



Teacher's Guide



ORDINARY PEOPLE

SUPPLEMENTAL LESSONS TO THE MMOT'S HOLOCAUST WORKSHOP

CONTENTS

A Note About This Teacher's Guide	3
HANDOUT: GLOSSARY OF TERMS	4
Before the MMOT Visit	5
HANDOUT: TEN STAGES OF GENOCIDE	6
After the MMOT Visit	8
HANDOUT: CLASSIC PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES	9
HANDOUT: PROPAGANDA IS EVERYWHERE	10
Additional Resources	11

A NOTE ABOUT THIS TEACHER'S GUIDE

Dear Educators,

On behalf of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Mobile Museum of Tolerance (MMOT), thank you for booking our *Ordinary People* workshop and inviting us to visit your school. The MMOT is based on the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles (MOTLA), a recipient of the Global Peace and Tolerance Award from the Friends of the United Nations. The MOTLA is a human rights laboratory and education center dedicated to challenging visitors to understand the Holocaust in both historic and contemporary contexts as well as confronting all forms of prejudice and discrimination in our world today.

The *first-of-its-kind* in the United States, the MMOT is a free traveling human rights education center, which brings a message of tolerance directly to schools and communities across the state of Illinois. The MMOT's 32-seat wheelchair accessible vehicle serves as a self-contained classroom in which an Illinois licensed educator teaches students from all different backgrounds about the dangers of dehumanization in historical times. It connects the past to the present and its relevance in the United States and is in alignment with Illinois Standards. (<https://mmot.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Standards-crosswalk-Ordinary-People-Ordinary-People.pdf>)

Aimed at students grades 7-12, the 45 minute Ordinary People workshop on the MMOT introduces students to the Holocaust in an age-appropriate manner. The MMOT educator will use PowerPoint slides to inform students of how the Nazis used propaganda to manipulate ordinary people, before launching into a short immersive film discussing the role of Ordinary People in dehumanization and genocide. Students will then engage in a facilitated dialogue and share their reflections of the anti-Semitism, dehumanization, stereotypes and discrimination they saw in the video. This will be followed by a discussion and video about Upstanders who resisted the Nazis and assisted Jewish people. Students will end the session by writing down one thing they can do to make a difference.

It is always important to acknowledge the sensitivity of the topics we are discussing in this workshop. The MMOT provides a space for respectful discourse and understands that the topics may trigger difficult feelings. For educators who wish to prepare students for the visit, or delve further into these topics post-visit, we have created this Teacher's Guide with the hope that participating teachers might use them as a catalyst for inquiry and action. This guide contains definitions relevant for the workshop, dialogue starters, handouts, and additional resources.

Sincerely,

The Mobile Museum of Tolerance Staff



HANDOUT: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ANTI-SEMITISM: A certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

BYSTANDER/BYSTANDER EFFECT: A passive witness to an event or problem, such as bullying. By not taking action, they may allow the situation to continue or become worse. The bystander effect is a theory that states that an individual's likelihood of helping a victim decreases as the number of people who simultaneously witness the crime increases.

DEHUMANIZATION: The act of regarding, representing or treating a person or group as less than human; the process of depriving a person or population of human qualities or attributes such as compassion, dignity, individuality, etc.

HOLOCAUST: The systematic bureaucratic state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. The Nazis, who came to power in January 1933, believed that the Germans were racially superior and that the Jews, deemed inferior, were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community. (USHMM)

GENOCIDE: The deliberate and systematic destruction of a religious, racial, national, or cultural group.

JEW: Any person whose religion is Judaism and is part of the Jewish people which traces back to biblical times. In the broader sense of the term, a Jew is any person belonging to the worldwide group that constitutes, through descent or conversion, a continuation of the ancient Jewish people, who were themselves descendants of the Hebrews of the Bible (Old Testament). Jewish people make up 0.2% of the world population. Today, the largest Jewish community in the world lives in the state of Israel. The second largest group lives in the United States.

NAZI: A member of a German political party that controlled Germany under Adolf Hitler from 1933 to 1945; a person who wants to use power to control and harm other people especially because of their race, religion, etc.

PREJUDICE: A prejudgment (opinion or feeling), usually negative, formed without adequate knowledge or reason.

PROPAGANDA: The deliberate spreading of ideas or information, true or untrue, with the purpose of manipulating public opinion to gain support for one's cause or to discourage support for one's cause or to discourage support for another's cause.

RESISTANCE: The refusal to accept or comply with something; the attempt to prevent something by action or argument; a force that opposes or works against the motion of another.

SCAPEGOAT: An individual or group unfairly blamed for problems not of their making.

STEREOTYPE: A simplistic characteristic or trait of an individual, often negative, that is generalized to be common among all people within an identity group.

TOLERANCE: A fair and objective attitude towards those whose opinions and practices differ from one's own. The commitment to respect human dignity.

