

LESSON PLAN

Dachau Song

Experience the vitality and power of a song written and sung by prisoners in the Dachau Concentration Camp in southern Germany by inviting your students to critically evaluate its lyrics.

 30-60 min  Grades 5-8

DOMAIN

The Holocaust

SUBJECT

Resistance

TOPIC

Resistance in Camps

Enduring Understanding

Self-expression is a powerful mode of resistance.

Essential Questions

1. How does art undermine oppression?

Readiness

 10 min

Ask students how they define resistance. What does resistance look like and what form does it take? Ask them also if they would expect there to be much resistance in concentration camps. Why or why not?

Input

 25 min

Printable background and [lyrics here](#).

Listen to the [Dachau Song](#) via the US Holocaust Memorial Museum website. Ask them to pay attention to the tone and tenor of the song while they read along with the lyrics that pop up on the screen (full screen is best for this).

When the song is finished, prompt students to provide their initial thoughts about the song. What did they notice? Does it remind them of anything? What is the overall feeling that the song generated for them?

Then, distribute the [PDF of the lyrics](#) and the background information.

Read through the background information about the song and clarify any of the details or language that the students might have trouble with.

Then, split the class into 5 groups and assign each one to a verse or the chorus.

In groups, ask each team to analyze the lyrics that they have been given, offering that they can reference a dictionary to look up words that are more difficult.

Prompt their analysis with some questions that will help better understand what life was like in Dachau:

1. What does the author indicate about life in the camp?
2. What imagery is used and why do you think it was chosen?
3. What are the inmates supposed to be cautious of?
4. What does this song say about resistance to oppression?

Output

 10 min

Ask each group to offer their analysis of the song and, while they do, add unique answers to your 'chalk' board. Once each group has presented their section, ask the whole group for other observations about the song in its entirety. What else can they glean from their collective observations about life in Dachau?

Time permitting, return to the recorded version of the song once again. Ask students to pay close attention to the lyrics that they have on their page in addition to the overall feel of the tune. What else comes up in their minds as they take in the whole piece once more?

Teacher Tip:

Students should know what a concentration camp is, so be sure to review this term with them, distinguishing it from extermination camps. If necessary, return to the lesson plans about concentration camps.