



Here There Are Blueberries

Lesson Plan

UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
MUSEUM

WILLIAM LEVINE FAMILY INSTITUTE
FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

LESSON: *Here There Are Blueberries*

GRADE LEVEL: Adaptable for grades 7–12

SUBJECT: Multidisciplinary

TIME REQUIRED: Prior to attending the play: Approximately 60 minutes (15 minutes per section). Discussion after attending the play: Dependent on your goals and student engagement.

RATIONALE

This lesson plan provides background information and discussion questions for students attending a performance of *Here There Are Blueberries*, a play by Moisés Kaufman and Amanda Gronich and developed by the Tectonic Theater Project. The play features the work of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

This lesson plan is written for students who have no prior knowledge of the Holocaust. Feel free to modify or skip portions if you are confident your students already have this information.

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is the Holocaust?
- What was Auschwitz?
- How do we know what we know about history?
- What is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum?

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

At the end of this lesson, students understand:

- The definition of the Holocaust
- That Auschwitz was a Nazi German camp that included a killing center
- That artifacts and documents are important pieces of evidence and help us understand the past
- That the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, collects, preserves, and makes available historical evidence about the Holocaust

TEACHER PREPARATION

- Review the [Frequently Asked Questions about the Holocaust for Educators](#) page, which educators can use to find accurate answers to questions from students.
- Print [student worksheets](#) for each student or group.

LEARNER VARIABILITY MODIFICATIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson is intentionally flexible—allowing for individual teacher modifications to achieve the educational outcomes. Technology and teaching strategies are suggested in the instructional sequence; please use other options if they support the learning needs of your students. Consider utilizing graphic organizers, note-taking strategies, reading choices, and online engagement tools.

PRIOR TO THE PLAY, PART ONE: WHAT WAS THE HOLOCAUST?

(15 minutes, reading and discussion)

1. Distribute [student worksheets](#). Read the definition of the Holocaust to the class slowly, asking students to circle words that are unfamiliar and underline phrases or sentences about which they have questions.

ASK THE STUDENTS

- When did the Holocaust take place? (*between 1933–1945*)
 - Where did the Holocaust take place? (*Europe and North Africa*)
 - Who were the perpetrators of the Holocaust? (*Germany and its collaborators; Nazis*)
 - Who were the primary victims of the Holocaust? (*European Jews*)
 - Who else did the Nazis and their collaborators target? (*Roma; people with disabilities; Slavic people; Black people; Communists; Socialists; Jehovah's Witnesses; gay men; people whom the Nazis considered "asocials" or "professional criminals"*)
 - What was the result of the Holocaust? (*six million Jewish people were murdered*)
2. Ask for volunteers to share any questions they may have about vocabulary or about the definition. (Educators may consider using a tool like [mentimeter.com](#) to collect questions anonymously.) Help students unpack the definition, using the [Frequently Asked Questions for Educators](#) resource and/or the [Holocaust Encyclopedia](#) to find answers to any questions they may have.

PRIOR TO THE PLAY, PART TWO: WHAT WAS AUSCHWITZ?

(15 minutes, reading, short video, and discussion)

1. Based on your students, educators can choose whether to have students read about Auschwitz or watch a short video. If reading is best, have students read—on their own, in small groups, or as a class—the three paragraphs about Auschwitz on page two of the [student worksheet](#). If a short, two-minute video is best, watch [this clip](#) as a class.
2. As a class, watch [this video clip](#) of Holocaust survivor Leo Schneiderman describing his arrival at Auschwitz in 1944. Note that Leo uses the word “kapo,” which refers to camp prisoners who were given positions of authority over other prisoners.
3. Collect any questions students may have about Auschwitz. Answer any questions that relate to information comprehension. To find answers, educators can use the [Holocaust Encyclopedia](#), including the article on [Auschwitz](#), which features [these maps](#). Explain that the class will revisit the rest of the questions after students have seen *Here There Are Blueberries*.

PRIOR TO THE PLAY, PART THREE: HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HISTORY?

(15–20 minutes, discussion, internet research)

1. Ask students to suggest a basic historical fact, something they learned in elementary school. (For example: “George Washington was the first president of the United States.”)
2. Once your class has decided on a fact they would like to use as an example, ask how they would go about proving that the fact is true. Solicit and record suggestions until you’ve recorded at least one primary source (contemporary newspaper, letter, diary, photograph, film footage, document, etc.).
3. Ask: Where could you find primary sources? (Answers may include libraries, museums.)
4. If desired, look for a primary source to prove the fact your class has chosen. Depending on the fact, you can look at the website of a specific museum, use a search engine searching the key words of your fact and “primary source.” (You could also start with the [Library of Congress](#) or the “Educator Resources” section of the [National Archives](#).) If you have time, discuss the differences between how websites present information, particularly the differences between sites that show primary sources and sites like Wikipedia, which present crowd-sourced information.

