

SUGGESTED MATERIAL

MUSEO DE ARTE Y MEMORIA

In this document, you will find suggested materials for working with secondary school groups before, during, and after (AVC) the exhibition "Before and After Absence: We Can Tell Their Stories" at the Museum of Art and Memory. Each teacher can adapt these suggestions according to their own criteria and the characteristics of their school groups.

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COM comisión provincial por la memoria

Mecanismo local de prevención de la tortura



The visit to the museum will connect the children with a moment in our history: the last military dictatorship. Particular emphasis will be placed on the personal lives of nine women who were part of the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared for Political Reasons organizations before and after the disappearance of their relatives. For this reason, it is important for the groups to have a prior understanding of what happened at that time and to work on questions such as: What is a coup d'état? What is the figure of the disappeared? What were the Clandestine Detention Centers? Who are the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo? What is the Right to Identity?

Before that, however, we would like to provide a vocabulary list in English useful for second-language students to practice and learn beforehand:

- 1. Archive Archivo
- 2. Memory Memoria
- 3. "Disappeared" "Desaparecido"
- 4. "Black Site" "Centro Clandestino de Detencion"
- 5. Document Documento
- 6. Letter Carta
- 7. Photo Foto
- 8. Letterhead Encabezado
- 9. Testimony Testimonio
- 10. Justice Justicia
- 11. Search Búsqueda
- 12. Disappearance Desaparición
- 13. Resistance Resistencia
- 14. Human Rights Derechos humanos
- 15. Justice Justicia
- 16. Identity Identidad
- 17. Justice Justicia
- 18. Protest Protesta
- 19. Collection Colección
- 20. Object Objeto
- 21. Letter Carta
- 22. Resistance Resistencia
- 23. History Historia
- 24. Truth Verdad
- 25. Justice Justicia

- 26. Documentaries Documentales
- 27. Museum Museo
- 28. Survivor Sobreviviente
- 29. Memory Book Libro de memorias
- 30. Collaboration Colaboración
- 31. Certificate Certificado

What was the 1976 Coup d'État?

On March 24, 1976, the Military Junta led by General Jorge R. Videla overthrew President María Estela Martínez de Perón. With this last blow against democratic institutions, the so-called "National Reorganization Process" began. The Armed Forces launched a systematic plan of censorship and violent persecution against those who did not align with their ideals and political actions.

During the State terrorism, around 800 clandestine detention centers (CDC) operated, located in military and police facilities, but also in schools, hospitals, courts, and factories. There, they kidnapped, tortured, and murdered detainees. Many of the disappeared detainees were pregnant at the time of their kidnapping. Their children were stolen and handed over to other families, stripping them of their true identities. Many children who were kidnapped along with their families suffered the same fate. Today, they are the grandchildren sought by the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

What is a "desaparecido"?

At the moment of the victims' kidnapping, since it was clandestine and illegal, their whereabouts were unknown. As we can see in this statement by Marta Alconada, Mother of the Plaza de Mayo: "We only want to know where our children are, alive or dead. But we want to know where they are."



Jorge Rafael Videla also responded to the victims' families: "The disappeared is an unknown, he has no entity. He is neither dead nor alive, he is disappeared."



The vast majority of victims continue to be designated as desaparecidos, since their whereabouts have never been known nor their bodies found. Some bodies were found in mass graves, thanks to the relentless work of human rights organizations. Many of the desaparecidos were members of social and political organizations, students, and workers. Two of those mentioned in the exhibition were performing mandatory military service at the time of their disappearance. Mandatory **military service** was in effect until 1994 in Argentina. Also known as "colimba," it consisted of a period of military training that men aged 18 to 21 had to complete.

Who are the Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo?

The Mothers gradually began to meet in different spaces, such as courts and hospitals, demanding information about their disappeared children. Later, recognizing that it was a collective struggle, they started to organize themselves in Plaza de Mayo, demanding to know their children's whereabouts. The Grandmothers, for their part, searched for their grandchildren—babies born in captivity or illegally appropriated. Their fight has led to advances in human rights, justice, and historical memory. To this day, 139 grandchildren have recovered their identities through the tireless work of the grandmothers. They are a global symbol of resistance and human rights advocacy.

Three of the founding mothers of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo Association (Azucena Villaflor, Esther Ballerino de Careaga, and María Eugenia Ponce de Bianco) were kidnapped on December 8, 1977, in Santa Cruz Church and later murdered in the "**death flights**." This was a method of extermination involving throwing detainees into the sea from an airplane. The operation to kidnap the mothers was led by the military officer Alfredo Astiz, who had infiltrated the organization by pretending to be a brother of a disappeared person.

What was DIPPBA?

The Buenos Aires Police Intelligence Directorate (DIPPBA), an organization that is now dissolved, operated from 1956 until 1998. Its archives were legally transferred to the Provincial Memory Commission for preservation, study, analysis, and dissemination. It is the first police intelligence archive recovered and opened in the country. It is an extensive and detailed record of systematic and organized political and ideological persecution, which also served to gather information on many of the mothers and grandmothers.

We suggest the following activities before the visit:

Considering that the exhibition revolves around the personal archive of 9 women, interweaving their personal stories with the collective history, we propose reflecting beforehand on: What is an archive?

What elements can be part of it? What do you think its importance might be?

