

Key Resources

Resource #1

Selected Lessons from casebook:

Facing History & Ourselves in a Digital Age:
Supporting youth civic participation in the
digital public sphere

1a: Eve and Facebook

1b: The Internet, social media, and the past

Good Participation Project and Facing History and Ourselves

Resource 1b:

The Internet, social media, and the past

Essential Question

How might social media impact the choices people make under a dictatorship?

Overall Aim

The Internet, social media, and the past is a springboard to consider the case of *No Time to Think* in today's digital world: How could social media have played a role in this case? Could it have made a difference to the events that took place? To the professor's thoughts and actions? How does living a digital world afford more time vs. less time to think and to grasp the scope of a human event as it unfolds?

Specific Objective/product

Students re-write a story from the past incorporating ideas around social media.

Materials, resources needed

Facing History Resource: Reading – No Time to Think

<https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/readings/no-time-think>

Part 1

Building historical context

This lesson is selected from a larger of a sequence of study during which the class has been learning about the Nazis rise to power. For students to be able use their digital civic imagination in this lesson, they will need to know core details about life in Germany after the Nazis assumed power and how they were able to turn the fragile Weimar democracy into a dictatorship. Resources for teaching that history can be found at www.facinghistory.org.

One resource for introducing the context of the Nazi dictatorship is a five-minute video-featuring historian Paul Bookbinder. Bookbinder describes the events that took place in the 1930s when the Nazis assumed power.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/videos/facing-history-scholar-reflections-nazi-rise-power>

Transition to the reading “No Time to Think” (or listen to the audio). Milton Mayer, an American college professor, wanted to find out how ordinary people reacted to Hitler’s policies and philosophy. Seven years after the end of World War II, he interviewed German men from a cross-section of society. One of them, a college professor, told Mayer how he responded, they text of that interview makes up the reading “No Time to Think.”

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Small group

Students read “No Time to Think” (or listen to the audio).

Students consider the following:

In the story, “No Time to Think” there are two sections, “Waiting to React” and “Uncertainty”, where the author wrestles with speaking out or taking a stand. He sees signals of protest, such as slogans painted on walls, in other countries or cities, but not in his own community.

Students reflect on their own responses to the reading and discuss the following questions in small groups.

Step Inside the professor’s perspective

- How would you characterize the professor’s response to the Nazi dictatorship?
- What did you read/hear that explains why the professor didn’t act?
 - What was he feeling, thinking about, focusing on? What does he believe or care deeply about?
 - Why do you think the professor struggled? Why did he seem afraid to speak up or speak out?
- What might have helped him take a stand?

Class Share/Discussion

Each group shares back to the class.

In a large group, have the students reflect on what the professor’s rationalizations suggest about how the Nazis were able to transform the democracy into a dictatorship.

Social media and social change

Present students with the following:

Today we live in a world where technology is all around and available all the time. It doesn’t matter if an event is happening down the street or half way around the world – chances are someone will post photos, videos, texts on social media or other internet sites.

Class discusses examples of how digital media have been used in recent times to speak out or protest about something (For example, twitter hashtags, Facebook events, photos, or YouTube videos in reaction to Ferguson, marriage equality, climate change).

Group work

In small groups, students create a display (virtual or hard copy) of examples of how social media is used today when people care about an issue or want to let others know about something that is happening.

Part 2

Individual work

Students reflect on the Social Media and Social Change examples collected (above).

Good Participation Project and Facing History and Ourselves

Students consider the questions below and write a short story in their journal (or online discussion board/blog). Their stories should draw on details from “No Time to Think” as a source of inspiration, but consider how use of social media and other digital platforms might have changed how things played out.

Questions:

Imagine, how might the professor’s story have been different if the internet had been invented and social media were available at the time?

- How might other people – friends of the professor, people in other towns, other countries - have used social media and the internet in this situation? What would signals of protest look like with Facebook or twitter? In what ways could these people have used the various online spaces? [To share information, to get others to do something]
- How might the professor have felt, thought, or acted differently? Why? If he chose to participate, what would that have looked like?
 - What tools would the professor have had to speak out and connect with others as well as the tools the Nazi regime would have had to monitor and control dissent?

Rewrite the professor’s story (2-3 pages) describing how the internet and social media may have been used and what happened.