



Storytelling about WWII Resistance in the Context of Nazi Memorials

Guide handbook



Comune di
Milano

VERZETS
RESISTANCE
MUSEUM



Weiße Rose Stiftung e.V.



Muzeum Armii Krajowej



ISTITUTO NAZIONALE
FERRUCCIO PARRI

RETE DEGLI ISTITUTI PER LA STORIA
DELLA RESISTENZA E DELL'ETÀ
CONTEMPORANEA



This handbook is a comprehensive resource for WWII guides and educators, created by the team behind the 'Resistance Through Their Eyes' project. This handbook provides essential guidance on effectively conveying narratives of WWII resistance within the context of Nazi memorials. Through a combination of historical insights, storytelling techniques, and practical tips, this handbook aims to enhance the quality of guided tours and educational programs, fostering a deeper understanding of the resistance movement during the World War II.



Funded by
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Introduction to the project "Resistance Through Their Eyes"

The "Resistance Through Their Eyes" (RTTE) project represents a joint effort to shed light on the diverse perspectives and experiences of individuals and groups who engaged in acts of resistance against the Nazi totalitarian regime during World War II. Rooted in a collaborative endeavour involving the **LRE Foundation** (Arnhem NL), **Dutch Resistance Museum** (Amsterdam NL), **City of Milan, Ferruccio Parri National Institute** (Milan IT), **White Rose Foundation** (Munich DE), and the **Home Army Museum** (Krakow PL), RTTE seeks to amplify the voices of those often marginalized in traditional historical narratives. By focusing on the stories of women, students, Jews, Roma/Sinti, homosexuals, and other minority groups, the project aims to deepen our understanding of the complexities of resistance across Europe during one of the darkest periods in modern history. By highlighting the experiences of resistance fighters from various backgrounds and nationalities, the project seeks to promote a multi-perspective understanding of European resistance history.

The project's overarching goal is to deepen our appreciation of the diverse resistance movements that flourished across Europe, from acts of individual defiance to organized resistance networks. Through a combination of historical exhibitions, online resources, youth events, workshops, and conferences, RTTE aims to engage audiences in critical reflection on the lasting impacts of resistance during World War II. Moreover, the project endeavours to explore the post-war legacies of resistance leaders and their contributions to the development of modern human rights protections in Europe.

The project emphasizes also the importance of storytelling in educating about WWII resistance. By sharing personal narratives and testimonies, the project aims to provide a multiperspective approach to understanding resistance efforts during the war. Participants in the project have the opportunity to exchange insights and working methods, ensuring effective communication of the historical narratives.

This project is a forward-looking initiative aimed at fostering intercultural dialogue, promoting inclusivity, and combating discrimination. By amplifying the voices of those who stood up against oppression, the project seeks to inspire future generations to promote human rights, justice, and democracy. Through education, awareness-raising, and commemoration, RTTE endeavours to ensure that the lessons of the past resonate with contemporary audiences and inform our collective efforts to build a more aware society.

The project is funded by the European Union.



Understanding the historical context

As guides and educators entrusted with the task of conveying the history of WWII resistance within the framework of Nazi memorials, it is imperative to possess a profound comprehension of the historical backdrop against which these events unfolded. This chapter aims to provide an in-depth exploration of the fundamental factors that led to the rise of the Nazi regime and the subsequent emergence of WWII resistance movements.

The rise of the Nazi regime

Following the conclusion of World War I, Germany found itself struggling with the repercussions of the Treaty of Versailles and the economic devastation wrought by the Great Depression (1929-1939). The treaty's harsh terms, including heavy reparations and loss of territory, caused resentment and economic instability, leading to political turmoil. In this turbulent climate, Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), led by him since 1921, took advantage of widespread unhappiness and social unrest. They used popular speeches and nationalist feelings to gain support.

In 1923 Hitler conducted an unsuccessful coup, known as the Munich Putsch or the Beer Hall Putsch. The failure led to a trial and his imprisonment, along with other Nazis. Although he was sentenced to five years in prison, the incarceration of the NSDAP's leader ended after nine months – he was released from the Landsberg Prison in December 1924. After regaining freedom, Hitler published a book in which he described his radical concepts - “Mein Kampf”. Over time, Hitler's charismatic

leadership and promise of national rejuvenation resonated with a disillusioned populace, driving the NSDAP to gradually increasing prosperity, noticeable especially after the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, leading to radicalisation of the people's spirits, triggered by increased unemployment and general economic crisis. Despite such circumstances, in free elections the NSDAP has never achieved a success enabling it to exercise power on its own – in 1932, they won the parliamentary elections, however they did not gather the required majority. The party did not become an official dominant political power until the year 1933, when an ongoing series of cabinet crises intensified, in parallel with growing fear of the communist influence.

