



ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
& EDUCATION CENTER

Resistance Is... Poem Activity Answer Key

Note to educators: This activity can be done as a reader's theater, as a guided class discussion, or individually by students working asynchronously.

Introduction: Throughout the Holocaust, Jews resisted the Nazis in many ways. Some resistance was physical, including fighting back. But Jews also resisted by maintaining their religion, culture, and traditions; by educating children after it was made illegal to do so; by smuggling food, documents, weapons, and information; and even by simply continuing to survive for another day.

Before they read *Resistance Is...*, ask students to think about how Jews resisted the Nazis and make a list of actions that they think Jews took to resist.

After reading the poem, have students answer these questions:

1. Compare your list with the actions in the poem. Was there any overlap in the lists?
 - a. Answers will vary.
2. Which type of resistance are the actions in the poem? Which type of resistance are the actions you listed? What are some reasons this might be the case?
 - a. Most of the actions in the poem are examples of cultural and spiritual resistance. The last three lines, describing taking up arms in the streets, rebelling in the death camps, and rising up in the ghettos, are examples of physical resistance. Students may be more familiar with one type of resistance rather than another. In general, individuals at or near the beginning of their study of the Holocaust are likely to be more familiar with physical (or armed) resistance rather than spiritual or cultural resistance. These quieter forms of resistance tend to be less well known but are equally important to learn about and understand.
3. Thinking about what you know about Resistance during the Holocaust, which type of resistance, spiritual/cultural or physical, do you think is more effective? Why?
 - a. Different types of resistance are effective in different situations. Individuals had to make decisions based on their circumstances, with limited information, and weigh the risks to themselves and others when deciding when and how to resist. Each type of resistance had an effect and contributed to the survival of individuals and of the Jewish people as a whole.

4. How might multiple forms of resistance work together? Would this strategy be effective? Why or why not?
 - a. Different types of resistance were frequently used together, and these combinations contributed to overall survival. For example, in the Warsaw Ghetto, clandestine youth clubs provided teens and young adults with a semblance of normal life and contributed to a sense of hope for the future. As time went on, conditions in the ghetto worsened, and information about the death camps reached the ghetto inhabitants, members of these youth groups morphed into the fighting groups that led the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. In this case, cultural resistance helped lay the foundation for physical resistance.

Have students write their own poem in the style of *Resistance Is...*, using a related theme word. Theme words may include: resistance, perseverance, determination, hope, inspiration, or another word of the teacher or student's choosing.