

Educator Guide



# Anne Frank

The Exhibition



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## Field Trip/Group Information

### Preparing students and chaperones for the visit: a note to educators

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#### **Anne Frank The Exhibition tells the story of Anne Frank and her family in the larger context of the Holocaust.**

Students will learn about their lives as immigrants/refugees experiencing discrimination and increasing danger and hostility because they were Jews living in a Nazi-controlled country. This discrimination forced them into hiding in the Secret Annex for two years to escape the danger and hostility of the regime. Students will also learn about their eventual arrest and transport to concentration camps, and, finally, the death of Anne and the majority of her family during the Holocaust. Given the nature of this history and the exhibition it is recommended that teachers think about any steps that might help prepare students for this content, especially students who might be sensitive to, or personally relate to, details or themes of the history and exhibition.

This can include but is not limited to marginalized students, students who have witnessed or been affected by violence and students who have connections to immigrant or refugee individuals or communities. It is also recommended that teachers prepare their students to demonstrate maturity, respect and sensitivity to others in the exhibition: the artifacts and displays tell the story of the Nazi regime's hateful ideologies, violence and genocide.

Teachers and chaperones are encouraged to monitor and attend to students as they go through the exhibition, staying close and watching students as they interact with the artifacts, especially any students who demonstrate they are having a hard time figuring out how to cope with the experience, which can include but is not limited to withdrawal, tears, agitation and anger. The exhibition is meant to tell a difficult story so many students may experience some level of discomfort, and it is healthy for students to practice empathy and other adaptive behaviors in response to such a story.

A little preparation and a strategy for attending the exhibition will help teachers ensure that they can keep their students safe, even as they work through the interesting, compelling story of Anne Frank and her family. It is a powerful experience for student (and adult) guests, and preparation and active supervision will ensure students (and adults) get the most out of the visit.

Students tour much of the exhibition using a personal audio device, so students have the ability to choose artifacts or areas of interest for greater or lesser attention. Students activate different audio narrations during the tour by activating numbered buttons through the exhibition. There are buttons that provide foundational information, and buttons that provide more supplementary information. If you would like to download a list of the recommended foundational buttons to ensure your students encounter key moments, please visit [annefrankcenter.com/educational-resources](https://annefrankcenter.com/educational-resources) and click on the document labeled **RECOMMENDED STOPS ON THE AUDIO TOUR.**

# About the Exhibition

*Anne Frank The Exhibition* invites students to engage deeply with the life and words of Anne Frank, a young Jewish girl whose diary, written while in hiding during the Holocaust, has become **one of the most widely read personal accounts in history**.

**Through immersive storytelling and historical context, students will explore:**

- The realities of hateful ideologies during the Holocaust: prejudice, discrimination, dehumanization and antisemitism
- The impact of bias and exclusion on individuals and communities
- The resilience of the human spirit in the face of injustice
- The power of personal storytelling to inspire empathy and understanding

Anne did not begin her diary for fame or recognition, though she did have dreams of being a writer or journalist. She wrote to process her experiences, to reflect and to imagine a future beyond her present circumstances. Her diary became a private refuge while in hiding and later a powerful public testimony. Even though she did not survive the Holocaust, her father helped fulfill her dream to someday be a published author by turning her diary into a world-renowned book.

This exhibition encourages students to see history not only as something that happened — but as something shaped by individual lives and voices as told through the thoughts, experiences, wisdom and words of a teenage girl.

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## Objectives of *Anne Frank The Exhibition*

- Explore the human story behind history by engaging with the life and words of Anne Frank, helping students understand the real impact of prejudice, discrimination and injustice through personal narrative and lived experience.
- Make meaningful connections between past and present by encouraging students to reflect on how the lessons of the Holocaust relate to issues in today's world, including identity, belonging and the role individuals play in shaping their communities.
- Foster reflection, empathy and understanding by creating space for students to consider their own perspectives, listen to others and deepen their awareness of diverse experiences.
- Inspire informed and positive action by empowering students to use their voices and choices to contribute to a more compassionate, inclusive and hopeful future within their communities and beyond.

# About Griffin Museum of Science and Industry

Griffin Museum of Science and Industry, located in Chicago, is one of the **largest science museums in the world** and has a long history of connecting innovation, industry and human stories.

Housed in the historic Palace of Fine Arts from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, the Museum opened to the public in 1933 through the vision of philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, who sought to inspire curiosity and opportunity through science and technology.

