

Introduction

Personal effects and archives

- 1 Brief outline and notes for the teacher
- 2 Opening slide (silent stimulus, sentence starters)

Introduction

Brief outline and notes for the teacher

Jewelry, souvenir photos, papers – the Nazis confiscated the personal belongings of their victims when they imprisoned them in concentration camps. The Arolsen Archives, the world's most comprehensive archive on Nazi persecutees, still hold several thousand of these objects – known as »effects.« The possessions of several hundred forced laborers who lost their lives in Nazi Germany are also stored there. Under the banner of the #StolenMemory campaign, we are trying to trace the families of the victims and return these objects to them! The campaign also includes a website and a traveling exhibition.

The effects and the historical documents from the Arolsen Archives help make the lives and the fates of individual victims of National Socialist persecution more tangible. These resources provide fascinating opportunities for research-based learning in schools and other educational contexts. The educational material that goes with the #StolenMemory campaign consists of three separate teaching units that build on one another. In combination with the introduction, one unit can be covered per lesson; alternatively, all three units can be used in the context of a one-day project. The material can serve to prepare pupils for a visit to an exhibition, but it can also be used independently.

For a general introduction to the topic, we provide a slide with a picture of some of the personal effects belonging to a victim of persecution. This picture can be used as a silent stimulus, for example. The slide also features two sentence starters that should be kept hidden at the beginning of the lesson: »Effects are...« and »an archive is...« By studying the picture, participants will be able to work out that the objects it shows are personal belongings that date back to the Nazi period (a postage stamp featuring Hitler, an imperial eagle stamp, the word »Reichskleiderkarte« [English: Reich clothing card]). They may realize that the items belonged to a foreigner (the details on the identity card, the name on the envelope).

At this point, you can introduce the term »effects« (prisoners' possessions, see the web story for more detailed information). You should explain that effects provide the opportunity for people to carry out their own research into the fates of victims of Nazi persecution. You can then discuss the term »archive« and ask what an archive is and what tasks it fulfils (archives store, preserve, and provide access to their holdings; the Arolsen Archives provide access to documents from concentration camps and documents about forced laborers, for example). In this connection, you should point out that the collection of effects held by the archive is a special case in that the aim here is not to archive the effects, but to return them to the families of their rightful owners. Once this foundation has been laid, you can move on to the first unit.



**What are effects?
Why are these objects stored
in the Arolsen Archives?
What is supposed to be done
with them?
The web story holds the
answers:**

[https://stolenmemory.org/en/
story/effects](https://stolenmemory.org/en/story/effects)



Methods used

Silent stimulus, sentence starters



Materials

Slide



Duration

about 10 minutes

Effects are...



an archive is...