



Educator Resource: Oral History Excerpt Discussion Questions

For use with the lesson "Exploring Survivors' Testimonies via Found Poems"

How to Use this Resource:

This resource is intended for educator use in conjunction with the "Exploring Survivors' Testimonies via Found Poems" lesson plan. At the end of this lesson students will engage in a class discussion based on their analyses of the oral history excerpts they have read and the "found poems" they have created from specific words and phrases from the excerpts that they have selected.

Some general discussion questions are included, as well as some questions that are specific to each pair of oral history excerpts. Suggestions for discussion themes are also listed. By all means, feel free to use or adapt these questions as needed based on the needs of your students and their responses to the lesson.

General Discussion Questions

1. What was this activity like for you? Why did you pick the words and/or phrases that you did?
2. Did anything that another group shared catch your attention?
3. Why do you think this individual sat down to share their experiences with Arwen Donahue?
4. How did learning about these individuals' experiences make you feel?
5. What similarities and differences between what you all read today did you notice?
6. As they look back, how do these survivors use their memories of what happened to them during the Holocaust to guide their modern lives?
7. These excerpts are only tiny windows into each person's experiences during the Holocaust. What questions do you still have about their lives or experiences?

Sylvia Green | Potential Discussion Themes: Survival, Arrival to the U.S., Why Survivors Speak Out

1. What does Sylvia Green say about her own survival during the Holocaust?
2. What shock does Sylvia Green describe experiencing when she arrives in the United States?
3. Why does Sylvia Green say that it is important for her to share her experiences with others?

Oscar Haber | Potential Discussion Themes: Liberation Period, Identity

1. What was Oscar Haber's experience of the period of liberation?
2. What does Oscar Haber say about his identity in the period of liberation?
3. How does Oscar Haber look back on his past?

Ann Klein | Potential Discussion Themes: Survival, Trauma, Why Survivors Speak Out

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1. How does Ann Klein describe how she felt after the war, when she returned to Hungary?
 2. What does Ann Klein say helped her survive her experiences during the Holocaust?
 3. “I think about it a lot, but I deal with it, except sometimes it looks to me that wasn’t me” - what do you think Ann Klein meant when she said this?

Justine Lerner | Potential Discussion Themes: Trauma, Survivor-Child Relationship, Why Survivors Speak Out

1. How does Justine Lerner discuss the challenges she faced in terms of sharing her experiences during the Holocaust with others?
2. Based on what you read, how does Justine Lerner describe her relationship with her son?
3. Justine Lerner described in multiple instances that it was very challenging for her to discuss her experiences during the Holocaust with others. So, why do you think she decided to be interviewed by Arwen Donahue?

John Rosenberg | Potential Discussion Themes: Place, Arrival to the U.S.

1. What was John Rosenberg’s initial experience upon arriving in the United States?
2. How does John Rosenberg discuss “place” in his oral history excerpts?
3. How does John Rosenberg look back on his life?

Paul Schlisser | Potential Discussion Themes: anti-Semitism, Why Survivors Speak Out

1. Based on what you read, how did Paul Schlisser first notice rising anti-Semitism in the 1940s?
2. How does Paul Schlisser describe his family’s experiences following Passover 1944?
3. Why did Paul Schlisser agree to be interviewed by Arwen Donahue?

Alice Dreifuss Goldstein | Potential Discussion Themes: anti-Semitism

1. What specific memories does Alice Dreifuss Goldstein describe, as she thinks back to witnessing the Nazi Party gaining power in Germany?
2. How do you fit Alice Dreifuss Goldstein’s memories into the larger context of the Holocaust?

About the Source

Citation:

Donahue, Arwen. *This is Home Now: Kentucky’s Holocaust Survivors Speak* (The University Press of Kentucky, 2009).

Goldstein, Alice Dreifuss. “Interview with Alice Dreifuss Goldstein, April 17, 2019.” Interview by Beth Goldstein. *Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project*.
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