From its earliest days, the Museum has focused on making complex ideas accessible and meaningful, inviting visitors to explore everything from transportation and energy to space exploration and human ingenuity. Over time, its mission has expanded beyond scientific discovery to include the broader human impact of innovation, emphasizing how science and technology shape our lives, communities and future.

Today, Griffin Museum of Science and Industry continues to serve as a place where curiosity meets reflection, empowering visitors of all ages to better understand the world around them and consider the role they play in shaping a more thoughtful and hopeful future.



# Activities

# Pre-Visit Activities

## ACTIVITY 1: Collaborative Conversation

Conversations can get your class on the same page, open the door to new ideas and create opportunities for **empathy, insight and knowledge sharing.**

**Below are examples of engagement strategies and prompts to spark the conversation prior to visiting the exhibition.**

### STRATEGY 1: JIGSAW

Students are put into groups and are responsible for the information they are given to become “experts.” One “expert” will rotate to the other groups to share their knowledge. By the end of all the rotations the class should have a collective understanding of their topic and be ready for group discussion.

### STRATEGY 2: FOUR CORNERS

Each corner is a response to a question. Students can choose to move to the corner that resonates most with how they feel about the prompt. Once students have selected their corner, they will discuss the topic in depth and then share out with the other corners.

### STRATEGY 3: GALLERY WALK

Students show ideas visually or in short responses on chart paper “wall.” Groups rotate to each image to discuss and leave feedback or add to the conversation.



## Pre-Visit Activities cont.

### ACTIVITY 1: Collaborative Conversation

#### THEME

*The realities of prejudice and discrimination during the Holocaust*

#### PROMPTS TO USE FOR THE DISCUSSION

- What might it have felt like for someone to be judged or treated differently simply because of who they were?
- Why do you think some people participated in discrimination, while others resisted or helped?
- What lessons from the discrimination during the Holocaust can help us recognize or challenge prejudice today?

*The impact of bias and exclusion on individuals and communities*

- How can bias or exclusion affect a person's sense of identity, safety or belonging?
- How can exclusion or discrimination affect individuals and communities over time?
- What can individuals or communities do to challenge bias and create a greater sense of belonging?

*The resilience of the human spirit in the face of injustice*

- What does resilience mean when someone is facing injustice or unfair treatment?
- How can one person's resilience inspire or strengthen others in their community?
- What qualities or actions help people remain resilient during difficult or unjust situations?

*The power of personal storytelling to inspire empathy and understanding*

- Why is it important to share an individual's stories?
- How can hearing someone's personal story change the way we understand history or an event?
- Why might a personal story help people feel more empathy than statistics or facts alone?

Our partner organization for *Anne Frank the Exhibition*, the Anne Frank Center at the University of South Carolina, has a series of lesson plans and instructional resources that can be used or adapted with these *Collaborative Conversation* activities, including resources created specifically for the exhibition at Griffin Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. They can be explored and downloaded at the Anne Frank Center website: [annefrankcenter.com/educational-resources](http://annefrankcenter.com/educational-resources).

## Pre-Visit Activities cont.

### ACTIVITY 2: Diary Analysis Think, Pair, Share

Using the prompt to the right, students will have the opportunity to **interpret the text** and **gather thoughts**.

After a few moments, they will turn to a partner, share their takeaways and listen to their partner's. From there, the pair will decide what they would like to share out of their learnings for broader discussion. Use the prompts below to deepen the discussion.

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#### Diary Excerpt from The Diary of Anne Frank:

**July 9th, 1942:** *“Here’s a description of the building... A wooden staircase leads from the downstairs hallway to the third floor. At the top of the stairs is a landing, with doors on either side. The door on the left takes you up to the spice storage area, attic and loft in the front part of the house. A typically Dutch, very steep, ankle-twisting flight of stairs also runs from the front part of the house to another door opening onto the street. The door to the right of the landing leads to the ‘Secret Annex’ at the back of the house. No one would ever suspect there were so many rooms behind that plain grey door. There’s just one small step in front of the door, and then you’re inside. Straight ahead of you is a steep flight of stairs. To the left is a narrow hallway opening onto a room that serves as the Frank family’s living room and bedroom. Next door is a smaller room, the bedroom and study of the two young ladies of the family. To the right of the stairs is a windowless washroom with a sink. The door in the corner leads to the toilet and another one to Margot’s and my room... Now I’ve introduced you to the whole of our lovely Annex!”*

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#### Guiding prompts for students to consider as they read the text:

- Why is it important to share an individual’s stories?
- What feelings do you get when reading this excerpt?  
How do you think Anne felt daily in a space like this?
- Why were spaces like this necessary?

