other active members were soon arrested, and the group and everyone associated with them were brought in for interrogation. The Scholls and Probst were the first to stand trial before the Volksgerichtshof—the People's Court that tried political offenses against the Nazi German state—on 22nd February 1943. They were found

guilty of treason and Roland Freisler, head judge of the court, sentenced them to death. The three were executed by guillotine.

However, the White Rose had the last word. Their last leaflet was smuggled to The Allies, who edited it, and air-dropped millions of copies over Germany.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_rose

Name: _____

Group Instructions & Discussion Questions for "The White Rose"

1. Read: Carefully read the excerpt provided to you. As you read, mark the text:

- Circle any words that are unfamiliar to you.
- Underline any parts of the excerpt that you think are most important or that stick out to you.
- If you are confused by any part of the excerpt, write a question mark by that line or section. You can also write out questions on the text.
- If anything surprises you or evokes a strong emotional response from you, you can write an exclamation mark by the line or section,
- If a particular thought pops in your head that connects to the reading, write it in the margins.

2. Discuss: After you have finished the reading, your group's Facilitator will lead your group through discussing the following question. Be sure to take detailed notes on the answers your group shares, since you will be teaching a new group of students about your excerpt in the next step of this activity.

3. Answer:

a. What was the White Rose? How long did it last?

b. Who comprised the core of the White Rose?

c. Who was the White Rose's target audience?

d. What was the White Rose's main effort of resistance?

e. What was the White Rose's overall message?

f. What do you think the White Rose revealed to the Nazis about resistance?

g. What ways did the White Rose exhibit active citizenship?

4. Prepare to Teach:

When your group has finished discussing the excerpt, each of you should form a plan of how you will teach fellow classmates about the group of people your excerpt addressed and their experiences during the Holocaust. Write out a draft summary of what you will say on the back of this sheet to teach other students who have not read your excerpt about this important group of people. **Write your summary to share with others here:**

5. After everyone in your group has written a draft of their summary, practice it with your group and help one another make the summary better. Was anything unclear or left out? Revise your summary so that you are prepared to do the best job possible when teaching your classmates.

6. **Jigsaw:** As you listen to your new group members share information about their excerpts and the people they learned about, take notes on each group:

a. **Warsaw Ghetto Uprising:**

b. **Aristides de Sousa Mendes:**

c. **Oskar Schindler:**

d. **Ellen Nielsen:**

Aristides de Sousa Mendes

Aristides de Sousa Mendes, (July 19, 1885–April 3, 1954), was a Portuguese Diplomat who ignored and defied the orders of his own government for the safety of war refugees fleeing from invading German military forces in the early years of World War II. Between June 16 and June 23, 1940, he frantically issued Portuguese visas free of charge, to over 30,000 refugees seeking to escape the Nazi terror, 12,000 of whom were Jews.

Sousa Mendes studied law at the University of Coimbra and obtained his law degree in 1908. In his early career as a diplomat for Portugal, he served in Zanzibar, Kenya, Brazil, and the United States before being assigned to Antwerp, Belgium in 1931. In Belgium he met the Nobel Prize winners Maurice Maeterlinck and Albert Einstein. After almost ten years of dedicated service in Belgium, Sousa Mendes was assigned to the consulate of Bordeaux in France.

The consul was still in Bordeaux at the outbreak of World War II and the invasion of France by the Nazi army of Adolf Hitler. Salazar managed to maintain Portugal's neutrality in the war, but his own personal opinions favoured Hitler as far as the combat against Communism was concerned. On November 11, 1939, he issued orders that consuls were not to issue Portuguese visas to "foreigners of indefinite or contested nationality; the stateless; or Jews expelled from their countries of origin". This order was followed only six months later by one stating that "under no circumstances" were visas to be issued without prior case-by-case approval from Lisbon. Similar policies against Jewish immigration were adopted much earlier by the United States and the United Kingdom.

Thus it was in a deliberate act of disobedience that Sousa Mendes issued an estimated 30,000 visas to Jews and other persecuted minorities: political dissidents, army officers from occupied countries, and priests and nuns. These visas were not all to individuals, but sometimes to families; in at least one case, the visa covered a family of nine people.[2] Sousa Mendes was inspired to this act in part through his friendship with Rabbi Chaim (Haim) Kruger[3], who had fled to France from Antwerp.

