

**Hopkins
Center for
the Arts**
at Dartmouth

School Matinee Series
Study Guide



Roger Guenveur Smith

OTTO FRANK

Tue & Wed, April 19 & 20, 7:30 pm



Welcome to the Hop

A performance needs an audience so be prepared to play your part!

Theater Guidelines

When entering the Hopkins Center, show consideration for all those sharing the building by being respectful in common areas. Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation. Backpacks, food, drink and gum are not allowed in the theater. Please turn off all cell phones and note that recording the performance or taking photos is not allowed.

Information for Teachers and Families

This study guide offers context and activities that will help your students engage with the performance.

Please note that this performance and study guide reference challenging topics, including the painful and violent history of World War II and the Holocaust.

This study guide's content was created by Ally Tufenkjian, Education and Engagement Manager. To download copies of this and other guides, visit <https://hop.dartmouth.edu/study-guides>.

About the Hop

The Hopkins Center's mission is to ignite and sustain a passion for the arts within Dartmouth and its greater community and to provide the core educational environment for the study, creation and presentation of the arts.

Did You Know?

- The Hopkins Center is located on the ancestral homelands of the Abenaki people.
- The Hopkins Center opened in 1962.
- The Hopkins Center was designed by Wallace Harrison, architect of Lincoln Center and the United Nations Building in New York City.

About the Show

In this original solo performance, acclaimed stage and screen actor Roger Guenveur Smith explores the story and legacy of Anne Frank's father, Otto Frank. As a steward of his daughter's legacy, Otto Frank navigated loss, adolescent ambition, and the criticism of those who questioned his motivations, the authenticity of the diary and even the Holocaust itself. Smith asks audiences: How does one simultaneously serve the living and the dead, and at what cost? He blends historical and contemporary perspectives in a piece about a man who lives through tragedy to share his family's experiences and memories through his daughter's famous diary.



Roger Guenveur Smith

About the Artist

Roger Guenveur Smith is an actor, writer and director who has created a wide body of work on stage and screen. His history-infused work for the international stage includes studies of Christopher Columbus, Jimi Hendrix and Bob Marley, artists Jean-Michel Basquiat, Simon Rodia and Charles White, and baseball greats Juan Marichal and John Roseboro. He has staged **travelogues** of Iceland, Panama, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Miami and New Orleans. Roger studied at Yale University and Occidental College and has taught at both institutions, as well as CalArts, directing his Performing History Workshop.

Contextual Background

World War II

The First World War in 1914-1918 created economic and political instability in Europe, setting the stage for World War II. Adolf Hitler, leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party—abbreviated as NSDAP in German and the Nazi Party in English—rose to power in Germany. After becoming Chancellor of Germany in 1933, Hitler swiftly consolidated power, anointing himself Führer (supreme leader) in 1934.

The **anti-Semitic** Hitler believed in the superiority of the “pure” German race, which he called “Aryan,” and saw war as a means to expand this race and German rule. In the mid-1930s, he secretly began the **rearmament** of Germany, a violation of the Versailles Treaty. After signing alliances with Italy and Japan against the Soviet Union, Hitler sent troops to occupy Austria in 1938 and **annexed** Czechoslovakia the following year. In September 1939, Hitler's



Hitler and his supporters at a Dortmund rally, 1933

invasion of Poland drove Great Britain and France to declare war on Germany, which marked the beginning of World War II. While many countries were affected by and participated in the war, the most involved nations were the Axis powers—Germany, Italy and Japan—and the Allies—France, Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and China. While the exact number is unknown, it is estimated that approximately 60 million people perished from the war worldwide.

The Holocaust

One of the most horrific acts of **genocide** in history was the Holocaust, the ideological and systematic **persecution** and mass murder of approximately six million European Jews, as well as the Roma and Sinti people, disabled individuals, homosexuals, Soviet prisoners of war, non-Jewish Polish people, and others. From 1933-1939, Nazis undertook an “Aryanization” of Germany, dismissing non-Aryans from civil service, closing Jewish-owned businesses and stripping Jewish lawyers and doctors of their clients. Under the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, Jews became routine targets for **stigmatization** and persecution. This culminated in Kristallnacht or the “night of broken glass” in November 1938 when German synagogues were burned and windows in Jewish shops were smashed. On this night, many Jews were killed and arrested.



