

Alicia: My Story

Lesson Plan for Chapter 4

“My First Escape”

TITLE: Melodious Magnitude: The Power of Music during the Holocaust

Alicia Chapter 4, p 28

“In his quiet way, he kept a watchful eye on us and his friends and their families. He came to be loved by the people he visited, both old Buczacz families and new arrivals from neighboring towns and villages. Our town had become the center for all the Jewish people within hundreds of miles.

“And they adored him, this handsome young man who made his rounds almost daily through the streets of the crowded ghetto. The young people even began singing songs Zachary had written. One I remember was a plaintiff song about a grandfather holding his grandson on his lap and telling the young child to always honor and remember his father, who had been killed by the Nazi Germans, by saying the memorial Kaddish.

“Some of Zachary’s songs, and many others, were sung by the young people when they gathered one evening at a friend’s home. I had gone there with Zachary and sat quietly listening to songs of love, brotherhood, and yearning for life. Some songs were in Hebrew, about Eretz Israel, the land of Israel. Sometimes a girl’s sweet voice would start with a joyous tune, only to be interrupted in the middle by a heartbreaking sob. Life seemed so vigorous in these young people. I was moved by the beauty of the music. Yet I was pained by the knowledge that death was so near.”

RATIONALE:

Prior to the annihilation of the Jews, Hitler and the Nazi regime rounded up all of the target groups into Ghettos. These degraded, horrendous places saw much evil, pain, and suffering. However, there was one source of relief and resistance: music. Music kept the hopes of people up and their resolve steady. In this lesson, students will examine the magnitude music had on the Jews in the Ghettos.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE(S):

Students will be able to:

- Define the three major types of music present throughout the Jewish Ghettos during World War II.
- Interpret examples of Jewish WWII music to construct their own Jewish WWII Ghetto-style song.

FLORIDA SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD(S):

SS.912.A.1.2

Utilize a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify author, historical significance, audience, and authenticity to understand a historical period.

SS.912.A.6.3

Analyze the impact of the Holocaust during World War II on Jews as well as other groups.

COMMON CORE STANDARD(S):**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- [Life in the Ghettos](#) – Reading Handout
- [Music in the Holocaust](#) – Worksheet
- [Ofyn Pripetshik](#) – Lyrics Handout / Overhead
- *Never Say You Have Reached the End of the Road*, found: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhOR3AvUea0>
- [Poem Rubric](#) – Handout
- ELMO / Overhead Projector

PREPARATIONS

- Have students read [Life in the Ghettos](#) for homework the night before.
- Load *Never Say You Have Reached the End of the Road* and let it buffer prior to class starting.
- Print all handouts (Music in the Holocaust, Ofyn Pripetshik, Poem Rubric).

LESSON**Introduction:**

1. **Bell work:** Put the students in pairs to answer the question(s): “Why do you listen to music?; What does music mean to you?; How does music reflect one’s life?; What types of music are there?; What is music used for today?” Write students’ answers on the board.
2. **Quote Analysis:** “At its best, [rap] music draws attention to complex dimensions of ghetto life ignored by most Americans. Indeed, gangsta rap’s in-your-face style may do more to force America to confront crucial social problems than a million sermons or political speeches.” ---*Michael Eric Dyson*
3. **Question:** What does this quote say about American rap music? What is the author claiming is the benefit to rap?
4. **Link it to the text:** Today we are going to examine how Jewish people used music in the Ghettos. Do you think it will be similar to why you listen to music? Or will it work like Mr. Dyson describes rap music?

Procedures:

1. Handout [Music in the Holocaust Worksheet](#)

2. Link the students' answers to the material: "Like you, the Jewish people also relied on music for a variety of different reasons. In the ghettos, music served three major purposes: documentation of ghetto life, a diversion from reality, and the upholding of tradition (written on board).

1. Street Songs

- a. Prediction Question: "What do you think street songs addressed?"
- b. About hunger, corrupt administration, hope for freedom, and a call for revolt. These are the songs most closely related to American rap music, pointing out corruption amongst the Jewish Councils (*Judenrat*).

2. Domestic Songs

- a. Ghetto Example: [Ofyn Pripetshik](#)
 - i. What do you think this song was designed to remind people of? What was it designed to explain or share with others? (Guide students towards the idea of education and the Jewish tradition of reading the Torah).
- b. Domestic songs were designed to help Jews remember their heritage. What are some examples of American heritage songs?
- c. American examples range from the "Star Spangled Banner" to "I've Been Working on the Railroad".

3. Partisan Songs (Resistance)

- a. The songs that spread like wildfire throughout the Ghettos. These songs were designed to lift resistance spirits amongst the Jews.
 - i. Play: "Never Say You Have Reached the Final Road"
- b. Who can remember the name of a resistance song in American history? Hint: Slavery (e.g. "O Canaan", "Wade in the Water")

3. Individual Activity: Students will write their own song following the [Poem Rubric](#). Cover rubric explicitly, explaining the expectations of all four grading marks.

Closure:

Exit Ticket: "At this point a lot of you may be wondering where so much came from. After all, the Jews had so little how could they write, remember, and spread music from Ghetto to Ghetto? Well, many Jews were forced to join Ghetto/concentration camp orchestras. Remembering everything you learned today, on a piece of paper I want you to describe why any Jews would agree to join such bands and how you think these Jewish musicians would have been viewed by the rest of the Ghetto population."

