



## Sharing the Art and Story of Holocaust Survivor Esther Nisenthal Krinitz

### CHILDREN ESCAPING WAR AND CONFLICT

**Resources:** [Memories of Survival](#) (book), [Fabric of Survival Gallery](#), [Fabric of Survival: An Interactive Gallery](#) (Sutori), [“Meet Esther” close read](#) (PDF), [Brothers in Hope](#) (book), T-chart [Similarities & Differences](#) for compare/contrast (provided or fillable PDF), [Children Escaping War and Conflict](#) (Sutori)

**Grades:** 5-12

**Subject Areas:** History, Geography, Social Studies, Literature, English/ Language Arts

**Topics/Themes:** Compare and Contrast, Basic Human Needs, Unaccompanied Minors, Children Surviving War and Conflict Family Separation, Human Migration, Social Studies, World History, Current Events

#### OVERVIEW:

All humans require basic physiological, safety and social needs for survival, including water, food, clothing, good health and a safe shelter, as well as love from family and friends. During natural disasters, war or other traumatic events, these items can become scarce, causing people to seek them for survival and leaving children of war and other conflicts very vulnerable.

In this literary compare-and-contrast lesson, students will understand the basic human needs and will be able to draw similarities between Esther’s and Garangs’s survival stories. Students will also be able to make comparisons to current events.

#### BACKGROUND:

**World War II:** World War II brought many changes to the lives of children throughout Europe and Asia. Beyond fear and confusion, many children in Europe were separated from their families and thrown into dangerous situations. Sometimes these separations were temporary, but unfortunately very often they were separated permanently. Separations occurred during evacuations and deportations, when children were either sent into hiding or given to neighbors for safekeeping, when children fled from home in the chaos of war, or when children were orphaned. Tens of thousands of children were suddenly alone and left to navigate alone in order to survive.

**Memories of Survival:** Esther was 15 years old when she refused to leave her village with the other Jews who had been ordered to report to a nearby train station. Instead, she and her younger sister Mania left their family to search for safety, assuming the identities of Catholic farmgirls. The two young girls were scared and vulnerable. Throughout their journey, they lived in fear of being discovered and killed. Over the next two years, the sisters were forced to bury the sadness of losing everybody they loved in order to have a chance to live.

**The Civil War in South Sudan:** Civil war in the Sudan has been going on for decades, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 2 million people and displacement of more than 4 million, many of them children. In 1987, about 20,000 young boys fled their homes and walked more than 1,000 miles in search of food, water and safety, half of them dying before they reached refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya. The survivors came to be known as the Lost Boys.

***Brothers In Hope:***

The author, Mary Williams, bases this fictional picture book on the harrowing, real-life experiences of a band of Sudanese boys, between the ages of 8 and 15, who walked nearly 1000 miles searching for a safe refuge. Told through the eyes and voice of eight-year-old Garang Deng, *Brothers in Hope* tells his story of survival. Traveling by night, foraging for food, plagued by violence, hunger, illness, and death, the journey is a perilous one. Although the book's real-life story took place over 20 years ago, many young people in South Sudan are having similar struggles as the young nation continues to rebuild.

**Other Wars and How They Affect Children (Current Events):** The annual report by the United Nations refugee agency found that in 2017, 68.5 million people remained forcibly displaced from their homes by war and persecution. To learn more about current events and some of the most profound conflicts that are displacing children and families, visit [Children Escaping War and Conflict](#) (Sutori) for this lesson plan.

OBJECTIVE:

**Students will be able to:**

- Understand selected historical events and how they contributed to family separation.
- Understand the basic human needs for survival.
- Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- Make connections to current events and articulate the similarities and differences.
- Reach a deeper understanding and be able to discuss global issues.

**LEARNING STANDARDS:**

- Recount stories, determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
- Describe characters in a story (e.g. their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
- Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).
- Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).
- Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

1. How were Esther and Mania's and Garang's stories of survival similar?
2. What were some of the hardships and dangers both Esther and Garang had to navigate?
3. How did the political events in Poland and Sudan limit access to basic needs of survival?
4. In recent history and current events, what are some of the conflicts and/or events that have caused family separation and hardship on children?
5. What are the basic requirements for survival? How do war, a natural disaster and other conflicts limit these needs?

**DISCUSSION STARTER:**

Below are the paragraphs from each story describing the moment when the girls (Esther and Mania) and Garang were forced to leave their villages on their own--and how on that one day, everything in their lives changed.

**Esther, age 15, and Mania, age 13 - Poland 1942**

[\*We Will All Perish\*](#) or "Leaving For Good" - [\*Memories of Survival\*](#) (book – Page 35): "October 15, 1942. We left our house for good and walked down to the road. Mottel sat in the front wagon holding the Torah. My parents went to join him while my brother helped my little sisters settle into the rear wagon with my aunt Trushel, her sister Golda, my uncle Ruven, and my five little cousins. Suddenly Mottel's daughter-in-law stood up and cried to my mother, 'Rachel, we will never come back! We will all perish!' Everyone began to cry. Mania and I followed quickly behind the woman who was to take us to Dombrowa and the house of Stefan, my father's friend. The wagons left for the Krasnik station, and we never saw our family again."

**Garang, age 8 - Sudan circa 2000**

"I was far from home tending my animals when my village was attacked. I could hear bangs like thunder and see flashing lights in the distance. Suddenly an airplane was circling above. Clouds of dust rose from the ground and bullets began to rain down on my herd. Many of the animals were killed. Others ran away in fear. My throat and eyes were full of dust, but I found my way to the forest, where I hid in the shadows of the trees.

When the storm of bullets passed, I ran back to my village to find my family, but everyone was gone. The houses were burning and everything was destroyed..."

**ACTIVITY: STORIES OF SURVIVAL: COMPARE AND CONTRAST**

**Activity Setting:** Classroom collaboration

**Materials:** [Memories of Survival](#) (book), [Brothers in Hope](#) (book), T-chart Similarities and Differences for compare/contrast (provided Page 5; also as [fillable PDF](#))

**Duration:** 45-60 minutes

1. Have students read *Memories of Survival* and *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*. You can divide the class into two teams, or if your students are assigned the books over time, the activities can be done individually or collaboratively.
2. On a whiteboard or chart paper, ask students to list the basic needs of survival (e.g., air/oxygen, water, food, shelter, sleep).
3. Ask the class to discuss the difference between what we need to survive and what we want.
4. In each of the stories, the sisters and the Lost Boys were helped on their journeys. How did people come to their aid?

Compare, contrast and discuss the factors that forced the children to leave their villages. Using a T-chart, have students find examples in the text that compare other aspects of the two survival stories. For example, all had to hide in the forest, and all had to seek shelter.

5. Ask students for examples of how the subjects of each story had to meet the basic needs of survival.
6. Ask students to look for examples of obstacles that threatened the safety of the characters in the story.
7. Debrief with the class and go over the similarities and differences of each story of survival.

### EXTENSIONS/ ENRICHMENT:

1. For younger students (grades 5-7): Ask leading questions such as: Find a passage in the story that describes a time the subject(s) were hungry, afraid of wild animals, witnessed injustice, were confronted by the military, rescued.
2. For older students (grades 8-12): Have a discussion about the stories and how similar situations are currently taking place around the world. For related articles visit [Children Escaping War and Conflict](#) (Sutori).
3. For older students (grades 8-12): Read one of the current events articles in the Sutori

or have your class find their own articles and discuss the driving forces that are creating unaccompanied minors and forced migration. How are the situations similar to Esther's and Garang's stories and how are they different?

4. Have students research the types of protections in place for refugee children and discuss their adequacy.

Visit the [Art and Remembrance](#) website:

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# SIMILARITIES & DIFFERENCES

Compare and contrast two stories of survival  
An Art & Remembrance Resource

Name:

Class:

Teacher:

Date:

Title 1:

Title 2:

Main Characters 1:

Main Characters 2:

Physiological Needs:

Physiological Needs:

Safety:

Safety:

Migration:

Migration:

Major Obstacles:

Major Obstacles: