MAUS: A MEMOIR OF THE HOLOCAUST REVISED EDITION
TEACHER’S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Historical record, memoir or graphic novel? MAUS defies easy definition. The two volume, Pulitzer Prize winning book by acclaimed graphic artist Art Spiegelman functions on three distinct yet seamless levels. It shares an eyewitness account of the Holocaust through the eyes of the artist’s father, Vladek; speaks to the tortured relationship between a son and his father; and finally, illuminates the relationship between an artist and his art.

Spiegelman uses a unique cartoon style — the visual portrayal of humans as animals — to reach many ends. His art illustrates his parents’ survival during the Holocaust; his father’s residual pain and its impact on family relationships; and his own artistic struggle. As a character in his own work, Spiegelman juxtaposes the minutiæ of daily life with the magnitude of events surrounding the Holocaust. Beneath the apparent simplicity of MAUS’ graphic novel format lies a harrowing and complex narrative derived from hours of personal interviews between father and son, and historical research that included visits to Auschwitz and other Polish sites.

MAUS first appeared in in Art Spiegelman’s avant-garde magazine Raw in 1980. MAUS, A Survivor’s Tale I: My Father Bleeds History was published in 1986; MAUS, A Survivor’s Tale II: And Here My Troubles Began followed 1991. The two volumes were awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 with the creation of a special category to honour the originality of Spiegelman’s work.

Some early critics contend that the comic book format is inappropriate for the subject matter and demeans the enormity of the Holocaust experience. Others argue that the cartoon medium opens up the history to a new readership and that by neither trivializing nor sentimentalizing, MAUS raises the comic book to a higher art form: the graphic novel.
ABOUT THE TEACHER’S GUIDE

The guide has been organized into two classroom subject areas. Teachers who wish to borrow ideas across disciplines will find that the student materials are particularly easy to adapt to different subject needs.

LANGUAGE ARTS
As autobiography, expressed through the conversations between father and son, MAUS offers English teachers a unique opportunity to analyze form and explore character development and the use of metaphor.

VISUAL ARTS
As a graphic novel which features the artist as one of the characters, MAUS offers art teachers an opportunity to explore style, the artistic process and contemporary cartooning as it relates to issues of social justice.

References to the two volumes of MAUS are denoted in the text with Roman numerals followed by the page number: page 46 in Volume II is indicated as (II.46).

Art Spiegelman was born in 1948 in Stockholm, Sweden, the son of Andzi (Anja) and Vladek Spiegelman. The family moved to Rego Park, New York in 1951. Spiegelman demonstrated an early interest in comic books. Popular horror comics, *Mad*, underground comics, television, as well as pop and high art were all formative influences. By adolescence, Spiegelman was seriously involved in comic making. As Spiegelman tells it, the underground comic movement developed in the 1960s while he was in junior high school:

“I met some people who later became, like myself, that first generation of underground cartoonists — like Jay Lynch, Skip Williamson. We were all working for the same little magazines. They were amateur self-produced magazines.” *(Dreifus, 36)*

Chapters of MAUS were first serialized in 1980 in Art Spiegelman’s avant-garde magazine *Raw*. *MAUS, A Survivor’s Tale I: My Father Bleeds History* was published in 1986 and *MAUS, A Survivor’s Tale II: And Here My Troubles Began* in 1991. The two volumes won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 with the creation of a special category to honour the originality of the work. The acclaim and public attention that followed the publication of MAUS came as a surprise to Spiegelman:

“One of the reasons I wasn’t ready for the response to MAUS is that I was living in a world where comics were being made seriously and taken seriously. So, to me, it was very natural.” *(Dreifus, 36)*

“There’s a kind of shock in people’s minds when they hear that this story is a comic strip — ‘Somebody did a comic strip about the Holocaust.’

Actually, that invests it with a certain lack of hubris. It’s not an opera about the Holocaust; it’s something modest, it’s a comic strip — a medium that has a history of being without pretensions or aspirations to art. And perhaps if there can be no art about the Holocaust, then there may at least be comic strips.” *(Dreifus, 35)*

Despite the acclaim, Spiegelman experienced angst and misgivings about his work. This self-doubt is expressed both in the text and images of MAUS.

Today Spiegelman is acknowledged as one of this generation’s foremost comic artists. Co-founder and co-editor of *Raw*, the acclaimed magazine of avant-garde comix and graphics with his wife Françoise Mouly, Spiegelman has become widely known for *MAUS* and his commercial work for *The New Yorker* magazine, among other literary efforts, including *In The Shadow of No Towers*. 
MAUS has generated much debate as to its literary form and merit. Even the Pulitzer Prize committee established a special category to honour the work. MAUS has been categorized variously as a cartoon, graphic novel, memoir (Vladek’s), autobiography (Art Spiegelman’s), oral history and allegory. Some think of it as a work of fiction, others as non-fiction.

Spiegelman recounts an amusing anecdote about his efforts to have MAUS removed from The New York Times Book Review’s fiction list, saying that “David Duke [the former leader of the Ku Klux Klan] would be quite happy to read that what happened to his father was fiction” (Blume, 1997). In response, one of the book review editors quipped that if he rang Spiegelman’s doorbell and a giant mouse answered, then he would place MAUS on the non-fiction list.

Spiegelman’s use of the comic book has been highly controversial, with some suggesting that the form demeans the gravity of the Holocaust experience. Others argue that to the contrary, MAUS has elevated the comic book form to new and serious heights.

PAIR ASSIGNMENT AND CLASS DEBATE: ANALYSIS OF FORM

Students select one of the forms or genres attributed to MAUS:
- comic book
- graphic novel
- memoir
- autobiography
- oral history
- allegory
- fiction
- non-fiction

In pairs or small groups, students find a working definition of their chosen form, and prepare an argument for classifying MAUS according to that particular form. Students present their arguments in the form of a class debate. After hearing all the presentations, the class agrees on a collective classification of MAUS.

EXTENSION ASSIGNMENT

As a homework assignment, students compose a short response discussing how classifying MAUS in different ways can change readers’ perceptions of the work. Alternatively, provide in-class time to complete the assignment.
No part of the graphic novel style has evoked more discussion than MAUS’ use of the animal metaphor. Central to the metaphor is Spiegelman’s decision to represent Germans as cats, Jews as mice, and Poles as pigs. This metaphor is a vehicle for rendering the enormity of the Holocaust in a contained form.

PAIR DISCUSSION: METAPHOR BY DESIGN
MAUS is clearly intended as a metaphor. Throughout the two volumes, readers are constantly reminded that the characters depicted in animal form think of themselves as human, and represent human experiences before, during, and after the Holocaust.

In explaining the origins of MAUS, Spiegelman recalls having seen old cat and mouse cartoons and old racist cartoons. These cartoons spawned the idea for a comic strip about racism in America that would be called “The Ku Klux Katz.” Before the ideas could come to fruition, however, Spiegelman changed his mind, realizing that the cat and mouse metaphor could be applied to a subject much closer to his own past — the Holocaust (Spiegelman, METAMAUS, 111 - 115).

Read aloud Metaphor By Design or distribute copies to the class. Reproduce and distribute Dossier: Metaphor By Design to groups, or allow student to view electronically.

