

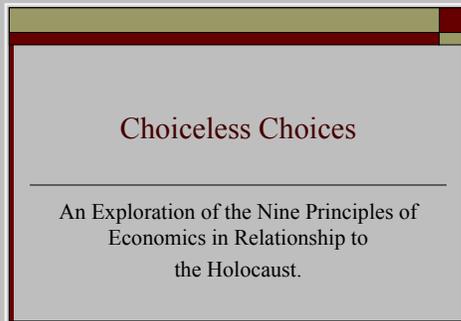
Choiceless Choices: An Exploration of the Nine Principles of Economics in Relationship to the Holocaust

POWERPOINT SCRIPT

SLIDES

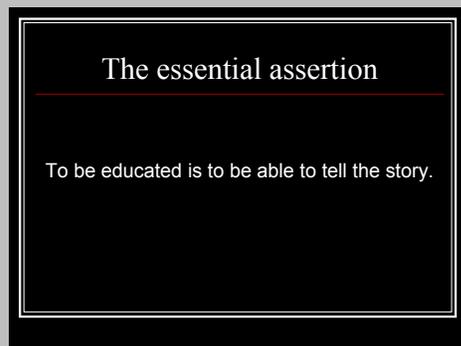
NOTES FOR TEACHER

Slide #1



Title slide

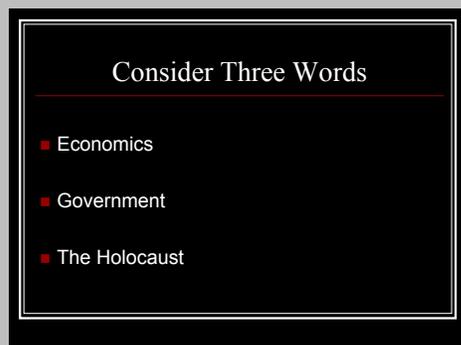
Slide #2



The Essential Assertion – To be educated is to be able to tell the story.

Educators may find value in using this assertion as a “home base,” for the year – a place to begin and end each lesson – so that students come to recognize that ownership of their education includes an articulation of their understandings, and that assimilating information in story form is a useful tool for future study.

Slide #3



Notes for slides #3-10

Introduction of terms: the etymology of the terms ‘Economics’, ‘Government,’ and ‘Holocaust’ are presented in these slides.

Educators can focus the lesson here by asking students about their prior understandings of the terms – teasing out “unspoken laws” of the students’ own homes in relationship to Economics – asking students about a ship captain as a metaphor for government, and exploring students’ prior knowledge of the Holocaust and how the definition “destruction by fire” applies.

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Slide #4

Economics

Slide #5

Economics

Economics comes from the Greek *oikonomikós*

Eco or *oíko* means "home"

Nómos means "manager" or "law"

(Excerpted from Dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/economic?r=1>)

Slide #6

We can understand economics as:

The law of the household

NOTES FOR TEACHER

See notes for slides #3-10 on page 1

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Slide #7

Government

“Govern” comes from the Latin *gubernare*

Gubernare means “to steer,” as in “to steer a ship.”

(Excerpted from Dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/govern>)

Slide #8

We can understand government as:

The steering of the ship of state.

Slide #9

The Holocaust

- From Greek *holókauston*
- A great or complete devastation or destruction, especially by fire.

(Excerpted from Dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Holocaust?test>)

NOTES FOR TEACHER

See notes for slides #3-10 on page 1

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Slide #10

We can understand the “Holocaust” as:

The state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims—six million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

(Excerpted from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust <http://www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/guidelines/>)

NOTES FOR TEACHER

See notes for slides #3-10 on page 1

Slide #11

Testimony

- In the following slide, Holocaust survivor Renée Firestone tells us about her family and “the law of the household,” that she grew up in.

The instructor can prepare students for the excerpt of Renée Firestone’s testimony by discussing with students how all homes have spoken and unspoken rules of behavior as well as considering rules in their own household in relationship to money and choices.

Slide #12

Eco - Nomos



The first use of survivor testimony will be presented.

*Included in this lesson are transcripts of the embedded testimony excerpts in a prepared handout. As a suggestion, teacher may want to hand out the transcripts after students have watched the excerpts. In any case, ask students to refrain from reading them until **after** they have viewed the video excerpt at least once.*

In the excerpt from Holocaust survivor Renée Firestone’s testimony that is embedded in this slide, Renée discusses her home life and experiences before the war. This excerpt was selected to give insight into what Renée’s home life was like before World War II. It is provided so that

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SLIDES

Slide #12 (cont'd)

NOTES FOR TEACHER

students can reflect on Renée's experience versus their own experiences. It has also been selected as the first excerpt because of its introductory quality. Below is the transcription of the excerpt:

Eco-Nomos – The Law Of The Household (1:00)

“And, um, I have fantastic memories about my grandfather. He was a real character. He always at summertime wore these starched white suits like he just came out of a box. And when he saw the grandchildren he reached in his pockets and started to crackle the paper that was in there and we knew there was candy, and we used to ask him for the candy. My father was a business man and he had a textile business and a tailor shop. He was a very fine craftsman. My mother, when she was young, when she, before she got married, she was already a business woman. She and two other sisters went to Vienna, and they had a millinery shop. And then when my mother got married, then she became a housewife.”

Slide #13

Renee's household

- Renée describes her father's business, her mother's business, and what life was like at home before the war.

Summary of the excerpt from Renée's testimony.

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Slide #14

Your household

How is Renée's household similar to your own? How is it different? What were Renée's family relationships like? In what ways are they similar to your own?

NOTES FOR TEACHER

Writing Prompt:

How is Renée's household similar to your own? How is it different? What were Renée's family relationships like? In what ways are they similar to your own?

Students can write a response here or simply discuss similarities and differences observed before moving on.

Slide #15

Let's now consider

- *The nine principles of economics.*
- *We should understand going in that we are looking for relationships between the nine principles and the events of the Holocaust...*

This slide is essentially a disclaimer. The instructor should be clear that survivor testimony is utilized throughout this lesson to explore, not insist on, connections between the economic principles and events of the Holocaust. Here the emphasis should be on "What might fit?" It is suggested that here the instructor could ask, "Why should we be cautious about applying economic principles to victims of the Holocaust?" as a way to guide students to recognize that the extreme realities of the Holocaust exist outside "normal" economic models or circumstances.

Slide #16

To that end...

- This lesson employs excerpts from Holocaust video testimony as a lens to think about the economic principles...

Completion of disclaimer.

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NOTES FOR TEACHER

Slide #17

Driving questions:

- "What are some of the factors that can influence choice?"
- "What are some of the factors that cause people to have no choice at all?"

Two writing prompts are provided for consideration with a focus on influences and the making of choices. These questions ARE NOT designed to be answered now, but to be used as a way to think about the information ahead. Later, these questions will be presented again and students will then provide reflective responses.

Slide #18

The Economic Decision-Making Process

- *In an ordered, safe and functioning society, nine principles are used to understand how economic choices are made.*
- *The first five principles apply to individuals.*
- *Principles 6, 7, 8 and 9, apply to individuals and have a relationship with government.*

The instructor can explain that the nine principles can be understood as a series in which one principle follows another, each effectively building on the other. The principles move from the individual toward the formation of government policies. These principles can be understood as "best case" constructions, meaning that they apply and tend to operate most effectively in economies that value competition, information, incentives, and property rights. Educators may want to consider with students how and when the principles apply best (peaceful free market capitalist structures versus war-time dictatorships.)

Slide #19

The Nine Principles of Economics

- People choose
- Every choice has a cost
- Benefit / cost analysis is useful
- Incentives matter
- Exchange benefits the traders

(California Council on Economic Education, Nine Economic Principles. <http://www.ccee.org/about/understand-economic-principles/>)

The instructor can next provide "translations" of the principles. By asking for student understanding and soliciting student interpretations of the principles, students should be able to grasp their meanings. The examples below may be helpful:

People Choose: *When we are free to make choices, we make choices that we think will bring us the greatest benefit.*

Every Choice Has a Cost: *Whenever we choose something, we give something else up.*

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SLIDES

Slide #19 (cont'd)

NOTES FOR TEACHER

Benefit/Cost Analysis is Useful: *We must evaluate our potential decisions before we make them in order to make wise choices. (In business, we hear Cost/ Benefit – here we use Benefit/Cost – as it seems to resonate with students when considering “what is good” first.)*

Incentives Matter: *Why do we do what we do?*

Exchange Benefits the Traders: *If I am free to trade, the idea is that I can get what I want and so can the person I am trading with. Both sides should emerge satisfied.*

Slide #20

Nine Principles (continued)

- Markets work with competition, information, incentives and property rights
- Skills and knowledge influence income
- Monetary and fiscal policies affect people's choices
- Government policies have benefits and costs

(California Council on Economic Education, Nine Economic Principles, http://www.ccee.org/about.cce/home_economic_principles.)

The instructor can provide “translations,” of the final four principles by asking for student understanding again. The final four are a bit more sophisticated and may require instruction on the relationship between individuals and governments and again should be understood as “best case” constructions. The examples below may be helpful:

Markets work with competition, information, incentives, and property rights: *Here, markets, or the buying and selling of goods and services, are most effective when competition; information; incentives; and property rights are present. The value of looking at war-time economies in Eastern and Central Europe during the Holocaust can illuminate how markets fail when competition; information; incentives; and property rights are absent.*

Skills and knowledge influence income: *In a functioning economy, the development of human capital pays off. We can ask students how that plays out differently in war-time situations as we advance in the lesson.*

Monetary and fiscal policies affect people's choices: *Students should be able to articulate some basic concepts about allocation of resources by the government. Asking them to consider what they know about funding education and infrastructure helps to generate conversation.*

Government policies have benefits and costs: *Discussions here revolve around current events that will later be juxtaposed with Nazi policies and Allied decisions that Renée discusses and will provide sharp contrasts.*

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Slide #21

The Nine Principles

- They are designed to help us understand the economic decision-making process of governments and of individuals when markets, laws and policies are operating effectively and human rights are being protected... but this is not always the case...

