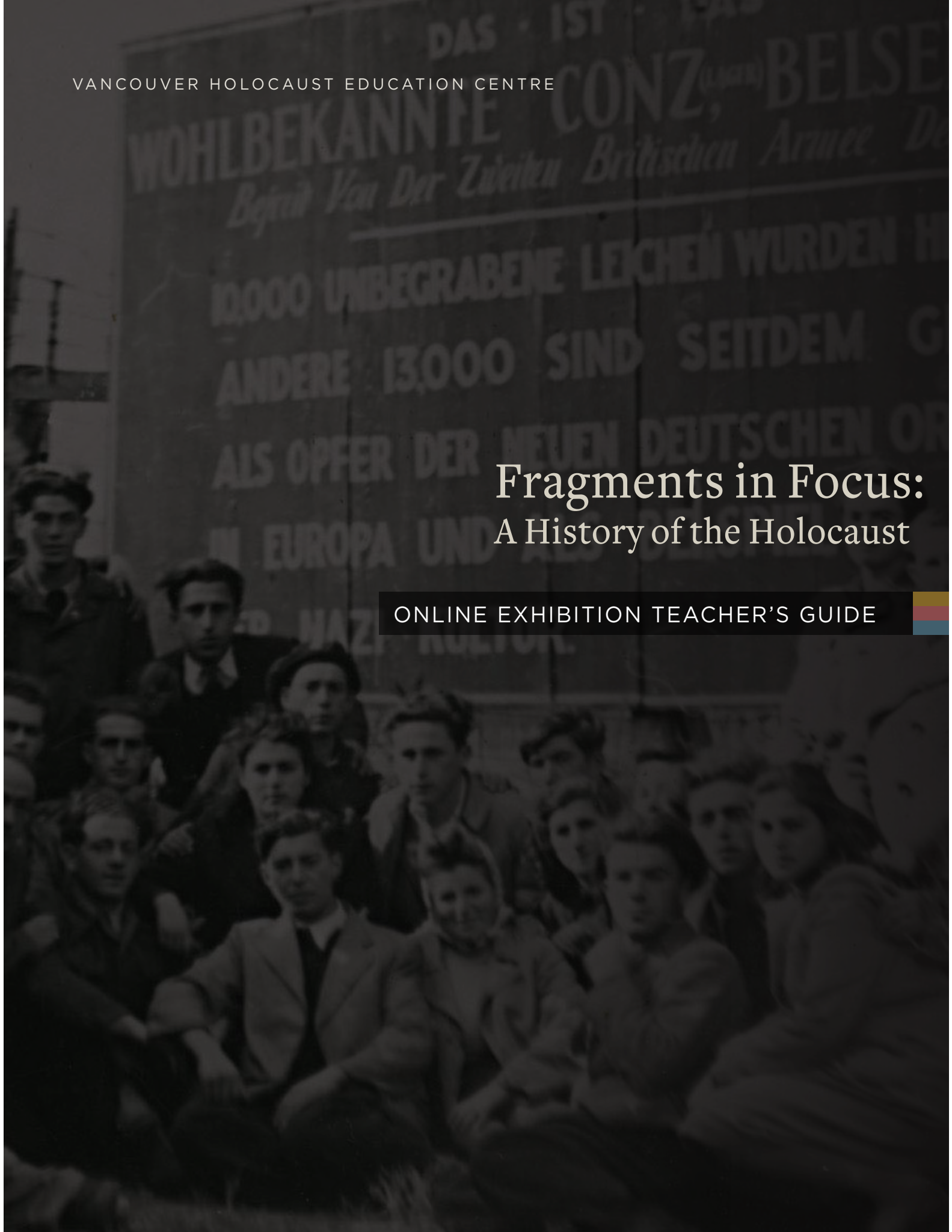


VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

Fragments in Focus: A History of the Holocaust

ONLINE EXHIBITION TEACHER'S GUIDE



Fragments in Focus: A History of the Holocaust
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Cover image: Group photograph at the gate
of Bergen-Belsen DP camp, 1946. [94.02.0105](https://www.digitalmuseums.ca/94.02.0105)

Fragments in Focus: A History of the Holocaust

ONLINE EXHIBITION TEACHER'S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

FRAGMENTS ONLINE EXHIBITION

Fragments in Focus: A History of the Holocaust (Fragments) features more than 160 artefacts, testimony clips and archival records drawn from the VHEC’s archival, museum, library and testimony collections. These items were donated by Holocaust survivors, eyewitnesses and historians, reflecting their deep connections to Canada and the BC community.

Fragments gives students the opportunity to learn about the Holocaust through the powerful lens of individual experiences. Each item in the online exhibition tells a unique and intimate story—of persecution, resistance, survival, loss or hope—and speaks to universal themes of Holocaust study.

Students and educators can navigate the online exhibition’s three sections: Pre-War Life, The Holocaust, and Aftermath. Thematic galleries within each section allow students to explore original materials and make deeper connections to historical themes by accessing related items. The *Fragments* online exhibition offers teachers a rich resource for engaging students with primary sources in the classroom.

Integrated student activities are designed to enhance student engagement with the primary sources featured in the online exhibition, while fostering critical thinking and social responsibility.

TEACHER’S GUIDE

This teacher’s guide is a companion to the *Fragments* online exhibition, providing educators with the necessary foundation to use the website in their classroom. Educators can use *Fragments* as either a primary or a supplementary resource for crafting a Holocaust education unit.

This guide provides teachers with:

- internationally developed guidelines for teaching the Holocaust;
- learning objectives for using the primary sources of *Fragments*;
- strategies for effectively integrating *Fragments* into classroom instruction;
- a Pre-Lesson on primary sources, with student readings, handouts and worksheets;
- suggestions for integrations and teaching formulations using the 19 student activities of the exhibition website.
- Access to all student activities can be found at the [Learning Resources page](#) of the *Fragments* website.

The *Fragments* online exhibition is written for a Grade 8 reading level. The content of the exhibition is appropriate for grades six and above. While the student activities are generally aligned with Grade 10 Social Studies standards and competencies, they are easily adaptable for younger grades by focusing on introductory questions within the student activity. The questions are designed to progressively prompt deeper and more complex reflection as students advance through each activity.

CONNECTIONS TO THE BC CURRICULUM

Holocaust education is mandatory in several provinces and territories in Canada. In British Columbia, the Holocaust is a required topic in the Social Studies 10 curriculum and an optional topic in [Social Studies 6](#). *Fragments* and its integrated student activities provide educators with an approachable, in-depth and accessible resource to satisfy the curricular mandate. The thematic galleries of the *Fragments* website align with the sample topics (elaborations) of the [Social Studies 10 curriculum](#) and this guide supports teachers in using *Fragments* to develop the curricular competencies.

The student activities and interactive features of the *Fragments* online exhibition strongly support inquiry-based and personalised learning, key emphases within the BC curriculum. Students actively participate in historical inquiry when they use critical thinking skills to question, uncover evidence and construct meaning from primary sources.

