



# UK-JHF Lesson

University of Kentucky-Jewish Heritage Fund  
Holocaust Education Initiative

## Lesson Title:

Using Character Strengths to  
Become Upstanders With HHC

## Lesson Overview

<b>Suggested Grade Level</b>	6-12
<b>Time Required</b>	4 days or 195 instructional minutes
<b>Subject</b>	U.S. History or English Language Arts
<b>Relevant Courses</b>	United States History or English Language Arts
<b>Kentucky Curriculum Standard(s) Addressed</b>	<p><b>HS.UH.I.Q.1:</b> Generate compelling questions to frame thinking, inquiry and/or understanding of key concepts in U.S. history.</p> <p><b>HS.UH.I.Q.2:</b> Generate supporting questions to develop knowledge, understanding and/or thinking relative to key concepts in U.S. history framed by compelling questions.</p> <p><b>HS.UH.CH.1:</b> Examine the ways diverse groups viewed themselves and contributed to the identity of the United States in the world from 1877-present.</p> <p><b>HS.UH.I.CC.1:</b> Engage in meaningful discussions/democratic discourse and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in U.S. history.</p> <p><b>HS.UH.I.CC.2:</b> Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in U.S. history.</p> <p><b>HS.UH.I.CC.3:</b> Engage in disciplinary thinking and apply appropriate evidence to propose a solution or design an action plan relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in U.S. history.</p> <p><b>ELA.RI.10:</b> By the end of the year, flexibly use a variety of comprehension strategies (i.e., questioning, monitoring, visualizing, inferencing, summarizing, synthesizing, using prior knowledge, determining importance) to read, comprehend and analyze grade-level appropriate, complex informational texts independently and proficiently.</p>
<b>Summary/Rationale</b>	<p>This lesson focuses on cultivating students' understanding of social-emotional learning (SEL) principles through HHC's (Holocaust and Human-Centered Education) frameworks. Its purpose is to inspire personal reflection and encourage actions that promote empathy, understanding, and positive change.</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Explore SEL Concepts:</b> Receive an introduction to HHC's SEL framework to understand its principles.</li> <li>• <b>Define an Upstander:</b> Learn the origins and meaning of the term "upstander," emphasizing its role in promoting social justice and moral courage.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Identify Strengths:</b> Reflect on their own strengths and recognize qualities they admire in others to build self-awareness and community.</li> <li>• <b>Address Barriers:</b> Analyze challenges to being an upstander and strategies to overcome them.</li> <li>• <b>Engage with the Awareness to Action Framework:</b> Learn how awareness of injustices can lead to meaningful actions that make a positive impact.</li> </ul>
<b>Featured Materials/ Content</b>	<p><a href="#">Upstanders Lesson Slides</a> For Teacher Guidance</p> <p>Eduprotocol Graphic Organizer Templates (to be printed or used digitally):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Thin Slide</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Frayar Model</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Iron Chef</a></li> </ul>
<b>Essential Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does it mean to be an upstander, and how does being an upstander contribute to creating a more just and empathetic community?</li> <li>• How can understanding our own strengths and the strengths of others help us work together to overcome challenges?</li> <li>• What barriers prevent people from acting as upstanders, and what strategies can help overcome these obstacles?</li> <li>• How does HHC's Awareness to Action framework guide individuals from recognizing injustices to taking meaningful action?</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p><i>After this lesson, students will be able to . . .</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe what it means to be an upstander and explain its significance in promoting social justice.</li> <li>• Apply Strength Spotting to identify and analyze personal strengths, peer strengths, and the strengths of rescuers during the Holocaust.</li> <li>• Analyze the relationship between upstanders and rescuers during the Holocaust and explain how their actions influenced outcomes.</li> <li>• Explain HHC's Awareness to Action framework and evaluate how it empowers individuals to address injustices through meaningful action.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Planning and Research</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Review Eduprotocol Templates:</b> Explore <a href="#">What are EduProtocol lesson frames?</a> to understand the structure and application of Eduprotocol templates in your lesson.</li> <li>2. <b>Familiarize Yourself with Specific Eduprotocols:</b> Study and understand the following Eduprotocols to determine how they will fit into your lesson: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <a href="#">Thin Slide</a></li> <li>b. <a href="#">Frayar Model</a></li> <li>c. <a href="#">Iron Chef</a></li> <li>d. Decide whether you will use paper copies or digital copies for any graphic organizers associated with these templates.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. <b>Prepare Materials:</b> Create digital versions or print the graphic organizers for student use.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <b>Understand VIA Character Strengths Survey:</b> Review the <a href="#">VIA Character Strengths Survey</a> to understand its purpose and how it connects to identifying strengths in students and historical figures.</li> <li>5. <b>Explore Stories of Rescue:</b> Visit <a href="#">Stories of Rescue</a> to familiarize yourself with key narratives and examples of upstanders during the Holocaust. Prepare to integrate these stories into the lesson as discussion points or case studies.</li> </ol>
<b>Lesson Created By</b>	<p><b>Lexie Gilley</b>, Eastside Middle School  <b>Sheila Hendricks</b>, Eastside Middle School  <i>Bullitt County Public Schools</i></p>

