

Foreword

The film *Schindler's List* focuses on the years of the Holocaust—a time when millions of Jews and other men, women, and children were murdered solely because of their ancestry. It is one of the darkest chapters in human history. Yet an appalling number of people, young and old, know little if anything about it. Even today the world has not yet learned the lesson of those terrible years. There are far too many places where hate, intolerance, and genocide still exist. Thus *Schindler's List* is no less a “Jewish story” or a “German story” than it is a human story. And its subject matter applies to every generation. *Schindler's List* is simply about racial hatred—which is the state of mind that attacks not what makes us people but what makes us different from each other. It is my hope that *Schindler's List* will awaken and sustain an awareness of such evil and inspire this generation and future generations to seek an end to racial hatred. Facing History and Ourselves developed this study guide to inform that journey by helping students make essential connections between the past and the present.

Steven Spielberg
Amblin Entertainment, Inc.



Facing History and Ourselves is a national educational organization devoted to teaching about the dangers of indifference and the value of civility by helping schools confront the complexities of history in ways that promote critical and creative thinking about the challenges we face and the opportunities we have for positive change. It focuses on the events that led to the Holocaust and the results of policies of genocide. Those grim histories help students recognize that our freedom is not the result of “outside forces” but a positive outcome of our own courage and resolve. Facing History also encourages students to relate that history to their own lives by exploring issues of identity, group behavior, and racial and ethnic hatred. With the help of the Facing History staff and resource speakers, teachers who participate in the program learn to use the tools of the humanities—inquiry, analysis, and interpretation—to analyze the events that threaten democracy and turn neighbor against neighbor. At workshops and follow-up sessions, those teachers are offered a wide range of materials that engage and challenge their students’ most advanced thinking and promote individual reflection and group discussion. These materials can be used to supplement or enrich existing courses.

Facing History is committed to producing and teaching materials that further democratic values and beliefs. It is also committed to prevention. We believe that unexamined prejudices, myths, and misinformation threaten the nation and its future. We therefore encourage students to look, listen, read, and think critically. And we constantly challenge them to complicate their thinking by not accepting simple solutions to complex questions. Facing History, writes one high school teacher, is a program that “honors duality, process and product, head and heart, history and ethics.” It helps teachers move their students from thought to judgment and ultimately to participation. This study guide uses the film *Schindler's List* to stimulate and inform that process.

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