

BULLYING CAN'T CONTINUE SPREADING PROJECT

MICHELE BRAKE, BACONTON COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

Unit Overview

This writing unit explores the history of the Holocaust and how it relates to modern-day bullying. Students examine poems, literature and other text to enhance their knowledge of the Holocaust while strengthening their understanding of tone, mood, allegory, diction, point of view, and theme. Then, students write an informative essay on their literary understanding within the context of the Holocaust and its connection to bullying. The unit concludes with students using their writing to create a public service announcement.

Standards Addressed

1. **ELA.8.RI.2:** Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
2. **ELA.8.RI.3:** Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
3. **ELA.8.RI.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
4. **ELA.8.RI.5:** Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
5. **ELA.8.RI.6:** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
6. **ELA.8.RI.7:** Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
7. **ELA.8.RL.1:** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
8. **ELA.8.RL.2:** Determine the theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationships to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

9. **ELA.8.RL.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
10. **ELA.8.RL.5:** Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
11. **ELA.8.W.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
12. **ELA.8.W.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
13. **ELA.8.W.5:** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
14. **ELA.8.W.6:** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationship between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
15. **ELA.8.W.9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
16. **ELA.8.W.10:** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
17. **ELA.8.L.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
18. **ELA.8.L.2:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
19. **ELA.8.L.3:** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
20. **ELA.8.L.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

21. **ELA.8.SL.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 8 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
22. **ELA.8.SL.2:** Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation
23. **ELA.8.SL.5:** Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

Essential Questions:

1. Why is it important to learn from history and pass this learning from generation to generation?
2. How can I contribute my best to a group effort?
3. Why do authors use allegory?
4. How do authors use words to impact readers and the mood and meaning of their stories?
5. How do I determine the central idea of a text? How is that central idea developed over the course of the text?
6. How does an author use the structure of a paragraph to help the reader understand the information?
7. How does an author's point of view or perspective affect their purpose?
8. How can I create meaning from poetry?

Day One – Unit Introduction

Standards Addressed: 18, 21

1. Discuss current knowledge of the Holocaust and the importance of learning from the past. Use a KWL chart to guide discussion.
2. Review components of the unit and introduce the informative essay and public service announcement activities.
3. In small groups, have students use a T-Chart to list characteristics of productive and unproductive group members based on past experiences. Discuss findings as a class.
4. Then, the same groups develop five guiding rules for the unit based on the discussion.
 - a. Rules must be written in the form of a two-word imperative sentence words with proper spelling and punctuation.
 - b. One representative will write one of the rules on chart paper on the board.

5. Discuss the importance of working well together throughout the unit. Make note of the importance of sensitivity when discussing issues of the Holocaust and bullying.

Day Two and Three – Video and Writing Comparisons

Standards Addressed: 6, 15, 16

1. Students view the documentary [*Paper Clips*](#).
2. At the end of the documentary, students read the book *Six Million Paper Clips* by Peter and Dagmar Schroeder. As they read, have students identify chapters from the book that correlate to what they saw in the documentary.
3. In small groups, have students discuss the following questions and record responses on either a Venn diagram or T-Chart:
 - a. How did the documentary and the book treat the event differently?
 - b. How did the documentary and the book treat the event the same?
 - c. Between the documentary and the book, which was more impactful? Why?
4. Conclude with a one-page Quick Write of responses based on their graphic organizer. Be sure that students support their answers with evidence from the documentary and book.

Day Three, Four and Five – Allegory, Diction, and Mood

Standards Addressed: 7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, 21

1. Use a document camera to read *Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust* by Eve Bunting. Make sure to hide the subtitle from the class.
2. Have small groups brainstorm characteristics of allegories and discuss whether or not *Terrible Things* qualifies as an allegory. Discuss characteristics as a class.
3. Students go back to small groups and discuss why Eve Bunting chose to use an allegory and her intended audience. Conclude discussion with a one-page Quick Write of findings. Be sure that students support their answers with evidence from the text.
4. Next, lead a class discussion on diction and mood. Discuss how different diction choices change the mood and meaning of a story. Have students create a cluster map to track words and phrases that impact the mood and meaning of a story.
5. Then, students rewrite a passage of their choice from *Terrible Things* replacing Eve Bunting's diction with their own to change the mood of the passage.

6. Conclude with an informative Quick Write addressing the following prompt: “Analyze the impact of Eve Bunting’s diction on the reader, the mood, and the meaning of *Terrible Things*. Support your ideas with evidence from the text.”

Day Five and Six – Individuals, Events and Ideas

Standards Addressed: 2, 10, 11, 15, 18

1. As a class, read the beginning of the biography of *Martin Niemoller*, author of the poem *First They Came for the Jews*. As you read, have students identify individuals, events, or ideas in the text and record findings on different colored sticky notes on the board.
2. Have students break into small groups to complete the reading using their own colored sticky notes to identify individuals, events or ideas.
3. When the reading is complete, ask students to make connections between the individuals, events or ideas they identified. Connections can be similarities and differences, causes and effects, problems and solutions, etc. Give students a few examples to begin.
4. Students then write three different “If...then...” statements to culminate their findings and share their sentences with Think-Ink-Pair-Share.
5. Next, as a class read the poem *First They Came for the Jews* by Martin Niemoller, annotating the text while you read. With each annotation, discuss repetition and free verse while students take notes.
6. First in small groups and then as a class, pose the following questions:
 - a. What impact does the author’s use of repetition and free verse have on the meaning of the poem?
 - b. Compare and contrast the genres and styles of *Terrible Things* and *First They Came for the Jews*. Record answers on a Venn diagram.
7. Conclude with a Quick Write addressing the following prompt: “How does *First They Came for the Jews* connect to *Terrible Things*? Which text imparts its meaning more strongly? Explain at least two reasons for your choice using text evidence to support your reasoning.”

