

Handout

Watching *Schindler's List* in Five Class Periods

If you plan to show the film over multiple periods, we recommend applying the five segment divisions identified below. Each segment is intended to fit within a 50-minute class period, leaving a few minutes at the beginning and end of the period. These framing moments are crucial. Students will need time upon entering the class to re-engage with the material and re-enter the serious and thoughtful mindset the film warrants. They will also need a few minutes to process and reflect on what they viewed before transitioning to their next class. These five segments are also carefully calibrated to ensure that they do not end with especially intense moments of the film.

Section 1 (0:00–39:25)

This section offers some insights into Oskar Schindler's character: he's a womanizer and an opportunist who hires Jewish labor because it is cheaper. Furthermore, his occupation of an apartment formerly owned by a Jewish family demonstrates that he has little regard for the plight of the Jews. This section also depicts the Nazis establishing the ghetto in Kraków, where Polish Jews are forced to live.

Section 2 (39:25–1:26:10)

The focus of this section is the liquidation of the Kraków ghetto, in which the viewer is first introduced to the symbol of a little girl in a red coat, the only character in color throughout the film. The ghetto liquidation scenes also provide the turning point for Schindler's evolution: as he witnesses the scope of Nazi terror and violence, he begins to question his role in the system.

This section includes the following disturbing content:

- A sex scene involving nudity
- Acts of violence (including random shootings of Jewish prisoners)
- Depictions of the liquidation of the Kraków ghetto

Section 3 (1:26:11–1:58:46)

In this section, Schindler begins his evolution into a rescuer. While Schindler's factory is beginning to be viewed as a refuge for Jews, he continues to assert that his primary motive is making a profit, and he expresses fears about the danger of being viewed as a rescuer by the Nazis. Nevertheless, at the end of this section, it becomes clear that Schindler is using bribes to secure the safety of his Jewish workers.

This section includes the following disturbing content:

- A shooting of a Jewish prisoner as punishment for stealing a chicken
- A scene in which Nazi commandant Amon Goeth brutally beats his Jewish servant, Helen Hirsch

Section 4 (1:58:47–2:32:30)

In this section, Schindler creates the list that will ultimately save the lives of over 1,100 Jews. The list ensured that Schindler's Jews would be moved to a new factory in the Sudetenland, saving them from almost certain death in the concentration camps.

This section includes the following disturbing content:

- Scenes of a Nazi "selection," in which a Nazi doctor or other official decides which prisoners could serve as slave laborers and which would be killed right away
- Depictions of nudity—both of a sexual nature and of Jewish prisoners
- Scenes illustrating children hiding from the Nazis, including in latrines
- Images of the Nazis exhuming bodies of those killed in the Kraków ghetto

Section 5 (2:32:31–3:15)

This section includes one of the most harrowing scenes of the film, when a train carrying female prisoners on Schindler's list is unexpectedly diverted to the Auschwitz concentration camp. At the last minute, Schindler's bribery and charisma saves them. The section also depicts the end of the war and Schindler's closing monologue, in which he expresses regret at not having been able to save more lives.

This section includes the following disturbing content:

- A scene in which the audience expects that female prisoners will be gassed, but they are ultimately spared
- Depictions of dehumanizing treatment of Jewish prisoners, including having their hair shorn and being stripped naked