The earliest of these visas were issued in the months between the 1939 and mid-1940 decrees, a period during which he attempted to protect his family by sending all but two sons home to Portugal and sending constant telegrams to Lisbon with coded requests for approval of the visas, in order to preserve his post while obeying his conscience. The majority of the visas, however, were issued after a harrowing three-day crisis of conscience in mid-June, 1940, shortly after Franco changed the status of Spain from "neutral" to "non-belligerent," [1], which suggested time was running out for Portugal to follow its neighbor. The consul offered a visa to his friend the rabbi, who responded, "I can't accept a visa for us and leave my people behind." [4] The distraught consul took to his bed in confusion from June 14th to the 16th. From his crisis, Sousa Mendes emerged on June 17, 1940, determined to obey what he called a "divine power" and grant visas to everyone in need, at whatever cost to himself.

He saved an enormous number of lives, but lost his career for it. In 1941, Salazar lost political trust in Sousa Mendes and forced the diplomat to quit his career, subsequently ordering as well that no one in Portugal show him any charity. Some quotes from Sousa Mendes include:

"I will not condone murder, therefore I disobey and continue to disobey Salazar." "I would rather stand with God against man, than man against God." "If thousands of Jews can suffer because of one Catholic (Hitler), then surely it is permitted for one Catholic to suffer for so many Jews." "I could not have acted otherwise and I therefore accept all that has befallen me."

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When your group has finished discussing the excerpt, each of you should form a plan of how you will teach fellow classmates about the person in your excerpt addressed and their experiences during the Holocaust. Write out a draft summary of what you will say on the back of this sheet to teach other students who have not read your excerpt about this important person. **Write your summary to share with others here:**

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Oskar Schindler

In December 1939, as occupied Poland was being torn apart by the savagery of the Holocaust, Oskar Schindler, the unlikeliest of role models, took his first faltering steps from the darkness of Nazism towards the light of heroism. "If you saw a dog going to be crushed under a car," he said later of his wartime actions, "wouldn't you help him?"

Before the outbreak of war, Poland had been a relative haven for European Jews—Krakow's Jewish population numbered over 50,000. But when Germany invaded, destruction began immediately and it was merciless. Jews were herded into crowded ghettos, randomly beaten and humiliated and killed. Jewish property and businesses were summarily destroyed, or appropriated by the SS and 'sold' to Nazi 'investors', one of whom was the fast talking, money hungry Oskar Schindler. An ethnic German, Schindler was born April 28, 1908, in Zwittau, Austria-Hungary, what is now Moravia in the Czech Republic.

Never one to miss a chance to make money, he marched into Poland on the heels of the SS. He dived headfirst into the black-market and the underworld and soon made friends with the local Gestapo bigwigs. His newfound connections helped him acquire a factory which he ran with the cheapest labor around: Jewish.

At first he seemed like every other usurping German industrialist, driven by profit and unmoved by the means of his profiteering. But somewhere along the line, something changed. He succeeded in his quest for riches, but by the end of the war he had spent everything he made on keeping 1,300 Jewish men and women alive. "He negotiated the salvation of his 1,300 Jews by operating right at the heart of the system using all the tools of the devil—bribery, black marketeering and lies," said Thomas Keneally, whose book about this paradoxical man was the basis of the movie *Schindler's List*.

Not long after acquiring his "Emalia" factory—which produced enamel goods and munitions to supply the German front—the removal of Jews to death camps began in earnest. Schindler's Jewish accountant put him in touch with the few Jews with any remaining wealth. They invested in his factory, and in return they would be able to work there and perhaps be spared. He was persuaded to hire more Jewish workers, designating their skills as "essential," paying off the Nazis so they would allow them to stay in Krakow. Schindler was making money, but everyone in his factory was fed, no-one was beaten, no-one was killed.

As the brutality of the holocaust escalated, Schindler's protection of his Jewish workers became increasingly active. In the summer of 1942, he witnessed a German raid on the Jewish ghetto. Watching innocent people being packed onto trains bound for certain death, something awakened in him. "Beyond this day, no thinking person could fail to see what would happen," he said later. "I was now resolved to do everything in my power to defeat the system."

By the autumn of 1944, Germany's hold on Poland had weakened. As the Russian army approached, the Nazi's tried desperately to complete their program of liquidation and sent all remaining Jews to die. But Schindler remained true to the "Schindlerjuden," the workers he referred to as "my children."