Tangible connections to the BC Social Studies 10 curriculum include:

CORE COMPETENCIES

Communication

Fragments provides opportunities for students to collaborate and communicate as they explore the online exhibition and complete the student activities. Through presentations and group discussions, students share their observations, interpretations and conclusions about themes of Holocaust study.

Thinking

Fragments prompts students to think critically about major themes in Holocaust history as they analyse primary sources from diverse perspectives (e.g., victims, perpetrators, witnesses, descendants, historians) to form reasoned inferences and conclusions.

Personal and Social

Investigating primary sources in *Fragments* connects students to personal stories of individuals impacted by the Holocaust and invites them to consider the implication of this history upon people and communities.

CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES AND HISTORICAL THINKING CONCEPTS

The 19 integrated student activities in *Fragments* align with curricular competencies of Social Studies 10 and the [Six Historical Thinking Concepts](#), developed by Professor Peter Seixas, at the University of British Columbia:

- **Establish** *historical significance*
- **Use** *primary source evidence*
- **Identify** *continuity and change*
- **Analyse** *cause and consequence*
- **Take** *historical perspective*
- **Understand** *the ethical dimension of history*

TEACHING GUIDELINES

Described by scholars as a paradigmatic genocide, the Holocaust is a critical topic of study for students. However, it can also be challenging to teach and learn about such a large scale and complex historical event. To ensure that students safely engage with lessons about the Holocaust, it is essential to approach the subject with planning and care. Below are recommendations developed by international experts for teaching the Holocaust accurately, sensitively and effectively.

Fragments was designed with these recommendations in mind and provides educators with a comprehensive resource grounded in best practices. Below are the VHEC's guidelines for teaching the Holocaust, along with an explanation of how *Fragments* aligns with these good practices.



LEARN MORE ABOUT HOLOCAUST PEDAGOGY

Consult the teaching guidelines created by our education partners: [IHRA](#), [USHMM](#), [Echoes & Reflections](#), [Azrieli Foundation](#).

ARE YOU TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST FOR THE FIRST TIME?

Our partners at the Azrieli Foundation created [The First Step](#), a foundational resource for educators who are teaching the Holocaust for the first time.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST

1.	DEFINE THE TERM <i>HOLOCAUST</i> Begin by defining the Holocaust, drawing from a historically accurate and reliable source. Students should be able to articulate what the Holocaust was, where and when it took place, who was involved, and why and how it unfolded as it did.	How <i>Fragments</i> supports this approach: The online exhibition provides a foundational definition of the Holocaust to anchor students' exploration of its history. The website's glossary defines other key terms related to the Holocaust, including antisemitism, genocide, and Jews. The glossary link appears at the bottom of every page, ensuring students can easily reference it as they navigate the online exhibition.
2.	BE PRECISE AND INTENTIONAL IN THE USE OF LANGUAGE To avoid stereotypes, generalizations and oversimplification, it is important to choose terms purposefully and to discuss the origin and purpose of perpetrator terms when they arise. The sensitive use of language is also essential for creating a safe classroom environment for students.	How <i>Fragments</i> supports this approach: The website glossary provides teachers with precise terminology and definitions. To help students recognise perpetrator vocabulary and avoid stereotypes, it also includes explanations of euphemistic terms used by perpetrators.

<p>3.</p>	<p>INCLUDE PRE-WAR JEWISH LIFE AND THE HISTORY OF ANTISEMITISM</p> <p>Understanding the diverse and vibrant Jewish life that flourished across Europe for millennia humanizes the victims of the Holocaust and underscores the magnitude of what was lost. It is also important for students to learn about the long history of antisemitism that was deeply rooted in European culture, and which laid the groundwork for the Holocaust.</p>	<p>How <i>Fragments</i> supports this approach:</p> <p>The Pre-War Life section illuminates Jewish life for students using captivating images, testimony and precious family objects. Within that section, The Longest Hatred thematic gallery provides a counterpoint: tangible primary source evidence of historic antisemitism and its centuries-long stronghold in Europe.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>CONTEXTUALIZE THE HISTORY</p> <p>Help students understand the sequence of events, who was involved and where the events took place. This contextualization reinforces that the Holocaust was not inevitable but rather the result of choices and decisions made by individuals, institutions and nations over many years.</p>	<p>How <i>Fragments</i> supports this approach:</p> <p>As students explore <i>Fragments</i>, the timeline helps them situate artefacts within the history of the Holocaust. The timeline also highlights Canada's response to unfolding events. To illustrate the complexities of human behaviours during that time, the artefacts and testimonies in <i>Fragments</i> were selected to represent the spectrum of choices made by victims, perpetrators, survivors, bystanders, military personnel, rescuers and governments.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>TEACH THE HUMAN STORY, NOT JUST STATISTICS</p> <p>It is imperative for students to understand that the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust were human beings with families, friends, hopes and dreams. Educators should translate statistics into personal stories at every opportunity by incorporating survivor and eyewitness testimony.</p>	<p>How <i>Fragments</i> supports this approach:</p> <p><i>Fragments</i> includes more than 30 testimony clips from BC Holocaust survivors providing students with firsthand accounts to watch and reflect upon. These personal stories elevate individual voices from the collective experience. The accompanying student activities encourage students to contemplate the impact of historical events upon individuals, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of the human dimension of the Holocaust.</p>

6. **BALANCE THE PERSPECTIVES AND TYPES OF SOURCES**

The use of primary sources can help students analyse source material critically. Teach students to consider the origin of sources, how and why they were created and by whom. Encourage students to recognise biases and assess the reliability of each source.

How *Fragments* supports this approach:

With 160 artefacts, archival records and testimony clips, primary sources are the foundation of the *Fragments* online exhibition. The [Analysing Artefacts Worksheet](#), which accompanies this guide, prompts student to observe, analyse and interpret primary sources with reference to historical thinking concepts. *Fragments* also includes secondary sources, such as texts and reflections videos from historians, collectors and archival professionals. These secondary sources offer students diverse perspectives from which to interpret the artefacts they encounter.

7. **DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST AND THE MORAL LESSONS THAT MIGHT BE LEARNED FROM IT**

When students encounter the Holocaust only through its moral lessons for humanity, the Holocaust is reduced to a metaphor and its historical specificity is obscured. Instead, the Holocaust should be taught as a specific historical event understood within the political, geographic and sociological contexts that led to its occurrence. Students should learn the facts, stories and nuances of the Holocaust before making meaning from it.

How *Fragments* supports this approach:

Fragments offers a historically accurate and comprehensive overview of the major themes in Holocaust history. Arranged chronologically, the thematic galleries allow students to witness the precursors to the destruction of European Jewry. Through primary sources, students can examine how individuals in different roles and in different countries responded to the Holocaust, revealing the complex factors that contributed to the Holocaust and made decision-making challenging and potentially dangerous.

8. **USE A STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH TO FOSTER A SAFE AND POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The Holocaust is a sensitive and heavy subject. Students should be encouraged to ask questions, share thoughts and engage in meaningful reflection. Educators play a crucial role in creating a space of mutual respect, where differing perspectives can be heard and valued.

