

Tips for Using Visual History

Contextualize the History

- Some background knowledge of the Holocaust is necessary for students to fully comprehend the significance and context of visual history testimony. It is important for students to understand the events in the testimony that occur before and after those covered in particular testimony clips they are viewing.
- Develop and use a common vocabulary (ghetto, antisemitism, concentration camp, etc.) before viewing and discussing testimony.
- Some general resources are available on the USC Shoah Foundation Institute website at www.usc.edu/vhi or in the bibliography listed in the Additional Resources section.

Think beyond “Holocaust Education”

- Visual history can enhance and augment not only the study of history, but also literature, current events, and other often-taught topics such as character education, diversity awareness/anti-bias education, and conflict mediation.
- Visual history testimony clips can be used as educational tools to provide opportunities for bellwork, journal writing, school-wide campaigns, research projects and other activities that support curriculum and instruction.

Encourage Discussion and Critical Thinking

- Teachers should be sensitive to the fact that no two students will see and hear a clip of testimony exactly the same way. Therefore it is a good idea to create opportunities for students to share their reactions or thoughts with the class and use this as a springboard for further discussion.
- Be responsive to the concerns and emotions of your students when studying this difficult and complex subject matter; allow sufficient time for students to share their feelings in either debriefing sessions or through the use of journal assignments.
- Discussion and reflection activities should provide students with the opportunity to connect, analyze, and apply the content of each testimony clip within the context of contemporary events and issues.

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Tips about Video Technology as a Classroom Resource

- A testimony clip may need to be viewed more than once in order to understand fully what the interviewee is trying to communicate.
- If you choose to view the video by playing it directly from the USC Shoah Foundation Institute *Creating Character* site, a broadband connection is recommended.
- If you choose to download the testimony clips, file sizes do not exceed 12.5 MB. All the video files for *Creating Character* will fit on a single CD-R or DVD-R and are playable in either a commercial DVD player or on a computer equipped with a DVD drive.
- It may be helpful to pause the video at certain points in the testimony for clarity, emphasis and discussion.
- There are many resources available offering general guidelines and trouble-shooting points to facilitate the use of video in the classroom. One of our favorites is a PBS/National Teacher Training Institute (NTTI) website, www.thirteen.org/edonline/ntti/resources/video1.html.