PROJECT WITNESS

EPISODE 1 · MICROSHORT STORIES

THE FORGER

An eighteen-year-old Jewish forger in occupied Paris races to produce nine hundred identity papers for three hundred children marked for deportation. Every hour he sleeps, thirty people die.

QUICK REFERENCE

TIME

45 min core / 90 min with extensions

Recommended: 2 days. Day 1: Watch + Analyze. Day 2: Create + Reflect.

MATERIALS

Device to play video; printed discussion questions (optional)

CONTENT ADVISORY

None required. Film contains no graphic imagery.

THEMES Rescue · Resistance · Documentation · French Underground · Forgery as Craft

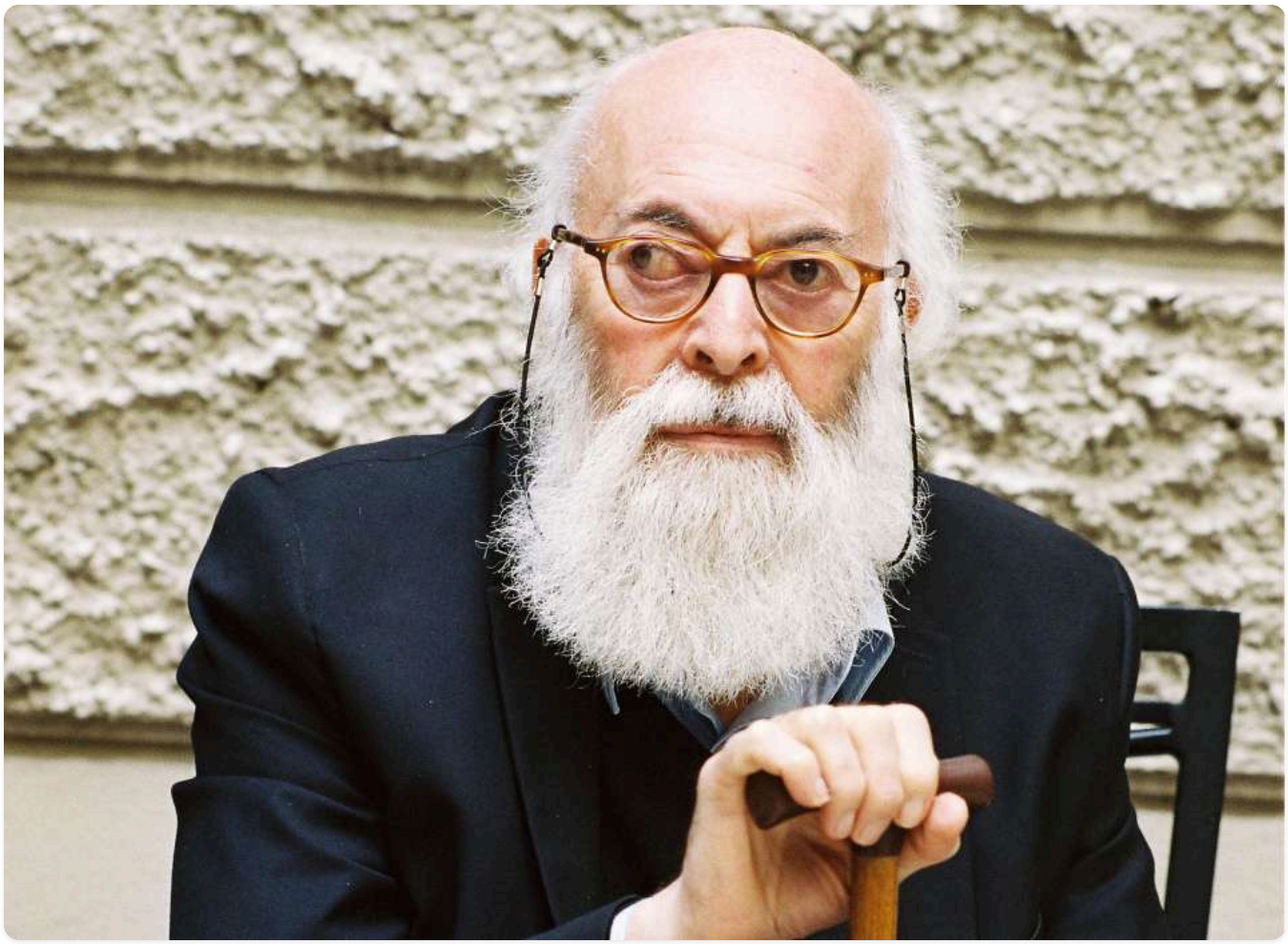
WHERE THIS FITS

Curriculum & Course Alignment

- **10th Grade Global Studies / Global History & Geography II (NY).** Unit on World War II, the Holocaust, French Vichy collaboration, and resistance. Kaminsky's story slots directly into the NYS Regents framework on the Holocaust and on European resistance movements.
- **9–12 World History (most state frameworks).** Causes and consequences of WWII; rescue and resistance during the Holocaust; the role of individual moral agency under occupation.
- **IB History (DP), Paper 3 Topic 11.** Causes and effects of 20th-century wars, including the Holocaust and the architecture of rescue.
- **AP World History / AP European History.** Period 9 content on WWII and the Holocaust; resistance and collaboration in occupied France as document-analysis material.
- The **NY State Holocaust Education Mandate** and its equivalents in 25+ states with Holocaust and genocide education requirements (full list: Standards tab, Appendix I).
- **Cross-disciplinary uses.** ELA (rhetorical analysis of the opening hook and Kaminsky's "arithmetic of conscience"); **Chemistry (11–12)** using lactic acid + iron gall ink + document forensics as an interdisciplinary thread elevated in Extensions; French (the Vichy lexicon, the *Carte d'Identité*); Civics / Ethics (the legal-vs-moral dilemma of rescue forgery).

EPISODE SUMMARY

About This Film



Adolfo Kaminsky (1925–2023), Paris

Adolfo Kaminsky was eighteen years old, Jewish, and hiding in a Paris attic he had disguised as an artist's studio. His survival depended on invisibility. Before the war, he had worked in a dye shop, and in learning the chemistry of color, he made a discovery that would define the rest of his life: a solution of lactic acid found in ordinary milk could erase the official inks stamped on French identity documents. If you could erase an ink, you could change a name. If you could change a name, you could save a life. Kaminsky began forging papers for the French Resistance.

THE MISSION

Then a courier arrived at his door with a list. Three hundred Jewish children were living in orphanages and convents across Paris. The Nazis knew where they were. Deportation orders had been signed. Each child required three forged documents: an identity card, a ration card, and a certificate of non-Jewish status. Nine hundred documents in total. Three days. Kaminsky was alone. He sat down and did the arithmetic: he could produce thirty documents per hour. If he slept for one hour, thirty people would die. He did not sleep.



The list arrives. 300 children, 900 documents, three days.



Kaminsky, as depicted in The Forger, working through the night

By the end of the war, Kaminsky's forgeries were estimated to have saved fourteen thousand lives. He never accepted a single franc in payment. He lost partial sight in one eye from the strain of close work under lamplight. After liberation he continued forging for Algerian independence fighters, for anti-apartheid activists in South Africa, and for refugees who needed to become someone else in order to survive. He lived quietly in Paris, nearly unknown, until a 2009 book by his daughter brought his story to public attention. Adolfo Kaminsky died on January 9, 2023, at the age of ninety-seven.

FOR EDUCATORS

Lesson Foundation

Three orienting framings (*Before You Begin*), then the planning anchors. Read these before opening the lesson; they shape every decision the four steps make. Grounded in the USHMM Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust, Yad Vashem's ISHS principles, the SAMHSA trauma-informed framework, and Touro's film-based-Holocaust pedagogy guide.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

WHY THIS FORMAT

What this lesson offers that other resources do not

The **90-second compression** is an engagement scaffold, not a substitute for depth. It solves the attention-span barrier without sacrificing gravity, and turns the film itself into a hook (Kaminsky's arithmetic of conscience: *"if I sleep for one hour, thirty people will die"*) that demands extension. The **tiered lesson plan** is where the depth lives: structured discussion, primary-source engagement, an interdisciplinary chemistry thread for 11–12 (lactic acid / iron gall ink / document forensics), and grade-band-appropriate writing scaffolds. See below for the **one-person, one-act spine**, which gives students a named individual (Adolfo Kaminsky) to stand inside, instead of macro-historical statistics. Together: a 90-second hook, a curated source set, and a discussion architecture designed to engineer past surface-level engagement, in a format that fits a single class period or splits naturally across two. *(Full articulation: About the Series · Why This Format.)*

THE PEDAGOGICAL SPINE

One person, one act as active agency, not passive tragedy

The Microshort Stories series teaches Holocaust history through the lens of *one named person, one specific act*. The frame shifts deliberately away from the macro-statistical "six million were murdered" treatment that dominates much of Holocaust pedagogy. It moves toward what individual people *chose* under impossible conditions, and what their choices cost. The aim is a mirror, not a monument: students reflect on their own moral compass and civic responsibility through the specificity of a person they have come to know in 90 seconds.

In this episode, the spine narrows to one named person. That person is **Adolfo Kaminsky**, whose ordinary professional skill (forgery, learned in a dye shop) was turned to a moral purpose at extreme personal cost. The lesson invites students to consider not whether Kaminsky should have done what he did, but what the *doing* looked like: the calculation, the cost, the refusal of payment, the decades of silence afterward. *(Full articulation: About the Series · Pedagogical Spine.)*

WHY 3D ANIMATION INSTEAD OF ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE OR AI

What the production technique actually is, and why

The films are **3D animated by a human animation team**. They are not archival footage, and they are not *AI-generated*. The choice of stylized 3D animation over actual archival material is a deliberate emotional-safety scaffold: it conveys the harsh realities of the era through high-quality storytelling while protecting younger and more sensitive viewers from the unmediated weight of graphic archival footage. In this episode specifically, that choice is what allows the forgery work to be depicted through documents, ink, and the chemistry of Kaminsky working alone by lamplight, while the deportation orders and the children whose lives the forgeries saved are *named* in voice-over without being shown. No act of harm is depicted at any point. *(Full articulation: About the Series · About the Animation Pipeline.)*

DRIVING QUESTION

What does responsibility for someone else's life look like when no one is watching?

The film never asks whether Kaminsky should have done it. It assumes he should have. The question this lesson sits with is what the doing actually looked like. That means the calculation, the cost, the refusal of payment, the silence afterward, and what any of that asks of someone watching today.

GRADES 11–12 LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. **Evaluate** the film's representational choices against the ethical questions the discipline asks of any rescue narrative (what the archive supports, what is at stake in centering rescue, how the film handles the statistical reality of abandonment).
2. **Articulate**, in writing, the historiographic problem this story poses, including how a film that compresses 97 years and 14,000 saved lives into 90 seconds shapes what we can know.
3. **Defend** a position on form-as-ethics: how does the choice of medium, length, and visual style itself carry moral weight when the subject is rescue under occupation?

Verbs are drawn from Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. Vague mental-state verbs (*understand, appreciate, become aware of, feel*) are deliberately avoided per the practitioner-guide standard.

FRAMEWORK GROUNDING

This lesson is grounded in the **USHMM Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust** (the discipline-specific spine: Jewish specificity preserved, victims named and individuated before harm, no role-play of victim or perpetrator identity, dignity of the victim treated as a discipline). Within that spine: **Understanding by Design** (Wiggins & McTighe) for backward-planning from the closing reflection, **constructivist scaffolding** for pre-screening framing, and **SAMHSA's six trauma-informed principles** for the affective check-in / opt-out / response-branching architecture below.

AUDIENCE POSITIONALITY

Build for a room that contains, even if you don't know it, at least one student with familial proximity to this history. That could mean family who survived, escaped, or were lost in occupied France or anywhere in occupied Europe. The opt-out language and check-in protocols (Facilitation tab) are designed to support that student without singling them out. This positionality assumption applies in religiously mixed, secular, and Jewish-majority classrooms equally.

WHY ANIMATION

Animation is a pedagogical choice, not a shortcut. The Microshort Stories films use restrained, stylized 3D animation to create enough emotional distance for students to engage difficult history without being exposed to graphic archival imagery or perpetrator-framed footage. The goal is not to make the Holocaust feel easier, entertaining, or fictional; it is to make accurate, teacher-guided inquiry possible without sensationalizing suffering.

The films are **not AI-generated**. They are authored through a human 3D animation process: scenes are storyboarded, modeled, staged, lit, animated, reviewed, and revised against historical research and visual-reference materials. That human review is what lets the films show sequence, setting, movement, and moral pressure while deliberately withholding details that would turn victim suffering into spectacle.

Use this framing if students ask why the story is animated: animation is the bridge into the lesson, not the lesson itself. The primary sources, testimony, historical context, and teacher-led discussion are where students test what the film introduces. *(Full articulation: About the Series · About the Animation Pipeline.)*

OPERATIONAL CONTENT STATEMENT

What is depicted: A 90-second stylized animated reconstruction of Adolfo Kaminsky's 1944 forgery work. No graphic violence. No depiction of harm to any person.

How: Stylized 3D animation throughout. Kaminsky is shown working alone by lamplight; documents, ink, the dye-shop chemistry. Reference is made to deportation orders and to the children who would have been killed without the forgeries; *none of those children, and no act of harm, is depicted.* The arithmetic ("every hour he sleeps, thirty people die") is spoken in voice-over.

Most-intense moments: The film's heaviest moment is conceptual, not visual: the moment the arithmetic lands (approx. 0:30–0:45). There is no on-screen violence and no graphic image at any point.

Opt-out language (read aloud at start of class): "The bathroom pass is by the door. The hallway is fine to walk. If you need to step out at any point, you can do that without explanation. None of this affects your grade."

PEDAGOGICAL NOTE ON RESCUE STORIES

Kaminsky was extraordinary precisely *because* rescuers were extraordinarily rare. The vast majority of non-Jewish Europeans during the Holocaust were bystanders or beneficiaries; the statistical reality of rescue is one in which most victims faced abandonment. Centering rescue stories can inadvertently diminish the scale of that abandonment if the caveat is not named, even when the stories are true and necessary. Teach Kaminsky as the exception, not the rule. Both the USHMM and Yad Vashem treat the Righteous Among the Nations with this caveat front and center.

FOR EDUCATORS

About This Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is designed around a single 90-second microshort film. That format combines the emotional power of documentary storytelling with the time constraints of a real classroom.

It follows a four-step structure: **Watch** (pre-viewing context and the film itself), **Analyze** (discussion and close reading), **Create** (structured creative response), and **Reflect** (personal connection and exit thinking). Each step is differentiated across three grade bands (7–8, 9–10, 11–12) so a single film can serve an entire department. Extension activities, facilitation protocols, and full standards alignment are available in the dedicated tabs above.

FOR EDUCATORS

About the Digital Student Experience

This episode also has an **interactive digital student module**. It is a self-paced, one-panel-at-a-time experience that students move through on a device. It carries the same Watch → Analyze → Create → Reflect spine as this lesson plan, but in student voice, without facilitator scripts, standards appendices, or opt-out language for you to read. That lives here, with you. Use it as the in-class surface students see while you facilitate from this plan. Two grade-band versions:

The Forger · Digital Student ExperienceGrades 9–10
The Forger · Digital Student ExperienceGrades 11–12

How the eleven student panels map to this lesson plan

1. **Begin** opens the lesson with the lamplight image and the headline. Pair with your opt-out language read-aloud (Facilitation tab).
2. **Before Viewing** (9–10) / **Terms of Entry** (11–12) covers the content advisory, the 3D-animation framing, and explicit permission to step out. Maps to the Watch tab's pre-viewing routine.
3. **The People** introduces Adolfo Kaminsky, the three hundred children on the list, the resistance network, and Sarah Kaminsky as the biographer who broke the silence in 2009. Names students will be asked to keep in view through Analyze.
4. **Prediction** (9–10) / **The Debate** (11–12) presents the Watch tab's *Prediction Prompt* in student-facing form. 9–10 asks why a teenager would refuse payment; 11–12 stages the historiographic restraint-vs-engagement debate. Give individual think time before any group discussion.

