

Teaching about Resistance during the Holocaust Using *Echoes and Reflections*

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This activity was developed to use when preparing teachers to use *Echoes and Reflections* with their students. When teaching about the Holocaust, it is important to stress that Jews resisted the Nazis' aims in many different ways, only one of which was armed resistance. Teaching about the Holocaust through a lens of resistance endows the victims with dignity and agency and demonstrates the power of the human spirit.

- Show students the painting [Camp Synagogue](#) by Felix Nussbaum from Lesson 9: Perpetrators, Collaborators, and Bystanders. Do not show the title or give any other information about the painting.
 - Pose the questions, “*What do you see? How do you describe the mood/feeling of this painting?*” Students may respond with words like depressing, stealth, darkness, death, etc.
- Set these answers aside and play the testimony of [Roman Kent](#) from Lesson 6: Jewish Resistance in which he talks about the various forms of resistance Jews demonstrated.
- Talk about resistance as cultural, moral, and spiritual. Talk about resistance as a concept familiar to many adolescents today. Discuss ways in which adolescents resist the dominant culture in schools and society.
- After this discussion, revisit [Camp Synagogue](#) and pose the question, “*In light of our discussion of resistance, what further observations can you make about this painting?*” Students may notice that there is light in the sky in the background, birds flying away, the whiteness of the robes in contrast to the drab environment, the fact that people are practicing their religion despite the grim context.
- Look at the poem *Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway Car* by Dan Pagis in Lesson 5: The “Final Solution”.
 - Instruct students to read it through the lens of resistance and ask, “*In what ways can this poem be read as an act of resistance?*”
 - Insights may include that writing itself is an act of resistance, that the poem is a message to those who will travel in the next carload or to those who may enter the car in the distant future. They may note that the speaker identifies herself and her children by names despite the Nazis' attempt to dehumanize the people in the car.