

Jewish Court of All Time

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Welcome to the Jewish Court of All Time project for 2025

*The members of the JCAT Project Team wish to express heartfelt thanks to **Matt Kaplan, Miriam Raider-Roth, and Deborah Skolnick-Einhorn**, who each contributed significantly to JCAT, and to whom we are immensely grateful.*

*We gratefully acknowledge
the contributions of the following people to this Teacher's Guide:
Stella Anderson, Kim Droscha Floyd, Miriam Raider-Roth, Leah Robinson, Farrah Schiff and Stacie Woodward.*

Finding Answers...

The JCAT 2025 Program Coordinators are **Meredith Katz** <profmkatz@gmail.com> and **Jeff Stanzler** <stanz@umich.edu>
Please contact Jeff if you have any logistical questions about the simulation.

For problems specifically about using or accessing the website, please contact **Jeff Stanzler** <stanz@umich.edu> or **Jeff Kupperman** <jkupp@inglobal.org>

URL: <http://jcat.icsmich.org>

The Jewish Court of All Time is accessible **only** through this interactive, password-protected Website.

From the JCAT Project Team... Michael Fahy, Meredith Katz, Jeff Kupperman, Leah Robinson, Rebecca Shargel and Jeff Stanzler

Table of Contents

In this Teacher's Guide you'll find the following:

JCAT Calendar

Choosing characters

JCAT postings week-by-week

Establishing character

Navigating the JCAT website

Digital citizenship

Please note that on occasion reference is made to **Place out of Time**, or **POOT**, which is JCAT's secular "cousin."

JCAT Calendar in Brief

Pre-Simulation (Opening of school through Oct. 9)

- Character choices for your students sent in by **Friday, September 19 (logistical details to follow)**
- Characters assigned and notifications IN YOUR INBOX for use by **Thursday, September 25**
- **Post Profiles by October 20th**
- Students write character profiles
- Explore background of the case/Do content lesson plans

Rosh Hashanah-Mon-Wed., Sept. 22-24

Yom Kippur-Wednesday night -Thursday Oct. 1-2

Sukkot-Mon. p.m. Oct. 6–Wednesday night, Oct. 8

Week 1 (October 9-17): *Introductory Posts*

JCAT Website opens on October 9; Respond to introductory forum posts.

Post Profiles by Monday, October 20

Shemini Atzeret/ Simchat Torah-Mon. Night Oct. 13-Wed. Oct. 15

Columbus/Indigenous Peoples Day-Mon. Oct. 13

Week 2 (October 20-October 26): *Journey of the St. Louis*

Week 3 (October 27-November 2): *How was the St. Louis talked about in 1939?*

Week 4 (November 3-9): *FDR Speaks*

Week 5 (November 10-16): *Would you have apologized?*

Week 6/7 (Nov. 17 through Thanksgiving): *“Should the FDR Memorial be changed?”*

Voting runs from November 17-Thanksgiving (Results announced December 1st)

