

Lesson plan – “MAUS II.” by Art Spiegelman¹

Time: 45 min. – some learners will require at least two 45 minutes lessons

Level of English: A2/B1

Skills:

- speaking (picture description with questions, brainstorming – mind map)
- reading (extract from the graphic novel)
- writing (writing into the speech bubbles, ...)

Methods: discussion, brainstorming (mind map), silent reading, creative writing, group work

Materials: cover of the book, vocabulary exercise, modified excerpts, prepared tasks for each excerpt, picture of the system of identification in German camps

Aims:

- to evoke interest in reading outside of the English lessons
- to introduce Holocaust

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to,

discuss living conditions in concentration camps, **understand** the horrors of the Holocaust, **create** and **fill in** blank spaces in the graphic novel

Introduction: 10 minutes

- **Picture description** (5 min.)
 - Students look at the cover of the book and answer some questions (could be done in pairs, small groups or as a class – I’ve opted for pair work)
 - Questions:
 - What emotions do you feel from the picture?
 - What can you see in the picture?
 - What animals are in the picture? How do we know? Who do they represent and why?
 - What are they wearing?
 - What are the mice feeling?
 - Who is the cat at the top of the picture?
 - What is today’s topic?
- **Mind map** (5 min.)
 - The students create together a class mind map on Holocaust
 - They should create a well-structured and detailed mind map – the students can use dictionaries for harder words, however, they would be encouraged to use vocabulary they already know
 - Into the mind map they can include the literature or cinematography connected to the topic

Lesson development: 30 minutes – group work (4 groups, ideally 3-5 students)

- **pre-reading** (5 min.)
 - pre-teaching vocabulary – words from every excerpts
 - students match words and pictures to the definitions, they check it with their group
- **silent reading and group work** (15-20 min.)
 - individual work - students read short excerpts from the book about various situations in the concentration camps - food, life at Auschwitz and Birkenau, selections, cremations

¹ This lesson is suitable even for History lessons (hard CLIL).

- group discussion, task completion – the students discuss the text and then complete various tasks connected to each excerpt
- 1st option: The groups would get all of the excerpts and they would always pick only 2-3 tasks for each excerpt
- 2nd option: They would get only one excerpt and they would do all of the tasks
- **group work presentation** (max. 5 min.)
 - all the excerpts from all the groups would be exhibited on a few desks, students would individually go through them and look at the ideas of others

End of the lesson: 5 minutes

- **Evaluation and group discussion**
 - teacher starts a discussion, the students who want to speak can, those who don't want are not asked to speak
 - possible questions if the students would not lead the discussion by themselves
 - How do you feel after the lesson?
 - How did you like the graphic novel?
 - Do you think something similar can happen today?
 - Have you been to Auschwitz?
 - How this experience affected the survivors and how it affected their children?
 - Teacher shows them a picture with the symbols that the prisoners wore in concentration camps
 - Were there only Jews in the concentration camps?
 - Why the other groups were also in the camps?

Additional activities:

If your learners show interest and would like to continue learning about Holocaust or the WWII., you can participate in The Butterfly Project with them. You can find more information about it here:

<https://thebutterflyprojectnow.org/>

Resources:

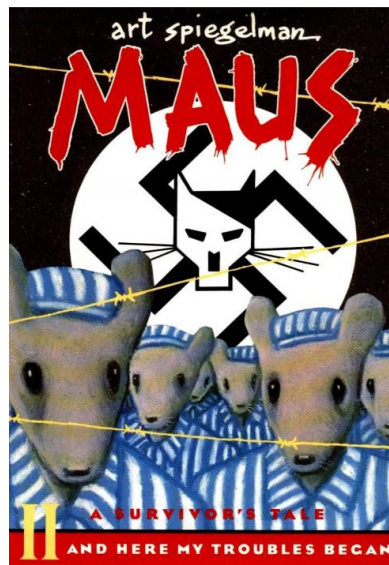
SPEIGELMAN, Art. *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here my Troubles Began*. Reprint Edition. New York City: Pantheon, 1992. ISBN 978-0679729778.

