

*Module 2: 1977*

*Activity 4: Persecution and Censorship*

**Compelling question:** To what extent and in what ways does a given society stifle or foster creativity?

**Overview:** Teachers might use and adapt this activity as a standalone 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 civic support of those affected by censorship and persecution.

## Primary and Secondary Resources for this Activity

### Oral History:

1. [Jana Kopelentova-Rehak](#) - In this 2 minute clip titled “Kicked-Out” Jana recalls that when a Bible was discovered in her dorm room, she was told to find lodgings elsewhere.
2. [Gabriel Levicky](#)- In this 2 minute clip titled “Police File” Gabriel reflects on when he was able to view his secret police file.

### Primary Resource:

3. [Havel’s Two Letters from Prison](#) - In June 1979, Vaclav Havel was arrested, along with other members of the Czechoslovak Committee to Defend the Unjustly Persecuted. The playwright, who was in his 40’s, remained in jail until January 1983. During these years, his writing consisted mainly of letters to his wife Olga.

## 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. **Intellectual**: A person who places a high value on or pursues things of interest to the intellect or the more complex forms and fields of knowledge

2. **Manipulate:** To manage or influence skillfully, especially in an unfair manner.
3. **Idolizes:** To admire or love greatly or excessively.
4. **Phenomenon:** A fact or situation that is observed to exist or happen.
5. **“Cult of Action”:** This belief dictates that action is of value in itself, and should be taken without intellectual reflection.

### Suggested strategies and assessments for this activity

**Compelling question:** To what extent and in what ways does a given society stifle or foster creativity?

#### **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:

- “Oppression Stifles Creativity” and “Oppression Fosters Creativity”
- “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.

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### **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) Write a letter to an organization or individual who has opposed government oppression. The letter should draw on their understanding of resources in this activity.
- 2) Write an essay that answers the compelling question.

Create a museum exhibit demonstrating understanding of the compelling question. Examples should be from this activity, historical, and draw from their own experience.