UPSTANDER: A person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

BEFORE THE MMOT VISIT

FRONTLOADING

You and your students will soon visit the MMOT and be immersed in an introduction to the Holocaust and learn, through the lens of history, the danger of dehumanization in its most extreme form. This guide is an opportunity to frontload ideas and themes that will be discussed on the MMOT. Talking about these themes beforehand will help students maximize their time in the MMOT by giving them a head start on information, so they will understand more deeply and will be able to grasp the information being presented. More importantly, it can help reduce stress when students are in an immersive experience.

ACTIVITY: ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY AND TEN STAGES OF GENOCIDE

Read through the **Glossary of Terms** (vocabulary), found on the previous page, and the **Ten Stages of Genocide** handout. Created by Gregory H. Stanton, the **Ten Stages of Genocide** is a prevailing theory which dictates that genocide occurs in a specific order, which is predictable but not inevitable. The theory includes preventative measures which have the potential to stop genocide from occurring at each stage.

Discuss the vocabulary and the ten stages with your students and challenge them to think about preventative measures. Inform students that they should think about and look for the first four stages when they view the film “Ordinary People” on the MMOT.



See if you are able to recognize the first four stages listed on this handout while viewing the film “Ordinary People” on the MMOT.

- 1. Classification:** All cultures have categories to distinguish people into “us and them” by ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality. For example: German and Jew, Hutu and Tutsi. Bipolar societies that lack mixed categories are the most likely to experience genocide.
- 2. Symbolization:** We give names or other symbols to these classifications. We name people “Jews” or “Gypsies,” or distinguish them by colors or dress; and apply the symbols to members of groups. Classification and symbolization are universally human and do not necessarily result in genocide unless they lead to the next stage, dehumanization. When combined with hatred, symbols may be forced upon unwilling members of pariah groups: such as the yellow star for Jews under Nazi rule or the blue scarf for people from the Eastern Zone in Khmer Rouge Cambodia.
- 3. Discrimination:** A dominant group uses law, custom, and political power to deny the rights of other groups. The powerless group may not be accorded full civil rights or even citizenship. Examples include the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 in Nazi Germany, which stripped Jews of their German citizenship, and prohibited their employment by the government and by universities. Denial of citizenship to the Rohingya Muslim minority in Burma is another example.
- 4. Dehumanization:** One group denies the humanity of the other group. Members of it are equated with animals, vermin, insects or diseases. Dehumanization overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder. At this stage, hate propaganda in print and on hate radio is used to vilify the victim group.
- 5. Organization:** Genocide is always organized, usually by the state, often using militias to provide deniability of state responsibility. Sometimes the organization is informal or decentralized. Special army units or militias are often trained and armed. Plans are made for genocidal killings.

HANDOUT: TEN STAGES OF GENOCIDE (CONT.)

6. Polarization: Extremists drive the groups apart. Hate groups broadcast polarizing propaganda. Laws may forbid intermarriage or social interaction. Extremist terrorism targets moderates, intimidating and silencing the center. Moderates from the perpetrators' own group are most able to stop genocide, so are the first to be arrested and killed.

7. Preparation: National or perpetrator group leaders planned the "Final Solution" to the Jewish, Armenian, Tutsi or other targeted group "question." They often use euphemisms to cloak their intentions, such as referring to their goals as "ethnic cleansing," "purification," or "counterterrorism." They build armies, buy weapons and train their troops and militias. They indoctrinate the populace with fear of the victim group.

8. Persecution: Victims are identified and separated out because of their ethnic or religious identity. Death lists are drawn up. Members of victim groups are forced to wear identifying symbols. Their property is expropriated. They are often segregated into ghettos, deported into concentration camps, or confined to a famine-struck region and starved. At this stage, a Genocide Emergency must be declared.

9. Extermination begins, and quickly becomes the mass killing legally defined as "genocide." It is "extermination" to the killers because they do not believe their victims to be fully human. When it is sponsored by the state, the armed forces often work with militias to do the killing. Sometimes the genocide results in revenge killings by groups against each other, creating the downward whirlpool-like cycle of bilateral genocide (as in Burundi).

10. Denial: The final stage lasts throughout and always follows genocide. It is among the surest indicators of further genocidal massacres. The perpetrators of genocide dig up the mass graves, burn the bodies, try to cover up the evidence and intimidate the witnesses. They deny that they committed any crimes, and often blame what happened on the victims themselves. They block investigations of the crimes and continue to govern until driven from power by force, when they flee into exile. There they remain with impunity, like Pol Pot or Idi Amin, unless they are captured and a tribunal is established to try them.

Created by Gregory H. Stanton, the Ten Stages of Genocide is a prevailing theory which dictates that genocide occurs in a specific order, which is predictable but not inevitable. The theory includes preventative measures which have the potential to stop genocide from occurring at each stage.

AFTER THE MMOT VISIT

DEEPENING YOUR EXPERIENCE

After your visit to the MMOT, students may still be processing what they've experienced. It is important to follow up to ensure that the experience continues well beyond the MMOT visit. After all, the whole idea of going to a museum (or in our case, having a museum come to you) is to learn something new and expand your mind. If your students reflect on what they have learned and talk about it after, they'll have a much richer experience.