On January 30, 1933, Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany by President Paul von Hindenburg, marking the beginning of Nazi rule. The subsequent Reichstag Fire in February 1933 provided the pretext for the implementation of emergency decrees, restricting civil liberties and consolidating Nazi control. The passage of the Enabling Act in March 1933 granted practically dictatorial powers upon Hitler, effectively ending the Weimar Republic and establishing a totalitarian regime. The act empowered him to pass laws without needing the consent of Reichstag or President. Shortly after that, the NSDAP was declared the only legal party in Germany. The Nazis' systematic implementation of propaganda, censorship, and indoctrination served to shape public opinion and control public disagreement, laying the groundwork for the systematic persecution of political opponents, ethnic minorities, and marginalized groups. Adolf Hitler has received the fullness of power in 1934 - after the death of Hindenburg, he gained the President's authority and assumed the title Führer.



MAUTHAUSEN 1945

A TRUTH

The outbreak of World War II

The outbreak of World War II in September 1939 threw Europe into a devastating conflict that brought widespread destruction and suffering. In Poland, the German invasion on September 1, 1939, marked the start of a brutal occupation characterized by oppression and violence. Polish people endured immense hardships under Nazi rule, with millions suffering in concentration camps and ghettos. Despite facing overwhelming challenges, Polish resistance movements, like the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*), bravely fought back against German forces through acts of sabotage and underground resistance. Polish youth was also dedicated to combatting the occupier – for instance, scouting operated under the name of Grey Ranks (*Szare Szeregi*), being engaged mainly in the acts of so called “little sabotage” (distribution of flyers, painting anti-Nazi slogans on walls, removing German flags etc.). Eventually, the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, though ultimately unsuccessful, showed the unwavering spirit of Polish resistance.

Meanwhile, in Germany, Adolf Hitler's totalitarian regime initiated a reign of terror marked by political persecution, racial discrimination and state-sponsored violence. In 1933, in order to create a place for imprisoning the political opposition, Jews, homosexuals, clerics (despite the Concordat between the Vatican and the Third Reich from July 1933) and other persecuted groups, the first German concentration camp was established – KL Dachau. The main creator of this unit was Theodor Eicke, co-author of the Nazi concentration camps system. The Nazi regime's machinery of oppression sought to crush all opposition and impose ideological conformity, however small groups of people continued to resist. The White Rose (*Weißerose*) resistance group, founded by students at the University of Munich in 1942, bravely defied Nazi tyranny through non-violent acts of civil disobedience and underground

propaganda. The group's courageous actions, including the distribution of anti-Nazi leaflets, challenged the regime's authority and inspired others to resist. History also records examples of people that resisted Hitler's rule alone. One of them was Georg Elser, an anti-Nazi German carpenter who in 1939 carried out an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the life of the Führer.

In the Netherlands, the Dutch people endured the harsh realities of Nazi occupation, as Dutch Jews were subjected to deportation and persecution. Despite the ever-present threat of reprisals, Dutch resistance movements (*Nederlandse Verzetsbeweging*) waged a clandestine struggle against the German occupiers. Underground networks smuggled Jewish refugees to safety, forged identity documents, and conducted acts of sabotage to disrupt Nazi operations. The February Strike of 1941, a mass protest against the deportation of Dutch Jews, demonstrated the resilience of the Dutch people in the face of challenges.

Similarly, in Italy, the rise of fascism under Benito Mussolini plunged the country into dictatorship and aligned it with Nazi Germany. However, as Mussolini's grip on power weakened and Italy faced imminent defeat, resistance movements emerged to challenge fascist rule and support the Allied cause. The Italian Resistance (*Resistenza italiana*) mobilized partisan fighters across the country, engaging in guerrilla warfare and sabotage against German occupation forces. In 1944, on June 4th, Rome became the first capital to be liberated from Nazi occupation by the Allied forces. The resistance movement's efforts, along with Allied advances from the south, sped up Italy's liberation and contributed to the downfall of fascism, leading to Mussolini's capture and death in 1945.