After the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto and the transfer of many Jews to the Plaszow concentration camp, Schindler used his influence to set up a branch of the camp for 900 Jewish workers in his factory compound in Zablocie and made his now famous list of the workers he would need for its operation.

The factory operated in its new location a year, making defective bullets for German guns. Conditions were grim, for the Schindlers as well as the workers. But Schindler saved most of these workers when he transferred his factory to Brunnlitz (Sudetenland) in October 1944.

Perhaps the question is not why he did it, but rather how could he not. And perhaps the answer is unimportant. It is his actions that matter now, testimony that even in the worst of circumstances, the most ordinary of us can act courageously. If Oskar Schindler, flawed as he was, did it, then so might we, and that is reason enough to hope.

4. Prepare to Teach:

When your group has finished discussing the excerpt, each of you should form a plan of how you will teach fellow classmates about the person in your excerpt addressed and their experiences during the Holocaust. Write out a draft summary of what you will say on the back of this sheet to teach other students who have not read your excerpt about this important person. **Write your summary to share with others here:**

9. After everyone in your group has written a draft of their summary, practice it with your group and help one another make the summary better. Was anything unclear or left out? Revise your summary so that you are prepared to do the best job possible when teaching your classmates.

10. **Jigsaw:** As you listen to your new group members share information about their excerpts and the people they learned about, take notes on each group:

a. **Warsaw Ghetto Uprising:**

b. **The White Rose:**

c. **Aristides de Sousa Mendes:**

d. **Ellen Nielsen:**

Ellen Nielsen

Mrs. Ellen Nielsen, who lived in a town near Copenhagen, lost her husband in 1941, and became a fishmonger on the Copenhagen docks to support herself and her six children. She bought fish from the fishermen and resold them to passers-by. From time to time she would buy flowers from two brothers who also bought fish from her. One day, the brothers asked Mrs. Nielsen to help them find a fisherman who would take them to Sweden, where they could escape the Nazis. The two brothers explained to her that they were Jewish, and that the Germans had begun arresting Danish Jews. Mrs. Nielsen had not known the brothers were Jewish, and had not heard of the arrests. As soon as she heard the story, she offered to hide the boys in her home while she arranged for a boat which would take them to Sweden. In a short time, the boys were safely across the sound in Sweden.

Through the fishermen, the Danish underground learned of Mrs. Nielsen's act, and contacted her. As her work put her in daily contact with the fishermen, she was ideally placed to act as liaison between them and the underground. She accepted, and over a hundred refugees passed through her home on the way to Sweden during the following weeks. At one time, she had over thirty refugees in her home at the same time.

When she wasn't helping Danish Jews to escape, she hid saboteurs for the underground. She was arrested by the Gestapo in December of 1944. "For three months she was in Vestre Prison, where the Gestapo tried unsuccessfully to get her to reveal the names of her contacts. She was then sent to Froslev Concentration Camp ... and from there to Ravensbruck in Germany. Upon her arrival in Ravensbruck, she was summoned to the office of the camp commandant. 'Mrs. Nielsen,' said the commandant, 'we know that you have been involved in the illegal transportation of Jews from Denmark to Sweden. 'Mrs. Nielsen remained silent. 'There is no point in denying it,' said the commandant, 'because he have proof. We know, for example, that you saved the lives of dozens of Jewish children. We even have some of their names. 'There was no reply from Mrs. Nielsen. 'No matter,' continued the commandant. 'The point is that we feel that since you were involved with the transportation of Jewish children in Denmark, we should give you a job here in Ravensbruck that would use to advantage your previous experience and interests. We are therefore giving you a job similar to the one you had in Denmark _ transporting Jewish children.' Mrs. Nelson had no idea what the commandant meant. But she learned all too soon. Her assignment was to carry those Jewish infants too young to walk to the gas chambers where they were put to death. She was also made to carry them, after they were gassed, to the crematorium to be burned.

When, after several weeks, she refused to continue at her macabre job, she was condemned to death and she was herself placed three times on the line leading to the gas chamber. The first time she saved herself by bribing a guard with a bar of soap which she had received in a Danish Red Cross parcel. The second time she was able to do the same with the contents of another Danish parcel. The third time she had nothing left with which to bribe the guards. Waiting on the line, stripped naked, she was resigned to death. Suddenly she was approached by German guards who informed her she had been saved. Count Folke Bernadotte had made an agreement with Heinrich Himmler to have all surviving Danish concentration camp prisoners shipped to Sweden for internment. "

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c. **Aristides de Sousa Mendes:**

d. **Oskar Schindler:**



The Holocaust: Excellence in Active Citizenship Award



Congratulations! You have been selected to serve on a committee that will select the “Excellence in Active Citizenship” award.

