Southwest Licking School District

Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Paula Ball  School: Watkins Memorial High School

Book Title: Tell Them We Remember: The Story of the Holocaust

Genre: Nonfiction

Author: Susan Bachrach  Publisher: Little Brown

Book Summary and Summary Citation:

Draws on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's collections of artifacts, photographs, maps, and taped oral and video histories to teach young people about this period of history.

Since opening its doors in April 1993, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has been visited by more than one and a half million people. Written by a member of the museum's education department staff, this extraordinary book draws on the museum's large collection of artifacts, photographs, maps, and taped oral and video histories of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses to teach young readers about this terrible period in history.

Review #1:

From Publishers Weekly:

This ambitious work, produced in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, is the book equivalent of a museum tour. Each spread investigates a different aspect of the Holocaust: the rise of the Nazi party, the Wannsee conference, the murder of the mentally ill, persecution of homosexuals and gypsies, and the destruction of the Jews. While unusually comprehensive, the text does not dominate the book. Thoughtfully chosen, uncommon documentary photographs overwhelm the pages with their pathos and horror (a woman, sitting on a park bench marked "for Jews only," hides her face from the camera; grinning children pose shortly before their mass execution in a Lithuanian shtetl; a killing squad trains its rifles on a Soviet Jew perched above a ditch filled with corpses). Individual experience is literally marginalized here, as the experiences of 20 young persons are telegraphed episodically alongside the body of the text. There is much to compel thought, but there is little attempt at synthesis—rather, each entry, textual or illustrative, seems to compete for the reader's attention. Ages 10-up.

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Review #2:

From School Library Journal:
Intended to extend the experience of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum beyond its walls, this book reproduces some of its artifacts, photographs, maps, and taped oral and video histories. Many of them are from archival collections in the museums of Germany, the Netherlands, England, and Poland, as well as those in the United States. The book is divided into three sections: Germany before and during the Nazi regime; the final solution, including the ghettos; and rescue, resistance, and liberation. Bachrach makes the victims of Hitler's cruelty immediate to readers, showing that, like readers, they were individuals with hobbies and desires, friends and family. Two interesting devices are used to generate emotional involvement. The first is an attractive "cast of characters," guileless young people whose pictures, taken from their identity cards, smile innocently out from the page and in other photographs, enjoying life. The second is to insert these same identity cards and photos of life before Hitler into the narrative of destruction so that readers can trace what is happening to the young people at different points in the Holocaust until their death or the war's end. Thus, this is a very personal approach to Holocaust history and a very effective one.

Marcia Posner, Federation of New York and the Jewish Book Council, New York City

Instructional Rationale/Objectives:

Read and comprehend nonfiction at grade level.

Analyze how author unfolds ideas—order, introduces, develops, and connects ideas

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: Mein Kampf Adolph Hitler

Document any potentially controversial content:

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9 and 10

Reading level of this title (if applicable): 9/10

Date Submitted to website: August 1, 2011

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)
Library Journal
Book Links
Publisher's Weekly
Booklist
Kirkus Review
Wilson Library Catalog
English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)
The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)
Literature for Today’s Young Adults