

BEING AWARE OF YOUR AUDIENCE

Considerations

In planning your presentation, think about who your audience is and about what they know or don't know coming into the talk.

- **Age:** Staying age-appropriate is critical (see below).
- **Maturity:** Especially for school groups, talk to the teacher about how much they think their students can handle. Maturity can vary a lot between students of the same age.
- **Previous knowledge:**
 - Some audiences, especially non-Jewish audiences, have so little knowledge of the Holocaust that you can't jump into the really tough stuff too quickly. Treat these audiences as you would 9th or 10th graders (see below).
 - You also need to consider how much explanation your audience needs. Non-Jewish audiences may need explanations of Jewish terms as well as Holocaust terms.
- **Potential previous trauma:** Some groups, like groups of 2Gs, may have previous trauma regarding Holocaust stories. The best thing to do here is to issue a warning about the type of content you are presenting.
- **Their expectations:** What type of group is it and what sort of content will they be expecting?
- **Sensitivity:** What do you expect this audience to be able to handle?

During your presentation, **stay aware of your audience**. If you see them reacting badly, consider cutting back on some of the more difficult parts.

Staying Age-Appropriate

The most important thing to remember about staying age-appropriate is that **you need to tell TRUE stories but you do NOT need to tell the WHOLE story to every age group.**

Grade/Age	Age-appropriate material
All Ages	Life before the war; Life after the war
Grades K-2 (ages 5-7)	Moving to the ghettos; Hiding; Intact families (<i>one parent may be lost</i>)
Grades 3-5 (ages 8-11)	Living in the ghetto; Living in hiding; Kindertransport; Broken families
Grades 6-8 (ages 12-14)	The difficulty of ghetto life; Deportation; Labor Camps; Partisans
Grades 9-10 (ages 14-15)	Gas chambers; Random shootings; The choices of partisans
Grades 11-12 (ages 16-18)	Killing pits Even at this age, avoid graphic imagery
College (ages 18-22)	Sexual abuse or Rape; Torture; Choiceless choices Always issue a content warning for stories involving rape
Adult (ages 22+)	Medical experiments (e.g. Mengele); Graphic imagery

Modifying Your Story

Choosing our words carefully can allow us to be aware of our audience without whitewashing the history.

- **Modifying scenes:** Consider changing the way you describe things, especially in scenes where you describe something in graphic detail. Cutting the detail while still talking about the horror can make your scene age-appropriate.
- **Choose appropriate scenes:** Stories can often be made age-appropriate by choosing which scenes to tell and which to leave out.
- **Reconsider your MIT:** Your MIT (Most Important Thing) may be different depending on your audience, which will change which scenes you include.
- **For elementary school audiences:** For younger audiences, we recommend you avoid first person (unless you are telling in the voice of an animal or an object) to avoid confusion. You might also consider whether your framework or scene order could be confusing.