

Unit 4: The Holocaust
7th Grade Language Arts
24 Class Meetings

Updated May 2026

Essential Questions

- How do people survive great atrocities?
- To what extent do people have control over their lives?

Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals

EU 1: The resilience displayed by those who lived through the Nazi's brutal reign shows the strength of the human spirit. Those who escaped the Holocaust did so through cunning, daring, and the sheer unwillingness to give in to the evil around them.

- Interpret first person accounts of the Holocaust.
- Connect the lessons of the Holocaust to contemporary global situations.

EU 2: We can control our actions and our reactions, but we cannot control what happens in the world around us or the people that may walk in and out of our lives. All of these factors affect who we are, so in essence, we are constantly changing based on the environment which surrounds us.

- Analyze how ideas and events influence individuals.
- Connect the events in *The Diary of Anne Frank* to the themes of tolerance, acceptance, and inclusion.

EU 3: Narratives provide a way to share real or imagined experiences and/or events in writing.

- Engage in the writing process to write a story which retells a Holocaust survivor's experience before, during, and after the war.

Standards

Common Core State Standards:

- **RL.7.1** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RL.7.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **RL.7.3** Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
- **RL.7.5** Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.
- **RL.7.6** Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.
- **RL.7.7** Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).
- **RI.7.3** Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
- **RI.7.9** Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of

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- key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.
- **W.7.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - **W.7.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
 - **W.7.7** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
 - **W.7.8** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
 - **W.7.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. a. Apply grade 7 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history”).
 - **SL.7.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - **SL.7.2** Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
 - **L.7.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
 - **L.7.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
 - **L.7.3** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
 - **L.7.4** I can determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words using many strategies.

ISAAC Vision of the Graduate Competencies

Competency 1: Write effectively for a variety of purposes.

Competency 2: Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner.

Competency 3: Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team.

Competency 4: Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively.

Competency 5: Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community.

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Unit Content Overview

1. Holocaust

- Learn background information about the Holocaust and WWII.
- **Vocabulary:** Shoah, resistance, genocide, ghetto, concentration camp, anti-Semitism, Gestapo, Kristallnacht, Final Solution, transit camp

2. Elements of drama

- **key terms:** act, scene, line, prologue, drama, stage directions, script, tragedy, monologue, dramatic irony, conflict, dialogue

3. Anne Frank

- Read the play version of Anne Frank to learn about the Frank family experience and better understand the Holocaust.
- **Vocabulary:** belfry, domestic, insufferable, loathe, portly, meticulous, rucksack, studious, subdued, unabashed, disgruntled, foreboding, inarticulate, intuition, invoice, liberate, onslaught, poise, ration, liberate

4. Survivor Stories

- Search Holocaust survivor databases for a story to interpret and share with peers.

5. Grammar

- Types of Sentences (Simple, Compound, Complex, Compound/Complex) Run-ons, Fragments

Interdisciplinary Connection:

- Social Studies
- Advisory
- Art
- Theater

Daily Learning Objectives with *TWPS*

Students will be able to...

- Examine and synthesize several aspects of the Holocaust to build background knowledge. ***
 - *What is something that surprised you in your research today?*
- Analyze each character's traits and motivations.
 - *Why do you think the helpers were willing to risk their own lives to assist the people in the Secret Annex?*
- Examine and assess the elements of drama. **
 - *How do stage directions help you to visualize what you are reading?*
- Critique the video presentation in relation to the text. **
 - *How did the scene we watched compare to what we read?*
- Compare and contrast the relationships and personality conflicts between characters.
 - *What is Anne's conflict with her mother and how does that compare to her sister, Margot?*

