

Module 1: 1968

Activity 4: "Normalization" and Exile

Compelling question: How does a society cope with invasion and oppression?

Overview: Teachers might use and adapt this activity as a stand alone exercise or in conjunction with other Module 1 activities. Also, we encourage you to explore Modules 2, 3, and 4 to design a comprehensive exploration of the 68, 77, 89 project.

As you design your students' learning experiences we suggest:

- Utilize the background resources for Module 1
- Previewing the selected primary and secondary resources
- Explore the instructional supports and selected vocabulary
- Adapt the lesson plans and performance assessments we provided for this activity

Focus: In this activity, students will explore oppression by pro-Soviet leadership and the process of fleeing Czechoslovakia.

Primary and Secondary Resources for this Activity

Oral History:

1. [George Malek](#) - In this < 2 minute clip titled “Leaving Czechoslovakia”, Malek recalls the dangers of fleeing the communist state.
2. [Melania Rakytiak](#) - In this 2 minute clip titled “Departure”, Rakytiak explains the difficulties of having family members who were loyal communists.
3. [Mila Saskova-Pierce](#) - In this 3 minute clip titled “Reasons for Leaving”, Sakova-Pierce recollects her motivation for leaving Czechoslovakia.

Socialism Realised:

3. [The Dilemma](#) - The short clip is from a 1990s Czech television program depicts a moral issue of a doctor under Soviet-controlled Czechoslovakia.
4. [What We Don't Talk About](#) - In this < 2 minute clip is from a 1980s Czech television program, a teacher and student have conflicting understandings on official travel.

Article from the Winter 2007-2008 Issue of *Slovo*.

5. [“Witness to History” \(Vladimira Hruskova Williams; Slovo 8 v.2\)](#) - When it was possible for Vladimira Hruskova Williams to return to Prague to visit her parents, she - like most Czechs and Slovaks - was stunned by what followed. **(The article is on pages 20-24 in the magazine and includes primary source photos).**

Support Resources

[Graphic Organizers](#): Create free, custom made graphic organizers including T-Charts, Venn Diagrams, Frayer Models and much more.

[Historical Thinking Prompts](#): The chart helps demonstrate historical thinking and has sentence frames to support the development of these skills.

[Document Analysis Organizers](#): Use these worksheets — for photos, written documents, artifacts, posters, maps, cartoons, videos, and sound recordings — to teach your students the process of document analysis.

[Harvard's Project Zero Thinking Routines](#): A routine can be thought of as any procedure, process, or pattern of action that is used facilitate the accomplishment of specific goals or tasks. Explore this collection and use them with the activities.

[Socratic Seminar/Discussion Stems](#): A handout of prompts and scaffolds for students.

[Rubric Maker](#): Easy to use, quick and free rubric tool maker.

Key Vocabulary for this activity:

1. **Excommunication**: The action of officially removing someone from membership of a community.
2. **“Normalization”**: The process of making extreme situations feel “typical” in daily life.
3. **Marginalize**: To keep people, groups, ideas, or actions in a powerless or unimportant position within a society.
4. **Social Criticism**: The act of revealing sources of evil or injustice in a society or nation.
5. **Coup**: A sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government.

Suggested strategies and assessments for this activity.

Compelling question: How does a society cope with invasion and oppression?

Instructional Strategy A: Barometer - Taking a Stand

The Barometer teaching strategy helps students share their opinions by asking them to line up along a continuum based on their position on an issue. It is especially useful when you want to discuss an issue about which students have a wide range of opinions. Because a Barometer activity gets many arguments out on the table, it can be an effective pre-writing exercise before an essay assignment. ([Full details can be found here](#)).

Class 1: Preparation - Students read/watch the 5 resources provided in this activity. Utilize the questions and commentary provided with the resources as well as the support items provided. As students engage with the resources, remind them that

they should be looking for evidence to answer the compelling question. For this set of resources, try using these routines with students: [Question Starts](#) or [Explanation Game](#).

Class 2: Barometer - Identify a space in the classroom where students can stand in a line or a U-shape. Place signs at opposite ends of a continuum in your room. Alternatively, you can post any statement at one end and its opposite at the other end of the line. For example, for this activity you can use:

- “Stay and live under Soviet Rule” and “Flee to Western Europe”
- “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Oppose” with specific topics or resources above.

Ask students to stand on the spot along the line that represents their opinion, telling them that if they stand at either extreme, they are absolute in their agreement or disagreement. They may stand anywhere between the two extremes, depending on how much they do or do not agree with the statement.

Their reasons for taking a stand should draw from what they read/viewed in the resources in this activity.

Instructional Strategy B: Graffiti Board

Graffiti Boards are a shared writing space (e.g., a large sheet of paper or whiteboard) where students record their comments and questions about a topic. The purpose of this strategy is to help students “hear” each other’s ideas. ([Full details can be found here](#)).

Class 1: Graffiti Board - You will need a large space in your room where several students can write at the same time. Some teachers cover a section of the wall with butcher or chart paper, while others use a whiteboard or chalkboard. You will also need plenty of pens and markers. For this activity, markers work better than pens or pencils because they allow students’ comments to be read from a distance. It is best if you supply one for each student.

Provide students with the compelling question “How does a society cope with invasion and oppression?” Students write comments or questions and reply to questions left by classmates. Try to organize or mark the comments under general themes and [use this strategy](#) or another one to discuss and process the information.

Class 2: Resource exploration - After reviewing the graffiti board and the conclusions that occurred, students should now

engage with the resources in this activity. You can do this as a full class activity or in learning centers. After students digest the resources perform one more processing activity: [“Claim, Support, and Question”](#) This will prepare them for the performance assessment below.

Suggested Performance Assessments: Now that students have engaged with the documents and have shared their insights with their classmates, it is time for them to collect their thoughts and answer the compelling question. It is important to connect the historical content to the present. In this sense, the historical content informs students about the past and apply that knowledge to the present.

Your decision on what students should produce will relate to the skills you think they should develop to succeed in the future.

- 1) Create an infographic that demonstrates their conclusion about the compelling question utilizing the sources in this activity and their understanding of the present.
- 2) Write an essay that answers the compelling question.

Develop a website or brochure comparing the actions in 1968 and an event that has occurred in their lifetime.