5. **Watch** embeds the 90-second microshort with captions enabled. Pair with the Watch tab's viewing-instruction prompt.
6. **Check-In** is a one-word affective response. The bridge between Watch and Analyze; do not skip.
7. **The Forgery** (9–10) / **The Document** (11–12) is a primary-source artifact analysis through a four-tab photo-explorer (the ID, the chemistry, the new name, the list). Pair with Analyze tab's close-reading prompts.
8. **The Arithmetic** presents the "thirty documents per hour" quote with a four-step chain visualization. Pair with Analyze tab's evidence work.
9. In **Claim** (9–10) / **Position** (11–12), students choose a defensible position on what Kaminsky's refusal of payment meant, then cite a specific detail. Bridges Analyze to Create.
10. **Create** is a medium-agnostic creative or analytical response (film, micro-essay, comic, position paper). Pair with the Create tab's *Make Your Own Microstory* activity.
11. **Reflect** is a sentence-frame exit reflection. Close with the Reflect tab's full-class consolidation prompt for the final five minutes.

Student responses save automatically to the browser's local storage and can be copied to the clipboard from the Responses panel. Students can hand them in digitally without an account or login. The Listen button on each panel plays grade-band-specific narration that frames the panel as a teacher might, while leaving the analytic work to the student.

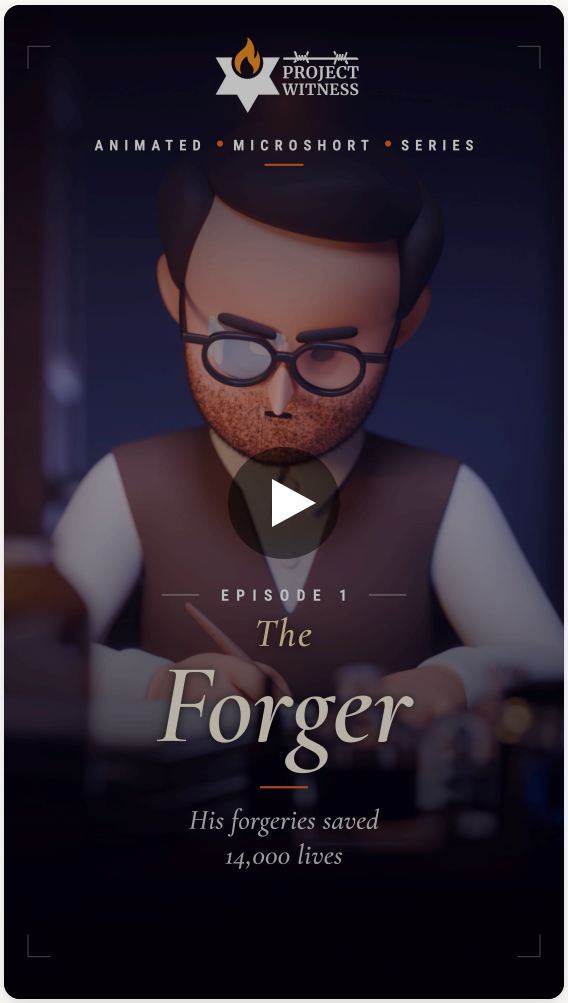
STEP 1 OF 4 · BEFORE VIEWING

Watch

The pre-viewing activities below are differentiated by grade band. Use them to build context, activate prior knowledge, and frame student thinking before the film begins. Then show the 90-second microshort.

VIEWING INSTRUCTIONS

Show the film in full without interruption. Students should have their pre-viewing notes visible but should not be writing during the film. The goal is full, attentive viewing.



Watch The Forger for 90 Seconds

BEFORE WE BEGIN

A Child Who Was Hidden

“I was five years old when they came for us. My mother pushed me into the arms of a stranger and said, ‘Go with this woman.’ I did not understand. I did not see my mother again for three years. The papers that woman carried said I was her niece. I do not know who made those papers. I only know that without them, I would not be here.”

Testimony of a hidden child, France, circa 1943 (adapted from accounts in the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive)

The children Kaminsky forged papers for were real. Most were too young to understand what was happening. Many never learned who had saved them.

BEFORE VIEWING

Based on what you have just read, write down one or two questions you want answered. What do you want to know about this story? Hold onto your questions as you watch.

KEY INSTITUTIONAL TERMS FOR THIS EPISODE

Institutions you will encounter in this lesson

Students may not have prior knowledge of these institutions. Brief definitions are provided here so that students can engage with the primary sources, secondary references, and credits in the rest of the lesson without unexplained acronyms. Spell out acronyms once aloud the first time they appear in discussion.

Yad Vashem

Israel's national Holocaust memorial and research institution (Jerusalem, established 1953). The field's primary repository of survivor testimony and the institutional voice cited throughout this lesson; specifically engaged here through Yad Vashem's *Righteous Among the Nations* archive of documented non-Jewish rescuers. *yadvashem.org*

USHMM (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

The U.S. national memorial and educational institution in Washington, D.C. (opened 1993). Maintains the Holocaust Encyclopedia and the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database referenced in the Extensions and Materials sections. *ushmm.org*

OSE (Œuvre de secours aux enfants)

The Jewish children's aid society in France, founded 1912. Coordinated the network that smuggled, hid, and rescued thousands of Jewish children in occupied France. Kaminsky worked with the OSE in the forgery operation that produced the documents this lesson centers on.

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mahJ (Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme)

Museum of Jewish Art and History in Paris, opened 1998 in the Hôtel de Saint-Aignan in the Marais. Holds Kaminsky-related material; the Kaminsky exhibition portrait by Christophe Fouin used in this lesson is from the mahJ collection.

Bundesarchiv

The German Federal Archives. Holds the institutional documentation of the Nazi state including SS construction records, Wehrmacht files, and a photographic archive of occupied Europe (the Bundesarchiv Bild collection) widely available under Creative Commons licensing.

USC Shoah Foundation

Survivor-testimony archive based at the University of Southern California (founded by Steven Spielberg in 1994 after *Schindler's List*). Houses recorded testimony of French-Resistance rescuers and rescued children whose lives Kaminsky's documents made possible. The **IWitness** platform is the foundation's classroom-facing teaching tool. *sfi.usc.edu · iwitness.usc.edu*

Touro practitioner guide

The curriculum-grade guide on teaching the Holocaust through film, published by the Holocaust Education Center at Touro College. The synthesis spine for this lesson plan's facilitation architecture.

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

U.S. federal agency. The source of the six-principle trauma-informed framework (2014) cited in this lesson's affective check-in, opt-out, and Plan A / Plan B response-branching protocols.

Full canonical glossary across the series, with all institutions referenced in any Microshort Stories episode: About the Series · Glossary of Institutions.

GRADES 11–12

Primary Source: Kaminsky's Memoir

"I did the math. In one hour I could make thirty blank documents, which meant that if I slept for one hour, thirty people would die. So I worked through the nights. Pen to paper, stamp to paper, next sheet. Until my hands could barely move."

Adolfo Kaminsky, *A Forger's Life* (as recalled by his daughter Sarah Kaminsky, 2009)





Adolfo Kaminsky, the man whose arithmetic became the line: if I sleep for an hour, thirty people will die

Prediction Prompt

PREDICTION PROMPT

Kaminsky describes what we might call an "arithmetic of conscience." This is a moral calculation expressed in numbers. What does it mean to reduce the weight of a human life to a unit in a mathematical equation? Is this a form of dehumanization, or the opposite? Come prepared to defend your interpretation after viewing.

PRE-SCREENING INOCULATION (READ ALOUD)

The last 60 seconds before press play

Read the operational content statement (Lesson Foundation tab) and the opt-out language. Then say:

> *"Before I press play, I want to tell you what's in the next 90 seconds. The film is a stylized animated reconstruction of Adolfo Kaminsky's 1944 forgery work. There's no graphic violence and no depiction of harm to any person. Kaminsky is shown working alone by lamplight; documents, ink, the chemistry. The film references deportation orders and the children who would have been killed without the forgeries; none of those children, and no act of harm, is depicted. The arithmetic, 'every hour he sleeps, thirty people die,' is spoken in voice-over. If at any point you need to step outside, you can do that without asking. You don't need to explain. You can come back when you're ready. There is no penalty. Before I press play, are there any questions?"*

Pause. Genuinely take questions if any. *Then* begin.

STEP 2 OF 4 · AFTER VIEWING

Analyze

These discussion and analysis activities develop close reading and media literacy skills. Use small groups or whole-class discussion formats as appropriate. Begin with the Affective Check-In; *do not* open analysis until the room has named the affective response.