Germans pass by the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business destroyed during Kristallnacht



Auschwitz camp in April 2015

Called the “Final Solution” by the Nazi **regime**, Nazis forced Jews into concentration camps as a last attempt at **ethnic cleansing**. Beginning in September 1941, every person designated as a Jew in German-held territory was marked with a yellow star and was deported to the Polish **ghettos** and German-occupied cities in the Soviet Union. Many people in the camps died from disease, starvation and malnourishment due to crowded, unclean living quarters, lack of adequate nutrition, and harsh physical labor. In 1942, the Nazis began killing large groups of people in gas chambers filled with toxic gas and by shooting.

This violence continued until the end of the war. By the spring of 1945, German leadership was dissolving amid internal dissent among the Nazi Party. A number of significant battles, including D-Day and the Allies’ bombing of the German city of Dresden, led to Germany’s formal surrender on May 8th, 1945.



Tuskegee Airmen Cadets in training, 1942



Japanese American soldiers with their motto



*Hermann Göring during cross examination
at his trial for war crimes
in Nuremberg, Germany, 1946*

African American Servicemen in World War II

More than one million African Americans served in the war to defeat Nazism and **fascism**, but did so in segregated units due to discriminatory Jim Crow policies that were reinforced by the US military. Several African American units were essential in helping win the war, including the Tuskegee Airmen, the first Black military aviators in the US Army Air Corps and the Red Ball Express, the truck convoy of mostly Black drivers responsible for delivering essential goods to troops on the front lines in France. The all-Black 761st Tank Battalion fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and the 92 Infantry Division fought in fierce ground battles in Italy. Despite their service, African American soldiers remained in segregated units and lower-ranking positions well into the Korean War, a few years after President Truman signed an executive order to desegregate the US military in 1948.

Japanese American Servicemen in World War II

Japanese American soldiers, known as Nisei, served in the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team (442nd) of the Allied forces, while also part of a segregated unit. The 442nd played a crucial role in the rescue mission of a trapped Texas National Guard unit in the battle of the 'Lost Battalion.' When the mission was over, the 442nd had lived up to its chosen motto "Go For Broke," becoming the most highly decorated regiment in US military history. Despite their heroism, the Nisei faced intense racism and discrimination at home, especially after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The attack prompted the US to imprison many of them and their families in Japanese internment camps from 1942-1945 under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066.

The War's Aftermath

Survivors of the concentration camps found it nearly impossible to return home; many had lost their families and been denounced by their non-Jewish neighbors. In the late 1940s, huge numbers of refugees, prisoners of war and other displaced populations moved across Europe, seeking **asylum** in other nations. The Allies held the Nuremberg Trials of 1945-46 to hold the perpetrators of the Holocaust accountable. Over the decades that followed, Germans reckoned with the Holocaust's bitter legacy, and survivors and the families of victims sought restitution of wealth and property confiscated during the Nazi regime. Beginning in 1953, the German government paid **reparations** to individual Jews and to the Jewish people as a way of acknowledging the crimes German people committed.

Otto Frank and the Frank Family

Otto Frank, a World War I veteran and banker, married Edith Holländer in 1925 and they welcomed daughter Margot in 1926 and daughter Anne in 1929. As Germany became more volatile, Otto and his family moved to Amsterdam in 1933. The Franks lived somewhat comfortably until 1940 when the Germans invaded and occupied the Netherlands. As Jews became targets of hatred and violence, **emigration** to the United States became impossible, and Margot was called up to be taken to a German labor camp, Otto and Edith made the decision to bring their family into hiding in the Secret Annex.

