Using Testimony in the Classroom

Guidance for Teachers

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Arts & Humanities Research Council

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Much of the theoretical thinking underpinning these guidelines has been published as: Sara Jones, 'Testimony through Culture: Towards a Theoretical Framework', *Rethinking History*, 23.3 (2019): 257-278.

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Who is this pack for?

The guidance and resources in this pack will be useful to educators at all levels and across the curriculum who teach about the Holocaust. Our small-scale survey of teachers in primary and secondary education (2019) indicated that almost all of them used testimony in some format in their teaching (predominantly video, images and literary forms). Challenges associated with using testimony included: understanding the nature of an individual perspective on a broader history; students becoming distressed while reading or viewing testimony or – conversely – not taking the material seriously; relatability and generating empathy; time available and the length of testimonies; and how to use testimonies in a way that is not simply about gaining "knowledge".[1]

The "**Research Briefings**" will be of broad interest in terms of assisting teachers in their reflective practice in this regard and the thinking underpinning the use of first-person sources. The "**Lesson Sketches**" are adaptable for different ages and subjects; however, they are designed with students in KS3, KS4 and KS5 in English, Drama, Religious Studies, and History in mind. The guidance here has been designed specifically for the use of testimony in Holocaust education; however, the ideas and concepts are broadly applicable to the use of testimony in relation to other traumatic and violent events.

What is in this pack?

There are already a vast number of testimonies available for teachers to use and a number of lesson plans that incorporate them (some of which are noted in our **Resources List**). This pack does not seek to replicate that existing material. It is not a guide on how to teach particular topics related to the Holocaust using testimony; it offers support in using testimony produced in different media as one source among many.

This pack is divided into three sections: **"Research Briefing I", "Research Briefing II"** and **"Lesson Sketches"**. **"Research Briefing I"** summarises key points from the research literature around testimony with a focus on what it means for educational practice. It is designed to assist teachers in thinking about why and how they use testimony and how these complex sources can be used to develop skills of critical and analytical thinking without decentring the importance of testimony in the history and memory of the Holocaust. It responds in this way to the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education report that highlights the value of survivor testimony, but recommends that: "CPD programmes must help teachers develop their pedagogical expertise in using various forms of testimony in sensitive, respectful and historically appropriate ways".[2]

"Research Briefing II" is also designed to assist teachers in their reflective practice. It takes as its focus two pressing problems

[1] The survey was conducted by Nataliya Nikolova in the context of a College of Arts and Law Undergraduate Research Scholarship. Forty-eight teachers (at various levels) responded to a series of questions relating to their use of testimony in Holocaust education across the curriculum.

[2] See Stuart Foster et al., *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust: Evidence from English Secondary Schools* (Centre for Holocaust Education, 2016), p.212.

facing those working in Holocaust education now and in the future. Firstly, the question of working with survivor testimony when there are ever fewer survivors able to tell their story face-to-face (meaning we are more reliant on mediated forms). Secondly, the related concern with creating a connection between this past and the world in which the students of today live. How can we help students to understand something that happened in what seems to them to be the distant past?

The **"Lesson Sketches"** are quite deliberately not full-blown lesson plans which can be taken "off the peg" for teachers to use. Instead they showcase how the ideas in the "**Research Briefings**" can be mapped onto different kinds of testimony, what teachers need to think about when using these different forms, and offer an outline of what that might look like in practice. In this way, the sketches can be adapted for different subjects, levels and prior knowledge. The "**Resources List**" provides links to further recommended resources and lesson plans should teachers be looking for something more structured.

We recognise that teachers in different roles and levels of responsibility may have different capacities in terms of time available to engage with the research briefings. While the extended material presented here will be of interest to teachers delivering Holocaust education across these different roles, they will be of particular use for subject leads or those working on special projects related to Holocaust education or commemoration. Our 2-page **Briefing Note**, provided at the end of this resource pack and available to download separately, offers a short-read summary of the key ideas presented here.

Research Briefing I: Using Testimony in the Classroom

What is testimony?

This question is not as straightforward as it might appear and you will get lots of different answers depending on whom you ask. We take a wide-ranging view of what testimony is. It is an account of an individual's personal experiences by that individual. But the form that account takes could be anything from theatre, documentary film, autobiographical writing and literature to video recordings, social media, or digital technology such as that used in the National Holocaust Centre and Museum's *Forever* project. *Forever* uses life-size images of a survivor, which, using digital technology, can "answer" questions in real time from hundreds of pre-recorded replies. Testimony might also be used by others to create new forms, such as when works of art, film, and literature are based on testimony, or many interwoven testimonies. We can understand all of these things as a form of testimony; yet, also *in the classroom, each form of testimony should be approached on its own terms and with different ethical and methodological issues in mind.*

Why use testimony?

Whilst the use of testimony in the classroom can create challenges, there are also opportunities to engage students in the kind of enquiry-driven and source-critical learning that we would advocate.

First-person accounts can be incredibly powerful tools in the teaching of traumatic and violent histories. It can be difficult for students to process and begin to understand the events of the Holocaust if they are confronted by facts and figures alone (although facts and figures are of primary importance in demonstrating the context and scale of what happened). The use of first-person testimony allows them to connect what they are learning to an individual life and to begin to understand the human impact of the catastrophe. Engagement with perpetrator testimony can promote better understanding of the conditions in which "ordinary" people come to commit horrific acts of violence.

Testimony can also be used in the values education that is attached to Holocaust education, as witnesses often draw connections to the present day and highlight the ongoing legacy of the Holocaust. Testimony is a very complex source, but for that very reason lends itself to promoting critical thought, creative thinking and expertise in source analysis. The use of testimony needs to be embedded in the curriculum. It is not an add-on nor is it something that students come to after having acquired a "factual", chronological framework.

However, in order for testimony to be productive in this way, teachers need to help students ask the right kinds of questions of the sources. *Teachers need to structure learning activities to encourage critical thinking, perspective-taking and deep understanding, whilst supporting the students as they grapple with complex and emotive issues.*

What are the challenges?

The challenges in using testimony centre on both ethics and methods, with the two aspects being closely interwoven around some core issues: *medium/genre,*

authenticity, empathy, perpetrators, secondary witnesses.

Medium/Genre

The very broad definition of testimony given above means that we are dealing with lots of different media: texts, documentary films, theatre, video recordings of live testimony. Within that several different genres: autobiography, diaries, documentary. Students need to appreciate how testimony is incorporated into and used in literature, drama and other forms of artistic expression. This opens a number of key opportunities for cross- and inter-curriculum links.

The medium that is used to produce the testimony has an effect on the way in which the story is told. Visual media tend to appear more "transparent" and therefore can make it easier for viewers to identify with the person giving testimony (which can be an opportunity and a challenge). Autobiographies are crafted to tell the story of the life as the author wants to present it. Diaries may seem more immediate, but are usually edited before publication. Documentary can seem more "truthful"; however, the images and accounts are arranged in a particular way to create a specific impression. Video recordings are perhaps the closest to face-to-face testimony; however, we mustn't forget the presence of the interviewer who asks particular questions.[3]

Students should be encouraged to engage with the issues around medium, not in order to detract from the importance of the message imparted by survivor testimony, but to help them recognise the nature of testimony and what it can (and cannot) teach us. Asking about the impact of the medium can help develop skills of source criticism, critical thinking and enquiry-based learning. In **"Lesson Sketches",** we offer examples below of how this might be done in an accessible way.

Authenticity

The issue of authenticity tends to be central in any discussion of testimony. But when people describe a testimony as "authentic", what do they mean? Sometimes authentic can refer to provenance. A testimony is authentic because it is produced (or assumed to be produced) by an individual who had the experience that they recount – that is, this is genuinely their story. In this understanding, all testimony can be considered "authentic" even if the person giving the testimony has made mistakes or misremembers. Authentic in this sense does not necessarily mean "true", rather it is closer to the meaning of the term "genuine".

