

ANALYSING PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE VHEC'S ARCHIVES

NOTE TO TEACHER: The following questions are designed to support students' independent inquiry into primary source photographs in the VHEC's Archives. These guiding questions will assist students to place an original photograph in its historical context and make inferences to deepen their understanding of historic events.

DIRECTION TO STUDENT: Study the digitized photograph in the VHEC's online collection (collections.vhec.org). Read the information in the catalogue record about the photo and then respond to the following questions as best you can.

PHOTOGRAPH:

DATE OF CREATION:

OBSERVE THE PHOTOGRAPH

- What is your initial impression of the photograph? What did you notice first?
- What type of photograph is it? For example, is it posed or candid? Is it a portrait, action scene or landscape? Does it record an event? Is it a personal photo or a documentary photo?
- Describe the quality of the photo. Consider the focus, exposure, lighting, and composition.

OBSERVE THE PHOTOGRAPH *(continued)*

- | PEOPLE | OBJECTS | ACTIVITIES | LOCATION |
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| Describe the people in the photograph (including age, appearance, clothing, facial expressions and relationship to each other). | Describe the objects in the photograph and how they are being used. | Describe what is happening in the photograph. | Describe the location and setting of the photograph. |

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ESTABLISH THE CONTEXT

- Who or what is the subject of the photograph?
- Who took the photograph?
- Where was the photograph taken?
- When was the photograph taken?
- A caption is a short description of a photograph or picture that provides information about what is happening in the image, when and where the picture was taken, and who is in it. Using the information that you have gathered, write a caption for the photograph that you are examining.
- What was happening at the time in history when the photograph was taken?
- Why do you think the photo was taken? What was the intended purpose and audience?
- What do you know (or can you speculate) about the photographer and his/her relationship to the people in the photograph?
- What perspective or bias does the photographer represent? Is the photographer an impartial observer or a participant in events (eg. victim, perpetrator, resister, collaborator, bystander, rescuer etc.)?

DRAW INFERENCES

- Why do you think that the owner donated the photograph to the VHEC?
- What can you infer from this photograph about the time period in which it was taken? What story does it tell you? List the evidence from the photo and your own knowledge of Holocaust history to support your inferences.
- What does this photograph tell you that you might not learn elsewhere?
- How does this photograph compare to (or connect with) other sources of history that you have examined? Does it reveal a unique perspective on events?