# During the Lesson

## Instructional Sequence

### Part 1: [What Does It Mean to Be an Upstander?](#)

Setup:

- Decide whether to use a digital class set of Thin Slides (e.g., Google Slides) or paper copies for this activity. Ensure all materials are ready before the lesson begins.

Create Slides: (2 minutes)

- Give students 2 minutes to create their own slide.
  - Each slide should include one word and one image that represents their interpretation of the term “*Upstander*.”

Review Slides: (2 minutes)

- Allow students 2 minutes to review their classmates' slides.
  - Encourage them to note any ideas or visuals that stand out or resonate with them.

Share and Reflect: (10 minutes)

- Invite students to:
  - Share their own slide with the class.
  - Highlight one contribution from another student that they found meaningful or inspiring.

Introduce the Definition: (5–7 minutes)

- Present the following definition of an upstander to the class:  
*"People who stand up for themselves and others. They harness their character strengths to find their moment and pursue justice, both great and small, inspiring others to be the best of humanity today."*
- Discuss how this definition connects to the students' slides and reflections.
- Discuss how being an upstander contributes to creating a more just and empathetic community.

### Part 2: [VIA Character Strengths Survey](#)

Discovering Your Character Strengths (2 minutes)

- Explain “In the early 2000s, scientists identified 24 character strengths that represent the parts of who we are. These strengths are different from your skills, talents, or interests because they

reflect the 'real' you—who you are deep down at your core. Everyone has all 24 character strengths, but we each have a unique mix, which creates a one-of-a-kind strengths profile. These strengths are grouped into six big categories, or virtues, that are universal across all cultures and nations. Today, we're going to take a survey to discover our own character strengths. This will help us better understand who we are and how we can use our strengths to grow, connect with others, and make a positive impact."

#### Administer the Survey (10–15 minutes)

- Provide students with the [link](#) to the VIA Character Strengths Survey. Allow time for them to complete it independently.

#### Frayer the Survey Results (15–20 minutes)

- Hand out or share the Frayer Model Template (digital or paper).
- Guide students to use their survey results to respond to the following prompts:
  - Describe four of your positive qualities
  - What are four things that you value in order to maintain positive interactions with others?
  - What is one of your character strengths from the survey? How can that strength be applied to your actions towards others?
  - What are four ways you can see your character strengths being applied to our work together and in your classroom?

#### Share Your Strength (7–8 minutes)

- After completing the Frayer Model, students will partner with a classmate to share:
  - One character strength they identified from the survey.
  - One way they see themselves using that strength in the classroom or their community.
- If time allows, invite a few volunteers to share their responses with the whole class.

#### Gallery Walk with Sticky Notes: Applying Our Strengths to Overcome Challenges (18–27 minutes)

- Preparation: (3–5 minutes)
  - Write the question, *"How can understanding our own strengths and the strengths of others help us work together to overcome challenges?"* on a large piece of chart paper or display it on a board.
  - Divide the space into two sections: "Our Own Strengths" and "Strengths of Others."
- Student Participation: (5–7 minutes)
  - Give each student a few sticky notes and a marker.
  - Ask them to write one idea or example for each section:
    1. How their own strengths could help overcome challenges.
    2. How recognizing the strengths of others could contribute to teamwork.
  - Have students place their sticky notes in the appropriate section on the chart or board.

- Gallery Walk and Discussion: (10–15 minutes)
  - Once all the sticky notes are up, review them as a class.
  - Highlight patterns, common themes, and any unique perspectives.
  - Facilitate a discussion using guiding questions, such as:
    1. What ideas stand out to you?
    2. How can these strengths work together in real-life situations?
    3. How do diverse strengths make a team stronger?