AFFECTIVE CHECK-IN (30 SECONDS BEFORE ANY ANALYSIS)

"Take a moment. One word for what you felt. We're not analyzing yet; we're noticing."

Take 4–6 words from around the room. Do not commentate. Acknowledge each. Then move into the descriptive and analytic questions below. This is the move that lets the room land before it thinks (per Dominick LaCapra's distinction between *acting out* and *working through*).

DISCUSSION STRUCTURE

Silent writing → paired share → full-class discussion

Before opening the grade-band questions to verbal discussion, scaffold individual thought first. The room will produce better discussion if every student has already committed something to the page.

1. **5 minutes of silent individual writing.** Students respond to the grade-band questions on their own, in writing. No talking, no looking at neighbors. Quieter students need this floor; louder students need this brake.
2. **5 minutes of paired share.** Students compare answers with one neighbor. Listen for divergence; the partner whose answer differs from yours is the more useful partner.
3. **Remaining time for full-class discussion.** Open the floor. Begin by inviting *differing* answers from around the room rather than the first hand up. Hold the divergence; do not race to consensus.

This is the universal scaffold for the Analyze step. Specific collaboration formats such as Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, and Socratic Seminar are detailed in the Facilitation tab and in About the Series · Discussion & Collaboration Patterns.



A forged identity card held up for inspection, as depicted in The Forger

GRADES 11–12

Rhetorical Analysis

1. The film imposes a strict 90-second constraint on a life that spanned ninety-seven years and touched fourteen thousand others. What is gained and what is lost by that compression? Is the compression itself an ethical act?
2. The story is told in the third person rather than in Kaminsky's own voice. How does this distance between narrator and subject shape your understanding of his actions? Would a first-person account from Kaminsky himself change what the story means?
3. How does this microshort compare to other representations of Holocaust rescuers you have encountered in literature, film, or testimony? What assumptions about heroism does it reinforce or challenge?

Historiographic Questions

4. Yad Vashem's documentation of rescue during the Holocaust reveals compromises, failures, and lives that could not be saved. The film presents none of this complexity. What is the historian's obligation when the archive complicates the monument?
5. Kaminsky forged documents for many liberation movements after the war, including some that used violent tactics. The film does not mention this. How should educators handle historical figures whose moral record is complicated by later actions?
6. This film lets us hear about the children, but not from them. What does that absence of survivors' voices tell us about whose perspective is centered? What would a different centering look like?

Hook Analysis of the Opening as Rhetorical Exordium

7. Identify the film's opening narration. These are the words spoken before any image. In classical rhetoric, this is the *exordium*: the move that establishes the speaker's authority and frames the rhetorical situation before any evidence is offered. Analyze this opening. What *ethos* does it establish? What does it claim implicitly about the relationship between speaker, subject, and audience?
8. The film's central rhetorical device is the arithmetic of conscience: *"if I sleep for one hour, thirty people will die."* This is what Kenneth Burke would call *identification by quantification*. That term names the move that asks the viewer to internalize the speaker's moral logic by

collapsing the gap between an hour of sleep and a life. Analyze the rhetorical move. What does the math accomplish that conventional moral language could not? What does it risk? Defend a reading.

9. The opening line is the film's argument made before its argument is named. It claims an implicit position on a question Holocaust pedagogy keeps re-asking: can rescue be represented without becoming triumphalism, and can the rescuer be honored without becoming a saint? Does the film's opening signal an answer? Cite specific language from the opening and at least one move the film makes later (omissions, framing, what is withheld) to defend your reading.

Cross-Discipline Look at the Chemistry of Forgery

Kaminsky's forgery work was not primarily an act of art. It was an act of *chemistry*. His prior training in a dye shop taught him that lactic acid (the same compound found in sour milk) could dissolve iron gall ink, the very ink the French state had chosen for its forgery-resistance. The neutral chemistry of dyes became the load-bearing science of rescue. *(The full Chemistry of Conscience essay lives in the Extensions tab; this question is the in-class bridge.)*

10. Iron gall ink was chosen by the French state for official documents *precisely* because it is permanent and resistant to removal. Lactic acid, an organic compound with no obvious connection to documents, happens to dissolve it. What does it mean that the scientific property that made the document forgery-*resistant* was also the property a chemist could exploit to forge it? Is this an accident, a structural inevitability, or something else? Tie your answer to a broader question about the relationship between knowledge and ethics. Can a chemical fact be morally neutral, or do its applications retroactively give it a moral weight?

Investigate Further What the Film Does Not Decide

A question the film deliberately leaves open. Take it home; come back with what you found and a position you can defend. (See About the Series · Anti-Surface Engineering.)

11. The film does not mention that, after WWII, Kaminsky continued forging documents for liberation movements. These included the Algerian FLN during the Algerian War of Independence, anti-apartheid networks in South Africa, anti-colonial movements across the Americas, and movements in the United States, Spain, and Greece in the 1960s and 70s, some of which used violent tactics. Find **one specific post-war forgery operation** Kaminsky was documented as participating in. Using the Just War tradition (jus ad bellum /

jus in bello) or another defensible ethical framework of your choice, write a 400–500 word argument: was Kaminsky's continued forgery work in that specific case justified by the same principle that justified his work in 1944? Or does the post-war record complicate the WWII rescue narrative? Defend a position with specific evidence about the movement and Kaminsky's documented role.

STEP 3 OF 4 · CREATIVE RESPONSE

Create

Students respond to the film through structured creative writing. Each grade band offers two options; students may choose the option that best suits their strengths or interest. Allow 20–25 minutes for the core activity, or assign as homework for a longer response.

“The laboratory was so cold that the ink wouldn’t dry. I held each document over the lamp, one by one, watching the signatures set. Outside, I could hear boots on the street. I couldn’t think about that. I could only think about the next blank page.”

Adolfo Kaminsky, as recalled in *A Forger’s Life* by Sarah Kaminsky, 2009



Self-portrait of Adolfo Kaminsky at 19

GRADES 11–12

Comparative Medium Analysis

Read the following memoir excerpt carefully. Then write a comparative analysis (400–500 words) that examines what the written memoir and the 90-second microshort each reveal that the other cannot. Your analysis should not simply summarize; it should make an argument about the relationship between form and meaning.

“The laboratory was so cold that the ink wouldn’t dry. I held each document over the lamp, one by one, watching the signatures set. Outside, I could hear boots on the street. I couldn’t think about that. I could only think about the next blank page.”

Adolfo Kaminsky, as recalled in *A Forger’s Life* by Sarah Kaminsky, 2009

Consider: sensory detail, pacing, emotional tone, what is foregrounded versus suppressed, and the reader’s/viewer’s role in constructing meaning. What does the memoir’s intimacy reveal that the film’s compressed narration cannot access? What does the film’s visual dimension do that language alone cannot achieve?



Adolfo Kaminsky, archival portrait. Memoir and film are two windows into the same life (source: The New York Times).

STEP 4 OF 4 · CLOSING

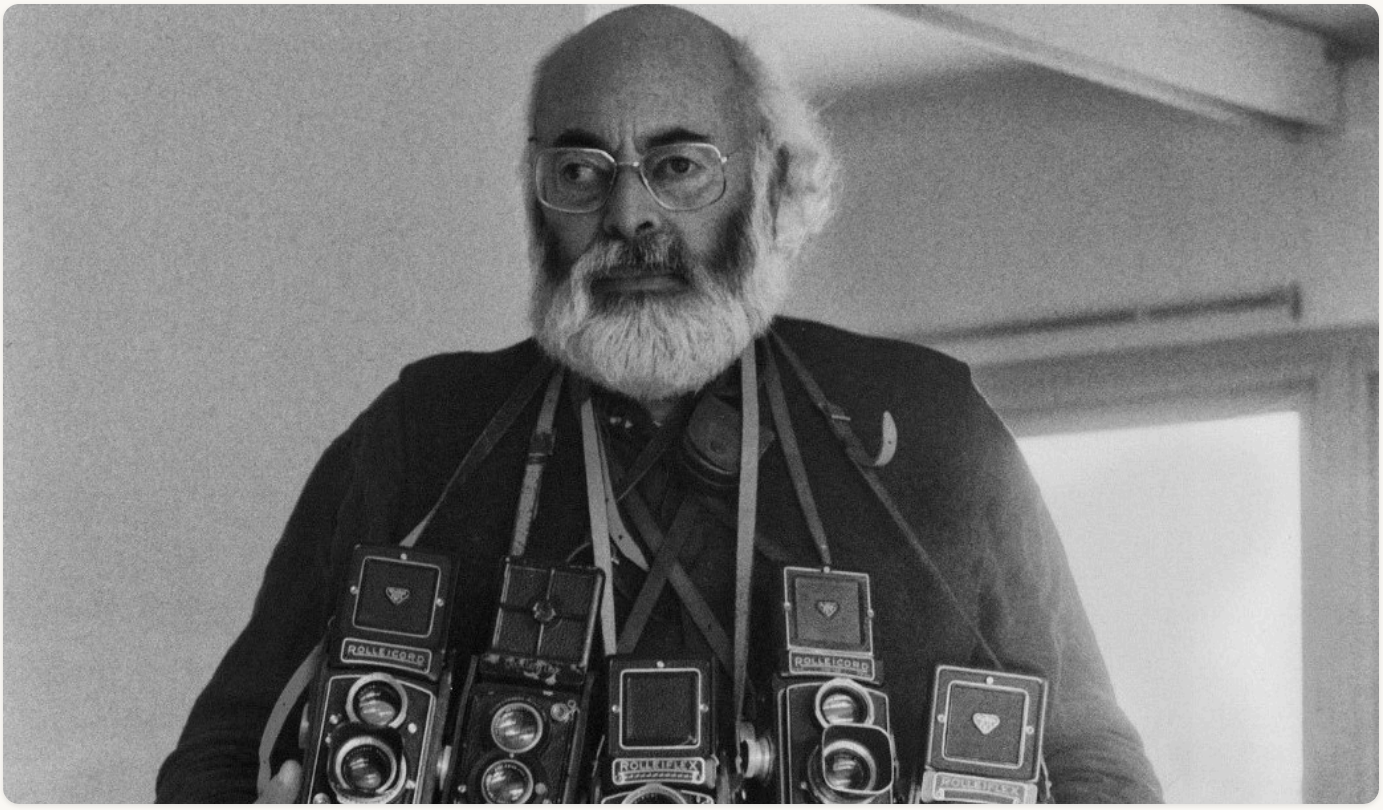
Reflect

These closing activities help students consolidate their thinking, make personal connections, and carry the lesson's meaning beyond the classroom. Allow 8–12 minutes. Begin with the Affective Consolidation; *do not* proceed to the grade-band reflection prompt until the room has named what it is carrying.

AFFECTIVE CONSOLIDATION (1 MINUTE BEFORE THE REFLECTION PROMPT)

"Thirty seconds. One word out loud for what you're carrying right now. Not analyzed. Just named."

Receive 4–6 words. No commentary; just acknowledge each. This separates the affective response from the cognitive close that follows. *Only after* this move should the grade-band reflection prompt begin.



Adolfo Kaminsky (1925–2023)

GRADES 11–12

Open-Ended Reflection on Kaminsky's Closing Statement

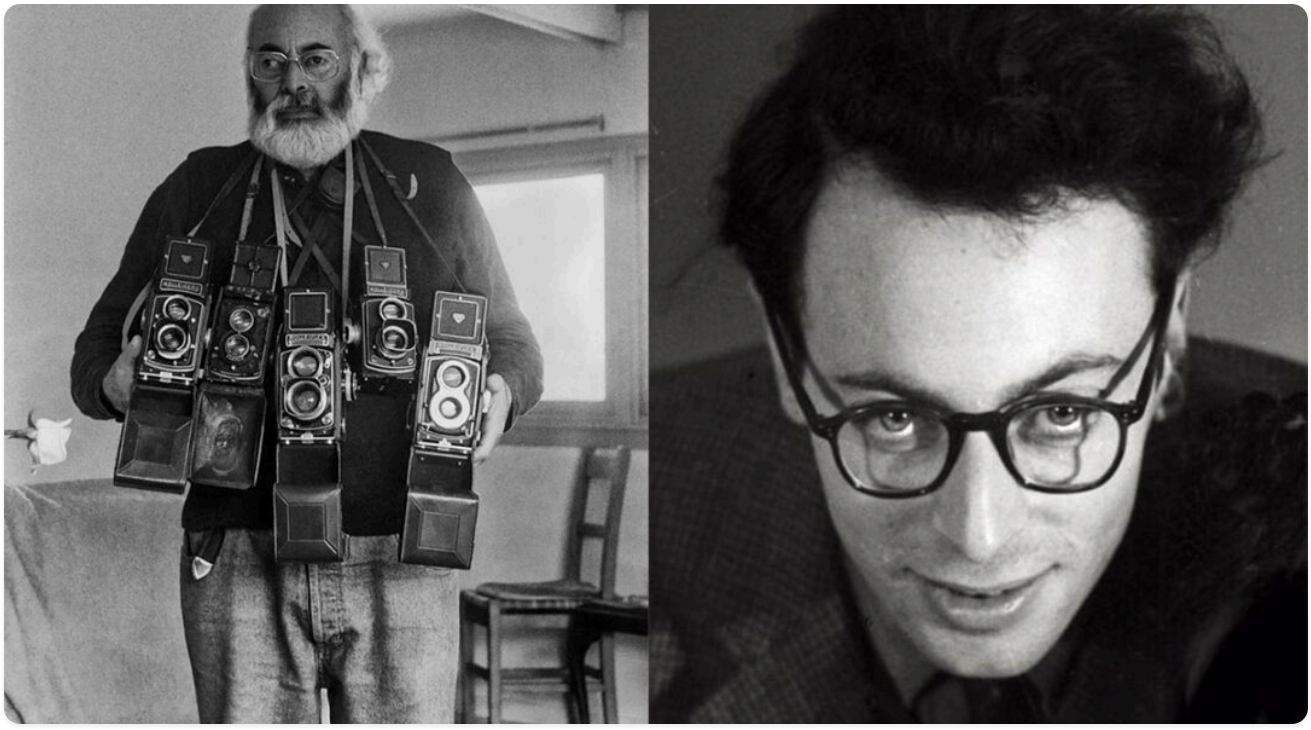
In an interview near the end of his life, Adolfo Kaminsky said:

"All humans are equal, whatever their origins, their beliefs, their skin color. There are no superiors. No inferiors."

Adolfo Kaminsky, 2015 interview

Write a sustained reflection (one page) on the following question: Kaminsky lived through the Holocaust, witnessed the systematic denial of this principle at an industrial scale, and spent decades protecting it through illegal means, including forging documents for armed liberation movements, some of which used violence. Does "all humans are equal" apply to everyone in this story, including the perpetrators he worked against and the fighters he worked alongside? Is this statement an act of hope, an act of grief, an act of defiance, or something else? And what does it ask of us now, more than eighty years later?

There is no single right answer. The goal is to think rigorously and honestly about whether this principle holds under the weight of its own history.



Kaminsky in Le Marais, Paris. This is the Jewish quarter where he lived the rest of his life, until his death in January 2023.

CLOSING CONSOLIDATION (3–5 MINUTES AFTER PAIRED SHARE)

Teacher elicitation: "Name a position from elsewhere in the room. It must be a position that is not your own and not your partner's, one you can articulate clearly and still disagree with. Who in this room took a position you can defend in their voice?"

Call on 2–3 students. Each names a position they heard, articulates it in good faith, and then names where their own position diverges. The natural pole structure in Ep.1: some students will land closer to a position that Kaminsky's "all humans are equal" is an act of defiant hope *despite* what he witnessed; others will land closer to a position that the statement is unsustainable in the face of the post-war record (the perpetrators, the armed liberation movements Kaminsky later forged for, the unresolved arithmetic of who lived and who did not). A third axis is what Kaminsky's decades of silence after the war say about the position of the rescuer in history. *Do not resolve.* Close on the divergence; refuse the synthesis. Sample close: *"The room contains positions that cannot be reconciled. Kaminsky himself held a statement of universal equality and a history of breaking the law in service of it. Holding that contradiction, instead of forcing it into agreement, is what an adult intellectual response to this material looks like."* (See *About the Series · Closing Consolidation pattern*.)

“All humans are equal, whatever their origins, their beliefs, their skin color. There are no superiors. No inferiors.”

Adolfo Kaminsky (1925–2023)

GOING DEEPER

Extension Activities

These activities are designed for students who want to go further in research, in creative production, or in interdisciplinary analysis. They are suitable for homework, independent projects, or honors-level coursework.



Kaminsky's forged documents, official stamps, and tools of the trade

GRADES 11–12

Interdisciplinary Essay: The Chemistry of Conscience

Kaminsky's discovery was chemical before it was moral. He learned that lactic acid found in ordinary sour milk could dissolve the iron gall ink used in official French government documents. This was not obvious: iron gall ink was chosen precisely for its permanence and forgery-resistance. The connection between chemistry and rescue was an accident of profession turned into a weapon of survival.



The chemistry of rescue, lactic acid dissolving iron gall ink

Write a 600–800 word interdisciplinary essay that does the following:

1. **Explain the chemistry:** What is lactic acid? What is iron gall ink? Why does one dissolve the other? Use at least one credible scientific source.
2. **Trace the discovery:** How did Kaminsky come to understand this? What was his prior training, and how did the dye shop prepare him for forgery in ways he could not have anticipated?
3. **Analyze the moral application:** What does it mean that a scientific fact, neutral, indifferent, and discovered by accident, was turned to moral purpose? Does this change how we think about the relationship between knowledge and ethics?

4. **Conclude with a claim:** The same chemistry that could save a life could also erase evidence of what was done. What does it reveal about moral agency that the instrument of rescue and the instrument of destruction are the same? Make an argument about what Kaminsky's use of chemistry tells us about the relationship between knowledge and responsibility.

Your essay should include a works cited section. Minimum two sources: one scientific, one historical.

CREATIVE PRODUCTION · CROSS-BAND

Make Your Own Microstory

A short original work, modeled on the craft principles of the microshort series, in *any* medium. The constraints are the lesson; the medium is the student's choice. The activity invites students into the same authorial position the makers of *The Forger* occupied: one person, one act, hard compression, anchored to a real artifact, and the discipline of letting numbers carry weight that adjectives cannot.

SUBJECT ANCHOR FOR THIS EPISODE

Ordinary skill, extraordinary use

The natural subject for an episode about Adolfo Kaminsky is any historical or contemporary person whose ordinary professional skill (forgery, chemistry, photography, printing, translation, accounting, cooking, sewing, plumbing, driving) was turned to a moral purpose at personal cost. Suggested fields:

- Other Holocaust-era rescuers whose work depended on professional craft, such as Chiune Sugihara (Japanese consul, visa-issuing diplomacy), Aristides de Sousa Mendes (Portuguese diplomat), Varian Fry (American journalist running an escape network in Marseille), Hannah Senesh (poet-turned-paratrooper), and the OSE (Œuvre de secours aux enfants, the Jewish children's aid society Kaminsky worked with).
- People in other times whose ordinary skill carried extraordinary weight include an Underground Railroad station-master who was a blacksmith, a Tiananmen "Tank Man" photographer (Stuart Franklin), a doctor running an underground clinic for undocumented patients, and anyone whose day job became a moral act.
- A person from the student's own family or community whose ordinary work carried someone else through a hard time.

The teacher approves the subject before students begin, to ensure the historical claims are defensible.

THE CONSTRAINTS THAT APPLY TO EVERY MEDIUM

1. **One named person at the center.** Not "the French Resistance," not "rescuers," not "the Holocaust." *One specific person*, named, whose story you can stand inside. Build outward from them.
2. **Hook-first.** Your first sentence (or first shot, or first line, or first panel) must commit. *The Forger*'s arithmetic-of-conscience opening (*"If I sleep for one hour, thirty people will die"*) tells the entire story before the story begins. Your hook must do something equivalent. No throat-clearing, no biographical preamble.
3. **Hard compression.** Pick your medium; live inside its cap (see options below). The cap is not a target. It is a wall. Cutting is part of the work.
4. **One primary-source anchor.** Your work must reference, describe, depict, or quote *one specific verifiable historical artifact*, such as a photograph, a document, a recorded testimony, or a physical object, and credit its source (institution, accession number where known).
5. **No invented dialogue from the dead.** If a historical figure's words are not documented, you do not put words in their mouth. You may describe what they did; you may not author what they said.
6. **If numbers serve, use them honestly.** Kaminsky's arithmetic worked because the numbers were real (300 children, 3 documents each, every hour of sleep). If your subject can be told through honest numbers, use them; if not, do not invent them. Numbers carry the weight of testimony only when they bear the weight of fact.

PICK A MEDIUM

Any of the following count. Pick the one that fits your strengths and the story.

- A **short film or video** may run up to **90 seconds**.
- A **flash fiction or micro-essay** may run up to **250 words**.
- A **poem** may take any form and run up to **20 lines**.
- A **spoken-word or audio piece** may run up to **90 seconds**.
- A **podcast cut** may run up to **2 minutes**; one voice, no edits to dialogue.
- A **comic or illustrated sequence** may run up to **6 panels** on a single page.
- A **photo essay** may include up to **5 images** drawn from existing public archives (Yad Vashem, USHMM, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, etc.), ethically captioned.
- A **song lyric** should be one verse and chorus; melody optional but credited if used.
- A **graphic memoir page** should be one page.

GRADES 11–12 · WHAT TO SUBMIT ON TOP OF THE WORK

Along with your microstory, submit a **400–500 word artist's statement** that engages:

1. Explain your representational choices. That means what you decided to show or say, and what you decided to *withhold*. The 9–10 Analyze tab notes the absence of survivors' voices in *The Forger*; engage that observation explicitly. What does *your* work include or exclude, and on what grounds?
2. Defend your medium choice against at least one plausible alternative medium for the same subject.
3. How (if at all) you used numbers, names, or specific historical detail. Kaminsky's "arithmetic of conscience" worked because the math was honest. If your work uses numbers, defend their accuracy; if not, defend the alternative.
4. What it would mean for your work to fail. Name the specific way your piece could go wrong, such as sentimentality, hagiography, historical inaccuracy, or the saintly-rescuer problem the 11–12 Historiographic Questions raise. Then name the move you made to guard against it.

A NOTE FOR THE TEACHER

This is an authentic assessment, not a craft exercise. The goal is not to produce polished work. The goal is for students to occupy, even briefly, the position the makers of *The Forger* occupied: choosing what to show, what to withhold, what to compress, what to credit. Imperfect work in the right register is more valuable than polished work in the wrong one. Grade for fidelity to the constraints, the specificity of the named subject, and the seriousness of the craft defense / artist's statement, rather than for technical polish in the chosen medium.

GO DEEPER

Video Resources

Documentaries exploring Kaminsky's story in depth.



NYT Documentary

Adolfo Kaminsky, A Forger's Life



60 Minutes

Adolfo Kaminsky, The Forger Who Saved Thousands

FOR EDUCATORS

Facilitation Notes

Real classrooms run faster or slower than the plan predicts. Real students respond at unpredictable intensities. The branches and protocols below are the contingency moves that keep the lesson coherent under either condition. They also let a colleague pick up this plan cold without improvising under pressure.

PLAN A FOR ONE STUDENT VISIBLY AFFECTED

Continue the lesson; let the student set their own pace. Make a quiet pass-by during the next student-led activity (paired share, individual writing). After class, brief individual check-in: *"How are you doing? You don't have to talk about the material. Just tell me you're okay. If you need someone, here's [counselor name]."*

PLAN B FOR MULTIPLE STUDENTS AFFECTED

Substitute the next paired-share or group discussion with silent journaling. Same prompt, different mode. Bring the room back together for the affective consolidation. If the room has not landed by the end of the period, save the cognitive close for the next session; never force closure on a room that hasn't landed.

TIME BRANCHES

If discussion is moving fast and you have ten extra minutes: extend the MEAL paragraph with a paired second-pass on the "ordinary expertise, extraordinary use" question. What other ordinary skills could become moral instruments under different conditions?

If discussion is stalling and you are ten minutes behind: cut the comparative-medium analysis (11–12) or shorten the MEAL paragraph from 150–200 to 100 words; the closing reflection survives translation.