Individually or in pairs, students examine the use of metaphor by reading three excerpts from MAUS in Dossier: Metaphor By Design, and respond to the following questions:

• How does Spiegelman stress that MAUS is intended to read as a metaphor?
• Why do you think he does this?
• Do you think MAUS could have been designed in another way? Explain.

EXTENSION ASSIGNMENT
MAUS is not the only piece of literature to employ metaphors. Introduce students to another literary work such as George Orwell’s Animal Farm or Aesop’s Fables. As an in-class or homework assignment, ask students to compare MAUS’ use of the extended metaphor one of these works, or another of their choosing.
Time flies...

Vladek died of congestive heart failure on August 16, 1982... Françoise and I stayed with him in the Catskills back in August 1979.

Vladek started working as a tinman in Auschwitz in the spring of 1944... I started working on this page at the very end of February 1987.

In May 1987 Françoise and I are expecting a baby...

In May 1944, and May 24, 1944, over 100,000 Hungarian Jews were killed in Auschwitz.

In September 1986, after 8 years of work, the first part of MAUS was published. It was a critical and commercial success.

At least fifteen foreign editions are coming out. I've gotten 4 serious offers to turn my book into a TV special or movie. (I don't wanna.)

In May 1948 my mother killed herself. (She left no note.)

Lately I've been feeling depressed.

Alright Mr. Spiegelman... we're ready to shoot...
LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR
Metaphor By Design

© Art Spiegelman. MAUS II: A Survivor’s Tale And Here My Troubles Began, 1992. Page 43.
LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR
Metaphor By Design

GROUP ACTIVITY: ETHNIC METAPHORS

The central metaphor of MAUS — in which Germans are represented as cats, Jews as mice, and Poles as pigs — is not as straightforward as it appears. MAUS plays with ideas of ethnic identity and the ways in which those identities can be hidden or masked. Ethnic and national groups are portrayed with some variations; only the representation of Jews as mice, regardless of their country of origins, remains constant.

Divide class into groups of four or five. Reproduce and distribute Dossier: Ethnic Metaphors to groups, or allow students to view electronically.

In small groups, students examine the excerpts in Dossier: Ethnic Metaphors and respond to the following prompts:

• How does Spiegelman depict African-Americans?
• How does Spiegelman distinguish ordinary Germans from Nazis?
• What dilemma does Spiegelman face in finding an animal metaphor to represent his French wife, a convert to Judaism?
• What do Vladek and Anja do to pass as non-Jews, and how is this conveyed visually?
• What does this suggest to you about the notion of ethnic identity?
• How are masks a fitting way to convey people’s perception of race or ethnic identity?

As a class, students discuss their notes generated in response to the excerpts. Lead a discussion about identity, using the following questions as prompts:

• What does Spiegelman’s treatment of ethnicity — through the use of animals — suggest about the notion of identity?
• Are masks a useful or desirable way to convey people’s perception of race or ethnic identity?

EXTENSION ASSIGNMENT

The classification of people according to their ethnic identities was a central feature of Nazi policy. Research Nazi racial ideology, eugenics and the theory of a master race. Explain how these beliefs were implemented during the Holocaust, using examples from Nazi propaganda and legislation.
LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR
Ethnic Metaphors

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR
Ethnic Metaphors

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR

Ethnic Metaphors

© Art Spiegelman. MAUS II: A Survivor’s Tale And Here My Troubles Began, 1992. Page 100.
LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR

Ethnic Metaphors

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR
Ethnic Metaphors

Summer vacation, Franoise and I were staying with friends in Vermont...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
Trying to figure out how to draw you...

WANT ME TO POSE?
I mean in my book, what kind of animal should I make you?

HUH? A MOUSE OF COURSE!

BUT YOU'RE FRENCH!
Well, how about the bunny rabbit?

NAH, TOO SWEET AND GENTLE.
I mean the French in general. Let's not forget the centuries of anti-Semitism.

HMMMPH.

I mean, how about the previous affair? The Nazi collaborators! The...

OKAY! But if you're a mouse, I ought to be a mouse too.

I CONVERTED DIDN'T I?

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR

Ethnic Metaphors

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR

Ethnic Metaphors

© Art Spiegelman. MAUS I: A Survivor’s Tale My Father Bleeds History, 1986. Page 137
LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR

Ethnic Metaphors

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR

Ethnic Metaphors

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: MAUS AS METAPHOR

Ethnic Metaphors

MAUS’ use of animal metaphors raises the controversial issue of race and racial identification. Some critics have objected to the mice metaphor because of its close association with Nazi propaganda, which portrayed Jews as vermin. Similarly, Poles have found the pig metaphor objectionable and insulting.

CLASS DISCUSSION: RESPONSES TO METAPHORS

Pre-assign, reproduce and distribute copies of Reading: Controversies: Race, Vermin, and Pigs, or allow students to view electronically. Encourage students to record their responses to the reading.

As a class, lead a discussion about the controversial use of metaphors in MAUS, using the following questions as prompts:

- Do you think the animal metaphor effectively conveys Vladek and Anja’s wartime experiences? Or, does the animal metaphor diminish the enormity of the Holocaust?
- Why do you think the mice and pig metaphors might be controversial?
- Does MAUS encourage or refute the Nazi ideology of Jews by portraying them as vermin? Explain.
- What reasons does Spiegelman offer for using these metaphors?

EXTENSION ASSIGNMENT

At home or in-class, students explore Holocaust resource material on the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre (www.vhec.org) and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (www.ushmm.org) websites. Using examples from the sites, including readings and visual documentation, students select one of the following questions and prepare a two-page essay:

- How did the Nazi ideology of Jews as a race contribute to the “Final Solution”? In what ways was the Nazi racial ideology used against Roma and Sinti people and citizens of Slavic countries similar or different?
- The Nazis also discriminated against members of the German population. Discuss the treatment of mentally and physically challenged Germans, or “asocials.”

Alternately, students can prepare a two-page essay addressing the following statement:

- A 2011 Canadian census question asked people to identify themselves according to race. This information is commonly used to measure racial discrimination and to study income differences between ethnic groups and its causes. Do you think people should be categorized by race? When do you think it would be appropriate or inappropriate?
LESSON 2 READING: MAUS AS METAPHOR
Controversies: Race, Vermin, and Pigs

RACE
Because we think of cats, pigs, dogs and frogs as different species, readers might conclude that different nationalities such as Germans, Poles, Americans and French are distinct races. In reality, each of these countries is populated by people of different races and ethnic backgrounds.

Some critics argue that the animal metaphor plays into the Nazi ideology of Jews as a race. Hitler wrote that “The Jews are undoubtedly a race, but they are not human” (preface, MAUS, Vol. I) (FIND REAL CITATION). In fact, Judaism is not a race but a religious and cultural group. People of any race can be Jewish.

Nazism used race as a tool of segregation. Racial differences helped distinguish between a master Aryan race and the inferior Slavic races, including the Poles, who the Nazis intended to transform into an enslaved society. Jews and Roma and Sinti people were considered to be sub-human and targeted for death. Recent genetic research has questioned the whole idea of race. Research findings show few genetic differences amongst people.

