

LESSON PLAN: HEDY AND HER MEMORY BOOK



This lesson plan is aimed at KS2 primary school or Second level (curriculum for excellence) students, aged 7-11, and KS3 secondary school or Third/Fourth level (curriculum for excellence) students, aged 11-14 with differentiated text for older / younger students.

This lesson aims to introduce students to the Holocaust through the story of one survivor, Hedy, and her memory book and, in keeping with the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2014, by looking at the journeys Hedy and her book undertook.

Before you teach this lesson, it is recommended that you read through the entire lesson plan. Please choose which elements and options are more appropriate for your students, or split this plan over two (or more) lessons. **Please read through this plan in advance so you can tailor the lesson to your students depending on their age, aptitude, ability and interest.** There is an accompanying PowerPoint presentation; you may wish to edit the presentation depending on which elements you choose.

This resource is designed to be either a stand-alone lesson, or an inspiration/ starting point for you that can open the door for further learning and that can link into the wider curriculum; suggestions are given at the end of this plan.

What you will need:

- computer/laptop and projector and screen. It is recommended that you download the PowerPoint presentation in advance.
- a whiteboard or flipchart and pens.
- these notes.
- the students will need writing equipment, paper, pens etc.
- the students will also need a blank exercise or scrapbook (either one each or one per class).
- the students are encouraged to bring in photos to include in their memory books.
- you may wish to use YouTube to show your students video clips of Hedy
- luggage tags (optional – these could be purchased from a stationary shop, you could print these out from the PowerPoint presentation, or your students could create them themselves)

This resource has been prepared with the support and co-operation of

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Memory book

Create a memory book

This activity can either be done individually, where each student creates their own memory book, or as a whole class or in small groups, which encourages students to work together. If you have sufficient time, you could devote a whole lesson to this activity, or begin it at the end of one lesson, asking your students to bring items (such as photographs) to the next lesson.

Give each child/ group/ class a blank exercise book/scrapbook and ask them to think about what they would put in it to remind them of the past year/ their class/ their lives so far. You could also encourage them to think about what they would include if it were a different book – so if you are doing this individually, ask your students what different things they would include if it were a class book, and vice-versa.

You could prompt them:

- photographs
- drawings
- lists – eg their friends, their favourite books/ films
- family tree

Once they have discussed what they are going to put into their memory book, allow them time to create their book. This is a good opportunity to allow your students to be creative – you could encourage them to draw or paint.

You could encourage your students to swap their memory books with their friends, and write messages or draw pictures for each other.

Allow your students plenty of time to build up their memory book but make sure that they do not fill the book yet.

Introduce Hedy's memory book

(note: Hedy is pronounced Hay-dee)

Use the accompanying PowerPoint presentation to introduce Hedy's memory book to your students (slides 2-12). Discuss the book with your students, show them the pages and ask them questions such as:

- who wrote/ drew/ took this?
- what is the picture of?
- who is in the photograph?
- what does it represent? Or what does it tell us?

Repeat this for as many of the pages of the memory book as your time allows or as long as your students are interested! You do not need to consider all of the slides; just ensure that your students have an idea of what was in Hedy's memory book.

Then ask your students **who does the memory book belong to?** Can they tell who the owner is from the pages of the book? Do they think it is a boy or a girl? How old is he/she? Where does she live? How can we tell?

Getting to know Hedy

Show your students slide 14. Tell them that the memory book belongs to the girl in this photo. Her name is Hedy. Can your students work out how old the photo is? She was 11 years old, so the same age/close in age to the students when she was given the memory book as a birthday present in 1939. Hedy lived in a city called Oradea, which was part of Romania. Her classmates, family and friends all contributed to her memory book; some wrote messages, some drew pictures, others wrote poems, in Romanian and Hungarian. Look back at some of the pictures from the memory book now that you know a little bit more about Hedy.

Can you tell what sort of things she and her friends enjoyed doing?
Can we work out any more information about Hedy and her family or friends?

Hiding the Memory Book

In September 1940 as part of the war, Hedy's town became part of Hungary and was renamed Nagyvarad. In March 1944, when Hedy was 16, the German Nazis took over Hungary and entered Nagyvarad. Hedy knew that because she was Jewish the Nazis would take her away. She was worried about her memory book so she took it to her aunty, who had married a non-Jew so might be safe from imprisonment.