MEMORIAL



WWII resistance movements

During the oppressive hold of Nazi tyranny, courageous individuals and organized resistance networks emerged across occupied Europe, determined to challenge the hegemony of the Third Reich. Early acts of resistance encompassed clandestine publications, graffiti, and acts of civil disobedience, reflecting an increasing defiance against Nazi oppression. As the scope and brutality of Nazi atrocities became increasingly apparent, resistance efforts intensified, manifesting in a variety of forms. Partisan warfare, espionage, sabotage, and underground resistance cells became integral components of the broader resistance movement.

The landscape of resistance varied significantly across different regions of occupied Europe, influenced by factors such as local socio-political dynamics, geographical terrain, and the severity of Nazi oppression. In Western Europe, resistance movements operated openly, benefitting from widespread public support and collaboration with Allied forces. The French Resistance, led by networks such as the "Combat" group and the "Maquis" conducted a persistent campaign of sabotage and resistance against German occupiers, resulting in the liberation of Paris in 1944. Similarly, in the Netherlands, the Dutch Resistance organized acts of civil disobedience and facilitated Allied espionage operations, contributing to the eventual Allied victory in Western Europe.

In contrast, in Eastern Europe, resistance efforts faced harsher repression and encountered greater challenges due to the brutal tactics employed by Nazi authorities and their collaborators. Partisan warfare, characterized by guerrilla tactics and hit-and-run attacks, became a principal form of resistance in countries such as Poland, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union.

The Polish Home Army (until 1942 as ZWZ - *Związek Walki Zbrojnej*), under the leadership of General Tadeusz Komorowski, launched the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, seeking to liberate the city from German occupation. Despite facing many difficulties and not being sufficiently supported by Allied forces, the determination of Polish resistance fighters showed the strong spirit of those who refused to surrender to tyranny.

In occupied territories, underground newspapers, such as the Polish "Biuletyn Informacyjny" and the French "Combat", disseminated anti-Nazi propaganda and called to resist. Armed resistance groups, such as the French Maquis and the Polish Home Army, engaged in acts of sabotage against German military installations and supply lines, disrupting enemy operations and strengthening Allied efforts. Important figures like political leaders, military commanders, and regular citizens played key roles in organizing acts of resistance against Nazi rule. Among these were individuals like Witold Pilecki, a Polish resistance fighter who voluntarily infiltrated Auschwitz concentration camp to gather intelligence, and Violette Szabo, a British Special Operations Executive (SOE) agent who conducted espionage missions in occupied France.



© Photo: Vincenzo Ferruccio Parri, Archivio Ferruccio Parri, Milano, 1980

Ferruccio Parri

> 29.01.1890 - 08.12.1981

Ferruccio Parri è stato una figura chiave del movimento di Resistenza italiano. Come vicecomandante del Corpo Volontari della Libertà (CVL), ha svolto un ruolo importante nella liberazione dell'Italia dal nazifascismo.

Ferruccio Parri nacque a Pinerolo il 29 gennaio 1890. Si laureò in lettere all'Università di Torino e successivamente iniziò a lavorare come insegnante. Nel 1915 Parri fu chiamato a prestare servizio nella Prima guerra mondiale. Dopo la guerra divenne attivo politicamente e intrinse la carriera di giornalista e direttore di giornali.

Cassassino di Giacomo Matteotti nel 1924, politico antifascista e socialista, esponente del suo antifascismo militante. Lasciò il suo lavoro di direttore di giornale e si dedicò alla diffusione della stampa clandestina antifascista, così anche gli antifascisti che erano in pericolo a causa del regime a fuggire all'estero. Nel 1931 Parri fu condannato a dieci mesi di carcere e tre anni di confino per aver aiutato il socialista Filippo Turati a fuggire in Francia. Nonostante ciò, Parri riuscì a stabilire collegamenti tra i vari gruppi antifascisti clandestini del Nord Italia.

Dopo l'8 settembre 1943, egli lavorò in parallelo con il movimento comunista italiano per formare i primi gruppi di Resistenza armata. Lasciò il suo lavoro di direttore di giornale e si dedicò alla diffusione della stampa clandestina antifascista, così anche gli antifascisti che erano in pericolo a causa del regime a fuggire all'estero. Nel 1931 Parri fu condannato a dieci mesi di carcere e tre anni di confino per aver aiutato il socialista Filippo Turati a fuggire in Francia. Nonostante ciò, Parri riuscì a stabilire collegamenti tra i vari gruppi antifascisti clandestini del Nord Italia.