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- Analyze and examine the development of theme. **
 - *What do you think is a major theme of a play?*
- Critique and evaluate how different events propel the action through conflict.
 - *When Anne tries on Mrs. Van Daan's fur coat, what conflict arises as a result?*
- Analyze and critique Holocaust statistical data.
 - *Which statistics surprised you the most and why?*
- Interpret a person's background/history to make an inference about their survival.
 - *Do you think your person survived the Holocaust? Why or why not?*
- Assess and make inferences about important quotes from the play.
 - *"For the past two years we have lived in fear. Now we can live in hope." What does this quote reveal about the speaker?*
- Make connections to the Holocaust through a simulation activity.
 - *Describe the activity you experienced today, your reaction to it, and what you took away from it personally.*
- Evaluate and compare the ways in which different people were able to survive the Holocaust. **
 - *What qualities or characteristics do all of these characters have that helped them to survive?*
- Assess a variety of sentences to determine sentence type.
 - *What are the features of a simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentence?*
- Interpret and formulate conclusions about a Holocaust victim's background and history.
 - *Based on what you read in your person's background, do you think s/he survived? Use evidence to explain your thinking.*
- Research a Holocaust survivor's story and illustrate it on a butterfly rendering that represents them and their story. ***
 - *What intrigues you about the person you chose for your project?*
- Present a Holocaust survivor's story through your butterfly rendering that represents their journey.
 - *As you listened to your peers' presentations, what did you notice about the survivors of the Holocaust? Were there common character traits or experiences that you noticed? Explain.*

Instructional Strategies/Differentiated Instruction

- Whole group instruction
- Small group instruction
- Guided notes
- Modeling
- Student-led instruction
- Anchor charts
- Think-Pair-Share
- Journaling
- Graphic Organizer
- Accountable Talk
- Homework

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- Word walls with visuals
- Audiobooks

EL Differentiation Instruction:

- Verbal: Prompting, questioning, elaborating, facilitate higher level thinking skills
- Explicit modeling
- Guided and independent practice
- Small group instruction
- Strategic grouping
- Key Vocabulary
- Graphic organizers
- KWL charts
- Venn diagrams
- Sequence writing
- Reinforcing contextual definition
- Providing correct pronunciation by repeating student's response
- Predicting and inferring
- Directed reading-thinking activities (DR-TA)
- Glossaries
- Chunk and Chew
- Sentence starters
- Word banks
- Google Translate

Assessments

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Anne Frank character map
- Holocaust survivor profile
- Reading check quizzes
- Nothing left activity response
- Journal responses
- Exit Slips
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Do Now
- Grammar practice
- Graphic organizers
- Homework
- Performance Task- Butterfly Project
 - Butterfly Project Scoring Guide

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SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Pear Assessment: *The Diary of Anne Frank* Act I Quiz (EU1, EU2)
- Pear Assessment: *The Diary of Anne Frank* Act II Quiz (EU1, EU2)
- Performance Task: Holocaust Survivor Butterfly Project (EU 1, EU2, EU3)
- Sentences Test

Unit Task

Unit Task Name: Holocaust Survivor Butterfly Project

Description: Through a study of survivor testimony, students will learn about the experience of a Holocaust survivor. (EU1) Students will choose a survivor to research using an online data bank to collect details about the survivor, their family, and their life before, during and after the Holocaust. Students will try to answer the question: What were the factors that led to their survival? (EU2) Students will then take that information and design a butterfly to represent that person and their legacy through the use of symbols, images, words and color. Students will also write an explanation to accompany the butterfly that details the survivor's story and the decisions behind their design choices. (EU3) Butterflies will be presented orally to keep the memories of those who survived the Holocaust alive, as well as foster tolerance and appreciation of cultural differences throughout the world.

Evaluation: Butterfly Project Scoring Guide

Unit Resources

- *The Diary of Anne Frank* (the play version) (Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett)
- Video: *The Diary of Anne Frank* (the play version) (San Juan College Band and Theater)
- *The Path to Nazi Genocide* (USHMM)
- *The Terrible Things* (Eve Bunting)
- *Talking to the Past* (60 Minutes)
- *Who Betrayed Anne Frank and Her Family?* (60 Minutes)
- *Surviving the Holocaust* (Fairfax County Schools)
- "Woman Who Helped Anne Frank, Dies at 100" (Teri Schultz, NPR)
- "Surviving the Holocaust" (Erin Cobb)
- Holocaust Scholastic Magazine
- "Website Reunites Survivors" (Brynn Allison)
- Internet Databases
- Worksheets
- Laptops
- SBAC Prep Online
- Pear Assessment