From 1942-1944, the Franks along with the Van Pels family and Fritz Pfeffer stayed in the Secret Annex of the Prinsengracht 263 building in Amsterdam, aided by several of Otto's friends and employees. Anne, a teenager at the time, kept a diary with detailed accounts of her time there, dynamics and relationships with her family and other annex residents, and her own tales. Otto was described by friends and by Anne as the peacekeeper, helping keep the family together and ease conflict between Anne and Edith. Anne's dream was to publish a book about her time in the Secret Annex, a wish fulfilled by her father, the only person from the Secret Annex that survived. Learn more about the Franks, the Van Pels and Fritz Pfeffer [here](#).



Margot, Otto, Anne, and Edith Frank in Amsterdam, 1941



A reconstruction of Otto, Edith and Margot Frank's room in the Secret Annex, 1999

When the Secret Annex was discovered in 1944, all of its residents and two of their helpers were arrested by Dutch police and put on a train to the Westerbork transit camp. Shortly after, they were put on the last train to leave Westerbork for the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp. Once they arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau, the men and women were separated on the train platform; this was the last time Otto would ever see his wife and children. He was sent to work in the camp and nearly died due to injuries, illness and harsh working conditions.



Original manuscripts of Anne Frank



Otto Frank in the attic of the Secret Annex just before the opening of the Anne Frank House on May 3rd, 1960

Otto Preserves Anne's Legacy

Otto was freed in January 1945 when Soviet troops entered the camp. He learned from survivors who had been in the camps with Edith, Margot and Anne that the rest of his family did not survive. In June 1945, he returned to Amsterdam to live with Jan and Miep Gies who had helped him and his family when they lived in the Secret Annex. After learning of Anne's death, Miep gave Anne's diaries over to Otto. Gripped by her writing, Otto worked hard to find a publisher. Anne's diary was published two years after the war and has been translated into more than 70 languages and read around the world.

Otto was also closely involved with the Anne Frank House, which was founded to preserve Prinsengracht 263 and its annex. After the opening of the House in 1960, Otto initiated international youth conferences held in Amsterdam where young people discussed topics such as religion in the modern world, youth protest and human rights.

Otto died on August 19th, 1980. In an interview shortly before his death, he said "I am almost 90 now and my strength is slowly fading. But the mission that Anne passed on keeps giving me new strength—to fight for reconciliation and for human rights across the world."

Pre-performance discussion questions

History:

- What were some of the social, political and economic forces that led to World War II?
- How do some of the forces that caused World War II bear similarities to the more contemporary wars of today?
- What sources have you consulted to learn more about World War II and the Holocaust? How do these sources enrich your understanding? What information or perspectives might be missing from these sources?

English Language Arts:

- How does an author's point of view affect how they present their ideas?
- How can literary techniques such as metaphor, simile and analogy help tell a story or make a compelling argument?
- How does the way a story or narrative is structured add to its meaning and message?

The Arts:

- How can a performer make use of their voice and physicality to tell a story?
- What kind of research and source material might inform this performance?
- When an actor seeks to portray an historical figure, what factors might they take into consideration?

Post-performance discussion questions

History:

- What historical events does this performance reference? What contemporary events does it reference?
- Why do you think the show's creator chose to reference events from both a more distant past and events from more recent history?
- How might the perspectives presented in this performance shape our interpretations of the past?

English Language Arts:

- How would you describe the character Otto Frank's point of view?
- What did you notice about the way the text of the performance was structured? How did its structure contribute to the performance's overall tone and message?
- What literary techniques were used in the performance's text?

The Arts:

- What instruments and kinds of music did you hear in the performance?
- What elements of music (such as, tempo, rhythm, and dynamics) did you hear in the performance?
- How did the performers use their artform to communicate their concerns about climate change?

Learning Activities

Mapping Performance Themes

This visual mapping activity invites students to generate responses to prompts, synthesize ideas, and see where their ideas intersect and diverge with those of other students.

Give each student several small pieces of paper or large Post-it notes. Ask them to respond to the following prompts, writing one response per piece of paper. Students can write multiple responses to the same prompt.

