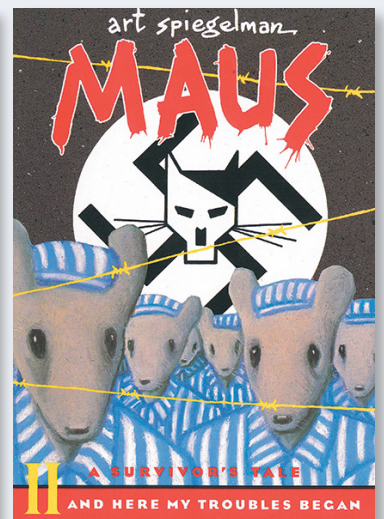
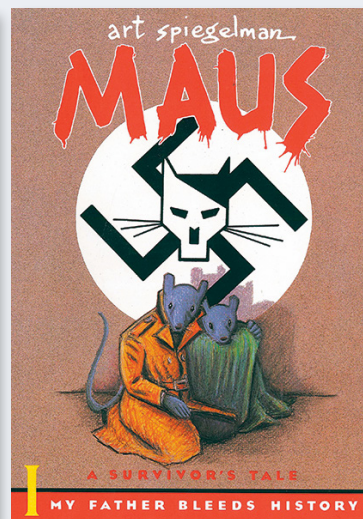
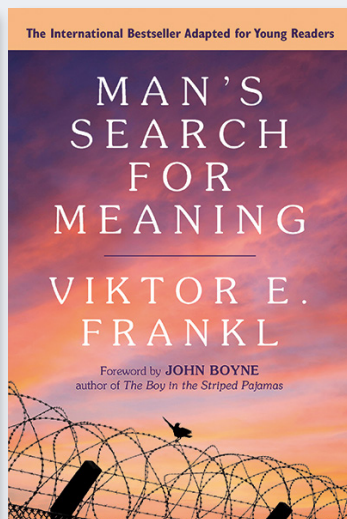
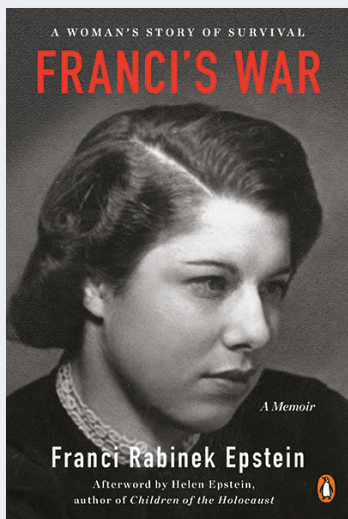
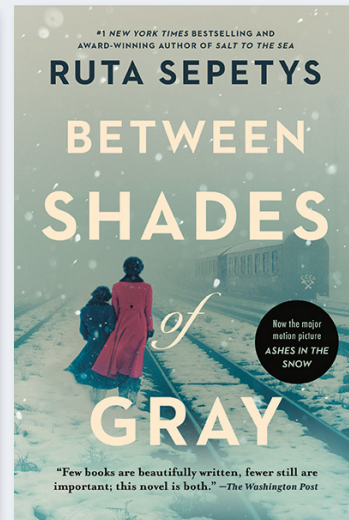
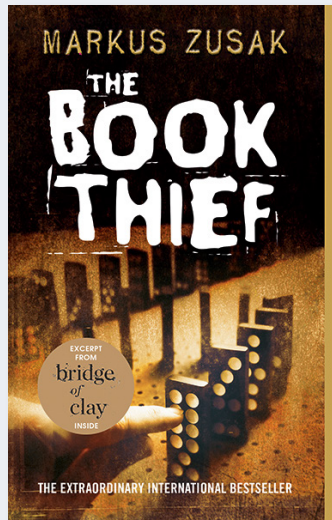
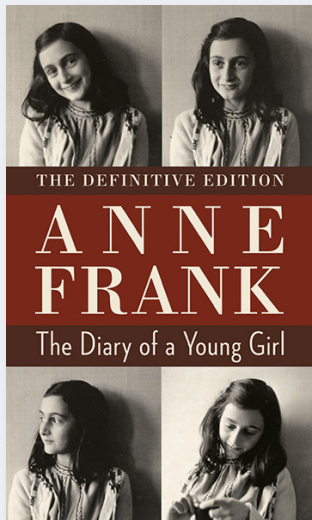