VERMIN
Nazi propaganda portrayed Jews as vermin:

“Mickey Mouse is the most miserable ideal ever revealed. ... Healthy emotions tell every independent young man and every honorable youth that the dirty and filth-covered vermin, the greatest bacteria carrier in the animal kingdom, cannot be the ideal type of animal. ... Away with Jewish brutalization of the People! Down with Mickey Mouse! Wear the Swastika Cross!” (from a German newspaper article, mid-1930s, reproduced in the preface to MAUS, vol. II).

Spiegelman intentionally created the mice metaphor, knowing about the Nazi association of Jews as vermin and that their preferred method of murder was through the use of a common pesticide — Zyklon B.

“I found that in a film called The Eternal Jew, a racist documentary made by a guy named Hippler, there’s shots of old Jewish men milling around in a ghetto, cut to a swarm of rats in a sewer, and saying that the Jews are the rats of mankind, carrying their disease through out the world.” (METAMAUS, 115)

POLES AS PIGS
Some Poles find the pig metaphor to be quite offensive. Spiegelman relates a conversation he had with a member of the Polish press:

"[A Polish press attaché] said, ‘Do you realize that it is a terrible insult to call a Pole a pig? It’s worse than it even sounds in English. Do you realize that the Germans called us schwein [pigs]?’ So I said, ‘Yeah, and the Germans called us vermin. These aren’t my metaphors. These are Hitler’s.’ And that gave us common ground. I pointed out that, in the book, there are Jews who act admirably—but there are many Jews in the book who don’t. These are just people wearing masks. And the same is true of the Poles. There are some Poles who saved my parents’ lives and who were very kind, and there were some who were swine.” (Dreifus, 3)
As a work of literature, MAUS’ strength lies in its honest and unsentimental depiction of the characters and their emotions. At the same time, the narrative is far from simple. The story is Vladek’s, and told by Vladek, but then reported secondhand by his son, Art Spiegelman. The narrative includes nuanced layers of interpretation. By studying the relationship between characters, students can gain an awareness of the richness and complexity of MAUS.

READING & ANALYSIS: CHARACTER STUDY

Pre-assign, reproduce and distribute copies of Reading: Character Study, or allow students to view electronically. Encourage students to record their responses to the reading.

Students choose one of the characters — Vladek, Art, or Anja — for a character study, and complete the accompanying reading. Students select two related excerpts and questions about their character, and prepare a one-page analysis. Students are encouraged to support their arguments by using quotes from the text.

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY & CLASS DISCUSSION: READERS’ THEATRE

As a class, select a portion of MAUS that explores the relationship between two characters. Have two or more students perform a dramatic reading of the excerpt. Following the readers’ theatre, lead a class discussion about the students’ interpretation of the event, characters, and emotions.
LESSON 3 READING: CHARACTER STUDY

VLADEK
Vladek was once a dashing young man, resourceful and daring. In MAUS, his son portrays him as aged and in poor health. Describe some of these changes using examples from the text. How do you think Vladek’s Holocaust experiences have contributed to the kind of person he became?

Vladek is portrayed in conflicting lights. Compare Vladek’s altruism towards Mandelbaum in Auschwitz (II.33-34) with his prejudice towards an African-American hitchhiker (II.98-100).

Describe Vladek’s personal strengths and weaknesses. Find other contrasting examples to support your argument.

Art portrays Vladek as an inconsiderate father, both emotionally demanding and guilt inducing. What examples can you find that support this view?

Describe Vladek’s relationship with Anja and his second wife Mala.

Vladek is presented as a hoarder who tries to return opened boxes of cereal to the store. Art writes that, “in some ways [Vladek] didn’t survive” (II.90). What does Art mean by this? Find other examples of hoarding. Why do you think Vladek would carefully keep calendars from 1965 and yet throw out Anja’s diaries?

ART
Art’s self-portrait is a realistic one. He presents himself as sarcastic, bitter and ambivalent towards his father. Find examples of Art’s feelings towards Vladek. Why do you think Art responds so badly to his father?

Art breaks a promise to Vladek not to use some of Vladek’s more private memories. What do you think of this broken promise?

Art fears that he has reduced his father, not only to a mouse, but to a rat, a “racist caricature” who reuses tea bags and hoards wooden matches. Should Vladek be portrayed with such honesty? Can you find contrasting examples of Art’s compassion for his father.

The Holocaust had lasting effects not only on survivors, but also on their children, commonly referred to as the Second Generation. Like many others of this generation, Art is plagued by guilt, fear, and anger, and was raised with the memory of dead relatives. Explain Art’s feelings and fears, and Art’s anger with Vladek for having destroyed Anja’s diaries?

ANJA
As a character, Anja is more challenging to assess than Art and Vladek since she cannot speak for herself. Anja is created from memory. Compare the similarities and differences between Art and Vladek’s relationships with Anja. Do Art and Vladek speak about or present Anja differently? If so, what does this tell us about her husband and son?

How does Anja’s memory, or lack of it (as her diaries were destroyed), affect the relationship between Art and Vladek?

How might the story of MAUS have changed if Art could have interviewed his mother as well as his father?
LESSON 1: A GRAPHIC NOVEL ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST?

Spiegelman shares the making of MAUS with his readers. Readers are continually reminded of the fact that MAUS is a graphic novel designed in comic book form and that the artist is a character in his own work. The artist’s process and readers’ responses are transparent features of the narrative.

As an art form, comic books and graphic novels are varied in style and content. Spiegelman’s employs a deceptively simple style in MAUS. However, the two volumes are quite sophisticated, and derive from a lengthy and involved process that included forty hours of taped interviews, historical research, and a great deal of editing.

CLASS DISCUSSION: COMIC BOOK DEPICTION

As a graphic novel about the Holocaust, MAUS has generated considerable controversy over the last three decades. Lead a class discussion about the appropriateness of using the comic form to present a Holocaust narrative. Students should support their position with examples from the text. Use the following prompt to open the conversation:

• Do you think that MAUS demeans the Holocaust experience? Or, does MAUS elevate the comic book form and educate a wider audience?
GROUP ACTIVITY: SIMPLICITY, FRAMES, FLASHBACKS, AND DRAWINGS

Explain to students that they will be analyzing various forms of artistic styles.

Divide class into groups of four or five. Assign each group one of the following styles: simplicity, frames, flashbacks, or drawings. Reproduce and distribute copies of Reading: Artistic Style, or allow students to view electronically. Assign as in-class reading.

In small groups, students review their readings and prepare responses to the following prompts using evidence from the text:

- SIMPLICITY: Compare the soft, rounded curves of the mice faces with the sharp, angular edges of the cat faces. What feelings or ideas do these drawings evoke?
- FRAMES: How does the use of frames help to convey a sense of time?
- FLASHBACKS: What stylistic techniques are used to move the reader between flashbacks and flash forwards?
- DRAWINGS: How do diagrams, charts, maps and photos act as documentary evidence of the Holocaust? What do you learn from them?

EXTENSION ASSIGNMENT

Reproduce and distribute Reading: Prisoner on the Hell Planet, or allow students to view electronically.

