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## ABSTRACT

This introductory lesson exposes students to a variety of online texts about Anne Frank and the Holocaust prior to more extensive study of these topics. Students are encouraged to cooperatively examine Internet sites as a primary source of information, and then share their impressions and opinions of the various sites. During the two 40-minute class sessions, grade 6-8 students will: work cooperatively in pairs; access and view specific sites on the Internet related to the topic they are studying; make observations that reflect thoughtful examination of each site's features and content; hold a "silent conversation," that is, an exchange of comments and ideas written on paper; and share their questions and thoughts about the sites together as a class. The instructional plan, lists of web resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. An observation and inquiry sheet for viewing websites about Anne Frank and the Holocaust and a silent conversation sheet are attached. (RS)

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# Dynamic Duo Text Talks: Examining the Content of Internet Sites

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## Grade Band

6-8

## Estimated Lesson Time

Two 40-minute class sessions

## Overview

Teachers can use this introductory activity to expose student to a variety of online texts about a particular topic. In this lesson, students work together to explore online texts about Anne Frank and the Holocaust. The lesson requires students to (a) examine various online texts and think about how their unique features are used to convey information about the specified topic, (b) initiate their own queries and conversations about the substantive content of those online texts, and (c) share their impressions and opinions of the various sites.

## From Theory to Practice

Keehn, S. & Roser, N.L. (2002). Fostering thought, talk and inquiry: Linking literature and social studies. *The Reading Teacher*, 55, 416-426.

- Via the acts of inquiry and conversation, curriculum can be linked in effective ways.
- Particular materials, texts, and tasks seem to help focus and promote genuine inquiry and conversation.

## Student Objectives

Students will

- Work cooperatively in pairs
- Access and view specific sites on the Internet related to the topic they are studying
- Make observations that reflect thoughtful examination of each site's features and content
- Hold a "silent conversation," that is, an exchange of comments and ideas written on paper
- Share their questions and thoughts about the sites together as a class

## Resources

- [Observation and Inquiry](#) sheet
- [Silent Conversation](#) sheet
- [A Cybrary of the Holocaust-Student Gallery](#)
- [The Anne Frank Center USA](#)

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- [The Auschwitz Album](#)
- Article about Anne Frank on the [Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia](#), © 1997-2002. Microsoft Corporation.
- Chart or banner paper
- Pencils and pens

## Instructional Plan

### Preparation

1. Review the article about Anne Frank on the Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia and the three other websites to become familiar with the features and content of each site.

[The Anne Frank Center USA](#). Students will examine a virtual scrapbook of Anne Frank's life.

[The Auschwitz Album](#). Students view the "Auschwitz Album," which was donated to Yad Vashem, a holocaust memorial of the Jewish people in Israel.

[A Cybrary of the Holocaust—Student Gallery](#). This section of the website is a gallery of artwork, discussion, poems, and letters created by a sixth-grade class as part of their exploration into genocide. (You may need to define "genocide" for the class and note its association with the Holocaust.)

2. Render three computer screens on chart or banner paper, label each with one of the three website addresses, and hang them on a wall of the classroom for later use.
3. Bookmark the websites for quicker student access.
4. Prepare a chart on banner paper with the headings: "World War II," the "Holocaust," and "Anne Frank."
5. Designate student pairings prior to the activity.

### Instruction and Activities

#### Session 1

Before students begin the exploration activities, post the banner paper with the headings "World War II," the "Holocaust," and "Anne Frank." Encourage students to share what, if anything, they already know about the three topics and note their thoughts on the chart. Explain how students will use the [Observation and Inquiry](#) sheet and the [Silent Conversation](#) sheet during the lesson.

Gather students in pairs. All pairs should open the article about Anne Frank on the [Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia](#), and the class should go through the article together. Make sure that students click on the hypertext links to "World War II" and the "Holocaust," and then read the first paragraph or two from each of those entries. Ask students what they want to add to the chart from the information they have read in the article and from the hypertext links. Add this new information to the chart.

Give each pair a copy of the Observation and Inquiry sheet with one of the web addresses highlighted in yellow. Although students will briefly visit each of the sites in the order listed, they will then go back to their designated site for a close viewing. Students should take turns writing their responses on the Observation and Inquiry sheet.