Venne catturato dai nazisti nel gennaio 1945 e liberato a marzo dopo una trattativa con la loro alleanza. Dopo il suo rilascio, Parri costituì un importante collegamento tra gli Alleati e i vari movimenti di Resistenza durante l'ultima fase della guerra.

Il 25 aprile 1945 Parri fu nominato alla guida del primo governo italiano dal dopoguerra con il sostegno della maggioranza delle forze politiche dell'Italia liberata. Egli svolse anche un ruolo importante nella salvaguardia della memoria della Resistenza italiana nel 1949 fondando a Milano l'Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione Nazionale in Italia (oggi Istituto Nazionale di Liberazione - Parri con l'obiettivo di difendere e conservare l'eredità della Resistenza).

Ferruccio Parri was a key figure of the Italian Resistance movement. As the Deputy commander of the Volunteers of Freedom Corps, he played an important role in the liberation of Italy from Nazi-Fascism.

Ferruccio Parri was born in Pinerolo on 29 January 1890. He graduated from the University of Turin with a degree in literature and afterwards began to work as a teacher. In 1915 he was called up to serve in the First World War. In 1931 Parri was sentenced to ten months in prison and three years of internal exile for helping the socialist Filippo Turati escape from arrest. Despite this, Parri managed to establish contacts between the various clandestine anti-fascist groups in northern Italy.

After 8 September 1943, Parri worked in parallel with the Italian Communist movement to form the first groups of armed anti-fascism. He left his job as a newspaper editor and editor-in-chief to devote himself to the dissemination of clandestine anti-fascist press. He also helped anti-fascists who were in danger from the fascist regime to flee the country and go into exile. In 1931 Parri was sentenced to ten months in prison and three years of internal exile for helping the socialist Filippo Turati escape from arrest. Despite this, Parri managed to establish contacts between the various clandestine anti-fascist groups in northern Italy.

Parri was captured by the Nazis in January 1945 and released in March after negotiations with the Allies. After his release, Parri established an important link between the Allies and the various movements of Resistance during the final phase of the war.

On 25 April 1945 Parri was appointed to lead the first post-war Italian government. He also played an important role in the preservation of the memory of the Italian Resistance. In 1949 he founded the National Institute for the History of the National Movement of Liberation in Italy (today the National Institute of Liberation - Parri with the aim of defending and preserving the legacy of the Resistance).

Il gruppo dirigente del Corpo Volontari della Libertà (CVL) che si riuniva per le strade di Milano il 29 giugno 1945. Parri è il terzo da sinistra.

Enrichetta Alferi

> 23.02.1899 - 27.12.1983



Enrichetta Alferi nacque in una casa da bottegai nel centro di San Vittore a Milano. Dopo l'esperienza del lavoro in fabbrica, si dedicò all'attività politica e fu tra le fondatrici del gruppo di antifascisti che lavorò per la liberazione dell'Italia dal nazifascismo.

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Examples of resistance figures

Aleksandra Mianowska, Ada Buffulini, Boy Ecury, Tadeusz Bieńkowicz, Validio Mantovani, Fernanda Kapteijn, Christoph Probst and Sophie Scholl were diverse individuals united by their commitment to resistance during World War II.

Aleksandra Mianowska, a renowned Polish actress, disobeyed the Nazis by aiding prisoners and collaborating with *Żegota* (Council to Aid Jews). After the German invasion, she joined Polish Red Cross. Throughout the war, she was helping patients as a nurse in hospitals in various Polish cities. For her deeds she was arrested by the Gestapo, as a result of which she was imprisoned. For her services regarding helping Jews during the occupation, she was honored with the title of Righteous Among the Nations.

Ada Buffulini, a doctor from Trieste, joined the anti-fascist movement, distributing leaflets and organizing resistance activities in Milan. Forced into hiding in 1943, Ada was later captured by fascists and deported to the Nazi camp in Bolzano, where her leadership in the resistance movement earned her respect among fellow prisoners.

Boy Ecury, from a Dutch Caribbean island Aruba, sabotaged German operations in the Netherlands and aided Allied pilots despite facing discrimination.

Tadeusz Bieńkowicz, a.k.a. "Rączy", a Polish platoon commander, orchestrated the liberation of 70 imprisoned resistance members in Lida, earning Poland's highest military honour. Validio Mantovani, a factory worker from Veneto, led attacks on German units as part of the Patriotic Action Groups in Milan.

