

Holocaust Historical Fiction Narrative Writing

Recommended Grade Level

Grade 9 (MYP4)

MYP Criterion Level

MYP5

MYP Assessment Criteria

Criterion B: Organizing

Criterion C: Producing text

Criterion D: Using Language (i, iii only)

MYP Command Terms Used

create, organise, select, use

MYP Global Context

Orientation in space and time

MYP Key Concept

Perspective

MYP Related Concepts

Genre, Context, Character, Setting, Point of View, Self-Expression

Statement of Inquiry

(Write your statement of inquiry below)

Key Skills and Topics

- Narrative writing
- Using imagery and sensory detail in setting description
- Indirect characterization (STEAL methods)
- Understanding the Holocaust (key events, causes, lived experiences of survivors)
- Incorporating research and historical facts into narrative fiction
- Genre conventions of historical fictions

Prior Knowledge Needed

- Some familiarity with historical fiction and/or period films from novels and films
- Prior experience with narrative writing tasks in previous years
- Dialogue writing (formatting and grammar rules)
- Elements of plot structure
- Some prior understanding of World War II and the Holocaust (basic facts)

ATL Skills

- Thinking: Creative thinking
 - Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products or processes
 - create original works and ideas; use existing works and ideas in new ways

Scaffolding

- The elements of plot structure: exposition, inciting incident/conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution.
- Brainstorming through pre-writing and visual stimuli
- Graphic organizers and models

Assessment Description

In this assessment, students will first plan, and then write, a historical fiction narrative centered on a character living during the Holocaust. Through this task, they will demonstrate their understanding of genre conventions, characterisation techniques, and the historical context and setting.

Assessment Criterion B: Organizing

	Achievement Level Descriptor (MYP5)	Task Specific Descriptor
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.	
1-2	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes minimal use of organizational structures though these may not always serve the context and intention ii. organizes opinions and ideas with a minimal degree of coherence and logic iii. makes minimal use of referencing and formatting tools to create a presentation style that may not always be suitable to the context and intention. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes a minimal use of organizational structures (such as paragraphs, sequencing of events, and narrative flow), though these may not always serve the context and intext of a historical fiction narrative ii. organizes ideas and events with a minimal degree of logic, using choppy or confusing transitions between sentences and paragraphs iii. makes limited use of spacing and formatting conventions to create a historical fiction narrative (e.g., missing title, inconsistent spacing, few or no paragraphs, incorrectly formatted references) that may not always be suitable to the context and intention of historical fiction.
3-4	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes adequate use of organizational structures that serve the context and intention ii. organizes opinions and ideas with some degree of coherence and logic iii. makes adequate use of referencing and formatting tools to create a presentation style suitable to the context and intention. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes adequate use of organizational structures (such as paragraphs, sequencing of events, and narrative flow) that serve the context and intext of a historical fiction narration ii. organizes ideas and events with some degree of coherence logic, using adequate transitions between sentences and paragraphs iii. makes adequate use of spacing and formatting conventions to create a historical fiction narrative (e.g. title might be present but not centered, some paragraphs may not be spaced or indented correctly, a few references may be formatted incorrectly or missing)
5-6	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes competent use of organizational structures that serve the context and intention ii. organizes opinions and ideas in a coherent and logical manner with ideas building on each other iii. makes competent use of referencing and formatting tools to create a presentation style suitable to the context and intention. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes competent use of organizational structures (such as paragraphs, sequencing of events, and narrative flow) that serve the context and intext of a historical fiction narration ii. organizes ideas and events in a coherent and logical manner, with ideas building on each other in well-connected sentences and paragraphs iii. makes competent use of spacing and formatting conventions to create a historical fiction narrative (e.g., centered title, well-spaced paragraphs, most references follow accurate citation conventions with a few inconsistencies or minor errors)
7-8	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes sophisticated use of organizational structures that serve the context and intention effectively ii. effectively organizes opinions and ideas in a sustained, coherent and logical manner with ideas building on each other in a sophisticated way iii. makes excellent use of referencing and formatting tools to create an effective presentation style. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes sophisticated use of organizational structures (such as paragraphs, sequencing of events, and narrative flow) that effectively serve the context and intext of a historical fiction narration ii. effectively organizes ideas and events in a sustained, coherent and logical manner, with ideas building on each other with sophistication in sentences and paragraphs iii. makes excellent use of spacing and formatting conventions to create an effective historical fiction narrative (e.g., centered title, well-spaced paragraphs, accurate use of citation conventions in referencing with 1-2 minor errors).

