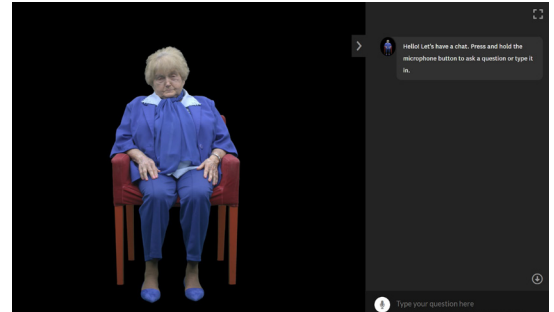


Teach with Dimensions in Testimony

Guidelines for Educators

What is Dimensions in Testimony?

USC Shoah Foundation's [Dimensions in Testimony \(DiT\)](#) provides students the opportunity to have a conversational experience with interactive biographies of Holocaust and genocide survivors far into the future. The technology preserves their stories and enables users to dialogue with these witnesses to history to learn about their experiences, and develop empathy, understanding and respect.



Pinchas Gutter, a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, was the first to be interviewed with DiT technology in 2014. Over the course of five days, Pinchas was asked over 1,000 questions about his life before, during and after the Holocaust. Since then, USC Shoah Foundation has continued to record interactive biographies, including biographies recorded in Hebrew, German, Spanish, Russian and Mandarin. This innovation is accessible in IWitness.

Dimensions in Testimony in Education

Engaging with an interactive biography through DiT on IWitness empowers students to be agents of their own learning. Led by their own inquiry, students ask questions and interrogate the primary source to learn about a survivor's life experiences, the historical context surrounding their story, as well as broader messages of hope, faith, empathy and humanity. These interactive conversations provide students a personal and moving experience that not only connects them to the story of a survivor's life but makes them feel connected to the survivor personally. Students develop a deepened understanding about the power of testimony as a primary source to learn about the past.

This humanizing technology develops students' critical literacy by enabling them to interpret the impact of a survivor's experiences on their identity, their attitudes and their beliefs; by encouraging students to explore their perspective; by empowering learners to interrogate their message; by engaging their multimodal capacities; and by inspiring self-reflection.

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Strategies for Engaging Students with Dimensions in Testimony

Access Interactive Biographies in IWitness

- Determine whether this interaction will be whole class or independent work—either is effective.
- Explore the multiple features connected to an interactive biography that aim to contextualize a survivor's life experiences and the themes shared in their story.

› An Introduction

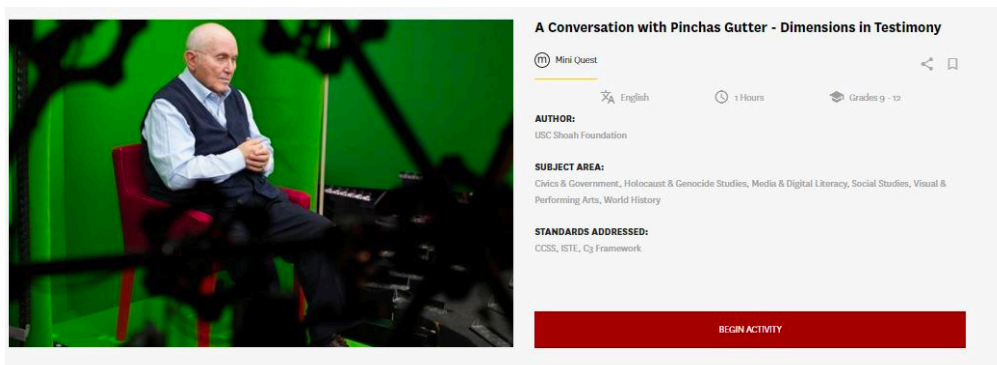
- *Five-Minute Summary:* For an overview of a survivor's life, ask, "Can you share your five-minute summary?"
- *Strategy:* As students listen, have them write 3-5 topics that they would like to learn more about.

› More about the survivor

- Use the biographical information about them, access their short curated clips on [the Watch page](#), view the gallery of images and/or watch their full testimony.
- *Strategy:* Have students use the "KWL" graphic organizer and write what they learn about the survivor from each source, what they want to know and the questions they may want to ask.

› Contextualize

- Find resources, clips and activities that can build students' content knowledge and deeper understanding for the survivor's lived experiences.
- *Strategy:* Assign an activity. Use the [Educator Quick Tips](#) for support with how to make a student group.



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Interact with the survivor: Ask them one of the following questions or have students provide questions about aspects of the survivor's experience they are curious to know more about.

Can you tell me about your childhood?

What was your life like before the war?

Where did you live during the Holocaust?

How were you separated from your family?

Which camps were you in?

What were the camps like?

What was the Holocaust like?

Tell me about liberation.

How were you liberated?

When did you first feel free?

How did you survive?

What was your life like after the war?

Where have you lived since the Holocaust ended?

What is your message for us?

Do you have a message for students?

Activate the Transcript Function: A transcript of the conversational exchange with the survivor is generated when the system is activated. Click the download symbol (down arrow) to access and download the transcript before exiting the page.

Important Technical Tips for Engaging with Dimensions in Testimony

- **Uninterrupted Environment:** When students interact with DiT, be sure their experience is uninterrupted, as best as possible. Allow them to listen to all the responses to questions completely from beginning to end. This helps students tune into the experience while also avoiding possible errors in the DiT system.

- **Rephrasing Questions:** Encourage students to rephrase questions until they receive a relevant response.

- **DiT Incorrect Response:** Even if the system responds with an unrelated response to a question, students will still find value with the interaction.