Why does all this matter? Firstly, it points us towards an important feature of "authentic" testimony – it does not have to be (and usually is not) 100% accurate. Instead, it is important that there was an intention to tell the truth about a personal experience. Secondly, it tells us that we, the audience, have a role to play in deciding whether or not a testimony is "authentic". If we agree that a text is "authentic" or "genuine", then we are saying something about the person giving

[3] See Sara Jones, *The Media of Testimony: Remembering the East German Stasi in the Berlin Republic* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014) for more on the impact of the medium on first-person accounts.

testimony – namely, we are recognising them as trustworthy.

- What does this understanding of authenticity mean for how we view perpetrators' testimony?
- If we do not expect 100% accuracy, what kinds of questions are appropriate to be asked of testimony? What can we learn from testimony?

Empathy

We may feel that empathy is a desirable response to hearing testimony. The research literature also suggests that emotion and feeling the pain of others is important in promoting an engaged response to mass violence and atrocity.[4] However, the concept of empathy is rightly viewed with concern when it comes to teaching about violent and traumatic histories.[5]

> "Often "empathetic exercises" are in poor taste and pedagogically flawed because it is impossible for us really to be able to imagine-except in the most superficial sense-what it would feel like to be in circumstances so far removed from our own life experience." (IHRA)

The IHRA distinguishes this kind of empathy from "genuine empathy". It is worth unpicking a little what that might mean. The philosopher Amy Coplan notes that some of the most popular definitions of empathy include:

(A) Feeling what someone else feels
(B) Caring about someone else
(C) Being emotionally affected by someone else's emotions and experiences, though not necessarily experiencing the same emotions
(D) Imagining oneself in another's situation
(E) Imagining being another in that other's situation
(F) Making inferences about another's mental states[6]

Some pedagogical approaches have focused on definition (D), which has resulted in learning activities that encourage students to feel as if they were themselves the victim or perpetrator of violent events (e.g., through role-playing where they take on the position of someone directly involved, or re-enactment of violent scenes). This is problematic for ethical reasons – it is an appropriation of the suffering of others, and methodological ones - students cannot (and should not) experience the same emotions as the victims of Nazi persecution and it is dubious ethically and pedagogically if they feel they have done so.

[4] For example, Alison Landsberg's concept of 'prosthetic memory'. Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

[5] See, for example, David H. Lindquist, 'Guidelines for Teaching the Holocaust: Avoiding Common Pedagogical Errors', *The Social Studies*, 97.5 (2006): 215-221.

[6] Amy Coplan, 'Understanding Empathy: Its Features and Effects', in *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 3-18 (p. 4).

The model of empathy that Coplan proposes and which we would adopt and reformulate here is rather different. We have rejected (D) and would instead suggest a combination of (A), (B), (E) and (F). In this model, the student recognises the emotion experienced by the survivor (fear, sadness, despair). However, they recognise that emotion from the perspective of the survivor (what Coplan terms "other-oriented perspective-taking"), and are continuously aware of the difference between themselves and the witness ("self-other differentiation").

- What kinds of learning activities are most likely to encourage "other-oriented perspective-taking" (imagining what it was like *for someone else*)?
- How do we ensure that students avoid being overwhelmed in their response to testimony?
- How can we encourage the kind of empathy described above, but make sure students maintain the necessary distance from the material?

This approach means we can engage the power of emotions to embed learning and enhance understanding without risking appropriation of someone else's story, or overwhelming students. Such personal distress can prevent the kind of distance from an account that is needed for critical thinking. In a classroom context, this means asking students to consider and discuss not how *they* feel on hearing or reading the testimony, rather how *the witness* would have felt in the situation. This doesn't mean that emotional responses should be avoided; however, those emotions should come from a recognition of what the witness experienced, rather than what the student is experiencing. Educators should be sure to avoid stereotypes or problematic assumptions regarding the perceptions, emotions and prior experiences of survivors where these are not articulated in the testimony and/or students have not had the opportunity for in-depth engagement with the life-story of that particular survivor. This is especially a concern when dealing with short excerpts of testimony.

One potentially fruitful approach for encouraging "other-oriented" empathy is the use of arts-based activities, which engage the students with survivor stories, but which encourage student *response* to those stories and *not a re-creation* of them. The idea is that students create something new that reflects the impact of the testimony for them, but also encourages critical engagement with the perspective of the witness. The effect of the creative process is to allow a certain distance that provides space for critical reflection. Careful handling is needed to avoid the use of stereotypes, insensitive interpretations, and oversimplification. We give examples of these kinds of activities in the **Lesson Sketches** below.

Perpetrators

Should we use perpetrator testimony in the classroom? What are the risks and what are the potential benefits? The risks of using perpetrator testimony relate strongly to the issues of authenticity and empathy. We might worry that by using perpetrator testimony as a source we are implicitly recognising it as "trustworthy" in some way, even though we might find its

contents abhorrent. Secondly, as educators, we may have concerns that students would empathise with or adopt the xenophobic or hate-fuelled perspectives presented in this material. In a situation in which the perpetrators attempted to wipe out the memory of the people along with the people themselves, it may feel like an ethical imperative to give voice to the victims over and above those who persecuted them.

But if one of the aims of our practice is to prevent a recurrence of violence, can we really do that without understanding its origins? How can we enable students to understand how "ordinary" people can come to commit horrific acts if we don't engage with the perspective of those ordinary people?

> "Efforts to understand and explain how this genocide occurred can only be addressed by a more nuanced and intelligent understanding of the perpetrators, their motivations and the socio-political context in which their crime unfolded."
>
> Stuart Foster et al., *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust: Evidence from English Secondary Schools* (Centre for Holocaust Education, 2016), p. 207

So we would recommend that perpetrator testimony can and should be used, but this needs to be done in a framework that encourages students to identify the challenges posed by these sources (e.g., the pressure to justify one's behaviour, the effect of ideology). It is especially important when approaching these texts that students take an "other oriented perspective" with regards to empathy (see above). We give an example of how you might approach perpetrator testimony in the **"Lesson Sketches"** below.

Secondary Witnesses

The term "secondary witnesses" is used in the research literature about memory of the Holocaust.[7] As a concept, "secondary witness" can be useful as a way of describing individuals who give an account of a past event from a personal perspective, but who didn't experience that event themselves. Most commonly, this might refer to the children and grandchildren of survivors, who tell the stories of their parents and grandparents. But the term might also be applied to creative artists who work with first-person testimonies to tell an individual story in a different form, e.g., a film or theatre performance.

But are secondary witnesses really witnesses? Isn't it confusing to use a term ("witness") that has a very specific meaning in this context, to in fact mean something else? It is actually very common in everyday life for people to be asked to provide an account of and knowledge about something which they have not experienced first-hand. Even in more formal situations of giving testimony, e.g., the courtroom, a witness can be called on the basis of what they have learned, rather than what they have experienced. However, when it comes to traumatic experiences, we tend to think of only primary witnesses as the "true" witnesses. This is in part because what we are interested in is not only what

[7] For example, Dora Apel, *Memory Effects: The Holocaust and the Art of Secondary Witnessing* (New Brunswick etc.: Rutgers University Press, 2002); Aleida Assmann, 'History, Memory and the Genre of Testimony', *Poetics Today*, 27.2 (2006): 261-273.

happened, but also what it felt like, and for that physical presence is important. For the purpose of clarity, this pack does not therefore use the term "secondary witness" and instead refers to "second and subsequent generations", when we are describing the children and grandchildren of survivors.

That doesn't mean that we can't use the accounts produced by "secondary witnesses". It just means that we have to recognise what kind of source it is and what it can usefully tell us. The children of survivors do not know what it felt like to suffer under Nazi persecution; however, they may be able to recount what their parent(s)/grandparent(s) told them about that suffering and can (and sometimes do) tell us what it was like growing up as the child/grandchild of a survivor. This can be extremely powerful in terms of demonstrating the ongoing legacy of the Holocaust and its relevance for the contemporary world, as well as maintaining a living connection with the subject once we no longer have survivors with us. Our "**Research Briefing II"** offers some ideas on how to engage with second and third generation survivors in the classroom.

Engaging with Students' Starting Points

Pupils bring to the classroom certain degrees of knowledge and levels of understanding about the Holocaust, National Socialism and the Second World War. It is crucial that these starting points are recognised and that pedagogical approaches build on and where necessary challenge these preconceptions.