How *Fragments* supports this approach:

The *Fragments* website provides age-appropriate and pedagogically sound student activities that prompt student reflection. The activities are non-prescriptive, facilitating student-led inquiry and creative thinking.

9. ENCOURAGE THE STUDY OF LOCAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL HISTORY AND MEMORY

While the Holocaust took place in Europe, it was an event that affected, and continues to affect, people and communities around the world. Provide students with content relevant to a geographic location they are studying, including Canada.

How *Fragments* supports this approach:

The online exhibition presents artefacts from Vancouver-based survivors of different regional and cultural backgrounds, emphasizing the unique experiences of victims from different countries where the Holocaust was carried out. The [Aftermath](#) section introduces concepts of collective memory and commemoration, inviting students to consider the ongoing legacy of the Holocaust for both individuals and societies.

10. AVOID DRAWING ANALOGIES BETWEEN THE HOLOCAUST AND CONTEMPORARY EVENTS OR POLITICAL SITUATIONS

Making analogies to contemporary events distorts and oversimplifies the Holocaust's complexities. Analogies detach the Holocaust from its historical setting, making it difficult for students to grasp the unique political, ideological and social contexts that led to genocide. This can lead to misunderstandings and false moral parallels that discourage critical engagement with Holocaust history.

How *Fragments* supports this approach:

Fragments emphasizes primary sources, survivor testimonies and diverse perspectives, allowing students to understand Holocaust events in historical context. The accompanying learning activities prompt thoughtful reflection using appropriate methodologies. This approach ensures that students can appreciate the historical realities of the Holocaust without distorting their significance through comparisons.

PRIMARY SOURCES IN THE CLASSROOM

WHAT ARE PRIMARY SOURCES?

Primary sources are the raw materials of historical research—original artefacts, records or first-hand accounts created at or near the time of the event under study. They provide direct evidence of the events, practices or conditions during the period in question.

In contrast, secondary sources (such as textbooks, scholarly books and articles) are created after an historical event and offer a description or interpretation of the event based on an analysis of primary sources.

The primary sources of *Fragments* include original materials created, written or used before, during and after the Holocaust, as well as eyewitness accounts that were documented later, including the oral testimonies and accounts of those who directly experienced the events. Examples include:

- oral video testimony
- photographs
- business documents and contracts
- currency and medals
- diaries, scrapbooks and journals
- propaganda materials
- correspondence
- government documents
- works of art
- personal and household objects

TEACHING WITH THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF *FRAGMENTS*

The *Fragments* online exhibition offers teachers a rich resource for engaging students with primary sources in the classroom.

Teaching with primary sources fosters the development of critical and historical thinking skills and advances key goals in the social studies curriculum. Direct engagement with objects from the past helps students examine meaning, identify links between past and present, recognise patterns and see relationships. When those primary sources are drawn from a variety of perspectives, students begin to appreciate the significance of context, bias, purpose and point of view in our interpretations of historical events.

Fragments has been carefully designed to help teachers realise these important learning objectives in the following ways:

1. ENCOURAGE ACTIVE, SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Unlike passive textbook learning, primary sources encourage active, learner-led historical inquiry. Students ask questions, uncover evidence, make inferences and construct meaning from sources that represent different accounts of the past.

How *Fragments* supports this active learning:

Fragments encourages active, personalized learning by inviting students to explore the thematic galleries of the online exhibition at their own pace and to focus upon themes and objects that arouse their curiosity. Self-directed inquiry and deeper content learning are supported by the inclusion of related materials, reflections videos and links to more information at collections.vhec.org.

Resources:

- [Professor Moser's Notebooks](#) student activity and related material;
- [Arriving in Auschwitz](#) testimony clip and student activity;
- Use the [Analysing Artefacts Worksheet](#) and the procedures of the [Pre-Lesson](#) to guide students' investigation of [Photo of Anny and Alex](#) and reflections video;
- [Propaganda Poster](#) and related material;
- [Lace Samples](#), reflections video and related material.

2. AROUSE CURIOSITY AND PERSONALIZE HISTORY

Primary sources make abstract concepts tangible and arouse student curiosity. They offer an unfiltered, often personal window into the past, revealing history as a series of human events with direct links to people who experienced the event in question.

How *Fragments* arouses curiosity and personalizes history:

The student activities of *Fragments* prompt students to analyse personal artefacts, photographs and testimonies to discover the stories of the individuals who owned, used or created the primary sources. By connecting students to these stories of Holocaust survivors and eyewitnesses in British Columbia, *Fragments* bridges generations, decades and continents to personalize history in a meaningful way.

Resources:

- [Photo of Amalia](#) student activity;
- [Postcard from Lipot and Olga](#) student activity;
- [Ring Comb and Mirror](#) and related material (using [Analysing Artefacts Worksheet](#));
- [Letter from Elspeth](#);
- [Disappearance Certificates](#) (using [Analysing Artefacts Worksheet](#)).

3. MOTIVATE FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Since primary sources are incomplete fragments of history, they motivate deeper content exploration, active analysis, and thoughtful response.

How *Fragments* motivates further investigation:

As students analyse the primary sources in *Fragments*, they will confront gaps in the evidence and unanswered questions due to the fragmentary nature of primary sources. By presenting these fragments of evidence within a thematic framework, *Fragments* provides the context necessary to guide students toward further investigation and reasoned inferences.

Resources:

- [Luggage Tag](#) student activity;
 - [Doctor's Note](#) student activity;
 - [Certificate of Identity](#) (using Analysing Artefacts Worksheet);
 - [Balla Family Torah Scroll](#) student activity;
 - [Handmade Box](#) student activity.
-

4. REVEAL MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Primary sources reveal diverse perspectives of the past, highlighting the need for multiple viewpoints when assessing historical events. By consulting multiple sources, students learn to recognise bias, assess reliability, reconcile contradictions, and challenge assumptions. In this way, students realise that history exists through interpretations that reflect the viewpoints and biases of those doing the interpreting.

How *Fragments* reveals multiple perspectives:

The primary sources in *Fragments* come from multiple perspectives, including items that were used or created by victims, survivors, perpetrators, witnesses and bystanders. The 14 reflections videos and related materials throughout the website add the viewpoints of descendants, historians, collectors and archival professionals. By integrating these diverse, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives to their analysis of primary sources, students will achieve a nuanced understanding of complex events in the Holocaust.

Resources:

- [Chess Set](#) student activity;
 - [ADEFA Dress](#) student activity and related material;
 - [Series of Banknotes](#) student activity;
 - [Propaganda in Occupied France](#) testimony clip and student activity;
 - [Immigration Identity Card](#) reflections video and related material;
 - [Letter from Tom](#) and related material (using Analysing Artefacts Worksheet);
 - [Antisemitism in the Netherlands](#) testimony clip (using Analysing Artefacts Worksheet).
-

5. DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING

Interaction with primary sources enhances cognitive and analytical thinking skills. Students critically observe, question and interpret original materials to form reasoned conclusions. By drawing inferences about primary sources, students construct knowledge and integrate information they have acquired from other sources.