GERMANCAMPS. System of Identification German Camps. In: Wikipedia [online]. [Cit. 13.03.2021].

Available from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wikipedia_system_of_identification_German_camps.png#filelinks

COVER OF THE GRAPHIC NOVEL



PRE-TEACHING VOCABULARY:

Match the words with their definitions:

1. Roots



2. Sawdust



3. Prisoner



4. Trench



5. Graves



6. Gasoline/Gas



a) a part of a plant that is underground, it provides support and brings water to the rest of the plant

b) petrol

c) a person kept in a place

d) a long, narrow ditch (*dúra)

e) a ditch for a coffin or dead body, usually with stone above it

f) pieces of wood

FOOD

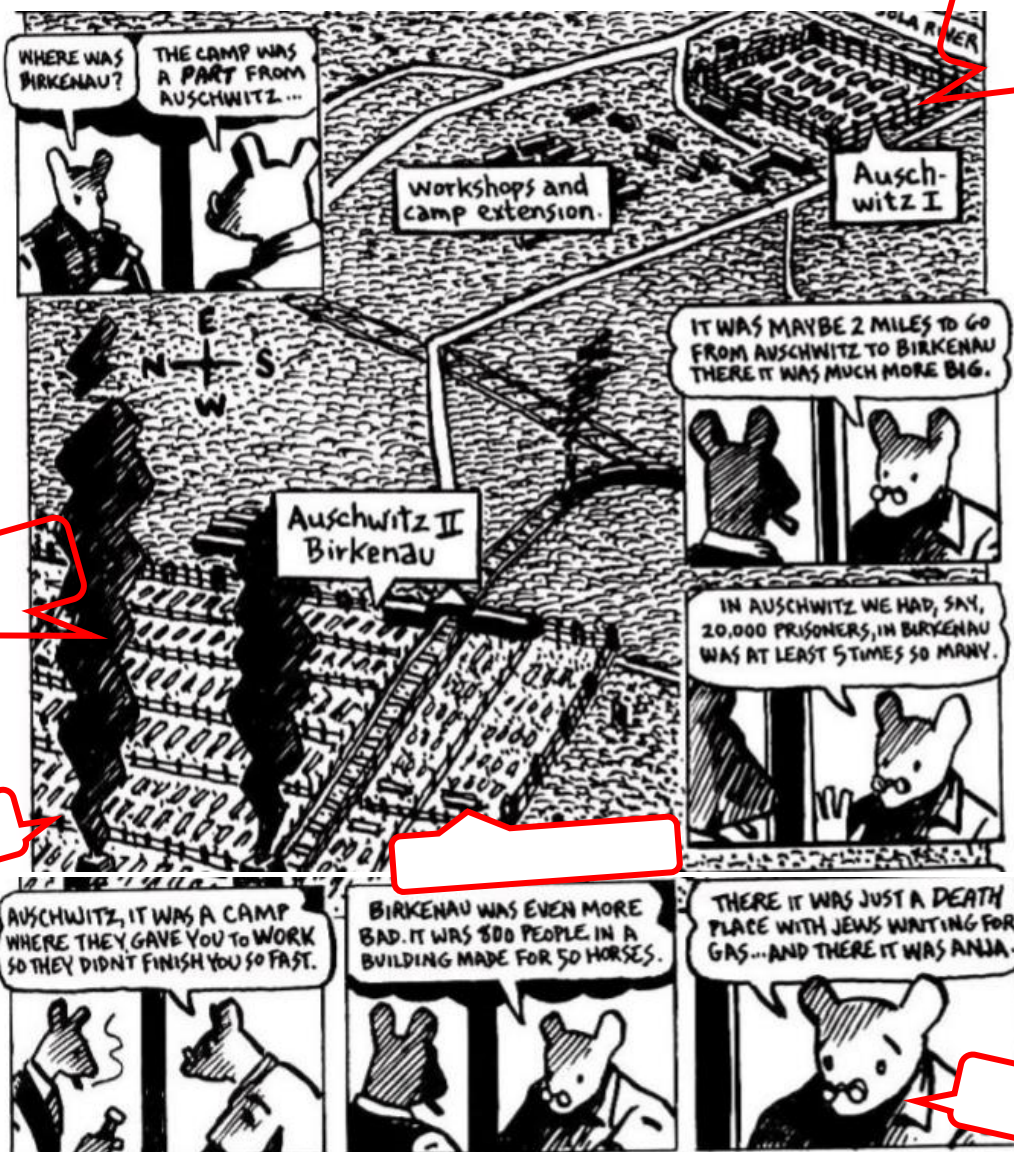


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Tasks

1. Fill in the speech/thought bubbles
2. What is Vladek's story about? What did he experience?
3. Write down 5 key words to the topic of food in Holocaust
4. What do you think would happen if someone stole your food bowl?
5. Based on the text and pictures, clarify the living conditions of Jews in concentration camps

AUSCHWITZ I. vs. AUSCHWITZ II. BIRKENAU



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Tasks

1. Fill in the speech/thought bubbles
2. Why was it worse in Birkenau (Auschwitz II.) than in Auschwitz I.?
3. What do you think Vladek felt being so close and at the same time so far away from his wife Anja?
