

Understanding the Holocaust through Literature Using *Echoes and Reflections*

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English/Language Arts and Social Studies/History teachers can use *Echoes and Reflections* to help their students understand literature of the Holocaust. Use the resources and testimony in *Echoes and Reflections* when teaching [*We Are Witnesses: Five Diaries of Teenagers Who Died in the Holocaust*](#) (Jacos Boas, Scholastic, 1995).

- Refer to materials and testimony in Lesson 4: The Ghettos when teaching [*We Are Witnesses: Five Diaries of Teenagers Who Died in the Holocaust*](#) (Jacos Boas, Scholastic, 1995).
- Write the word “ghetto” on the board before reading the diaries. Ask students to write their images and thoughts about the word in a journal.
- Show [Ellis Lewin’s](#) and [Joseph Morton’s](#) testimonies from Lesson 4. Have students compare their original images and thoughts about the word “ghetto” to what they learned from these survivors. Distribute [primary source materials](#) in *Echoes and Reflections* to enhance students’ understanding of the [ghettos](#).
- After an introduction to the teenagers in *We Are Witnesses*, have students divide into groups by teenage author. Students read about their chosen teenager in groups.
 - Using the following prompts, allow time for students to write in their journals: **I NOTICE... I WONDER... POWERFUL WORDS AND IMAGES...**
 - Ask students to compare notes and discuss how they should present their teenager to the class.
- Initiate a [jigsaw exercise](#), asking students to move into new groups with at least one representative from each diary. Students will discuss their teenagers and perceptions of life in the ghettos.
- Share testimony from [Leo Berkenwald](#), [Milton Belfer](#), and [Eva Safferman](#) to provide students with additional perspectives of ghetto life.

At the end of class, ask students to consider what they learned about the ghettos from the diary entries and visual history testimonies shown in class using the following questions to guide the discussion:

What did the young people you learned about do to survive in the ghettos?

How did the people you read about or listened to maintain hope?