How *Fragments* supports the development of critical thinking:

The 19 student activities and Analysing Artefacts Worksheet for *Fragments* are designed to guide students to use critical thinking techniques to investigate and construct knowledge from primary sources.

Resources:

- [Recipe Book](#) 3D model and related material;
- [Doctor's Note](#) student activity;
- [Marianne's Identity Card](#) with [Marianne's Forged Identity Card](#). Students use the [Analysing Artefacts Worksheet](#) and follow the procedures of the [Pre-Lesson](#) to examine and compare the two identity cards and form a reasoned inference about their historical significance. (*note: do not reveal the captions or title of the two artefacts until after students have concluded their analysis.*)

6. ACCOMMODATE DIVERSE LEARNING STYLES

Primary sources come in various mediums, catering to diverse learning styles. Oral testimonies, graphic materials, images and objects engage learners in different ways. This flexibility allows for personalized learning.

How *Fragments* accommodates diverse learning styles:

Fragments presents primary sources in a variety of formats, including video clips, an interactive map, digital 3D models that can be manipulated by the user, and artefacts that can be examined under a digital magnifying lens. These diverse formats encourage active learning, stimulate curiosity and accommodate varied learning styles.

Resources:

- [Chess Set](#) 3D model and student activity;
- [Escape: Journey of the Gottfried Family](#) interactive map;
- [Life that Was](#) student activity;
- [Photo of Amalia](#) student activity;
- [Arriving in Auschwitz](#) testimony clip and student activity.

INTEGRATING *FRAGMENTS* INTO THE CLASSROOM

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre has created 19 student activities, one for each theme of the *Fragments* online exhibition. Although each activity relates to a specific theme, many also connect and intersect with other themes and larger concepts of the Holocaust.

As well, the student activities use a variety of formats and media. There are student activities associated with seven physical objects, three photographs, three video testimonies and six archival documents. Each student activity is intended to take an average of 15 minutes to complete.

Access to all 19 student activities can be found on the [Learning Resources page](#) of the exhibition website. A link also appears beside the caption for each primary source item that has an associated student activity.

Fragments and the student activities are designed to support teachers in unique and encompassing ways. Whether teaching a lengthy unit on the Holocaust or a single lesson, a novel study or a learner-led inquiry project, *Fragments* is a practical and versatile tool for educators to confidently engage their students with primary sources of the Holocaust.

All student activities in the *Fragments* website can be:

- completed individually, in a small group, or as a class;
- adapted to specific grade levels depending on student competence and knowledge of the Holocaust, at the teacher's discretion;
- configured as primary learning material for a Holocaust unit or as supplementary to units and lessons.

When using a student activity in the classroom, ensure that students:

- Watch the historical reflections video (or read the transcript) and read the texts for the associated section and the theme before beginning the student activity. For example, before starting the Luggage Tag student activity, students should watch the [historical reflections video Introduction to the Holocaust](#) and read the text for the [Efforts to Leave theme](#). This will give them the foundation to meaningfully analyse the luggage tag.
- Have the skills and resources to engage with the artefact. For example, complete the [Pre-Lesson](#) on analysing primary sources, provide access to the [Analysing Artefacts Worksheet](#) and show them how to navigate the online exhibition.
- Allow enough time for students to read the background text and complete the activity.

Below are four possible integrations, or formulations, of *Fragments* that demonstrate its capacity as a flexible and enriching teaching tool.



NOTE: The below examples are suggestions only. Please reach out to the VHEC education team if you have questions about how to use *Fragments* in your classroom at education@vhec.org

1. SPECIFIC PRIMARY SOURCES

Mr. Singh's Social Studies 10 class is studying the Holocaust for two weeks. Mr. Singh uses *Fragments* to teach students about primary sources and how we learn history through different sources.

Mr. Singh's implementation:

- During week one, Mr. Singh's class takes a closer look at physical objects of *Fragments*. At the beginning of each class, students complete one learning activity tied to an object.
- During week two, the class analyses the importance of documents as primary sources. Near the end of each class, students complete one student activity tied to a document.
- After completing the activity each day, students have the choice to turn in their completed work or share their answers with the class.

Benefit:

Students gain a deeper understanding of how primary sources expand our interpretation of the Holocaust, while also considering the historical perspectives of different sources.

2. PROJECT-BASED CURATION

Mx. Smith's Genocide 12 class has a year-end project. Students have the option to create a freeform project about a historic genocide, for which primary sources must be used.

Mx. Smith's implementation:

One student decides their final project will be on the Holocaust and they want to create an exhibition about the history of the Holocaust. Mx. Smith provides the student with access to *Fragments* as a resource for self-directed inquiry and research. The student can explore the online exhibition and review the primary sources to create their project.

Benefit:

Students independently learn about the Holocaust and develop their inquiry skills by exploring *Fragments* to complete an individual project.

3. COMPLEMENT TO A FULL UNIT

Ms. Chen uses *Fragments* as the principal resource to complement her one-week Holocaust history unit in Social Studies 10. She considers *Fragments* a “textbook” or entry point for each topic discussed.

Ms. Chen’s implementation:

- Day One: Students are introduced to Holocaust, and concept of primary sources through the *Fragments* exhibition. Ms. Chen provides an introductory lesson on the Holocaust (see: [VHEC’s recommended resources](#)). This lesson is followed by the [Pre-Lesson Thinking Like a Historian—Introduction to Primary Sources](#) and concludes with an introduction to the online exhibition, *Fragments*.
- Day Two: Ms. Chen leads the class through the three theme texts in the [Pre-War Life](#) section of *Fragments*. Students watch the historical reflections video for Pre-War Life, read the text, and complete the four student activities within the section, independently or in small groups.
- Days Three and Four: Ms. Chen moves on to [The Holocaust](#) section, using the same procedure as Day Two. Students watch the [historical reflections video](#), read the texts and complete the student activities in The Holocaust section over the course of two or three days.
- Day Five: Students move on to the [Aftermath](#) section, watching the historical reflections video, reading the text for Aftermath and related themes and then completing the student activities.
- Ms. Chen closes the Holocaust unit with student presentations, reflections or assessment.

Benefit:

Fragments serves as a comprehensive educational resource for teachers to supplement each lesson within a unit on the Holocaust with ease and continuity.

4. PICK AND CHOOSE

Mrs. Lafontaine's Social Studies 6 class is studying the Holocaust for two weeks. Mrs. Lafontaine uses *Fragments* to teach students about primary sources and how we learn history through different sources.

Mrs. Lafontaine's implementation:

- In the weeks before the class begins a unit on the Holocaust, Mrs. Lafontaine's class reads *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry, a fictional book about the rescue of the Danish Jews. To animate the themes in the book, Mrs. Lafontaine would like her students to engage with primary sources related to resistance, rescue and hiding during the Holocaust.
- Mrs. Lafontaine has her students browse several *Fragments* thematic galleries: [Jewish Life Before the Holocaust](#), [Life in Hiding](#), [Help and Rescue](#), and [In Defiance](#). In small groups, students complete the student activities in each of those themes. Mrs. Lafontaine leads the class in discussion and reflection on the three student activities.
- In the next school year, Mrs. Lafontaine selects *Refugee* by Alan Gratz for the novel study and supplements the novel study with the artefacts and student activities in [Religion and Faith](#), [The Longest Hatred](#) and [Efforts to Leave](#).

Benefit:

Teachers easily identify and select artefacts and themes in *Fragments* that supplement, or complement, existing lesson plans.

THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN— INTRODUCTION TO PRIMARY SOURCES

OVERVIEW

Students will gain historical thinking skills by learning to investigate and analyse primary sources. *Fragments* uses artefacts and primary sources to tell the history of the Holocaust. Once they complete this activity, students will be prepared and ready to explore *Fragments* and complete all student activities.

DURATION: 45–60 MINUTES

The length of the activity can be adapted by selecting one artefact instead of two or by selecting only certain discussion questions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will learn to engage with Holocaust-era primary sources and practice using skills of observation, analysis and inference. Guided by the [Analysing Artefacts Worksheet](#), students will become familiar with the [Six Historical Thinking Concepts](#).

NOTE

Before starting this lesson, students should be introduced to, or have basic knowledge of, the Holocaust, including a working definition of the term.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Before beginning the Pre-Lesson, choose two artefacts from the following list. Information sheets for each artefact are attached as appendices to this teacher's guide.
 - [Yellow Star Badge](#)
 - [Stapf Bilderdienst Photograph](#)
 - [Prayer Book Fragment](#)
 - [Postcard Sent to Drancy](#)
2. Distribute documents and assign readings. Individually, or in a group, students read the following study documents, when prompted.
 - Each student should receive two printed copies or a PDF of the [Analysing Artefacts Worksheet](#) (appendix 1).
 - Print or send the student reading [What are Primary Sources?](#) (appendix 3) to each student.
 - Print or send the information sheets for the artefacts (appendices 4 to 7).
3. Complete Class activity (allow 30 minutes)

CLASS ACTIVITY

1. Students read student reading [What are Primary Sources?](#) either as homework or at the start of the class (5 minutes).

2. Teacher selects two artefacts.

3. Teacher passes out one [Analysing Artefacts Worksheet](#) to each student.

4. The teacher displays the image of one of the artefacts on the projector or sends the image to the students' devices.

5. Individually, students examine the artefact image and complete the [Analysing Artefacts Worksheet](#) (*note: do not pass out the artefact information sheet until after the initial observation is completed*).
 - [Initial Observation](#) (3 minutes)
Students study the object without any contextual information, writing down their observations and impressions as guided by the worksheet.
 - [Establish Context](#) (8 minutes)
Teacher passes out the information sheet for the artefact. Students read the information sheet and observe the artefact again in light of the contextual information.
 - [Draw Inferences](#) (5 minutes)
Students draw inferences as guided by the worksheet.

6. Students share their observations and conclusions with their neighbour.

7. Using the second artefact, repeat steps 3 to 5, this time having students work together in small groups rather than individually.

8. After 15–20 minutes, allow each group to share one interesting fact about the artefact and one question they would like to have answered.

APPENDIX 1: OVERVIEW

FRAGMENTS STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

PRE-WAR LIFE

THEME	STUDENT ACTIVITY	TYPE	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
RELIGION AND FAITH	Balla Family Torah Scroll	Object	Students will consider continuity and change in relation to the Jewish faith before, during and after the Holocaust.
JEWISH LIFE IN EUROPE BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST	Life That Was	Photograph	Students will reflect upon the diversity of everyday life for European Jews before the Holocaust.
THE LONGEST HATRED	Series of Banknotes	Object	Students will analyse cause and consequence as they investigate evidence of historic antisemitism and scapegoating prior to the rise of the Nazis.

THE HOLOCAUST

THEME	STUDENT ACTIVITY	TYPE	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
THE RISE OF NAZISM	ADEFA Dress	Object 3D Model	Students will examine the ethical dimensions of choices made by groups and individuals in the early stages of the rise of Nazism.
MANIPULATING THE MASSES	Propaganda in Occupied France	Testimony	Students will build relevancy and connection by listening to a survivor's testimony.
EFFORTS TO LEAVE	Luggage Tag	Object	Students will understand the challenges Jews faced in their efforts to leave Nazi Germany and the impact of restrictive Canadian immigration policy.
LIFE IN HIDING	Photo of Amalia	Photograph	Students will use inquiry processes and skills to place a Holocaust-era photograph into context.
HELP AND RESCUE	Doctor's Note	Document	Students will consider and make ethical judgements about help and rescue, from a rescuer's point of view, during the Holocaust.

IDENTITY AND BELONGING	Confirmation Photo	Photograph	Students will analyse how a person's identity and sense of belonging changed because of events and ideas during the Holocaust.
IMPRISONED IN GHETTOS	Chess Set	Object 3D Model	Students will analyse an artefact through three different perspectives: a victim, a perpetrator and a witness.
HOLOCAUST BY BULLETS	Report on Nazi Atrocities	Document	Students will learn how the recounting of a historical event can include and exclude perspectives.
NAZI CAMPS	Arriving in Auschwitz	Testimony	Students will draw conclusions using testimony and historical text to establish significance.
MESSAGES TO LOVED ONES	Postcard from Lipot and Olga	Document	Students will assess the cause and consequences of family separation during the Holocaust.
IN DEFIANCE	Recipe Book	Document 3D Model	Students will gather information and communicate conclusions about an artefact's historical significance.
"ENEMY ALIENS"	Handmade Box	Object 3D Model	Students will consider multiple perspectives and interpretations of an artefact.

AFTERMATH

THEME	STUDENT ACTIVITY	TYPE	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
LOSS AND LIBERATION	Birth Certificate – Jack Gardner's Son	Document	Students will analyse the cause and consequences of life and death in the Jewish community after the Holocaust.
WAR ORPHANS	Professor Moser's Notebooks	Document	Students will understand the significance of expressing and recording testimony.
JOURNEY TO CANADA	Immigration Challenges & Immigration Struggles	Testimony	Students will compare two perspectives on immigration to Canada.
BEARING WITNESS RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS MEDAL	Righteous Among the Nations Medal	Object	Students will understand the various ways in which the Holocaust is remembered, including their own impressions of what they learned.

ANALYSING ARTEFACTS

ARTEFACT	DATE OF CREATION
OBSERVE THE ARTEFACT	
What are your initial impressions of the artefact? What did you notice first?	
Describe the physical appearance of the artefact (colour, size, condition, fragility, etc.).	
What material is the artefact made from?	
Does the artefact appear to be intact or is it missing parts?	

ESTABLISH THE CONTEXT

Who created the artefact?	Who owned or used the artefact?	When was the artefact created or used?
How was it created or used?		Where was the artefact created or used?
What was the intended purpose or function of the artefact?		
What point of view or perspective did the owner, user or maker (e.g., victim, perpetrator, bystander, rescuer, etc.) of the artefact represent?		

DRAW INFERENCES

What inferences (conclusions) can you draw from the artefact about life before, during or after the Holocaust?

Many of the artefacts' owners, makers and users risked their lives to create or retain these objects.
What do you think was the significance of this artefact to its owner, maker or user?

Why do you think that the owner donated the artefact to the VHEC?

What does this artefact teach you that you might not learn elsewhere?

What questions do you have about this artefact that you cannot answer?

WHAT ARE PRIMARY SOURCES?

A primary source is an original artefact, record or firsthand account from a historical period that was created by people at that time in history. Primary sources provide direct evidence of the events, practices or conditions during the historical period in question.

In contrast, secondary sources (such as textbooks, documentaries, scholarly books and articles) are created after a historical event and offer a description or interpretation of the event based on an analysis of primary sources.

WHY WE USE PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary sources provide us with direct evidence of events, behaviours or conditions in the past. By critically analysing primary sources and asking questions, historians act like detectives to re-construct and learn about the past.

Primary sources can take many different forms, including:

- oral histories or testimonies
- photographs
- business documents and contracts
- currency and medals
- diaries, scrapbooks and journals
- propaganda materials
- correspondence
- government documents
- works of art
- physical objects

Primary sources also reflect a variety of perspectives depending on their purpose, who created them, who used them and under what circumstances. When interpreting primary sources, it is important to identify their perspective and to seek out a variety of primary sources to reflect diverse viewpoints. This gives us a more complete understanding of the past.



DID YOU KNOW?

- The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre holds Western Canada's largest collection of Holocaust-related artefacts, testimonies and archival records.
- The collection is made up of personal items donated by Holocaust survivors and their families, along with gifts from private collectors, military veterans, community members and academics. Each item provides an entry point into a distinct perspective of the Holocaust.
- The VHEC acquires, preserves and makes available these primary and secondary sources as documentary evidence of the Holocaust and its impact on individuals, families and society.
- The VHEC also has a comprehensive library of secondary sources, including books by historians, films, educational resources and a special collection of rare books.

YELLOW STAR BADGE

WORN BY TONI NEUMANN

The Star of David is a common and important symbol of the Jewish religion. During the Nazi era, Jews over the age of six were forced to wear a yellow Star of David badge on their outer clothing whenever they were in public. The word "Jew" was imprinted on the badge in the local language. The badge allowed people to easily recognise Jews, making them a target for public humiliation, abuse and persecution.

This yellow star badge belonged to Toni Neumann, a Jewish woman from Germany. The word *Jude* in the centre of the badge is German for "Jew." Toni was forced to wear this badge while she was a prisoner at a concentration camp-ghetto called Theresienstadt. In 1945, a high-ranking Nazi leader agreed to release 1,200 Jewish prisoners from Theresienstadt in exchange for money. Toni and her husband were among the prisoners selected for this rescue and were transported to freedom in Switzerland. Toni's daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren all perished in a concentration camp. After the war, Toni and her husband moved to New York to join their son.



[1993.007.001](#)

PRAYER BOOK FRAGMENT

FOUND BY EVELINE ROSENGARTEN ON THE MORNING AFTER KRISTALLNACHT

On November 9–10, 1938, violent anti-Jewish riots were carried out throughout Germany and Austria under the direction of the Nazis. The event came to be known as Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass). Hundreds of Jews were killed, beaten or arrested and their property destroyed. Thousands of synagogues (Jewish places of worship) were burned to the ground.

Eveline Rosengarten, who was ten years old at the time, witnessed the destruction of the Fasanenstrasse Synagogue in Berlin during Kristallnacht. On the morning of November 10, she found this burnt fragment of a Hebrew prayer book in front of the synagogue. The synagogue had been burned to the ground while firefighters stood by, instructed by Nazi officials not to put out the fire unless it spread to non-Jewish buildings.

As Jews, Eveline and her family experienced escalating antisemitism and persecution under the Nazi regime. Because of this, the Rosengartens tried for many years to leave Germany. However, most governments in the world had restrictions against allowing Jewish immigrants into their countries and the family was turned down by several nations. Shortly before the start of Second World War in 1939, Eveline's family was able to emigrate to Shanghai, just weeks before it closed its port to immigrants.

Eveline's son donated this and other family artefacts to the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.



[2009.004.001](#)

STAPF BILDERDIENST PHOTOGRAPH

JEWISH MEN CROSSING WEESPERSTRAAT BRIDGE

This photograph, taken in 1941, shows four orthodox Jewish men walking on the Weesperstraat bridge, which crosses the Nieuwe Achtergracht canal in Amsterdam, Netherlands. In the 1930s, the buildings and warehouses along this canal housed many Jewish families and businesses.

This photo was taken in 1941 by Stapf Bilderdienst, a Nazi-endorsed photographic agency founded by the German photographer Franz Anton Stapf. During the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, Stapf Bilderdienst was given explicit permission by the Nazis to carry cameras and photograph scenes for propaganda purposes.

As a press photo agent for the Nazis between 1940 and 1944, Stapf Bilderdienst photographed daily life in the Jewish quarter of the city, often photographing Jews who fit a physical stereotype. Some photographs also show evidence of anti-Jewish persecution (e.g., storefronts, signage, arrests). Many of the agency's photos appeared in newspapers alongside stories with antisemitic content. Stapf Bilderdienst captured some of the last images of Amsterdam's Jewish community before it was decimated.

This photograph was one of hundreds that were seized from Stapf Bilderdienst's Amsterdam office by Jimmy Sharpe, a member of the Canadian military's investigation unit, in 1945 and brought to Canada as war souvenirs.



[93.07.0177](#)

POSTCARD SENT TO DRANCY CAMP

**WRITTEN BY SERGE VANRY (WAJNRYB)
TO HIS MOTHER**

This is a postcard written in 1943 by Serge Vanry, who was 12 years old, to his mother at a Nazi internment camp near Paris. Serge was in hiding in the south of France when he wrote this postcard. However, it never reached his mother. She had been deported from Drancy camp to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in July 1943. The postcard was returned to Serge marked “Return to Sender” and “Rejected by the Censor.”

Before the war, Serge lived with his parents and younger brother Edouard in Paris. The family was Jewish. During the war, northern France was occupied by the Nazis. In July 1942, the Jews of Paris were rounded up and imprisoned in internment camps (including 4,000 Jewish children). From there, they were sent by train to Auschwitz and other death camps in Eastern Europe.

During the round-up of Jews in Paris, Serge’s mother removed the yellow star badge from Serge’s clothing and told him to run away to avoid arrest. Even though Serge did not want to leave his mother and three-year-old brother, he made his way across Paris to a train station. He took a train to a friend’s farm in the countryside and hid there. While Serge escaped the Nazis, his mother and little brother were arrested and imprisoned. They were later deported separately to Auschwitz.

Serge spent the rest of the war in various hiding locations in the south of France (Vichy). His mother survived Auschwitz and was reunited with Serge after three years; his little brother was murdered upon arrival at the death camp.



