

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST THROUGH LITERATURE



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NON-FICTION

- Bartoletti, Susan C. *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow*. New York: Scholastic Nonfiction, 2005. Print (grades 7-9) – Germany; how Hitler gained the loyalty, trust and passion of Germany's young people; includes interviews; true stories; photographs.
- Borden, Louise, and Allan Drummond. *The Journey That Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005. Print. (grades 6-8) – Picture book, France, Through archival material and diaries, the true story of Hans and Margaret Rey's escape in 1940 from the advancing German army.
- Fishkin, Rebecca L. *Heroes of the Holocaust*. Mankato, Minn: Compass Point Books, 2011. Print. (Ages 12 and up) – Presents true stories about Jews who resisted and fought the Nazis and the heroic gentiles who helped them, photographs.
- Hopkinson, Deborah, *We Had to be Brave: Escaping the Nazis on the Kindertransport*. New York: Scholastic, 2020. (Grades 6 and up). Non-fiction does not get any better than this. Will appeal to tech-savvy young readers by providing additional links and references. Though solidly middle-grade book, this is a succinct and accessible summary of the beginnings of the Nazi Party and Hitler's rise to power, making it appropriate for readers well into high school.
- Hoose, Phillip. *Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2015. Print. (grades 8-12) – Denmark, true story, resistance. Hours of interview material present the compelling story of resistance and national pride of a small band of teenaged boys.
- Volavkova, Hana, ed. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezyn Concentration Camp, 1942-1944*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964. Print. (All ages) Poetry and drawings.
- Kaplan, William, and Shelley Tanaka. *One More Border*. Vancouver: Groundwood Books, 1998. Print. (grades 3-5) – Picture book, Lithuania, true story of one family's escape from war-

torn Europe.

Kaufman, Lola Rein, and Lois Metzger. *The Hidden Girl: a True Story of the Holocaust*.

Turtleback Books, 2010. Print. (Grades 3-8) – Set in Poland and based on a true story of a young girl’s survival.

Levine, Karen. *Hana's Suitcase*. Morton Grove, Ill: Albert Whitman, 2003. Print. (grades 5-9) – Biography of a Czech girl who died in Auschwitz told in alternating chapters with an account of how the curator of a Japanese Holocaust center learned about her life after Hana’s suitcase was sent to her.

Leyson, Leon, Marilyn J. Harran, and Elisabeth B. Leyson. *The Boy on the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible... on Schindler's List*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2015. Print. (Grades 4-7) – Memoir of the youngest of Jew on Schindler’s list.

McCann, Michelle R. *Luba: The Angel of Bergen-Belsen*. Illus. Ann E. Marshall. Berkeley, Calif: Tricycle Press, 2003. Print. (grades 3-5) – Picture book, Bergen-Belsen, the true story of a an everyday hero and the children who gave her a reason to live, extensive historical note.

Rappaport, Doreen. *Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust*. Somerville, Mass: Candlewick, 2013. Print. (grades 8-12) – Chronicle of well-researched accounts of heroic Jews who organized to help others and sabotage the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Schroeder, Peter W, and Dagmar Schroeder-Hildebrand. *Six Million Paper Clips: The Making of a Children's Holocaust Memorial*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben Publishing, 2004. Print (grades 3-7) – Picture book, teaching tolerance.

Stille, Darlene R. *Architects of the Holocaust*. Mankato, MN: Compass Point Books, 2011. Print. (Ages 12 and up) – True story, explanation of deeds of key leaders of German government and Nazi regime, photographs.

Taylor, Peter L, and Christos Nicola. *The Secret of Priest's Grotto: A Holocaust Survival Story*. Minneapolis MN: Kar-Ben Pub, 2011. Print. (grades 5-12) – Picture book, Ukraine, true story, survivor.

Wood, Angela. *Holocaust: The Events and Their Impact on Real People*. London: Dorling Kindersley, 2007. (Grades 7-12) – True story, explanation of complex backdrop that allowed the Holocaust to occur. Survivor stories, photographs.

FICTION

PICTURE BOOKS

Bunting, Eve. *Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust*. Illus. Stephen Gammell
Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989. Print. (Grades K-3) – Allegory, animals

of the forest learn to stick together after the Terrible Things start taking one type of animal away after another.

