

## Obtaining Information About Totalitarian States in Europe

You are an American journalist who has been given special permission to attend the “International Fascist Art Exhibition” in 1939. By reviewing officially sanctioned government art, you will learn about the politics, economy, and culture of four European nations: Italy, Nazi Germany, Spain, and the Soviet Union. You will also learn “secret” information about these societies by talking to your classmates to find out what additional knowledge—not approved by the government—they have. Later, you will write an article revealing what you have learned about totalitarian states in Europe.

### Follow these steps:

1. Carefully read the “secret” information below. It relates to Placard A in the exhibit. During the activity, other pairs will come to you and ask if you have additional knowledge about Placard A. Say “yes” and secretly give them the information below without letting the “government” (your teacher) see you. Whether you share the information by showing it, passing notes, or explaining it in a whisper, you must maintain secrecy. If pairs ask for information about any of the other placards, you must look down, shake your head and say, “I know nothing!”
2. When instructed, choose one of the placards hanging on the walls of the “International Fascist Art Exhibition.” On the appropriate row of Student Handout I: Notes on Totalitarian States in Europe, record the country the art was created in, two elements of fascist art you see, and the message the government is trying to convey with this poster.
3. Then, secretly find a pair of students in the class that has information related to the placard you just analyzed. Find out what they know about it. Record this “secret” information on the back of your matrix or on a separate piece of paper. Remember that your teacher should not see these notes or know that you are discussing “unsanctioned” information.
4. Show your teacher your completed row on Student Handout I, but not the “secret” information you recorded. If approved, choose another placard. Repeat this process for the remaining placards until the activity is stopped.

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### “Secret” Information for Placard A

Fascist philosophy held that because Mussolini himself was the embodiment of the will of the people, individual rights and freedoms were no longer necessary. Under fascism, individuals were valued only as members of the state. Following this philosophy, Mussolini created a police state. He outlawed freedom of speech and the right to assemble, and tightly censored the media. He publicized slogans such as “Mussolini is always right!” and “Believe! Obey! Fight!” throughout Italy.

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1. Carefully read the “secret” information below. It relates to Placard B in the exhibit. During the activity, other pairs will come to you and ask if you have additional knowledge about Placard B. Say “yes” and secretly give them the information below without letting the “government” (your teacher) see you. Whether you share the information by showing it, passing notes, or explaining it in a whisper, you must maintain secrecy. If pairs ask for information about any of the other placards, you must look down, shake your head and say, “I know nothing!”
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### “Secret” Information for Placard B

During Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia, a country with a poorly trained and poorly equipped army, the Italian army acted with great brutality. The army used poison gas, despite the fact that Italy has signed the 1925 Geneva Conventions which outlawed its use. Italy tried to keep its use of mustard gas a secret, but it was exposed by members of the Red Cross and other international observers. Italy’s actions in Ethiopia horrified the rest of Europe.

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1. Carefully read the “secret” information below. It relates to Placard C in the exhibit. During the activity, other pairs will come to you and ask if you have additional knowledge about Placard C. Say “yes” and secretly give them the information below without letting the “government” (your teacher) see you. Whether you share the information by showing it, passing notes, or explaining it in a whisper, you must maintain secrecy. If pairs ask for information about any of the other placards, you must look down, shake your head and say, “I know nothing!”
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### “Secret” Information for Placard C

Hitler and the Nazis established absolute power over Nazi Germany through terror, torture, and brutality. Upon taking office in 1933, Hitler quickly outlawed all political parties except the National Socialists, or Nazis. Hitler developed his own private army to terrorize and murder his political opponents. In 1934, during what became known as the “Night of the Long Knives,” Hitler had several Nazi leaders murdered to purge the party of all members who disagreed with him.