## Pre-Visit Activities cont.

### ACTIVITY 3: On The Way Discussion and Reflection

**Learning can begin before a class even enters the exhibition.** Below are examples of engagement strategies and prompts to spark conversation prior to visiting the exhibition while students travel on the bus.

#### STRATEGY 1: THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Students reflect on the questions below, then discuss with a partner. **Optional:** share a few responses with the full group.

- How do you think young people like Anne Frank might have felt during this time?
- What emotions might someone experience when their rights are taken away?
- How do those feelings connect to how you would feel in a similar situation?

#### STRATEGY 2: EXPLORING CHOICES AND INFLUENCE

Educators guide a short discussion about the questions below. Students are encouraged to think about how people's choices, small and large, can impact others.

- What is propaganda, and how can it influence how people think or act?
- How can messages — true or false — shape the way people treat others?
- What kinds of choices do individuals have when they see unfairness or harm?

#### STRATEGY 3: PERSONAL REFLECTION

Students quietly reflect on their responses to the questions below. **Optional:** students can write their responses if possible.

- How do I feel when I see someone treated unfairly?
- What would I hope to do in a situation where someone's rights are being taken away?
- What kind of person do I want to be when faced with difficult choices?

# Post-Visit Activities

## ACTIVITY 1: Telling Your Story

Just as Anne used her diary to document her world and share her inner life, students are encouraged to use their journals as spaces for **honesty, creativity and growth.**

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Anne's diary demonstrates that journaling is not only documentation, it is connection. Through her writing, she invited readers into her fears, hopes, humor and dreams. She allowed others to see her full humanity.

Encouraging students to journal extends this legacy. It empowers them to explore their own interior worlds while recognizing that their stories have value.

**The journal is an extension of the exhibition experience and an invitation to:**

- Reflect on personal identity and values
- Consider the impact of their words and actions
- Explore hope, resilience and belonging
- Recognize the influence their voice can have

### OBJECTIVE

Students will begin a personal journaling practice using guided prompts provided on bookmarks distributed during the Museum visit.

### MATERIALS

- Student journals (provided at the exhibition)
- Prompt bookmarks (provided)
- Quiet writing space

### PROCEDURE (30 – 45 MINUTES)

#### 1. Reflect as a Group (5 – 10 minutes)

Ask students:

- Why do you think Anne wrote in her diary?
- How did journaling help her navigate uncertainty?
- How can writing help us better understand ourselves?

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#### 2. Introduce the Practice (5 minutes)

Explain that journaling is not graded. It is not about perfection. It is about honesty, reflection and curiosity.

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#### 3. Independent Writing (15 – 20 minutes)

Students select one prompt from their bookmark and write continuously without worrying about grammar or structure.

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#### 4. Optional Reflection (5 – 10 minutes)

Students may share insights voluntarily in small groups or discuss how the writing process felt.

## Post-Visit Activities cont.

### ACTIVITY 1: Telling Your Story

#### Guided Prompts for Students in Journal



The following prompts appear on cards inserted into their journals to help initiate their journaling practice.

**1. What gives you hope, even during challenging times?**

*Encourages students to identify sources of resilience and optimism in their own lives.*

**2. What is something you are still learning about yourself?**

*Invites self-discovery and reinforces that growth is ongoing.*

**3. What strength do you carry that you don't always recognize?**

*Helps students name their inner power and build confidence.*

**4. Describe a future you believe is possible — for yourself or your community**

*Encourages imagination, agency and forward-thinking.*

**5. When have you seen kindness make a difference?**

*Connects hope to real-world actions and community impact.*

**6. If you fully trusted your voice, what would you say?**

*Empowers students to recognize the importance and potential impact of their words.*



Anne Frank used her diary to navigate fear and hold on to hope at the same time, transforming her private reflections into a story that continues to shape the world. We hope students use these journals to discover the power of their own voices.

As they write, they not only reflect on history — they deepen their understanding of the events unfolding in their own lives and communities today. By placing a journal in their hands, we affirm that their voices matter, their reflections have meaning and their stories carry the power to influence the future.

## Post-Visit Activities cont.

### ACTIVITY 2: Journalist Assignment

In her journal, **Anne Frank expressed her desire to become a writer**. One career pathway as a writer is journalism — putting together information on events, ideas, people and facts to share with the public. Today’s journalists research, put together reports, write, edit and create content for newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

#### OBJECTIVE

Students will explore journalistic writing using guided prompts about their experience in the exhibition.

