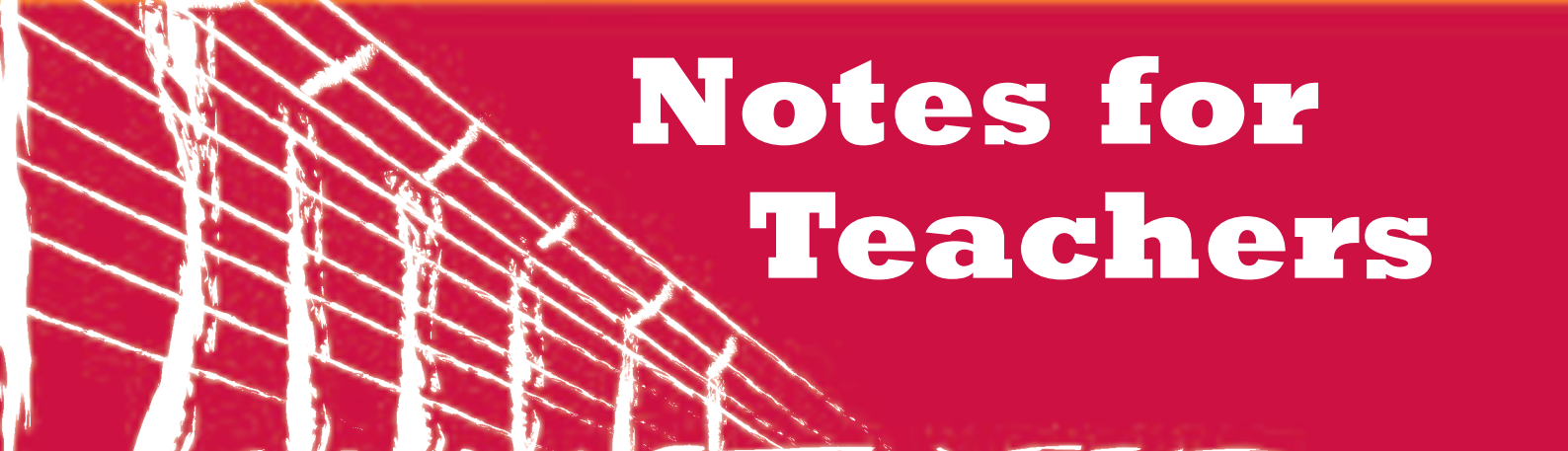


Martin and Erica's Journey



**Notes for
Teachers**





Martin's mother
and father



Martin and Erica



Martin's maternal
grandparents



Background

Martin and Erica's Journey is based on the memories of Martin Stern, a Holocaust survivor now living in the UK. Martin was a young child when the German Nazis invaded the Netherlands in 1940 and he went on to survive the Westerbork transit camp and the Theresienstadt ghetto, in the then Czechoslovakia.

The publication focuses on Martin's testimony and provides a human perspective of this catastrophic period of history. The language and content are appropriate for Year 6 students upwards and focus on survival rather than horrific descriptions of the camps. Martin gives moving descriptions of those adults who put their own lives at risk to help him and his younger sister, as well as providing details of his early life. There are some images in the book, which can be used by teachers with their pupils.

Lesson ideas

Martin and Erica's Journey lends itself to use in History lessons and literacy hour, as well as encouraging pupils to reflect on lessons for citizenship.

Martin and his family

It is important that pupils understand that Martin was a young boy who had committed no crime, but was persecuted due to prejudice and bigotry. Allow your pupils time to look at the family photos of Martin and his sister (*Martin and Erica's Journey*, page 22). Encourage them to answer these questions with supporting evidence from the photos, the aim being to move away from stereotypical responses and realise that we are all unique human beings:

- Can you tell by looking at a person where they are from?
- Can you tell what religion a person is?
- How are these photos similar to photos you may have at home of your family?



People who helped

A number of adults did their best to help Martin and Erica. Your pupils could create a wall display focusing on those individuals.

Pupils should identify:

- Who each person was
- How and when they helped
- What risk they were running and what happened to them

Encourage your class to think about why more people did not try and hide or help Jewish people. They may find it useful to remember what happened to Jo Rademaker when doing this.



People who didn't do anything

Martin talks about the German people he sees through the glass door in the train station in Germany, how they were carrying on with their own lives and not paying any attention to the Jewish people in the room next door. By this point Martin and the other people would have been malnourished, and quite dirty after their journey. Ask your class to work in small groups and discuss the following:

- Why did the German people in the railway station ignore the Jewish people?
- Could the German people have done anything to help, or was the situation too difficult?
- Why do we sometimes ignore unpleasant things we see taking place, rather than get involved in trying to change them?

This may be extended into a broader citizenship activity looking at how your class can play a part in challenging prejudice when they see it happening. They may want to create a school guide to 'Looking out for others'.

Pedagogical guidance

Martin and Erica's Journey is a Holocaust related resource for Year 6 students and above. It is suggested that the book be read by students in small groups or read by the teacher with the whole class. Some of the content could also be included on a school's Visual Learning Environment. *Martin and Erica's Journey* can also be used alongside a similar publication, *Paul's Journey*, and can help create an understanding of the different experiences survivors had.

There are a number of pedagogical issues all teachers should consider prior to teaching about the Holocaust, with special consideration needed for work with primary age children. The Holocaust was an unprecedented episode, affecting much of continental Europe and resulting in the murder of approximately 6 million Jews, including 1.5 million children. When delivering lessons to younger students it is essential that materials are age appropriate and do not include the more graphic and disturbing images of the camps, ghettos or *Aktions*. Pupils should be left with the beginning of an understanding of what happened, to be built upon in their later schooling.

For a comprehensive breakdown of pedagogical guidelines visit the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research website www.holocausttaskforce.org and go to the section entitled 'For Teachers'.



Notes



A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes, corresponding to the three images on the left.