My dear Mama,

The last news that I received from you that you are in good spirits and in good health was a joy to me, as well as knowing that you are still in the same place. This leads me to believe and hope, more and more that our separation will be short lived and that we will be together with little brother Doudou very soon. News from Dad is reassuring to me. As to myself, I am fine with Aunt Renee. I am going to school with cousin Andre and I am a good student. I leave you in the hope that we will see each other soon. In the meantime, I kiss you tenderly.

Your little Serge

[2002.014.001](#)

NAVIGATING THE *FRAGMENTS* WEBSITE

HOME PAGE

The *Fragments* online exhibition is comprised of three main sections: Pre-War Life, The Holocaust and Aftermath. From these sections students can access related material under **3D Objects**, **Escape Interactive Map** and **Learning Resources**.

PRE-WAR LIFE

This section has three themes: Religion and Faith, Jewish Life in Europe Before the Holocaust and The Longest Hatred.

THE HOLOCAUST

This section has 12 themes: The Rise of Nazism, Manipulating the Masses, Efforts to Leave, Life in Hiding, Help and Rescue, Identity and Belonging, Imprisoned in Ghettos, The Holocaust by Bullets, Nazi Camps, Messages to Loved Ones, In Defiance and "Enemy Aliens".

AFTERMATH

This section has four themes: Loss and Liberation, War Orphans, Journey to Canada and Bearing Witness.

3D OBJECTS

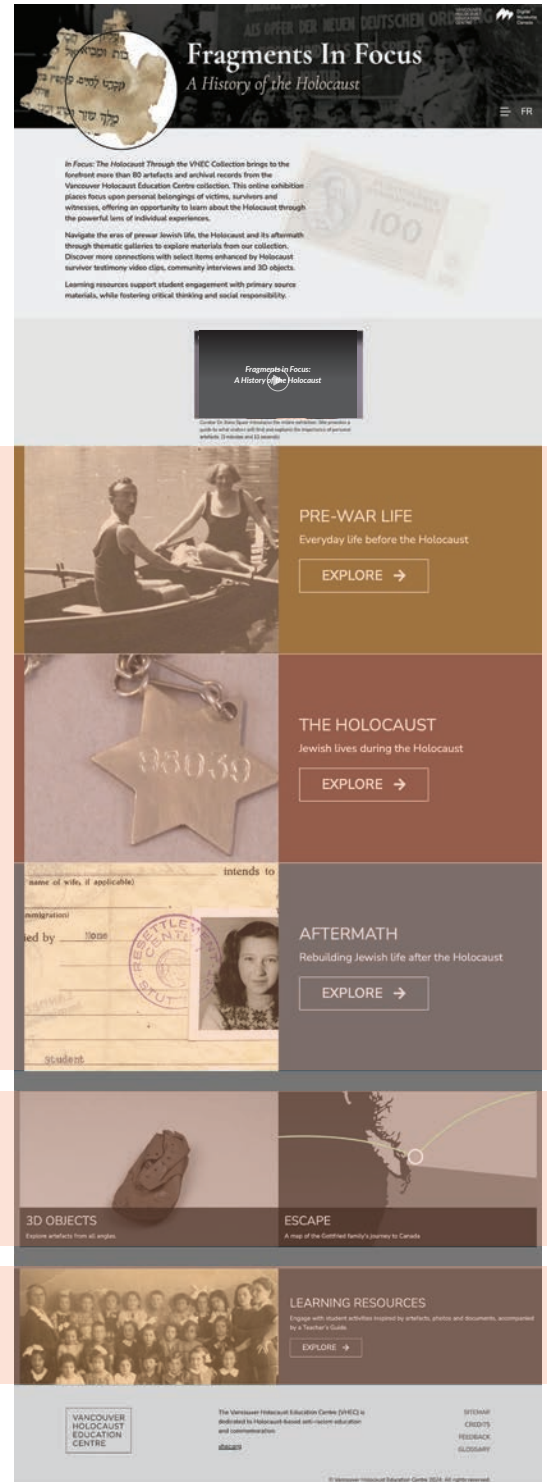
Five artefacts have been digitally rendered into 3D models, allowing the user to examine the artefact from every angle.

ESCAPE INTERACTIVE MAP

The interactive map traces the Gottfried family's flight from Nazi persecution in Europe and links primary source artefacts to geographic locations on the map.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Includes the teacher's guide and all 19 student activities integrated into the online exhibition.



MAIN SECTION PAGES

The landing page for each section provides a **Text Overview**, **Historical Reflections Video** and **Themes**.

TEXT OVERVIEW OF THE SECTION

HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS VIDEO

Professor Lauren Faulkner Rossi offers a historian's perspective to contextualize each section.

THEMES

The screenshot shows the 'Fragments In Focus' website header with the title 'The Holocaust' and a quote from Magdalena Kunovits. Below the quote is a paragraph of text and a video thumbnail for 'Historical Reflections Introduction to the Holocaust'. A 'THEMES' grid is displayed below, with 'The Rise of Nazism' highlighted in a yellow box. The footer includes the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre logo and contact information.

The screenshot shows the 'The Rise of Nazism' theme landing page. It features a title, a subtitle 'The End of Democracy', and a large image of a Star of David with the word 'Jude' written on it. Below the image is a text overview and a grid of primary sources including a prayer book fragment, ADEFA dress, a crowd saluting Hitler, an antisemitic children's book, a postcard from Dachau, an antisemitic sign, a Star of David badge, and Nuremberg Laws.

THEMES LANDING PAGES

The landing page for each theme contains a **Text Overview** and **Primary Sources**.

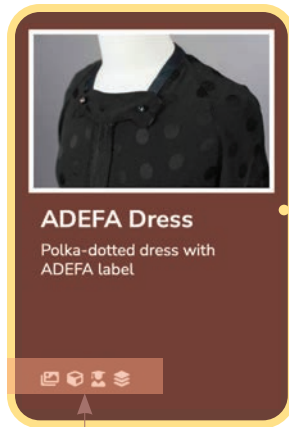
TEXT OVERVIEW OF THEMES

PRIMARY SOURCES

Contains multiple items, including artefacts, photographs, archival record and testimonies.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Related materials appear on some Primary Source pages.



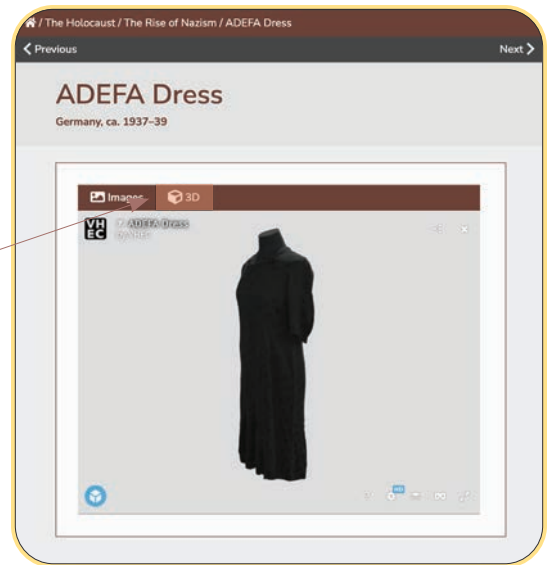
ICON KEY

The small icons located below each item tell you what you will find when you click on that item, such as a video, three-dimensional model, photo, related items or student activity.

