

Well, Are You Just Going to STAND There?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are ethics? How can one tell when someone is acting ethically?
- Why is it often difficult for people to act ethically in response to others committing injustices?
- What constitutes ethical behavior when injustices are being committed?
- In what ways can individuals take action to correct injustice?

Overview

In this activity, students will consider various factors that limit individuals' willingness to intervene on behalf of victims of persecution. They will view eye witness testimonies describing the behavior of onlookers in various genocides and think about what constitutes ethical behavior in difficult circumstances. They will then learn about Oskar Schindler's efforts to rescue Jews during World War II and evaluate the ethics of his actions. Students will conclude the activity by crafting an argumentative essay regarding Schindler's actions.

Target Audience

High School World History or Philosophy/Ethics

Activity Duration

Two 45–60 minutes class period(s)

Enduring Understandings

- Injustices can only be corrected when concerned individuals take action.
- There are many different ways for individuals to take action against injustice.
- Ethics are the set of moral standards that guide an individual's behavior.

MATERIALS

- Computer with Internet connection and a projector
- If available, devices with internet access, one per student or student pair
- Handouts, one copy per student
 - The Actions of Witnesses
 - Judging Oskar Schindler
- Ideally, the teacher will have curated the clips in a location accessible to students prior to the lesson.

Background Information/Links

The decision to risk personal security to intervene on behalf of another human being is always a complicated one. These decisions are guided by every individual's ethical code. In times of genocide, when intervention often carries with it the risk of severe punishment or execution, these decisions to help are especially fraught. In all genocides—from the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust to the Rwandan and Syrian Genocides—courageous individuals who were guided by ethics risked everything to help victims of persecution. On the other hand, many more individuals weighed the risks and decided not to get involved. These individuals did not perpetrate the crimes against humanity, but they also did nothing to stop them. Were these people behaving unethically? Do ethics change based on practical circumstances? Or is definition of ethical behavior invariable? Those are the questions at the heart of this activity.

Oskar Schindler's efforts to save persecuted Jews in Nazi Germany is well-known as a result of the 1993 film, *Schindler's List*. Schindler was a member of the Nazi Party and an industrialist who sought to profit from war activities early in World War II. He took over a factory confiscated from its Jewish owner by the Nazis, staffed it largely with forced Jewish laborers from the Plaszow concentration camp, and socialized quite frequently with the sadistic commandant of the camp, Amon Goeth. Although the workers suffered horribly in the camps, Schindler intervened on their behalf on several occasions. When the camp was to be liquidated, Schindler proposed and received permission to build an armaments factory in the Sudetenland to be staffed by 300 of his Jewish workers. Those workers have testified that conditions in Schindler's factory were quite good and that they felt safe there. Schindler treated them as human beings; in return, when Schindler's fortunes fell after the war, many of the workers provided him with charitable support. It is unclear why Schindler seemed to transform from a self-absorbed Nazi to a rescuer of Jews, although some have suggested that the change came after he witnessed the horrible abuses that Jews suffered at the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto.



For additional information

BBC—"Ethics: A General Introduction"

http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/intro_1.shtml

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

"Genocide Timeline"

<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007095>

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum—"Oskar Schindler"

<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005787>

Schindler's List

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108052/>

The History Channel—Civil Rights Movement Videos

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement/videos>

Procedure

Consider

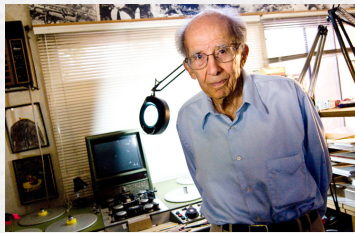
- 1 The teacher will define ethics as the set of moral principles that guide an individual's behavior. Ethics are concerned with the interests of someone or something other than oneself.
- 2 The teacher will ask students to list some basic ethical principles, e.g. it is wrong to kill, treat others as you would like to be treated, etc.
- 3 The teacher will present students with a scenario:
 - Imagine that you are browsing through social media one evening and notice that one of your classmates—someone who seems like a good person who you are friendly but not good friends with—is being bullied. Many people are posting hurtful comments about the victim's appearance, social life, etc., and some are suggesting the victim should be physically hurt. What challenges does this situation present for observers who object to this behavior? What do you think would be an ethical response?"
 - Students will discuss their responses in pairs. The teacher will ask for volunteers to share their responses.



