The Devil’s Arithmetic by Jane Yolen

Introductory Webquest by Greg Ott

The following webquest is modified from one created by a teacher who wanted to introduce his students to the Holocaust before they read the novel “The Devil’s Arithmetic”. Much of the story is set during the Holocaust and involves many Jewish customs so a basic understanding of the history and the culture is necessary to fully appreciate it. Enter this experience with an open and thoughtful mind. A journey into this history will expose you to both the best and to the worst of humanity. It is both a journey into the potential evil that we as humans can perpetrate on our fellow man and into the potential power of the human spirit when faced with that evil.

This webquest asks you to research reliable sources to gain insight into the Jewish religion and the horrors of the Holocaust. Some of what you read and see may be graphic in nature but, they reflect the realities of this history. Please take the time to answer the questions thoroughly and show respect for those that experienced it. **All links can be found in Google Classroom.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step #1 – Enter the United States Memorial Holocaust Museum Student Learning site and the various headings. Answer the following questions as you go, but don’t limit your experience here to the questions themselves.</th>
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| **How were schools used to spread Nazi ideas and antisemitism?**  
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| **Explain Hitler’s attitude towards the “handicapped.”**  
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| **Why do you think that many people didn’t notice the harassment of German Jews before the war?**  
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| **What were the Nuremberg Laws?**  
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| **What is meant by “ARBEIT MACHT FREI,” and where might one have seen it?**  
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| **What was the difference between the “concentration camps” and the “extermination camps?”**  
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| **What was the Sonderkommando?**  
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| After you have completed your exploration of this site, what is your reaction to something that you learned from the experience?  
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Step #2 – Browse the Museum of Tolerance. Explain something that you discovered that you did not notice on the previous site.
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Step #3 – Browse the 36 Questions about the Holocaust for 4 questions that you actually are interested in knowing more about. Share your findings here.
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Step #4 – Browse the Holocaust Studies Site for areas of interest. Look more deeply into a topic you find of interest. Share your findings here.
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Step #5 - Visit the Additional Novel Resources and browse the Passover Traditions and Yiddish Phrases sites in order to find the answers to the following questions:

What historical event is celebrated by the Passover? ________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
When does the next Passover begin? ____________________________
What is the Haggadah? ____________________________
What Prophet plays a significant symbolic role in the Passover seder? Explain? ____________________________

What appears to be the main theme of this holiday? ____________________________
What Yiddish expression might you hear at a party before a toast? ____________________________
What does it mean? ____________________________
**Step #6** - Watch the video in Google Classroom about Henry Oster's Bar Mitzvah in Israel. Having listened to Mr. Oster speak, what messages can you take away from both his experiences and the video?

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**Step #7** - Mr. Oster was only 5 years old when Hitler came to power. Use the site Children During the Holocaust to gain greater insight into the unique challenges that children faced. What made the experiences of children unique?

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Considering everything that you have been exposed to between hearing Henry Oster speak and the research you have done, what three themes seem to emerge from it all? Explain.

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I encourage you to explore the sites provided for other areas of interest. You have only scratched the surface of the information available on the multitude of issues raised by the Holocaust. We will come back to this topic when we get to Period 6 in April.