HOUSE returns user to home page	STACK item has related artefacts or videos
PHOTO item has images	CUBE item can be viewed in 3D
CAMERA item is a video testimony	STUDENT item has student activity

3D OBJECTS

Users can manipulate the object to examine the artefact from every angle.



LEARNING RESOURCES

The *Fragments* Learning Resources page offers teachers a way to engage students with primary sources in the classroom. To facilitate this, the VHEC has created this companion **Teacher's Guide**, **19 Student Activities** and a **Historical Timeline**.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

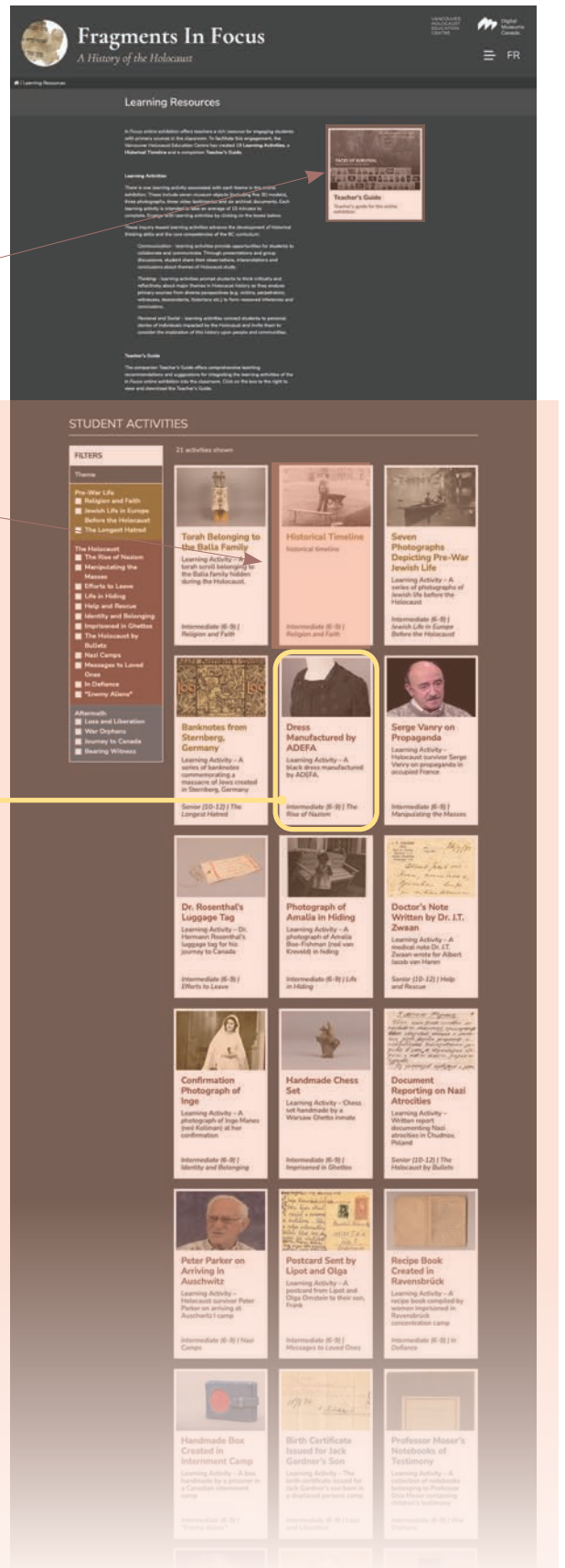
Offers comprehensive teaching recommendations and suggestions for integrating the student activities of the *Fragments* online exhibition into the classroom.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

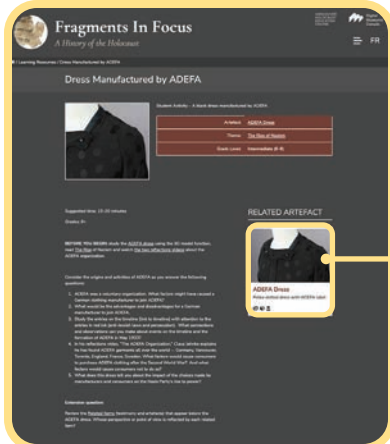
A timeline of key events in Holocaust history can be viewed or downloaded as a reference tool to accompany the learning activities.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

There is a student activity for each of the 19 themes in the online exhibition.



Users can visit the artefact page on which the student activity is based by clicking on the related artefact.



Users can return to the student activity.



OTHER WAYS TO NAVIGATE THE FRAGMENTS WEBSITE

Home / The Holocaust / The Rise of Nazism / ADEFA Dress

Previous

Next

BREADCRUMBS

Every sub-page on the website has a “breadcrumbs” bar for wayfinding, including a “Previous” and “Next” button to move back and forth between items. The house icon allows the user to return to the home page from anywhere on the site.

MAIN MENU AND LANGUAGE TOGGLE

Main menu for the website. Users can switch between English and French language.



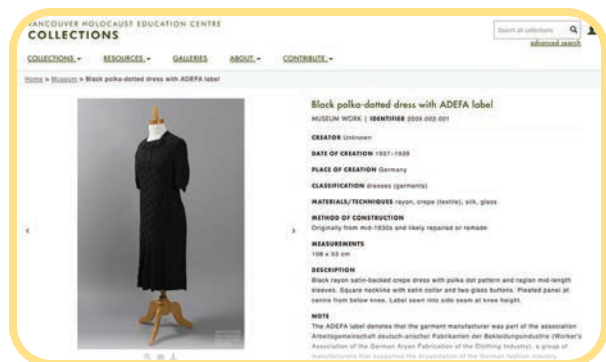
LINKING TO VHEC COLLECTIONS

The primary source items are drawn from the VHEC’s collection of more than 7,000 artefacts, archival records and testimonies, which are available to the public.

2019.038.001

IDENTIFIER NUMBER

The artefact identifier links to the [VHEC collections website](#), which provides information about the item, placing it within a larger historical context. Educators and students can pursue a self-directed inquiry into primary sources.



SITEMAP, GLOSSARY AND TIMELINE

The website footer has a **Site Map** that helps users navigate the entire website, a **Glossary**, breaking down relevant terms and a **Timeline** of historical events.

BOOK A CLASS TOUR

The VHEC's museum tours are interactive educational programs aligned with the BC curriculum. During their visit, students explore primary sources and artefacts, enabling them to develop a deeper understanding of the Holocaust and its impact.

The tours are led by experienced museum educators who guide students through the exhibitions, point out key artefacts and provide historical context. Students are encouraged to engage with the exhibitions by asking questions, making observations, and sharing their thoughts and opinions.

Click link to book: www.vhec.org