- 4 The teacher will present a second scenario:
 - "As you are leaving school later than usual one day, you witness the principal and one of your teachers standing very close to and yelling at a fellow student, again someone who seems like a good person who you are friendly but not good friends with. You hear the principal call the student "lazy and stupid." You notice that other students see this interaction as well, but they turn their backs and seem to be ignoring it. What challenges does this situation present for observers who object to this behavior? What do you think would be an ethical response?"
 - Students will discuss their responses in pairs. The teacher will ask for volunteers to share their responses.
- 5 The teacher will lead a brief discussion about the various factors influencing students' proposed responses in each scenario. How are the scenarios the same? How are they different? (Emphasize that in the first scenario those perpetrating the injustice are your equals. In the second, they are people with significant power over you.) How might these differences affect individuals' responses?

Collect

- 6 The teacher will facilitate a brief discussion of the following questions:
 - What factors influence a person's behavior when they see injustice?
 - Do ethical principles change as a result of different real-world circumstances?
 - Do individuals have an obligation to take action against injustice even if it jeopardizes their own safety or prosperity (in other words, if it is against their own self-interest)?
- 7 The teacher will introduce the historical example of civil rights protests against discriminatory state laws in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Provide examples of these discriminatory laws. Explain that, during protests, activists were purposely breaking state laws in a nonviolent way. Their demonstrators were confronted by police. If possible, show a brief video clip of one such clash between non-violent protesters and the police.



- 8 The teacher will ask students, “During the Civil Rights Movement, what factors might influence a person’s decision to take part in protests? What were the risks?”
- 9 The teacher will introduce the concept of genocide as the most extreme form of injustice. When the government is involved in killing groups of people for no reason other than their race, color, beliefs, etc., the risk of speaking out can be death for the protestor himself. Understandably, witnesses to genocide have responded very differently.
- 10 Students will use a graphic organizer, The Actions of Witnesses, to analyze eye witness clips detailing various individuals’ responses to genocide. Students should not complete the last column at this time.

Construct

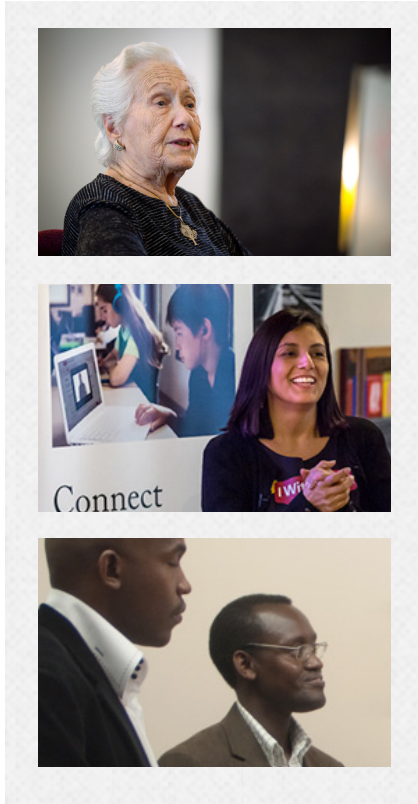
- 11 The teacher will lead a brief discussion of students’ findings, emphasizing the real-life circumstances that affected the individuals’ actions.
- 12 Working in pairs, students will return to the graphic organizer and evaluate each individual’s behavior as ethical or not given their circumstances, providing an explanation for each evaluation.
- 13 The teacher will lead another discussion of the students’ thinking. Does what is considered ethical behavior change as a result of circumstances? What is the proper balance between ethics and self-interest?

Communicate

- 14 Students will view a series of clips specifically related to the actions of Oskar Schindler. The clips will detail both actions he took in his own self-interest and actions he took to protect Jewish prisoners. [ALTERNATIVELY, students can view selected portions of *Schindler’s List*.] Students should evaluate Schindler’s actions on the worksheet, Judging Oskar Schindler.
- 15 Students will write an argumentative essay in which they respond to the following question: Was Oskar Schindler a model of ethical courage? Can individuals today learn from his example? Students should present a claim and support it with at least three specific details from the clips or film.

Connections

Connect to Student Lives	Connect to Contemporary Events	Connect to the Future
Students will begin by analyzing what constitutes ethical responses to injustice in their school lives.	Students will be able to extend their thinking about protests during the Civil Rights Movement to civil rights protests today	Students will develop their own sense of what constitutes ethical behavior, which will guide their future actions.



Clips of Testimony

Collect: Witness Actions

■ Tamara Branitsky

She recounts her escape from the ghetto. A German soldier saw her and did not turn her in, and her Christian housekeeper and family friend helped her hide.

■ Rose Apelian

She explains that, before her mother was killed, she told her young daughter to go to a church if she ever needed help. When Rose did so, the church members refused to let her inside because they feared for their own lives.

■ Phansy Peang

She describes how her forced labor supervisor at first refused permission for her to take some time off to visit her sick child. He relented when she promised to be back in five days but said he would kill her if she was late.

Note: The audio is not in English, so the students will need to read the closed captions. There seems to be some sort of inconsistency with the translation in that it keeps flipping back and forth from feminine to masculine pronouns when referring to the sick child. Warn students of this discrepancy.

■ Irene Binzer

She and her mother found refuge for a couple of weeks in the home of a friend, but he asked them to leave when he heard that Germans were coming. He did not want to endanger the lives of his wife and children.



■ Arnost Graumann

Prior to World War II, Arnost escaped Czechoslovakia to Great Britain through a refugee work program. While there, he asked many people to put down the \$50 deposit required to bring his parents to London but was refused by all because they didn't believe the situation was as dire as Graumann said.

Communicate: Schindler

■ Leon Cooper (Holocaust Museum Houston Interview)

He explains that Schindler saved his life by selecting him and that conditions in Schindler's factory camp were good. He said originally Schindler was just looking to make money and helped the Nazis, and he's not sure why he changed for the better.

■ Sidney Eichenholz

He says that wealthy Krakow Jews paid Oskar Schindler to get onto his list. Schindler later asked the Nazis to give him a factory and Jewish workforce, ostensibly to build ammunition but really to save Jews.

■ Joseph Lipschutz

While at his factory camp, Joseph paid Schindler a gold piece in exchange for an extra piece of bread each week.

■ Helena Jonas Rosenzweig

Helena was a maid for Amon Goeth, the brutal commandant of a concentration camp. Schindler would come frequently to socialize with Goeth, but he would always offer some kind words to Helena.

Judging Oskar Schindler



Testimony	Evidence of Schindler's Ethical Courage	Evidence of Self Interested
Leon Cooper		
Sidney Eichenholz		
Joseph Lipschutz		
Helena Jonas Rosenzweig		

Was Oskar Schindler a model of ethical courage? Respond to this question with a thesis statement.

Place stars next to three pieces of evidence from the testimony that you will use to support your thesis.

The Actions of Witnesses



STUDENT HANDOUT

Individual	How Could the Witness / Onlooker Have Helped?	Why Might They NOT Help? (Risks)	What Action did They Take and What Was the Result?	Was Their Behavior Ethical? Why?
Tamara Branitsky				
Rose Apelian				
Phansy Peang				
Irene Binzer				
Arnost Graumann				

Survivor and Witness Biographies



STUDENT HANDOUT

Tamara Branitsky was born in Lwow, Poland, on January 30, 1922. Her father died shortly after she was born and her mother had to go to work. In September 1939, the Soviet army occupied her town and, instead of going to the university, Tamara got a job to help her mother. The Germans invaded Poland, and on July 1, 1941, they entered Lwow. After hiding out with false papers for a time, Tamara ended up in the Krakow Ghetto and put in prison. From there she was sent to Krakow-Plaszow Concentration Camp. Here Tamara was held as a political prisoner due to connections she had made while she was in hiding. Later, Tamara was transferred to Skarzysko-Kamienna Concentration Camp and then to Leipzig Concentration Camp. As the Allies were closing in, April 1945, Tamara and the other prisoners from Leipzig were taken from camp on a Death March. Tamara and her friend Wanda ran away and hid in a nearby barn whose owner fed them and sent them to a safe place to hide. The Russian army liberated her there. Tamara eventually married one of the Polish men serving in the Russian army, Leopold Branitsky. In 1952, they emigrated to Canada. Tamara worked for the Canadian government for many years and had two children and five grandchildren. The interview with Tamara took place on April 24, 2001, in Toronto, Canada.

