

Teach the Shoah: Giving Voice to Their Stories

Facilitator and Storyteller

Tanya Wisoker

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1:40- 3:04 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EtSFgO-9hg&t=101s>

About Teach the Shoah

We challenge ignorance and hate by telling **testimony-based stories** to **build personal connections** to the stories and lessons of the Holocaust among **people of all generations and all backgrounds**.

Our Offerings:

- Storyteller Training
- Storyteller Bureau
- Storytelling Programs and Workshops
- Holocaust Commemorations

www.TeachTheShoah.org



Opening Guided Meditation



The Plan for this Session

- Listen to a story of the Holocaust
- Examine the testimony and research behind the story
- Explore the methodology ourselves
- Discuss how this can be used in our education settings

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

Giving & Receiving Appreciations

are essential to
the storytelling
process.

3 Types of Appreciations

1. Content
2. Delivery
3. How the story makes you feel

The concept of "Appreciations" is based on the work of Coach Doug Lipman



Content Reminder:

These are Holocaust stories.

A Story of the Holocaust

Our Story: **Franceska Manheimer – Rosenberg**

also known as Franceska Mann

Based on the testimony of Filip Müller

Our Process:

Moving from
Testimony to
Story

❖ TESTIMONY

❖ IMAGE

❖ MOMENT

❖ SCENE

❖ STORY

Documents, testimony, artifacts

How do we choose what to include in a story?





Storyteller Process:

**Leading others to develop and tell a
testimony based story**

Taking Care of Yourself

- **Be prepared for an emotional impact**
 - It's ok to decide there are pieces of your subject's story that you do not want to include
- **Expect this to sometimes feel exhausting**
 - Give yourself space
- **Respect your emotional limitations**
 - Don't try to put yourself in their shoes
- **Find your Most Important Thing (MIT)**
 - Why do you want to tell this story?
 - What do you want your audience to know?

Tips for Taking Care of Each Other

- **Share the space**
 - Extroverted? Great! Please share and then give others time to speak.
 - Introverted? Do your best to add your voice to the conversation.
- **Respect others' emotions and reactions**
 - Holocaust stories and histories can be difficult to tell and to hear.
 - Emotional responses can take us by surprise – let's make space for others' feelings, without corrections or shaming. They are valid.
- **Appreciate each other**
 - Correcting and directing each other is not the goal.
 - Embrace the art of verbally appreciating what others have to offer.

Getting started:

1. Determine the objective of the lesson or project
 - a. What is YOUR objective?
 - b. What is the STUDENT's objective?
 2. Provide a choice of testimonies, including artifacts or photos with attached testimony.
- 

Finding testimonies:

USC Shoah Foundation: <https://sfi.usc.edu/collections/holocaust>

Testimonies, tips, training for educators: <https://iewitness.usc.edu/home>

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

<https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies>

Yad Vashem archive: <https://www.yadvashem.org/archive>

Local in your community:

<https://holocaustcommission.jewishva.org/what-we-carry>



3. Scaffold with lessons or available appropriate research materials, keeping your objective in mind.

Examples of lexicons (glossary, vocabulary):

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/glossary>

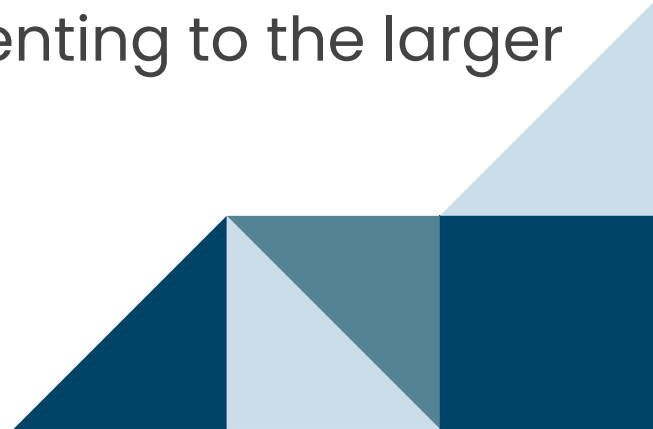
<https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/resource-center/lexicon.html>



4. Help students find an image, something they can draw or describe to get started.
5. Encourage them to move forward or backwards in time from the image. What is happening? Is anyone speaking? Is there movement?