- What is one word you would use to describe the performance?
- What were some of the main themes of the performance?
- What did this performance prompt you to consider about the past?
- What did this performance prompt you to consider about the present?

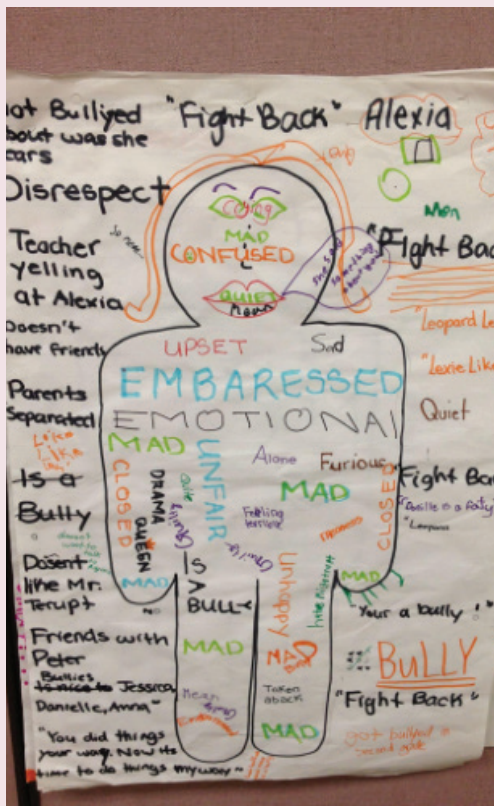
Next, place students in small groups. Ask them to spread all of their pieces of paper on the floor, table, or poster-sized piece of paper. Invite them to read everyone's responses and then work together to organize responses based on how the ideas relate. Remind students that they can decide how to best visually represent their ideas and that there are no right or wrong answers. If desired, groups can create names for the categories and groupings they form. They can also chart connections between other categories with string or another material.



Visual mapping in action

When groups' visual maps are complete, invite the whole class to walk around and look at other groups' work. Ask students to reflect on the following:

- What did you notice about yourself and your group during this process?
- What categories emerged? What choices did your group make as you were creating categories and groupings of ideas?
- What were some common themes and ideas from groups' maps? What were some key differences?
- What did you discover about the themes of the performance and what it made you think about both historical and current events?



Role On The Wall example

Role On The Wall

The activity helps students examine multiple perspectives and how different perspectives and actions may impact a character or individual.

Draw a large outline of a head and shoulders or human figure on a piece of paper or whiteboard, leaving space to write inside and outside the figure. Identify this outline as the character Otto Frank. Invite the group to share statements or messages that Mr. Frank may have been receiving from others in his life. They should think back to the performance to inform some of their answers. Encourage students to consider who might be sharing that message. If desired, you can color code, writing messages from a particular person in a specific color. Write those responses on the outside of the figure. Next, ask how Otto Frank might feel inside based on the messages he is receiving from others. Write those words and statements on the inside of the figure.

Afterwards, ask students the following reflection questions:

- How would you describe the messages that Otto Frank may have been receiving?
- How might these messages have impacted him? What events, people or actions may have impacted him the most?
- Have you ever experienced similar messaging?

If Otto Frank Were Here Today

This activity asks students to write from a character's perspective and make inferences about a character's motivation and opinions. Prior to beginning, be sure to introduce or review relevant historical content and context with students.

Ask students to do their best to put themselves in Otto Frank's shoes and to imagine what he might think if he were still alive today. If needed, review information about Otto Frank's experiences, human rights advocacy work, and his approach to preserving his daughter Anne's memory and legacy as well as information and perspectives presented in the performance. You may give students several minutes to jot down notes about what Otto Frank might be thinking and wondering about contemporary events and this moment in time.

Next, ask them to write a short 1-2 minute monologue in first person from the perspective of Otto Frank, writing as if he were still alive today. If desired, you can connect this activity to a specific contemporary event you are studying in class. For quick tips on how to write a compelling monologue, check out [this article](#) from Masterclass.