WHAT: An award that recognizes an active citizen from the Holocaust who either resisted Hitler and his Nazi regime and/or rescued others who were targeted by his tyranny.

WHY: Being an active citizen is our duty and it is important to recognize those who exhibit such positive traits. During the years of the Holocaust, this often meant risking one’s life to save another.

HOW: You will be assigned a resister or rescuer and research them. Take notes on:

- Who they were.
- What they did.
- How they assisted others.
- What they risked by resisting or rescuing.
- How they displayed active citizenship.
- What happened as a result of their efforts.

I. Write and be prepared to deliver a SPEECH

After you have completed your research, write a speech in which you present your assigned person with the “Excellence in Active Citizenship” award. Your speech should share the details of your research in a creative way as you pretend to speak to an audience about why this person is deserving of a citizenship award. Your final speech should be approximately 2 minutes in length. You will deliver your speech at a reception honoring all recipients of the “Excellence in Active Citizenship” awards (the reception will be held in class on _____ (due date). You will turn in your typed speech for a grade on this date.

II. Design and construct an actual AWARD

At the end of your speech, you will pretend to present the recipient with an actual award that you have artistically designed and created. The award you design should literally or figuratively represent your assigned citizen. Awards can be designed as a common award type (a certificate, a plaque, etc.) or can be more creative and abstract (a statue, a physical shape symbolic of the person’s work or life, etc.)

My assigned citizen is: _____

Examples of Rescuers and Resisters

- Władysław Bartoszewski - Polish Żegota activist.
- Count Folke Bernadotte of Wisborg - Swedish diplomat, who negotiated the release of 27,000 people (a significant number of which were Jews) to hospitals in Sweden.
- Jacob (Jack) Benardout - British diplomat to Dominican Republic before and during World War Two. Issued numerous Dominican Republic visas to Jews in Germany. Only 16 Jewish families arrived in the Dominican Republic (the other Jews dispersed into countries along the way e.g. Britain, America) and so created the Jewish community of The Dominican Republic
- Hiram Bingham IV, American Vice Consul in Marseilles, France 1940-1941.
- José Castellanos Contreras - a Salvadoran army colonel and diplomat who, while working as El Salvador's Consul General for Geneva from 1942-45, and in conjunction with George Mantello, helped save at least 13,000 Central European Jews from Nazi persecution by providing them with false papers of Salvadoran nationality.
- Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, German diplomatic attaché in Denmark. Alerted Danish politician Hans Hedtoft about the imminent German plans deport to Denmark's Jewish community, thus enabling the following rescue of the Danish Jews.
- Frank Foley - British MI6 agent undercover as a passport officer in Berlin, saved around 10,000 people by issuing forged passports to Britain and the British Mandate of Palestine.
- Albert Göring - German businessman (and younger brother of leading Nazi Hermann Göring) who helped Jews and dissidents survive in Germany
- Paul Grüninger - Swiss commander of police who provided falsely dated papers to over 3,000 refugees so they could escape Austria following the Anschluss.
- Kiichiro Higuchi - lieutenant general in the Imperial Japanese Army
- Wilm Hosenfeld - German officer who helped pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman, a Polish Jew, among many others.
- Prince Constantin Karadja - Romanian diplomat, who saved over 51,000 Jews from deportation and extermination, as credited by Yad Vashem in 2005.^[18]
- Jan Karski - Polish emissary of Armia Krajowa to Western Allies and eye-witness of the Holocaust.
- Necdet Kent - Turkish Consul General at Marseille, who granted Turkish citizenship to hundreds of Jews. At one point he entered an Auschwitz-bound train at enormous personal risk to save 70 Jews, to whom he had granted Turkish citizenship, from deportation.
- Zofia Kossak-Szczucka - Polish founder of Żegota.
- Carl Lutz - Swiss consul in Budapest, managed to provide safe-conducts for emigration to Palestine to many thousands of Hungarian Jews.
- Luis Martins de Souza Dantas - Brazilian in charge of the Brazilian diplomatic mission in France. He granted Brazilian visas to several Jews and other minorities persecuted by the Nazis. He was proclaimed as Righteous among the Nations in 2003.^[19]
- George Mantello (b. George Mandl) - El Salvador's honorary consul for Hungary, Romania, and Czechoslovakia - provided fictive Salvadoran citizenship papers for thousands of Jews and spearheaded a publicity campaign that eventually ended the deportation of Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz.^{[20][21]}
- Paul V. McNutt - United States High Commissioner of the Philippines, 1937-1939, who facilitated the entry of Jewish refugees into the Philippines.^[22]
- Helmuth James Graf von Moltke - adviser to the Third Reich on international law; active in Kreisau Circle resistance group, sent Jews to safe haven countries.
- Delia Murphy - wife of Dr. Thomas J. Kiernan, Irish minister in Rome 1941-1946, who worked with Hugh O'Flaherty and was part of the network that saved the lives POWs and Jews from the hands of the Gestapo.^[23]
- Giovanni Palatucci - Italian police official who saved several thousand.
- Giorgio Perlasca - Italian. When Ángel Sanz Briz was ordered to leave Hungary, he falsely claimed to be his substitute and continued saving some thousands more Jews.

