

# Lesson Plan – Hans and Sophie Scholl and the White Rose Movement

## Introduction

Student age range: 14-16

Subject: History

Time required: 50 minutes

## Overview:

The White Rose was a resistance movement run by students at the University of Munich during World War II. Two siblings, Hans and Sophie Scholl, were discovered distributing anti-Nazi leaflets, and subsequently beheaded for treason. Students will explore their story in this case study about resistance during the Holocaust.

## Essential questions:

- What was the White Rose Movement, and what role did Hans and Sophie Scholl play in the movement?
- What happened to Hans and Sophie Scholl?
- What was the impact of the White Rose Movement?

## Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about the Scholl siblings and the White Rose Movement.
- Students will understand the limited role of resistance during the Holocaust.

## Key issues/concepts:

- Perspectives
- Significance

## Materials:

Whiteboard and marker

Ability to screen [this TedEd video](#)

## Worksheet – White Rose Pamphlet

## Alternate Worksheet (for students requiring more learning support) – Sophie Scholl Comprehension Questions

## Handout – Sophie Scholl Source Study

### Teaching notes:

Throughout their examination of the White Rose Movement, students should be aware that while some resistance was possible, it was very limited, due to the violent, totalitarian nature of the Nazi regime. Teachers can focus on the importance of standing up for one's beliefs, and the possibility of students acting as change-makers. However, teachers should not overstate the impact of the White Rose Movement, or the range of resistance activities during the Reich.

### Glossary:

- Resistance
- Oppression

## Lesson Instructions

### ONE – Opening questions (5 minutes)

Teacher provokes class discussion with these questions:

- Do you ever see injustice in the world and want to speak out about it?
- Can you, as students, really make a difference to the world?
- If you were a student in Germany during the Nazi regime, is there anything you could have done to stop the Holocaust?

### TWO – Engage with TedEd (15 minutes)

Students watch the TedEd lesson called 'The secret student resistance to Hitler' by Iseult Gillespie. Find it at [this link](#) (5 mins 33 secs).

Students write 4 dot points to summarise what they learned in the video.

Teacher selects students to share one dot point each, and writes them on the board, until all the main points are covered.

## THREE - Pamphlet analysis (15 minutes)

Students read the White Rose Pamphlet, available on the [Worksheet – White Rose Pamphlet](#). While reading, students underline any words or concepts they don't understand.

Teacher explains any unknown words or concepts the students identified.

Individually, in small groups, or as a class, students answer these questions, which are on the Worksheet.

1. How are Hitler and the Nazi party characterised in the pamphlet? Give examples from the text to support your answer.  
A: It is a very negative characterisation. Hitler is criticised for sending troops into Stalingrad, where hundreds of thousands of German soldiers died. He is called a “dilettante”. The Party elite is called “base”, “power-seeking”, and the regime named “the most abhorrent tyranny that our people has ever endured”. Party cadres are called “godless, shameless, and unscrupulous exploiters and cutthroats”.
2. What is the intended audience of the pamphlet?  
A: University students, intellectuals, German youth.
3. What does the pamphlet suggest about life under the Nazi regime?  
A: The pamphlet suggests the Nazi state has attempted to indoctrinate the people. It mentions how various Nazi bodies have “tried to make us uniform... to narcotize us in the most fruitful educational years of our lives”. It cites “ideological training” as a method of “stifling our independent thought”, and states that there has been a “destruction of all physical and intellectual freedom”.  
The pamphlet accuses the Nazis of cheating people out of their freedom.
4. Note how many times the word ‘honour’ appears in the pamphlet. Why do you think the authors use this word so often?  
The White Rose Movement is appealing to people’s intrinsic values. The word ‘honour’ was used broadly by the Nazi Party, so the White Rose Movement is reclaiming the word and the notion, attempting to show that true honour is not what the Nazis stand for, but the opposite.
5. What is the pamphlet encouraging people to do?  
A: To fight against the Party, to leave Nazi organisations and to leave university, where the State determines the messages. To bring about intellectual and spiritual change. The pamphlet is encouraging people to defy Nazi indoctrination, think for themselves, and act with true honour. It asks German youth to “stand up at last, engage simultaneously in revenge and expiation, smash their tormentors, and bring about a new intellectual and spiritual Europe”.

The pamphlet requires a high level of reading ability. Students who require more learning support can engage with the [Worksheet – Sophie Scholl Comprehension Questions](#) instead of the pamphlet analysis.

## FOUR – Sophie Scholl Source Study (10 minutes)

Teacher chooses different students to read each of the quotes on the [Handout – Sophie Scholl Source Study](#).

Class discussion: what do the sources reveal about Sophie Scholl? Students must link their responses to at least one source.

## FINISHING UP

Students respond: what does the example of the Scholls and the White Rose Movement teach us about resisting injustice?

## Modifications:

Students who need more learning support can use the Comprehension Questions worksheet instead of the White Rose Pamphlet worksheet in Step Three.

## Additional Resources

Find an episode about The White Rose on ‘The Rest is History’ podcast, available [here](#), or wherever you access your podcasts.

All the White Rose pamphlets are available from the Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team, [here](#).

## Related lessons

Sydney Jewish Museum has developed lesson plans to support the teaching of a complete unit about the Holocaust. [Click here](#) to see all lesson plans.

You can also view suggested plans for teaching a full unit of the Holocaust [at this link](#).