Assessment:

- Students will complete the Music in the Holocaust Graphic Organizer in order to show their ability to define the 3 major types of Ghetto music.
- Completion of the Student's Poem will show the student's ability to interpret and use the Jewish Ghetto music examples.
- Exit Ticket Response

EXTENSIONS/MODIFICATIONS FOR DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION:

For ELL Students:

- Provide Handouts for any songs played, place in a group with strong readers.
- Also, provide links to songs and handouts the night before.

Modifications:

- These can be made in which songs are linked to the Jewish songs. For example, the Street Songs can be linked to a contemporary song like Macklemore's "Same Love". As the music scene changes, students may better understand links to different songs.

Extension:

- Have students link each type of song to one of their favorites. Instead of providing Macklemore's example, have them link it themselves and explain why.
- They could also play examples of their song choices and present to the class why it is a Partisan song, Domestic song, etc.

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Zog nit kein mol (*Never Say You Have Reached the End of the Road*)-English subtitles. (2013, March 3). *YouTube*. Retrieved February 24, 2014, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhOR3AvUea0>

ATTACHMENTS

- “Life in the Ghettos”
- “Music in the Holocaust”
- “Music in the Holocaust” Answer Key
- “Oyfn Pripetshik” Lyrics / Overhead
- Poem Rubric

Life in the Ghettos



In the Warsaw ghetto, Jewish children with bowls of soup. Warsaw, Poland, ca. 1940.

— *Institut Pamieci Narodowej*

Life in the ghettos was usually unbearable. Overcrowding was common. One apartment might have several families living in it. Plumbing broke down, and human waste was thrown in the streets along with the garbage. Contagious diseases spread rapidly in such cramped, unsanitary housing. People were always hungry. Germans deliberately tried to starve residents by allowing them to purchase only a small amount of bread, potatoes, and fat. Some residents had some money or valuables they could trade for food smuggled into the ghetto; others were forced to beg or steal to survive. During the long winters, heating fuel was scarce, and many people lacked adequate clothing. People weakened by hunger and exposure to the cold became easy victims of disease; tens of thousands died in the ghettos from illness, starvation, or cold. Some individuals killed themselves to escape their hopeless lives.

Personal Account:

“The hunger in the ghetto was so great, was so bad, that people were laying on the streets and dying, little children went around begging, and, uh, everyday you walked out in the morning, you see somebody is laying dead, covered with newspapers or with any kind of blanket they found, and you found...those people used to carry the dead people in little wagons, used to bring them down to the cemetery and bury them in mass graves. And every day thousands and thousands died just from malnutrition because the Germans didn't give anything for the people in the ghetto to eat. There was no such thing. You can't walk in and buy anything, or getting any rations. It's your hard luck. If you don't have it, you die, and that's what it was.”

Abraham Lewent, Born 1924, Warsaw, Poland
Interview 1989

Name: _____

Music in the Holocaust

1. Complete the definitions as we move through the lecture.

	Definition
Street Songs	
Domestic Songs	
Partisan Songs	

2. Directions: Using the Definitions from above, where would you place each song type? Explain why you put that song in that category.

Documentation of Ghetto Life	Oral Newspapers	Upholding of Tradition

Music in the Holocaust Answer Key

1. Complete the definitions as we move through the lecture.

	Definition
Street Songs	About hunger, corrupt administration, hope for freedom, and a call for revolt. These are the songs most closely related to American rap music, pointing out corruption amongst the Jewish Councils (<i>Judenrat</i>).
Domestic Songs	Designed to help Jewish children remember their heritage, their culture, and their shared history. These songs are most closely related to songs like “Working on the Railroad”.
Partisan Songs	Designed to lift the spirits of the Jewish people in the camps, these songs spoke of resistance movements. Can be linked to songs sung by American slaves in which they voiced their resistance and informed other slaves how to escape.

2. *Directions:* Using the Definitions from above, where would you place each song type? Explain why you put that song in that category.

Documentation of Ghetto Life	Oral Newspapers	Upholding of Tradition
Street Songs	Partisan Songs	Domestic Songs

Oyfn Pripetshik

Oh, the fire burns in the fireplace, and the room has heat.
And the rabbi teaches all the little ones all their ABCs;
And the rabbi teaches all the little ones, all their ABCs.
See now, little ones, listen children, don't forget it, please.
Say it once for me and say it once again, All your ABCs.

Poem Rubric

Directions: Your poem will relate to one of the three main categories of Jewish music. Meaning, they will either be a street song, domestic song, or partisan song. The poem should have some kind of rhyming scheme and describe a realistic difficulty or trouble facing an individual in the Ghetto.

Note: You do not need to write (Name); that is so you know where to put your name, date, period, etc.

Here is an example of how your paper should look:

(Name) John Smith
 (Date) 02/14/14
 (Period) 8th Period
 (Type of Song) Street Song

(Title) *Soon we will be...*
 Soon we will be
 Free as free can be
 So you must push me
 And I will push you
 Through the gloom
 And our impending doom
 Through the starvation
 Towards our own nation

	10 Points	5 Points	0 Points	
Trouble/Issue	Poem described a realistic trouble that was discussed in class.	Poem described an unrealistic problem.	Poem did not address a problem faced by people in the Ghettos.	/10
Poem Length	8-10 Lines	<5 Lines	<2 Lines	/10
Title	Title represents the poem.	Title does not represent the poem	Title makes no sense at all/no title was written	/10
Type of Song	Poem accurately represents a domestic song, street song, or partisan song.	Poem closely represents a domestic song, street song, or partisan song.	Poem does not represent one of the three types of songs.	/10
				Total Score /40

Teacher Comments: