



**Movies that Matter: Film Study & Social Justice**  
**“Blessed is the Match”**

Teacher Resources & Lesson Plans



## **Acknowledgments**

The following curriculum materials were arranged by the Mizel Museum Education Department under the supervision of Georgina Kolber, Managing Director and Penny Nisson, Director of Education.

These resources were developed by Dr. Joie Norby Lê, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and Josh Madrid, Education Associate, in partnership with the University of Denver.

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## **Movies that Matter: Film Study & Social Justice**

### **“Blessed is the Match”**

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#### **Museum Introduction:**

The Mizel Museum, an educational, nonprofit organization, is Denver’s only museum that addresses today’s social justice issues through the lens of Jewish history and values. We encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to celebrate diversity and equality and to combat discrimination and hatred. Our programs, events, and exhibits address these and other social issues and encourage positive change in our communities. Our museum is dedicated to fostering cross-cultural understanding, combatting racism, and promoting social justice. We achieve our mission through educational programming, events, and exhibits that connect universal Jewish values to the larger world.

#### **Miryam Brand Films:**

Miryam Brand was a Holocaust survivor and a dedicated volunteer of the Mizel Museum who devoted much of her passion and energy to education. In her memory, her family has provided the Mizel Museum with the opportunity to host a film program each year for schools and communities. A Miryam Brand film reveals the lived experiences of survivors of the Holocaust or of those whose dedicated their lives to the liberation of the Jews during the Holocaust. Each selected film reminds us of the significance of this historical event, and in an effort to continue educating the public about the Holocaust, provides a distinct message about what it means to stand up for others to ensure it never happens again.

#### **Unit Background:**

The study of films to understand the depth and complexity of significant events in history allows students to interact with primary source materials in meaningful ways. The narrative focus of film documentaries can share evocative stories of strength, survival and courage, all key themes reflected in the study of social justice issues. The following film has been carefully selected to emphasize meaningful historical events. It focuses on a key individual who has made the cause to stand up for themselves and others their life’s work, demonstrating remarkable bravery, initiative and resilience. This film addresses the importance of becoming civically engaged in our communities, cultures and countries to positively impact those affected by the most prevalent social justice issues throughout history and today.

#### **“Blessed is the Match” (2008)**

In the poetry and writing of Hannah Senesh comes the voice of a young woman who thoughtfully explored the themes of social justice in her work. From her first diary entries at the age of 13, to one of her last poems written during her incarceration nine years later, Hannah became a natural storyteller and witness to one of the most significant events in history. In

1939, at the age of 18, Hannah immigrated to Palestine as anti-Semitism began to take hold of Hungary. Once there, she was educated at the Nahalal Agricultural School for Girls, a departure from the intellectual path her mother, Catherine Senesh, hoped for her. After she finished her schooling, she moved to Kibbutz Sdot Yam, a primitive community established in Caesarea. Her life was less than ideal and her writing once again echoed sentiments of discontent. During that time, Hungary allied with Germany during the war and anti-Semitic legislation impacted the Jewish community. In 1943, Hannah chose to volunteer for a mission for the British Army to help liberate Jews in Central Europe and was trained in Palestine to become a paratrooper. In 1944, at the age of 23, she parachuted into Yugoslavia behind enemy lines and along with three other resistance fighters, crossed the border into Hungary where they were almost immediately captured and imprisoned. Hannah was eventually executed six months later. Developed from the Senesh family archives of writing, interviews and photographs, this film evokes the power of one woman's ability to take action in the most profound way. Considered a heroine in Israel, her poetry is widely read and memorialized. In this story, various themes of courage and social justice are brought to life in a biopic about the power of a young woman willing to fight for a meaningful cause.

### **Implications for Unit Study:**

The Mizel Museum's goal is to provide a cohesive, educational experience that puts social justice issues into context and empowers students to confront hatred and bigotry. Through the study of documentary films, students can recognize how social change is the result of continual advocacy. These films also help promote understanding and empathy for others, in particular those who are disenfranchised or the object of discrimination and oppression. This particular film depicts the individual and collective struggle to make progressive change and demonstrates how human rights activism is rooted in dedication and personal sacrifice. The aim is to motivate students to act, and, ultimately, to help mold a responsible participant in civil society who will continue to combat bigotry and hatred today and in the future.

### **Key Terms & Definitions:**

<b>Vocabulary Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Identity</b>	A set of personal characteristics both physical and emotion by which an individual can be recognized.
<b>Religion</b>	A set of beliefs, values, and practices based on the teaching of a spiritual figure.
<b>Persecution</b>	The act of singling out an individual or a group and directing physical or emotion abuse on them.
<b>Holocaust</b>	A Greek term meaning "Sacrifice by Fire" used to describe the key event in world history that saw the extermination of 6 million Jewish and other people during World War II.

<b>Threat</b>	A person or thing that is regarded as dangerous or likely to inflict harm
<b>Nazi</b>	A member of the National Socialist German Worker's Party founded in 1919 and became a political power under Adolf Hitler in 1933. The word Nazi is often associated with brutality, racism, and tyranny.
<b>Refugee</b>	A person who has fled a given area due to dangerous conditions whether physical or political.
<b>Refuge</b>	A place of shelter or protection.
<b>Europe</b>	A landmass lying between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, separated from Asia by the Urals Mountains on the east and the Caucasus Mountains, the Black and Caspian seas on the Southeast.
<b>Righteous</b>	Acting in an upright, moral, virtuous way
<b>Brave</b>	Having and showing courage in the face of danger, pain or difficult circumstances such as the Holocaust
<b>Genocide</b>	The systemic destruction of all or a significant part of a racial, ethnic religious or national group.
<b>Upstander</b>	A person who stands up for his or her beliefs and does the right thing even if they are alone and facing danger.
<b>Bystander</b>	A person who is present but not taking part; watching but not offering help to a victim
<b>Collective Memories</b>	Refers to the shared pool of information held in the memories of two or more members of a group
<b>Jewish people</b>	The Jewish people are not a race but a cultural and religious group with strong historical ties.
<b>Resilience</b>	The ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens
<b>Systematic</b>	Using a careful system or method or done according to a system
<b>Liberation</b>	The act or process of freeing someone or something from another's control : the act of liberating someone or something
<b>Totalitarian</b>	Controlling the people of a country in a very strict way with complete power that cannot be opposed
<b>Vigilant</b>	Carefully noticing problems or signs of danger
<b>Anti-semitism</b>	Hostility towards or prejudice against Jews.

## Colorado Academic Unit Standards

Content Area	Grade Level	6th Grade
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)	GLE Code
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze and interpret historical sources to ask and research historical questions</li> <li>Human and physical systems vary and interact</li> <li>Compare multiple systems of government</li> </ul>	SS09-GR.6-S.1-GLE.1 SS09-GR.6-S.2-GLE.2 SS09-GR.6-S.4-GLE.2
Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring the thinking of self and others is a disciplined way to maintain awareness</li> <li>Assumptions can be concealed, and require identification and evaluation</li> </ul>	RWC10-GR.6-S.4-GLE.3 RWC10-GR.6-S.4-GLE.2
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical thinking in the arts transfers to multiple lifelong endeavors</li> </ul>	VA09-Gr.6-S.4-GLE.1

Content Area	Grade Level	7th Grade
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)	GLE Code
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas and themes within regions of the Eastern Hemisphere and their relationships with one another</li> <li>Compare how various nations define the rights, responsibilities, and roles of citizens</li> <li>Regions have different issues and perspectives</li> <li>Different forms of government and international organizations and their influence in the world community</li> </ul>	SS09-GR.7-S.1-GLE.2 SS09-GR.7-S.4-GLE.1 SS09-GR.7-S.2-GLE.2 SS09-GR.7-S.4-GLE.2
Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose, tone, and meaning in word choices influence literary, persuasive, and informational texts</li> </ul>	RWC10-GR.7-S.2-GLE.3

Content Area	Grade Level	8th Grade
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)	GLE Code
Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A variety of response strategies clarifies meaning or messages</li> <li>Quality reasoning relies on supporting evidence in media</li> </ul>	RWC10-GR.8-S.1-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.8-S.4-GLE.3
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual arts are valuable for a variety of art and non-art related lifelong endeavors</li> </ul>	VA09-Gr.8-S.4-GLE.1

Content Area	Grade Level	High School
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)	GLE Code
Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Validity of a message is determined by its accuracy and relevance</li> <li>Listening critically to comprehend a speaker's message requires mental and physical strategies to direct and maintain attention</li> <li>Logical arguments distinguish facts from opinions; and evidence defines reasoned judgment</li> <li>Complex situations require critical thinking across multiple disciplines</li> </ul>	RWC10-GR.11-S.1-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.9-S.1-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.12-S.4-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.11-S.4-GLE.2

Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the historical method of inquiry to ask questions, evaluate primary and secondary sources, critically analyze and interpret data, and develop interpretations defended by evidence</li> <li>• The key concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, complexity, unity and diversity over time</li> <li>• The significance of ideas as powerful forces throughout history</li> <li>• The interconnected nature of the world, its people and places</li> <li>• Purposes of and limitations on the foundations, structures, and functions of government</li> <li>• Analyze how public policy – domestic and foreign – is developed at the local, state, and national levels and compare how policy-making occurs in other forms of government</li> </ul>	<p>SS09-GR.HS-S.1-GLE.1  SS09-GR.HS-S.1-GLE.2  SS09-GR.HS-S.1-GLE.3  SS09-GR.HS-S.2-GLE.3  SS09-GR.HS-S.4-GLE.2  SS09-GR.HS-S.4-GLE.3</p>
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication through advanced visual methods is a necessary skill in everyday life</li> <li>• Art is a lifelong endeavor</li> </ul>	<p>VA09-Gr.HS-S.4-GLE.2  VA09-Gr.HS-S.4-GLE.3</p>



## Pre-Lesson: History in Context

### Overview & Activity:

World War II has been regarded as one of the greatest and most tragic conflicts in human history. With the Nazi invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, millions of people were plunged into the war that lasted for another six years. In Germany, the institution of antisemitic laws targeting the Jewish population quickly evolved into the mass execution of Jews and other marginalized populations throughout Eastern Europe. On May 29, 1938 Hungary also established anti-Jewish legislation, similar to the [Nuremberg Laws](#), and Hannah Senesh immigrated to Palestine shortly thereafter. In this activity, students will develop a timeline of major events that occurred in Europe during World War II, paying particular attention to those that affected Hungary. Students may develop their timeline using a program such as [RWT Timeline](#), [Scribble Maps](#) or [Animaps](#) or by utilizing a graphic organizer (see Supplement). Understanding the history of Hungary during World War II provides crucial context to the story of Hannah Senesh and her efforts to save the Jewish in Hungary during the Holocaust.

### Objective

Students will map out key events during World War II to better understand the impetus for Hannah's return to Hungary to liberate the Jews.

### Resources:

- [USHMM: Timeline of Events](#)
- [USHMM: The Holocaust in Hungary](#)
- [USHMM: Hungary Before the German Occupation](#)
- [Yad Vashem: Historical Background: The Jews of Hungary During the Holocaust](#)
- [The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe: Hungary from 1918 to 1945](#)
- [COJS: Palestine During World War II, 1940-1945](#)
- [George Pick: Antisemitism in Hungary \(Podcast\)](#)

### Extension Activity:

Have students develop a diary timeline where they create fictional entries that Hannah would write to reflect the ongoing changes throughout Europe during World War II.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies:

- Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
- Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
- Examine places and regions and the connections among them

## Post Lesson: Call to Action

### Overview & Activity:

Hannah's life demonstrates that the roots of activism can take hold at a very young age. Her lived experiences of discrimination in Hungary, moving to Palestine, and separation from her mother, all had an influence in motivating her to become a paratrooper to liberate the Jews being persecuted in Hungary. Through the study of various activists, we begin to understand how their experiences influenced them to take action on behalf of their beliefs. In this activity, students will first chart Hannah's path towards activism by storyboarding her journey. Then, students will use Hannah's story as an example of how their own life experiences have inspired activism or empathy for a cause they may be interested in and storyboard their own journey. Have students use an online storyboard program such as [Storyboard That](#) (see example) or the included storyboard template (see Supplement) to highlight important or influential moments that have led to a call to action for an important personal or societal cause.

### Objective

Students will summarize the journey of Hannah Senesh and construct a visual storyboard that depicts her path towards activism as well as chart their own journey towards a call to action.

### Resources:

- [Jewish Virtual Library: Hannah Senesh](#)
- [Jewish Women's Archive: Hannah Szenes \(Senesh\)](#)
- [Hackastory Tools](#)
- [Additional Study—The Diary of Lajos Ornstein: An Extraordinary Journey](#)

### Extension Activity:

Students present their personal journey to the rest of the class and follow up with a discussion on how they can turn their causes into a call to action. Students could also describe Hannah's or their personal journey by mapping the narrative experience (see Supplement).

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies:

- Develop and build appropriate mastery in art-making skills using traditional and new technologies and an understanding of the characteristics and expressive features of art and design
- Create works of art that articulate more sophisticated ideas, feelings, emotions, and points of view about art and design through an expanded use of media and technologies
- Transfer the value of visual arts to lifelong learning and the human experience
- Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
- Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
- Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
- Examine places and regions and the connections among them
- Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic

# Poetry of Hannah Senesh

## Overview & Activity:

Throughout her life, Hannah Senesh wrote poetry to help express her thoughts, feelings, and desires in life. In the movie, “Blessed is the Match”, some of her works are read aloud to the audience. In this activity, students will critically analyze and interpret her poetry in relation to the historical time period in which she wrote them (or her age and experience at the time of writing). Using historical context from the pre-lesson plan and information gathered from the movie, students will come to have a better understanding of the meaning of Hannah’s poetry. Have students annotate each poem for figurative language and then use the poetry analysis worksheet (see Supplement) or other poetry analysis method such as [SOAPSTone](#) to critique her work. As an extension activity, have students write a reflective analysis using background knowledge gained from the pre-lesson or movie and cite evidence from the poem to support student analysis.

## Objective

Students will analyze select poems written by Hannah Senesh and reflect upon their significance in relation to Hannah’s life or the history of World War II.

## Resources:

[The Hannah Senesh Legacy Foundation \(Poetry\)](#)  
[Facing History and Ourselves Study Guide](#)

## Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies:

- Demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational, literary, and persuasive texts
- Evaluate how an author uses words to create mental imagery, suggest mood, and set tone
- Read a wide range of literature (American and world literature) to understand important universal themes and the human experience
- Engage in a wide range of nonfiction and real-life reading experiences to solve problems, judge the quality of ideas, or complete daily tasks
- Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
- Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
- Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
- Examine places and regions and the connections among them
- Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic

# Righteous Among the Nations

## Overview & Activity:

Hannah Senesh is one example of an individual who attempted to liberate the Jews during the Holocaust. While many people and countries stood by rather than intervene, other individuals also stepped forward to assist the Jews even at their own peril. In 1963, [Yad Vashem](#) undertook a project to grant the title of Righteous Among Nations to those who helped the Jewish during the Holocaust. According to Yad Vashem, to be recognized as one of the Righteous Among Nations, these individuals must have done one or more of the following: hiding Jews in the rescuers' homes and on their property, providing false papers and false identities, smuggling and assisting Jews in their escape ([www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)). In this activity, students will expand their understanding of what it means to be an upstander by studying the biographies of Oskar Schindler, Jan and Antonina Żabiński and Sophie Scholl. These individuals were willing to take great risks to help others who were being subjected to acts of extreme hatred and bigotry. By recognizing those who were willing to take action for others, students can begin to understand what it takes to take a stand against injustice or intolerance in order to become one of the Righteous Among the Nations.

## Objective:

Students will compare and analyze the biographies of individuals who were instrumental in assisting Jews during the Holocaust to better understand the power of being an upstander.

## Resources:

- [Encyclopaedia Britannica: Oskar Schindler](#)
- [Holocaust Research Project: Sophie Scholl Revolt & Resistance](#)
- [Yad Vashem: Jan and Antonina Żabiński](#)
- [The Zookeeper's Wife](#)
- [Yad Vashem: Featured Stories](#)
- [Not in our Town: Define Upstander](#)

## Extension Activity:

Have a class discussion or have students write a reflective essay on the following:

- *What does it mean to be an upstander?*
- *How did those who assisted the Jews during the Holocaust exemplify extraordinary courage?*
- *What are some lessons we can take away from the Righteous Among the Nations individuals to address contemporary issues of intolerance or injustice in society today?*

## Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies:

- Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
- Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
- Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world



- Examine places and regions and the connections among them
- Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
- Analyze origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens
- Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic

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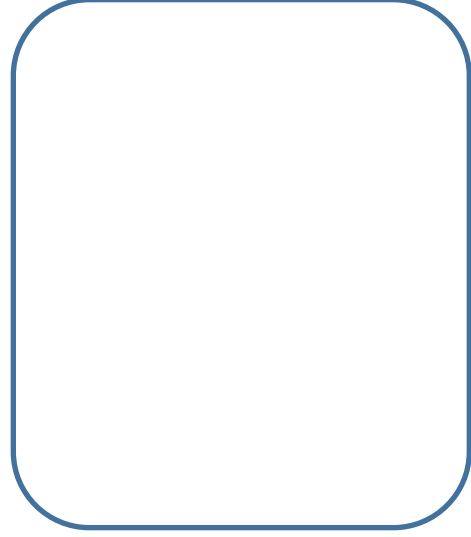
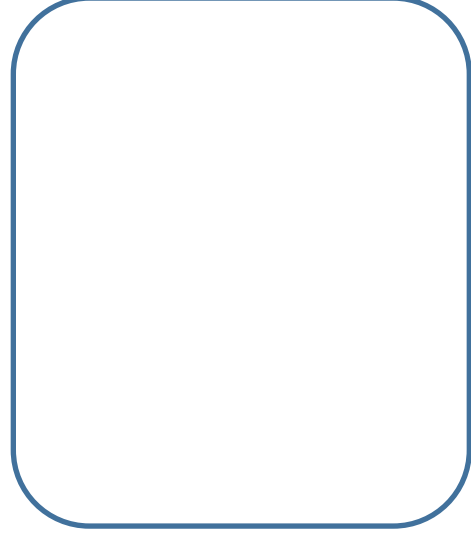
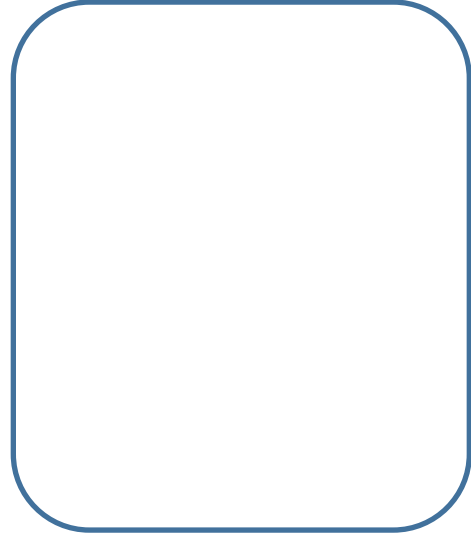
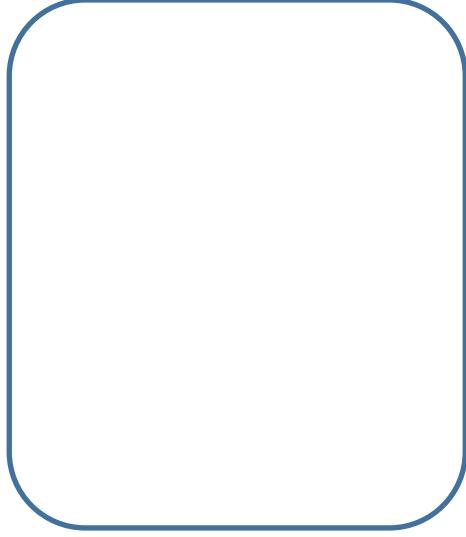
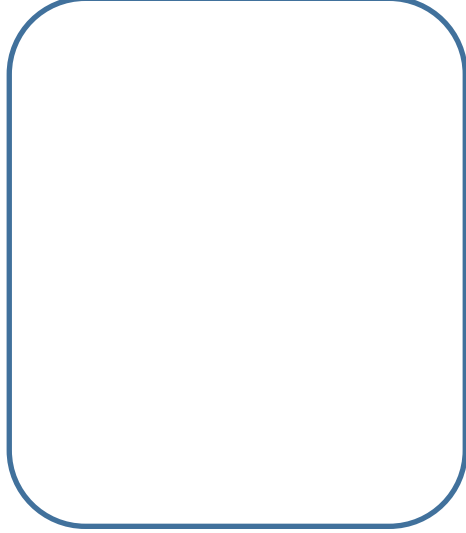
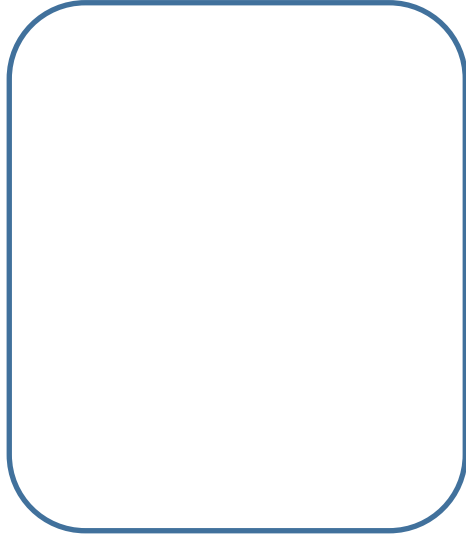
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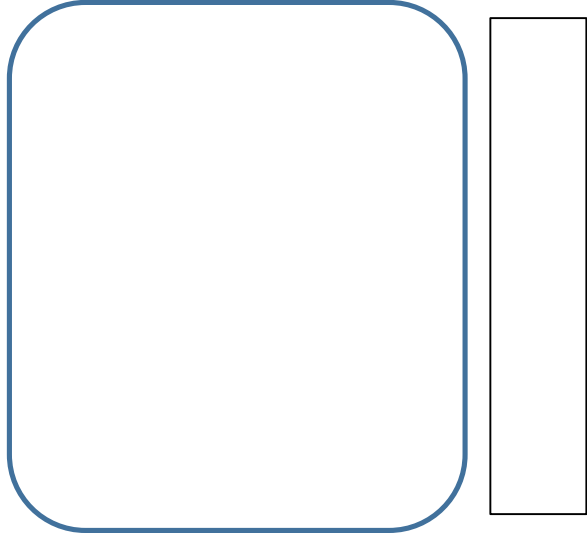
# **SUPPLEMENT**

## **Lesson Plan Materials**

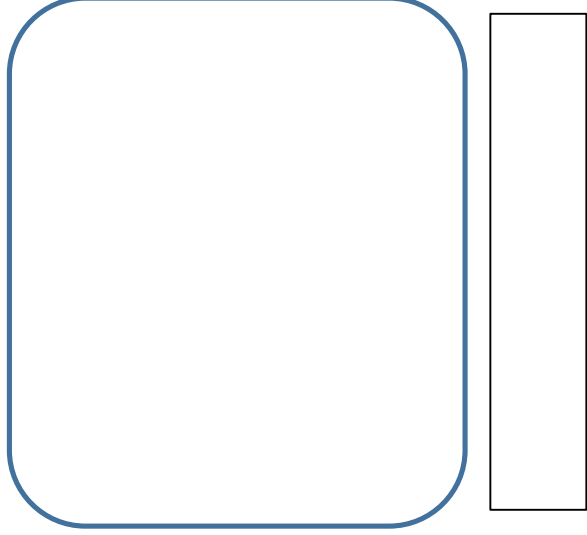


The Journey and Activism of: \_\_\_\_\_

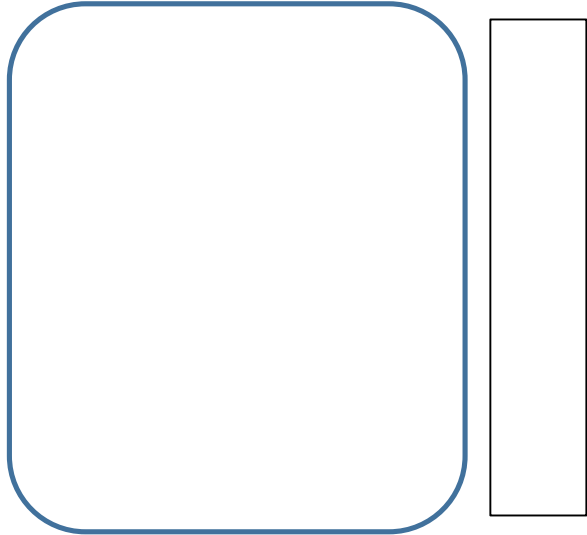




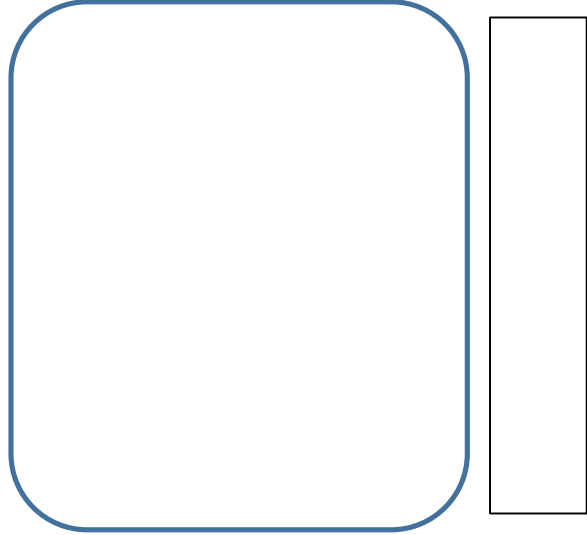
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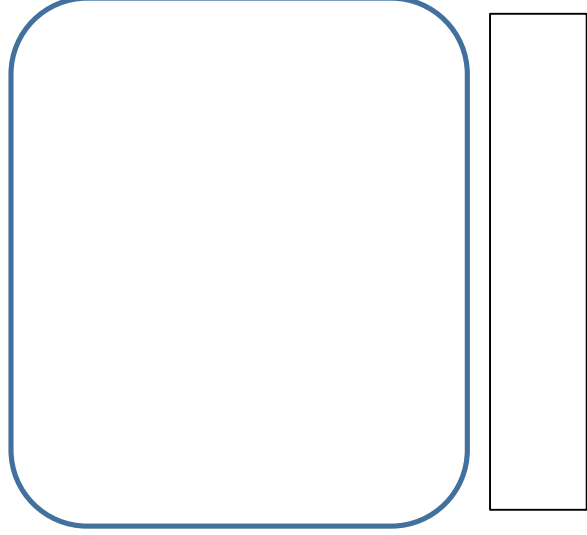
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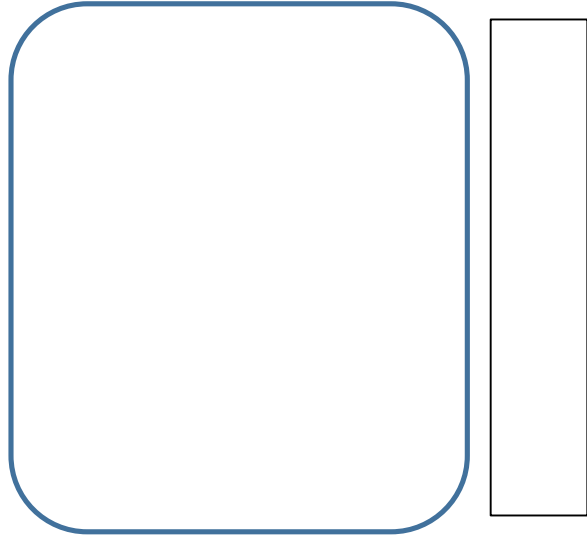
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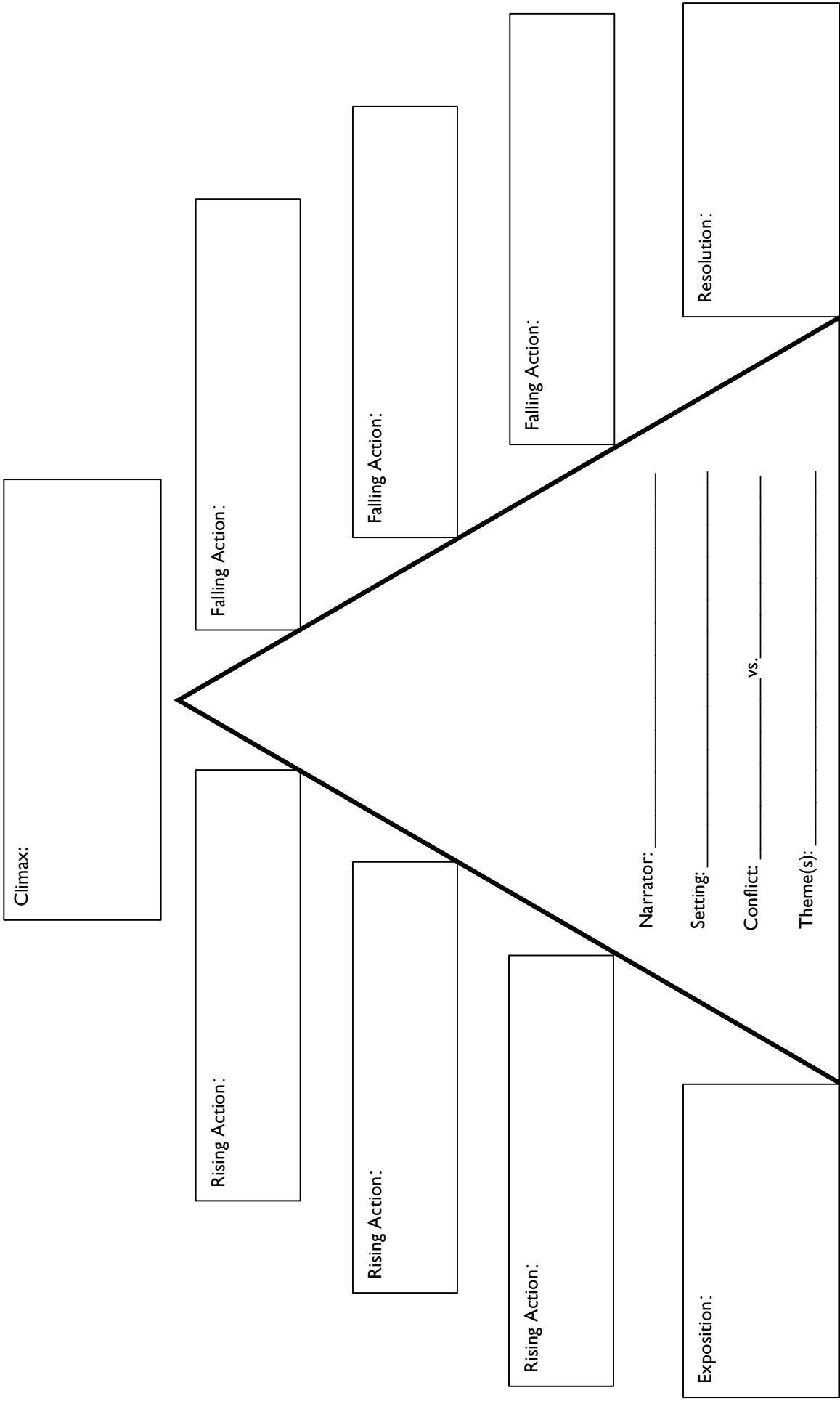
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Climax:

Rising Action:

Rising Action:

Rising Action:

Falling Action:

Falling Action:

Falling Action:

Exposition:

Narrator: \_\_\_\_\_

Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

Conflict: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

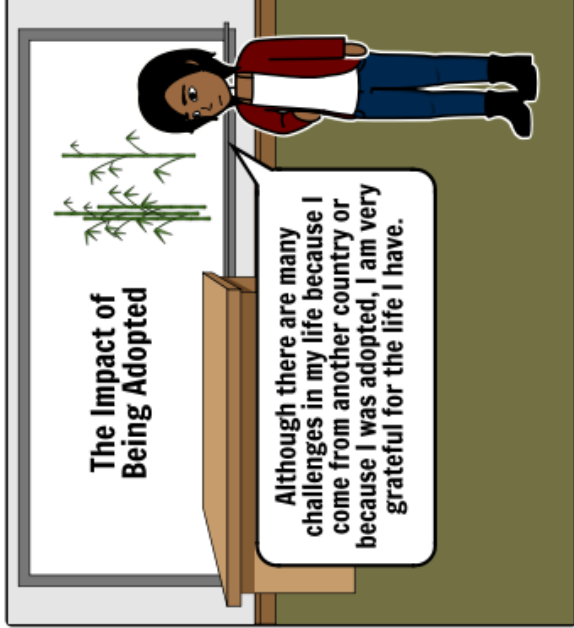
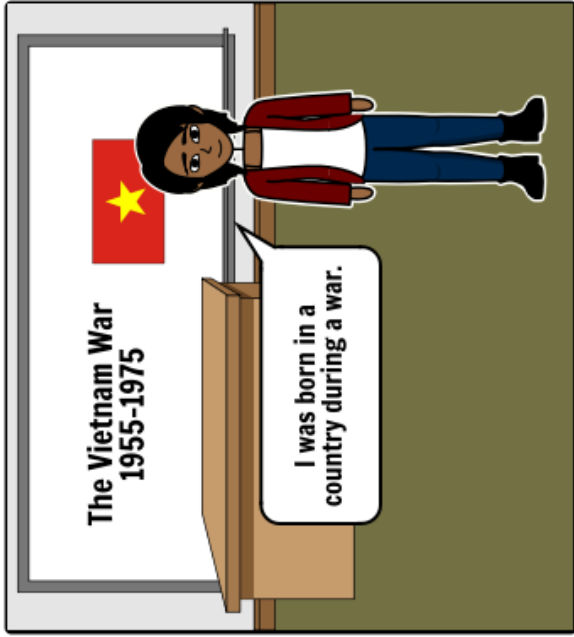
Theme(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution:

A plot is a sequence of events that comprise a narrative. One or more characters within the narrative are affected by these events in a relationship between cause and effect. Map the narrative experience of a person whose journey leads to activism.

# A Journey to Activism: Example

By: jnorby



Create your own at Storyboard That

**“Now”**  
**(1938) – Age 17**

Now – now I’d like to say something,  
Something more than mere words,  
More dappled than color,  
More musical than rhythm or rhyme,  
Something a million people haven’t already said or heard.

Just something.  
All about the land is silent, listening,  
The forest gazing at me, expectant.  
The sky watches me with a curious eye.  
Everything is silent. And so am I.

**“At the Crossroads”**  
**(1942) –Age 21**

A voice called. I went.  
I went, for it called.  
I went, lest I fall.  
At the crossroads,  
I blocked both ears with white frost.  
And cried  
For what I had lost.

**“Blessed Is the Match”**  
**(1944) –Age 22**

Blessed is the match consumed  
in killing flame.  
Blessed is the flame that burns  
in the secret fastness of the heart.  
Blessed is the heart with strength to stop  
its beating for honor’s sake.  
Blessed is the match consumed  
in kindling flame.

**“One, Two, Three...”**  
**(1944) –Age 22**

Written in her cell after being captured in Budapest.

One – two – three...  
eight feet long.  
Two strides across, the rest is dark...  
Life is a fleeting question mark.  
One – two – three...  
maybe another week.  
Or the next month may still find me here,  
But death, I feel is very near.  
I could have been  
Twenty-three next July;  
I gambled on what mattered most,  
The dice were cast. I lost.

**Poem Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

***Literal Meaning***

What does the literal meaning of the poem seem to be? What is happening in the poem?

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1. Who is the subject of the poem?

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2. What are they talking about?

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3. Why do you think the author wrote the poem?

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4. When does the poem take place?

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5. Where does the poem take place?

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6. What is the poet's attitude?

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7. Does the poem shift from person to person or between different times or places?  
Why or why not?

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***Tone***

What do you think is the tone (narrator's attitude towards the subject) of the poem?

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**Imagery**

Pick out three uses of imagery and write them below (this will most likely be a phrase or line from the poem), then explain what the poet is trying to convey with this image.

Image 1: \_\_\_\_\_

MEANING: \_\_\_\_\_

Image 2: \_\_\_\_\_

MEANING: \_\_\_\_\_

Image 3: \_\_\_\_\_

MEANING: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lyric Qualities**

Is there any evidence of rhyming or repetition? Write down the line and lyric quality. How does this contribute to the poem's overall tone, message or meaning?

Line & Lyric: \_\_\_\_\_

Line & Lyric: \_\_\_\_\_

MEANING: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Figurative Meaning**

Find at least two figurative devices and explain what they mean. You are looking for terms like: simile, metaphor, allusion, symbolism, alliteration, personification.

Figurative Device: \_\_\_\_\_

MEANING: \_\_\_\_\_

Figurative Device: \_\_\_\_\_

MEANING: \_\_\_\_\_

Many poems tell us about a poet's understanding of an experience so the beginning will be different than the end. The change may be in feelings, language, tone or connotation. Does this poem shift from beginning to end? Why or why not?

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