Over recent years engagement with the Holocaust seems to be starting earlier in the school curriculum. Increasingly it may be the case that pupils have studied the Holocaust during the later stages of primary school (Key Stage 2), almost certainly at Key Stage 3 (normally during Year 9) and some will have studied the topic at GCSE and through to A-level. Even if students have not engaged with the history of the Holocaust formally, it is likely that they will (perhaps unconsciously) come into contact with narratives and images relating to the genocide as they circulate in contemporary culture.[8]

It's clear that some works, such as John Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas,* change historical facts too extensively to be appropriate for teaching *about* the Holocaust. Nonetheless, teachers cannot assume that their students have not read or seen such works outside of the classroom. They cannot simply ignore students' prior engagement with the topic in the hope that they can override misconceptions and misunderstandings with correct information. Unless these misconceptions are brought to the surface and explored, they are likely to remain, with new knowledge being built around and through them.

Instead, we would recommend starting by engaging with students' "starting points".[9] Focusing in on what students know and how they know it can provide

[8] See Andy Pearce and Arthur Chapman, 'Holocaust Education 25 Years On: Challenges, Issues, Opportunities', *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*, 23.3 (2017): 223-230.

[9] Stuart Foster et al., *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust: Evidence from English Secondary Schools* (Centre for Holocaust Education, 2016), p.38.

opportunities to explore key issues about authenticity. This can in turn often become a powerful learning tool and also provide the basis for exploring similar issues in the use of first-person testimony. In **“Lesson Sketches”** we provide a suggestion for that kind of engagement.

Research Briefing II: Teaching the Holocaust through "Family Frames"

What are "Family Frames"?

When witnesses recount their memories of Nazi persecution, they rarely speak only of their own story. They also remember what happened to those around them, their friends and above all their family members. "Family Frames" is our way of describing the ways in which individual stories are interwoven with those of the people closest to them.

In the case of those who arrived in the UK on the Kindertransport, memories of family members from whom they were separated are key to the trauma that motivates the account. As they testify to the experiences of parents and other family members who were left behind (if they know what happened to them at all), they are in effect telling someone else's story, as well as their own. We might see this as similar to (and, in important ways, different from) the testimonies of the second and third generation – the children and grandchildren of survivors – who recount the stories of their parents and grandparents and at the same time the impact of growing up as the child or grandchild of someone who lived through the Holocaust.

As we move towards a time when those with personal experience of the Holocaust are no longer able to give their own testimony, the question of *who* will testify becomes ever more pressing. **"Research Briefing II"** directly addresses this question and considers how Holocaust education might make use of testimony in the "post-survivor age".

Why work with "Family Frames" in the classroom?

For most young people the family – especially parents/guardians and siblings – is the focal point of their everyday lives. Engaging them with this focal point as it appears in the testimonies of survivors can act as a point of identification – along the lines, "this is someone *like* me" (but crucially *not* me).

A focus on "Family Frames" can also allow us to think with students not only about the history of the Holocaust, but also about its legacy and ongoing impact. What was it like for some Kindertransportees to be reunited with their families after so many years of separation? What was it like for others never to see their parents again? What is it like growing up as the child or grandchild of a Holocaust survivor? How is memory of the Holocaust transmitted through generations and why is that important? Students should be encouraged to think about these questions from the perspective of the survivor (that is, through "other-oriented" empathy).

Thinking about testimony through the frame of the family also allows us to consider ways in which we can work with the second and third generation to promote the continuation of Holocaust education in new formats. We outline in **Research Briefing I** the particular nature of second (and third) generation testimony. The children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors can give an account

of their parents' or grandparents' experiences and this is important. However, this second-hand testimony can be complemented with personal accounts of what it is like to be the grand/child of a survivor. In this way, mediated accounts produced by survivors themselves can be complemented by live testimony given by the second/third generation that draws connections to the contemporary world, but does not risk an inappropriate equating of first- and second-hand memory.

Working with the Testimonies of the Kindertransport

The history of the Kindertransport often forms the focus of Holocaust education in the classroom, especially at primary level. There are many reasons why this history is an appropriate "way in" for students, particularly younger ones:

- it allows a teaching about persecution and its impacts, without necessitating a detailed account of the horror of the camps and/or other sites of mass murder;
- the age at the time of those directly affected can encourage identification with the victims and thereby a better understanding of their perspective;
- the clear connection to Britain (as the host nation), and the status of the Kindertransportees as refugees, can make this history feel more relevant to students based in the UK;

Nonetheless, these features also mean that the use of Kindertransportee testimony requires some careful thought. Specifically:

- Can we really foster understanding of the Holocaust without confronting students with the horror of the camps?
- What does it mean to experience something as a child and recount that experience as an adult? What is unique about the child's perspective?
- How can we avoid presenting the Kindertransport as an uncomplicated story of British heroism? How do we reflect on the ambivalent treatment of Jewish refugees in Britain and British antisemitism?

We would therefore recommend that the Kindertransport should not be the only lens through which Holocaust education is delivered; rather, it should be incorporated as part of a broader approach. Particularly for younger children, the use of Kindertransportee testimony within a wider curriculum can provide opportunities for students to identify and empathise with individuals without needing to engage fully with camp experiences. Also for older children, the testimony of those who came to the UK on the Kindertransport can be invaluable as part of an approach that addresses the legacy of the Holocaust for families and its ongoing relevance. In all cases, preparatory activities should:

- make clear the place of the Kindertransport within the history of the Holocaust[10]
- encourage consideration of the "child perspective" (what would children *not* have known or understood, what would they have seen that adults would not)
- avoid using the Kindertransport as a way of celebrating Britain without presenting the ambivalence of the UK government's position towards refugees then and now. [11]

Working with the Testimonies of the Second (and subsequent) Generation

Integrating the accounts of the second generation (and subsequent generations) into Holocaust education would allow us to continue to use face-to-face testimony, as well as offer broad perspectives on the legacy of the Holocaust. The latter is important, because it helps students to see the continued relevance of the Holocaust. Live testimony (also of the second and subsequent generations) allows the witness to make connections with e.g. contemporary politics in a way that recorded testimony cannot.

However, it is important ethically and methodologically that students do not confuse the testimony of the second generation with the testimony of survivors. They must be prepared to treat the testimony on its own terms: that is, as the account of an individual who did *not* experience the Holocaust, but did experience what it was like growing up as the child of a survivor. This is principally about the questions that they ask of the testimony. The second generation witnesses can explain what happened to the survivor during the Holocaust, but not what it felt like. On the other hand, they can explain the ongoing impact of the Holocaust and their perception of how that history is connected to the contemporary world.

Second generation testimony should be used as a complement to survivor testimony (also testimony produced in different media), rather than a substitute for it. The second generation witnesses should also receive adequate briefing to ensure they understand that they are there to tell the story of their parents *as* the story of their parents and not as their own. At the same time, it should be made clear that their own story is also of interest and importance (that is, they are not simply a mouthpiece for their parents).

Students can be prepared for a talk by a second generation witness in the following ways:

- ❖ Provision of necessary historical context for the particular experiences of the parents of the second generation witness.
- ❖ Engagement with the biography of the second generation witness, alongside that of his or her parents. It is important to develop activities that make clear that the experiences of the

[10] Note that the HET recommends the Kindertransport can be usefully taught at primary school, but without reference to the Holocaust itself. The Trust provides excellent resources to support teachers in the "Scheme of Work for Primary Schools".

[11] HET has resources which focus on problematising 'British responses to Nazism and the Holocaust'.

survivor and the second generation are distinct. The students should understand that second generation witnesses tell the stories of survivors, but that these stories are not *their* stories.

- Preparation of questions for the second generation witness, encouraging a mixture of follow-up questions about the experience of the parent and questions relating to the ongoing impact of the Holocaust and their view of its contemporary relevance. Students should be encouraged to think about what kinds of questions are appropriate and why?