Fernanda Kapteijn, a teenage courier from Utrecht, played a crucial role in the Dutch resistance, distributing illegal newspapers and funds to affected families.

Probst and Scholl, members of the White Rose resistance group, bravely defied the Nazi regime in Germany. Christoph Probst, the only White Rose member with children, drafted leaflets condemning the regime's atrocities, while Sophie Scholl, an artist and student, distributed the anti-Nazi leaflets and defied interrogation. Ultimately, both sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom.

Though their backgrounds varied, these individuals shared a common dedication to freedom and justice, leaving a lasting legacy of resistance against tyranny. You can read more about their lives, as well as about other people in the resistance, from our project exhibition available at the website address provided: www.through-their-eyes.org



Approaches to storytelling

In this chapter, we delve into the art of storytelling and explore effective techniques for engaging audiences while incorporating personal narratives and testimonies. Storytelling is a powerful tool that can captivate, educate, and inspire, making it an essential component of any communication strategy. Whether you are conveying historical events, sharing personal experiences, or advocating for a cause, mastering the art of storytelling can elevate your message and resonate with your audience on a deeper level.

- **The power of storytelling**

Explore the psychological impact of storytelling on human cognition and emotions. Understand why stories are such a potent means of communication and persuasion. Learn how storytelling can foster empathy, connection, and understanding among diverse audiences.

- **Crafting compelling narratives**

Identify the key elements of a compelling narrative, including character development, plot structure, and thematic resonance. Discover strategies for crafting narratives that are emotionally resonant, intellectually stimulating, and morally compelling. Explore different narrative formats, such as linear storytelling, nonlinear storytelling, and multi-perspective narratives, and their respective strengths and weaknesses.

- **Engaging audiences through storytelling**

Learn techniques for capturing and maintaining audience attention from the outset. Explore the use of vivid imagery, sensory language, and narrative tension to create a sense of immediacy and urgency. Understand how to tailor your storytelling approach to different audiences, contexts, and platforms for maximum impact.

- **Incorporating personal narratives and testimonies**

Recognize the power of personal narratives and firsthand testimonies in conveying lived experiences and perspectives. Explore ethical considerations when sharing personal stories, including consent, confidentiality, and sensitivity to trauma. Learn how to effectively integrate personal narratives and testimonies into your storytelling selection while respecting the integrity and autonomy of the storytellers.

- **Case studies and examples**

Examine case studies of successful storytelling campaigns, advocacy initiatives, and historical narratives that have effectively engaged audiences and driven social change. Analyse examples of personal narratives and testimonies used in various contexts, from documentary filmmaking to social media activism, and evaluate their impact on audience perceptions and attitudes.

Please remember that by mastering the art of storytelling and incorporating personal narratives and testimonies into your communication strategy, you can amplify your message, foster empathy and understanding, and inspire action and change. In the following chapters, we will discuss practical strategies for applying these storytelling techniques to everyday work.

Navigating sensitive topics

In this chapter, we will navigate the complexities of addressing sensitive topics such as persecution, collaboration, and liberation. These subjects carry significant historical, cultural, and emotional weight, making them challenging to discuss. However, by approaching them with care, sensitivity, and nuance, we can foster empathy, understanding, and reconciliation.

- **Understanding sensitivity**

Begin by examining the nature of sensitive topics and why they evoke strong emotions and reactions. For example, the Holocaust remains one of the most sensitive and emotionally charged topics in history, as it involved the systematic genocide of six million Jews by the Nazi regime during World War II. The impact of the Holocaust extends beyond the Jewish community to other marginalized groups, including Roma, disabled individuals, LGBTQ+ individuals, and political dissidents.

- **Addressing difficult subjects**

Learn strategies for addressing difficult subjects in a respectful, inclusive, and empathetic manner. For instance, when discussing collaboration during World War II, it is essential to acknowledge the complex motivations and circumstances that led individuals to collaborate with oppressive regimes. By contextualizing collaboration within broader historical, social, and political contexts, we can avoid oversimplification and moral judgment.

- **Fostering empathy and understanding**

Discover techniques for fostering empathy, understanding, and dialogue around sensitive topics. Personal narratives and testimonies play a crucial role in humanizing historical events and connecting audiences to the lived experiences of individuals



affected by persecution, collaboration, and liberation. For example, survivors' testimonies from the Holocaust provide powerful insights into the human cost of genocide and the resilience of those who survived.

