

Introduction



Introduction

"It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality."

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Introduction

interconnectedness of oppressions

Holocaust Education

When educating about the Holocaust it is important to remember that our students come from all backgrounds and enter the lessons with varying levels of knowledge and for some personal connections.

It is our job while teaching about the facts to also realize we are bringing awareness to students of antisemitism, racism, hate and indifference. One of the big takeaways in this education should be respect for diversity and the sanctity of human life.

Commitment to Holocaust Education

Working at a school that bears the name Anne Frank comes with commitment and obligation. The school itself holds strong the belief that we must stand up for freedom, justice, inclusion and human dignity. As a school, we feel that there is no room for aggression, discrimination, and racism of any form.

Students are empowered from kindergarten with the knowledge and understanding that compassion, empathy, inclusion and acceptance of all should be the norm. The conversation is started from a young age that when acceptance and inclusion are not present there are major consequences that occur.



Personal Recommendations

Holocaust education begins in kindergarten, with discussions about friendship, acceptance, compassion, empathy and using our kind words to communicate when feeling upset. Students begin to realize that when these traits are not present, it can lead to conflict.

Grade 6 is when most students are developmentally and emotionally ready to begin learning some of the facts about the Holocaust. Although they are ready, a high level of sensitivity is still required.

Commitment to Holocaust Education

Commitment to educate oneself as an educator

Conditions Pre-Holocaust in Europe:

1. Even when Jews were made citizens, they didn't really belong
2. Violence against Jews ensued minor outrage from other countries and was tolerated or even incited by local authorities
3. Dehumanization decreased the value of life and enabled murder
4. The European public still had a great appetite for the humiliation of Jews and anti-Jewish conspiracies, especially religiously inspired blood libels
5. Even those countries that professed compassion for the plight of Eastern European Jews had no stomach for accepting refugees
6. What began with gratuitous words of hate ended with callous acts of murder

Some Guidelines

- Define the term "Holocaust"
- The Holocaust was not an inevitable event
 - Precision of language
 - Avoid comparisons of pain
- Avoid translating people into statistics
(re-centre the "human" in the process of learning)

Teach The Human Story

While connecting people and events to the larger story, educators should:

- Translate statistics into personal stories; use survivor and witness testimony whenever possible
- Highlight examples of how victims attempted to retain their humanity in the face of dehumanization
- Stress the "choiceless choices" of the victims with limited or no power.

Encourage Inquiry-Based Learning & Critical Thinking

- Support students' sharing of ideas and asking questions of themselves and others.

Foster Empathy

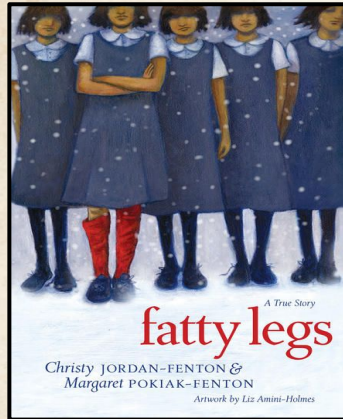
- Challenge students to understand people and their attitudes and actions in a historical context using sound approaches and strategies.

EnSure a Supportive Learning Environment

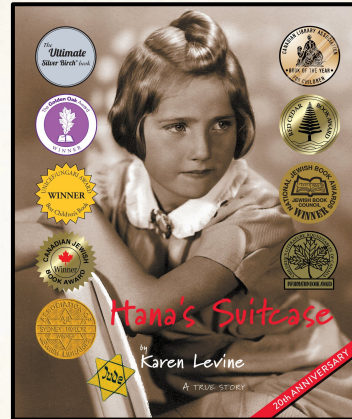
- Guide students "safely in and safely out" of this study; use age-appropriate materials and always be mindful of the social and emotional needs of individual students.

Hana's Suitcase

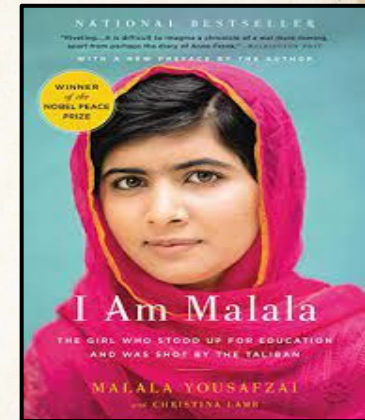
Selecting rich texts that share similar themes.



A story about an Indigenous girl who is brave, determined, and hopeful. The young girl ultimately illustrates the power of human dignity.



A story about a happy young Jewish girl who was a victim of the Nazis. In a quest to learn about Hana messages of bravery, empathy, hope and survivorship are clear.