Assessment Criterion C: *Producing text*

	Achievement Level Descriptor (MYP5)	Task Specific Descriptor
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.	
1-2	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. produces texts that demonstrate limited personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates a limited degree of insight, imagination and sensitivity and minimal exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas ii. makes minimal stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating limited awareness of impact on an audience iii. selects few relevant details and examples to develop ideas. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. produces a historical fiction story that demonstrates limited personal engagement with the creative process and the historical context; demonstrates a limited degree of insight, imagination and sensitivity and minimal exploration of, and little or no critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas relating to the Holocaust ii. makes minimal use of stylistic and literary devices (e.g. sensory description, figurative language, dialogue, tone, symbolism), demonstrating limited awareness of impact on audience iii. selects few relevant and specific details from history to develop the setting, context, characters, and plot.
3-4	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. produces texts that demonstrate adequate personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates some insight, imagination and sensitivity and some exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas ii. makes some stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating adequate awareness of impact on an audience iii. selects some relevant details and examples to develop ideas. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. produces a historical fiction story that demonstrates adequate personal engagement with the creative process and the historical context; demonstrates some insight, imagination and sensitivity and some exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas relating to the Holocaust ii. makes some use of stylistic and literary devices (e.g. sensory description, figurative language, dialogue, tone, symbolism), demonstrating adequate awareness of impact on audience iii. selects some relevant and specific details from history to develop the setting, context, characters, and plot.
5-6	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. produces texts that demonstrate considerable personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates considerable insight, imagination and sensitivity and substantial exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas ii. makes thoughtful stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating good awareness of impact on an audience iii. selects sufficient relevant details and examples to develop ideas. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. produces a historical fiction story that demonstrates considerable personal engagement with the creative process and the historical context; demonstrates considerable insight, imagination and sensitivity and substantial exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas relating to the Holocaust ii. makes thoughtful use of stylistic and literary devices (e.g. sensory description, figurative language, dialogue, tone, symbolism), demonstrating good awareness of impact on audience iii. selects sufficient relevant and specific details from history to develop the setting, context, characters, and plot.
7-8	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. produces texts that demonstrate a high degree of personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates a high degree of insight, imagination and sensitivity and perceptive exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas ii. makes perceptive stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating good awareness of impact on an audience iii. selects extensive relevant details and examples to develop ideas with precision. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. produces a historical fiction story that demonstrates a high degree of personal engagement with the creative process and the historical context; demonstrates a high degree of insight, imagination and sensitivity and perceptive exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas relating to the Holocaust ii. makes perceptive use of stylistic and literary devices (e.g. sensory description, figurative language, dialogue, tone, symbolism), demonstrating good awareness of impact on audience iii. selects extensive relevant and specific details from history to develop the setting, context, characters, and plot.