Thanksgiving Nov. 27/28

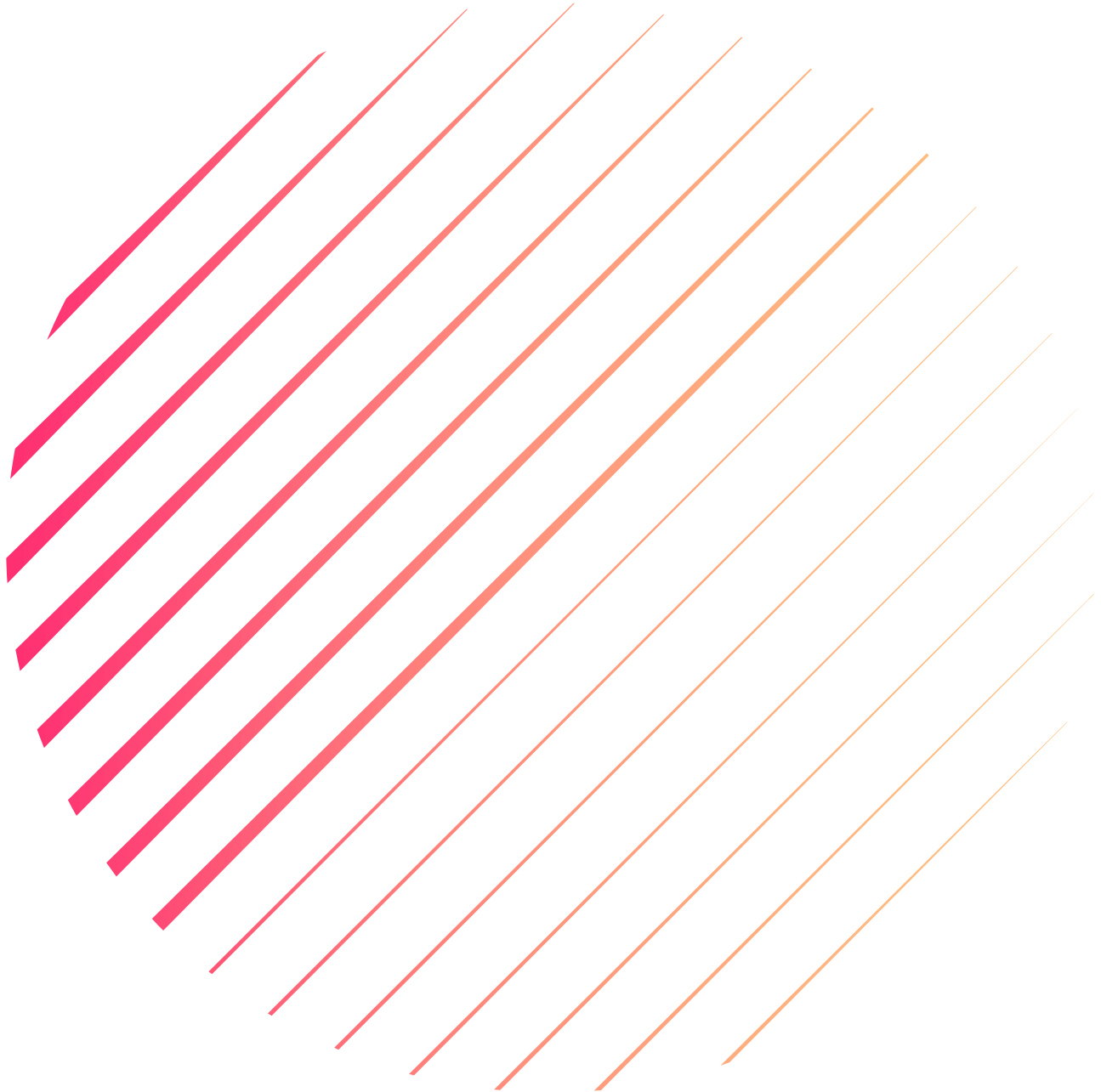
Week 8 (December 1-7): JCAT Concludes, Part 1: *Reflections on the Vote*

Week 9 (December 8-14): JCAT Concludes, Part 2: *Green Room Reflections; Saying Goodbye*

Chanukah starts Sunday, Dec. 14

Pre-Simulation

- 1) JCAT Step-by-Step
- 2) Choose student characters
- 3) Students research and write character profiles
- 4) Review Scenario



JCAT STEP BY STEP

Here's a quick description of the major steps in this project (more detail follows)

Step #1: Read the Scenario

Before you choose characters for your students, it's important that they have a sense of the context in which the simulation will play out. The scenario describes the core conflict that we'll explore over the coming weeks, and it provides a basic sense of the big issues that will be in play.

Step #2: Selecting Characters

We ask your students, whether individually or in small groups, to "become" a character (either an actual person or a literary character) and to portray that character in our online conversations. We ask that any characters chosen have life experiences, perspectives, or stated beliefs that can contribute to resolving the concerns of today's world. We'll talk in class and online about the process of choosing characters for your students.

Step #3 Write the Profile

The Profile is the result of your student's exploration of their character's history and life circumstances. It is a means for your students to teach the mentors and other students about their character, and it serves the specific function of trying to push the students to "become" their character a bit more. Students write their profiles in the first person, and in doing so we strongly encourage them to adopt a style they feel suits their character. In JCAT, what you say is very important, but so is **how** you say it.

Step #4 Learn to navigate the JCAT website

You first need to know how to **post your profile**. Once the simulation begins, know that there is both private communication (messages) and that public communication in the **FORUM**, and later in the **COURTOOM**. In the **navigating the website** section you'll learn about all of this, as well as how your students keep track of responses to their public posts (**NOTIFICATIONS**).

Step #5 Establishing Character

As you work on and ultimately complete your Profile, please take some class time to practice speaking and thinking in character, representing your character's ideas as you've come to understand them and trying to speak in your character's "voice." In this section of the Teacher's Guide, we'll share some ideas and activities designed to help your students with playing their characters, and with fully embracing the intellectual and "theatrical" opportunities of character play.

