



Mädchen des Kindertransport



Image courtesy Tom Tolkien



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In our **Mädchen des Kindertransport** exhibition, we explore the experiences and lives of the girls saved by the kindertransports of 1939. Over 10,000 children were moved out of German occupied countries into Britain and beyond as Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party began to persecute the Jewish population. For many, this escape was not a moment too soon but in escaping persecution, many girls left behind their family and the only life they had known.

WWII involved the terrible horrors of the Holocaust, yet the Kindertransport offered a glimmer of hope for girls and their families. This educational guide provides discussion points and activities that provide an insight into the choices and experiences of these girls, and how lessons learnt during WWII might be used to tackle the current refugee crisis.

This educational guide is designed for classroom use with students in elementary and secondary school and university settings. There are also activities that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards and UK National Curriculum.



Discussion Questions



Students can answer the following questions on their own or discuss in groups.

1. At the beginning of Hitler's rise to power, other countries were worried about taking in Jewish refugees. Why do you think this was?
2. What did the parents of the Kindertransport hope for their children's future? Can you find a section about this in *Meet The Girls*?
3. What emotions might the little girl in the picture above be feeling, waiting for the train to leave?
4. Would a Kindertransport for the Syrian refugees solve some of our current problems? Explain your answer.
5. Many of the Kindertransport survivors went on to educate school children about the Holocaust. What knowledge do you think you need to pass on to younger children in order to make the world a better place?

Exploring Poems & Poetic Conventions



Common Core State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL: 6.4, 7.4, 8.4, 9-10.4, 11-12.4 - Determine the meaning of words/phrases used in text, including figurative/connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning/tone.
- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RL.9-10.6 - Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the U.S.

UK National Curriculum Links

KS1

- Discussing the meaning of words.

KS2

- Clarifying new words and linking new meanings to known vocabulary.
- Identifying how language contributes to meaning.
- Exploring the use of personification as a poetic convention.

Read this poem, written by Kindertransport survivor Lotte Kramer, sixty years after she travelled to Britain:

Suitcase

*Grey and tattered it stands in the attic
Having accomplished sixty odd years
Of survival and childhood memories,
Stuffed tight with mother love and heartache,
Unable to forget the packed trains
Of ownerless children and platforms of tears
Its pock-marked skin a testimony
And emblem of such histories.
What now in this war-world of cul-de sac lives,
Seekers of all ages for a place to own
Confronting friendlessness in a strange town,
A suitcase, perhaps, of unhappy souls
To be stored in some future eventual attic
Or dumped in a museum as showpiece of luck.*

- Lotte Kramer

Try to answer the following questions, re-reading the poem. You might need to look up words that you don't understand in a dictionary. Poetry, like art, is created so everyone can find something that they like or understand; there are no right or wrong answers but you need to explain your answer, using the poem.

- What does Lotte want you to think about when she writes that the suitcase is 'stuffed tight with mother love and heartache'?
- What does a 'testimony' mean (you might need to look it up in a dictionary) and how is the suitcase a testimony to the history of the holocaust?
- Who might the 'unhappy souls' be, and why are they unhappy?
- Lotte uses *personification* to make it seem like the suitcase has had the experiences of a person. Why would she write about the suitcase rather than a child or herself?
- What is a cul-de-sac, and what might Lotte mean by a 'cul-de-sac world'?



Suitcase

What would you have taken in your suitcase?

Children traveling on the Kindertransport had to follow strict rules on what they were allowed to bring with them. They could only bring one, small suitcase with no valuables. Girls were advised to take 12 dresses, 2 coats, shoes, nightwear and toiletries.



On a piece of paper, draw a suitcase like the one on this page and then add (in words or drawings) all the things you would have packed in your suitcase. In order to fit in just one, small suitcase they would have to be quite small, soft, or flat.

What would you take to remember your family? What might you need when you are away from home? What do you like doing best? Remember, this all happened in 1939 so all your items need to have existed: no iPads! Have a look at the objects in the exhibition for inspiration.



Suitcase

Common Core State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 - Integrate visual information.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3 - Analyze a series of events described in a text.

UK National Curriculum Links

History KS1 & KS2:

- Note connections and contrasts over time.
- Understand similarities and differences between ways of life, and objects available, in different periods.

PSHE KS1 & KS2:

- Make and explain choices.
- Identify positive ways to face new challenges.

Writing a Diary Entry

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA.Literacy.W: 4.3, 5.3,6.3, 7.3, 8.3, 9-10.3, 11-12.3 - Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences using technique, details, and event sequences.

Writing a Diary Entry



Many of the Kindertransport refugees wrote a diary during their time in Britain, recording their thoughts and the things that happened. Many of these diaries have since been published as autobiographies, educating new generations about the horrors of Nazi Germany and the realities of the Kindertransport.

Using the photograph at left, create a mind map to develop a character for one of the girls. Use the exhibition to consider:

- A name and age.
- Where she came from.
- When she arrived in Britain.
- Where she went and who her foster family was.
- Whether she went to school or what job she did.
- Who the other girl is.

Once you have developed your character, write a diary entry as your character. Talk to the diary (or your reader) and tell them about your feelings about the Kindertransport, your new foster family and the things you have done that day.

Understanding Events

The Kindertransport rescued children from parts of Nazi-occupied Europe in 1939. Our understanding of things that happened in the past is built up through a range of different forms of information, which we call sources. Our understanding of what happened during and after the Kindertransport has been developed using the following sources:

- The stories of people who were there.
- Objects that people have kept.
- Personal letters.
- Newspaper articles at the time.
- Official documents.
- Photographs.

All these different sources provide different pieces of information. Consider each source as you answer the questions below:

- Who created this source and why?
- Who did the creator think would read the source? Does this make it any less useful?
- Which source do you think might be most reliable? Which one is least reliable? Why?
- Objects and photographs can't speak for themselves. Which sources could be used to help us understand them better?

Girl Museum

We are the first and only museum in the world dedicated to celebrating girls & girlhood.

We exhibit, educate, and raise awareness about the unique experience of being born and growing up female around the world in the past and present.

As a community of passionate and creative individuals, we acknowledge and advocate for girls as forces for collective responsibility and change in the global context, not as victims and consumers.

We are a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization.

Learn more and get involved at www.GirlMuseum.org



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Create a Timeline



Using the dates given in the 'Meet the Girls' section of the exhibition, create a timeline that shows when the girls left their countries to travel to Britain and other important dates in their lives. You could use different colors for the different girls.

Timeline & Understanding Events

Common Core State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9 – Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

UK National Curriculum Links

History KS2

- Developing a chronological understanding of events.
- Developing an understanding of how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.
- Selecting and considering historical sources.