As an in-class or homework assignment, students prepare a one-page reflective paper based on the following prompt:

- In contrast to MAUS, Spiegelman’s earlier work, Prisoner on the Hell Planet, takes a very different stylistic approach. In this “comic within a comic,” Anja’s suicide is powerfully drawn, with human faces depicting a full range of expression. Which of the two works do you find more powerful or effective? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
PRISONER ON THE HELL PLANET

© Art Spiegelman. MAUS I: A Survivor’s Tale My Father Bleeds History, 1986.
LESSON 2 DOSSIER: ARTISTIC STYLE

PRISONER ON THE HELL PLANET

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LESSON 2 DOSSIER: ARTISTIC STYLE

PRISONER ON THE HELL PLANET

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PRISONER ON THE HELL PLANET

© Art Spiegelman. MAUS I: A Survivor’s Tale My Father Bleeds History, 1986.
LESSON 2 READING: ARTISTIC STYLE

SIMPPLICITY
MAUS is deceptively simple. Unlike colourful mainstream comics, MAUS uses only black and white. There are few details and few facial expressions. Mice faces are expressed simply with dots for eyes and short lines for mouths and eyebrows. Sometimes, facial shadows are used to convey emotions. Only differences in clothing distinguish one mouse from another. And yet, each character is clearly recognizable. MAUS’ simplistic style makes it easily accessible and approachable for all groups of readers.

FRAMES
Renowned comic book artist Will Eisner calls comics “sequential art,” referring in part to the way each frame follows the other. MAUS’ use of frames is a traditional one: few drawings break out of their borders and the frames help keep the Holocaust separate from the present. One exception to this rule, where past and present meet, can be found in the drawing of the Auschwitz hangings presented simultaneously with a drive through the Catskills. Other variations include the use of a frame within a frame, varied sizes of frames, and a single image drawn through multiple frames.

FLASHBACKS
MAUS makes use of many flashbacks and flash forwards to tell the story in an alternating fashion. At one point Vladek is shown looking back in time at his younger self (I.74, I.115). Although extremely effective, MAUS’ use of flashbacks and flash forwards is not new. Students will be accustomed to interpreting these time shifts from their experience with other comic books, film and television.

MAPS, PHOTOS, DIAGRAMS & DOCUMENTS
A unique feature of MAUS is its use of informational drawings. These maps, photos, diagrams, and documents serve as a kind of documentary evidence for Vladek’s story and Holocaust history. These special drawings enhance readers’ understanding of people, places, and events by adding a richness of details to an otherwise simple style. Some examples include:

MAPS
- Concentration camp, Rego Park, and the Catskills, back covers Vol. I & II
- Death march, Vol. II.84

PHOTOS
- Family photographs, Vol. II.114, 115

DIAGRAMS
- Hiding places, Vol. I.110
- Crematoria, Vol. II.70
- Shoe repair, Vol. II.60

DOCUMENTS
- Nazi proclamation, Vol. I.82
- Passport marked with a “J,” Vol. I.90
- Timeline, Vol. II.68
LESSON 2 DOSSIER: ARTISTIC STYLE
Maps

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: ARTISTIC STYLE

Maps

© Art Spiegelman. MAUS II: A Survivor’s Tale And Here My Troubles Began, 1992. Back Cover.
Maps
Yah, he was Anja’s oldest brother. He ran, in Lodz, the family hosiery factory. In 1939 he and Hela came to see the World Fair, and stayed here the war. In 1942–you were a baby. He came also here, from Stockholm to his house.

I liked better to stay in Sweden—I had again a good business—but Anja insisted to be with the only surviving one of all her family.

And oy—when Herman died from a hit-and-run driver in 1969, Anja started the Alc to die a little.

So here. It’s their two kids, Lolek and Lona, what stayed by us, in Sosnowiec, in the war.

Lolek, you know he then came out alive from Auschwitz, so now he’s an engineer and a big-shot college professor.

The little girl, she finished with Richieu in the Ghetto.

This brother of Anja, Josef, he was a sign painter, a commercial artist, always she said you resemble.

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: ARTISTIC STYLE

Photos
LESSON 2 DOSSIER: ARTISTIC STYLE

Diagrams

HIDING PLACES, VOL. I. 110

I came to one of the four crematorium buildings. It looked so like a big bakery...

From below ground, in the gas room, we Fiinmen had to take out the pipes and fans for ventilating.

This was a factory to make—One, two, three—ashes and smoke from all what came here.

underground undressing room

underground gaschamber

Special prisoners worked here separate. They got better bread, but each few months they also were sent up the chimney. One from them showed me everything how it was.

Intention
Benzinfection
Ries infection

They came to a big room to undress their clothes. What looks so, yes, here is a place so like they say.

People believed really it was here a place for showers, so they were told.

If I saw a couple months before how it was all arranged here, only one time I could see it.

© Art Spiegelman. MAUS II: A Survivor’s Tale And Here My Troubles Began, 1992. Page 70.
Dans la tannure, j'avais encore la même histoire avec Yid.

Un seul poir pour moi aujourd'hui? Le commerce? Bon, mon capitaliste!

Qu'est arrivé à l'homme qui travaillait là-bas?

À côté, une partie des prisonniers sont envoyés dans les camps, ils avaient besoin de mes services aussi.

Je suis allé voir le kapo de l'atelier de chaussures.

Il y avait eu des départs, mais il y en avait toujours des nouveaux.

Je vais vous faire savoir si vous avez besoin de nouvelles chaussures.

Vous savez, j'ai toujours été un débrouillard.

Vous n'avez pas l'air d'être un débrouillard, vous êtes plus une personne.

Dois-je avoir écrit sur mon front?

D'accord, alors... faites-moi ça!

...et alors, vous avez même enregistré que vous avez des citations.

Vous êtes mieux que notre dernier chaussurier!

Vous voyez! Ca n'a pas d'intérêt de savoir comment faire tout ça!

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: ARTISTIC STYLE

Documents

NAZI PROCLAMATION, VOL. I. 82

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: ARTISTIC STYLE

PASSPORT MARKED WITH A “J”, VOL.1.90

LESSON 2 DOSSIER: ARTISTIC STYLE

Documents

© Art Spiegelman. MAUS II: A Survivor’s Tale And Here My Troubles Began, 1992. Page 68.
LESSON 3: ARTISTIC PROCESS

GROUP ACTIVITY: SIMPLICITY, FRAMES, FLASHBACKS, AND DRAWINGS

Reproduce and distribute copies of Reading: Artistic Process, or allow students to view electronically. Assign reading as homework.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY: PRODUCING A VISUAL NARRATIVE

We often rely on professionals to teach us about the past. But ordinary people, who have lived through momentous events, have much to contribute to our understanding of history. Interview a member of your family or community about their memories of a single historical event. This might include veterans, participants in social movements, or immigrants to Canada. Record their experiences and ask to view any related photographs and documents. Visit the library to collect background information and supporting visual documentation.

Since art is a medium to share history, select the most important events and dialogue and produce a five-frame comic strip. Edit the narrative to fit the limitations of the frames. Share finished product with your class and interviewee.
Spiegelman recorded more than forty hours of taped interviews with his father. These interviews were conducted over a long period of time and are highly personal in nature.