NOTES FOR TEACHER

This is a lead-in for the next excerpt from Renée's testimony. The idea here is to position students to see how governments can alter circumstances and begin to consider the connection between human rights and government policies.

Slide #22

During the Holocaust there were anti-Jewish laws...

Interviewer

- "Were there any other specific anti-Jewish laws than that Jews had to wear a yellow star?"

Renée Firestone

- "Well, later, yes, later we had to wear yellow stars, and we had a curfew; my father's business was taken from him..."

- *Let's listen to more of Renée's story...*

The lead-in for the story Renée relates in the next slide is important in order to contextualize the Nazi government involvement in the stripping of Jewish rights, which made it easier for opportunists to capitalize on victims' misfortunes.

Slide #23

Consider Property Rights...



Embedded excerpt from Holocaust survivor Renée Firestone's testimony tells the story of her father's business and the consequences of Jews' rights beginning to diminish.

Consider Property Rights (1:32)

"I would like to tell you a little incident about my father's business, because, um, at one point there was a non-Jewish family, a shoemaker, who had about nine children, came to my father and asked him to take his thirteen-year-old boy as an apprentice to his business, and my father took pity on him, and of course took him in – not only took him in as an apprentice, but he brought

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Slide #23 (cont'd)

him into our house, and he grew up with us as a brother. And at the end when we were taken to the brick factory to the ghetto, my father wrote a letter to him, to send us some supplies, and the answer was that he was not going to risk his life for us. Now this is a young man who took over my father's business when they said that a Jew can no longer own a business. Then my father said, 'This is a gentile son of mine, I can trust him,' and he gave him the business and the money. He owned everything we owned at that point and he wouldn't help us. And so, these are some of the stories about our neighbors and friends and how they supported us when we were in trouble."

NOTES FOR TEACHER

Slide #24

Decisions?

- Renée describes two decisions: her father's decision to help the shoemaker's son, and the adoptive son's decision to later deny help to Renée's family.

Testimony excerpt summarized with questions for students to consider.

Slide #25

Writing Prompt:

Analyze these choices: What were the incentives involved? Please articulate your understanding of influences on the decisions made. Explain your thinking.

Here the instructor can pose the questions and have students answer in writing or answer verbally in group discussions.

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Slide #26

We know that choices have costs
and that incentives matter

In the following excerpt Renée talks
about having to weigh her options...
let's listen to more of her story...

NOTES FOR TEACHER

A discussion here around benefit/cost analysis, and monetary and non-monetary incentives would be valuable. One that underscores the value of a free market and a functioning and protected market structure would be helpful to then juxtapose with Renée's experience as next reported.

Slide #27

Consider Benefits and Costs



Embedded excerpt from Holocaust survivor Renée Firestone's testimony essentially epitomizes the idea of "Choiceless Choices" that had to be made by individuals imprisoned by the Nazis. Transcription below:

Consider Benefits and Costs (1:46)

"And then in the morning, they brought these two big barrels of so-called food; they called it ersatz; it was some kind of a liquid that looked like coffee or tea, tasted more like dishwater. But it was hot. And we had stood out there freezing half of the night. And then I realize that not everybody is going to get some of that. That the first prisoner was handed a bowl and she went to the barrel, and she got some of this liquid. Then she came back and was going to share it with the five of us. Well, in the beginning, we shared. But later on as time went on and we were starving, whoever was up front had some of the liquid; by the time the bowl reached the fourth and the fifth prisoner, there was nothing. And so from then on, it became a fight every time we did the line-up: who is going to stand up front and who is going to be in the back? And then later we found out that without any warning, Dr. Mengele arrived after line-up and was selecting for the gas chambers. So every morning and every afternoon, you had to figure out where you want to stand. You want to fight your way to the front of the line-up because you are so hungry that you may not make it to the afternoon line-up? Or you will manage to survive till the afternoon, then you really want to be in the back and hide from Mengele."

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Slide #28

Benefits and costs

- In Renée's description of *ersatz*, she describes the benefits and the costs of making a decision. Were there any "choices," that were "good ones," in the situation Renée describes?"

NOTES FOR TEACHER

Writing Prompt:

In Renée's description of "ersatz" she describes the benefits and costs of making decisions. Were there any "choices" that were "good ones" in the situation that Renée describes?