Rose Apelian was born on May 01, 1907, in New York as Rose Lucy Shishmanian. In 1910, Rose and her family traveled to her parents' hometown Dikranagerd (Diyarbakir) in the Ottoman Empire where they stayed for five years. Then, in 1915, they were then deported with thousands of other Armenians who lived there. After weeks along the deportation route, Turkish soldiers attacked the caravan. Rose's father was killed and Rose and her sister were taken to by the Turkish commander overseeing the deportation. While living with this Turkish family, Rose resisted to comply with the assimilation to a new culture and religion. As

a result, she was sent to a Muslim institution for children and was separated from her sister. Rose was able to escape the institution and unite with distant relatives from her mother's side who lived in Istanbul. By this time, Rose had forgotten to speak Armenian and only knew Turkish. In 1921, Rose was sent to the Near East Relief orphanage in Greece. It was in the orphanage that she was able to relearn Armenian. Around 1924, Rose reunited with her family in America. In 1925, she married, but did not have any children. In 1972, Rose and her husband moved from New York to California. In 1977, she was interviewed by students of renowned scholar Dr. Richard Hovannisian. She was later interviewed by the Armenian Film Foundation on May 06, in 1992, in Torrance, CA.

Phansy Peang was born on December 12, 1948 in Phnom Penh, Chamkar Morn district, Boeng Keng Korng village, to parents Tun Peang and Im Sophon. Phansy was the youngest of 11 siblings, some of whom died and one who disappeared before the genocide. The Peangs were an ethnically Khmer family, as well as practicing Buddhists. Phansy's parents owned a flower shop and the family was affluent, with connections to the royal family. As a child, Phansy attended a French school. At 18, she married Ham Chen. She dropped out of school, intending to take a year break, because of a severe migraine condition. Phansy and Ham moved to Kampot Province for Ham's job as a director of a fertilizer factory. They lived at the factory during the week and returned home for weekends, and had two children by 1975. Like many younger Cambodians, Phansy supported Marshall Lon Nol and the Khmer Republic. On April 20, 1975, Phansy and her family were forced to evacuate Phnom Penh and relocate in rural Cambodia, where Phansy was separated from her husband. Six months after evacuation, Phansy's daughter Munichahda died from convulsions. From 1975–1979, she performed forced labor—constructing canals, digging rice



paddies, and demolishing buildings. In late 1977, she discovered from an acquaintance that Ham was shot dead by the Khmer Rouge. Phansy was liberated in July 1979 and was able to move back to Phnom Penh. She returned to the city alone, and shortly thereafter, migrated to Thailand where she stayed in refugee camps. While in Thailand, Phansy converted to Christianity and became a Catholic. The Church eventually sponsored her visa to France, where she remained for a short time. She immigrated to the United States and settled in Long Beach, California. Phansy was interviewed on April 11, 2009 in Los Angeles, California, USA.

Irene Binzer was born in Warsaw, Poland, on October 1, 1926. She lived with her mother after her parents divorced. She and her mother moved to Belgrade, Yugoslavia. After the Germans bombed and invaded Belgrade, Irene was required to wear the Yellow Star, and she began to experience antisemitism. She and her mother obtained false identity papers and stayed for a time with a resistance group. Irene and her mother were captured and sent to prison where she was placed in solitary confinement. Here she was raped repeatedly over the course of the year she was there and she witnessed guards beating prisoners every morning. They were transferred to a German prison where she was again raped by the guards. After the Soviets took control of Belgrade in 1945, Irene and her mother went to Italy to a refugee camp. From there they emigrated to New York. Irene met and married Ignaz Binzer, and they had two daughters. Irene's interview took place in Yonkers, New York, on April 8, 1997.

Arnost Graumann was born on December 18, 1919 in Vienna, Austria. Arnost moved with his family to Brno, Czechoslovakia in 1939 where his father opened a shoe shop. Arnost trained and became a swimmer on the Prague swim team, but the Jewish members of the team refused to go to Germany,

where the competition was being held. Later, there was another competition in England and Arnost to escaped to London. He survived in by performing odd jobs and swimming clinics. He married his wife, Lisa, and joined the British army. Arnost's unit participated in the invasion of France on June 6, 1944. After the war, Arnost returned to Prague to locate his parents. He spent some time teaching in Prague, but when the Communists began asserting their power, he permanently emigrated to Great Britain and became a citizen. He worked in an embroidery factory for 50 years. Arnost was interviewed on June 8, 1988, in Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom.