### Part 3: Upstanders and Rescue During the Holocaust

Delivering Key Information About Upstanders and Rescue During the Holocaust (10–15 minutes)

- "Rescue was tragically rare, especially given the enormity of the atrocities committed during the Holocaust."
  - Start by explaining the scope of the Holocaust—millions of people suffered and perished. Despite the widespread suffering, instances of individuals stepping forward to rescue others were incredibly rare due to the immense dangers involved. Many who could have acted chose to stay silent out of fear or helplessness.
- "Avoid sanitizing the tragedy of the Holocaust with hope."
  - Stress the importance of not diminishing the horror of the Holocaust by focusing solely on the rare moments of hope or triumph. While there were acts of resistance and courage, we must acknowledge the overwhelming loss and suffering that defines this history. By doing so, we honor the memory of the victims and the significance of the choices made by those who resisted.
- "All rescuers are upstanders, but not all upstanders are rescuers."
  - Clarify that rescuer is a specific type of upstander. Rescuers directly acted to save lives during the Holocaust, often at great personal risk.
  - However, not everyone who stood up to injustice during that time physically rescued people. Some upstanders supported resistance movements, spoke out against the atrocities, or helped in ways that weren't directly related to rescuing individuals but still had a profound impact.
- "All rescuers resist, but not all resistance is rescue."
  - Explain that resistance against Nazi oppression took many forms: hiding people, sabotaging the enemy, speaking out, and so on. While rescuers were involved in acts of resistance, not all resistance efforts were about physical rescue. Resistance could involve standing up for what was right or supporting those in danger, even if it didn't directly result in saving lives.

Guiding Discussion Questions: (10–15 minutes)

- What makes rescue so rare during the Holocaust?
- Why is it important to acknowledge the full scope of suffering, not just moments of hope?

- How do you think people could resist the Nazis even if they couldn't physically rescue others?
- What barriers prevent people from acting as upstanders, and what strategies can help overcome these obstacles?

End with a brief reflection: (5–7 minutes): Encourage students to reflect on the powerful acts of courage and resistance, considering how they might act as upstanders in their own lives today.

#### Part 4: [A-I-A Framework](#)

- Introducing the A-I-A Framework (15 minutes)

Explain: “Now that we've discussed what it means to be an upstander and the rare but important acts of rescue, let's introduce a powerful framework that will help us think about how we can create positive change in our communities. This framework is called the A-I-A Framework, which stands for Awareness, Influence, and Action. This A-I-A Framework helps guide us as we think about how to be effective upstanders. It emphasizes that being an upstander is not just about knowing what's wrong, but about doing something to make things right.”

##### ■ Awareness:

- Upstanders use their critical thinking skills and empathy to become aware of problems in their communities.
  - Being an upstander starts with awareness—the ability to see and understand the challenges others face. Upstanders don't ignore injustice; they acknowledge it. They use their critical thinking skills to analyze situations and their empathy to feel the pain of others.
  - For example, if you see a peer being bullied, an upstander will be aware of the impact it has on the individual and the group.

##### ■ Influence:

- Upstanders realize that they can use their character strengths to influence the outcome of a problem.
  - Once we are aware of a problem, the next step is to understand that we have the power to make a difference. Upstanders recognize that they can use their character strengths—like kindness, courage, or fairness—to influence the situation.
  - For example, if you're aware of bullying, you can influence the situation by standing up for the person being bullied, offering support, or encouraging others to do the same.

##### ■ Action:

- Upstanders work within a community to take action and create change.
  - The final step in the framework is action—taking steps to make a positive difference. Upstanders don't just think about problems; they actively work to solve them. This can mean helping someone directly or working with a group to create a solution.
  - For example, taking action might involve reporting the bullying to a teacher,

organizing a school campaign about kindness, or providing a safe space for the victim.

■ Discussion Prompt:

- Can you think of a time when you became aware of a problem, realized you could influence the situation, and took action to make it better? What did that look like?

Discover Compassion: Stories of Rescue (30 minutes)

\* Assign students a rescuer to research in advance or allow students to choose on their own.

■ Researching the Rescuer:

- Assign each student a rescuer from the Stories of Rescue website. Students will read about their assigned rescuer and take notes on key facts related to their actions during the Holocaust.

■ Completing the Iron Chef Eduprotocol Template:

- Have students complete the Iron Chef Eduprotocol Template with the following components:
  - Slide Title: The name of the rescuer.
  - Four Key Facts: Students should list four important facts they learned about their rescuer's actions.
  - A Picture: Students will add a picture related to their rescuer (if available).
  - A Connection to the A-I-A Framework: Ask students to explain how their rescuer demonstrated Awareness, Influence, and Action.

■ Be Prepared to Share:

- After completing their templates, students should be prepared to share their findings with the class. During the debriefing, students will discuss their rescuer's role as an upstander and how their actions reflect the A-I-A Framework.

Debriefing Stories of Rescue Activity (20 minutes)

■ The Impact of Awareness, Influence, and Action:

- Discuss how each rescuer demonstrated the A-I-A Framework.
- Explore common themes across different stories of rescue.
- Invite students to share what they learned about their assigned rescuer and how their actions impacted others.

■ Compassion and Courage:

- Reflect on the personal qualities that made these rescuers upstanders.
- How can we apply these qualities in our own lives to stand up for others?
- Highlight the importance of collective action and the power of one person to make a difference.

## Assessment(s)

**Written Assessment: Understanding Upstanders and the A-I-A Framework**



### Extended Response Question:

In this unit, we have explored the concept of being an upstander and how individuals can take action to make a positive difference in their communities. You have learned about the A-I-A (Awareness, Influence, Action) Framework and its role in understanding how upstanders create change. Additionally, you researched a rescuer during the Holocaust and analyzed their actions through the lens of this framework.

### Your Task:

#### Write a well-developed response to the following question:

“In what ways did your assigned rescuer demonstrate the characteristics of an upstander? Use the A-I-A Framework (Awareness, Influence, Action) to explain how your rescuer became an upstander and the impact of their actions. Additionally, explain how understanding your own character strengths can help you become an upstander in your community today.”

#### Be sure to include the following in your response:

- A clear explanation of how your rescuer demonstrated each part of the A-I-A Framework.
- Specific examples of your rescuer’s actions that show awareness, influence, and action.
- How your own character strengths can help you be an upstander today, based on what you’ve learned in this unit.
- Reflect on why being an upstander is important in creating positive change and fostering empathy within a community.

#### Grading Criteria:

- **Understanding of the A-I-A Framework:** Clear and accurate explanation of how the rescuer demonstrated Awareness, Influence, and Action.
- **Use of Specific Examples:** Well-chosen examples from your research on the rescuer to support your analysis.
- **Connection to Character Strengths:** Thoughtful reflection on how your own strengths can contribute to becoming an upstander.
- **Clarity and Organization:** Well-organized response with clear, logical flow and proper use of evidence.

## Links to Necessary Resources and Handouts

- [Upstanders Lesson Slides](#) For Teacher Guidance
- Eduprotocol Graphic Organizer Templates (to be printed or used digitally):
  - [Thin Slide](#)
  - [Frayer Model](#)
  - [Iron Chef](#)
- [The VIA Character Strengths Survey](#)
- [Discover Compassion: Stories of Rescue](#)

# Following Up and Additional Resources

## Suggested Modification for Accommodation

### 1. Use of Graphic Organizers:

- Frayer Model: Use the Frayer Model for defining and understanding key concepts like "Upstander" and "Rescuer." This allows students to break down the terms visually, helping with comprehension and retention.
- Mind Mapping: For students who benefit from visual learning, allow them to create mind maps connecting character strengths, the A-I-A Framework, and the concept of upstanders.

### 2. Collaborative Learning:

- Pair or Small Group Research: Allow students to work in pairs or small groups to research their assigned rescuer. This fosters collaboration and peer learning, particularly for students who benefit from group interaction.
- Peer Review: Have students share their Iron Chef Eduprotocol Template with a partner for feedback before submitting it. Peer review can enhance understanding and promote critical thinking.

### 3. Differentiated Reading Materials:

- Read Aloud or Audio Options: For students with reading difficulties or visual impairments, provide the option to listen to the Stories of Rescue website through text-to-speech tools.

### 4. Flexible Assessment Formats:

- Oral Presentation: Allow students who struggle with writing to present their responses to the extended response question verbally or through a recorded video.

### 5. Technology Integration:

- Interactive Platforms: Use digital tools like Padlet, Google Slides, or Flipgrid for students to present their rescuer research and share reflections with the class.
- Online Polls or Surveys: Use tools like Google Forms to have students reflect on what it means to be an upstander, or ask them to assess how their character strengths have grown throughout the unit.

