



UK-JHF Lesson

University of Kentucky-Jewish Heritage Fund
Holocaust Education Initiative

Lesson Title:

Snapshots in the Life and Power of
Martin Himler

Lesson Overview

Suggested Grade Level	9th-12th
Time Required	90 minutes/ 1-2 45 to 50 minute class periods
Subject	U.S. History
Relevant Courses	US History, World History, Kentucky History, Human Geography, English
Kentucky Curriculum Standard(s) Addressed	<p>HS.UH.CH.1: Examine the ways diverse groups viewed themselves and contributed to the identity of the United States in the world from 1877-present</p> <p>HS.G.MM.1: Analyze how cultural, economic and environmental factors contribute to migration patterns and population distribution at multiple scales.</p> <p>HS.UH.CE.5: Evaluate the ways in which groups facing discrimination worked to achieve expansion of rights and liberties from 1877-present.</p>
Summary/Rationale	<p>This lesson features numerous excerpts from Martin Himler's autobiography, <i>The Making of an American: The Autobiography of a Hungarian Immigrant, Appalachian Entrepreneur, and OSS Officer</i>. The autobiography begins with Himler's early life in Hungary and covers his immigration to the United States in 1907; the various jobs he took on to establish himself; his founding of Himler Coal Company and Himlerville in Martin County, KY; and his work for the OSS in the latter years of World War II. Chronologically, the autobiography does not extend past 1946. Additional primary sources are included in the form of newspaper articles, as well as 1920s era photographs made accessible as part of the George Gunnoe Papers housed at Marshall University.</p>
Featured Materials/Content	<p>Day 1 of the lesson includes a Pear Deck, which provides an overview of Himler's life to the point of his founding Himlerville, and a handout for an exercise that familiarizes students with the thinking routine that guides student learning on Day 2.</p> <p>Day 2 of the lesson includes the 8 primary sources described above, each formatted as an individual handout. Day 2 of the lesson also includes additional resources educators may use depending on if they would like the lesson to conclude with a written assessment or if they would prefer it to conclude with a whole class discussion.</p> <p>All of these resources are included in the "Links to Necessary Resources and Handouts" section of the lesson plan below.</p>

Essential Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who was Martin Himler and how does his story relate to Kentucky and to the Holocaust? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do different moments in his lifetime help us to think about power? b. How can we place Himler’s story within the wider context of the Holocaust? c. Students will also likely generate additional supporting questions of their own as they examine primary sources on Day 2.
Learning Outcomes	<p><i>After this lesson, students will be able to . . .</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and explain connections between the personal story of Martin Himler, Kentucky history, and the history of the Holocaust. • Think critically and form questions related to power and the ways in which it operates. • Create either a piece of reflective writing or participate in both small-and-whole group discussions that synthesize their learning.
Teacher Planning and Research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First, consider how this lesson could best be connected to your existing curriculum. If you are adding this lesson to your existing Holocaust unit, the lesson has potential to work well either toward the beginning of your unit, as you discuss immigration and barriers to immigration, or toward the end of it, as you draw students’ attention toward efforts to bring Nazis to justice. 2. Consider if you would like to purchase a copy of The Making of an American: The Autobiography of a Hungarian Immigrant, Appalachian Entrepreneur, and OSS Officer. By no means is the book necessary for this lesson, but it is a useful text, especially if you are interested in localizing the history of the Holocaust for your students by emphasizing Kentucky connections. 3. Decide on which manner of assessment works best for your circumstances. This lesson identifies two final assessment options: either a written reflection or a whole-group discussion (either option follows a period of time devoted to small group discussions). 4. If need be, familiarize yourself with Pear Deck and ensure that it is connected with your Google Account. Day 1 of this lesson utilizes a Pear Deck. If you prefer, you could use it as Google Slides, although that alters the interactive nature of the presentation. Specifically, Slides 1, 4, 7, 11, 16, 22, and 26 were created with student interaction in mind. If you are comfortable using Pear Deck, please feel free to edit these slides as needed to best suit your own purposes. Note: If your students have never used Pear Deck before, be prepared to answer any basic questions they may have regarding the platform. That said, joining a Pear Deck works very similarly to joining other popular online educational tools (Kahoot, Gimkit, etc.). Still, it may be worth it