HOLOCAUST-FATIGUE NOTE

Most students arrive having heard *about* Holocaust rescuers in the abstract. The unfamiliar angle this microshort offers is the *arithmetic*. This is the explicit, named, numerical trade-off between a forger's sleep and a child's death. That specificity is the entry the lesson trades on.

SUGGESTED COLLABORATION FORMATS FOR THIS EPISODE

Where each collaboration format fits in this lesson

The universal three-step Discussion Structure (silent writing → paired share → full-class) lives at the top of the Analyze tab. Below: specific structured formats and where each one earns its place in *this* episode. Full pedagogical treatment of each pattern lives in About the Series · Discussion & Collaboration Patterns.

Think-Pair-Share

Use during Analyze. 2–3 minutes per pair on a single question. The most-useful prompt for this episode at 9–10 is the "numbers rather than names" question (why does the film build with the 300/3/900 arithmetic instead of named children?); at 11–12, the rescue-saintliness question (whether Kaminsky's life of forgery for liberation movements after WWII complicates the rescue narrative the film offers).

Jigsaw *(cross-episode, once 2+ episodes have been taught)*

Most powerful pairings for *The Forger*: **Ep. 1 (The Forger) × Ep. 2 (The Boxer)**, where students compare resistance under different conditions. Kaminsky chose the work freely; Salamo was forced into it. What does "resistance" mean when the form of action is voluntary craft versus forced participation? Alternative pairing: **Ep. 1 × Ep. 3 (Four Photographs)**, on what documentation does that other forms of resistance cannot. Kaminsky's documents created identities to save lives; Errera's photographs created evidence to prevent denial.

Socratic Seminar *(11–12 only)*

Use for the ethics-of-forgery and rescue-saintliness debate in the 11–12 Analyze tab. Students prepare positions in writing first (per the Discussion Structure scaffold). Inner-circle of 6–8 students discusses; outer circle observes and writes. Switch halfway. Particularly powerful when paired with the Cross-Discipline chemistry question: *can a chemical fact be morally neutral?*

Gallery Walk

Use for the Create-tab outputs, such as the 7–8 Letter Writing / Personal Narrative outputs, the 9–10 MEAL paragraphs on Kaminsky's refusal of payment, or the 11–12 Comparative Medium Analysis essays. Post student work around the room; students circulate silently with sticky notes, leaving one substantive question per peer. Particularly powerful for *The Forger* because the Letter Writing outputs frequently reveal how differently students imagine the moral interior of the person Kaminsky was.

ANTI-SURFACE ENGINEERING

How this lesson engineers past surface engagement

Short-form media risks shallow consumption: students who are accustomed to 90-second content may extract the surface and exit. This lesson plan engineers against that risk through three deliberate moves, all already built into the structure:

1. **Individual written response before any verbal discussion.** See the Discussion Structure card at the top of the Analyze tab. Quiet students need the floor; loud students need the brake. Both come from silent writing.
2. **The Investigate Further question at the end of Analyze.** Each grade band has a question the film deliberately does not answer. For this episode, that means a specific rescued child or family (7–8), the historiographic basis of the 14,000-lives figure (9–10), and a Just-War application to one of Kaminsky's post-WWII forgery operations (11–12). Students leave the room with a research debt to themselves; the depth happens after class.
3. **Closing Consolidation on divergence.** See the Reflect tab. The room ends not on agreement but on what could not be resolved. The discipline of staying with the unresolved is itself the anti-surface move.

Full pattern in About the Series · Anti-Surface Engineering.

FOR EDUCATORS

Materials & Primary Sources

Every primary material below is locatable in under ten minutes via the link or reference provided. Sources draw from at least two of the field’s trusted institutions per the Touro practitioner-guide standard.

- **USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia.** encyclopedia.ushmm.org

  Reference for the French Resistance, the Vichy regime, and Holocaust-era identity-document practices.
- **USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.** sfi.usc.edu · iwitness.usc.edu

  Source archive for the "hidden child" testimony excerpt cited in Step 1. The IWitness platform offers full classroom-ready survivor video with curated educator scaffolding.
- **Yad Vashem · The Righteous Among the Nations.** yadvashem.org/righteous

  Background and statistics on rescuers; essential context for the rescue caveat in the Lesson Foundation.
- **Sarah Kaminsky, *A Forger's Life* (2009).**

  The biographical source for the memoir excerpts cited in this plan; available in English translation.
- **Project Witness microshort · *The Forger*.**

  The 90-second film at the center of this lesson.

CLOSING TEACHER FRAMING

Contemporary Continuity

The forgery network Kaminsky belonged to has direct contemporary parallels in documentation work for refugees fleeing persecution today. The same skills, the same legal-vs-moral question, and the same anonymous risk are still at stake. This is not a closed historical chapter.

APPENDIX

Full Standards Alignment

APPENDIX A

Common Core ELA Standards

Common Core ELA · Grades 7–8

CODE	STANDARD DESCRIPTION
RI.7.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RI.7.2	Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
RI.7.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes their position from others.
W.7.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
SL.7.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Common Core ELA · Grades 9–10

CODE	STANDARD DESCRIPTION
RI.9-10.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RI.9-10.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
RI.9-10.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
W.9-10.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
SL.9-10.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own

	clearly and persuasively.

Common Core ELA · Grades 11–12

CODE	STANDARD DESCRIPTION
RI.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including where the text leaves matters uncertain.
RI.11-12.5	Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
RI.11-12.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.
W.11-12.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
W.11-12.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
SL.11-12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

APPENDIX B

NYS Next Generation Learning Standards (ELA)

In 2017, New York State adopted the *Next Generation Learning Standards*, replacing its prior adoption of the Common Core State Standards. NY classrooms (including the 10th-grade Global Studies sections that fold this lesson into their existing curriculum) cite NGLS, not CCSS, in their pacing documents. The codes below are the NGLS equivalents most directly engaged by this lesson.

Grades 7–8

CODE	STANDARD DESCRIPTION

7R1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
7R2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. *(Engaged by tracking how the arithmetic of conscience develops from opening to close.)*
7R6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.
7W2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content (Letter Writing, Personal Narrative, or "Kaminsky at 3 AM" descriptive writing).
7SL1	Engage effectively in collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade-level topics, texts, and issues.

Grades 9–10

CODE	STANDARD DESCRIPTION
9-10R1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
9-10R3	**Analyze how an author unfolds an analysis or argument, including the sequence, the introduction and development of ideas, and the connections that exist.** *(Centrally engaged by the film's chronological development of Kaminsky's story, namely the unfolding from skill, to commitment, to arithmetic, to consequence.)*
9-10R5	Analyze in detail how an author's intent influences particular sentences, paragraphs, or sections of a text. *(Engaged by Hook Analysis, which treats the arithmetic-of-conscience sentence as a deliberate author choice.)*
9-10R6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose and analyze how rhetoric advances that point of view.
9-10R7	Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in print, multimedia, photograph), determining which details are emphasized.
9-10W1	Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant, sufficient evidence (MEAL paragraph, Create tab).
9-10W4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
9-10SL1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade-level topics.

Grades 11–12

CODE	STANDARD DESCRIPTION
11-12R1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. *(Engaged by historiographic questions about Kaminsky's later forgery work for armed liberation movements, including what the film includes and what it leaves uncertain.)*
11-12R3	Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events, including how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop. *(Engaged by tracing how a dye-shop apprenticeship, a chemical fact about lactic acid, and the architecture of occupied Paris interact to make rescue possible.)*
11-12R5	Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in their exposition or argument. *(Engaged by the Comparative Medium Analysis, which weighs memoir's intimate prose against the film's 90-second compression.)*
11-12R6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text. *(Engaged by Hook Analysis as rhetorical exordium, reading the arithmetic of conscience as Burke's "identification by quantification.")*
11-12R7	Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats in order to address a question or solve a problem. *(Engaged by the Chemistry of Conscience essay synthesizing scientific and historical sources.)*
11-12W1	Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant, sufficient evidence (Comparative Medium Analysis, Ethics-of-Forgery essay).
11-12W2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas (Chemistry of Conscience interdisciplinary essay, Extensions tab).
11-12SL1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, including seminar-style discussions, on grade-level topics.

Source: New York State Education Department, Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards (2017; implementation 2020–21).