Once students have finished their monologues, ask them:

- What was it like to write from the perspective of Otto Frank? What did you find interesting? What did you find challenging?
- What historical information did you draw from as you were writing?
- What creative choices did you make to bring this character to life in the monologue?
- What did this exercise help you discover about our contemporary moment?



Otto Frank

Vocabulary

Anti-Semitic: The characteristic of having prejudice or hostility towards Jewish people.

Annex: Declaring sovereignty over another territory by threat of force or use of force.

Asylum: International protection for a refugee who is immigrating to another country.

Emigration: The act of moving away from one's home country.

Ethnic Cleansing: The forced removal of an ethnic group from a territory.

Fascism: A political philosophy, movement or regime characterized by an autocratic government, dictatorial leader and the forcible suppression of opposition.

Genocide: An internationally recognized crime where acts are committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

Ghettos: Camps designed by the Nazis to segregate and persecute Jewish people.

Persecution: The act of treating a person or group of people unfairly due to a difference of their identity and/or belief system.

Rearmament: To arm again with new or better weapons.

Regime: A form of government, typically characterized by an authoritarian one.

Reparations: A system of payment and reconciliation intended to make up for damages and harm caused to a mistreated group of people, which might include money, land and other resources.

Stigmatization: The act of perceiving someone with a negative attitude or in a shameful or disgraceful way.

Travelogue: A piece of writing inspired by a person's experience traveling.

Resources

The Anne Frank House, www.annefrank.org/en

The National WWII Museum, www.nationalww2museum.org

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, www.ushmm.org

References

www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/main-characters

dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/role-wall-0

dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/visual-mapping

dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/teaching-strategies/writing-role

holocausteducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/1.-Non-JewishVictimsOfNaziPersecutionMurder-Digital.pdf

www.adl.org/anti-semitism

www.history.com/news/761st-tank-battalion-black-panthers-liberators-battle-of-the-bulge

www.history.com/news/japanese-american-442-wwii-lost-battalion

www.history.com/this-day-in-history/nuremberg-race-laws-imposed

www.history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/jim-crow-laws

www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/battle-of-dresden

www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/nuremberg-trials

www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/the-holocaust

www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/tuskegee-airmen

www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/world-war-ii-history

www.iom.int/key-migration-terms

www.masterclass.com/articles/tips-for-writing-dramatic-monologues#5-tips-for-writing-dramatic-monologues

www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fascism

www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/ghettos

www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/learn-about-genocide-and-other-mass-atrocities/definitions

Image Credits

Allard Bovenberg, Photo collection: Anne Frank Stichting, Amsterdam,
www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/go-in-depth/two-versions-annes-diary

Allard Bovenberg, Photo collection: Anne Frank Stichting, Amsterdam,
www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/main-characters/otto-frank

Anne Frank Fonds, Basel, Switzerland, exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/personal-story/otto-frank

Anne Frank House, www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/main-characters/otto-frank

Arnold Newman, www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/main-characters/otto-frank

mobile.twitter.com/guenveursmith

Brenda Cecil, The Nisei, Japanese American soldiers in World War II (documentary),
www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9l4rhf43jA

Corbis, history.com/topics/world-war-ii/world-war-ii-history#&gid=ci0230e631308526df&pid=hitler-at-dortmund-rally-3

DFS Drama for Schools and Lara Dossett, www.pinterest.com/dramaforschools/role-on-the-wall

Gabriel Benzur, www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/world-war-ii-history#&gid=ci0230e5c0804726df&pid=image-placeholder-title-MTU3ODc4NjAwMDI2NDk4NzgZ

Parabol, unsplash.com/photos/jNKfJ6u78nw

Raymond D'Addario/Galerie Bilderwelt/Getty Images, www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/nuremberg-trials
SPC#JAYJAY/Getty Images,

www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/world-war-ii-history#&gid=ci0235901a20012718&pid=gettyimages-557614097

US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park,
www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/kristallnacht