

*Students will examine the resilience shown by people during the rise of Hitler and the resilience they have shown in their own lives.*



**QUESTION EXAMINED**

**HOW DOES COMING OF AGE IN  
A TIME OF CHAOS IMPACT OUR  
RESILIENCE?**

**THEMES** Coming of age, Belonging, Persecution,  
Community, Terror, Uncertainty, Displacement, Resilience

**Subject**  
ELA

**Grades**  
6 - 12

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## RESOURCES INCLUDED

### FOR TEACHERS

- Context for this lesson
- Tips for Using this Lesson
- Focus Questions
- Big Understandings
- Objectives
- Materials
- Procedure

### FOR STUDENTS

- Resilience in 1938 Record Sheet

*Cover image: Dinner  
hosted by the Jewish  
Winter Relief  
Organization, January 1,  
1938. Heinrich Stahl  
Collection, AR-7171*

**EXTERNAL LINKS** 

[About the Leo Baeck Institute & the 1938Projekt](#)

[Key Dates: Jews Under the Nazi Regime 1933–1939](#)

**CONTEXT FOR THIS LESSON**

The 1938Projekt timeline creates an opportunity for students to examine the impact historical events had on real people from the past.

Objects communicate information about the people who created and used them. By reading these objects closely, people who lived in the past come to feel more immediate and real, and history becomes more relevant to our lives now.

Background information from the Leo Baeck Institute exhibition *1938Projekt: Posts from the Past*, curated by Magdalena M. Wrobel, Ph.D

The Leo Baeck Institute was founded in 1955 by leading German-Jewish émigré intellectuals who were determined to preserve the vibrant cultural heritage of German-speaking Jewry that was nearly destroyed in the Holocaust. They named the Institute for Rabbi Leo Baeck, the last leader of Germany's Jewish Community under the Nazi regime.

Today, the Leo Baeck Institute — New York | Berlin (LBI) is devoted to preserving and promoting the history and culture of German-speaking Jewry. Its archival, art, and library collections tell the story of Jews in German and world history. As Jews enjoyed growing social and political empowerment in the 19th century, they played a significant role in shaping art, science, business, and political developments in the modern era with leading figures including Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, and Franz Kafka.

In the 20th century, German and Austrian Jews fought in the First World War to demonstrate their patriotism and further their quest for social equality. Following the war, the Weimar Republic provided more opportunities for advancement. After the Nazis rose to power in January 1933, Jews were persecuted, and by 1938 it was clear that Jewish life in Germany, as they knew it, was no longer possible.

Today, as right-wing populism gains new followers around the world, the personal narratives and private thoughts recorded by German and Austrian Jews in letters and diaries in 1938 take on new meaning. They can tell us much about a minority's struggle for civil rights and social integration, as well as the tremendous achievements that follow when such struggles are successful. They speak to human resilience and they also offer a warning about the disastrous consequences of discrimination, exclusion, and persecution.

## 1938Projekt TIMELINE

### TIPS FOR USING THIS RESOURCE

For this lesson, students will examine artifacts posted on the 1938Projekt website. The 1938Projekt was created by the Leo Baeck Institute in 2018, eighty years after the events of 1938, to address the question of how one grasps the mixture of shock and disbelief felt by the victims of the Nazi regime. Over the course of 2018, the Institute posted a collection of letters, diaries, documents, and photographs saved by German and Austrian Jews and their families which are housed in the archives of the Leo Baeck Institute New York | Berlin and those of several partner institutions. These sources were uploaded daily to the 1938Projekt site—one for each day in 1938, corresponding to the dates of the 2018 calendar year. The materials illustrate the range of reactions and emotions of individuals and families in response to quickly changing events under the Nazi regime and the struggles they faced to escape Germany and Austria in order to survive. In addition to the daily posts, significant world events are described alongside the calendar entries to provide a broader context for the individualized stories.

Before teaching this lesson, take some time to familiarize yourself with the site's layout. To begin:

1. Explore the 1938Projekt website by scrolling through daily entries within each month to gain a chronological understanding of the events revealed through artifacts on the site.
2. Follow the hyperlinked dates in the list of artifacts included in this lesson. This will lead you to more in-depth information about the artifacts themselves and the people who created them.
3. Keyword search on the 1938Projekt website to find artifacts or themes that connect to particular topics, places, and individuals.

## KEY TERMS/VOCABULARY

<b>Anti-Semitism</b>	Hostility to or prejudice against Jews
<b>Chaos</b>	Complete disorder and confusion
<b>Discrimination</b>	The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, gender or religion
<b>Persecution</b>	Hostility and ill-treatment, especially because of race or political or religious beliefs
<b>Resilience</b>	The ability to mentally or emotionally cope with a crisis, recover from difficulties and overcome challenges.

## FOCUS QUESTIONS

How do struggles from the past inform current day struggles?

What similar struggles and resilience do we see across different groups of people?

How can we help each other get through times of chaos?