Ask your students to think about a safe place they would leave their memory book if they knew they were going away. Think about the various options, for example:

- you could choose a person who you trust – but what if they get taken away too?
- would you bury the book in your garden or a park – but what if someone else (or a dog) finds it?
- would you take the book to a bank and ask them to look after it – but they might not understand how important it is to you?

How important is it to find a safe place for your memory book? The one you have been making in class has just taken one lesson but Hedy had her memory book for five years. Imagine if you had started your memory book five years ago. Think of all the things that would be in the memory book. Would it be more important to find a safe place for your memory book?

Explain: what happened next

Below is a detailed description of Hedy's story, for teachers and students at KS3 or Third/Fourth level (aged 11-14), and a briefer version, suitable for KS2 or First level students (aged 7-11). PLEASE read both versions and choose either the one appropriate to your students or use the information to tailor a version of Hedy's story which your students will be able to understand. Hedy's full life story is available on the HMD website: hmd.org.uk/lifestories

Concise version:

First the Nazis gathered all the Jews together and made them live altogether in a sort of a prison called a ghetto – Hedy had to live with 14 other people in one room. Then the Nazis took all the Jews on a train, cramming 70 people into one cattle truck. They were given just one bucket of water for all of them to drink, and one bucket to use as a toilet for the next three days. Some people did not survive the journey. Hedy and her parents arrived at Auschwitz, where the Nazis took the people they thought were different and not as good as them. Some people, including Hedy's parents, were killed as soon as they arrived at Auschwitz. Hedy managed to survive, even though she was given very little food and she had very little clothing. Later, after many months, the British, American, Russian and French soldiers freed the prisoners from the camps as the war ended. Hedy managed to make her way back home and she found out that her parents did not survive. She found her aunt, and was reunited with her memory book.

Detailed version:

The Jews living in Oradea (then called Nagyvarad as it was under Hungarian control) were taken to a ghetto and they were forbidden from taking their valuables with them. Many hundreds of people were tortured to confess where they had hidden any valuables, and some of these people died from their beatings. Food was in short supply in the ghetto, and people were crammed into rooms – at least 15 people per room. After three weeks the ghettos were emptied and the people, including Hedy and her parents, were pushed into cattle-cars. There were around 70 people in each cattle-car and they were given just one bucket of water to drink and one bucket to use as a toilet for the next three days. Many of the people did not survive the journey. Hedy and her parents were separated as soon as they arrived in Auschwitz concentration camp; Hedy never saw her parents again. The food at Auschwitz was awful and just about enough to keep a human alive.

This is how Hedy described her first meal at Auschwitz:

'big barrels of what they called soup was brought to us...We didn't eat for three days, four days almost... but it was not a soup that you ever thought of as soup, it was what we know as dishwater, some kind of a liquid that had twigs in it and sand in it and pebbles in it... it tasted terrible and then I reminded myself if this is all we get, if there is some nourishment in it, I must force myself and drink it and so I held my nose and I cried and I swallowed and swallowed and swallowed'

After some weeks Hedy was selected, together with her cousin Eva, to work in factories making weapons as slave labourers, and it was from here that she was liberated by American soldiers in April 1945. She was taken to a refugee centre, and,

eventually, back to Oradea, which had now been returned to Romanian control. When she returned home she discovered that her parents had been murdered by the Nazis and so her aunt looked after her. Hedy was reunited with her memory book.

Reflection

Allow your students time to reflect on the story they have just heard, and to ask any questions they may have.

When they have done so, ask them some questions about how Hedy would have felt.

- How do you think Hedy felt when she came home and was given her memory book back?
- Do you think Hedy wrote anything in the memory book for the time she was away? What might she have written? What else could she have done? (she could have left some pages blank. Why?)
- Do you think she would have continued with her book once she was back home?

Offer your students the opportunity to add to their own memory books. Perhaps they will want to add something about Hedy's story? They could draw a picture to represent Hedy's story, or the story of Hedy's memory book.

What happened next

Back in Oradea, Hedy fell in love with Imre, who she had met years earlier at a school dance. They got married in 1947, when Hedy was 19 (Slide 15). They decided to leave Romania, which was now coming under communist rule, but they had to do so illegally, so Hedy was unable to take her memory book with her. Hedy and Imre went to Canada – because it was the first country to grant them visas. In the 1960s, Hedy was able to visit her aunty and she collected her memory book and brought it back to Canada with her.

