INTRODUCTION

Holocaust Memorial Day offers teachers the opportunity to raise awareness amongst students of all the communities who suffered as a result of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution. Events leading up to and on the day itself create a focal point for young people to reflect on the history of the Holocaust, its repercussions and to consider more recent atrocities.

In keeping with the theme for 2013, Communities Together: Build a Bridge, educational activities might explore ways to remember those communities destroyed by the Holocaust and consider how we can create strong, diverse communities today.

Film interpretations of the Holocaust narrative are a powerful, if controversial, teaching tool within this context. Film Education have recently produced, in partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust, a new teaching resource comprising one DVD of sensitively chosen clips from a wide range of films focusing on the Holocaust and a second disc containing curriculum-focused activities and teachers’ notes. Thinking Film, Thinking History: The Holocaust is available free from Film Education.
SENSITIVE USES OF FILM

Using film to stimulate discussion, research and reflection about the Holocaust is an accessible way into this subject area but one that should be used with sensitivity and awareness of its limitations. Citizenship themes such as the importance of democracy, social responsibility, the dangers of prejudice, stereotyping and racism are illustrated vividly by some of the most successful films about the crimes of the Third Reich and other regimes which perpetrate genocide. The same films, however, often conflate time, create fictional characters and contain historical inaccuracies. When showing such films to young people, it is essential to make clear that these are fictionalised representations of the past which may highlight key ideas or emotions but which cannot be relied upon as an accurate account.

WAYS TO USE FILM

The aim, therefore, is to view historical films as documents to begin an investigation into the study of the Holocaust. If we look at how the film itself works, as well as examining how it purports to tell us about the events of the Holocaust, the result can be a rewarding and thought-provoking journey. A film can capture a feeling of a historical period; it can create an atmosphere and a picture of the past that perhaps, with further historical research and examination of other contemporary art forms, can make that world come to life.

Central to teaching about the Holocaust should be survivor testimony. When exploring the ideas represented in Holocaust films, the use of reliable survivor testimony is crucial to reposition the filmic interpretation alongside a personal story of survival. Produced by the Holocaust Educational Trust and the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation in conjunction with Film Education, Recollections: Eyewitnesses Remember the Holocaust is a BAFTA award winning teaching resource featuring testimonies from Holocaust survivors, liberators, rescuers and aid givers. If your school does not already possess this resource, please contact the Holocaust Educational Trust [www.het.org.uk] for a complimentary copy.
TEACHING GUIDELINES

There is a general consensus amongst Holocaust education providers as to what constitutes good practice at secondary level in this area. These are available in full from the Holocaust education providers outlined in the useful links page but some key points include:

- Avoid the use of graphic images as they dehumanise the victims
- Ensure activities are meaningful and purposeful and do not trivialise the subject (no word searches etc).
- Do not attempt role-play activities. No one can imagine what it was like to live through these atrocities and to try to do so over-simplifies and trivialises the experiences of those who did.
- Focus on stories of individuals. Personalise the lessons with stories from those who experienced the Holocaust first hand.
- Contextualise events historically and avoid romanticising the past.
- Do not make over-simplified parallels with other genocides. Each event is unique with its own history.
- Avoid comparisons of pain. There is no hierarchy of oppression.
- Teach about perpetrators, victims, survivors, rescuers, bystanders and all the groups persecuted by the Nazis.
- Teach about the history of antisemitism.
- Consider the lessons for today.

USEFUL LINKS
http://www.aegistrust.org/
http://www.annefrank.org.uk/
http://www.amnesty.org.uk/
http://www.hedp.org.uk/
http://www.het.org.uk/
http://hmd.org.uk/
http://www.iwm.org.uk/

Film Education is not responsible for the content of external sites.
RELATED FILMS

The following films represent stories related to the Holocaust and other genocides and are accompanied by Film Education resources available at www.filmeducation.org

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas
Relevance: The online resource is aimed at teachers of English at KS3
Certificate: 12A

Freedom Writers
Relevance: The study guide is aimed at teachers of English, Media and Film at Key Stages 3, 4 and AS & A2 level. Teachers of Citizenship, General Studies, History and Politics will also find them useful.
Certificate: 12

The Counterfeiters
Relevance: The study guide is aimed at teachers of Citizenship, History, German, Media/Film at GCSE, AS/A2, Intermediate and Highers.
Certificate: 15

Downfall
Relevance: The study guide is aimed at teachers of History, German, Film Studies at GCSE, AS/A2.
Certificate: 15

The Pianist
Relevance: The study guide is aimed at teachers of History, Film Studies at GCSE, A Level.
Certificate: 15

Schindler’s List
Relevance: The study guide is aimed at teachers of History, Media Studies, Religious and General Studies at GCSE, A Level.
Certificate: 15

Shooting Dogs
Relevance: The study guide is aimed at teachers of English, Film & Media, Citizenship, History, Politics at GCSE, AS/A2.
Certificate: 15

Hotel Rwanda
Relevance: The study guide is aimed at teachers of PHSE, Citizenship, History, Media and Film Studies at KS3, GCSE
Certificate: 12A