### 6. Choice of Rescuer:

- **Student Choice:** Allow students to select their own rescuer from a provided list of stories, giving them more autonomy in their research. For students who may be particularly interested in certain historical figures or events, this can help boost engagement.

#### 7. Additional Scaffolded Support:

- **Sentence Starters or Templates:** Provide sentence starters for students who may struggle with writing. Example: “One way my rescuer demonstrated awareness was when...”
- **Guided Notes:** Provide students with guided notes during lecture presentations about the A-I-A Framework, allowing them to focus on key points rather than taking comprehensive notes on their own.

#### 8. Culturally Responsive Practices:

- **Relating to Students' Own Experiences:** Have students draw connections between being an upstander in the Holocaust and being an upstander in their own lives. Discuss contemporary issues or examples of upstanders they may have seen in their communities.
- **Guest Speakers or Videos:** Consider bringing in guest speakers or showing short videos of modern-day upstanders to inspire students and make the content more relatable.

## Additional Resources

- **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM):** The USHMM website offers a wealth of educational materials, including survivor testimonies, historical timelines, and teaching resources. They also provide lesson plans and activities specifically designed for middle school students.
  - Website: [Introduction to the Holocaust](#)
- **The Holocaust Explained:** This website provides a user-friendly, interactive approach to learning about the Holocaust, including specific lessons on key figures, events, and concepts related to upstanders and rescuers.
  - Website: [The Holocaust Explained](#)
- **The Upstander Resource from the Holocaust & Humanity Center:** This interactive resource from the Holocaust & Humanity Center explores the powerful concept of being an upstander during the Holocaust. Through personal stories and educational materials, students can learn about individuals who took brave actions to resist oppression and protect others. The website includes video testimonials, historical context, and tools for students to reflect on how they can apply the principles of being an upstander in their own lives. It’s an excellent resource for fostering discussions around moral courage, social justice, and the impact of standing up for what’s right.
  - Explore the resource here: [Holocaust & Humanity Center - Upstander](#)

- **Character Lab:** This resource offers a wide range of tools, articles, and strategies for teaching students about character strengths, resilience, and empathy. Their materials are geared toward helping students build positive habits and grow as individuals.

- Website: [Character Lab](#)

## Cross-Curricular Connections

### 1. Social Studies (History & Civics)

- **The Holocaust and World War II:** This unit provides a natural connection to a history class studying the Holocaust, World War II, or the broader history of genocide. Teachers can collaborate to explore historical events in depth, connecting the actions of upstanders and rescuers to the political, social, and moral dynamics of the time.
- **Human Rights and Social Justice Movements:** The concept of upstanders can also be extended to the study of human rights movements, both historical (e.g., Civil Rights Movement, Anti-Apartheid Movement) and contemporary (e.g., refugee rights, racial justice). Students can analyze how upstanders in various contexts have fought for equality and justice.

### 2. English Language Arts (Literature & Writing)

- **Literature on Moral Courage and Resilience:** English teachers can incorporate novels, short stories, or poetry that explore themes of standing up for others and moral courage. For example, books like *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry, or *Night* by Elie Wiesel provide rich contexts for discussing upstanders and the consequences of standing by.
- **Research & Writing Projects:** The research component of this unit can be extended to English classes through writing assignments where students reflect on or write essays about upstanders in history, literature, or even their own lives.

### 3. Character Education & Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

- **Character Strengths and Personal Growth:** Integrating the A-I-A Framework with SEL allows students to apply concepts of awareness, influence, and action in real-world scenarios. This could involve discussions or role-playing activities to explore how they can use their character strengths to promote positive change in their communities.
- **Empathy and Compassion:** This unit's focus on understanding others' struggles and standing up for justice is an ideal fit for SEL programs. Teachers can develop lessons around empathy, the importance of standing up for others, and how small actions can lead to big changes in communities.

### 4. Philosophy and Ethics

- **Moral Decision Making:** In a philosophy or ethics class, the question of moral responsibility and the role of individuals in times of injustice can be explored. How do individuals decide to act in the face of widespread cruelty? This ties directly into the study of ethics, virtue, and personal responsibility.
- **Civic Responsibility and Ethical Leadership:** Students could discuss how being an upstander relates to leadership and community involvement. Philosophy classes can tie this into ethical theory, asking students to consider the moral obligations of citizens in times of crisis.