## BIG UNDERSTANDINGS

1. The events of 1938 had a profound impact on the lives of Jews living in Austria and Germany.
2. Despite incredible loss, hardships, and struggle, humans have the capability to survive and rebuild their lives.
3. Resilience is not the final product of survival, but the effort itself.
4. Our lives are worthy of efforts by others to write and read about them.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Students will listen to and read Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" poem and choose significant lines or stanzas to share out to their groups.
2. Students will examine the "Resilience" exhibition panel and reflect on a time in history where people were resilient.
3. Students will also do the same for a friend or family member.
4. Students will examine specific artifacts on the 1938Projekt website and complete the record sheet.
5. Students will complete a guided free-write using sentence starters.
6. Students will share their free-writes with their classmates.
7. Students will develop one of their free-write entries into a personal narrative.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Smartboard
- Chrome books, iPads, or other devices for students to search the 1938Projekt website
- "Resilience" definition
- "Resilience in 1938" Record Sheet
- Pen, loose-leaf, timer

## PROCEDURE

### WARM-UP

On the school's smartboard, play Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" via YouTube, providing each student with a copy of the poem. Each group member should go back and read the poem silently picking one line or stanza they feel is significant and share what it is and why they chose it with their group.

### MINI LESSON

Explain to students that, as writers, we look to our own personal experiences and the experiences of others for writing ideas, and oftentimes moments of struggle and resilience make up who we are. Tell them that what makes Maya Angelou's poem so amazing is that we can feel her resilience, her unwillingness to give up no matter what life threw at her.

Project the following information about resilience on the school's Smart Board:

**Resilience: Despite incredible loss, hardships, and struggle, humans have the capability to survive and rebuild their lives. Resilience is not the final product of that effort, but the effort itself.**

Ask students to list a time in their lives where they had to be resilient.

Provide your own answers as a model. Be honest. Students will be more inclined to share if you make yourself a little vulnerable here.

Then ask students to list a time in history where a group of people had to be resilient.

Have students share out their responses at their tables first and then ask for volunteers for whole class sharing.

Explain to students that today they will be using the 1938Projekt Timeline to examine the mixture of shock and disbelief felt under the Nazi regime. But, more importantly the resilience shown during that time of chaos.

In pairs, students will use laptops to examine the following dates on the 1938PROJEKT TIMELINE: 1/1/1938, 3/17/1938, 4/2/1938, 7/6/1938 and complete



## PROCEDURE, cont.

### ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

In pairs, students will use laptops to examine the following dates on the 1938Projekt Timeline: 1/1/1938, 3/17/1938, 4/2/1938, 7/6/1938 and complete the Record Sheet.

After students have completed the “Resilience in 1938 Record Sheet” ask each pair to share out the example of resilience that stood out to them the most and why.

### DISCUSSION

Explain to students that after this examination they have done on the resilience shown by Austrian and German Jews during the rise of the Nazi regime, they will pivot to think about how they themselves have also grown up in a time of chaos.

Solicit examples of that chaos from students:

9/11

The War on Terror

Immigration raids

Donald Trump’s presidency

### GUIDED FREE WRITE

Explain to students that their lives are worth writing about and how important it is for them to chronicle the resilience they have shown in their own lives.

Explain that they will be participating in a guided free write to explore the ways in which they have been resilient.

Students should have a pen and loose-leaf ready to write. Using your phone as a timer, give students 5 minutes for each sentence starter. Stress the importance of writing without stopping, telling the whys and why nots of each story, going into detail, and not worrying about spelling or mechanics during this exercise.

## PROCEDURE, cont.

### GUIDED FREE- WRITE, Cont.

One at a time, display each sentence starter on the smartboard

- I felt I had no control over my life when...
- One fear that I was able to shake was...
- One thing that is no longer holding me back from the past is...
- The scariest thing I've ever done that turned out to be worth it is...
- A mistake that I learned from was...
- I showed resilience by...

### INDEPENDENT WRITING

Explain to students that a personal narrative tells a true story about someone's life. In this final assignment, they will write a short personal resilience narrative based on one of the moments they have written about in their free write.

Their completed resilience narrative should focus on a single moment in their lives, have a central theme of resilience, and clearly show the importance of that moment in their lives.

### CLOSE/ REFLECTION

Students will share one impactful sentence from their resilience narratives with the class.

**RESILIANCE IN 1938  
RECORD SHEET**

**My group members:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Keep notes on each calendar entry using the record sheet below.*

**Calendar entry 1/1/1938:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Source type:**  
(example: passport, diary entry, suitcase, telegram, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

**How does this artifact illustrate resilience?**

Calendar entry 3/17/1938: \_\_\_\_\_

Source type:

(example: passport, diary entry, suitcase, telegram, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

How does this artifact illustrate resilience?

Calendar entry 4/2/1938: \_\_\_\_\_

Source type:

(example: passport, diary entry, suitcase, telegram, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

How does this artifact illustrate resilience?

Calendar entry 7/6/1938: \_\_\_\_\_

Source type:  
(example: passport, diary entry, suitcase, telegram, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

How does this artifact illustrate resilience?