ASK THE STUDENTS

- Why are primary sources important? (*They provide information; they are original material; they were created at the time something happened.*)
- How could a new primary source change how we think about a moment in history? Can it be evidence that something happened? (*It could include new information or a new perspective that people didn't know before; it can be evidence of an event no one knew about or include new details.*)
- How do documents and artifacts help us know what we know about history? (*They help us know what happened and what people said/did; they are the sources for books and exhibits; they help us understand what was going on at the time.*)

PRIOR TO THE PLAY, PART FOUR: WHAT IS THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM?

(10–15 minutes, discussion)

1. As a class, consider the role of a museum. Compile a list of words students use to describe what a museum does, either on the board or in a shared digital workspace.

ASK THE STUDENTS

- What do museums collect? (*artifacts; documents; historical film; oral histories; photographs*)
 - What do museums do with their collections? Refer to the set of words you compiled and discuss how museums utilize their collections. (*They make displays; they make educational resources; they let historians and filmmakers see them; they preserve them for the future.*)
 - What would you expect to find in the collections of a Holocaust museum? (*collections about life in concentration camps; materials owned by people who were killed; records of Jewish communities*)
2. Ask if any students have ever been to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. If so, have them share what they remember about the visit.
 3. If you (the educator) has been to the Museum, share what you remember about the visit.
 4. Share the Museum's [homepage](#). What did you identify in your discussion about museums that you see reflected on the website?

5. Explain: You are going to see a play that is a true story. It takes place at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, at a time when the Museum’s historians and archivists (people who work with primary sources) received a new collection about the Auschwitz camp.

NOTE: If possible, educators may wish to have students take a [virtual tour](#) of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which takes approximately 30–45 minutes. This can be substituted for steps 2–4.

AFTER THE PLAY: CLASS DISCUSSION

Your students will likely have many questions or comments about what they saw and learned during the play. You should allow ample time for this conversation. Here are some considerations:

- You can use some of the materials in the “Additional Resources” section below if your students want to look at images from the Höcker album or learn more about the Museum’s research into the album.
- If you would like to center your discussion around themes of the play, look at the “[Widening the Lens: Here There Are Blueberries Discussion Guide](#),” which includes quotes from the play paired with discussion questions on the role of choice; the other Auschwitz album; the descendants of perpetrators; the *Helferinnen*; postwar trials; Holocaust artifacts; and where hatred can lead. The discussion guide also includes interviews with the real Judy, Sara, and Rebecca—who inspired the characters in the play—and with the playwrights Moisés Kaufman and Amanda Gronich.
- Make sure you return to your students’ questions about Auschwitz from part two of this lesson plan: Were they answered by the play?
- If your students have questions that the Museum’s resources cannot answer, you can write to the Museum at learnmore@ushmm.org.

OPTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Students create a reflection on *Here There Are Blueberries* (for example, a collage, a journal entry, or a short video). Their reflection can be about some of the themes of the play (for example, memory, the role of choice, or responsibility), or it can be about what the play made them think or feel.

OPTIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Class participation
- Group/individual work
- Inclusion of historical information
- Quality of brief reflection (does student include all facets of assignment, is reflection thoughtful, does student show understanding and analysis)

OPTIONAL EXTENSION: “TO THE MEMORY OF MY PARENTS: THE MICHAEL KRAUS COLLECTION”

(20 minutes, short film, discussion)

NOTE: Can be done either prior to or after seeing the play.

1. Explain that you will be watching a short film (just under nine minutes) about diaries written by a teenager who survived the Holocaust.
2. Split students into three groups. (They do not need to physically move into these groups.) Instruct each group to pay attention and take notes on a different aspect of the film.

Group 1: What is this artifact, and what information does it include?

Group 2: Who created this artifact, and what do we know about him?

Group 3: According to the film, what makes this artifact important?

3. Watch [To the Memory of My Parents: The Michael Kraus Collection](#). After watching, ask for volunteers from each group to share answers to their assigned question.

ASK THE STUDENTS

- What have you learned about the Holocaust, about Auschwitz, about primary sources, or about the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum that is included in the film?

NOTE: Your students can view all of Michael Kraus's diaries [here](#). The narrator of this film is Rebecca Erbelding, the archivist who is featured in *Here There Are Blueberries*.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Here There Are Blueberries Discussion Guide](#)
- [Museum resources](#) for the Höcker album and *Here There Are Blueberries*
- [Auschwitz through the Lens of the SS: the Album](#) (Holocaust Encyclopedia article about the Höcker album)
- [View Karl Höcker's album](#)
- Additional Lesson Plans: [Höcker/Auschwitz Albums Photo Analysis](#)

For questions or more information, please contact learnmore@ushmm.org.

COVER PHOTO: Historical image inside the camera lens shows SS-Obersturmführer Karl Höcker eating blueberries with the *SS Helferinnen* (young SS women who worked as communications specialists) on July 22, 1944. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*



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