- **Navigating controversy and disagreement**

Recognize the potential for controversy, disagreement, and conflicting interpretations when addressing sensitive topics. For example, debates surrounding the memory and commemoration of historical figures involved in controversial actions, such as wartime collaboration, often spark heated discussions. By engaging in respectful dialogue and acknowledging diverse perspectives, we can navigate controversy and promote mutual understanding.

- **Promoting reconciliation**

Explore the role of education, commemoration, and memorialization in promoting reconciliation in the aftermath of historical trauma. Initiatives such as truth and reconciliation commissions, which aim to address past injustices and promote social cohesion, provide valuable models for transitional justice.

Creating engaging guided tours

Guided tours are invaluable tools for conveying historical narratives, cultural heritage, and educational content in an interactive and immersive format. Thoughtful planning, engaging storytelling, and interactive elements are essential components of effective guided tours that address diverse audiences.

Thematic tours offer focused explorations of specific topics, themes, or periods in history, allowing visitors to delve deeper into subjects of interest. By considering the interests, preferences, and prior knowledge of the audience, tour designers can create tailored experiences that encourage in-depth exploration and meaningful engagement.

One format does not fit all when it comes to guided tours. To ensure inclusivity and accessibility, tour designers should consider the diverse needs and preferences of different audience demographics, including age groups, cultural backgrounds, language proficiency, and physical abilities. By offering experiences that accommodate varying levels of knowledge and interest, tour guides can create welcoming and inclusive environments for all visitors.

Interactive and immersive elements enhance the effectiveness of guided tours by actively engaging participants and creating memorable experiences. Incorporating hands-on activities, interactive exhibits, storytelling sessions, guided discussions, and role-playing exercises encourages active participation and deeper learning. Technology such as augmented reality, virtual reality, and interactive displays further enriches the tour experience and brings historical narratives to life.

Maintaining quality and consistency is essential for delivering successful guided tours. Tour guides should be trained to deliver engaging and informative presentations, follow established tour scripts, and respond effectively to visitor questions and feedback. Regular evaluation and updating of tour content ensure that guided tours remain relevant and compelling over time.

By applying these principles and techniques, tour designers can create guided tours that educate, entertain, and inspire audiences of all ages and backgrounds.



Interpreting Nazi memorials

Navigating the symbolism and significance of Nazi memorials requires a nuanced approach that acknowledges the complexities of history and the sensitivity of the subject matter. Institutions such as the Mauthausen Memorial and Gusen Memorial serve as important reminders of the atrocities committed during the Holocaust and the Nazi regime's reign of terror, while also reshaping the landscape of remembrance sites.

The Mauthausen Memorial and Gusen Memorial in Austria offer visitors a stark landscape marked by the remnants of the former concentration camps. Symbolic structures, including the quarry and the "Stairs of Death," serve as powerful reminders of the suffering endured by prisoners subjected to forced labour and brutal treatment. Guided tours and interpretive exhibits provide historical context and personal testimonies, allowing visitors to gain insight into the camp's operation and the experiences of those who were imprisoned there.

In addition, the Gusen Memorial is currently reshaping the landscape of remembrance sites. Located near the former Gusen concentration camp in Austria, this evolving memorial aims to honour the memory of the victims while confronting the complex history of the site. Through community engagement, commemorative events, and ongoing research, the Gusen Memorial is creating a new narrative of remembrance that acknowledges the site's troubled past and promotes dialogue and reconciliation.

In interpreting Nazi memorials, it is essential to contextualize them within the broader historical narrative of World War II and the Holocaust. Providing historical background on the rise of

nazism, the establishment of concentration camps, and the systematic persecution of targeted groups helps visitors understand the significance of these sites and the events that unfolded within them. Emphasizing the importance of remembrance and commemoration fosters empathy and understanding among visitors, encouraging reflection on the lessons of history and the dangers of intolerance and extremism.

By offering guidance on interpreting the symbolism and significance of Nazi memorials and approaches to contextualizing them within the broader historical narrative, institutions can facilitate meaningful engagement with this challenging subject matter. Through education, remembrance, and reflection, we honour the memory of the victims and reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that such atrocities are never forgotten or repeated.



Practical considerations for educators

Delivering guided tours and educational programs at sites of historical significance, such as Holocaust memorials and museums, requires careful planning and preparation. Here are some practical considerations to enhance the effectiveness of educational experiences.