Lesson Sketches

The following ideas are suggested to help pupils engage with the topic, to think about inquiry approaches and developing good questions, and explore their prior knowledge. The example sources are just that, examples that show more concretely how the ideas outlined above might be applied to specific texts. In the **Resources List**, we provide a more comprehensive list of possible materials. The suggestions are divided according to different media; however, these might be combined in a single lesson or series of lessons (in this sense, these are *not* lesson plans per se). We have not specified a subject area for each medium. It's clear that different sources are likely to find use more or less easily in different subject areas (e.g., literary texts in English). We would encourage teachers to view the use of Holocaust testimony as part of the cross-subject spiral curriculum. As noted above, all use of testimony should be underpinned by a secure grounding in the history of the Holocaust.

Engaging with Students' Starting Points

Note that the lesson sketch below is intended as a way of uncovering students' starting points; that is, unpicking what they already know or think they know about the historical events and where they might have acquired those impressions (it may of course be that they know very little). The aim is to bring to the surface potential misconceptions before new learning is attached to these. We would *not* recommend this approach as an introduction to formal learning about the Holocaust. Following the guidelines laid out by HET, we would suggest this instead begins with a discussion of the lives of Jewish people before World War II, which may emerge from the discussions in this 'starting points' lesson. We suggest using an image without people in it which nonetheless represents the persecution of Jewish people under National Socialism. Images of the camps can be dehumanising for victims and survivors and in many cases are taken from the perspective of perpetrators. They should therefore be used with caution in the classroom and – as with all media – with careful consideration of what is age appropriate.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Burning_Synagoge_Kristallnacht_1938.jpg).

Students are presented with an image of the synagogue in the German town of Siegen, set on fire during the November Pogrom ('Night of Broken Glass') in 1938. Give students the basic information to allow them to locate the image in their prior knowledge: e.g., that it is a synagogue (a Jewish place of worship) in Germany in 1938. What do they think is going on in the image? Why was the synagogue set on fire? Who set it on fire? What happened next? This opening section

of the lesson might involve whole class discussion and the unpicking of the image on the white board. The aim is to establish prior understandings of the persecution of Jewish people under National Socialism, the context of World War II and the events of the Holocaust.

What questions do students have about the image and the events represented in it? If we want to answer these questions, what are some of the challenges of doing so?

What types of sources do we have and what can they tell us?

Who/what might tell us something about this period?	What form might the evidence about what happened take?	Where might we find this evidence today?	What could this source tell us?	What can we not find out from this source?

Table 1

Video Testimony

EXAMPLE SOURCE: Teacher selection from the clips available from the Yale Fortunoff Video Archive: https://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/excerpts/ . These are usually 15-30 minutes long.

Shorter clips (< 2 ½ minutes) can be found on the BBC Teach website (https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/holocaust-memorial-day-2019/zb3r6v4). These are individual stories focused on those who were children during the Holocaust

We would recommend starting with one of the "Excerpts" that combine several testimonies that address a theme (the historical context of which should already have been covered in previous lessons or elsewhere in the curriculum). If shorter individual testimonies are to be used, we would recommend showing several of these over the course of the lesson to highlight multiple perspectives. Students might later engage with a full-length testimony as described below.

Please note the age considerations and content warnings stated at the start of the recordings.

Key Considerations

- Video testimony can appear to be the most "transparent" medium that we address here; that is, it is easy to forget that the witness is not sitting in front of us, that there is a camera and an interviewer, and an institution that has a particular reason for collecting these stories. This means that it can better replicate some of the impact of face-to-face testimony, but also means it can be difficult for students to engage critically with the testimony as a source.
- The apparent authenticity of the source may mean that students will assume that what the survivor says is not only subjectively true (that is, their experience), but also objectively (that is, historically accurate or the only possible response). Watching different testimonies around the same topic can help address this as students can notice differences in emphasis. It is also important to encourage students to ask appropriate questions of the source: that means questions about the individual experience of history and how it relates to the present.
- The excerpted testimonies allow students the time to engage with multiple perspectives; however, it does mean that the focus is on a particular "theme" rather than the life story as a whole. This is why we would suggest – if time is available – also creating space for engagement with a full testimony (perhaps as an extension project).

Starting Point

We would recommend starting with a reflection on what testimony is and what questions can be asked of it. Teachers might take this out of the context of the Holocaust, where students are likely to be unwilling to critically examine witness stories. It may be an opportunity to discuss contemporary concerns about finding reliable information: What sources do students use to find out about the

contemporary events? What sources do they trust and why/why not? Why do news programmes often incorporate interviews with those affected by an event? What can we learn from them?

Focusing on a particular contemporary example, a series of questions can be framed and discussed with students:

- Why is this person being interviewed/recorded?
- What was the person asked at the start of the interview?
- What were the key questions the interviewer asked?
- Were there parts of the testimony where the account was more or less credible – what factors make you think this?
- Are there signals/indicators that the testimony you are listening to/watching has been edited?

Students could then engage with the framework of the Yale Fortunoff Video Archive in particular. What is the history and purpose of this institution? Why and how do they gather testimonies? See: https://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/about-us/our-story/ . This will help them to understand the testimonies as a source.

Source Engagement

Before watching the testimonies, students can be asked to write a short paragraph or list of what they already know about the "theme" (as indicated, this should have been covered in class before engagement with the testimony). What questions still remain that might be answered by the testimonies? This activity allows students to direct their own enquiry and also provides an opportunity for the teacher to address misconceptions. Students can then watch the excerpts and re-write their summary, including the new information.

As an extension, students might write questions to which they did not receive an answer and use teacher-supported enquiry to discover answers drawing on other appropriate sources. This activity supports students in exploring which kinds of sources are best at answering different kinds of question. We would particularly recommend the range of materials provided by the Holocaust Educational Trust, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and National Holocaust Centre and Museum (see **Resources List**).

A second extension might be a creative response to video testimonies. As indicated above, this should be an opportunity for students to reflect critically on the testimony, what it means for the witness and their own response to it. One approach is to ask students to listen to the excerpt (it might even be read aloud to the class) and write down one word, phrase or image that they feel is at the centre of the testimony. That word, phrase or image can then form the starting point for a creative output such as drawing, painting, or poetry. Important in this context is to avoid an attempt to "represent" the testimony in a different form. Instead it is about creating a response to the testimony that reflects student engagement with the account.

Such activities also work with full-length accounts and over an extended period of time. The *Echo Eternal* project provides several successful examples of this kind of work with students of a range of different ages and abilities: http://echoeternal.uk/ . Note that the success of this project was assured through the involvement of artists-in-residence.

Diary

EXAMPLE SOURCE: *Diary of Anne Frank*

Key Considerations

- Diaries can appear especially immediate and authentic, because their structure gives the impression that they are written "in the moment" and unfiltered. This can enhance the feeling of connection between author and reader, as the reader feels they have access to the author's innermost thoughts and feelings. However, students should be brought to reflect on the process of publication and the ways in which the diary has been edited (particularly in the case of the diary of someone who died before it was published). Who else is involved in producing this testimony?
- As with all forms of testimony, diaries taken on their own give a singular perspective on a very specific set of events. That perspective needs to be set in a broader context in order to avoid a partial view.
- Teachers will need to consider if they propose to use the whole diary or only extracts. Using extracts can allow this source to be studied in a reduced amount of time; however, it does mean that contextualisation will have to be considered carefully. On the other hand, teachers will also need to consider the extent to which they will extend the diary forwards and backwards in time, e.g., by explaining what happens to Anne after the diary finishes.

  If extracts are to be used, we would recommend selecting moments from across the diary to give a sense of the whole and allow students to engage with Anne's experience as it evolved over time.

Starting Point

You might begin by asking students what they do to help them remember and look back on big events. What about recording everyday life? It might be that some keep diaries, but it's more likely to elicit reflection on images and the ways that these are stored and circulated. Ask students to think about their social media usage. Ask them to consider a recent post to Facebook/Twitter/Instagram etc. Who did they hope would read it? What would they have changed if they had known their teacher/parents/future employers were looking at it?

They can then ask: Who was Anne writing for? Do you think she intended it to be published? Does it matter? The idea here is to get students thinking about the ethics of reading a diary and open opportunities to discuss the editing work undertaken by Otto Frank.