#### Session 2

During the second session, gather students in pairs and give them the Silent Conversation sheet. They should open one of the websites that they did not do the observation and inquiry work on and ask them to complete a "silent conversation" about it. This conversation should include at least 4 comments or questions written by each partner.

When all pairs have completed their "silent conversation," the class will go through the websites in numerical order first sharing their observations about the sites and then asking their questions about them by referring to their Observation and Inquiry sheets. Observations or questions that directly relate to the original three topics on the chart should be added under the comments from Session 1. Post the completed Silent Conversation sheets up on chart or banner paper screens so that classmates can read one another's discussions, and compare others pairs' thoughts to their own.

Use the chart with the three categories to lead the class into a study of the "human face" of World War II and the Holocaust via excerpts from Anne Frank's diary.

### Extensions

- Students write their own diary entries about a significant event or period in their own lives modeling it after Anne's style.
- Students write a diary entry from the point of view of an adolescent living in Europe during World War II and incorporate information that they learned throughout the unit.
- Students research a specific aspect of the Holocaust, by framing a question about it to guide their research. For example, students might ask:
  - Where are the memorials to Holocaust victims located in the United States?
  - What has become of the original concentration camps?
  - What worldwide groups or organizations have been established to help Holocaust survivors or their surviving relatives?
- Students visit the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) website, take an online tour, and write a follow-up reflection of their experience.
- Students read another work of historical fiction that pertains to this period, then write a follow-up reflection on how that reading contributed to their knowledge of the Holocaust. Suggestions for such readings include: *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry and *The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen.
- The lesson [Anne Frank: One of Hundreds of Thousands](#) can be used as an extension to this lesson because it invites students to connect Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* to the historical events of World War II.

### Student Assessment/Reflections

- Successful navigation to and through the various sites
- Completed [Observation and Inquiry](#) sheet for assigned site that includes specific references to details and elements on the site that support students' observations and opinions
- Completed [Silent Conversation](#) sheet that includes specific references to details and elements on the site that support students' observations and opinions; also check for correct coding of comments to see if students understand what kind of thinking they are doing
- Teacher observation and anecdotal notes on class discussions

## **IRA/NCTE Standards**

1 - Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

3 - Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

6 - Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

8 - Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

12 - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).



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# Observation and Inquiry Sheet

## For Viewing a Website

Partner #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner #2: \_\_\_\_\_

### Websites:

**1. The Anne Frank Center USA:**

<http://www.annefrank.com/index1.html>

**2. The Auschwitz Album:**

[http://www.yad-yashem.org.il/exhibitions/album\\_auschwitz/home\\_auschwitz\\_album.html](http://www.yad-yashem.org.il/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/home_auschwitz_album.html)

**3. Cybrary of the Holocaust-Student Gallery:**

<http://remember.org/imagine/index.html>

After looking at and talking about the site with your partner, please complete the thoughts below. BE SURE TO TAKE TURNS WRITING AND WRITE LEGIBLY.

Our initial reaction to this site was . . .

because . . .

As far as the way this site looks, we noticed . . .

because . . .

One question that occurred to us about this site while we were  
looking at it was:

One question that occurred to us about \_\_\_\_\_  
while we were looking at this site was:

One aspect or feature of this site that we liked was . . .

because . . .

One aspect or feature of this site that we think could be improved was . . .

because . . .

Other comments or questions that occurred to us while we were looking more closely at this site:



## Silent Conversation Sheet

Partner #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Website name: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner #1 should begin the conversation by looking at the site and raising a question about it, stating an opinion on some aspect of it, making an observation about it, or drawing some connection to it. Partner #2 should respond to the question, observation, or connection, or react to the opinion. Then Partner #2 should raise a new question, make a new observation or connection, or state an opinion on a different aspect of the site.

**ALL OF THIS SHOULD BE DONE WITHOUT SPEAKING. IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR PARTNER IS ASKING OR SAYING, THEN WRITE THAT INTO THE CONVERSATION AND GET A RESPONSE BEFORE YOU MOVE ON.** Remember to word your comments and ask your questions in a way that requires more than a one-word response.

Before you write your comment or question, please identify yourself as Partner #1 (P1) or Partner #2 (P2) and after each comment or questions, label it as:

Q = Question raised

P = Opinion stated

B = Observation made

C = Connection made

A = Answer to a question

R = Response or reaction to an opinion, observation,  
or connection

Each partner must write at least 4 substantive portions of the "silent conversation." In other words, clarification requests do not count.



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