THEMATIC GUIDE

Teaching About
the Holocaust and Global Genocides



The titles in this collection include memoirs, historical fiction, psychological explorations, and graphic novels that chronicle memories and personal experiences of Holocaust and Global Genocide victims and survivors.

INTRODUCTION.....	2
ABOUT THE TITLES IN THIS COLLECTION.....	3
BUILDING KNOWLEDGE.....	6
THEMES.....	9
WRITING ACTIVITIES.....	10
BOOKS & FILMS OF INTEREST.....	12
ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE.....	13



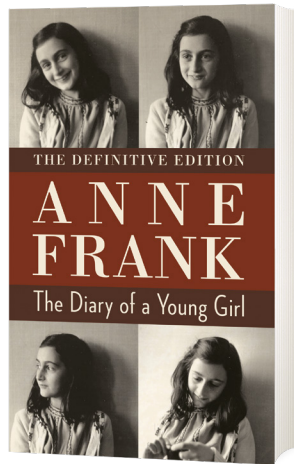
■ INTRODUCTION

According to a recent study commissioned by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) and reported by *The Guardian* (www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/16/holocaust-us-adults-study), nearly 25% of young adults in America either believe the Holocaust is a myth, think it has been exaggerated, or are not sure. These findings are particularly alarming given that the number of living survivors—the most compelling evidence of the Holocaust—is quickly diminishing. Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, compels us to “never forget,” yet most states do not require students to learn about the Holocaust. How, then, do we continue to bear witness for Holocaust victims and survivors? Who is left to tell their stories? Holocaust authors and artists are the last remaining voices charged with this significant role.

The titles in this collection include memoirs, historical fiction, psychological explorations, and graphic novels that chronicle the memories and personal experiences of Holocaust and Global Genocide victims and survivors. The collection provides a variety of genres to ensure broad appeal for today’s middle and high school students. Teachers can choose to select individual or multiple texts depending on reading level, thematic consideration, or instructional goals. Essential questions are provided to frame the study of these complex texts, and conversation starters serve as prompts for close reading and collaborative discussion. Activities apply to all titles and can be adapted to whole class or small group settings such as seminars or literature circles. Student readers will be compelled to face history, confront truths, consider their own stories, and define their future roles in a society very much in danger of forgetting or repeating history.

■ ABOUT THE TITLES IN THIS COLLECTION

Listed below are brief summaries as well as questions providing purpose, context, and framing while students read.



The Diary of a Young Girl
The Definitive Edition

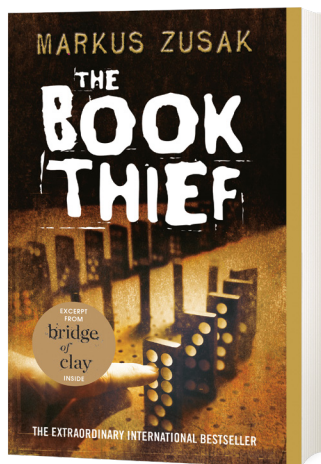
ANNE FRANK
Edited by Mirjam Pressler
Translated by Susan Massotty

978-0-553-57712-9 | Mass Market | Bantam
400 pages | \$7.99 | Lexile: 1020L

Also available
Audio Download, E-Book

A lasting tribute to its famous author, Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* details her tragic yet inspirational coming of age during two years hiding from the Nazis.