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1. Carefully read the “secret” information below. It relates to Placard D in the exhibit. During the activity, other pairs will come to you and ask if you have additional knowledge about Placard D. Say “yes” and secretly give them the information below without letting the “government” (your teacher) see you. Whether you share the information by showing it, passing notes, or explaining it in a whisper, you must maintain secrecy. If pairs ask for information about any of the other placards, you must look down, shake your head and say, “I know nothing!”
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### “Secret” Information for Placard D

The Nazis pursued a program of “racial hygiene,” based on the pseudoscientific movement known as eugenics. They sought to “purify” the so-called “German race” through selective breeding. They forcibly sterilized as many as 2 million people they deemed “unfit to reproduce.” The groups targeted included the mentally and physically disabled, Jews, Gypsies, and homosexuals. The Nazi sterilization campaign began as soon as the Nazis took power in 1933. The Nazis went further by carrying out a systematic plan to persecute and murder Jews. They murdered 6 million Jews in what became known as the Holocaust.

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1. Carefully read the “secret” information below. It relates to Placard E in the exhibit. During the activity, other pairs will come to you and ask if you have additional knowledge about Placard E. Say “yes” and secretly give them the information below without letting the “government” (your teacher) see you. Whether you share the information by showing it, passing notes, or explaining it in a whisper, you must maintain secrecy. If pairs ask for information about any of the other placards, you must look down, shake your head and say, “I know nothing!”
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### “Secret” Information for Placard E

Spanish Nationalist forces targeted population centers and terrorized and killed innocent Spanish civilians. The most infamous incident occurred on April 26, 1937, when 48 German bombers under the command of the Spanish general Francisco Franco attacked the Spanish city of Guernica. They destroyed the city and killed hundreds of civilians. People around the world were shocked by the senseless killing. Franco also used the German air force to bomb Madrid, Spain’s capital and largest city.

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1. Carefully read the “secret” information below. It relates to Placard F in the exhibit. During the activity, other pairs will come to you and ask if you have additional knowledge about Placard F. Say “yes” and secretly give them the information below without letting the “government” (your teacher) see you. Whether you share the information by showing it, passing notes, or explaining it in a whisper, you must maintain secrecy. If pairs ask for information about any of the other placards, you must look down, shake your head and say, “I know nothing!”
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### “Secret” Information for Placard F

Franco saved Spain from political chaos, but only by establishing a brutal dictatorship. Franco’s peacetime government continued the terrorist tactics the Nationalists had used during the Civil War, and executed thousands of political enemies. Franco did not return Spain to normal peacetime government, and continued to rule like a wartime military commander.

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1. Carefully read the “secret” information below. It relates to Placard G in the exhibit. During the activity, other pairs will come to you and ask if you have additional knowledge about Placard G. Say “yes” and secretly give them the information below without letting the “government” (your teacher) see you. Whether you share the information by showing it, passing notes, or explaining it in a whisper, you must maintain secrecy. If pairs ask for information about any of the other placards, you must look down, shake your head and say, “I know nothing!”
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### “Secret” Information for Placard G

Soviet agriculture was collectivized by force. If rural peasants resisted merging their lands into state-owned collective farms, they could be assaulted by Russian troops. Although Stalin declared his Five-Year Plan a success, in reality, agricultural production went down over those years. In the Ukraine, government agents seized farmers’ crops to meet unrealistic government quotas. The result was tragic mass starvation. Five million Ukrainians died of starvation between 1932 and 1933.

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1. Carefully read the “secret” information below. It relates to Placard H in the exhibit. During the activity, other pairs will come to you and ask if you have additional knowledge about Placard H. Say “yes” and secretly give them the information below without letting the “government” (your teacher) see you. Whether you share the information by showing it, passing notes, or explaining it in a whisper, you must maintain secrecy. If pairs ask for information about any of the other placards, you must look down, shake your head and say, “I know nothing!”
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### “Secret” Information for Placard H

After Stalin took control of the government in 1928, women’s rights were slowly taken away. Divorces were made much harder to obtain and were subject to a high tax. Official party publications said collective farms would provide equal rights for women in rural areas. In fact, when collectivization began in 1930 and 1931, the number of women in leadership positions declined. Female participation in the party and rural soviets (councils) continued to be low, partly due to the heavy amount of household work for which the women alone were responsible.