Logistics and preparation tips

- Pre-visit planning: Familiarize yourself with the site's layout, exhibits, and visitor guidelines. Develop a clear itinerary and schedule to maximize the time available for learning activities.
- Group management: Determine the size and composition of your group in advance and establish protocols for behaviour and engagement. Consider dividing larger groups into smaller, more manageable ones for a more personalized experience.
- Accessibility: Ensure that the site is accessible to all participants, including those with disabilities or special needs. Coordinate with site staff to arrange accommodations such as wheelchair access, sign language interpretation, or audio guides.
- Multimedia resources: Utilize multimedia resources such as audiovisual presentations, digital exhibits, and interactive displays to enhance engagement and cater to different learning styles.

- Safety and security: Prioritize the safety and security of participants by familiarizing yourself with emergency procedures, evacuation routes, and site-specific safety protocols. Maintain supervision at all times, especially in areas with potential dangers or restricted access.
- Sensitivity and respect: Emphasize the importance of respectful behaviour and sensitivity toward the subject matter. Encourage participants to approach the experience with an open mind and a willingness to learn from the perspectives of others.

Resources for further development

- Educational materials: Explore a variety of educational materials, including textbooks, documentaries, and online resources, to deepen your understanding of the historical context and significance of the site.
- Training programs: Attend professional development workshops, seminars, and conferences focused on Holocaust education and museum interpretation. These programs provide valuable insights, strategies, and best practices for effective teaching and learning.
- Collaboration and networking: Collaborate with colleagues, educators, and experts in the field to share resources, exchange ideas, and collaborate on educational initiatives. Networking opportunities can enhance your professional growth and expand your knowledge base.
- Continued learning: Stay informed about current research, trends, and developments in Holocaust education and museum studies through ongoing professional development activities and self-directed learning opportunities.



Case studies and best practices

In this section, we present real-life examples of successful guided tours and educational initiatives at historical sites, focusing on lessons learned and recommendations for effective storytelling.

Mauthausen Memorial

The Mauthausen Memorial in Austria provides a powerful educational experience through its guided tours and educational programs. Visitors are guided through the former concentration camp by knowledgeable tour guides who provide historical context and personal stories of survivors. Interactive exhibits, archival footage, and survivor testimonies are incorporated to deepen understanding and foster empathy. One of the key strengths of the Mauthausen Memorial is its emphasis on individual stories and human experiences, which make the history of the Holocaust more relatable for visitors.

Gusen Memorial

The Gusen Memorial is undergoing a transformative process of reinterpretation and redevelopment to create a more engaging experience for visitors. Through innovative exhibits, multimedia installations, and interactive storytelling techniques, the Gusen Memorial aims to convey the complex history of the former concentration camp and its legacy. By incorporating survivor testimonies, archival materials, and multimedia resources, the Gusen Memorial provides visitors with a deeper understanding of the atrocities committed during the Holocaust and the importance of remembrance and commemoration.

Lessons learned and recommendations

- Incorporate **personal stories** and testimonies of survivors to humanize the historical narrative and make it more relatable for visitors.
- Utilize a **multidisciplinary approach**, combining historical research, archival materials, and interactive exhibits to engage visitors of all ages and backgrounds.
- Tailor guided tours and educational programs to the **specific needs and interests** of different audience demographics, including school groups, families, and international visitors.
- Approach sensitive topics with **sensitivity and respect**, acknowledging the gravity of the subject matter and the experiences of those affected by the Holocaust.
- Continuously evaluate and refine educational initiatives based on **feedback from visitors** and stakeholders, striving for improvement and innovation in Holocaust education and commemoration.

stories that connect
e.g. young → young

potentials

making it relevant for young audiences (what does it have to do with me)

Personal stories
Empathy
Adjust method of education to generation
Personal contact
Intergenerational to learn
Age + gender + nationality

passive
— How to take action?

give attention to all victims not just Jewish victims

CRITICAL THINKING (democracy, fake news)

3 popular opinions about resistance
— who knows what about resistance!

diversity

1 Using personal stories & exemplars

Conclusion and resources

As we conclude this handbook on history education and memorial interpretation, it's essential to recap the key takeaways and recommendations for educators seeking to enhance their practice in this important field.