Hesse, Karen. *The Cats in Krasinski Square*. Illus. Wendy Watson. New York: Scholastic Press, 2004. Print. (Grades 2-5) – Picture book, Poland, resistance two Jewish sisters ingeniously fight the Nazi occupation of Poland, extensive historical note.

Hoestlandt, Jo, and Mark Polizzotti, trans. *Star of Fear, Star of Hope*. Illus. Johanna Kang. New York: Walker, 1995. Print. (Grades 3-5) – Picture book, France, Nine year old Helen is confused by the disappearance of her Jewish friend during the German occupation.

Lehman-Wilzig, Tami, and Craig Orback. *Keeping the Promise: A Torah's Journey*. Minneapolis, Minn: Kar-Ben Publ, 2005. Print. (grades K-3) – Picture book, The Netherlands, Auschwitz, space, the journey of a Torah scroll from a Dutch rabbi to a Jewish boy, to Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon who died on space shuttle Columbia.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Butterfly*. New York: Philomel Books, 2000. Print. (Grades 3-5) – During the Nazi occupation of France a girl's mother hides a Jewish family and tries to help them escape to freedom, based on author's family, Author's note.

Wiviott, Meg, and Josée Bisailon. *Benno and the Night of Broken Glass*. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben Pub, 2010. Print. (Grades 4-7) – Picture book, Germany, true story, the story of Kristallnacht through the eyes of a cat.

NOVELS

Arato, Rona. *The Ship to Nowhere: On Board the Exodus*. Toronto, ON: Second Story Press, 2016. Print. (ages 8-12) – The true story of the ill-fated voyage of the *Exodus 1947*. A fusion of stories from real passengers and fictitious characters. Photographs and sidebars.

Bartoletti, Susan C. *Boy Who Dared*. New York: Scholastic, 2018. Print. (Grades 5-7) – One episode from *Hitler Youth* is fleshed out into a full novel. Told through a series of flashbacks.

Behar, Ruth. *Letters From Cuba*. New York: Penguin Random House. 2020 (Middle Grade). Epistolary novel offers unique perspective of Holocaust. Young girl flees Poland to join father in Cuba, builds new life while working to raise money to rescue the rest of the family.

- Blankman, Anne. *Conspiracy of Blood and Smoke*. New York: Balzar and Bray, 2015. Print. (Grades 9-12) – Germany. From German POV. Second in series. A blend of history and fiction.
- Blankman, Anne. *Prisoner of Night and Fog*. New York: Balzar and Bray, 2015. Print. (Grades 9-12) – Germany. From German POV. A blend of history and fiction. Set in 1930s Berlin a young German girl devoted to her Uncle Adolf, meets and falls in love with Jewish boy.
- DeWoskin, Rachel. *Someday We Will Fly*. New York: Penguin Books, 2019. (Grades 9-12) -- Jewish family flees Warsaw for Shanghai in 1940. Unique Holocaust escape story.
- Fukuda, Andrew. *This Light Between Us: A Novel of World War II*. New York: Tor Teen, 2019. (Grades 9-12) -- Letters between unlikely pen pals – a Japanese American boy and a French Jewish girl.
- Gardner, Sally, and Julian Crouch. *Maggot Moon*. Somerville, Mass: Candlewick Press, 2014. Print. (Grades 7-12) – Allegory. An alternative history set in a mash-up of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.
- Gerstein, Mordicai. *The Old Country*. Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2006. Print. (Grades 3-5) – Allegory with fairy tale/magical elements. In the Old Country, where anything is possible, Gisella stares a moment too long into the eyes of a fox, and she and the fox exchange shapes. Gisella's quest to get her body back takes her on a journey across a war-ravaged country.
- Hesse, Monica. *Girl in the Blue Coat*. Boston: Little Brown. 2017. Print. (Grades 7-12) – The Netherlands, mystery, a teen-aged girl in the Dutch resistance tries to save a Jewish girl in a blue coat.
- Lowry, Lois. *Number the Stars*. New York: Yearling book, 1989. Print. (Grades 5-7) – Set in 1943 during German's occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old girl helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.
- Nielsen, Jennifer A. *Resistance*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2018. Print. (Grades 3-7) – Set in Poland during German occupation, Chaya joins resistance and works as a courier smuggling food, supplies and information into Poland's ghettos, eventually taking part in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.
- Preus, Margi. *Shadow on the Mountain*. New York: Amulet Books, 2014. Print. (Grads 5-9) – Based on real life story. Fourteen year old boy joins Norwegian resistance, working for five years as courier and spy.
- Roy, Jennifer R. *Yellow Star*. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2012. Print. (Grades 5-7) –

