

# Lesson Plan – Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto

## Introduction

Student age range: 14-16

Subject: History

Time required: 50 minutes

## Overview:

This lesson examines two significant forms of resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto :

1. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
2. Creation of the Emanuel Ringelblum Archive (also known as the *Oyneg Shabbes* Archive)

Through these examples, students learn that Jews engaged in various forms of resistance against the Nazi regime. By so doing, students problematise the early historical opinion that “*The reaction pattern of the Jews is characterized by almost complete lack of resistance.*” (Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (3 vols; 1985), III:1030)

## Essential questions:

- What forms of resistance existed within the Warsaw Ghetto?

## Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about Emanuel Ringelblum and the Ringelblum Archive (‘Oyneg Shabbes’ Archive)
- Students will learn about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

## Key issues/concepts:

- Significance
- Contestability

## Materials:

Ability to show the YouTube video called ‘The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising’, available at [this link](#).

## Worksheet – Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto

## Teaching notes:

For NSW Teachers: This lesson can be integrated into the study in various ways. The NSW Government (NESA) Syllabus, 2024 and its supporting materials indicate that this lesson could be useful as:

- An example of key figures of the ghettos (Emanuel Ringelblum), under the dot point ‘Radicalisation from Kristallnacht to ghettoization (1938-1940)’
- An example of various forms of resistance under the dot point ‘Differing forms of resistance’
- Examples of testimony (The Ringelblum Archives) under the dot point ‘Experiences of the Holocaust through survivor testimony’
- A case study of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, as mandated by the syllabus and recommended in NESA’s Supporting Materials

## Glossary:

- Ghetto
- Archive
- Milk cans
- Cache

## Lesson Instructions

### ONE – Recall of ‘Resistance’ learning (5 minutes)

Teacher asks students about the different types of resistance they learned about in the lesson called ‘Resistance’, i.e.

- Physical
- Spiritual
- Religious

Teacher explains that this lesson will focus on two forms of resistance: physical and spiritual.

**Modification:** if the class has not completed a prior lesson on Resistance, teacher explains that resistance comes in various forms, as per the three dot points above. Teacher explains that this lesson will focus on two forms of resistance: physical and spiritual.

## TWO – The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (20 minutes)

Teacher specifies: This is an example of physical resistance.

This activity is based on the YouTube video called ‘The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising’, available at [this link](#) (3mins 43 secs), and requires students to work with the **Worksheet – Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto**.

As a class, work through the following steps:

1. **FIRST VIEWING:** Watch the video for general understanding. Students should not have pens or paper in hand.
2. Read through the questions on the Worksheet.
3. **SECOND VIEWING:** Watch the video with the questions in mind.
4. Give initial responses to the questions on the Worksheet.
5. **THIRD VIEWING:** Watch the video for a final time.
6. Ensure all questions are answered in detail.
7. Complete the activities on the Worksheet.
8. Teacher leads discussion of True/False questions e and f, as students may have varying responses - there is no ‘right’ answer to these questions.

## THREE – Emanuel Ringelblum / Oyneg Shabbes Archive (20 minutes)

Teacher specifies: This is an example of spiritual resistance.

Teacher leads students to take turns reading aloud from the Reading on **the Worksheet – Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto**.

Teacher offers to clarify anything students didn’t understand from the reading.

Students work independently to answer the questions on the worksheet.

Students complete the tasks on the worksheet.

## FINISHING UP

Students choose to answer one of these questions as an exit ticket:

- What was the significance of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising? OR
- What is the value of the Emanuel Ringelblum Archive?

## Modifications:

As a long-term extension study, students may be given the option to write a book or film report about 'Who Will Write our History?'.

The book is written by Samuel D Kassow, and takes a detailed look at the Emanuel Ringelblum Archive.

The full length documentary film is available on YouTube at [this link](#).

## Additional Resources

See the documentary film 'Who Will Write our History?', available on YouTube at [this link](#).

## Related lessons

This lesson is a corollary to the lesson titled 'Differing Forms of Resistance'. You can find that, and other lesson plans at [this link](#).

You will also find a suggested plan for teaching a full unit about the Holocaust at [this link](#).