LISTS: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

GOAL
Students analyze lists associated with various aspects of the Holocaust in order to gain an understanding of the bureaucracy integral to Nazi efforts to destroy European Jewry. Students will learn about the historical value of primary sources, the historical events that they reflect, and the context in which Schindler acted.

LISTS IN EVERYDAY LIFE
Brainstorm the types of lists that you and others use in:
» Daily life (to-do lists, phones lists etc)
» Family life (shopping lists, chore lists etc)
» Your community (school attendance lists, voting lists etc)

What is the purpose of these various lists?

HOLOCAUST LISTS
Students work in small groups with one document selected from Holocaust Lists: Student Reading (p. 9-13).

Record your answers to the following:
» When was the list made? If no date is marked, make an educated guess based on the background information provided.
» Who authored the list?
» What is listed?
» What was the purpose of the list?
» What did you learn about the Holocaust from the list?

Share your findings with the class and work together to order the lists chronologically.

Discuss:
» How do these lists tell the story of the Holocaust?
» What functions did lists serve during the Holocaust?
» In what way did lists de-humanize victims of the Holocaust?
» How did Schindler’s list function differently?

EXTENSION: DARFUR
Students work with list #8, a list of massacres in Darfur, Sudan, 2004.

» Discuss what the list tells us about the current situation in Darfur.
» Research and write about the United Nations’ and/or Canada’s policy on Darfur. How, in your opinion, should the international community respond to the crisis and why?
1. LIST OF ACTIONS AND BOYCOTTS AGAINST JEWS, 1933

About this Document
Announcement issued by the Nazi organization in Celle, Germany calling upon local citizens not to shop in the Jewish stores listed. The handbill also lists different aspects of the boycott against Jews. It forbids Nazi party members to represent Jews in court, to vouch for Jews in any way, to collect funds offered by Jews for party purposes, to meet with Jews in public or socialize with them in pubs, and to wear party insignia while working in Jewish-owned businesses.

Historical Background
Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party assumed power in Germany in January 30, 1933. The elimination of Jews from German life was central to Nazi ideology. The first organized action against German Jews took place on April 1, 1933 in the form of a boycott against Jewish businesses. Nazis posted signs that advised “Don’t buy from Jews” and “the Jews Are Our Misfortune.” In addition to the boycotts, Jews were arrested, beaten, harassed and humiliated.

2. LIST OF CONFISCATED JEWISH POSSESSIONS, 1942

About this Document
A list of possessions taken from the home of Hugo Elbert in Slovakia in March 1942. The list of confiscated items includes: blankets, knitting wool, gloves, draperies, shawl, material for sewing, warm winter underwear, winter coats, comforters, sweaters, and trousers.

Historical Background
Following the outbreak of WWII on September 1, 1939, the Nazis immediately placed restrictions on Jews. They were forced to wear a yellow badge and later the Star of David. Jews were excluded from certain professions and schools and were not allowed to own bank accounts. Jewish stores were forced to display a Star of David and to pay large sums of money to the Germans. Jewish homes and businesses were seized. Household items confiscated from Jews were distributed to ethnic Germans.
3. LIST OF WORKERS IN THE PINSK GHETTO

About this Document
Ghetto worker's list from Pinsk, Belarus, retrieved from the Judenrat building.

Historical Background
The Nazis revived the medieval term ghetto to describe the compulsory Jewish quarters. These were poor sections of a city where all Jews from the city and surrounding areas were forced to live. Enclosed by barbed wire or walls, the ghettos were sealed to prevent people from entering or leaving. Established mostly in occupied Eastern Europe, the ghettos were characterized by overcrowding, starvation and forced labour. The Nazis established “self-governing” Jewish councils (Judenrats) that were forced to obey Nazi demands. These councils oversaw the administration of slave labour within the ghettos, making lists and organizing workers. All ghettos were eventually liquidated, and the Jews were deported to concentration camps.

