



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

LESSON PLAN – FOR 6^H GRADERS AND ABOVE

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:

Archives hold many types of documents and materials that assist in studying the past. Events and actions of the past affect the present and the future. Throughout American history, Jewish Americans have fought for what they believe is right.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

What is an archives and why are they important?
What kinds of materials represent the history of individuals?
How to individuals today connect with historical figures from the past?

INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

Begin with a series of questions relating to what an archives is, its mission, and how familiar the group is with the archive information. Ask the questions as introductions, verbally, rather than as written questions:

- 1) How many have you have been to a library?
- 2) How many of you have been to an archives?
- 3) Who knows the difference?
- 4) How does understanding history reveal information about Jewish identity and Jewish values?

TOUR (15 minutes)

Take a short tour of the AJA or the AJA website:

- 1) Show our facility to assist understanding of what an archives contains and how researchers use an archives. Show original documents, photographs, and play and audio. Show some of oldest materials.

RESEARCH (20 minutes)

EDUCATOR: Ask student to name some famous people who are no longer living. What do you know about them? How do you know what you know? If someone told you, or if you read it in a book, how did the author know? Because of documents, photos, diaries, recordings, video.

Assign historical figures to Chevruta pairs and give the list of questions. They will essentially become that individual. Potential candidates:

- Emma Lazarus: poem on Statue of Liberty
- Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel: coming to America and his time at HUC-JIR
- Annie Nathan Meyer: her philanthropy and support of Zora Neale Hurston
- Rabbi Sally Priesand, 1st woman rabbi in America
- Rabbi Joachim Prinz, at MLK fight for civil rights
- Kivie Kaplan, President of the NAACP, activist and philanthropist, friends with Jackie Robinson
- Rabbi Perry Nussbaum, Civil Rights Rabbi in Mississippi
- Rebecca Gratz, Started the Sunday School program

Students will be given archival “boxes” that relate to their historical figure. They will have various materials such as photos, posters, audio (if possible), objects and so forth. They will be given a full table so they may spread their materials out for examination.

Research Questions

- 1) Name and dates of birth
- 2) What events were going on in the United States during your lifetime?
- 3) What part of American did you live in most of your life?
- 4) What was your occupation?
- 5) Were you an immigrant or born in the United States?
- 6) What freedom were you fighting for?
- 7) Name two or three things that you did that were important to helping fight for that freedom?
- 8) What Jewish values might have guided your decision?
- 9) Have you experienced or seen this issue in your own life or in your own family and friends?
- 10) Do you think that what you did affected the present (2018) and the future

BREAK (10 minutes)

PRESENTATION PREPARATION (20 minutes)

After completing the questions, students will give a presentation. This presentation will be a method of teaching their fellow students about who they are and their freedom fighting. Students can choose from the following:

1. **Interview with a Freedom Fighter Role Play:** One student will be a journalist/interviewer and the other will play the role of the freedom fighter. conversation questions can be provided by us, or the students can create them. The questions will reflect freedom fighting, their experiences and feelings, and how they compare with each other.
2. **Play** -- Create and perform a 5 minute play based on your feelings and experiences as a freedom fighter.
3. **Stage a discussion** with a family member who doesn't agree with what you are doing as a freedom fighter. Make sure to include your reasons for doing what you did.
4. **Poem** – write a poem that highlights the most important ideas that you learned about your freedom fighter
5. **Poster** – make a poster that is “selling” what you are fighting for.

PRESENTATIONS (20 minutes)

WRAP-UP & CONCLUSION (10 minutes)