“I have no background per se in oral history. Long after the interview I did with my father I found a book on oral history, read it and found out that maybe I had gone about it in an unorthodox way. ... MAUS grew out of a comic strip I did in 1971. A three page strip based on stories of my father’s and mother’s that I recalled being told in childhood. When I finished the 1971 strip, I was pretty much estranged from my father. I went back to him and showed him the strip as an excuse to renew contact with him. Some of the information he gave me at that point made me actually go back and rework the three page strip. And that led me to tape his experiences in more full detail, and I spent about four days with him talking into a reel-to-reel clunky tape recorder.” (Smith, 1987)

Spiegelman intended to tell his father’s story “the way it really happened”(I.23). However, the interviews reflect the troubled relationship between father and son. For example, when Vladek wishes to discuss the glaucoma in his left eye, Art pushes his father to stay on topic. Spiegelman expresses frustration with his father’s digressions to the point of yelling at him. He also resorts to bribery, promising to put up the storm windows if Vladek tells him more about Anja (II.103). The process seems to be a difficult and emotionally draining one for both of them:

Art: I’m — uh — sorry I made you talk so much, pop.
Vladek: So, never mind, darling. Always it’s a pleasure when you visit (II.117).

Spiegelman researched his parents’ story by visiting Poland and the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau.

“The crew helped me find my parents’ house in Sosnowiec. We found people who remembered my family. In Auschwitz, we were able to hook up with the curator of the visual archives of the museum, and he helped me find the pictures I needed for my visual reconstruction. ... The first time I went, we went to Auschwitz I, which is where my father was incarcerated. And that looks fairly benign in some bizarre way. It’s paved. It’s got trees. So in that first trip, I spent a lot of time in Auschwitz I, which was a rather sanitized place, set up like a museum or a world’s fair display. And that kept it at a peculiar distance... [Birkenau] stretched as far as the eye could see in any given direction. And then in the back is the rubble of where the killing apparatus was. We walked in and it was nearing dusk when we found Birkenau. And that was frightening. It was one of the only places I’ve ever walked where one really does believe in ghosts. It felt like every step was walking on ashes.” (Dreifus, ’37)

Spiegelman used a lengthy process to complete each page. Starting with his father’s taped memories, Spiegelman selected the most important scenes and scraps of dialogue, which he then edited to fit the restrictions of a comic strip. Spiegelman began with a tiny layout of each page, followed by a full-size trial on a plastic master grid. He reworked each panel multiple times, paring down the dialogue and retracing the contours of each drawing with coloured inks. Spiegelman even continued editing some of his final strips with white-out or pasted in dialogue.
LESSON 4: POLITICAL CARTOONS

Social justice issues have long been a popular subject matter for graphic artists and cartoonists. Though not the first of its kind, MAUS helped to legitimize graphic novels and introduced a new, accessible form of literary expression — not to mention the Holocaust — to a general readership. Other graphic novels concerned with historical events or issues of social justice include: Keiji Nakazawa’s Barefoot Gen, which records the testimony of a child survivor of the bombing of Hiroshima; Jack Jackson’s Comanche Moon about Native American displacement; Jacques Tardi’s account of the First World War in The War of the Trenches; and Raymond Briggs’s When the Wind Blows about a nuclear attack.

CLASS DISCUSSION: POLITICAL CARTOONS
Reproduce and distribute copies of Dossier: Political Cartoons, or allow students to view electronically in small groups. Allow class time for students to examine the selection of editorial cartoons.

Have students describe their initial reaction to each cartoon. Was it one of amusement, annoyance, comprehension, or confusion? Did students agree with the intent of the cartoon?

Compare the styles of the four cartoons in terms of their use of realism, details, backgrounds and use of exaggeration. How does the artist’s style contribute to the message of the cartoon? More importantly, what purpose can such cartoons serve?

WRITTEN RESPONSE
Individually, students compose a brief description of each cartoon with language appropriate for a younger sibling or friend. Set the stage by explaining the event or issue portrayed in the cartoon. Explain the intended irony and your reaction to it.

EXTENSION ASSIGNMENT
Select a current or historical issue or event from a newspaper, social studies text, novel or memoir that interests you. Describe the social injustice found in the situation. Identify the victims, oppressors and moral dilemma. Choose a style that best suits your purposes and draw a cartoon that challenges the viewer to think more closely about your subject. Share your cartoon with classmates.

Measure how well the intent of your cartoon has been conveyed to fellow students. Working in pairs or small groups, read each other’s cartoons. Write a single word describing your initial reaction to each cartoon. Write a paragraph explaining your understanding of each cartoon’s social justice issue or moral dilemma.
LESSON 4 DOSSIER: POLITICAL CARTOONS

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VISUAL ARTS

LESSON 4 DOSSIER: POLITICAL CARTOONS

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LESSON 4 DOSSIER: POLITICAL CARTOONS

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Glossary

Action / Aktion - German word meaning “action” but used to refer to any non-military campaign. An Aktion would be an operation undertaken for political or racial reasons. For example, Aktion 14f13 was the code name for the murder of the disabled.

Antisemitism - Opposition or hatred of Jews. As a term, it came into wide-spread use in the 1870’s. Subsequently, it has come to denote hatred of Jews, in all of its forms throughout history.

Appel - French word for roll call. Process of forcing concentration camp prisoners to line up outdoors to be counted, often for several hours and under all weather conditions.

Aryan - Originally a linguistic term referring to the Indo-European group of languages. Before the end of the nineteenth century, the term had taken on racial definitions, often referring to people whose ancestors were northern European and thus “purer” than “lesser” races. The Nazis viewed Jews and other non-Aryans such as Gypsies (Roma) and Poles as either inferior or subhuman.

Aryanzation - Term used to describe the confiscation of Jewish-owned businesses and their transfer to German ownership.

Auschwitz - A concentration camp established in 1940 near Oswiecim, Poland. In 1942, it became a death camp. It contained a labour camp, the death camp Birkenau, and the slave labour camp, Buna-Monowitz. Up to 1.5 million Jewish men, women and children were murdered in this camp and 100,000 victims had families or homes to return to after the war. Many people inside the cars – sometimes referred to as cattle cars. The cars were packed tight and sealed off, and passengers had no food or water. Many inside the cars, especially the old and very young, died before the train reached its destination.

Concentration Camps - Immediately after assuming power on January 30, 1933, the Nazis established camps where they “concentrated” and imprisoned perceived enemies of the state. Enemies of Nazism included real and imagined political opponents including: Communists, Socialists, Monarchists, trade unionist, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Roma and Sinti people, homosexuals and others deemed “anti-social.” The general round-up of Jews did not begin until 1938. Before then, only Jews who fit the other categories were interned in the camps. The first three camps were Dachau, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen.

Crematorium - Building in a concentration camp containing large brick ovens where corpses, including those who had been gassed to death, were burned. Viadek refers to the crematorium as “ovens.” Jewish prisoners, called Sonderkommando, were assigned to work in the crematorium for a few months, until they were killed and replaced by other prisoners.

Dachau - One of the first concentration camps, it opened in March 1933 as a prison for political opponents of the Nazi regime. Although, Dachau did not have a poison gas, mass murder program, there were 31,591 registered deaths out of 206,206 registered prisoners. The total number of non-registered deaths is not known. The camp was liberated on April 29, 1945.

Death March - In retreat from Allied soldiers at the end of the war, Nazis forced large numbers of prisoners to march long distances under heavy guard and under intolerable conditions. Approximately 250,000 prisoners were murdered or otherwise died on these marches between the summer of 1944 and the end of the war.

