



CLASSROOM VIDEO • VIEWING GUIDE

USING SURVIVOR TESTIMONY: PREPARATION

Overview

In this classroom video, students learn about the history of the Holocaust and view, react to, and interpret first-person accounts of the Holocaust and genocide. Survivor and witness testimonies—firsthand accounts from individuals who lived through or encountered genocide and other atrocities—help students more deeply appreciate and empathize with the human and inhuman dimensions of important moments in history. They supplement what we learn from historians and secondary sources by offering unique perspectives on the

difficult and sometimes impossible situations individuals were forced to confront during moments of collective violence and injustice. Teacher Paul Capobianco uses the Two-Column Note-Taking teaching strategy with his students to organize their thoughts and emotional responses as they listen to recorded survivor testimony. The strategy allows students to jot down the major ideas they hear as they watch a video or a speaker, and it gives literal space for students to process their emotional responses to challenging material.

Questions to Consider

1. At **0:44**, Mr. Capobianco says, “I use video of testimony, of people who are survivors, in my course—give [students] the experience first of just listening and watching. And then I would go back and show it again.” Why does he do this?
 2. What role does two-column note-taking play in Mr. Capobianco’s lesson?
 3. At **2:38**, Mr. Capobianco says, “I want to be sure we consider that testimony includes both words and images. This is the active part of taking in survivor testimony. Please watch for the person’s body language and listen for their patterns of speech. For example, when do they pause when they are talking? Where do they look? How do these kinds of gestures relate to the story they are telling? Those are the kinds of things I want you to think about.” Why does Mr. Capobianco want his students to focus on the physicality of the survivors as they share their stories? Why is this important?
-

Featured

Paul Capobianco

Teacher

8th Grade

Atrium School

Watertown, MA

Video Goals

- **Explore** how to prepare students to interact with recorded survivor testimony.
- **Learn** how the Two-Column Note-Taking teaching strategy can help students process emotionally challenging material.
- **Observe** the role that empathy plays in students’ understanding of these historical events.

Lesson Resources

- [**Teaching Strategy: Two-Column Note-Taking**](#)
- [**Remembering the Past: Sonia Weitz’s History**](#) (video)
- [**Life or Death in the Netherlands**](#) (video)
- [**Holocaust and Human Behavior, Chapter 11**](#)
- [**Lesson Plan: Teaching with Video Testimony**](#)