Source Engagement

There are a range of excellent resources for engaging with the *Diary,* including ideas for activities (see the box below for a selection). In selecting which of these to use, we would stress the need to avoid activities that ask students to imagine themselves *as* Anne Frank (as opposed to being sensitive to the expressions of emotions in the diary itself, which are complex and challenging). Teachers should also keep in mind – and encourage

students to keep in mind – the nature of the diary as a source as outlined above.

Whilst avoiding "self-oriented" empathy (see **Research Briefing I**), teachers might make use of Anne's closeness in age to the students by asking them to consider what questions they would ask Anne Frank if she had survived. Are these the same questions that you have heard asked of people who did survive? The reason behind this question is the idea that all of the survivors are (especially for students), elderly! Does being elderly illicit certain questions and responses – what does this mean when it comes to considering the testimony written by someone their own age?

The *Diary of Anne Frank* also lends itself to thinking about the present moment. For example, if her story is extended beyond the diary to include consideration of Otto Frank's attempt to get asylum for the family in the United States before they were forced into hiding it can be used to help explore issues surrounding refugees today. The recent film *No Asylum* (https://noasylumfilm.com/) might be a good starting point here (see below for ideas on how to approach testimony embedded in documentary film).

More broadly, the iconic status of Anne Frank means that her story has been told through multiple media (theatre, film, exhibitions, social media etc.). Exploration of the ways in which these different media tell the story in different ways – drawing on the considerations for each medium outlined in this document – would make for an engaging cross-curricula project.

Anne Frank Resources

- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum provides a useful summary of published resources here: https://www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/anne-frank#h171 .
- The Anne Frank House also provides free online resources, including an introductory lesson and ideas for connecting Anne's story to the present: https://www.annefrank.org/en/education/all-educational-products/ .
- The Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect has published a 'Reader's Companion' to the diary which also includes some useful activities to complete with students: https://www.annefrank.com/teacher-resources
- The Anne Frank Trust offers an extensive schools' programme if more time (and resources) permit: https://annefrank.org.uk/education/schools-programme/

Poetry

EXAMPLE SOURCE: Nelly Sachs, *Chorus of the Saved* [Chor der Geretteten]. Translation by Catherine Sommer available at: https://nellysachsenglish.wordpress.com/2013/04/28/chorus-of-the-saved/ (© Catterel).

Sachs was a German Jewish refugee

Key Considerations

- Poetry that is also testimony sits on the boundary between fiction and non-fiction. It works with highly condensed imagery in order to convey something essential about the world. The images produced do not always correspond directly with reality; rather they create symbolic representations of the author's response to his or her experiences. In the case of Nelly Sachs's *Chorus of the Saved*, this is her response to surviving Nazi persecution.
- Students need to be equipped with the skills to engage with and respond to the images created by the poem – there is no "correct" answer and many (but not all) interpretations are valid. Dealing with poetry can equip students to deal with ambiguity.
- Regarding this poem in particular, one key theme is "survivor guilt", that is, the feeling of "why did I survive when so many others did not?". Students may find this concept difficult to understand; however, it can provide a way of getting them to think beyond a simple celebration of survival (and the idea of a "happy" ending). Sachs addresses the issue of the legacy of the Holocaust for relationships – between survivors and the dead, but also between survivors and the perpetrators (who is the "you" in the second part of the poem?). Teachers should be careful to contextualise this theme in the broader context of the poem and the events it represents in order to avoid a focus on the guilt felt by the survivor, rather than the actions of the perpetrators.

Starting Point

Before students read the poem, it would be useful for them to have some background on the author and to begin thinking about how survivors of Nazi persecution might have felt/feel about the fact of their survival. One suggestion would be to present students with a shortened version of Sachs's biography (for example, drawn from: https://nellysachsenglish.wordpress.com/2013/04/28/chorus-of-the-saved/), explaining what she experienced and how she survived. Students can then be asked to imagine how she would have felt after the War – what would her response be to those around her? Be sure to avoid asking students to imagine themselves as Sachs, rather they should be encouraged to use their empathy to imagine her experiences as her own.

The concept of survivor's guilt is also encapsulated in the piece of visual art produced by Kristen Brown with the title *Survivor's Guilt*. This piece (image available online) can provide a useful

stimulus for getting students to think about and around the concept.[12]

Source Engagement[13]

Poetry should – in the first instance – always be read aloud. Start by reading the text aloud to the group (or asking a student volunteer to do this for you) and ask the students to note down key ideas, images and words. The idea is that the "doing" helps them with the "listening". Students can then read the text aloud to one another in small groups and select a single image or metaphor to recreate: this recreation might be done physically (as a moving tableau) or using other creative techniques, such as drawing or collaging, or even writing a poem in response to Sachs's work (see the comments on creative work under **Video Testimonies** above).

The creative engagement with a single image – or set of single images across the class – can then form the basis for the discussion of the meanings behind those images: e.g., feelings of already being dead, loss and guilt at surviving, continued fear in the new society. The process of making something new allows for critical engagement with the source that can be deepened through the sharing of creative outputs and class discussion.

The work with poetry can be extended to touch on different themes and topics. A complement to the work with Sachs could be engagement with other responses by survivors in the post-War period. *Echoes and Reflections: Teaching the Holocaust, Inspiring the Classroom* provides ideas in this regard, including a lesson plan "Holocaust Survivors 'Return to Life'", which incorporates openly accessible poetry and video testimony. See: http://echoesandreflections.org/unit-8/?state=open#content . You might also look at the selection of poems read aloud and available as podcasts at: https://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/?genocide=5&resource_type=36&age=any

[12] We are very grateful to Laura Rutherford of Solihull School who drew our attention to Brown's work when carrying out pilot testing of these resources.

[13] This technique for engagement with 'difficult' texts draws on activities developed by Professor Doris Sommer in the Pre-Texts initiative (see: http://www.pre-texts.org/resources/supporting-ideas-resources).

Literature (Fiction)

EXAMPLE SOURCE: Morris Gleitzman, *Once* (Penguin, 2005)

Key Considerations

- We would understand this work as testimony only in the sense described under the heading "Secondary Witnesses" above; that is, a creative writer has taken the first-person accounts of survivors and used them to create a new artistic form. Students need to be made continuously aware that they are engaging with fiction and that the "authenticity" of the text relates to its ability to convey a story that "could be" true, not one that "is" true. This also represents an opportunity to engage students with the question of *why* we might study fiction (when "real life" stories are available).
- The text itself works with the idea of telling stories as a way to get through difficult situations and to process grief and loss. In this way, it reflects on its own status as a work of the imagination, but also on the value of fiction: it is notable though that Felix in the end sacrifices his stories, but keeps the letters (the testimonies?) of his parents.
- The book is written from the perspective of one who does not know what is going on, but gradually comes to learn over the course of the text. This in itself may feel unrealistic (also to the students who will likely have more knowledge than Felix on approaching the book); however, it can provide useful opportunities to check understanding and address misconceptions. Along the lines: "What does Felix think is going on in this scene?" "What is really going on?"
- Teachers will need to consider if they are going to work with the whole text or an extract of it. Working with an extract is less time-intensive and can allow real engagement with a key scene; however, it will need some careful thought in terms of contextualisation.

Starting Point

We would recommend starting with the author's biography. This will set up expectations *before* the students engage with the text and ensure that they are aware that the author did not have the experiences that he describes, where he got the idea for the work from, and that they are dealing with a fiction. A good starting place is the "*Dear Reader…*" letter included at the end of the penguin edition. This can also be found on the Morris Gleitzman website: https://www.morrisgleitzman.com/once.htm . You might particularly explore with students the statement: "This story is my imagination trying to grasp the unimaginable." What role can the imagination play in working through difficult histories?

You might also take the opportunity at this point to look at some of the first-person testimonies listed on Gleitzman's website and which he cites as inspiration for the book. This activity might however be better as a follow-up in order to avoid

confusion between these accounts and the fiction.