#### MATERIALS

- Student journals (provided at the exhibition)
- Prompts (below)
- Writing utensils

#### PROCEDURE (45 – 60 MINUTES)

##### 1. Reflect as a Group (5 minutes)

Ask students:

- How were people during Anne Frank’s time informed about current events?
- How do we learn about current events today?

##### 2. Introduce the Practice (5 – 10 minutes)

- Explain what a journalist does. Explain that this assignment is to explore journalistic writing and is not about perfection. Introduce prompts and answer student questions before they begin.

##### 3. Independent writing (20 – 30 minutes)

##### 4. Optional reflection (10 – 15 minutes)

Students may share their writing voluntarily or discuss what they observed during the writing process. Alternatively, use the questions below to prompt reflection:

- What skills are important for a journalist to practice?
- How might personal ideas affect a journalist’s writing?
- How might journalism change in the future?

## Post-Visit Activities cont.

### ACTIVITY 2: Journalist Assignment

#### Journalism Writing Prompts

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*You are a journalist visiting Anne Frank The Exhibition. Your task is to write an article that helps others understand what they might experience and why it matters.*

*Before writing, create an outline of your article using the guide below.*

#### ARTICLE OUTLINE

**Headline:**

What is a powerful title that captures the meaning of the exhibition?

**Opening (Hook):**

How will you draw readers in? What is the first moment or idea you want to share?

**Key Experience:**

What part of the exhibition stood out to you the most? Why?

**Emotional Impact:**

How did the exhibition make you feel? How do you think people like Anne Frank may have felt during this time?

**Understanding History:**

What did you learn about the Holocaust, human rights or the impact of discrimination?

**Choices and Responsibility:**

What did you notice about the choices people made during this time? How can individual choices impact others?

**Connection to Today:**

How does this exhibition connect to the world we live in today?

**Closing Message:**

What do you want your readers to think about or do after reading your article?

# Educator Tips and Best Practice

## Teaching about Anne Frank and the Holocaust can be supported through an inquiry-based approach that aligns with the Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science.

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Using compelling and supporting questions can help frame student exploration, guiding them to think critically about the human experiences within this history. Primary sources, such as Anne Frank's diary and other personal narratives, offer meaningful entry points for students to engage with evidence, build understanding and begin forming their own interpretations.

Providing historical context can help students situate Anne Frank's story within the broader timeline of events, supporting their ability to think chronologically and recognize how the Holocaust developed over time through a series of decisions and actions. Exploring the roles of individuals, groups and institutions may also support students in examining cause and effect, and in considering how systems, beliefs and choices shaped historical outcomes.

Opportunities for reflection and discussion can further deepen student learning. Structured conversations and open-ended questions can support students in considering multiple perspectives, developing claims and communicating their thinking. These moments of reflection can also help students process both the intellectual and emotional aspects of the content.

### Example

- What stood out to you the most about Anne Frank's story?
- How do firsthand stories help us understand history?
- Are there connections between what you've learned and the world today?

Themes such as rights, responsibilities and civic participation can provide helpful connections to civics, allowing students to explore how ideas like propaganda, bias and access to information influence how people think and act. These connections can support students in building media literacy and critical thinking skills while making thoughtful, age-appropriate links to the present.

Creating space for a respectful and inclusive learning environment can support students as they engage with complex and sensitive topics. Encouraging students to share perspectives, listen actively and reflect on ethical questions can help them engage more deeply with the material, and not compare the pain or impact between the Holocaust and other world changing events.

As a whole, these approaches can serve as helpful tools to support educators in guiding students through historical inquiry, reflection and discussion — helping them build understanding of the past while developing the skills to think critically about the world around them.

# Additional Resources for the Classroom

To extend learning before and after your visit to *Anne Frank The Exhibition*, the following trusted organizations offer free downloadable lesson plans, primary sources, videos and classroom-ready materials.

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## **Anne Frank House**

- Free lesson plans and classroom activities
  - Historical background materials
  - Virtual tours and short educational videos
  - Primary source documents and teaching guides
- [annefrank.org](http://annefrank.org)**
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## **Anne Frank Center at the University of South Carolina**

- Free lesson plans and classroom activities — virtual tours
  - The Anne Frank Youth Network — a national and global initiative to bring students into contact with one another, and to train, foster and support leadership. (Open to HS students and older.)
- [annefrankcenter.com](http://annefrankcenter.com)**
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## **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

- Standards-aligned lesson plans
  - Printable worksheets and primary sources
  - Survivor testimony videos
  - Professional development resources
- [ushmm.org](http://ushmm.org)**
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## **Facing History and Ourselves**