Leon Cooper was just twelve days shy of his tenth birthday when the German Army marched into his hometown of Chorzów, Poland, in September 1939. He spent time in several concentration and labor camps, including Oskar Schindler's Emalia camp. After the war, 16-year-old Leon came to the U.S. with other teenagers under the auspices of a United Nations Relief Organization. After a brief stay in Cleveland, Ohio, he was sent to Houston, Texas in 1947. He first stayed at the Wolff Home with other orphans and was enrolled at Sam Houston High School. After graduation, he was inducted into the Army and was stationed in Germany. When he returned to Houston, "the only home I ever had," he married Shirley Pomerantz and established a successful career as a businessman. This interview took place on August 11, 1996, in Houston, Texas.

Sidney Eichenholz was born on January 20, 1924, in Krakow, Poland. He lived with his parents, three brothers, and one sister. The family was poor after the Great Depression and sold goods from a cart in neighboring villages. Sidney's father died following a stroke when Sidney was 14. When the Germans began bombing Poland, the children fled. After being arrested, Sidney was eventually sent to Mielec Concentration Camp in Poland where he worked



packing and shipping wigs. Later he was sent to Wieliczka Concentration Camp. Sidney wasn't there long before he was sent to Krakow-Plaszow Concentration Camp where his job was disposing of corpses. In October 1944, many from the camp were sent to Gross Rosen Concentration Camp. Eventually Sidney ended up at Brunnlitz Concentration Camp. After the camp was liberated by the Soviet Army, he returned to Krakow where he found that his older brother had survived as well. He survived by smuggling items across the Polish-German border and then sneaked into France. Following a bout with tuberculosis, Sidney finally received his visa to enter the United States. He worked with a friend making pants. He met and married his wife, Chana Ruda, and they had two children; one boy and one girl. This interview was taken on June 25, 1997, in Brooklyn, New York.

Joseph Lipschutz was born in Krakow, Poland, on November 1, 1918. Joseph was raised in a traditional Jewish home with his parents, two brothers, and one sister. Joseph's father died before the Germans invaded Poland. After the September 1939 invasion, he and his brothers escaped to Russia. Eventually, Joseph was forced to return to Krakow to try to bring his mother and sister out to Russia. Unfortunately, the border was more securely monitored, so Joseph and his mother and sister were stuck in Krakow. Eventually, they were required to move into the Krakow Ghetto. The Ghetto was emptied, and Joseph and his family were sent to Krakow-Plaszow Concentration Camp. Joseph was able to use his connections to get himself, one brother, and his sister on Schindler's list and survived by working at Schindler's factory. When the Soviet Army liberated the Brunnlitz camp, Joseph found his way to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he went to college and raised five children. Joseph was interviewed on February 26, 1996, in Cape Coral, Florida.

Helena (Helen) Jonas Rosenzweig was born in Krakow, Poland, on April 25, 1925. Helena remembers living a happy life with her friends and family before the Nazis invaded Poland. After the invasion, the family was sent to the Krakow Ghetto. After three years in the Ghetto, Helena, her mother, and her sisters were taken to Krakow-Plaszow concentration camp, and her father was taken and killed by Nazis at Belzec camp. Helena's father was killed by the Nazis at Belzec. Shortly after arriving at Krakow-Plaszow, Helena was selected by the camp commander, Amon Goeth, to move into his house and become his personal maid. For two years, Helena was witness to Goeth's murder of numerous Jewish prisoners and subject to his abusive behavior. After Goeth was arrested for stealing from the German government, Oskar Schindler invited Helena and her two sisters to work in his factory. They followed Schindler when he moved his factory to Czechoslovakia and were liberated in May 1945 by the Soviet Army. Helena met her husband at a displaced persons camp where they were married. Later, they emigrated to New York and raised three daughters. After her first husband's death, Helena married Henry Rosenzweig. Helena's interview took place in Colts Neck, New Jersey, on November 26, 1996.

National Standards

College, Career & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies Standards

D1.5.9-12 Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

D2.Civ.3.9-12 Critique relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets.

D2.Civ.7.9-12 Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with others.

D2.Civ.10.9-12 Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

D2.Civ.12.9-12 Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.

D2.Civ.14.9-12 Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

D2.Geo.5.9-12 Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.

D2.His.3.9-12. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

D3.1.9-12. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

D4.2.9-12. Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical).

D4.6.9-12. Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

D4.7.9-12. Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

RI.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain

RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.