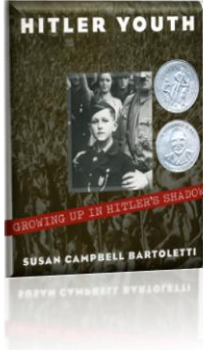


Integrating Literature into the Curriculum: World War II Germany, 8th Grade

by Ann Campbell, Jen Hamilton, Sarah Miller

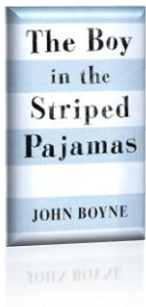
Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow*. New York: Scholastic, 2005. Print.



Annotation: *Hitler Youth* focuses on the lives of 12 young people growing up in Germany during World War II. Through pictures, first hand testimony and research, Campbell tells of how German youth participated in the war. These youth became machine gun operators, nurses, prison guards, concentration camp inmates and resistance fighters. The images and interviews make this an interesting read for students. It will appeal to reluctant readers because it is about real, teenagers that they can connect to. It is also a very though provoking book because it covers all aspect of WWI era German Youth and brings to light the hard choices that young people had to make in order to survive.

Instructional Strategy: This book is naturally broken into sections by chapters that cover different types of youth. Classes can be broken into groups and given a summary of the actions and feelings of each youth in the book. They can use these summaries to create character profiles of people affected or influenced by the war. Each profile could include information such as religion, ideology, age, job, feelings about Hitler/War. Students can be asked to consider their character perspective throughout the rest of the unit when examining new topics. This will lead to lively discussion from a multitude of perspectives.

Boyne, John. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. New York: David Fickling, 2006. Print.



Annotation: This fictionalized tale of a naïve nine year old faced with Auschwitz, is deceptive in its simplicity. Bruno is the son of the camp commandant and makes friend with Schmueel, a nine year old living on the other side of the fence. The simplicity of the tale and the language used might make one tempted to let younger readers read the book. This would be a mistake. It is simple and easy for a reluctant reader to read but make sure they are mature enough for the content and that reading this story is part of a larger lesson plan as this tale is deceptively dark.

Instructional Strategy: We would use the different perspective of the Jewish child and the German child to promote seeing things from different points of view. We would use a few minutes from the movie to show the difference between the boys and then have students practice letter writing where they focus on point of view. Each student would choose a different person from the time period (a German boy, the commandant of the camp, a prisoner) and write a letter to the world from that perspective telling his/her point of view. Discussion would centralize around how the two could be friends.

LeZotte, Ann Clare. *T4: a Novel in Verse*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. Print.

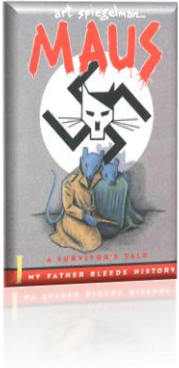


Annotation: When the Nazis put a new law nicknamed “T4” into effect, a 13 year-old deaf girl must leave her home and family and go into hiding to avoid captivity and death. *T4: a Novel in Verse* gives a different perspective of Nazi Germany and other groups besides Jews that were victimized. Themes of survival and the importance of each life are woven throughout the text. Short poems and easy vocabulary make it good for struggling or reluctant readers. Various people groups are represented throughout the text, promoting the idea of equality and acceptance.

Instructional Strategy: Read-aloud at the beginning of every class. After each reading, students can write their responses and thoughts about the section in their journals. Students can analyze the characters and situations, determine literary devices used, critique the author’s style, or explore themes. The class could also engage in discussion about what was read.

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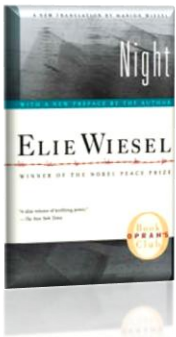
Spiegelman, Art. *MAUS I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History*. New York: Pantheon, 1986. Print.



Annotation: MAUS tells the tale of Vladek Spiegelman, a young, married Polish man at the onset of WWII. This graphic memoir is written and drawn by Vladek's son Artie as he listens to his father tell of his experiences as a Jew during this time period. The book follows Vladek to a German Prisoner of War camp, a Polish Ghetto, and a horrific concentration camp as he shares how he survived each difficult ordeal with cunning and smarts. The graphic nature of this book makes it ideal for reluctant readers. The imagery used by Spiegelman is very thought-provoking. His use of animals and symbols leaves a lot of room for discussion.

Instructional Strategy: This book contains many powerful images. A great strategy would be to pull individual images from the text that relate to what the class is discussing for the day (for example: POW camps) and have the students do a free write where they discuss their observations of the image. This can lead into a discussion that will introduce the day's topic.

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. Transl. by Marion Wiesel. New York: Hill and Wang, 1958. Print.



Annotation: The bestselling author Elie Wiesel, is also a civil rights activist and Nobel peace prize winner. He wrote a memoir of his time in Auschwitz. As a 15-year-old Jewish boy, he was taken to Auschwitz. Separated from his mother and imprisoned with his father, he tells the truth about his life in a German concentration camp. Most especially, Wiesel pulls no punches about his own behavior. Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults Winners 2007 Award Winning book.

Instructional Strategies: After listening to an excerpt from the audio book of *Night* by Elie Wiesel, we would practice memoir writing. The discussion would focus on how memoir and fiction and autobiography differ from one another. Students would be able to take one of their own memories and turn it into a memoir. They would be asked to choose one memory or event that has stuck with them over the years and write as much as they can about that one event.

Sources Used

Campbell, Kimberly Hill. *Less is More: Teaching Literature with Short Texts-Grades 6-12*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2007.

Danks, Carol. "[Using the literature of Elie Wiesel and selected poetry to teach the Holocaust in the secondary school history classroom](#)" *The Social Studies*, Jun 1, 1996, Vol. 87, Issue 3, p101 [ProQuest Education Journals](#) through the Hoover Library article search on EBSCO.

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<http://www.ilovelibraries.org/booklovers/awardwinningbooks/fulllist07.cfm?ID=21>