- Discuss the multiple roles the diary takes on as it progresses, both for Anne and readers. Consider personal, historical, literary, and any other roles.
- In what ways can the diary be considered a coming-of-age story? Discuss specific examples from the text that illustrate Anne's change in maturity over time.
- Is Anne's optimistic worldview justified or is she naive? Discuss events in the novel that support, contradict, or qualify her belief that people are good at heart.
- Elaborate on the social and political conditions Anne describes that necessitate the Franks' hiding and facilitate their capture.
- In what ways is Anne Frank's diary relevant today? What lessons might it teach us? Use specific words, phrases, or quotations from Anne's text to explain your thinking.



The Book Thief

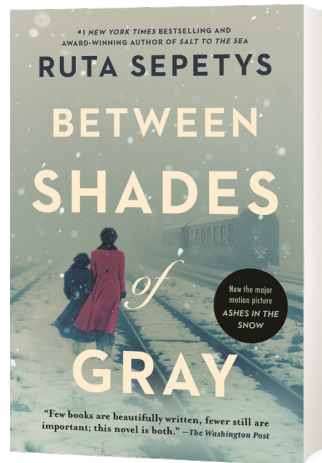
MARKUS ZUSAK

978-0-375-84220-7
Paperback | Random House Children's Books
608 pages | \$14.99 | Lexile: 730L

Also available
Audio Download, E-Book

In Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*, a young female protagonist named Liesel finds salvation in the books she shares with her friends, including a Jewish man in hiding.

- What is the impact of the author's choice to use Death as the book's narrator? Consider impact on plot, theme, and author's intent.
- What purpose do books and reading serve in Liesel's coming of age? Using specific instances from the text, trace the development of this motif throughout Zusak's novel.
- In the novel, multiple characters give away bread. What is the impact of this symbol on the novel as a whole? Consider characterization, plot, and theme.
- Using specific text evidence throughout the novel, trace the symbolism of color and light. How does the author use this motif to support further meaning?
- In what ways do words develop meaning and support themes in *The Book Thief*? What is one word or phrase in the novel that might be especially powerful or meaningful to today's readers?



Between Shades of Gray

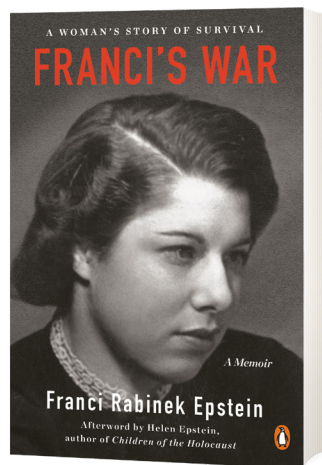
RUTA SEPETYS

978-0-14-242059-1
Paperback | Penguin Young Readers
384 pages | \$10.99 | Lexile: HL490L

Also available
Audio Download, E-Book

Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys is the survival story of a young girl who uses art as a source of solace and a form of escape.

- What are multiple ways Lina is on a journey? By novel's end, how far has she traveled, both literally and figuratively?
- How does the book use typography—the placement and size of type—to represent time in the novel? In what ways does the relationship between past and present influence mood and meaning?
- Discuss the relationship between Lina's drawing and her identity, both past and present. Discuss some key instances where her art is important.
- What is the impact of Elena's kindness and strength on Lina, Jonas, and others throughout the novel? Use text evidence to support your thinking.
- Trace the meaning of the book's title as it develops throughout the novel. What specific people, places, and things are gray? How is gray used figuratively? In what ways is current society "gray"?



Franci's War

A Woman's Story of Survival

FRANCI RABINEK EPSTEIN

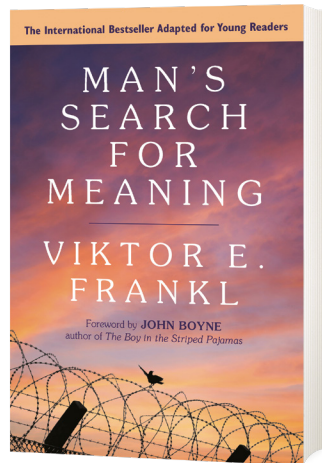
Afterword by Helen Epstein

978-0-14-313557-9
Paperback | Penguin Adult
272 pages | \$18.00 | Lexile: 1120L

Also available
Audio Download, E-Book

Franci's War highlights the ingenuity, skill, and spirit of a daring young fashion designer who survives Auschwitz and inspires her daughter to share Franci Rabinek Epstein's story with the world.