UNDERSTANDING HOW PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES CAN LEAD TO HARM

During your visit to the MMOT, it was made clear that propaganda techniques were used to dehumanize the Jewish people to get neighbor to turn upon neighbor. Introduce to your students this quote by Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Propaganda Minister in Nazi Germany: *"Tell a lie often enough and everyone will believe you."* Ask students what they think it means. Can they give an example of an oftentold lie that many people believe? Ask them if they think lying is a form of propaganda (it most definitely is a form of propaganda!). Use this discussion as the introduction to this lesson.

Propaganda has many definitions, but generally speaking it is about the power of persuasion. Surely, some propaganda is not harmful, like some propaganda used in advertisements. This lesson plan, though, looks at propaganda that is definitely ominous and harmful.

Give your students the **Classic Propaganda Techniques** handout and discuss the techniques: repetition, testimonials, bandwagon appeal, transfers of one quality to another, and highly synthesized music and imagery. These are some of the techniques that were used by the Nazis to recruit young people.

HOMEWORK ACTIVITY

Give your students the **Propaganda Is Everywhere** handout. Tell the students that when they go home they should look for propaganda via a song, image, commercial, or statement. Ask your students to determine which type of propaganda it is and what it was trying to accomplish. At the next class, ask your students what they found.



CLASSIC PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES

REPETITION:

Repetition is the repeating of a certain symbol, word, or slogan so that the audience remembers it. This could be in the form of an image or a jingle. Propagandists use repetition to link themes to certain ideas. Repetition can prevent further discussion by convincing group members that the opposing side is incapable of rational thinking.

TESTIMONIALS:

If a doctor is on a commercial and talks about how effective a medication is for you, you will take them more seriously than if a random person recommends it. Similarly, if a celebrity with beautiful hair says such-and-such shampoo gave her/him this beautiful hair, then you are more likely to buy it. This is what testimonial propaganda comprises of. Advertisers use the testimonials of influencers, authority figures, or experts to convince you to purchase their product.

BANDWAGON APPEAL:

Did you ever get something just because all of your friends were getting it? Or have you ever agreed that a certain person is awful because everyone else said they were, even though they'd actually been nice to you personally? That is the mentality of bandwagon propaganda. Media knows that people don't like to feel as though they are left out so they try to convince you that everyone else is buying this or doing that so that you will "jump on the bandwagon" too!

TRANSFERS OF ONE QUALITY TO ANOTHER:

Also known as association, this technique projects positive or negative qualities (praise or blame) of a person, entity, object, or value onto another to make the second more acceptable or to discredit it. This type of propaganda often deals with famous people or depicts attractive, happy people. It suggests that if people buy a product or follow a certain idea, they will be happy or successful as well.

HIGHLY SYNTHESIZED MUSIC AND IMAGERY:

Specific music and imagery with strong emotional implications are used to influence the audience. The music, for example, can generate happiness and then that happiness is associated with the target-person, item, or idea. Strong emotional things can influence audiences in one way or another.

HANDOUT: PROPAGANDA IS EVERYWHERE

Propaganda is the deliberate systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.

Give one example for each type of propaganda in the corresponding space below.

TYPE OF PROPAGANDA	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Repetition	The repeating of a certain symbol, word, or slogan so that the audience remembers it.	
Testimonials	Using the testimonials of influencers, authority figures, or experts to convince you.	
Bandwagon Appeal	Trying to convince you that everyone else is buying or doing something and you'd better join.	
Transfers of One Quality to Another	Projecting positive or negative qualities (praise or blame) of a person, entity, object, or value onto another to make the second more acceptable or discredit it.	
Highly Synthesized Music and Imagery	Using music or imagery with strong emotional implications to influence the audience.	

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

Find **ONE** piece of propaganda to bring to the class discussion. It could be a song, an image, or a statement. State which type of propaganda it is and what it is trying to accomplish.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Consider using these resources prior to and following the MMOT experience to spark students' curiosities, enrich their skills and knowledge of topics covered during the lesson, and to highlight potential sources of action.

<https://www.museumoftolerance.com/education/special-speakers/hear-a-holocaust-survivor/>

Holocaust Survivor testimony video: <https://www.museumoftolerance.com/education/archives-and-reference-library/online-resources/>

For additional definitions and timeline of the events of the Holocaust, please see:

<https://www.museumoftolerance.com/education/teacher-resources/>

***I have Never Forgotten You** and **Unlikely Heroes** are films by Simon Wiesenthal Center's Two-Time Academy Award winning Moriah Films. These can be found on streaming sites online.*

***The Sunflower** by Simon Wiesenthal. Available on Amazon.com (\$13.99): <https://a.co/d/cqMxgLD>*

Short on resources? Don't forget the power of partnering with your school librarian! Ask them for what resources they have on this topic. Also, your local public library is another source of wisdom and easy-to-check-out resources!

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