Key takeaways

- Understanding the **historical context** of the Holocaust is crucial for effective education and memorial interpretation. Educators should strive to provide accurate, nuanced, and age-appropriate information to students and visitors.
- Fostering **empathy and respect** for the victims and survivors of the Holocaust is central to Holocaust education. Encourage critical thinking, reflection, and dialogue to deepen understanding and promote tolerance and compassion.
- Incorporating **personal narratives** and testimonies into educational programs can make the history of the Holocaust more relatable and impactful for learners. Highlighting individual experiences humanizes the historical events and encourages empathy and connection.
- Utilize **engaging pedagogical approaches**, such as guided tours, interactive exhibits, and multimedia resources, to enhance learning experiences and cater to diverse learning styles and preferences.
- Continuous **professional development** is essential for educators to stay informed about current research, best practices, and emerging trends in history education and memorial interpretation. Seek out training opportunities, collaborate with colleagues, and engage in ongoing learning and reflection.

Additional resources and references

Books: Explore a range of books and scholarly publications on history, education, and memorialization for further reading and professional development. Get inspired by any of the chosen items below.

- "Night" by Elie Wiesel
- "The Diary of Anne Frank" by Anne Frank
- "Outline of the History of the Resistance Movement in Poland 1939-1945" by Janusz Piekałkiewicz
- "Memoir from the Warsaw Uprising" by Miron Białoszewski
- "Stones for the Rampart" by Aleksander Kamiński
- "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen" by Tadeusz Borowski
- "If This Is a Man" by Primo Levi
- "A Woman in Berlin" by Anonymous
- "The Twelve Apostles" by Jan De Hartog
- "Anus mundi" by Wiesław Kielar
- "A Social History of The Third Reich" by Richard Grunberger
- "Fateless" by Imre Kertész
- "The little girl who could not hate" by Lidia Maksymowicz and Paolo Rodari
- "Auschwitz. A Monograph of the Human" by Piotr M. A. Cywiński
- "Hope is the Last to Die" by Halina Birenbaum
- "None of Us Will Return" by Charlotte Delbo
- "Reflections in the Gas Chamber's Waiting Room: From the Memoirs of a Muselmann" by Adolf Gawalewicz
- "People in Auschwitz" by Hermann Langbein
- "I Was Doctor Mengele's Assistant" by Miklós Nyiszli
- "Smoke over Birkenau" by Seweryna Szmaglewska
- "A piece of bread" by Adam Ziemia
- "A barbed wire Refrain" by August Kowalczyk
- "Childhood behind barbed wire" by Bogdan Bartnikowski

Websites: Visit renowned websites and online resources provided by WWII museums, memorial sites, and educational organizations for access to archival materials, lesson plans, and multimedia resources.

- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
- [Yad Vashem](#)
- [Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum](#)
- [Museum and Memorial in Sobibor](#)
- [Terezin Memorial](#)
- [State Museum at Majdanek](#)
- [Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site](#)
- [Treblinka Museum](#)
- [Buchenwald Memorial](#)
- [Sachsenhausen Memorial](#)
- [Bergen-Belsen Memorial](#)
- [Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial](#)
- [Mauthausen Memorial](#)
- [Gross-Rosen Museum](#)
- [Ravensbrück National Memorial](#)
- [Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial](#)
- [Mittelbau-Dora Memorial](#)
- [Memorial Struthof](#)

Workshops and seminars: Attend workshops, seminars, and conferences focused on Holocaust education and memorial interpretation to gain insights, share experiences, and collaborate with fellow educators.

Networks and associations: Join professional networks and associations dedicated to WWII education and memorialization to connect with colleagues, access resources, and participate in advocacy efforts.

HEAD

1 Thought

LEARNING
"EXPERIENCE"

COMPLEXITY

- * Shacked
- * People living at the
Camp site

DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES
IN CAMP EG. SPANISH FOOTBALL

All photographs featured in the handbook are the property of the LRE Foundation. The photographs are presented in chronological order and depict:

1. Mauthausen Memorial (cover photo).
2. Youth event at the Dutch Resistance Museum featuring the project exhibition display.
3. Comparison of the view of the “Stairs of Death” in reality and in an archival photo.
4. The building of the former crematorium on the grounds of the Gusen Memorial.
5. The project exhibition display at the Milan House of Remembrance.
6. Youth event at the Dutch Resistance Museum featuring the project exhibition display.
7. Course of the project workshop for guides and educators at the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance
8. The guided tour at the Gusen Memorial.
9. The view of the Gusen Memorial among residential buildings.
10. The guided tour at the Mauthausen Memorial.
11. Notes created by participants during the workshop at the Mauthausen Memorial.
12. One of the tasks conducted during the project workshop.