- How does Franci's lie about being an electrician serve to save as well as endanger her?
- Which women in the memoir best represent themes of resilience and female strength, both during and after Franci's imprisonment? Elaborate.
- How does art support themes and meaning in the book? Who might be considered an artist? What impact does their specific art have on their own and others' survival?
- In what ways does the author explore the concept of distance? How is Franci distant from her past, her home, and even herself?
- Epstein's book is subtitled "One Woman's Story of Hope." How accurate is the title to her circumstances as detailed in the memoir? What might readers find hopeful in her story?



Man's Search for Meaning
Young Adult Edition

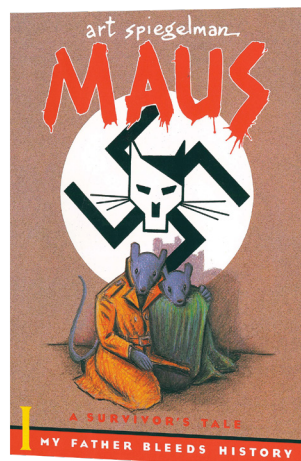
VIKTOR E. FRANKL
Foreword by John Boyne

978-0-8070-6799-4
Paperback | Beacon Press
192 pages | \$10.99 | Lexile: N/A

Also available
Audio Download, E-Book

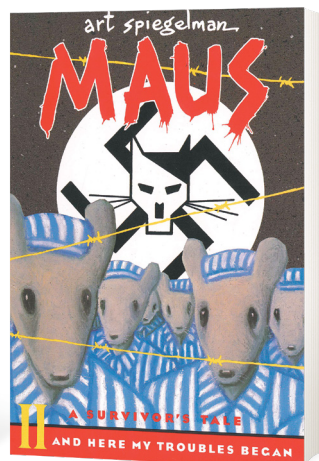
In *Man's Search for Meaning: Young Adult Edition*, Viktor Frankl chronicles the purposeful psychological process he developed and used to save himself—body and soul—while imprisoned in Auschwitz.

- In what ways are Frankl and other prisoners stripped bare? How does this nakedness contribute to the development of logotherapy?
- How does Frankl survive the concentration camp, both physically and spiritually? What specific images and practices support his survival?
- Using specific examples from throughout the book, discuss the impact of the arts on the author as well as his contemporaries.
- To what extent is Frankl's view of choice accurate in the concentration camp? What evidence supports or contradicts his view?
- How does the text illustrate Frankl's personal definition of responsibility? Defend, refute, or qualify this view using examples from your own life or from others you know.



Maus I: A Survivor's Tale
My Father Bleeds History
ART SPIEGELMAN

978-0-394-74723-1
Paperback | Pantheon
160 pages | \$16.95 | Lexile: NP



Maus II: A Survivor's Tale
And Here My Troubles Began
ART SPIEGELMAN

978-0-679-72977-8
Paperback | Pantheon
144 pages | \$16.95 | Lexile: NP

The generational legacy of trauma, another form of imprisonment, is explored in Art Spiegelman's graphic novels *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History* and *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began*.

- Why does Spiegelman make the choice to portray his human characters as animals? In what ways are the specific animals appropriate to the humans they depict?
- How reliable is Vladek as a storyteller and a source of information for his son? What factors influence his reliability?
- In what ways is Artie's story bound within his father's, both literally and figuratively?
- Why is food central to Vladek and Artie's relationship? Discuss what his father wishes to "feed" Artie.
- In what specific ways does the past influence the present in Artie's, Vladek's, and our own lives?

■ BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

The books in this collection include historical references and themes that may be unfamiliar to some students. The following activities provide opportunities to build knowledge and an equitable environment to access the reading demands and context of these complex books.

STATION ROTATION

Create a “stations” learning experience to build awareness of the pervasive existence of genocide, the purposeful killing of people who represent a specific country or ethnicity. Clarify for the class that the Holocaust, or “Shoah” in Hebrew, is the specific, historic example of genocide they will be examining. Explain that by the end of the period, students will be able to answer the following question: “What ideologies and practices allow genocide to exist, both historically and in contemporary culture?”

Split students into small groups at various stations around the room, each set up with an image, audio clip, video, infographic, or short text about a different example of genocide. Images and texts might be on paper or can be accessed online with the media sources. Groups will spend 20 to 30 minutes researching and discussing their material, settling on key takeaways to record on a chart posted at the station. When groups have had sufficient time at a station, they can move to the next to examine the resources and add to what has already been noted.

Students will eventually return to their original station, read their classmates’ notes, and synthesize them into a clearly written summary statement that demonstrates the context and significance of this particular example for the class. In online or hybrid environments, students can meet in breakout rooms and record their thinking on a Google Doc or slide deck. For older students or advanced classes, students can locate the research material themselves and create a class “Gallery Walk” of text, images, and links using Google Jamboard slides. Stations might include:

- Armenian Genocide (WW I era)
- Jewish Holocaust/Final Solution (WW II era)
- Cambodian Genocide (1975-1979)
- Bosnian Genocide (1992-1995)
- Rwandan Genocide (1994)
- Darfur Genocide (2003-current)
- Syrian Genocide (2011-current)

4 “A”s ANNOTATION

Ask students to apply the 4 “A”s Protocol while reading the Time.com article “Survey Reveals Gaps in Knowledge of Holocaust History—And That Most Americans Believe It Could Happen Again” (www.time.com/5235725/holocaust-history-survey/).

Direct students to annotate while reading the article, focusing on the author’s assumptions as well as the reader’s agreements, arguments, and aspirations. In this way, students read with a focus on author intent and reader reaction. Students can either code in pen or highlight in four different colors. The article asserts that “now is a crucial moment” and that “there’s no time to waste” when it comes to educating young people about the details of the Holocaust. The fourth A, “aspiration,” provokes students to consider their own role, both now and in the future, in influencing this social issue. After reading, partners or the class as a whole can discuss their thinking, using the text for reference and support.

For more information on the 4 “A”s Protocol, visit www.schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/4_a_text.pdf.

SEE, THINK, WONDER

Ask students to analyze a Holocaust painting or poem while applying the “See, Think, Wonder” routine to explore the selection. Students should ask themselves:

- What do I see? (what details stick out?)
- What do I think? (what about the image or wording makes me think that?)
- What does this make me wonder? (what broader questions does this image or wording raise?)

With each question, students apply a more critical lens. One source for Holocaust visual art can be found in the Yad Vashem Collection: www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/ready2print/pdf/art.pdf.

Students might also compare poems and accompanying illustrations about the Holocaust in “Seven Poems, Seven Paintings” at The World Holocaust Remembrance Center website: www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/lesson-plans/poems-paintings.html. For example, the class might read “Shema,” by Holocaust survivor Primo Levi, which urges the reader to tell the story of victims and survivors. In the accompanying painting, students might notice the skeletal figures in the background. They may think these people are connected to the main figure in front and wonder why he is portrayed differently. Taken together with Levi’s poem, students may come to understand how the poet wishes us to recognize the humanity of Holocaust victims and survivors. Prompt students to look for similar themes as they read the other texts in this collection.