- Curriculum collections on identity, community and moral choice
  - Classroom discussion strategies
  - Writing prompts and reflection tools
  - Multimedia resources
- [facinghistory.org](http://facinghistory.org)**
- 

## **USC Shoah Foundation**

- Searchable survivor testimony archive
  - Classroom-ready video clips
  - Inquiry-based lesson plans
  - Digital storytelling tools
- [sfi.usc.edu](http://sfi.usc.edu)**
- 

## **Echoes and Reflections**

- Free downloadable Holocaust curriculum
  - Printable lesson plans and classroom materials
  - Interactive maps and timelines
  - Educator webinars
- [echoesandreflections.org](http://echoesandreflections.org)**
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## **Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center**

- Downloadable educator guides (Interrupted Lives, Resistance — They Fought Back, In Our Voices)
  - Stand Up / Be an Upstander classroom activities
  - Virtual field trips and digital teaching trunks
  - Confronting Antisemitism in Schools Toolkit
  - Holocaust & Genocide Resource Guide aligned to Illinois mandates
  - Social-emotional learning and art-based reflection activities
- [ilholocaustmuseum.org](http://ilholocaustmuseum.org)**
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# Illinois and Chicago Public School Alignment

## Grades 6 – 8

- SS.6-8.IS.1.MdC.** Ask essential and focused questions that consider multiple perspectives and will lead to independent research.
- 
- SS.6-8.IS.1.MC.** Determine sources representing multiple points of view and diversity of authorship that will assist in organizing a research plan.
- 
- SS.6-8.IS.2.MdC.** Determine the credibility of sources based upon their origin, authority and context.
- 
- SS.6-8.CV.2.MCa.** Analyze how the application of laws and the protection, granting or denial of individual and collective rights have impacted participation and powers of various groups of people.
- 
- SS.6-8.H.1.MdC.** Analyze connections and disconnections among events and developments in broader historical contexts and identify the effects of events on groups of people who have been marginalized.

## Grades 9 – 12

- SS.9-12.IS.2.** Develop culturally informed, student-driven supporting questions that contribute to inquiry and evaluate the purpose of supporting questions in the research and inquiry process.
- 
- SS.9-12.IS.3.** Develop new supporting and essential questions by primary and secondary investigation, collaboration and use of sources that reflect diverse perspectives (e.g., political, cultural, socioeconomic, race, religious, gender).
- 
- SS.9-12.IS.5.** Gather and evaluate information from multiple primary and secondary sources that reflect the perspectives and experiences of multiple groups, including marginalized groups.
- 
- SS.9-12.IS.11.** Use interdisciplinary lenses to identify local, regional, state, natural or global concerns and anticipate the outcome possible solutions might have on all impacted communities, including marginalized communities.
- 
- SS.9-12.CV.1.** Distinguish between the rights, roles, powers and responsibilities of individuals and institutions in the political system and analyze the marginalization of multiple groups and perspectives in that system.
- 
- SS.9-12.H.13.** Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.
- 
- SS.9-12.H.5.** Analyze the factors and historical context, including overarching movements, that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

# Essential Questions (CPS) Aligned to the Exhibition

## GRADE 5

- How do people work together to create a strong community?
- How do we form and shape our identities?
- What can people do to resist or challenge prejudice and injustice?
- How can people cope with anxiety and stress?
- How do authors build and sustain readers' interests?
- How do humans impact the environment?

## GRADE 6

- What makes a hero?
- How do people's life experiences shape the rules they live by?
- How does culture affect our perspective?
- How do we learn to see different perspectives?

## GRADE 7

- How do culture, time and place influence the development of identity?
- What is the power of one voice against institutional oppression?
- What does it mean to be free?

## GRADE 8

- What is home?
- How do we find the truth?
- How can we ensure our world is preserved for future generations?
- What is the responsibility of the individual to take a stand?

## GRADE 9

- Who are we in relation to other people?
- How does our view of reality shape our understanding and our actions?
- How can inquiry-based research help us tackle complex questions and problems?
- How do human actions affect our communities and our world?
- How can we really understand the consequences of our decisions?

## GRADE 10

- To what extent am I defined by my culture?
- What is the difference between the face I see and the face I present to others?

## GRADE 11

- What drives who gets to tell their story and who gets silenced?
- What is the benefit of comparing who I was yesterday to who I am today?
- How do stories help us to understand ourselves and make sense of the world?

## GRADE 12

- How do our relationships — with our families, our communities and the world around us — shape our identities?

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