7. Students will write an outline or bullet points, rather than a complete essay or story. Each change in time or location is a separate scene in the story.
8. Students will tell the story to a small group and receive appreciations, revamping before presenting to the larger group.



Before a final presentation:

Important question for students:

What is the most important thing (MIT) that you want us to understand or feel from your story?

How are you showing that?

This allows them to go back and refine the story.

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of several overlapping triangles and squares in shades of blue and teal.

Testimony and Image

- An image is still, like a photo
 - There is color and texture, light and shadow
 - There may be a person, or many people
 - Position and posture, facial expressions, clothing, furniture



Creating a Story

Our Story: **Sophie Weinberger Salzer**

- Sophie (Zofia) Weinberger was born in Lodz, Poland in 1915.
- She and her husband, Morris Salzer, had a baby girl, Jadwiga, or Juniya, in 1939
- Five months later, Nazi Germany invaded Poland.

Summing up: The Storytelling Journey

- Steps to building an **historical** story
 1. Find a **Primary Source** (e.g. information from the survivor)
 2. **Perceive** the information (*read, watch, listen*)
 3. **Build** a story
- 
- A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of several overlapping triangles and squares in shades of blue and teal, creating a modern, abstract geometric design.



Closing Guided Meditation



Storyteller Coffeehouse

Featuring David Halpern

Bring your coffee or tea and join us at this month's coffeehouse. David Halpern will be telling the story of his mother, **Rosette (Rozia) Faust Halpern**.

Come listen to the story and talk with David about his story-building process.

Storyteller Coffeehouse

Featuring David Halpern

Thursday, July 30, 8 PM ET

Register for this free event: TheirStories.org/SC30July26

STORYTELLER COFFEEHOUSE

TeachTheShoah.org

FEATURING

David Halpern

telling the story of

Rosette (Rozia)

Faust Halpern

Thursday, July 30, 2026

8 – 9 PM EST

TheirStories.org/SC30July26



STORYTELLER COFFEEHOUSE

TeachTheShoah.org

FEATURING

Linda Duke telling
the story of
Edgar Rose

Wednesday, August 12, 2026

8 - 9 PM EST

TheirStories.org/SC12Aug26



Illustration of the Sinti and Roma Monument Germany

SHARING THEIR STORIES

VOICES OF SINTI AND ROMA

A Storytelling infused history talk

Sunday, August 2, 2026

8 PM Eastern

TheirStories.org/STS2Aug26



Special FREE & on Zoom event for for IHMD

MOVING FROM TESTIMONY TO STORY

Learn to tell a Holocaust story



Mondays for 6 weeks

Oct 5– Nov 24

Register at
TheirStories.org/MFTTSOct26

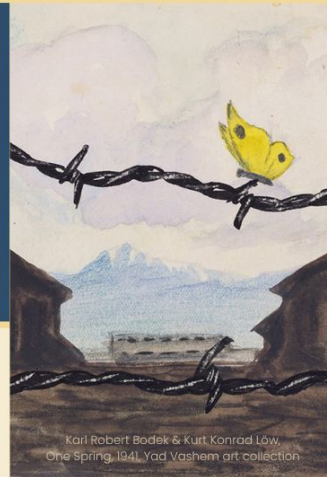
**Places are
limited.
REGISTER
NOW!**

Let our professional storytellers and Holocaust scholars help you craft a compelling story from personal, family, or historical sources.

- * Evaluate testimonies *
- * Research documentation *
- * Learn storytelling techniques *
- * Build and organize scenes *

Finish with a 10 minute Holocaust story ready to tell.

**Learn to turn a
testimony into a story**



Karl Robert Bodek & Kurt Konrad Löw,
One Spring, 1941, Yad Vashem art collection

The Teach the Shoah Team

Leadership:

- Deborah Fripp, *Executive Director*
- Violet Neff-Helms, *VP and Storytelling Director*
- Cathy Polakoff, *Co-Storytelling Director*
- Lynne Feldman, *Director of Holocaust Scholarship*

Personnel:

- Cantor Karen Webber, *Poet / Liturgical Artist*
- Jenna Price, *Storyteller Bureau Manager*
- Tanya Wisoker, *Project Manager- Coffee House*
- Emily Hand, *Historian*

Many Wonderful Storytellers!

**More than
150 storytellers
& counting**

Board of Directors:

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Teach the Shoah



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