THEMES TRACKER

Ask students to keep a themes tracker for patterns they will uncover in the texts. They will use it to trace the development and interaction of themes over time. As students read and begin noticing a pattern developing, they create a new entry in their tracker. While younger students may need help identifying these big ideas, older and advanced students should be encouraged to identify themes as they read. If students need help getting started, choose one theme and model how to track its development. Alternatively, suggest students use different color highlighters to identify themes as they read. They can also use margin notes to analyze how themes are developing. Possible themes for the collection can be found in the essential questions and conversation starters listed in this guide.

DIALECTICAL JOURNAL

To promote active, close reading, ask students to keep a dialectical response journal. Dialectical response journals are typically double-column pages that list specific quotations and excerpts from the book on the left and responses to text on the right. Responses might include analysis, questions, connections, reactions, or any other notes that help students engage with the text. These response journals can be brought to book circles, small group activities, and class seminars, providing students with textual evidence to support their thinking and discussion. The journals can also provide ideas and support for culminating writing products.

■ THEMES

The following themes appear throughout the titles in this set. Essential questions are purposely broad, generating interest, inviting multiple perspectives, and applying to big ideas across units of learning. Conversation starters promote connection and relevance before and after students read.

SURVIVAL

Essential Question:

Is hope enough to survive seemingly insurmountable conditions?

Conversation Starters:

- How do we cope with the unimaginable? What happens if we don't?
- What power do we have over ourselves and our future?
- What gives meaning to life?

IDENTITY

Essential Question:

What can we learn about ourselves and others in the midst of crisis?

Conversation Starters:

- How do our personal histories change us fundamentally?
- What is the role of art in shaping our historical, cultural, and individual identities?
- What are the qualities of a hero?

HUMANITY

Essential Question:

What can the Holocaust teach us about our own and others' humanity?

Conversation Starters:

- What are the ideologies that allowed the Holocaust to happen?
- How can one promote unity and kindness in an atmosphere of partisanship and fear?
- What are the warning signs of racial violence?

LEGACY

Essential Question:

What is the complex relationship between the living and the dead?

Conversation Starters:

- Can we truly understand others' histories?
- How does writing one's story shape the present, past, and future?
- Who bears the burden of a tragic past?

■ WRITING ACTIVITIES

CULMINATING WRITING ASSESSMENT

Culminating assessment prompts provide students with a frame to read and analyze the texts in a collection and prepare students for formal writing opportunities that occur at the end of the unit. Students should be introduced to these prompts prior to reading so that they read with a purpose. Prompts should be complex enough to encourage critical thinking and to promote a variety of student responses. Students can apply thinking from their themes trackers, dialectical journals, and other class materials as they respond to the prompt. The prompt might align with an essential question or discussion starter, such as the ones in this guide. For instance, students might respond to one of the following prompts:

- (Older/advanced writers): *In multiple examples of Holocaust literature, narrators reflect on their responsibility to bear the burden of their parents' experience. Consider one or more of the texts we've read in this unit. In a well-written essay, analyze how authors and artists convey the complex legacy of trauma through purposefully chosen literary elements and techniques. Use explicit text evidence to support your thesis.*
- (Younger/progressing writers): *Choose a work from our unit where a character struggles to maintain hope. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the author's portrayal of this idealism supports the book's overall purpose or meaning. Make sure to use specific text examples to support your argument.*

QUICK-WRITES

Ask students to respond with quick writes before, during, or after reading passages of text. These informal writing opportunities provide a way to galvanize thinking about authors' complex themes, as well as a chance for students to make connections to prior knowledge, to their own experience, or to the world around them. Quick writes can come directly from the conversation starters included in this guide, or they might be more creative or personal in nature, like those below. Sample quick writes that apply to this collection include:

- Are all humans essentially good inside? Elaborate.
- What role does art or music play in your life? Explain why.
- Can a person escape their history? Why or why not?
- What advice would you give this character and why?

Write your response in a short paragraph.

