Evidence and Memory

Building an argument for Holocaust education

SS24.HOS.21d "Develop an argument regarding the need for education about the Holocaust and how museums, memorials, and organizations can be used to preserve memory and combat Holocaust denial.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the passage's main claim, circle two kinds of historical evidence, and number the different ways museums, memorials, and organizations help preserve memory or counter denial.

Why Places and Sources Matter

(1) At the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland, visitors encounter preserved barracks and shoes taken from people deported to the camp. More than one million people were murdered at Auschwitz, most of them Jews. Across Europe, Nazi Germany and its collaborators murdered six million Jews during the Holocaust. Education about this history is necessary because denial and distortion can spread when people cannot test claims against evidence. A museum can connect an object to records of its origin and to survivor testimony. Those sources show that the shoes are not just symbols: they belonged to people whose lives were violently interrupted.

(2) A memorial has a different job. Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe creates a public place to remember victims, including people whose names many visitors may never learn. Its presence in the center of a city makes remembrance part of public life rather than a private choice. Yet a memorial alone cannot explain how historians know what happened. An organization such as USC Shoah Foundation preserves survivor and witness video testimonies and creates educational resources using them. Together, public remembrance and accessible evidence can resist attempts to erase victims or dismiss their experiences.

(3) A skeptic might say that a textbook summary is enough, so a museum visit or an online archive adds little. But a brief summary cannot show every source behind its account, and a memorial can make the loss visible in public space. A preserved object, a transport record, and a recorded testimony can be examined together rather than accepted on trust. This does not mean every false claim deserves a debate. It means students can ask where information came from, compare independent sources, and explain why denial conflicts with documented history. Education joins evidence to remembrance, helping people defend the truth and recognize the human cost of antisemitism.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the passage's main reason for teaching students to examine evidence about the Holocaust?

2. How can a museum make a stronger case against denial than an object displayed without any explanation?

3. What does a public memorial add to Holocaust education, and why is a memorial not enough on its own?

4. How could USC Shoah Foundation's work help a student respond to Holocaust denial?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A school board says a single textbook page is enough to teach the Holocaust. Write one paragraph arguing for or against this plan. Explain at least two different roles that museums, memorials, or organizations could play, name a specific form of historical evidence, and respond to the board's claim without copying a sentence from the passage.

Evidence and Memory

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the passage's main claim, circle two kinds of historical evidence, and number the different ways museums, memorials, and organizations help preserve memory or counter denial. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the passage's main reason for teaching students to examine evidence about the Holocaust?	**Examining evidence helps students test claims and explain why Holocaust denial or distortion conflicts with documented history.**
2	How can a museum make a stronger case against denial than an object displayed without any explanation?	**A museum can connect an object, such as a shoe, to records of its origin and survivor testimony, allowing visitors to examine supporting sources.**
3	What does a public memorial add to Holocaust education, and why is a memorial not enough on its own?	**It makes remembrance part of public life and honors victims. On its own, it cannot explain the historical evidence for what happened.**
4	How could USC Shoah Foundation's work help a student respond to Holocaust denial?	**Its preserved survivor and witness video testimonies give students accounts they can examine alongside other sources, such as transport records, to challenge false claims.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A single textbook page is not enough to teach the Holocaust. It may report that Nazi Germany and its collaborators murdered six million Jews, but students also need to see how historians support that account. A museum can connect preserved belongings to transport records, while USC Shoah Foundation makes survivor and witness testimony available for education. Students could compare a transport record with a recorded account to test a denier's false claim. A memorial also gives victims a place in public memory. These experiences do not replace a textbook; they help students understand its evidence and human meaning.

Accept arguments for a different plan if they address the board's claim, accurately explain at least two distinct roles, and identify a relevant historical source. Students need not claim that visiting a site is the only way to learn from a museum or memorial.