	<p>to try out Pear Deck with your students prior to teaching this lesson to minimize any technical difficulties.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Familiarize yourself with the thinking routine utilized during Day 2 of the lesson. Power, Possibilities, Me is an inquiry-based thinking routine developed by JusticexDesign, an educational project with connections to Harvard's Project Zero. The thinking routine is relatively straightforward, but educators should have a basic grasp of how it works prior to teaching the lesson to ensure that the lesson runs smoothly. 6. Review the overall instructional sequence and the handouts included as part of this lesson. 7. Decide student configurations for the lesson. The lesson was created with pairs or small groups in mind, but whatever configuration you decide upon, choose it ahead of time to ensure that the lesson stays on schedule. 8. Ensure that you make enough copies of all handouts for both Days 1 and 2 of the lesson. Do note that you have some flexibility on Day 2 that likely impacts how many copies you will need. 9. Make any adjustments to the lesson as needed. You know your students and your circumstances best, so feel free to adapt this lesson as needed so that it works best for you. This includes modifying any suggested time limits for activities included in the instructional sequence below.
Lesson Created By	<p>Patrick Hall, Hazard High School <i>Hazard Independent Schools</i></p>

During the Lesson

Instructional Sequence

DAY 1: Martin Himler's Story and the Laying the Groundwork for Day 2

1. **Ensure that the [Pear Deck](#) is ready for students to join as they enter class.** The first slide of the Pear Deck functions as a Bell Ringer. Students must correctly identify three locations relevant to Martin Himler's life (New York City, Kentucky, and Mátraverebély, Hungary) by dragging and dropping icons on a map. Allow students 2-3 minutes to complete the Bell Ringer, then spend another ~2 minutes reviewing student answers. While many students will likely be able to approximately locate New York City and Kentucky, it is likely that few will be able to locate Mátraverebély on their own. (~5 minutes)
2. **Introduce the topic of today's class on Slide 2.** What you say here will vary depending on how you are integrating the lesson into the class, but consider including the following basic information: that Himler was a Hungarian Jew who immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s, eventually settled in Kentucky, and worked for the United States Office of Strategic Services during World War II. As you wrap up your introduction, emphasize to students to pay close attention to the quote on the following slide. (~2 minutes)
3. **On Slide 3, read the excerpt from Himler's autobiography aloud.** You may even consider reading it aloud twice, to ensure that students have enough time to begin processing it. This excerpt does a lot of work early on in the lesson in terms of introducing students to several basic facts about Himler: he was at one point destitute, but he dreamt big dreams; he alludes to the construction of Himlerville, which he identifies as both a joy and a regret; and he mentions bathrooms twice, which gestures to how much he grew to care for his miners. (~2 minutes)
4. **Segue to Slide 4, provide students with time to answer the prompt and as responses begin to populate on Pear Deck, call attention to individual responses as needed.** In some cases, you may encourage students to verbally expand on their written answers. They may resonate with various pieces of the excerpt. Some may wonder at how Himler was able to go from being penniless to having enough funds to start a mine, others may question his apparent mixed feelings toward Himlerville, while others may ask why he mentions homes with bathrooms twice. All are excellent observations that you can use to "hook" your students into Himler's story. (~5 minutes)
5. **Continue through the remainder of the Pear Deck, engaging with students at your discretion.** (~20 minutes)
 - a. Additional planned moments for student engagement are on Slides 7, 11, 16, 22, and 26. Feel free to mix it up with these by spending as much or as little time as you feel necessary on each individual moment; different groups will likely resonate with different moments. Some additional suggestions for how you might approach these moments can be found in the speaker notes on those slides.