4. Why do we see two huge smokes in Birkenau? What does it represent and which building it was coming from?
5. Based on the text and the pictures, discuss the biggest difference between those two parts of Auschwitz?

SELECTIONS



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Tasks

1. Fill in the speech/thought bubbles
2. Why were the officers examining the jews?
3. How did the „healthy“ prisoners look like? What were they used for after the selection?
4. How often did they examine them?
5. Create a story/comic strip/picture/video/... where you express what happened to the jews after the S.S. wrote down their number and they were sent to the other side?

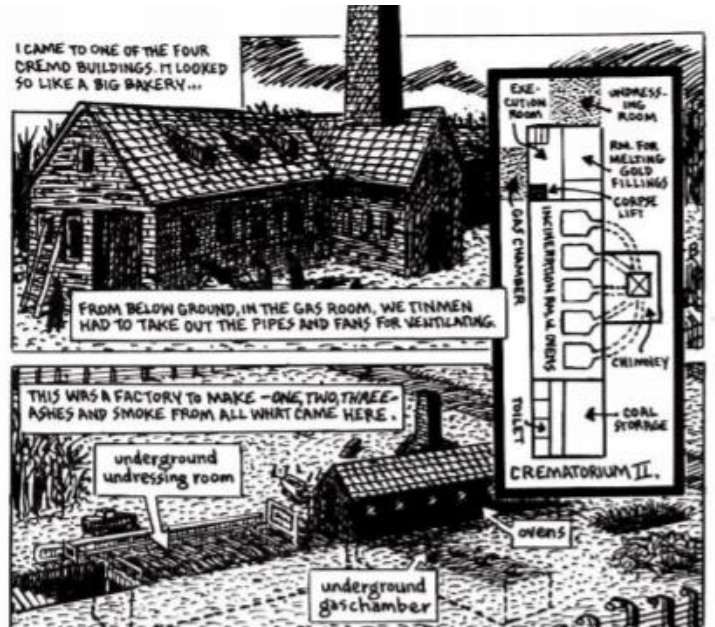
CREMATION



PRISONERS WHAT WORKED THERE POURED GASOLINE OVER THE LIVE ONES AND THE DEAD ONES.



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SPECIAL PRISONERS WORKED HERE SEPARATE. THEY GOT BETTER BREAD, BUT EACH FEW MONTHS THEY ALSO WERE SENT UP THE CHIMNEY. ONE FROM THEM SHOWED ME EVERYTHING HOW IT WAS.



Tasks

1. Fill in the speech/thought bubbles
2. Describe with your own words the place Vladek is talking about, also write down what you already know.
3. What do you think is the most important part of these pictures/text?
4. What could the Jews feel when burying other Jews? Why did they do it?
5. Write down all the question you have

SYSTEM OF IDENTIFICATION IN GERMAN CAMPS

CATEGORY



+ Additional designation



+ ID