Source Engagement
The engagement here will depend on the subject area and the aims for the session. This text lends itself beautifully to being taught as a work of English literature that addresses such themes as tolerance, human rights, morality, abuse of power, and loss and grief. Penguin provides some good open-access resources: https://www.penguin.com.au/content/resources/TR_Once.pdf

Nonetheless, we would not recommend glossing over the context of Felix's story, that is, the historical setting of this work of fiction. This means that in engaging with the text, teachers should initially locate those themes within the historical context and ensure that student misconceptions about that history are addressed. As indicated above, the naivety of the protagonist can create opportunities for discussion around such misconceptions.

Further engagement with the context could take the form of student research into the "real-life" biographies of children who experienced Nazi persecution and/or were murdered during the Holocaust. The Museum of Tolerance has a webpage dedicated to children's stories: http://www.museumoftolerance.com/education/teacher-resources/holocaust-resources/children-of-the-holocaust/ and the BBC combines animation with first-person accounts https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01zx5g7/clips **(see also above under Video Testimonies)**. One suggestion for a follow-on activity is to ask students to write the next chapter of Felix's story, drawing on the knowledge gained from these biographies: students thereby engage in their own form of creative secondary witnessing.

Documentary Film

EXAMPLE SOURCE: *Auschwitz: The Nazis and the Final Solution* (BBC, 2005). Series available on Netflix or DVD. Focus here on Episode I

A much shorter alternative (circa 6 minutes each) is the series of mini-films available on the BBC Teach website *The Eichmann Show Documentary*. These do not include perpetrator testimony as such, but might be used to introduce some of the key questions about guilt and justice. Do note that these contain some upsetting imagery and advanced teacher view is recommended: https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/holocaust-memorial-day-2019/zb3r6v4

Key Considerations

- Much like video testimony, documentary film can appear "transparent" as a medium; that is, it can be difficult for the viewer to remember the presence of the director, camera, script, editing, marketing and distribution etc. Students need to be made conscious of these features and should consider what this means for how we respond to the testimonies within the film.
- Documentary film frequently contains multiple testimonies set alongside one another. More reflective forms might include contradictory stories (as is the case in *Auschwitz*); however, the effect is usually to reinforce a single argument about the world.[14] Artefacts, photographs and footage are often used alongside the testimonies to support that argument. The testimony in the example sources is given in different forms and includes both face-to-camera witnesses and voice-reading of autobiographical sources.
- *Auschwitz* includes perpetrator testimony alongside survivor and bystander testimony. Students should be encouraged to think about the different ethical and methodological questions raised by these different kinds of accounts. Why should we hear perpetrator testimony at all? What do we need to think about when we listen to perpetrators? How does this differ to our engagement with bystander or survivor accounts? What is the impact of having their voices side-by-side with survivors? The *Eichmann Show* does not include perpetrator testimony; however, the focus is on perpetrators from the perspective of victims and bystanders. This raises similar questions: Why should we think about motivations? What about punishment of perpetrators? How do we decide who is guilty?

Starting Point

The fact that documentary film draws information from lots of different places means that it is a good opportunity to engage students with the idea that different sources can answer different kinds of questions – and that different forms of testimony need to be approached in different ways. Students

[14] See Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (Indiana: Indiana UP, 1991).

might be asked to imagine they were going to write the history of one particular aspect of the Holocaust, perhaps something that has already been studied to some extent in class and which features in the documentary. For *Auschwitz*, this could be the Nazi euthanasia programme and for the *Eichmann Show* the punishment of perpetrators or the experience in the camps. Ask students to then write a list of questions that they would ask about this history. What sources would they use to find the answers to these questions? Encourage them in particular to think about where testimony (from survivors, perpetrators and bystanders) would be appropriate. What problems can they anticipate with using each kind of source?

Source Engagement
Whilst watching the film, ask students to write a list of the different kinds of sources used (footage, photography, testimony, autobiography etc.). At the end, ask them to write two sentences summarising what the key idea of the film is – that is, what the film is trying to tell us about the origins of Auschwitz or the Eichmann trial. How does it try to convince us? What role does each source play in trying to convince us? Is everything in the film "real"? What about the re-enactments? The teacher will need to gauge the extent to which students can engage in depth with different ideas of authenticity, but the key point is that students recognise that documentaries often combine evidence with reconstruction in order to persuade us.

Turning to the perpetrator testimony and/or focus on the perpetrator from different perspectives, students might be asked to think what they learn from that in particular. Was there anything that surprised them? What do we learn from the perpetrator perspective that we can't learn from other sources?

Thinking specifically about the use of perpetrator testimony in *Auschwitz*: Do they see any problems with using perpetrator testimony? One simple way of getting students to engage with these issues is to ask if they believe the perpetrator account: why /why not?

By way of an extension, students could be asked to look at a selection of victim testimony in which the perpetrators are described. How do the accounts differ and what can we learn from each? A further issue is the use of photographs and footage taken by perpetrators in order to tell the story of the victims. Do we see the perpetrator perspective elsewhere in the films? Who was taking the pictures and the footage that we see?

Theatre

EXAMPLE SOURCE: Ruth Barnett, *What Price for Justice?*

Barnett's play addresses directly the impact of the Holocaust and the Kindertransport on families and raises important questions about perpetrators and the search for justice after 1945.

Act II, Scene 7 of *What Price for Justice?* is provided with the kind permission of the author in the resource pack. The author is also happy to send email attachments of the original script and later versions to any teacher who asks (contact: rutheclb@gmail.com). She can also post a copy of the print version of the book for a small charge. Her book about the play and how/why she wrote it is available to purchase online: Ruth Barnett, *Why War? A Memoir in Honour of my Parents – A Kindertransport Tale* (independently published in 2019).

Key Considerations

- Theatre can be considered a form of testimony in diverse ways. In the case of the example source, it is a play written by a Kindertransportee about her own experiences and those of her family. Other plays are based on the testimonies of survivors, but are written by someone else (who functions as a "secondary witness"). Such works may contain elements that are more or less fictionalised. There also exist a number of works in which the witnesses themselves are present on stage to recount their stories. The play *And then they came for me: Remembering the world of Anne Frank* (James Still, 1999) does this to great effect by combining video accounts by survivors with stage performance by actors following a script. Any use of theatre as a form of testimony needs to be sensitive to the particular way in which the experiences of survivors are mediated.
- Theatre can be treated as text and examined as such, particularly in the context of the English literature curriculum. In this way, it can be examined for thematic concerns – in the case of the source text this would include questions of justice, reconciliation and family. Nonetheless, as with literature, we would not recommend abstracting this discussion from the historical context, which should be taught alongside any literary analysis in order to avoid misconceptions.
- Theatre is – for the most part – written to be performed. Performing a testimony can promote detailed understanding of and empathy with the experiences of the witness, as the performer embodies the person who gave the original testimony. Role play is quite literally the point of the task. This raises concerns about the kind of empathy that is generated and the risk of over-identification, emotional overloading, and a lack of critical distance (see **Research Briefing I**). If teachers choose to perform a play based on testimony, they should include strategies to mitigate this.
- The nature of theatre should also be kept in mind if students are watching a performance (rather than performing

themselves). The embodiment of survivors by actors can be productive in "making it real" and encouraging identification; however, it can also blur distinctions between actor and witness and fiction and reality.
- ❖ With regard to the example source, the special considerations regarding teaching the Holocaust through **Family Frames** and the particular nature of the testimony of those who came to the UK on the Kindertransport should be taken into account (see **Research Briefing II**).

Starting Point

Before engaging with the text, students should be introduced to the historical background of the rise of Nazism and the Kindertransport to the UK. At a minimum, we would recommend spending 2 lessons on this background before engaging with the text. There are numerous excellent resources for teaching the Kindertransport and its context. We would especially recommend the Holocaust Educational Trust's resource pack, *Britain, Refugees and the Kindertransport,* which draws on diverse kinds of testimony, as well as historical sources (aimed at KS4 and above – see access details in the **Resources List**). The "Memories of the Kindertransport" sheet produced by HET for use in the lesson includes information about Barnett, the author of *What Price for Justice.* This allows an easy link to be made with the play. Note also that HET's resources provide a structured way to address issues around antisemitism in Britain at the time.

Alternative materials on the Kindertransport can be found in the **Resources List** below. See also HMD's Drama Lesson Plan, which explores the use of drama techniques without re-enactment of traumatic situations (https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/holocaust-memorial-day-drama-lesson-plan/).