- b. Embrace spontaneous moments of student engagement as they occur. Students may resonate with a particular part of Himler's story or with some of the images of Himlerville shown on Slides 23 through 25.
 - c. **Try to wrap the presentation with at least 15 minutes of class time remaining.** The presentation intentionally concludes with one slide that discusses the decline of Himlerville and another that contains an image of Beauty, KY, the community that now exists where Himlerville once stood. As you wrap up, be sure to note to your students that the presentation does not capture the totality of his life.
6. **When you reach the final slide of the presentation (a duplicate of Slide 3), distribute the handout "[Himler's Dream Town](#)" to students. As you do, have students group up in either pairs or small groups. (2~3 minutes)**
- a. Inform students that they will be working with a partner or in small groups to revisit and think critically about the excerpt you read aloud toward the beginning of class.
7. **After you have distributed the handout, provide students with a brief explanation of what they will be doing: discussing and analyzing the excerpt in the context of power. (2~3 minutes)**
- a. Draw specific attention to the different types of power outlined on the first page of the handout so that students are made fully aware of how broadly this exercise approaches power.
8. **As per the handout, have students first discuss the excerpt with their partners or small groups, then have them complete the three questions on the second page of the handout. (10~12 minutes)**
- a. There should be enough class time remaining for students to have at least a 5-7 minute conversation with their partners/groups. As students converse, circulate among the classroom and chime in to their conversations as you see fit. If one particular pairing or group of students cannot see a particular type of power in the excerpt, you may be able to reframe the excerpt in such a way that allows them to do so.
 - b. As students converse, keep an eye out for pairings or groups of students who appear largely silent. These students may just need a little bit of extra help to get started. If you momentarily join them, consider drawing their attention to particular words, phrases, or even feelings Himler deploys in specific moments of the excerpt and ask them if those words/phrases/feelings make them think of a particular type of power.
 - c. After students have spent a sufficient length of time discussing the excerpt with each other, direct them to answer the questions on the second sheet of handout. How long students will need to complete these questions will likely vary from class to class, but as a general rule, ~5 minutes ought to be sufficient, particularly if students have participated well in their partner/group discussions.
9. **Collect students' handouts as they leave class and review them prior to tomorrow's class to gain a sense of which types of power they feel are most visible in the excerpt.**
- a. Alternatively, you may also instruct students to hang on to these handouts and to bring them to class tomorrow.

DAY 2: Snapshots in the Life and Power of Martin Himler

10. **Begin class by informing students that you will be revisiting the life of Martin Himler today.** You may consider adding that while yesterday's excerpt was from a specific point in his life, as he was still working to establish himself in the United States, today's class will focus on "snapshots" or moments across the entirety of his life. As students did toward the end of yesterday's class, they will be analyzing these moments in Himler's life within a context of power.
 - a. **Note:** Broadly speaking, today's lesson can be roughly divided into two halves, where students will be examining primary sources for the first half of class and then writing a reflection or participating in a whole group discussion based on their examinations in the second half of class.
11. **Briefly review power with your students. (~5 minutes)**
 - a. You may simply ask your students "What is power?" and have a brief whole group discussion. Another option would be writing "What is power?" on your board or projecting it on your screen and having students consider the question as a bell ringer as they come into class.
 - b. This review is an opportunity to refresh students on the different types of power they learned about in the latter half of yesterday's class.
 - c. By the end of this, students should have a collective working definition of power, even if that definition largely consists of the types of power they began learning about yesterday.
12. **Divide students up into pairs or small groups. (2~3 minutes)**
 - a. These may be the same pairings/groups as yesterday, if you'd like, or they could be different as well.
13. **Distribute Sources A-H among your students. (2~3 minutes)**
 - a. Depending on the experience you want students to have with these sources, you have several options for how you might distribute them. If you want to enable a pair or group to dive deeply into the sources, consider handing each group 1-3 sources. If you wish to give each pair or group the freedom to resonate with whichever snapshots they find most meaningful, then consider distributing a packets of all eight sources to each pair or group.
 - b. Keep in mind that different sources will need different lengths of time for students to consider. While none of the sources are particularly long, some are longer than others.
 - c. As you distribute the sources, let students know that each source has three questions attached to it to help guide their thinking and discussions.
 - d. This is also a good point to inform students that they should prepare to share what they write or discuss with the whole group.
14. **Give students about 20 minutes to read and discuss the sources amongst themselves. (~20 minutes)**
 - a. Feel free to adjust this time limit based on what you think will work best for your students; whatever you decide, just make sure that you leave yourself enough time to complete the task you assign them in the latter half of the class.
 - b. Like yesterday, as students read and discuss, cycle through the classroom, joining groups and conversations on an as-needed basis to troubleshoot if students experience difficulties understanding any portions of the sources.
15. **After 18 or so minutes (or however much time you deem appropriate) has passed, give students a heads-up that they should wrap up their conversations. At this point, you have two options for how you might proceed:**

