

*Module 2: 1977*

*Activity 2: Samizdat*

**Compelling question:** How does censorship affect cultural expression?

**Overview:** Teachers might use and adapt this activity as a stand alone exercise or in conjunction with other Module 2 activities. Also, we encourage you to explore Modules 1, 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 2
- 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 literary censorship and underground culture.

## Primary and Secondary Resources for this Activity

### Oral History:

1. [Jiri Pehe](#) - This 1.5 minute clip titled “Samizdat” explains how he obtained samizdat, or self-published dissident literature, during his university years.
2. [Jarek Mika](#)- This 3 minute clip titled “Elementary School” explores how in elementary school, Jarek found himself in trouble because of his creativity.
3. [Suzanna Halsey](#) - In this 3 minute clip titled “Communist System” Suzanna discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the communist system.

### Article from the online magazine *Delayed Gratification*, #9

4. [“They Feared Us Because In Music You Cannot Cheat”](#) - In the 1970s, the Plastic People of the Universe faced persecution by the communist regime in Czechoslovakia – and ended up helping to topple it. Co-editor Marcus Webb tells one of rock 'n' roll's most extraordinary stories.

## 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. **Samizdat:** From the Russian word for 'self-publish,' samizdat referred to the practice of people secretly copying and distributing of literature banned by the state, especially in the formerly communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe. This happened on a small scale, with people often typing up or writing out the pieces of literature and then sharing it within trusted groups of friends. Those found to possess or to have distributed samizdat literature could be punished by the authorities.
2. **Materialism:** A belief that objects, money, and comforts are more important than spiritual, intellectual, or cultural values.
3. **Unpredictable:** Something that is not expected or can't be foreseen.
4. **Beatnik:** Originally, a person who participated in an American social movement of the 1950s and early 1960s which stressed artistic self-expression and the rejection of society's norms. Later, the term was used outside of the USA.
5. **Galvanize:** The act of shocking or exciting someone or a group into taking action or organizing.

Suggested strategies and assessments for this activity.

**Compelling question:** How does censorship affect cultural expression?

**Instructional Strategy A: Socratic Seminar**

In a Socratic Seminar activity, students help one another understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in a text through a group discussion format. Students are responsible for facilitating their group discussion around the ideas in the text; they shouldn't use the discussion to assert their opinions or prove an argument. Through this type of discussion, students practice

how to listen to one another, make meaning, and find common ground while participating in a conversation. ([Full details can be found here](#)).

**Class 1: Preparation** - Students read/watch the 4 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.

**Class 2: Socratic Seminar** - The teacher facilitates the Socratic seminar described above. We suggest the teacher or students utilize a twitter # (that you design for the class) to tweet highlights of the discussion. This allows students to review the exchange in the future. ([How to use a twitter # hashtag](#))

Be sure to remind them that they should be looking for evidence to answer the compelling question.

---

### **Instructional Strategy B: Big Paper - Building a Silent Conversation**

This discussion strategy uses writing and silence as tools to help students explore a topic in depth. In a Big Paper discussion, students write out their responses to a stimulus, such as a quotation or historical document. This process slows down students' thinking and gives them an opportunity to focus on the views of others. It also creates a visual record of students' thoughts and questions that you can refer to later in a course. ([Full details can be found here](#)).

**Class 1: Big Paper - Building a Silent Conversation** - This activity works best when students are working in pairs or triads. Each group also needs a sheet of big poster paper that can fit a written conversation and added comments. In the middle of each of these, tape or write the "stimulus" (image, quotation, excerpt, etc.) that will be used to spark the students' discussion. In this case, the stimulus can be the compelling question for this unit.

After completing the steps in this protocol, debrief the process with the large group. The conversation can begin with a simple prompt such as, "What did you learn from doing this activity?" This is the time to delve deeper into the content and use ideas on the Big Papers to draw out students' thoughts. The discussion can also touch upon the importance and difficulty of staying silent and students' level of comfort with this activity.

**Class 2: Performance Assessment** - This class invites students to present their understanding from the previous class and present it in the assessment format you use (suggestions below). By giving them class time to work on the assessment, you can troubleshoot, check in with students, and they can collaborate.

---

**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.

Create a “playlist” of articles, videos, images, etc. that addresses their understanding of the compelling question.