Deportation - Part of the Nazi program to remove Jews from Germany, and increase living space for ethnic Germans. Initially an effort to rid German land of Jews, deportation eventually became a means to deliver Jews to concentration camps and implement the Final Solution.

Displaced Persons - Refugees who no longer had families or homes to return to after the war. They faced economic deprivation and feared reprisals or even death if they returned to their prewar homes. Immediately after the war it was estimated that there were between 1.5 million and 2 million displaced persons including 200,000 Jews, mainly from Eastern Europe.

Dysentery - Often leading to death during the Holocaust, dysentery is a disease causing inflammation of the intestines and severe diarrhea. It can be caused by various bacterial, viral, or parasitic infections, and is most often transmitted through contaminated water.

Einsatzgruppen - Nazi mobile killing units made up of men from the SS Security Police and other volunteers, operating in German-occupied territories during World War II. The Einsatzgruppen were used in the invasions of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and, most brutally, Russia. Their victims, primarily Jews, were executed by shooting and were buried in mass graves from which they were later exhumed and burned.

Final Solution - Nazi code name for the plan to destroy the Jews of Europe.

Gas - The Nazis used poison gas to kill large numbers of victims. Among the different gases used, Zyklon B was one of the most efficient and deadly.

Gas Chamber - Underground room where victims were gassed. Prisoners were told that they were showers intended for sanitation purposes. After gassing the bodies of the victims were brought to the crematorium.

Gestapo - A political police unit established in 1933. Its official name was Geheime Staatspolizei or secret state police. The Gestapo acted above the law and were notorious for their brutality.

Ghetto - The ghetto was a section of the city where all Jews from the surrounding areas were forced to live. Surrounded by barbed wire or walls, ghettos were often sealed to prevent people from entering or leaving. Established mostly in Eastern Europe, ghettos were characterized by overcrowding, starvation and forced labour. All were eventually destroyed as the Jews were deported to death camps.

Graphic Novel - Differentiated from an ordinary comic book in its length and that it tends to deal with more serious issues. It is also aimed at more mature readers.

Hitler, Adolf - Nazi party leader from 1921 to 1945. He became the German Chancellor on January 30, 1933 and President on August 2, 1934. He committed suicide in his Berlin bunker on April 30, 1945 following Germany’s defeat by the Allied powers.

Holocaust - The destruction of some 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their followers in Europe between the years 1933-1945. Other individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered grievously during this period, but only the Jews were marked for complete annihilation. The term “Holocaust” - literally meaning “a completely burned sacrifice” – suggests a sacrificial connotation to what occurred. The word Shoah, originally a Biblical term meaning widespread disaster, is the modern Hebrew equivalent.

Kaddish - The Jewish prayer of mourning for the dead.

Kapo - Prisoner in charge of a group of inmates in Nazi concentration camps. The word “kapo” comes from the Italian “capo” meaning head or chief. Kapos were most often professional criminals, former soldiers, foreign legionnaires and other rough unskilled
Glossary

Prisoners who directed the forced labour work details of Jews in concentration camps. They were appointed by the SS work detail officers, and they had equally cruel foremen assisting them. Prisoners often had to bribe Kapos to avoid being beaten to death. To distinguish them from Jews wearing yellow stars, Kapos wore black arm bands with white lettering on their left arms.

Liberation - Period of time during which concentration camps were entered and captured by Allied forces.

Liberators - Soviet, British, Canadian and American troops who entered the concentration camps after the Nazis had left.

Liquidation - Term used by Nazis referring to the removal and/or elimination of prisoners. The liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto saw the deportation of Jews to the concentration camp Treblinka, where most were then killed.

Maus - German word for mouse.

Mauschwitz - Name used in MAUS to refer to the concentration camp of Auschwitz. Derived from a combination of the words MAUS and Auschwitz.

Meshegu - Yiddish word for crazy. Vladek uses this word to describe his nephew, Lolek, in MAUS I.

Nazi - Name for the National Socialist German Workers Party. (NSDAP)

Nazism - The ideology of the National Socialist German Workers Party and the party's system of rule from 1933 to 1945. Also a form of fascism. The ideology included: 1) anti-liberalism and anti-parliamentarianism, 2) anti-communism and anti-socialism; 3) the Führer principle which replaced parliament with a hierarchical dictatorship based on the concepts of leader and follower, command and obedience; 4) nationalism, 5) racism and antisemitism, 6) imperialism and 7) militarism.

Organize - Word used by Auschwitz prisoners to mean stealing or procuring food or other necessities needed for survival.

Oswiecim - Polish name for the town and camp of Auschwitz.

Pogrom - A Russian word for physical attacks on Jews, usually accompanied by the destruction of property, murder and rape.

Ravensbrück - A concentration camp for women located outside of Berlin. Opened on May 15, 1939, a men’s camp was added in April 1941, and Uckermark, a camp for 1,000 children, was also established. Out of 132,000 prisoners, 92,000 women from 23 nations were murdered at this site. Inmates were forced to work for the armaments industry and Siemens, who had built a factory adjacent to the camp. Those unable to work were killed in the gas chambers of Uckermark which operated from December 1944 to April 14, 1945. The camp was liberated by the Soviet Army.

Role call - Process of forcing concentration camp prisoners to line up outdoors to be counted, often for several hours and under all weather conditions. Vladek refers to it by its French name, “appel.”

Round-up - Term used to refer to the Nazi collection of Jews and other victims for deportation, labour or murder.

SS - Abbreviation usually written with two lightning symbols for Schutzstaffel (Defense Protective Units). Originally organized as Hitler’s personal bodyguard, the SS was transformed into a giant organization by Heinrich Himmler. Although various SS units were assigned to the battlefield, the organization is best known for carrying out the destruction of European Jewry.

Selection/Selektion - Term for choosing whom to kill. The process of selecting victims for the gas chambers by separating them from those considered fit to work.

Schnell - German word for “quick” or “hurry.”

Shower - Language of deception for the gas chamber.

Shvartser - German/Yiddish word for black. Used in a derogatory manner by Vladek Spiegelman when referring to the black hitchhiker in MAUS II.

Sonderkommando - German, meaning “special commando.” Sonderkommando was a unit of SS soldiers, given a special duty or assignment such as to help the mobile killing squads. It is also the name given to Jewish prisoners assigned to work at the gas chambers and crematoria. At Auschwitz-Birkenau these Jewish Sonderkommando were replaced every few months and put to death themselves.

Sonderkommando Revolt - The revolt by prisoners at Birkenau during which a crematorium was blown up on October 7, 1944.

Sosnowiec - Located in Upper Silesia (south-west Poland), it is the town where Vladek and Anja Spiegelman lived before the war. Of a population of 130,000 in the late 1930s, over twenty percent were Jewish. Annexed early in the war, and located less than 60km away from Auschwitz-Birkenau, the large scale deportation of Sosnowiec’s Jews began in 1942. May 10 to 12 saw the deportation of 1500 Jews to Auschwitz, followed by another 2000 in June. By August 12, 1942 all the remaining Jews of Sosnowiec and its outlying areas were ordered to gather in the town’s central square allegedly to have their papers checked. Over a period of several days an additional 8,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz. In 1943 the remaining Jews of Sosnowiec were transferred to a ghetto near Kamińska.