JUICY SENTENCES/MENTOR TEXTS

Inspire students to read like writers by analyzing and imitating an author's style. Provide or allow students to choose a "juicy sentence" from the class text or the text being studied in their book circle. Juicy sentences are central to comprehension, complex in their wording, and worthy of close examination. They are a type of mentor text, serving as models of strong writing. As a class, break the selected sentence into

parts and delve into the impact each part has on the text as a whole. Ask students what they notice and what they admire about the sentence. Now ask students to write a similarly styled sentence in their own words. Depending on the level of writers and the instructional goal, these student products can stand alone or serve as starters for longer writing responses. More on juicy sentences can be found at www.achievethecore.org/page/3160/juicy-sentence-guidance.

MULTIMEDIA MEMOIR

Invite students to tell their own stories by writing a multimedia memoir. The memoir should address the question: *How have various experiences and beliefs shaped my identity?* The format for the multimedia memoir might include one of the following:

- A podcast using free audio recording and editing software such as Audacity www.audacityteam.org
- A digital story using iMovie or Windows Movie Maker. Students can either appear on-screen reading their script or provide narrative audio while images, personal photos or video clips play in the background.
- An interactive webpage that combines multiple digital features to tell a story. With Adobe Spark and similar online tools, students can combine text, social graphics, video, and audio to showcase multiple writing samples.
- A Lit Trip using Google Earth www.tiny.cc/GoogleEarthAnneFrank. In this example, students access video and images to visit the secret annex and other sites central to Anne Frank's story.

CROWDSOURCED POETRY

Several main characters from the texts in this collection turn to art as a way to assert their humanity. Recently, NPR.org has echoed this idea, arguing that “Poetry can make us more human” and challenging its listeners to express their humanity in “crowdsourced poetry.”

Challenge the class to write a crowdsourced poem illustrating a central theme from the book or unit. In a crowdsourced poem, students contribute individual lines that collectively combine to form one product. The teacher provides a sentence starter inspired by or derived from one of the unit texts, such as “I still believe . . .,” from Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Each student starts with this phrase and writes a response that becomes a stanza of the poem. For more information on crowdsourced poems, as well as an example: www.npr.org/2021/01/28/960688815/this-is-our-dream-a-crowdsourced-poem-to-inspire-hope.

#ITSTARTEDWITHWORDS

In an effort to confront the global rise in anti-Semitism, a new social media campaign called #ItStartedWithWords warns us that minor aggressions can ultimately turn into racial persecution. The campaign's website (itstartedwithwords.org) features living

survivors telling their stories and reflecting on the origins of the Holocaust. Share one or two videos from the website, then challenge students to write a similar script for one of the texts' protagonists. Alternatively, ask students to write an argumentative essay analyzing the impact of hate speech in today's society. Students might choose to address antisemitism or hate crimes targeting people of Asian or Middle Eastern descent.

■ BOOKS & FILMS OF INTEREST

FURTHER READING

Visit our website, www.prhsecondaryeducation.com, to browse additional fiction and non-fiction titles about the Holocaust and Global Genocides.

English Language Arts > Genre: Fiction > Historical Fiction: Events & Periods > Holocaust
www.tinyurl.com/ELAHolocaust

History > Wars, Conflicts, and Events > Holocaust & Genocides
www.tinyurl.com/HistoryTitlesHolocaust

FILMS

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas

Denial

The Diary of Anne Frank

Life Is Beautiful

The Pianist

Schindler's List

DOCUMENTARIES

75 Years After Auschwitz's Liberation, Watch Four Documentaries That Keep the 'Memory of the Camps' Alive (www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/four-documentaries-about-the-holocaust)

The Last Survivors

Memory of the Camps

Never Forget to Lie

Shtetl

■ ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

Laura Reis Mayer is a high school instructional coach and National Board Certified Teacher in Asheville, North Carolina. She has taught middle, high school, and college English, speech, drama, and literacy. As a consultant to various national organizations, she develops and facilitates professional learning on college and career-ready standards, teacher leadership, and National Board Certification. She is the author of 17 other Penguin Random House Teacher's Guides.

