

## Maths to tell a story hidden inside a story (Primary)

When we think about the events of the Holocaust it is important to remember the **Untold Stories** of the individuals represented in frequently quoted statistics. These suggestions for a Primary Maths lesson encourage students to use their skills in mathematics to help people think of the human stories behind the statistics which are so easy to focus upon when we talk about the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. If students make their calculations just after hearing the **Untold Stories** of the SS St Louis case study <http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/the-ss-st-louis/read> they will understand the real hardship faced by the passengers who had to spend so long at sea. The same class could lead the Primary Assembly <http://education.hmd.org.uk/resources/hmd-2011-primary-assembly> for HMD and share the results of the Maths tasks with the rest of the school or they could also work on the additional ICT/Maths lesson <http://education.hmd.org.uk/resources/ictmaths-primary> and combine all their research.

**Tell** the students how their skills in Maths can be useful when they want to share an important message with other people. **Explain** that sometimes people read stories but do not think very carefully about the numbers they find inside them. Maths students are very important people because they can explain what the numbers really mean so that people understand what the story is trying to tell them.

**Share** the story of the SS St Louis <http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/the-ss-st-louis/read> and **show** the related presentation <http://education.hmd.org.uk/resources/hmd-2011-primary-assembly-presentation>.

**Tell** the story in your own words using the pictures to help you. It will be helpful to write key points on the board especially the dates mentioned in the story. **Leave** time for reflection and questions at the end of the story because students will find parts of it very sad. **Tell** students that they can use Maths to work out the answers to difficult questions and that the answers to these questions will help people to really understand the hardship faced by the passengers.

Explain that this Maths lesson will be very important because if students share the answers to the questions with lots of people on Holocaust Memorial Day they will help everyone to remember the **Untold Stories** of the refugee passengers and to think in more detail about the difficulties faced they faced. They might also be encouraged to remember present day refugees who undertake long journeys to

unknown destinations when they trying to escape from persecution in places like Darfur.

Students could take the questions home at the end of the lesson and ask others to try to work out the answers to the questions. This will make sure that more people use their Maths skills and pass **Untold Stories** on to a wider audience.

**Instruct** students to work through the following tasks. They could work individually or you could **display** the questions on the board and **work** through each one together as a whole class. **Focus** attention on the length of the voyage, the additional unplanned travelling and the final destination of the passengers. When everyone has worked out the answers **discuss** the implications of all the additional time spent on the ship eg ever decreasing food supplies, lack of fuel, running out of clothes, wages for the crew and explain that people who ignore the Maths in the story have not really heard the whole of the story.

### The questions

1. How long did the SS St Louis spend at sea between leaving Hamburg and arriving at Antwerp?
2. How long would the passengers have lived on the ship if the Cubans had let the St Louis into harbour straight away? There are clues in the story to help you.
3. Calculate the percentage of the total journey spent in unplanned time on the ship.
4. 64 fewer people went on to live in France rather than England. How many went to France?

### For Teachers: The Answers

1. 13 May 1939 - 17 June 1939 inclusive = 36 days
2. 13 May 1939 – 27 May 1939 inclusive = 14 days
3. Answer to Q1 – Answer to Q2 = 12 days.  $12/36 = 0.33 \times 100 = 33.3\%$  (to 1 decimal place)
4.  $288 - 64 = 224$

Students could publish the questions and answers in a school newsletter or on the school website or use their own social networking to tell the whole community about the St Louis and the importance of paying special attention to the extra information Maths can provide within its **Untold Stories** before we share them with other people.