

Holocaust Remembrance Using the News

The following activities correlate to the Florida Standards for middle and high schools. Social Studies: SS.612.A.6.3; SS.612.W.7.8; SS.612.W.9.3
Language Arts: LAFS.612.L.1.1; LAFS.612.L.1.2; LAFS.612.L.2.3; LAFS.612.L.3.4; LAFS.612.L.3.6; LAFS.612.RF.3.3; LAFS.612.RI.1.1; LAFS.612.RI.1.2; LAFS.612.RI.1.3; LAFS.612.RI.2.4; LAFS.612.RI.3.7; LAFS.612.SL.1.1; LAFS.612.SL.1.2; LAFS.612.SL.1.3; LAFS.612.SL.2.4; LAFS.612.SL.2.5; LAFS.612.SL.2.6; LAFS.612.W.1.1; LAFS.612.W.1.2; LAFS.612.W.1.3; LAFS.612.W.2.4; LAFS.612.W.2.5; LAFS.612.W.2.6; LAFS.612.W.3.7; LAFS.612.W.3.8; LAFS.612.W.3.9



In 1942, On Anne Frank’s 13th birthday, she receives a diary. It is her favorite gift. She begins writing in it immediately: “I hope I will be able to confide everything to you...and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support.” Naming the diary Kitty, Anne begins a journey of self discovery with these words.

Fifty-two years later and hundreds of miles away, a classroom of students in inner city Long Beach, California, embark on that same journey. With the help of a new teacher, Erin Gruell, the students in room 203 of Woodrow Wilson High School find a new lease on life. “We felt like Anne Frank, trapped in a cage, and identified with the violence in Zlata Filipovic’s life. We were so inspired by the stories of Anne and Zlata, that we wrote letters to Miep Gies, and to Zlata, in hopes that they would come to Long Beach and share their stories with us. When Miep visited us, she challenged us to keep Anne’s memory alive and ‘passed the baton’ to us. It was then that we decided to begin chronicling our lives.” And with those words, the Freedom Writers were born.

The high school students begin writing anonymous journal entries about the adversities that they face in their everyday lives: gangs, immigration, drugs, violence, abuse, death, anorexia, dyslexia, teenage love, weight issues, divorce, suicide and all the other issues they experience. The journals prove to be life changing.

Now it is your turn, using a composition notebook, start your own diary this month and record your thoughts and feelings about the events going on around you. To learn about things going on in the world around you, use the *Tampa Bay Times* as a resource. To begin your diary, write about something that you have read that directly effects your life and community.

For more information about the Freedom Writers, log on to freedomwritersfoundation.org.



From the perspective of someone living in the United States in 2018, the actions that took place during the Holocaust seem outrageous. Looking at the history of the Holocaust from the perspective of time, one can confidently utter the words “never again.” You may think that the factors that allowed the Holocaust to happen were unique to that time in history and to that part of the world. They are not.

- Research the history of the genocides that have taken place in the world since 1945. Find out the causes of the genocides and the number and type of people affected. Acts of hate and intolerance persist throughout the world and within our communities today.
- Look through the *Tampa Bay Times* for an article focusing on prejudice and hate. Briefly summarize the article. In small groups, share your articles. As a group, decide how the negative events in the article could have been prevented.
- In *Diary 94*, a Freedom Writer argues that people should “rock the boat” and “speak out” when they witness an injustice. Have you observed an unjust action or behavior? What did you do? If you could go back in time and revisit that moment, would you handle it differently? Why, do you believe, is it sometimes difficult for people to speak out or act against wrongdoing?

Source: Freedom Writers Foundation



Author George Santayana wrote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” What does this phrase mean? Discuss this idea with your class. Using words and pictures from the *Tampa Bay Times*, create a collage to make a connection between “then” and “now.” Images and metaphors should express feelings and attitudes as well as behaviors and events. The overall effect should reflect your viewpoint on whether the present world has learned the lessons of history. You may focus on only one theme or on several issues that you find particularly relevant to your own life. In your journal, discuss your thoughts about the class discussion.



Author Cynthia Ozick writes, “Indifference is not so much a gesture of looking away – of choosing to be passive – as it is an active disinclination to feel.” A bystander is someone who sees an act but turns away from helping. During Hitler’s reign of terror many residents living near concentration camps and killing centers claimed to not be aware of what was happening. There were many bystanders who saw the smoke from the crematoriums and who saw innocent men, women and children gunned down in the streets by the police killing squads. Do you know what is happening in your neighborhood? Look for articles of crimes in different towns and counties in the *Tampa Bay Times*. You can check the police logs in the newspaper regional sections. In your journal, list the name of the town and county and what crimes have occurred. Update this list daily for two weeks. Were there bystanders to these events? What would you have done if you had witnessed these actions?



According to the British Broadcasting Company, “The Nazis, obsessed with the notion of creating a ‘biologically pure, Aryan’ society, deliberately targeted Jewish children for destruction, in order to prevent the growth of a new generation of Jews in Europe.” One of the reasons the Holocaust happened because Hitler and the Nazis were racist. They believed the German people were a “master race” who were superior to others. Racism, stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice go hand in hand and are prevalent in present society. Look through the regional, national and international sections of the *Tampa Bay Times*. Find

articles depicting stereotypes, discrimination or prejudice. Choose one of these articles and summarize it in your notebook. Also, include your reaction and opinion of the story and what you could do to prevent the situation in the story. Share the article and your views with your class.



Genocide presents a perfect example of man's inhumanity to man. It also presents the opportunity to see humanity shine through the evil. Throughout World War II, citizens of Europe rescued Jews and others from Nazi persecution. In Denmark, most of the Jewish community was boated to Sweden where diplomat Raoul Wallenberg led an effort that saved thousands of Hungarian Jews. Underground efforts led many Jews to safety, and countless individuals protected Jews in hiding. In the war-torn region of Darfur, humanitarians such as actress Angelina Jolie have risked their lives to help innocent children dying of starvation. Look in the *Tampa Bay Times* to find an article about a humanitarian or modern hero. Read the article. Think about the main ideas and points in the article. Explain, in a well-developed paragraph, the main ideas of the article. Be sure to include the qualities that make the person a humanitarian or hero. Share the information with your class.



A hero is a person noted for feats of courage or nobility of purpose, especially one who has risked or sacrificed his or her life. Author Ervin Staub wrote, "Heroes evolve; they aren't born." Peter Garrett, lead singer for Australia's Midnight Oil defines a hero as having a "core set of values which include thinking about and doing things for others; self belief without boasting; the capacity to accept setbacks without giving; in and a sense of humility."

What is a hero? On a piece of paper, define what a hero is to you. Look for examples of everyday heroes in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Create a chart listing the heroes and their attributes. Share your thoughts and what you have learned with your class.



Studies show people can be consciously committed to democracy and deliberately work to behave without prejudice, yet still possess hidden negative prejudices or stereotypes. So even though we believe we see and treat people as equals, hidden biases still may influence our perceptions and actions. Discuss bias with your class. What does the word mean? With your class, make a list of biases in society. Where do you think these biases come from? Look for examples of biased ideas and language in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Cut out or write down the words, phrases or pictures you find. Paste the words onto a piece of construction paper. On the back of the paper, explain the bias behind these words, phrases or pictures. Share your project with your class.

Extension activity: With your class, complete the **Analyzing How Words Communicate Bias** lesson from Teaching Tolerance - <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/analyzing-how-words-communicate-bias>. Use your newspaper to compare to the sources noted in the lesson.

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