Option A: Writing a Reflection - Inform students that they will be writing a 1-page reflection to synthesize what they have learned over the course of the last couple of days. Plan to give students 15~20 minutes of writing time.

- Pass out copies of "[Reflecting on the Life of Martin Himler](#)" to students; this handout contains the prompt to which they will be responding. If all students have chromebooks, you could also push the handout to them as an assignment and have them type as opposed to write their reflections.
- Provide students with at least ~15 minutes of writing time. As students write, be sure to circulate throughout the room, responding to student questions as needed and giving feedback as students' reflections begin to take shape. If you identify student work that seems particularly promising, you may also "warm call" on that student and ask if they would be willing to share a piece of their reflection with the whole class.
- Allow students to share pieces of their reflections with their peers, provided that enough class time (even ~5 minutes would allow for some sharing) remains.

Option B: Whole Group Discussion - Inform students that they will now be having a whole group discussion to synthesize what they have learned about over the past couple of days.

- The extent to which you will need to facilitate this discussion will vary depending on your students and your own preferences for how class discussions work in your classroom.
- A list of [Whole Group Discussion Questions](#) is available as an optional resource if you choose this route. You need not limit your discussion to these specific questions; you can use as many or as few of the listed questions as you see fit. This resource is not intended for distribution to students, but if you would like to distribute to students, you are welcome to make your own tweaks to it and do so.
- If you have a 50-minute class period, you have roughly 20 minutes of class time remaining; be sure to pace yourself and be mindful of your remaining time as you conduct your class discussion. It may be helpful to project a timer on your screen to help you manage the time you want to devote to each question.
- If you worry that students may be reluctant to converse, it may be helpful to keep them in the same pairs or groups they were in for the first half of class. Rather than immediately pose a question to the whole class, you could instead have students briefly discuss a question with their partners/groups in 30-second Think-Pair-Shares, then have each pair or group share their thoughts with the full class following a Think-Pair-Share.
- Conversely, if a particularly resonant idea or perspective comes up during class discussion, do not be afraid to pursue it!

16. Conclude by collecting any materials or student work you wish to collect.

- a. Even if you did not choose Option A above and have students write a reflection, you may wish to collect the handouts containing Sources A-H if you wish to review student answers.

Assessment(s)

- Primary Source Analysis
 - Handouts for both Day 1 and Day 2
- Discussion

- Primarily Small Group, but some opportunities for Whole Group
- Written Reflection
 - Optional Culminating Assessment for Day 2

Links to Necessary Resources and Handouts

- [Pear Deck](#) - For use on Day 1
- ["Himler's Dream Town"](#) - For use on Day 1
- [Source A: "Kentucky Bank Closes"](#) - For use on Day 2
- [Source B: Himlerville circa 1920](#) - For use on Day 2
- [Source C: Charles Fenyvesi Reflects on a Conversation on Martin Himler](#) - For use on Day 2
- [Source D: "If I Were the President..."](#) - For use on Day 2
- [Source E: Winning Over the Martin County Locals](#) - For use on Day 2
- [Source F: Himler's OSS Service](#) - For use on Day 2
- [Source G: Himler's Love for America](#) - For use on Day 2
- [Source H: Running Himler Coal Company](#) - For use on Day 2
- [Reflecting on the Life of Martin Himler](#) - Day 2 Assessment Option
- [Educator Resource: Whole Group Discussion Questions](#) - Day 2 Assessment Option Resource
- [Educator Resource: Power, Possibilities, Me](#) - JusticexDesign Thinking Routine

