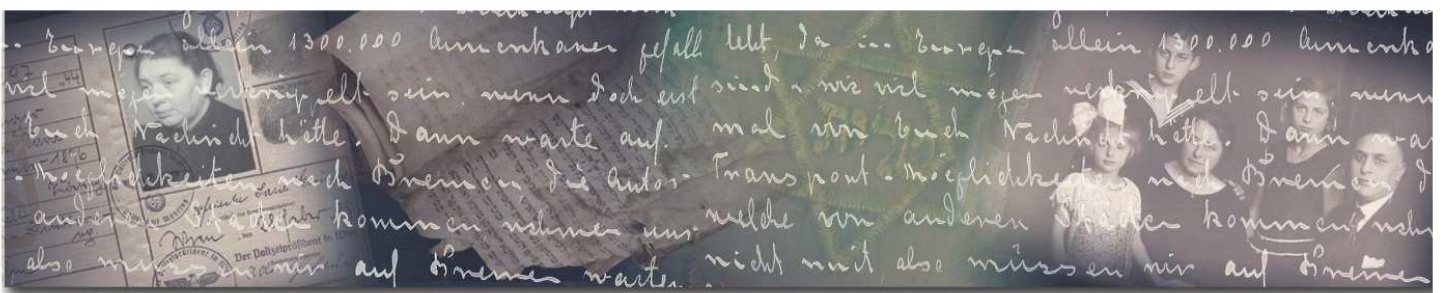




Visiting the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center:

Suggested Learning Activities for Students

Grades 7-12



The following activities have been developed for you to use before a trip to the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center. The more prepared students are for what they will see, read, and hear, the more they may gain from their visit to the Museum. These activities will draw out prior knowledge, provide avenues for a more in-depth study and review, and incorporate reading and writing strategies.

Facilitating pre-field trip activities sets the tone for your students and prepares them intellectually for their visit. It ensures that each student will come to the Museum with similar and shared experiences with their peers, and it will help contextualize the subject matter of the different exhibitions.

K-W-L (What I Know – What I Learned – What I Want to Learn)

Pre-Visit

Part One (What I Know)

1. Have students draw lines on a piece of paper to divide it into thirds (or fold a piece of paper into thirds so you have 3 long columns).
2. Students write K, W, L across the top, one letter per column.
3. On the chalkboard, whiteboard, overhead projector or flip chart, do the same thing.
4. Keeping in mind the age of your students, and the exhibition(s) they will visit, have students choose, or you assign, a topic from the list below, for students to write everything they KNOW under the K column.

Examples:

- The Holocaust
 - Genocide
 - Prejudice
 - Nazis
 - Ghetto
 - Concentration Camp
 - Behaviors: bystanders, perpetrators, victims, helpers, resisters
5. Ask students to pair up (their partner can have the same topic or not) and share with their partners what they have listed. Many students will include misconceptions about what they think they know that can be addressed later.
 6. Come back together as a group. Go through each topic one by one and ask students who chose that topic to share what they KNOW. If you have big poster paper, each topic can be written as a heading on each paper ahead of time and then taped on the board and filled in as each topic is discussed.

Part Two (What I Want to Know)

1. For two minutes, have students write under the "W" what they want to know about the topics you/they chose in Part One.
2. Suggest that as they tour the Museum, they should be thinking about the questions they have written down. Part Three (What I Learned) can be completed after your return.

Post-Visit

Throughout your tour of the Museum, docents will provide the opportunity for students to reflect and de-brief. However, students should have the chance to further consider and discuss what they saw and experienced on their visit back in the classroom.

A 30-40 minute discussion with students is recommended soon after their visit to help them recall what they have learned and to reflect upon the Holocaust and its implications. Use the following activities as the basis for the discussion.

Part Three (What I Learned)

1. Allow time for students to look over the already completed two parts of the K-W-L.
2. Have students take three minutes to write under the proper heading everything they learned about the questions they had listed under the Want to Know heading, or to clear up any misconceptions
3. Ask students to compare what they had in the Know column.
4. Have students share what they learned and correct what they had in the Know column on their sheets.

