

Lesson Plan: *The Auschwitz Album*

Lesson objectives:

- Introduce students to the photographic materials from the “Auschwitz Album”.
- Instruct students in how to analyze artifacts
- Raise students’ awareness of the suffering of others, the Holocaust and in that context learning about tolerance

Lesson outline:

It is very important to prepare classroom in a particular way: all of the desks should be removed (you can also built an “island” in the middle of the class where students can sit). On the walls, all around the classroom, you should put photos from the *Auschwitz Album* in the following order: the first should be placed near the door and the rest should tell the story 1) coming to the camp, 2) becoming a prisoner, etc. The order should reflect the way to destruction. Students stand or sit in the middle of the classroom facing the pictures.

The lesson should start with a short walk around the classroom to look at the photos (3-4 min). The teachers starts asking questions:

When do we take pictures?

What kind of moments do we want to capture?

What are pictures for?

- 1) The teacher presents information about the Auschwitz Album (where we have these pictures from, what we can see in them, etc.)
- 2) The teacher hands out testimonies of Holocaust survivors. This is the story behind the pictures. Students point out the phases of the Holocaust in the pictures and in the texts
- 3) Next, the teacher shows other pictures: three surreptitious photos taken by Sondercommando where you can see bodies near the gas chambers.
- 4) Then, the teacher shows photos from the book *Auschwitz- Birkenau: The Place You Now Stand*. (31 black-and-white pictures from the past and 31 colorful pictures from the present times.)

Useful links:

http://pl.auschwitz.org/m/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1466&Itemid=10

<http://kultura.wp.pl/gid,14239969,title,Auschwitz-oczami-esesmanow,galeria.html?ticaid=1fa5e>

- 5) Recapitulation: conversation with students

Note: If there is time in the class, you could present Grzegorz Skórski's short film *Chleb* [Bread] from the Filmotkea Szkolna series (handed out to every school).