Following Up and Additional Resources

Suggested Modification for Accommodation

- **Virtual and/or Distance Learning** - While designed with traditional in-person learning in mind, this lesson could also be adapted for digital learning. Students could type directly onto most handouts if they were instead distributed as virtual assignments via Google Classroom or some other learning management system. The partner/group elements of the lesson could also be adapted via breakout rooms.

Additional Resources

- [“From Hungary to Eastern Kentucky: War hero honored with Congressional Gold Medal”](#) - This *Lexington Herald-Leader* article by Liz Moomey discusses how Martin Himler was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2021.
- [The George Gunnoe Papers, Marshall University Special Collections](#) - This Marshall University collection contains several additional historic images of Himlerville and was the source for those images included as part of this lesson. The images have been digitized and are available for download.
- [Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust](#) - This list of guidelines on teaching about the Holocaust was compiled by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Educators new to teaching the Holocaust will find this especially helpful.
- [“How we owned a mine, or a brief history of Kentucky’s coal mining cooperative”](#) - This *Kentucky Lantern* article written by Anya Petrone Slepian
- [The Making of an American: The Autobiography of a Hungarian Immigrant, Appalachian Entrepreneur, and OSS Officer](#) - Several of the sources excerpted for this lesson were pulled from Martin Himler’s autobiography, which is available for purchase via this link. It can also be purchased through Amazon and the Martin County Historical Society.
- [The Martin County Historical Society](#) - The Martin County Historical Society (MCHS) maintains records related to Martin Himler and Himlerville. Several MCHS members are also involved in the [Save the Himler House](#) initiative, which is working to secure funds to restore Martin Himler’s home in what once was Himlerville.
- [JusticexDesign](#) - JusticexDesign, a project spearheaded by Sarah Sheya, created the thinking routine utilized during Day 2 of this lesson. Other thinking routines and resources created by JusticexDesign are also available on its website.
- [Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust and Humanity Center](#) - Located just north of Kentucky in Cincinnati, OH, the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust and Humanity Center is a viable option for KY educators who desire to take their students to a Holocaust museum.
- [Ronald Eller’s Publications](#) - Educators wishing to know more about Appalachian history or about the history of coal mining in Appalachian Kentucky may consider consulting historian Ronald Eller’s

scholarship, including his publications [*Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930*](#) and [*Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945*](#).

Cross-Curricular Connections

- **ELA** - This lesson pulls heavily from Himler's own writing, *The Making of an American: The autobiography of a Hungarian Immigrant, Appalachian Entrepreneur, and OSS Officer*, and considers excerpts of it from the perspective of social studies. As an autobiography, the text's potential applications within ELA are significant and social studies teachers may consider working with their ELA colleagues to design additional lessons or activities that could be taught in conjunction with this lesson.

Citations

0737: George Gunnoe Papers, 1918-1943. 2. https://mds.marshall.edu/gunnoe_george_papers/2.

Fenyvesi, Charles. "Two Men, One Evil." *The Washington Post*, December 16, 2003.

Himler, Martin. "If I Were the President..." *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 15, 1958.

Himler, Martin. *The Making of an American: The Autobiography of a Hungarian Immigrant, Appalachian Entrepreneur, and OSS Officer*. Edited by Cathy Cassady Corbin. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 2018.

"Kentucky Bank Closes: Cooperative Venture of Hungarian Colony Suffers in Coal Slump." *The New York Times*, June 25, 1928.

Sheya, Sarah and JusticexDesign. "Power, Possibilities, Me." *JusticexDesign*.
<https://www.justicexdesign.org/tools#h.xqtbbchisrqd>.