Novel in verse. Based on true story of a young girl's survival in the Lodz ghetto in Poland.

Spiegelman, Art, and Art Spiegelman. *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History*.

New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1991. Print. (Grades 9-12) – Graphic novel. Author-illustrator traces his father's imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp.

Sepetys, Ruta. *Salt to the Sea*. New York: Puffin Books, 2017. Print. (Grades 7-12) – Fictionalization of real-life tragedy of the sinking of the Wilhelm Gustloff. Set in winter in 1945 in East Prussia, four teenagers, four secrets. Told in alternating chapters. Of particular interest is Alfred Frick, a German soldier.

Wein, Elizabeth. *Rose Under Fire*. New York: Hyperion, 2013. Print. (Grades 9-12) – Companion book to *Code Name Verity*. When young American pilot Rose Justice is captured by the Nazis and sent to Ravenbrück, she finds hope in the impossible through the loyalty, bravery, and friendship of fellow prisoners. Deals with medical experiments (Ravensbrück Rabbits).

Wilson, Kip, *White Rose*. New York: Versify, 2019. Print. (YA) – Novel in verse. Based on the anti-Nazi political activist Sophie Scholl, a founding member of the White Rose a non-violent resistance group in Nazi Germany. Scholl was hanged by the Nazis in 1943 at the age of twenty-one.

Wiviott, Meg. *Paper Hearts*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2016. Print (Grades 7-12) – Novel in verse. The true story of a group of young women who were prisoners in Auschwitz.

Yolen, Jane. *Briar Rose*. New York: Tor, 2016. Print. – Allegory. Young woman grows up hearing her grandmother tell and retell a frightening version of "Sleeping Beauty" legend and realizes, upon grandmother's death, that the fairy tale offers a clue to grandmother's story and follows the truth to the Nazi extermination camp Chelmno.

Yolen, Jane. *The Devil's Arithmetic*. New York: Puffin Books, 1988. Print. (Grades 5-7) – A young girl resents the traditions of her Jewish heritage until time travel places her in the middle of a small Jewish village in Nazi-occupied Poland.

Yolen, Jane. *Mapping the Bones*. New York: Philomel Books, 2018. Print. (Grades 9 & up) – Using structure of "Hansel and Gretel" fourteen year old twins Chaim and Gittel escape Łódź Ghetto with their parents and another family, but are separated and find themselves with a band of partisans in Łagiewniki Forest, and then in the fictional concentration camp Sobanek where the twins are subjected to gruesome medical experiments. "Gittel Remembers" chapters are told from an adult pov, providing relief and foreshadowing of survival.

Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. Print. (Grades 8-12) –

Trying to make sense of the horrors of WWII, Death relates the story of Liesel, a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors.

Adult Books appropriate for teens:

Schindler's List, Thomas Keneally
Night, Elie Wiesel
Lilac Girls, Martha Hall Kelly
All the Light We Cannot See, Anthony Doerr
In the Garden of Beasts, Erik Larson
Survival in Auschwitz, Primo Levi
In the Mouth of the Wolf, Rose Zar and Eric Kimmel
Auschwitz Lullaby, Mario Escobar

Websites with MORE books:

<https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=11586>

<http://cblfd.org/2016/05/using-graphic-novels-in-education-teaching-the-holocaust-with-comics/>

<https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/subject-reading-list/holocaust-books-for-middle-grade-readers>

<https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/subject-reading-list/holocaust-books-for-young-adults>

<https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/subject-reading-list/holocaust-books-for-children>

<https://www.usmmm.org/collections/bibliography/childrens-books>