4. LIST OF THE NUMBER OF INTENDED JEWISH VICTIMS BY COUNTRY, 1942

About this Document
List of the number of intended Jewish victims in each country. This list was compiled by Nazis following the Wannsee Conference in 1942.

Historical Background
In January 1942, Nazi and German government leaders gathered for what became known as the Wannsee Conference to discuss the “final solution to the Jewish question in Europe”. This was the Nazis' code name for the deliberate, carefully planned murder of all European Jews through the use of forced labour and killing centres. Never before had a modern state committed itself to the murder of an entire people.
5. LIST OF DEPORTEES FROM PARIS TO AUSCHWITZ, 1943

About this Document
List compiled by the Nazis identifying the names, birthdates and birthplaces of Jews on Convoy 64, from Paris to Auschwitz, December 7, 1943. The list includes names of 575 males and 422 females, of whom 161 were children. At liberation in 1945, there were 50 survivors of this list, 2 of them women.

Historical Background
In 1942, the Nazis began to deport Jews from ghettos to slave labour and death camps. The Nazis’ goal was to resolve the “Jewish question in Europe” by deporting 3.5 to four million Jews to extermination camps in Eastern Europe.

Established in 1940 as a concentration camp in Poland, Auschwitz became a killing centre in 1942. The number of people who died in Auschwitz is estimated to be between 1.1 and 1.5 million.
6. SCHINDLER’S LIST

About this Document
List used by Oskar Schindler to transfer Jewish workers from Plaszów concentration camp to safety in his factory in Brünnlitz, Czechoslovakia.

Historical Background
In October 1944, Schindler gained permission to relocate his factory, no longer an enamelware factory but by then a bogus munitions plant, to Brünnlitz in Czechoslovakia. Through negotiations and bribes from his war profits, he persuaded Germany military and SS officers to let him take “essential” Jewish workers with him. He supervised the preparation of a list of more than 1,000 Jews to be transferred from Plaszów to Brünnlitz.

Schindler’s famed “list” has become legendary. There were, in fact, three different lists compiled between October 1944 and May 1945. The lists were prepared not by Schindler, but rather by his Jewish associates.

Although the significance of being a Schindlerjuden, a Jew protected by Schindler, might not have been fully apparent at the time, inmates recognized that Schindler was actively protecting his workers. Prisoners tried with pleas and bribes to get their names added to the official typed orders.

During the Holocaust, the difference between life and death could be determined by whether one’s name appeared on a list. Schindler’s list offered a rare chance of survival during the Holocaust.
7. List of Child Survivors, 1945

About this List
Handwritten chart in English listing children at Landsberg displaced persons’ camp by nationality and age, Germany 1945.

Historical Background
One-and-a-half million children were among the nearly six million victims of the Holocaust. Ninety percent of Polish Jewry perished. Upon the end of World War II in Europe in May 1945, those few Jews who survived were confronted with the enormity of their loss. In the period immediately following liberation, survivors began their search for family. Some survivors returned to their homes and found them destroyed or occupied by strangers. Many found members of their family and community dead or scattered in displaced persons’ camps across Europe. A few attempted to rebuild Jewish life in the 200 Polish communities, while others emigrated to Palestine or North America.

8. List of Massacres in Darfur, Sudan, 2004

About this Document
List of massacres, compiled by refugees from Darfur, Sudan, in the Touloum refugee camp in Chad, May 2004. The refugees were desperate to have their stories told – and alert the world to their plight.

Historical Background
Violence and destruction are raging in the Darfur region of western Sudan. Since February 2003, government-sponsored militias known as the Janjaweed have conducted a calculated campaign of slaughter, rape, starvation and displacement in Darfur. It is estimated that 400,000 people have died due to violence, starvation and disease. More than 2.5 million people have been displaced from their homes and over 200,000 have fled across the border to Chad. Many now live in camps lacking adequate food, shelter, sanitation, and health care. The United States Congress and President George W. Bush recognized the situation in Darfur as “genocide.” Darfur, “near Hell on Earth,” has been declared the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today.

Source: Excerpt from the Save Darfur Coalition website (www.savedarfur.org)