Individually or as a group, conduct a brief research on the life of one of the women featured in the exhibition. You can deepen your investigation at the museum and observe what new information you find. The women included in the exhibition are:

- Nora Morales de Cortiñas (son Gustavo Cortiñas, disappeared on 15/04/1977).
- Mabel Penette de Gutiérrez (son Alejandro Gutiérrez, disappeared on 24/07/1978).
- Rosa Tarlovsky de Roisinblit (daughter Patricia Roisinblit, disappeared on 8/10/1978, and her grandson born in captivity, Guillermo Rodolfo Fernando Pérez Roisinblit, recovered in 2004).
- Isabel "Chicha" Chorobik de Mariani (granddaughter Clara Anahí Mariani, disappeared on 24/11/1976)
- Matilde "Sacha" Artes Company (daughter of Graciela, disappeared on 2/4/1976 along with her daughter Carla Rutila Artés, recovered in 1985).
- Olga Martegani de García (son Alejandro García, disappeared on 16/3/1977).
- Mercedes Lagrava de Martínez (son Atilio Martínez Lagrava, disappeared on 21/6/1977).
- María Isabel Cattáneo de González (brother Atilio Jorge, disappeared on 4/01/1977).
- Adelina Dematti de Alaye (son Carlos Esteban Alaye, disappeared on 5/5/1977)

Possible sources of information:

- Mothers of Plaza de Mayo website: https://www.abuelas.org.ar
- YouTube channel with videos of testimonies and outreach material: www.youtube.com/abuelasplazamayo
- Family Members website: https://memoriaabierta.org.ar/wp/memorias-de-la-memoria-familiares/

Additional materials:

- Trivia for memory, truth, and justice by CPM. Available at: https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/project/24-de-marzo-juego/
- Videla's statements about the disappeared: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueFt60NGZoc
- Declaration of Mother of Plaza de Mayo Marta Alconada: https://www.youtube.com/watch? v=ge8Gv1zANeY



VISIT TO THE MUSEUM

The personal archives included in the exhibition showcase how meticulously the women kept copies of the letters they sent, the always insufficient responses, court documents, notes on pieces of paper, and their demands first to the dictatorship and later to democratic governments. From their desperate cries—"Where are they?" and "Find them alive"—to the persistent search for truth, justice, and memory.

The construction of the right to identity in our country and internationally is the result of the arduous and valuable path traveled by the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, from the first time they gathered in October 1977 to the present day. The Grandmothers are internationally recognized and associated not only with the search for their grandchildren who were illegally taken during the last dictatorship but also with the right of all people to know their identity.

Individual and collective struggles generated documents (habeas corpus, notes, advertisements in newspapers, etc.), and to find their children, grandchildren, or siblings, they had to preserve that history that

was beginning to be written. The goal is to invite young people to undertake their own journey and inquiry into the personal archives of the exhibition, understanding their value as a vehicle for collective memory.

The exhibition is organized as follows:

First room: before	Second room: Search	Third room: The dissapeard
The idea of this room is to tell, through personal objects, the lives of these women before the disappearance/murder of their children/grandchildren/siblings. Some of them painted, others played the piano, some sewed, cooked, worked, or studied. Certain activities were put on hold after the disappearance/murder of their relatives.	 This room has two axes: On one side, it aims to rebuild the biographies of the disappeared. On the other, it shows the early moments of the search, using various documents such as notes, banners, etc. 	Mothers, grandmothers, and sisters made countless presentations. They wrote to public and private institutions. They kept copies of these letters and the few responses they received. Many of these documents formed evidence in the judicial cases that have been carried out and are ongoing.

Toward the end, the collective room recounts when they started gathering, searching, demanding, and walking alongside others. Initially, modestly, raising money through raffles of a "embroidered jean shirt." They founded organizations and collectives, articulated at the regional level. They broadened their perspective on what to fight for—looking at the past, present, and future. Personal pain became a collective struggle. Their voices and their journey multiplied in others.



CONTINUATION IN THE SCHOOL

We propose different activities to continue in the classroom that journey undertaken at the museum, allowing students to reflect on the knowledge built through the exhibition. Each teacher can choose the activity they find most appropriate.

OPTION 1: RESEARCH

Teachers who chose the previous research activity can ask what new information they found at the museum about the woman they selected, and share their findings about the lives and stories of all of them.

OPTION 2: DEBATE

We provide some questions to guide a deeper discussion:

- From a gender perspective: Why were women the ones fighting for the appearance of their children/grandchildren? Why did they keep all these archives? Are the ways of recording and saving these records specific to women?
- About the construction of memory: How is memory built? What is the relationship between personal memory and collective memory? What role can the "Family Biographical Archive" built by the Grandmothers play? What is its importance? Why is it important to retell these stories? What is the use of asking questions and continuing to investigate what happened?

OPTION 3: FANZINE WITH YOUR PERSONAL/FAMILY ARCHIVE

The goal of this activity is to reflect on the construction of personal memory and its connection to collective

memory. Individually, each student must create a fanzine from their personal or family archive. They can include photos, letters, texts, drawings, or documentation inspired by what they saw in the museum. If possible, we suggest that each student bring objects from their personal archive to class for sharing and to help create their fanzine based on the chosen material.

Starter questions: What story does the chosen object tell? What other information could it contain? What is its importance?



To conclude the activity, we propose combining all the fanzines created by students and reflecting on the following questions:

- What differences do you find between the ways of archiving today and those of the women in the exhibition?
- What differences and similarities do you see among classmates?
- What features of your own story does that archive tell?
- What is its importance?

Finally, we share additional digital materials and resources to work on March 24:

https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/project/24-de-marzo/