Star of David - A six-pointed star formed of two equilateral triangles; a traditional symbol of Judaism. Used by the Nazis as an identification marker for Jews. By Nazi decree, Jews over the age of six had to wear a yellow Star of David badge or blue and white armband on their clothing.

Swastika - Symbol of the Nazi party. A cross with equal arms each of which is bent at a right angle. It appeared on Nazi uniforms and flags.

Terezin (Czech) / Theresienstadt (German) - Terezin was established in 1941 as a “model camp” to deflect international criticism of the Nazi’s treatment of Jews and to camouflage the murder of Jews, from the Western world. Situated in northwestern Czechoslovakia it served as a transit camp for Jews deported from Western European countries under Nazi occupation. As a ghetto and transit camp it was little more than a stopover for Jews on route to the death camps of Treblinka, Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Typhus - An infectious disease and common cause of death in the camps. Characterized by fever, exhaustion and nervous symptoms, typhus was most often spread by lice and fleas which thrive under unsanitary conditions.

World War II - The war fought from 1939-1945 between the Axis and the Allied powers. The war began when Germany invaded Poland in September 1939. Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945. On August 6, 1945, the U.S. dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan; nine days later, Japan surrendered. The war ended with the signing of a peace treaty on September 2, 1945.

Yid - Someone who speaks Yiddish, or a slang term for a Jew. Sometimes used in a derogatory manner.

Yiddish - A language spoken by many Jews in Europe, usually written in the Hebrew alphabet. It is a dialect of High German with a mixture of words of Hebrew, Romance, and Slavic origins.

Zykron - A pesticide and commercial name for prussic acid. As a deadly poisonous gas, it was used by the Nazis to kill large numbers of victims. Among the different gases used, Zyklon B was one of the most efficient and deadly.
HOLOCAUST TIMELINE

1929
Onset of the Great Depression. 70,000 people unemployed in Frankfurt alone. The National Socialist Party (Nazis) gain support.

1933
JANUARY 30
Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany by President von Hindenburg.

MARCH 22
Dachau, the first concentration camp, opens. Political opponents of the Nazis are detained.

APRIL 1
The first state-directed boycott of Jewish shops and businesses in Germany.

APRIL 7
The first Nazi laws excluding Jews from civil service, medical professions and the arts are enacted. Schools and universities are Aryanized. Jewish children have restricted access to public education.

JULY 14
A law is passed permitting the forced sterilization of Gypsies (Roma), the mentally and physically disabled, African-Germans and others considered “unfit.” East European Jewish immigrants stripped of German citizenship.

1934
AUGUST 2
Hitler proclaims himself Führer und Reichskanzler (Leader and Reich Chancellor). Armed Forces must now swear allegiance to him.

1935
SEPTEMBER 15
"Nuremberg Laws," anti-Jewish racial laws enacted; Jews lose the right to German citizenship and to marry Aryans. Sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews forbidden. Aryan women under age 45 cannot work in Jewish homes.

1936
OCTOBER 25
Mussolini and Hitler form Rome-Berlin Axis.

1938
MARCH 12 - 13
Austria is peacefully annexed (Anschluss) by Germany. All antisemitic decrees immediately applied in Austria.

JULY 6 - 15
Representatives from thirty-two countries meet at the Evian Conference in France. Most countries refuse to admit Jewish refugees.

SEPTEMBER 1
Germany invades Poland; Second World War begins.

OCTOBER 12
Germany begins deportation of Austrian and Czech Jews to Poland.

1939
MARCH 15
Germans invade Czechoslovakia.

JUNE
Cuba, the United States and Canada refuse to admit Jewish refugees aboard the S.S. St. Louis, which is forced to return to Europe.

AUGUST 23
Germany and the Soviet Union sign the Ribbentrop-Molotov non-aggression pact.

SEPTEMBER 1
Germany invades Poland; Second World War begins. The British government establishes tribunals to classify refugee “enemy aliens” in one of three categories based on their supposed threat to national security.

SEPTEMBER 10
Canada declares war on Germany.

OCTOBER 12
Germany begins deportation of Austrian and Czech Jews to Poland.

1940
APRIL – JUNE
Germany invades Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and France.

MAY 20
The first prisoners arrive at Auschwitz concentration camp, established at Oswiecim, Poland.

SEPTEMBER 27
Italy, Germany and Japan form an alliance called that Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis.
### 1941

**JUNE 22**  
Germany invades the Soviet Union, breaking the German-Soviet non-aggression pact. The Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing squads) begin mass murders of Jews, Gypsies (Roma), and Communist leaders.

**JULY 31**  
Hermann Göring appoints Reinhard Heydrich to implement the “Final Solution.”

**SEPTEMBER 23**  
Soviet prisoners of war and Polish prisoners are killed in Nazi test of gas chambers at Auschwitz.

**SEPTEMBER 28-29**  
Approximately 34,000 Jews are murdered by Einsatzgruppen at Babi Yar, near Kiev, Ukraine.

**OCTOBER**  
Establishment of Auschwitz – Birkenau for the mass murder of Jews, Gypsies (Roma), Poles, Soviets, and others.

**DECEMBER 7**  
Japan attacks Pearl Harbour.

**DECEMBER 8**  
Gassings begin at Chelmno death camp in German-occupied Poland.

**DECEMBER 11**  
United States declares war on Japan and Germany.

### 1942

**Nazi death camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, and Majdanek spearhead the mass murder of Jews through gassing.**

**JANUARY 20**  
Wannsee Conference in Berlin; Nazi leaders meet to discuss “the Final Solution,” the plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe.

**JUNE 1**  
Jews in France and Holland are required to wear identifying stars.

### 1943

**OCTOBER-NOVEMBER**  
Rescue of Danish Jewry to Sweden.

### 1944

**MARCH 19**  
Germany occupies Hungary; Eichmann put in charge of plans to annihilate Hungarian Jewry

**MAY 15-JULY 9**  
Over 430,000 Hungarian Jews are deported to Auschwitz, where most are gassed.

**JUNE 6**  
D-Day: Allied invasion at Normandy, France

**AUGUST 2**  
Nazis destroy the Gypsy (Roma) camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau; approximately 3,000 Roma are gassed.

**OCTOBER 7**  
Prisoners revolt at Auschwitz-Birkenau and blow up one crematorium.

### 1945

**JANUARY 17**  
Nazis evacuate Auschwitz and force prisoners on death marches toward Germany.

**JANUARY 27**  
Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz.

**APRIL**  
US troops liberate Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps.

**APRIL 15**  
British troops liberate Bergen Belsen concentration camp.

**APRIL 30**  
Hitler commits suicide in his Berlin bunker.

**MAY 5**  
US troops liberate Mauthausen concentration camp.

**MAY 8**  
Germany surrenders, the war ends in Europe.

**AUGUST 6 & 9**  
The U.S. bombs Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.

**SEPTEMBER 2**  
Japan surrenders, end of Second World War.

**NOVEMBER 1945 - OCTOBER 1946**  
International Military War Crimes Tribunal held in Nuremberg, Germany.
RESOURCES

REVIEWS AND ARTICLES ON MAUS


GRAPHIC NOVELS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Eisner, Will. The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. W.W. Norton, 2005. Eisner’s only graphic nonfiction is a history of the fabricated document that has fanned the flames of antisemitism for decades.