Source Engagement

As noted above, the play can be explored as a work of literature and studied with regard to its core themes without necessarily performing the material: Such themes include, justice, reconciliation, and the legacy of Nazi persecution for families.

However, the full effect of theatre as a medium is only seen when the play is performed. If you choose to produce the full-length play with your students, we would recommend that this be part of a longer term and possibly cross-curricula project in which they are given space to explore the historical context (e.g., within the history curriculum) *and* the thematic concerns of the text (e.g., within the English curriculum). This will ensure that students taking on the roles of the protagonists are consistently encouraged to take a step back from those roles, maintain a critical distance to the text and – whilst empathising with the characters – recognise that this story is not *their* story. Consider also the kind of staging that you would like to work with. A realist/naturalist aesthetic draws the audience in; however, more abstract or symbolic staging can be productive in terms of promoting critical distance and highlighting the nature of theatre as a medium.

If time is limited, *What Price for Justice?* lends itself well to being delivered focusing only on one or several shorter extracts. The same principles as for a full-length performance apply – students

should be engaged with the historical context, as well as with the thematic concerns of the text. We would suggest in particular that Act II, Scene 7 can be taught within a single class. This scene stages the first meeting of Ruth and her brother Martin with their mother after the end of the War. In this regard, it could form the basis of a follow-on lesson, delivered after students have engaged with the material provided by HET (see above) and drawing on the ideas presented in **Research Briefing II** around **Family Frames**.

What Price for Justice: Act II, Scene 7

August 1949. The lights come on showing a waiting room in Haslemere railway station. Three people are sitting there, waiting for a train. Martin (17) wears long trousers and Ruth (14) wears shorts, both with short-sleeved tops. Phylis Hosking wears a tweed skirt and long-sleeved blouse. There is tense silence. Phylis sits upright and still, her thoughts far away. Both children fidget and look very uncomfortable.

Ruth: (*hopefully*) Perhaps she is not coming after all. Perhaps she doesn't actually exist. She died in the war.

Martin: Don't be daft, Ruth! The train is just a little bit late. Of course she is coming – she wrote a letter didn't she, Mrs Hosking?

Phylis: (*coming out of her reverie*) Yes, she did. I gave you the letter to read.

Ruth: (*angrily*) I never saw any letter.

Martin: You didn't want to know, when I showed it to you.

Ruth: (*impetuously*) I don't want her to come. I want to be out in the field with the others, bringing the harvest in. It's my job to lead the horse home with the loaded wagon and then drive the next empty wagon out to the field.

Martin: I am sure they'll manage without you, Sis.

Phylis: (*kindly*) You can go out to the field later, Ruth. She is your mother and she has come a long way to see you.

Ruth: She hasn't come for 10 years, so why should she come now? I am happy on the farm, with the animals. I don't want her coming to change my life. And there is no way I'm going to Germany. If I can't stay here with you, I'll run away and find another farm with horses.

Martin: Don't be so daft, Ruth, running away won't solve anything.

Phylis: You know we love you and consider you part of the family, but you have parents too.

Ruth: They didn't come and didn't come – and now I don't want them to come!

(*Sounds off-stage of a steam engine slowing down and stopping*)

Martin: Too bad, Sis! She's coming.

All three get up. Ruth tries to run behind Phylis, who gently pushes her out towards the exit onto the platform. Martin and Ruth stand facing the back of the stage, where the platform is. Sounds of crowds getting off the train gradually peter out.

Ruth: She's not coming. Can we go home now?

Phylis: Not yet, Ruth, we shall have to find out when the next train will come. She may have missed the train.

Louise enters from the side of the stage, elegantly dressed with a small suitcase. Both children turn towards her, confused and stare speechless. Louise looks at them, smiling, as if she can't believe what she is seeing.

Louise: Malu! Ruthchen! You have grown so tall. (*She takes a few steps forward. Ruth backs away frightened. Martin stays stock-still. Phylis steps up to Louise with her hand out*.)

Phylis: Welcome to Sussex, Frau Michaelis. (*She shakes hands with Louise*.)

Louise: Thank you, Mrs Hosking, for bringing the children to meet me. (*She holds her arms out to Martin and Ruth. Ruth backs away further. Martin stays still and allows her to embrace him, but he is not comfortable. Tears roll down Louise's cheeks.)*

Martin: (*pulling away to arm's length*) Mutti! Why did you leave us so long? Ruth thought you were dead and that our father would bring us to China – as far away from Germany as you can get.

Louise: (*softly, and getting softer until her voice becomes inaudible*) I couldn't leave Germany once the war started. Believe me, I wanted to come and take you to Shanghai. It wasn't possible. The Nazis took everything away – I had no money – nothing – nothing … and … (*she pulls herself together physically and emotionally*). But now your father is back home from Shanghai. He has a good job as a judge in Mainz. We can all be together again as a family in Mainz.

Martin: (*very seriously, with Ruth and Phylis looking on puzzled*) I don't think that is going to work. Ruth is off her rocker. She is terrified of Germany. She has some romantic idea about China, but I don't think she would go anywhere at all and leave her beloved horses.

Louise: But we are your parents. I have been searching for you every day since the war ended. We have to get our family back and Germany is a different place now – it is safe there now. The Nazis have been beaten. We are all needed, all four of us, to help build up a better Germany.

Ruth: I'm not going to Germany – no way! Germany kicked me out and I'm not going back – not ever! The Hoskings are my family, and all the animals too. The animals need me more than Germany does.

Martin: Don't be daft, Sis. There are plenty of animals in Germany too.

Louise: It isn't about animals – it's about us – our family – we need to be together again. And in Germany. Germany is our home. Hitler took it away from us. We must claim it back and make it our home again.

At this, Ruth rushes out and Phylis goes out after her. Martin shrugs. Louise is obviously uncertain what to do.

Martin: (*matter-of-factly*) We'd better go after them. We can't stay here.

The exit together and the lights go off.

Resources List

The resources list gives an overview of further materials provided by the national organisations with whom we have collaborated.

Holocaust Educational Trust

The Trust works in schools, universities and in the community to raise awareness and understanding of the Holocaust and its contemporary relevance, providing an outreach programme for schools, free, downloadable teaching resources, teacher training, and its flagship Lessons from Auschwitz programme.

- **Outreach Programme**
  The Trust arranges for Holocaust survivors to go into schools and other community spaces to talk about their experiences during the Holocaust and can arrange for trained educators to lead interactive workshops suitable for students from Year 6 (age 10). Free of charge.

- **Teaching Resources**
  The Trust provides fully resourced lesson plans and additional materials to introduce age-appropriate Holocaust-related topics across the curriculum. These include: Resources for Primary and early KS3, *Exploring the Holocaust* (for KS3/S2), Resources for KS4 and Scottish Nationals and Resources for post-16. The Trust's flagship teaching resource is *Exploring the Holocaust.* This is a cross-curricula scheme of work providing resources for teaching about the Holocaust through History, RE / Philosophy and PSHE / Citizenship. This is for use at KS3 and is built around 15 core lessons. The Trust provides guidance on the ways in which Holocaust education can be incorporated into other subjects such as English, Drama and Art. It suggests some suitable literature texts and plots for study and/or performance in schools. Available at: https://www.het.org.uk/exploring-the-holocaust-menu (free but registration needed). Additionally, the *70 Voices* digital platform created by the Trust contains 70 powerful sources on the Holocaust, including testimonies, letters, diaries and others.

- **Teacher Training**
  The Trust offers free teacher training workshops for trainees and practising teachers, and free residential courses throughout the year, including an *Exploring the Holocaust* UK residential course, international teacher study visits and an Annual Teacher Training Course at Yad Vashem

- **Lessons from Auschwitz**
  A four part course centred around a one-day visit to the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. Seminars take place before and after the visit, which enable students to be prepared for and to reflect on the visit. Students are expected to devise a 'Next Steps' project in response to their experience, spreading their understanding of the Holocaust and its continuing relevance within their schools, colleges and local communities.

