

Opening dialogue

Pedagogical concept:

Why this exercise? By doing this, we promote the following **tools**:

- **Democracy** - by letting students contribute and vote for the “better” option;
- **Critical thinking** - listening, agreeing or disagreeing and justifying their position, giving examples, relating to others’ opinions;
- **Respect** - taking turns to talk, agreeing or disagreeing based on listening, giving others the space to talk;
- **Humility** - there are no universal truths and nobody has the truth in their hands, conclusions are reached within the group, one’s opinion isn’t more important than the other person’s opinion, this is learned through the construction of dialogue and conclusion with all the contributions.

One of the most important things to work on is **critical thinking** and talking about it.

Teachers might want to encourage students to research, look for other opinions, see the other side of things, don’t buy the first thing that appears, look for other options and always hear the other side.

Duration: 2 hours

Necessary materials:

Watch short videos (testimonies), read stories from the Shoa, images (the elements we can use are endless, there are many resources)*, relatable (where the students might feel connected or related), not too graphic or violent, maybe also stories about non-Jews that went through the Holocaust.

Suggested resources:

- Nazi propaganda and Memes
- Testimonies
- Holocaust Videos for Classroom Use:

[https://www.ushmm.org/teach/holocaust-videos-for-classroom-use?utm_source=we%20are%20teachers%20guide&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=we are teachers 2023](https://www.ushmm.org/teach/holocaust-videos-for-classroom-use?utm_source=we%20are%20teachers%20guide&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=we%20are%20teachers%202023)

- Hanna Arendt texts or phrases
- Photographies before the war

Level: Advanced

Description of the activity/methods:

1. Watch short **videos** (testimonies), read **stories** from the Shoa, look at **images** (feel free to use the wide selection of pictures available, or see the above suggested resources). Choose such materials which the students might feel **connected** or **related** to. The sources should **not** be too graphic or violent. You could also include stories about non-Jews that went through the holocaust.
2. Open the floor for **conversation**: We do this by asking questions, such as *What did the video or story make you think or feel?*; *What questions do you have after watching the videos / reading the stories / seeing the images?* *Which question would you ask the others if you wanted to start a discussion about this topic?*
3. The next step is to **vote** for the best question: all the questions are written down and read out loud, now each person in the group needs to vote which question they think is the most interesting to start a conversation. The winning question is the one they will be discussing.
4. As soon as they already have the winning question, the conversation can start by the teacher asking: *Who voted for this question? Who wrote this question? and Why do you think it is an interesting question?* Once the students start telling why they think it is interesting, the teacher must make sure they **justify** their answers and **give examples** for what they say. All their answers should always be well argued and justified. As soon as one person starts, the rest may comment on it one by one, **raising their hands** to talk, **taking turns** and **listening** to each other. The teacher might get involved by asking questions like *Do you agree? What do you think about that?* The teacher must always return the conversation to the main subject and try to help students focus on values such as *democracy, freedom, respect, equity, human rights, tolerance, respect for life, acceptance* and *love* throughout the conversation.
5. Towards the end the teacher starts wrapping up by asking what **conclusions** the students think they came to. Students should first come up with as many conclusions as they can think of and write everything down (this allows many students to get involved at the same time). Finally, make a conclusion that reflects the group discussion and shows that a **conclusion** is made by **various opinions** and **many individual truths**. The students write down their own conclusion, while the teacher makes sure that there was a closure in the conversation by reviewing everything that was covered during the discussion.