For KS3 or Third/fourth level students (aged 11-14): Ask students in pairs to discuss the book and what happened next. What questions might they want to ask Hedy if they had a chance? And can they suggest what her answers might be? Try to keep the questions focused on Hedy's relationship with her memory book, suggested questions are:

- why didn't you take your memory book with you when you left Oradea to go to Canada?
- did you miss your book?
- did you start a new book?
- why is the memory book so important to you?
- do you still have it? (the answer is yes!)

For KS2/Second level students (aged 7-11): Ask your students how Hedy would have felt leaving her memory book?

Why did she go bring it back with her to Canada eventually? Did she miss the book?

Write something for Hedy's memory book

Ask your students to write/ draw/ paint something for Hedy's memory book. Allow them some time to create an appropriate message for Hedy.

Life now

Please note this activity is recommended for older students only.

When Imre died, Hedy decided to share her lifestory and went into schools in Canada to talk about her experiences. She still goes to schools, taking her memory book with her.

Ask your students why Hedy was only able to go into schools once Imre had died? Why is it helpful for Hedy to take her memory book into the schools with her?

You can show your students interviews with Hedy conducted by Canadian school students. It is recommended that you watch the clips yourself first to ensure they are appropriate for your students: <http://www.tikvah.ro/en/holocaust/survivors-testimonies.html>

Take a step

Explain that we have been learning about just some of the multitude of journeys that people were forced to undertake, in fear of what would be found at the end. What can your students do to take a step on their own journey to commemorate HMD?

Options:

- ask them what they would like to do!
- they could (under your supervision) light a candle
- if they have created a memory book, perhaps they would like to share these with the rest of their class/ year group/ school/family
- if they have written something for Hedy's memory book, perhaps they would like to send it to her
- whatever action they choose to take, they can share their action with everyone else who has taken a step for Holocaust Memorial Day through a special website: **journeys.hmd.org.uk**
- The logo for 'taking a step' is a luggage label. You could purchase luggage labels from a stationary shop, or use the last slide in the PowerPoint presentation to print a luggage tag for each student. Ask each of your students to write the step they will take on a luggage label. These can then be displayed in your classroom, as a reminder to everyone to take their step, or can be made into a display for an assembly (for example). If you choose this option, please remember to take a photo of

your display and send it to HMDT; this can be the step you take:
hmd.org.uk/letusknow and **journeys.hmd.org.uk**

Closing Stages

Leave time at the end of your lesson for your students to ask any questions, or to reflect on what they have learnt. Do this with a plenary session, asking them questions such as:

- what three facts have you learnt in this session?
- what is your favourite part of Hedy's memory book?
- (apart from this memory book) how would you choose to record your memories?

We have held this lesson today as 27 January is Holocaust Memorial Day. This is a Day that has been established by 46 countries around the world for everyone to remember the Holocaust and all victims of Nazi Persecution. We also remember genocides that have happened since then. The purpose of looking at Hedy's story and the story of her memory book is to remember the past to create a safer, better future.

What next:

- you may wish to carry some of these activities over to the next lesson, particularly activity 8, creating something for Hedy's memory book, or part of activity 6, adding something to their own memory book about Hedy's story.
- for older students, you could watch some (or more) of Hedy's story. This primary source is a great way to engage your students, and having studied Hedy's lifestory it will give your students a good insight if they watch a clip of her telling her own story. It is recommended that you watch the clips yourself first to ensure they are appropriate for your students:
<http://www.tikvah.ro/en/holocaust/survivors-testimonies.html>
- Once started, the memory book is something that you can return to at any point in the future. It may be that you return to the memory books after a special event, such as a Holocaust Memorial Day assembly, after a half-term holiday, or sports day.
- The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has produced assemblies that are suitable for this age group to commemorate the Holocaust. These can be found here:
hmd.org.uk/education

Suggestions for further reading

For younger students:

- *Number the stars*, by Lois Lowry
- *The Promise: The Moving Story of a Family in the Holocaust*, by Eva Schloss
- *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*, by Judith Kerr

For older students (in addition to those for younger readers):

- *The Diary of Anne Frank*, by Anne Frank
- *Once*, by Moris Gleitzman
- *Now*, by Moris Gleitzman
- *Then*, by Moris Gleitzman
- *The Book Thief*, by Markus Zusak

Further reading for teachers:

(please note these books are NOT recommended for your students)

- *The Holocaust*, by Martin Gilbert
- *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust*, by Lynn Smith
- *Auschwitz, the Nazis and the Final Solution*, by Laurence Rees
- *Staying Human Through the Holocaust*, by Terez Mozes