APPENDIX C

NYS Social Studies Framework

The NYS Social Studies Framework is the official framework governing 10th-grade Global History & Geography II in New York State. The Key Ideas below are the Framework's curriculum-organizing units; the Conceptual Understandings (sub-codes) drill down to specific content; the Social Studies Practices are the universal skills students develop across the Framework. This lesson engages the codes below directly. *(Reviewer gift: Jessica Como, 10th-Grade Global History & Geography, cited 10.5 and 10.10 as the natural anchors. The full per-Key-Idea breakdown below extends her starting point to the Conceptual Understandings each Key Idea contains and the Social Studies Practices the lesson exercises.)*

Key Ideas & Conceptual Understandings

CODE	STANDARD DESCRIPTION & HOW THIS LESSON ENGAGES IT
10.5	**Unresolved Global Conflict (1914–1945) · World War II.** Key Idea. The primary anchor for this lesson; Kaminsky's forgery operation in occupied France (1942–44) sits within the WWII period the Key Idea covers, and the Vichy-collaborationist context engages the wider European political architecture of the war.
10.5b	**Total war and the home front.** The Nazi-Vichy administrative state, including the *Carte d'Identité* system, the religion-marking on identity papers, and the deportation infrastructure, is a primary example of the totalizing reach of WWII into civilian populations. Kaminsky's chemistry (lactic acid dissolving iron gall ink) is itself a response to the bureaucratic apparatus of identification.
10.5c	**The Holocaust.** The systematic murder of European Jewry, including the deportations from France, the operation of the camp system, and the rescue networks that operated in resistance, is the central content of this episode. Kaminsky's story specifically engages the question of *rescue* as a category of Holocaust response, alongside resistance and refuge.
10.5d	**Post-war reorganization.** Kaminsky's continued forgery work after WWII for anti-colonial and liberation movements, documented in 11–12 Historiographic Questions, engages the post-war reorganization of global politics and the question of how the moral logic of WWII rescue extends (or does not) into the wars that followed.
10.10	**Human Rights Violations (Post-1945 to Present).** Key Idea. The legacy anchor for this lesson; the Holocaust is the originating case for the post-war human-rights infrastructure, and Kaminsky's late-life statement, *"All humans are equal, whatever their origins, their beliefs, their skin color,"* is itself an articulation of that infrastructure's founding principle.
10.10a	**Crimes against humanity.** The Vichy administrative apparatus that produced the religion-stamped identity papers is itself a documented instance of state participation in crimes against humanity. Kaminsky's response, using documents to undo the documents, is the case study for how individuals resist state participation in atrocity.
10.10c	**International response and prevention.** The work of institutional memory engaged throughout the lesson (Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations archive, the USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia, the OSE archives, the mahJ exhibition) is the ongoing infrastructure that exists to ensure rescue is documented as part of the response, alongside the documentation of the violations.

Social Studies Practices

PRACTICE	DESCRIPTION & HOW THIS LESSON ENGAGES IT
A	**Gathering, Interpreting, and Using Evidence.** Engaged through the actual *Carte d'Identité* documents (Wikimedia / USHMM), Kaminsky's recorded testimony, the memoir *A Forger's Life* by Sarah Kaminsky, and the institutional records of Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations archive. Students distinguish what the historical record verifies (the existence of the forgery operation, the chemistry, the wartime context) from what rests on Kaminsky's own account (the specific 14,000 figure).
B	**Chronological Reasoning and Causation.** Engaged by tracing the chain: Vichy collaboration (1940) → anti-Jewish laws and deportations (1941–44) → Kaminsky's recruitment by the resistance (1942) → the forgery operation through Liberation (1944) → post-war life and continued forgery work for liberation movements → the 2009 publication of Sarah Kaminsky's memoir and the global recognition that followed Kaminsky's 2023 death.
C	**Comparison and Contextualization.** Engaged by comparing rescue (Kaminsky's forgery for the OSE) to other forms of Holocaust-era resistance and survival; comparing Kaminsky's wartime forgery (universally accepted as morally required) to his post-war forgery for armed liberation movements (contested ethically). Students also engage the wider international response by examining other documented rescuers in Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations archive.
F	**Civic Participation.** Engaged centrally by the lesson's Driving Question, *what does responsibility for someone else's life look like when no one is watching?*, and by the Stinger Question at 11–12, which asks students to apply the Just War tradition (or another defensible ethical framework) to one of Kaminsky's post-war forgery operations.

Source: New York State Education Department, K–12 Social Studies Framework · Global History & Geography II (Grade 10). Per the Framework, the Key Ideas and Conceptual Understandings are the content spine and the Social Studies Practices are the universal skills students develop across them.

APPENDIX D

C3 Framework for Social Studies

CODE	STANDARD DESCRIPTION
D2.His.1	Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.
D2.His.3	Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of those individuals and groups is determined.

D2.His.14	Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.
D2.His.16	Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.
D4.1	Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.
D4.6	Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems and to analyze potential responses.

APPENDIX E

Florida B.E.S.T. Standards

CODE	STANDARD DESCRIPTION
ELA.x.R.2.1	Explain how individual text sections and/or features convey meaning (where *x* = grade band: 7, 910, or 1112).
ELA.x.R.3.2	Analyze how an author's choices in text structure, narration, and point of view create meaning.
ELA.x.C.1.3	Write and support a claim using logical reasoning, relevant evidence from sources, elaboration, and a concluding statement.
SS.912.W.7.6	Describe the causes, events, and effects of the Holocaust, including its impact on European Jewish communities and the Allied and Axis powers' responses.

APPENDIX F

Texas TEKS

CODE	STANDARD DESCRIPTION
ELAR x.6(A)	Analyze how authors use language, including point of view, to achieve specific purposes and produce specific effects (where *x* = grade level: 7, 9, or 11).

ELAR x.8(A)	Analyze the author's purpose and message within a text and how the author responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
ELAR x.10(A)	Write an informational essay that synthesizes information from multiple sources (Grades 7–8).
WH.15(A-D)	World History: Analyze the causes and events of World War II, including the Holocaust, its causes, the Allied and Axis powers' responses, and its lasting historical impact.

APPENDIX G

California History-Social Science Framework

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
10.8.1–10.8.6	Students analyze the causes and consequences of World War II, including the persecution of European Jews and others, the Allied response, liberation, and the Nuremberg Trials.
11.7	Students analyze America's participation in World War II, including the ideological and strategic context of Allied military campaigns in Europe and the Pacific.
7.10	Students analyze the causes and effects of significant political and cultural developments in the medieval and early modern period. This provides historical context for European national identity and governance (Grades 7–8 context).

APPENDIX H

CASEL SEL Competencies

This lesson builds **self-awareness** through personal reflection on moral choices and the limits of individual endurance. It develops **social awareness** through empathy and perspective-taking with historical figures who acted under extreme pressure. **Responsible decision-making** is exercised through analysis of ethical dilemmas, such as Kaminsky's arithmetic of conscience, the weight of refusing payment, and the choice to continue forging after liberation. Collaborative discussion activities, especially the sentence frame reflection and small-group analysis, develop **relationship skills**, including active listening, turn-taking, and the ability to build productively on others' ideas. These competencies align to all four CASEL core areas and are activated across every grade band.

DASA · Dignity for All Students Act (New York State)

This lesson plan directly supports the goals of New York State's Dignity for All Students Act by engaging students in anti-bias education through the study of historical injustice and moral response. The lesson asks students to examine how prejudice, discrimination, and dehumanization operate at a systemic level and how individuals can resist those systems through courage, skill, and solidarity. The activities develop students' capacity for empathy, critical thinking, and moral reasoning: core competencies for building inclusive school and community environments.

APPENDIX I

State Holocaust Education Mandates

> This lesson plan satisfies Holocaust education mandates in 25+ states including New York, Florida, California, Illinois, New Jersey, Connecticut, Michigan, Oregon, Colorado, Rhode Island, Kentucky, and Maine. As the number of states with Holocaust and genocide education requirements continues to grow, this lesson is designed to meet the instructional intent of those mandates: that students learn not only the historical facts of the Holocaust, but also the moral dimensions of resistance, rescue, and the choices available to individuals within genocidal systems.

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Project Witness is a nonprofit Holocaust education initiative dedicated to preserving memory through short-form documentary storytelling.

Microshort Stories lesson plans are developed in consultation with Holocaust educators and aligned to national and state curriculum standards.

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