

THE VIENNA PROJECT TEACHING UNIT

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Overall Objectives

- To increase their awareness of memorials and remembrance practices
 - improve consciousness of monuments and memorials
 - the ability to consider remembrance practices critically
- To learn about the various victim groups targeted by National Socialism in Austria
- To gain a deeper understanding in how thorough a system can be in oppressing its citizens
- To have a taste or flavor of the experience of oppression
- To deepen their understanding of the city of Vienna and its history
- To reinforce historical learning by tying it to place and physical experience
- To introduce students to the aftermath of WWII (post-war experiences, restitution and memory); to improve their awareness of how these events shape the world they live in today
- To practice skills of research and presentation
- To allow students to practice performing research and presenting in English (when applicable)

LESSON II: AUSTRIAN VICTIMS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Overview

Students will review their knowledge of WWII and Austria's role in the history of National Socialism. They will then learn about the different targeted victim groups in Austria. Lastly, students will discuss their familiarity and knowledge of these different groups, and consider whether any of these groups face persecution in the present day.

Suggested Grade Level

Ages 14-18

Duration of Activity

50 minutes

Historical Context

Students should have at least an overview of WWII and Holocaust history and a timeline of events. They should also have a basic understanding of Austria's role within WWII and the Holocaust.

Materials

Worksheet

Student Articles

External Article: "Jehovah's Witnesses," <http://jehovah.to/gen/holocaust/>

Teacher Preparation

Print student articles and worksheets

Have a blackboard or shared writing space available

Activity

Inform students that today they will be talking about the different victim groups in Austria that were targeted and persecuted by National Socialists.

****It is recommended at this point that teacher take a moment to prepare their students for the information that they will be working with. This is a difficult topic to work with, and it may be helpful for teachers to establish the classroom as a safe zone where students feel safe asking questions and having responses to the material they are studying. We recommend that the teachers ask students to brainstorm what is important to them in maintaining a safe and supportive classroom (being respectful of all questions, not laughing at anyone or responding unkindly to them, etc).**

1. Ask students to brainstorm what they know about Austria's history with WWII and the Holocaust. Students should have a basic understanding of the Anschluss and of Austria's history within WWII. This is a chance for the teacher to reinforce any previous timelines with the class.
2. What were the different victim groups persecuted by the Nazi Regime in Austria? Ask students to name as many as they can. Students may not know many—the teacher can inform students of any missing groups. Final list should include, but not be limited to:
 - Jews
 - Roma and Sinti
 - People with mental and physical disabilities and illnesses
 - Homosexual men and women
 - Communists, dissidents, socialists, and other victims of political persecution
 - Jehovah's Witnesses

Make sure that students understand that these are victims persecuted as part of a group; while individuals from all different backgrounds were persecuted, these are groups that were targeted systematically under National Socialism.

4. Divide students into 5 groups. To each group, give a Victims Worksheet and an article on one of the Austrian victim groups. Each group of students should be working with one of the five articles.

Explain to students that they are going to receive an article together about one of the victim groups targeted by Nazis in Austria.

Ask students to:

- a. read the article as a group (teachers might suggest that the students read the article out loud within their group, to practice oral skills and reading comprehension)
- b. compose 5 bulletpoints to share with their classmates
- c. discuss the article among themselves. Was any of the information new to them? What felt surprising? Do they have any previous knowledge about these groups? Where does their knowledge come from?

5. When students are finished reading and discussing their articles, ask each group to present their 5 points to the rest of the class. Students can take notes on their Victims worksheet.

6. Discuss the groups listed in the previous exercise:

- Which victim groups are familiar to students? Which do they know the most about?
- Are there victim groups that are unfamiliar? Which groups had they not heard much about previously?
- Why do students know more about some groups than others? (if this is the case)
- Are there memorials devoted to any/all of these groups in their country? What kind of memorials?
- Which groups have they studied the most in school?
- Are any of these groups targets of similar persecution today?

Reflection Activity:

For the last 5-7 minutes of class, ask students to write a reflection inspired by the following question. Students may move beyond the question in their writing, but this should be the starting point:

After you leave here today, what would you tell your friends or family about what you did today in class? What feels most important or most memorable to you?

We recommend that during the course of this class, teachers maintain a dialogue with their students and make sure that they have a chance to process this information.