Here the instructor can have students write a response or have a class discussion. This is an opportunity for the instructor to focus on "Choiceless Choices" and to prompt discussion around differences in free societies and those that are not free.

Slide #29

Government

Again...

We begin to segue into the marriage between economics and government. Here the instructor can ask students to consider the two disciplines as "husband and wife" or "two parts of a whole."

Slide #30

We know that...

- Government policies have benefits and costs.
- Let's listen to more of Renée's story as we...

Here we are reminding students that the ninth principle of economics states that, "Government policies have benefits and costs," in order to prepare students for the next excerpt of testimony which explores this theme.

The instructor now has an opportunity to discuss allocation of resources and might want to use current events to explain how government policies are formed prior to playing Renée's clip which describes Allied government policy during World War II.

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Slide #31

Consider Government Policies



NOTES FOR TEACHER

Embedded testimony excerpt from Holocaust survivor Renée Firestone regarding the bombing at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Transcription below:

Consider Government Policies (1:19)

“Let me just tell you that in September before my sister died yet, there were Americans flying overhead. We saw the little silver dots in the, glittering in the sunshine and everybody yelled, “The Americans, the Americans!” and the sirens were going and the Germans were going to the bunkers and we stayed outdoors, and we were hoping that they are going to just bomb the whole place to pieces, including us, we didn’t care. But they didn’t. They flew over Auschwitz-Birkenau and then we heard bombing. There was about eight kilometers from us a factory, I.G. Farben-Auschwitz, and I presume that’s what they were bombing. (INT: It was an artificial rubber factory.) Yeah. (INT: There’s a docent at the Wiesenthal Center who was one of the pilots...) Yeah. (INT: ...and they were under express orders not to bomb Auschwitz.) I know. I know. And they, even if they didn’t bomb Auschwitz, if they would have just bombed the railroad before it reached Auschwitz, thousands and thousands of Jews and others could have been saved.”

Slide #32

Government policies

- Renée explains that “thousands and thousands of Jews and others could have been saved,” if the Allies would have bombed the railways that led to Auschwitz.

In this excerpt of Renée’s testimony she explains that thousands would have been saved if the Allies had bombed the railways into Auschwitz.

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Slide #33

Government policies

Certainly, some type of benefit/cost analysis must have been employed by the Allies in deciding not to bomb Auschwitz. What do you think some of the economic factors were that might have been considered in this decision?

NOTES FOR TEACHER

Government Policies Writing Prompt:

Certainly, some type of benefit/cost analysis must have been employed by the Allies in deciding not to bomb Auschwitz. What do you think some of the economic factors were that might have been considered in this decision?

This prompt could be used as a writing exercise or to generate a class discussion. Alternatively, as a follow-up the instructor could choose to have students research why the Allies didn't bomb Auschwitz. The structure of the research could be based on exploring the potential economic factors that might have been part of that decision.

For information on the bombing at Auschwitz, see the article, "[United States Policy and Its Impact on European Jews](#)" from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's *Holocaust Encyclopedia*.

Slide #34

Driving questions:

- "What are some of the factors that can influence choice?"
- "What are some of the factors that cause people to have no choice at all?"

We begin the conclusion of the lesson by coming full circle and presenting again our original driving questions.

Slide #35

Where we began...

Choiceless Choices

An Exploration of the Nine Principles of Economics in Relationship to the Holocaust.

A final reflection and discussion around economics and government being about people, leadership, and choices is recommended here.

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Slide #36

In conclusion...

- We want to be very cautious about making direct connections between the types of choices we have today, and the choices (or lack of choices) people had during the Holocaust.
- What we can do, though, is consider the influences on the choices we make...

NOTES FOR TEACHER

In conclusion – the final disclaimer. It is important that the teacher help students to recognize that events of the Holocaust do not parallel our own and that we are not assigning the economic principles to people's experiences in the past, but are suggesting instead that perhaps some natural threads of connection exist between government, economics, and people over time.

Slide #37

Economics and government

Are about people, leadership
and choices

Suggested Writing Prompt:

If economics and government are about people, leadership, and choices – and to be educated is to be able to tell the story – what story can you tell about “Choiceless Choices,” the nine principles of economics, and government policies?

Economics and government are about people, leadership, and choices.

The instructor has an opportunity to assign a final writing assignment here. The recommendation would be to make this a take-home assignment.

To conclude the lesson, the instructor asks the original driving questions to generate a final discussion:

“What are some of the factors that can influence a choice?” and “What are some of the factors that cause people to have no choice at all?”

The goal is to generate thoughtful responses that show a connection between economics and government and how they operate together.

By juxtaposing an exploration of the principles designed to underscore a free market and a free people with the extreme opposite circumstances the aim is to build an appreciation for government, government policy, and measured choices.