3E Activities: Explore, Examine, Extend

EXPLORE: Brainstorm ahead of time a list of questions that are rolling in your head. Ask your students to do a similar 'brain dump.' Have students identify what they found interesting or what they want to know more about.

EXAMINE: Investigate what was in the exhibition(s); probe the difficult questions and refer to the list you prepared ahead of time.

EXTEND: Begin independent research projects on topics that interested them, the less broad the better.

Start with Wonder

Orient students to the physical space of the Museum and why museums are built. This can be a pre- or post-visit activity.

Consider how museums and memorials help to remember the past, but also build awareness and teach us about the present.

Consider why it would be important to have a Holocaust museum.

Focus on the Big Idea

Prepare a list of what you hope your students will be able to explain and/or define after having visited the Museum. Create follow-up activities that help guide students to ponder questions surrounding this particular focus.

EXAMPLE:

- What combination of factors contributed to the Holocaust?
- What did you learn about people's actions or reactions during the Holocaust?
- Why is it important to learn about the Holocaust?
- What significance does the Holocaust have to current world events?

Chronology of Events

Ask students to list the documents, photographs, objects and film footage that they recall most vividly from their visit. Then have them put those items in chronological order according to the historical events.

Role-Playing as Reflection

1. Write a tour book entry as if you were a journalist who just visited the Museum. By evaluating information and evidence to support or reject your opinions, prepare an outline for the article with different points that you would want to discuss in your article to describe your visit to the Museum.
2. Create a Museum brochure or catalog. Highlight different areas of the Museum and exhibitions that you found interesting and intriguing. Identify and list discussion points you would address and ask about if you were a docent.

The "Big Question"

1. As you (the teacher) reflect on your field trip, identify what the "Big Question" or focus for this trip was for you as an educator. For some, it is how students can be more actively involved in standing up for themselves and others; for others, it's how human rights atrocities continue to be perpetrated in the 21st century. Some educators want to provide their students with different perspectives on history.
2. Next, ask your students to determine their own "Big Question." Have each student answer the questions below in writing or picture notes.
 - What did you see that was interesting?
 - Why was it interesting?
 - What challenges were presented to you?
 - How did/can you handle the challenges?
3. Have students share their work with a partner and determine between themselves the "Big Question."
4. Allow time for each pair to share their "Big Question" with the rest of the class. As they report their questions, write each one on the front board for everyone to see.
5. Once each pair has shared, brainstorm possible solutions and answers to their questions. Providing potential solutions is very important in order to conclude this activity.

Expand and Assess Learning with Class Projects

The synthesis activities below incorporate language arts and content learning while reinforcing, expanding, and assessing learning progress. Student presentations are a great way to assess what students learned while on a field trip to the Museum. This is also a way to assess what they have learned during your unit of study.

Student Specialists

Students choose a topic to focus on during your unit on the Holocaust. As you facilitate and guide their study on the unit, each student focuses on an independent research project. Students compile information from what they learned on the trip and that relates to their topic. Through a Pair-Share, Group-Share, a “brain dump” or more formally as a PowerPoint, web page, etc., students share their newfound knowledge with the class.

Student-Prepared Museum Guide

After a student trip to the Museum, students prepare a guide for family and friends who they would like to bring on their second trip to the Museum. Include “must sees” within the Museum – the most interesting, powerful, etc.

Learning Journals

Students keep a journal about their study of the Holocaust. As the teacher, prepare questions for students to answer and topics to discuss that are important to them. Students can use illustrations, poems, and other modalities to help guide and assess their understanding of the topics presented in the exhibition(s) toured.

Many students have found that keeping journals when studying about the Holocaust or visiting Holocaust-related museums encourages their own self-understanding.

Topic “Quilt”

Create a class quilt that highlights some of the major themes of the Holocaust that were discussed during your field trip. It could be a “Culture Quilt” – a “map” of the world, where each student is assigned a different country to collect information on to be inserted on the quilt.