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

HMDT supports people across the UK to mark Holocaust Memorial Day each year, and deliver Holocaust and genocide education in a range of ways. Free resources are available for use in schools, communities, and for a range of sectors including local authorities, libraries, universities, youth groups, museums and galleries, prisons and many more.

- **Teacher Training**
  These are available for primary, secondary and SEN schools, and include guidelines for teachers, scripts and presentations for assemblies, lesson plans, tutor time sessions and creative activities. You can browse the collection at www.hmd.org.uk/schools.

- **Other resources:**
  Films – HMDT have produced a range of educational films, documentaries, and testimonies and interviews with Holocaust and genocide survivors. www.hmd.org.uk/film

  Life stories – these resources provide information about those affected by the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and more recent genocides. They will give an overview of the person's life before the genocide, what happened to them during, and if they survived what has happened since. Some life stories are also available in an 'easy-to-read' format for younger audiences, those with English as a second or other language, or to be used if you have less time: www.hmd.org.uk/lifestories

  HMDT's resources hub also includes images, poems, faith resources, posters and booklets, and many other resources to help people to mark HMD and deliver Holocaust and genocide education – www.hmd.org.uk/resources

National Holocaust Centre and Museum

Based in Laxton, Nottinghamshire, The National Holocaust Centre and Museum was established in 1995 by the Smith family as a Centre for learning and as a permanent memorial for the victims of the Holocaust. Survivors and their testimony are at the core of their work to promote an understanding of the roots of discrimination and why this matters to us to day. In particular reflecting on how we can be upstanders in our lives and communities.

Today the Centre has a purpose built primary exhibition called *The Journey* which focuses on the Kindertransport as well as a main Holocaust exhibition that details the key stages of the Holocaust. Both exhibitions include a wide range of artefacts and testimony from Holocaust survivors. It is also a place of memorial having over a thousand white roses that are dedicated to those who were murdered during the Holocaust. They host survivor speakers on a regular basis who are often keen to speak with educational groups.

The Centre offers a range of learning programmes hosted at the Centre including primary, secondary, A-level, university, PGCE and community groups such as U3A and the WI. They provide specialist conferences focusing on Hate Crime as well as tailored programmes for subject specific groups. They offer outreach programmes for primary and secondary in London and Leeds. Here is an overview of some of the key programmes:

- **Secondary programme**
  Choices Suitable for Y7-Y11, a cross curricular day that focuses on the choices that were made during the Holocaust and what this means to us today. An educator led day where students explore the key theme in the Centre's memorial gardens, main exhibition and workshop. Students are invited to listen to survivor testimony and ask questions relating to their experiences. Pre and post visit resources focus on the importance of testimony.

- **Primary programme**
  The Journey: Suitable for Y5/6, an educator led programme that focuses on the Kindertransport. Students are guided through a series of tactile and interactive rooms that follows the story of Leo over a six week period in 1938. Students are invited to listen to survivor testimony and ask questions relating to their experiences. Pre- and post-visit resources focus on the importance of testimony. The Journey exhibition can be explored online using The Journey trail.

The Centre's online resources include:
The Journey trail: https://journey.holocaust.org.uk/the-journey-exhibition-trail/

Edek: https://www.edek.film/)

Secondary pre- and post-visit resources: https://www.holocaust.org.uk/72663832610)

Using Testimony in the Classroom

Briefing Note

This **Briefing Note** provides a concise summary of the key ideas contained in the two **Research Briefings** in the full **Using Testimony in the Classroom** pack**.** The Briefing Note is designed to provide teachers with an overview of and easy reference to the key considerations in the use of testimony. It should be used in conjunction with the full pack and, in particular, with the **Lesson Sketches** contained in it.

Testimony is an account of an individual's personal experiences by that individual. But the form that account takes could be anything from theatre, documentary film, autobiographical writing and literature to video recordings, or digital technologies.

First-person accounts can be incredibly powerful tools in the teaching of traumatic and violent histories. The use of first-person testimony allows students to connect what they are learning to an individual life and to begin to understand the human impact of the catastrophe. Engagement with perpetrator testimony can promote better understanding of the conditions in which "ordinary" people come to commit horrific acts of violence. Testimony can also be used in the values education that is attached to Holocaust education, as witnesses often draw connections to the present day and highlight the ongoing legacy of the Holocaust.

Research Briefing I
Using Testimony in the Classroom

The **challenges** in using testimony centre on both ethics and methods, with the two aspects being closely interwoven around some core issues: *medium/genre, authenticity, empathy, perpetrators, secondary witnesses.*

Medium/Genre The medium that is used to produce the testimony has an effect on the way in which the story is told. Students should be encouraged to engage with the issues around medium, not in order to detract from the importance of the message imparted by the survivor, but to help them recognise the nature of testimony and what it can teach us.

Authenticity A testimony is authentic because it is produced by an individual who had the experiences that they recount. "Authentic" testimony does not have to be 100% accurate. Instead, it is important that there was an intention to tell the truth about a personal experience. If we agree that a text is "authentic", then we are recognising the person giving testimony as trustworthy.

Empathy is in many cases a desirable response to hearing testimony. However, in order to be productive, empathy needs to be of the right kind. In particular, we should avoid using learning activities that encourage students to feel as if they were themselves the victim or perpetrator of violent events (e.g., through role-playing). Students cannot (and should not) experience the same emotions as the victims of Nazi persecution and it is dubious ethically and pedagogically if they feel they have done so.

We adopt a model of empathy in which the student recognises the emotion experienced by the survivor (fear, sadness, despair). However, they recognise it from the perspective of the survivor, and are continuously aware of the difference between themselves and the witness. We describe this as "other-oriented". This doesn't mean that emotional responses should be avoided;

however, those emotions should come from a recognition of what the witness experienced, rather than what the student is experiencing.

Perpetrator testimonies can be used alongside those of victims, survivors and other witnesses in order to promote better understanding of the causes of genocide. However, this needs to be done in a framework that encourages students to identify the challenges posed by these sources. It is especially important when approaching these texts that empathy is "other oriented" (as described above).

Secondary Witnesses The term "secondary witness" describes individuals who give an account of a past event from a personal perspective, but who didn't experience that event themselves (e.g., children and grandchildren of survivors, or creative artists who work with first-person testimonies). However, this term can be confusing as it uses a term ("witness") that has a very specific meaning in this context, to in fact mean something else. The pack does not therefore use the term "secondary witness" and instead refers to "second and subsequent generations", when we are describing the children and grandchildren of survivors.

Research Briefing II
Teaching the Holocaust through "Family Frames

"Family Frames" describes how individual stories are interwoven with those of the people closest to them. For those who arrived in the UK on the Kindertransport, memories of family members from whom they were separated are key to the trauma that motivates the account. This is similar to (and, in important ways, different from) the testimonies of the second and third generation who recount the stories of their parents and grandparents and the impact of growing up as the child or grandchild of a Holocaust survivor. A focus on "Family Frames" can allow us to consider not only the history of the Holocaust, but also its legacy and ongoing impact. It can also help us to think about how Holocaust education might make use of testimony after the survivors.

Teaching of the **Kindertransport** using testimony should:

- make clear the place of the Kindertransport within the history of the Holocaust
- encourage consideration of the "child perspective"
- avoid using the Kindertransport as a way of unequivocally celebrating Britain

Working with the **testimonies of the second generation** should:

- Avoid confusing the testimony of the second generation with the testimony of survivors.
- Be used a complement to survivor testimony (also testimony produced in different media), rather than a substitute for it.
- Ensure the second generation speaker receives adequate briefing and understands that they are: (i) there to tell the story of their parents *as* the story of their parents; (ii) that their own story is also of interest and importance.
- Prepare students by: (i) providing necessary historical context for the particular experiences of the parents of the second generation witness; (ii) engaging with the biography of the second generation witness, alongside that of his or her parents.
- Encouraging a mixture of follow-up questions about the experience of the parent and questions relating to the ongoing impact of the Holocaust.

The full resource pack – **Using Testimony in the** Classroom - explains the Research Briefings in more detail and, through a series of **Lesson Sketches**, shows how these ideas might be applied to different media (video testimony, diaries, poetry, literature, documentary film, theatre, and digital media). The pack is available open access here: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/culturesastestimony