Assessment Criterion D: Using language

	Achievement Level Descriptor (MYP5)	Task Specific Descriptor
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.	
1-2	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. uses a limited range of appropriate vocabulary and forms of expression ii. writes and speaks in an inappropriate register and style that do not serve the context and intention iii. uses grammar, syntax and punctuation with limited accuracy; errors often hinder communication iv. spells/writes and pronounces with limited accuracy; errors often hinder communication v. makes limited and/or inappropriate use of non-verbal communication techniques. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. uses a limited range of appropriate creative vocabulary (eg. verbs, adjective adverbs) and simplistic sentence structures, demonstrating a weak command of context-specific vocabulary (eg. ghetto, curfew) ii. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i> iii. demonstrates limited accuracy in grammar, syntax and punctuation (capitalization, tenses, punctuation), with frequent errors that hinder communication iv. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i> v. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i>
3-4	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. uses an adequate range of appropriate vocabulary, sentence structures and forms of expression ii. sometimes writes and speaks in a register and style that serve the context and intention iii. uses grammar, syntax and punctuation with some degree of accuracy; errors sometimes hinder communication iv. spells/writes and pronounces with some degree of accuracy; errors sometimes hinder communication v. makes some use of appropriate non-verbal communication techniques. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. uses an adequate range of appropriate creative vocabulary (eg. verbs, adjective, adverbs) and simple and complex sentence structures, demonstrating a developing command of context specific vocabulary (eg. deportation, rationing) ii. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i> iii. demonstrates some degree of accuracy in grammar, syntax and punctuation (capitalization, tenses, punctuation); errors sometimes hinder communication iv. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i> v. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i>
5-6	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. uses a varied range of appropriate vocabulary, sentence structures and forms of expression competently ii. writes and speaks competently in a register and style that serve the context and intention iii. uses grammar, syntax and punctuation with a considerable degree of accuracy; errors do not hinder effective communication iv. spells/writes and pronounces with a considerable degree of accuracy; errors do not hinder effective communication v. makes sufficient use of appropriate non-verbal communication techniques. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. uses a varied range of appropriate creative vocabulary (eg. verbs, adjectives, adverbs) and sentence structures, demonstrating a competent command context-specific vocabulary (eg. death march, collaborator) ii. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i> iii. demonstrates a considerable degree of accuracy in grammar, syntax and punctuation (capitalization, tenses, punctuation); errors do not hinder effective communication iv. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i> v. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i>
7-8	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. effectively uses a range of appropriate vocabulary, sentence structures and forms of expression ii. writes and speaks in a consistently appropriate register and style that serve the context and intention iii. uses grammar, syntax and punctuation with a high degree of accuracy; errors are minor and communication is effective iv. spells/writes and pronounces with a high degree of accuracy; errors are minor and communication is effective v. makes effective use of appropriate non-verbal communication techniques. 	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. effectively uses a range of appropriate creative vocabulary (eg. verbs, adjectives, adverbs) and sentence structures, demonstrating an excellent command of context-specific vocabulary (eg. Kapo, crematoria) ii. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i> iii. demonstrates a high degree of accuracy in grammar, syntax and punctuation (capitalization, tenses, punctuation); errors are minor and communication is effective iv. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i> v. <i>(not assessed in this task)</i>

Task-Specific Instructions

For this assessment, you will write a **historical fiction narrative** set during the Holocaust. You will use a variety of **descriptive writing** techniques and **characterisation** strategies to immerse the reader in the time and place your story takes place in.

For this task, you **do not** need to write a complete story with a resolution. Instead, you will write **one dramatic scene** based on a specific event and prompt.

Before we begin, watch this video on [historical fiction](#) and familiarise yourself with key features of the genre.

1. Selecting

Select one of the four prompts listed below. Then, read/view the sources and create notes on the following:

- Key words
- Strong emotions
- Memorable images or setting details
- Other facts or details you might use in your story

Auschwitz Concentration Camps

PROMPT # 1: The protagonist is an inmate of Auschwitz. One day, they return to the barracks after a day of hard labor and discover that a close family member is missing. Write a scene about the character's reaction to the situation. What are the character's thoughts and emotions? What actions do they take to find their missing loved one? What does the character see and hear?

[Three Survivors Remember Auschwitz, 80 Years Later](#) (video)

[Tales from Auschwitz: Survivor Stories](#) (text)

[Never Shall I Forget](#) by Elie Wiesel (poem)

[Auschwitz: 80 years after its liberation, three survivors tell their stories](#) (text)

[War and Remembrance - "Selection" Scene at Auschwitz-Birkenau](#) (movie excerpt)

[Auschwitz Survivors Tell Their Stories](#) (video)

The Liberation of Concentration Camps

PROMPT # 2: The protagonist is a soldier in an army who has arrived at a concentration camp. Write about the character's experiences when they enter the camp and interact with the inmates for the first time. What are the character's thoughts and emotions? What do they see and hear? What actions do they take to help the prisoners?

[A Holocaust Survivor Recalls The Day He Was Liberated](#) (video)

[Holocaust Survivors – First Steps in the DP Camps and a New Beginning](#) (video)

[Liberators and Survivors: The First Moments](#) (video)

[Witness account of liberation](#) (text)

[The Shocking Liberation of Auschwitz: Soviets 'Knew Nothing' as They Approached](#) (text)

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

PROMPT # 3: The protagonist is a resistance fighter in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Write a scene set during the battle. Where is the character (eg. a bunker, a street, behind a barricade, the sewers, etc.)? What are the character's thoughts and emotions? What do they see and hear? What actions do they take to fight the German soldiers?

[What Were Ghettos in the Holocaust? | Holocaust Explainer](#) (video)

[Remembering the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising](#) (text)

[Warsaw Ghetto: A survivor's tale](#)

[The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising | Key Historical Concepts](#) (video)

[The Great Deportation in the Warsaw Ghetto - Abraham Lewin's Diary](#) (video)

[Poland: Warsaw Ghetto Uprising 75 years On](#) (video)

[How one person saved over 2,000 children from the Nazis](#) (video)

The German Occupation of France

PROMPT # 4: Write a scene about a character in a German-occupied city in France who gets delayed buying food and is now racing to reach home in time for the 9:00 pm curfew. What are the character's thoughts and emotions? What do they see and hear? What obstacles or challenges do they face?

[Jews in France Under the German Occupation](#) (video)

[Child Memories from the Occupation and Liberation of Paris](#) (text)

[From pacifist to spy: WWII's surprising secret agent](#) (video)

[Life In France Under German Occupation](#) (video)

2. Character Profile

To write a good story, it is important to create a complex and fleshed out protagonist! Complete the “**Character Profile**” activity to help you plan and note down key details of your character's life.

3. Creative Writing Practice

To develop strong, compelling narratives, writers must craft **vivid descriptions** using all **five senses** to bring a scene to life. They should also use strong characterisation by incorporating the five **STEAL** methods:

Speech (what the character says)

Thoughts (what the character thinks or feels)

Effect on others (how others react to them)

Actions (what the character does)

Looks (how the character appears)

To help you build these skills, complete the “**Sensory Description & STEAL Methods Practice**” task. This two-part exercise will help you develop several short scenes relating to your story.

4. Drafting

Now it's time to write your own historical fiction piece! As you write, be sure to **refer back to your chosen prompt** to ensure you have met the task requirements. Remember, you are **not** writing a complete narrative, only a scene! Don't be afraid to end on a cliffhanger.

Refer to the following vocabulary lists to help you write:

- [Negative & Depressing Vocabulary List](#)
- [Character Traits List](#)
- [Master List of Physical Descriptions](#)
- [Feelings Vocabulary List](#)

Be sure to use your ideas and writing from the previous “**Character Profile**” and “**Sensory Description & Steal Methods Practice**” tasks to help you write.

Optional: Before you begin drafting your story, read through the “**Model Historical Fiction Narrative**” and pay close attention to the descriptive and characterisation techniques used.

5. Revision and Referencing

Revise your writing using this [editing checklist](#) to proofread for spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting and organisation. Make sure to add **references** for research sources using the appropriate citation conventions and format.