Jackson, Jack. Comanche Moon. Last Gasp, 1978. Concerned with Native American displacement, it is the true story of Cynthia Ann Parker, her son Quarah and the Comanches of Texas.


Katin, Miriam. We Are On Our Own. Drawn and Quarterly, 2006. Told from the perspective of a young child, the novel is a poignant memoir of the author’s escape from Budapest with her mother during World War II.

Kubert, Joe. Yossel, April 19, 1943: A Story of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. iBooks, 2003. Kubert imagines what his life would have been like had his parents not left Europe before the Holocaust. His namesake, Yossel, chronicles his time in the Warsaw Ghetto by illustrating the life and death around him.


AUSCHWITZ MEMOIRS


Brewster, Eva. *Progeny of Light / Vanished in Darkness*. Edmonton: NewWest Publishers Limited, 1994. Of the thousand Berlin Jews deported to Auschwitz–Birkenau on April 20, 1943 Eva Brewster and her mother were among the seven who survived. Brewster describes her youth, the events that led to her capture, her time in Auschwitz, and the rebuilding of her life. Grades 10-12


Geve, Thomas. *Guns and Barbed Wire: A Child Survives the Holocaust*. Chicago: Chicago Academy, 1987. Thomas Geve (a pseudonym) spent a total of 22 months in Auschwitz and Buchenwald. He arrived at the camps at the age of 13, one of the youngest inmates at the time. Seventeen full-colour reproductions of Thomas’s haunting drawings done immediately after liberation are included in the book. Grades 10-12


Levi, Primo. *If This is a Man / The Truce (Survival in Auschwitz / The Reawakening)*. London: Abacus, 1987. Two books, but they should be read as one. The first book tells of the descent into the hell of Auschwitz, and the second book tells of Levi’s return home and renewal. One of the most important works of this period. Grades 11-12

Leitner, Isabella. *Fragments of Isabella*. New York: Laurel, 1978. The Katz family was deported to Auschwitz in May, 1944. Many of Leitner’s family did not survive the first selection. Those who did survive heard their mother’s final words: livel! Grades 8-12


Matas, Carol. *Daniel’s Story*. Toronto: Scholastic Inc., 1993. Fictional narrative of young Daniel and his family who are uprooted from their home in Frankfurt, sent to the Lodz ghetto in Poland and finally, to Auschwitz. Daniel’s story is based on the real experiences of many of the more than one million children who died in the Holocaust. Grades 5-6

Mayer, Anita. *One Who Came Back*. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1981. Anita Mayer spent several months in hiding from the Nazis. Her story begins where Anne Frank’s left off, with the arrest of her family by the Germans. Anita tells of her time in a Dutch concentration camp and in Auschwitz, as well as her triumph in overcoming the past. Grades 9-12


Muller, Filip. *Auschwitz Inferno: Testimony of a Sonderkommando*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1979. This is the testimony of one of the very few who saw the death process up close and lived to tell about it. Grade 12

Nyiszli, Miklos. *Auschwitz: A Doctor’s Eyewitness Account*. Toronto: Little, Brown & Company, 1993. While virtually all fellow Hungarian Jews were sent to Auschwitz to die, Nyiszli was spared for a grimmer fate: to perform “scientific research” on fellow inmates under the supervision of Dr. Mengele, and serve as physician to the Sonderkommando. A disturbing account of the full horror of a Nazi death camp. Grade 12


Vrba, Rudolf and Alan Bestic. *Escape From Auschwitz (I Cannot Forgive)*. New York: Grove Press, 1986. Vrba spent two years in Auschwitz and miraculously escaped with another prisoner. Their account of what the Nazis were doing shocked those who listened. The Allies’ response to the report remains a point of contention among historians. Grades 10-12


RESOURCES
AUSCHWITZ NON-FICTION


Dwork, Deboráh and Robert Jan van Pelt. Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996. This unprecedented history reveals how an unremarkable Polish village was transformed into a killing field. Using architectural designs and planning documents and over 200 illustrations, this definitive book traces the successive stages of how Auschwitz became the focus of a Germanized Poland and the epicenter of the Final Solution. Grade 12


Gilbert, Martin. Auschwitz and the Allies. London: Mandarin, 1981. The story of how and when the Allies learned of the Nazi death machine, and of how they responded. One of the major questions still debated by historians today: what could the Allies have done to stop the genocide? Grade 12


Lagnado, Lucette & Sheila Dekel. Children of the Flames: Dr. Mengele and the Untold Story of the Twins of Auschwitz. Toronto: Penguin, 1991. Of the approximately 3,000 twins subjected to medical experimentation by Dr. Joseph Mengele, only 160 survived. This is the story of those twins. Grade 12

Piper, Franciszek & Teresa Swiebocka. Eds. Auschwitz: Nazi Death Camp. The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 1996. A history of the camp dealing with the distribution of camp victims by nationality, the plundering of the personal effects of the murdered Jews, the fate of children; medical experiments upon prisoners, and aspects of the camp resistance. Grade 12

Webber, Jonathan & Connie Wilsack. Eds. Auschwitz: A History in Photographs. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993. Through more than 280 documentary photographs from the archives of Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and reproductions of artistic works by former prisoners, this book records the visual history of Auschwitz. It includes photographs taken by the Nazis of the construction and expansion of the camp, of individual prisoners and scenes from daily life, and of the machinery of mass murder itself; clandestine photographs, taken by prisoners; aerial photographs, taken by the Allies; and photographs taken at liberation.

VIDEOS

Eva Brewster: Interview with a Survivor Interview with a survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau. 00:24 min. colour.

Choosing One’s Way: Resistance in Auschwitz-Birkenau This documentary relays the little-known story of resistance in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Accomplished through the smuggling of gun powder from a nearby munitions factory, the inmates succeeded in destroying Crematorium #4. The film features thirteen survivors. 00:30 min. colour/bw.

David E. Testimony Project Vancouver: Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society, 1993. This tape follows the experiences of a teenage Holocaust survivor from Hungary. David describes the ghettoization of his community, Auschwitz, a death march, forced labour, and liberation. 00:23 min. colour. Includes teaching guide.

Klara F. Testimony Project Vancouver: Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society, 1993. The first part of the tape documents Klara’s life in Hungary, her life before deportation, her experiences in Auschwitz-Birkenau, labour camps, and Bergen-Belsen. The second part is her answers to students’ questions. 00:34 min. colour. Includes teaching guide.

One Survivor Remembers Academy Award winning documentary based on the memoir of Gerda Weissmann Klein’s “All But My Life.” It records the story of a young woman’s three frightful years as a slave labourer of the Nazis and her miraculous liberation. It stands as the ultimate lesson in humanity, hope, and friendship.

Prisoner 88 A documentary on Sigmund Sobolewski, a Polish Catholic survivor of Auschwitz, who, as one of the first prisoners of Auschwitz and as Chief of the Second Fire Brigade, brings a unique perspective as he bears witness to the Holocaust. 00:49 min. colour.

WEBSITES

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum www.ushmm.org/education

Yad Vashem International School of Holocaust Studies www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education

Museum and Memorial Auschwitz-Birkenau en.auschwitz.org