- Dimitar Peshev - Deputy Speaker of the Bulgarian Parliament.
- Frits Philips - Dutch industrialist who saved 382 Jews by insisting to the Nazis that they were indispensable employees of Philips.
- Witold Pilecki - the only person who volunteered to be imprisoned in Auschwitz, organised a resistance inside the camp and as a member of Armia Krajowa sent the first reports on the camp atrocities to the Polish Government in Exile, from where they were passed to the rest of the Western Allies.
- Karl Plagge - a Major in the Wehrmacht who issued work permits in order to save almost 1,000 Jews (see *The Search for Major Plagge: The Nazi Who Saved Jews*, by Michael Good)
- Eduardo Propper de Callejón - First secretary in the Spanish embassy in Paris who stamped and signed passports almost non-stop for four days in 1940 to let Jewish refugees escape to Spain and Portugal.
- Traian Popovici - Romanian mayor of Cernăuți (Chernivtsi): saved 20,000 Jews of Bukovina.
- Manuel L. Quezon - President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, 1935-1941, assisted in resettling Jewish refugees on the island of Mindanao.^[22]
- Florencio Rivas - Consul General of Uruguay in Germany, who allegedly hid during Kristallnacht and later provided passports to one hundred and fifty Jews.^[24]
- Ángel Sanz Briz - Spanish consul in Hungary. Saved, together with Giorgio Perlasca, more than 5,000 Jews in Budapest by issuing Spanish passports to them.
- Abdol-Hossein Sardari - Head of Consular affairs at the Iranian Embassy in Paris. He saved many Iranian Jews and gave 500 blank Iranian passports to an acquaintance of his to be used by non-Iranian Jews in France.
- Eduard Schulte - German industrialist, the first to inform Allies about the mass extermination of Jews.
- Irena Sendler - Polish head of Żegota children's department: saved 2,500 Jewish children.
- Ho Feng Shan - Chinese Consul in Vienna, who freely issued visas to Jews.
- Henryk Ślawiak - Polish diplomat, saved 5,000-10,000 people in Budapest, Hungary.
- Chiune Sugihara - Japanese consul to Lithuania, 2,140 (mostly Polish) Jews and an unknown number of additional family members were saved by passports, many unauthorized, provided by him in 1940.
- Selâhattin Ülkümen - Turkish diplomat who saved the lives of some 42 Jewish Turkish families, more than 200 persons, among a Jewish community of some 2000 after the Germans occupied the island of Rhodes in 1944.
- Raoul Wallenberg - Swedish diplomat, saved up to 100,000 Jews. Wallenberg saved the lives of tens of thousands of Jews condemned to certain death by the Nazis during World War II. He disappeared in January 1945 after being captured by the Soviet troops who took control of Budapest.
- Sir Nicholas Winton - British stockbroker who organized the Czech Kindertransport which sent 669 children (most of them Jewish) to foster parents in England and Sweden from Czechoslovakia and Austria after Kristallnacht. Sir Nicholas has been nominated for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize.^{[25][26]}
- Namik Kemal Yolga - Vice-Consul at the Turkish Embassy in Paris who saved numerous Turkish Jews from deportation.
- Gilberto Bosques Saldívar - General Consul of Mexico on Marsella, France. He issued Mexican visas to around 40,000 Jews and political refugees, allowing them to escape to Mexico and other countries. He was later imprisoned by the Nazis.