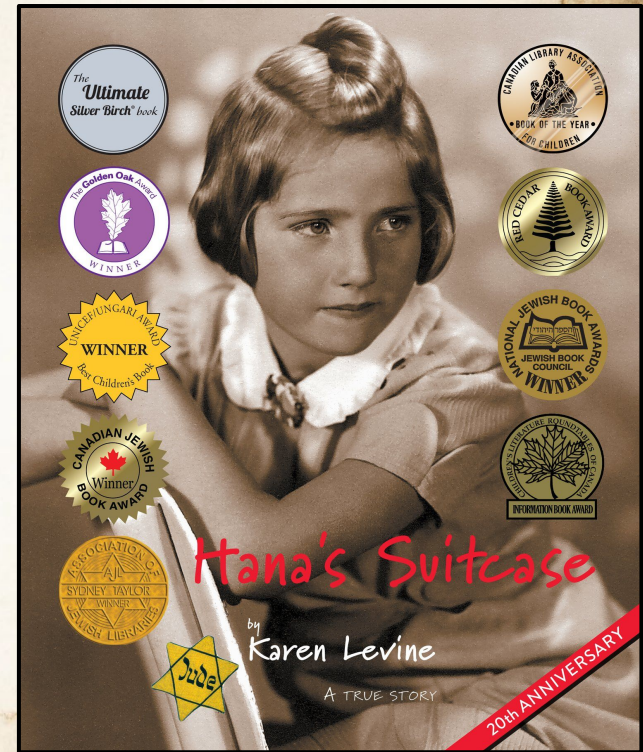
A story about a brave young Pakistani girl who demonstrated resilience, hope, perseverance, and courage. Malala is a survivor.

Hana's Suitcase

Hana's Suitcase is a book that brings to life a human story of the Holocaust.

As the subject and events in the story may evoke strong emotions it is important to allow for the students a safe entry and safe exit each day.

It is imperative that students feel that they are able to talk through their feelings and have the support needed to work through any emotions they may experience.



Hana's Suitcase

Can be as big or small a
project as you wish.

Setting the Stage

Prior to reading the book I showed the students this picture. My goal was to pique their interest and build curiosity.



What do you think this is?
What do you think it contains?
Can you read what is written on it?

Grade 5 Novel Study

We engaged in a whole class read aloud. Students were asked not to read ahead independently, however, they were free to reread sections that we had read together. This was due to the age of the students as well as the sensitive content. In my opinion, I needed to be present to support the students and answer questions as they arose.

Grade 5 Novel Study

- Listen
- Process
- Talk/Question/Share

Introduction

To begin, we read the introduction which helped to give the students some context on the story. Following the brief introduction we spent time having some meaningful discussion.



Discussion

In your opinion, why do we take the time to learn about the past?

It is believed that some of the most important values in the world are; inclusivity, respect, and compassion. How do you think that these values will relate to this book?

Grade 5 Novel Study

I strategically divided the book up into sections. This allowed for meaningful dialogue and exploration of the story. It also created anticipation for what was to come next.

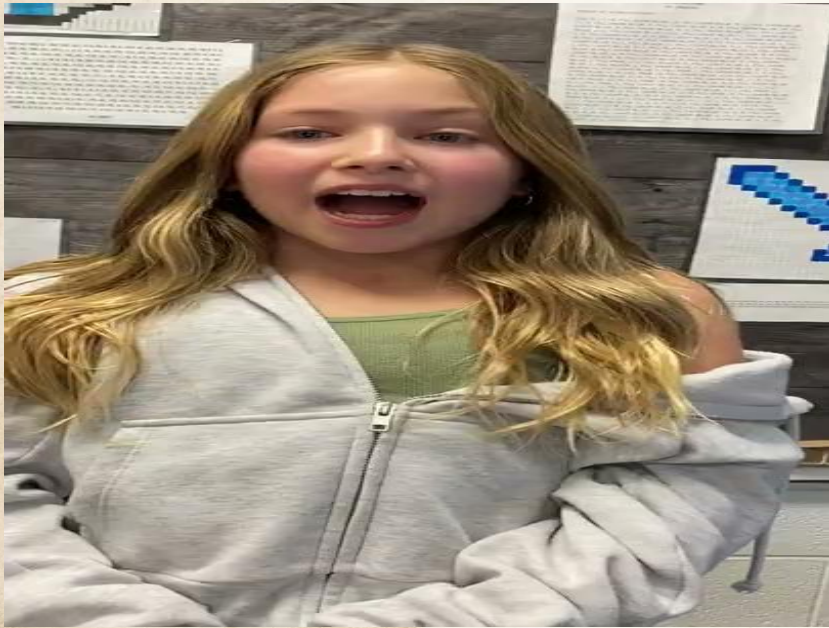
Planning ahead the sections to be read also allowed for us to include some important literacy skills. We were able to incorporate some follow up on:

- the structure of the story
 - reading strategies
 - character traits
- using context clues to ensure understanding of vocabulary

Grade 5 Novel Study

For students to fully understand the story it is important for them to become familiar with the vocabulary. Creating anchor charts or a word wall equipped with definitions for students to use will help ensure understanding. In addition, it allows for students to use the proper vocabulary when responding to and reflecting on the story and the Holocaust.

Student Voice



Parent Voice

“Thank you for teaching them about the Holocaust. Our 3 kids have their middle names after our grandparents who were all Holocaust survivors (Auschwitz, Dachau camps survivors) with very hard stories that they will learn more about when they grow up. It helps a lot for us to talk about the Holocaust - they know a bit about it and seems to be proud to carry the names and tell about their family.”