Day Seven – Central Ideas and Supporting Details

Standards Addressed: 1, 3, 20

1. Read the article “How the Holocaust Progressed” from *The World of Anne Frank: A Complete Resource Guide* by Betty Merti. As you read, identify the central idea and thesis, main points, and supporting details. Then, deconstruct the article into a formal outline.

- Using a [Vocabulary Jigsaw](#), students deconstruct the following words from the text: bureaucrats, expropriation, forbade ghetto, concentration, and annihilation.

Day Eight – Objective Summaries

Standards Addressed: 1

- Lead discussion on objective versus subjective summaries.
- Model writing a subjective summary using *Paper Clips*. Then, change this summary to an objective summary.
- In groups, students practice own objective summary writing using *Terrible Things*. Have each group record their summaries on chart paper to share with the class.
- Individually, students reread “How the Holocaust Progressed” and write a one paragraph objective summary.

Day Nine and Ten – Construction Strategies

Standards Addressed: 4, 11, 17, 18

- Discuss and review transitions, central ideas, supporting details, diction and organizational structure.
- Have students practice identifying topic and transition sentences. In pairs, students examine “How the Holocaust Progressed,” noting the following:
 - Whether the topic sentence is the first sentence or preceded by a transitional sentence
 - The use of transition words or phrases
 - The average number of sentences per paragraph
 - How many paragraphs tend to develop a single topic
 - How many pieces of evidence or support for each topic sentence are included in a paragraph
 - The text’s organizational structure(s)
 - The type of diction
- Have each student develop a Quick Write analyzing the author’s paragraph construction strategies gathered from the answers to the previous questions.
- Conclude with a discussion of the question: “How does an author use paragraph structure to help the reader understand the information?”

A TIP FROM THE TEACHER

More visual learners can use different colored highlighters to show different parts of the text identified in the questions.

Day Eleven and Twelve – Point of View and Purpose

Standards Addressed: 5, 21

1. Begin with discussion on point of view, perspective, bias, and purpose.
2. In small groups, students examine “How the Holocaust Progressed” and determine the author’s point of view, perspective, and purpose. Make sure each group uses text evidence to support their assertions.
3. Have students record their conclusions on two different graphic organizers on large poster paper. Each group then defends their consensus and evidence before the class and answers questions from classmates.

Day Thirteen and Fourteen – Theme

Standards Addressed: 7, 8, 9

1. As a class, conduct a silent then oral reading of *A Poison Tree* by William Blake.
2. Then, using the SIFT method (symbols and sounds, imagery, figurative language, tone and theme), have students perform a close reading of the poem. Further, note that students should mark unknown words for future clarification and use context clues to determine their meaning.
3. When students are finished, form small groups to discuss findings.
4. As a large group, use a flowchart to discuss the theme of the poem. Ask students how the theme developed through the plot.
5. To conclude, have each student perform a Quick Write on the following prompt: “How do *A Poison Tree* and its theme connect to our study of the Holocaust? Support your position with text evidence from the poem.”

Day Fifteen through Twenty – Informative Writing

Standards Addressed: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

1. Review components of informative writing. Then, pose the following prompt:
 - a. ““Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it’ is a famous quote by the philosopher and writer George Santayana. We educated ourselves on how the Holocaust progressed to affect so many millions in the worst ways imaginable. Using this knowledge of the “big world” of the Holocaust and its progression, apply it to the “small world” of our school by answering the following question in an informative essay: How can we keep intolerance and the mistreatment of others in check at our school? Propose an action plan of at least

three steps targeted to middle school students to diminish bullying and intolerance at our school. Use evidence from three of our texts in this unit, either visual and/or printed, to help support your action plan.”

2. Work with students to deconstruct all elements of the prompt, including vocabulary.
3. Then, discuss the elements of the writing process: prewriting, rough drafting, revising, editing, final drafting, and proofreading. Further, make a note that the final paper will be typed in proper MLA format with in-text citations and a Works Cited page.
4. Conclude with review of the **Informative Writing Rubric**.

Day Twenty through Twenty-Five – Public Service Announcement Project

Standards Addressed: 11, 19, 21, 22, 23

1. Break students into groups based on writing skills and presentation experience.
2. Begin a discussion on public service announcements and their characteristics. Use the [Rock Your World](#) website to guide discussion. Further, show multiple examples of public service announcements.
3. Then, give each group a **BCCS Project Guide** and inform students they will use their informative writing pieces to develop their own public service announcement.
4. Each group then creates a *concept plan* and completes the **Concept Plan Activity Sheet** as well as a **Bullying Survey** to begin the initial stages of their video.
5. Students work on their video for several days and conference with the teacher as needed.

Day Twenty-Six – Conclusion

Standards Addressed: 12, 16

1. Each group shares their public service announcement with the class.
2. Students take time to reflect on their experience during the unit and complete the L portion of the KWL chart from the first day.
3. Then, students write a letter to the person of their choice on the lessons they learned from the unit.