Character Play & Empathy

In this simulation, you will be playing a character. In fact, nearly everything you do online will be “in character.” Most of the characters portrayed in the simulation were or are real, living people. As you begin researching and portraying your character, and as you seek to understand them, you’ll find yourself asking questions about what was important to them, and how their experiences and ideas, and the times in which they lived, shaped the person they became. Playing a character in a simulation gives you the opportunity to think about big questions like these, as you use your knowledge and creative imagination to try to put yourself in your character’s shoes, and to imagine what they would say and how they might say it.

We see great value in character play as an exercise of the imagination. Considering the ideas and the perspective of someone from a different time or place can be a powerful spark for learning, as well as to the development of empathy. Many of you will be surprised to find that you have things in common with your character. These connections are really important, because they help us see the humanity in people who might otherwise appear to be very different from us.

Yet it is just as likely that there will be parts of your character’s experience that are very different from your own, and those differences are just as real and just as important. The way that ideas about race, gender, culture, religion, or sexuality (to name a few) can impact someone else’s life is something we must learn about and try to understand, while always remembering that learning about something is not the same as experiencing it firsthand. So while we ask everyone to “stay in character,” online, we also ask that everyone try to be mindful and respectful about the limits of what we can truly “know” about someone else’s experience or how authentically we can embody it.

So when you log in, think of yourself as an actor putting on a costume and walking onto a stage. On that stage, you will be playing your character—offering an interpretation of them based on what you have learned through research, and through exercising your creative imagination. When you log out, you will be you again, though—perhaps— you will look at the world a little differently.

JCAT 2025 SCENARIO

In 2025, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the death in April 1945 of President Franklin D. Roosevelt (known as FDR), many events are being held across the United States in his honor. The National Parks Service planned one such event for Fall 2025 at the FDR Memorial in Washington DC. The memorial traces the 12 years of U.S. history during FDR's presidency through a sequence of four outdoor rooms, one for each of FDR's terms of office. (Take a look at the Memorial: [Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)).

Coincidentally, the “St. Louis Group,” a national group of survivors of the M.S. St. Louis and their descendants, was planning their annual meeting **for the same week in Washington**. The M.S. St. Louis was a ship bound for Cuba in June 1939 (just before World War II started), whose passengers were Jewish refugees from Hitler's Germany. Even though they had the required documents, nearly all the passengers were refused entry to Cuba. The ship next came to Florida seeking safe haven for its passengers in the US. However, FDR denied the request on behalf of the US, as did Canada. The 936 passengers were returned to four different countries (England, Belgium, France and Holland) in Europe, none of which were yet under Nazi control. Following the German invasion of the latter three countries, 254 eventually died at the hands of the Nazis. The St. Louis Group members today represent the survivors who made it to the United States after World War II, and the descendants of anyone aboard the ship.

In planning its meeting, the St. Louis Group became aware of the FDR event. Because FDR had ultimate responsibility for refusing the ship entry to the United States, St. Louis Group members are critical of his actions and were disappointed when the FDR memorial established in 1997 did not include a reference to the St. Louis.

As they continued planning their own event, the St. Louis Group, represented by their spokesperson, Sol Messinger, became increasingly upset that FDR continues to be celebrated as a hero, especially at a time when there are very few Holocaust survivors left to tell their stories and when antisemitism is again a growing problem in the United States.

The group decided to write a letter to the National Park Service (hosting the FDR commemoration), demanding that the FDR Memorial be altered to include a reference to the M.S. St. Louis and the fate of its passengers. They

stated that they were prepared to read their letter outside the FDR Commemoration event in protest and threatened to take further action if their demands weren't met.

Recognizing that such a proposal should be taken seriously and seeing the potential political damage of such a protest, the Director of the National Park Service, Jessica Bowron, has turned to the Jewish Court of All Time for an official advisory. She asks the Court to consider the St. Louis Group's demand both from the perspective of history and our current day and charges the court with inviting guests from throughout history to come to Masada and help us to consider complex questions about righting historical wrongs and how we commemorate the past.

Choosing student characters

Logistics: You will receive an email from us with instructions for sending us **a rank ordered list of three possible character choices** for each of your students by **Friday, September 19th** (*we know that this is early, but in order to navigate the holidays and give your students time to do their research and write their profiles, we need an early start—we'll send your character assignments out by **Wednesday, September 24th***). Following the format on the spreadsheet you will help us make the process of assigning characters as smooth and as quick as possible. ***Please note that we are asking you not to request any character more than once on your list.*** We know this might be a challenge, especially in larger classes, but having a character appear multiple times on a single class list makes it very difficult to honor requests and extends the amount of time it takes to finalize character lists.

GUIDING STUDENT CHARACTER CHOICE

Student character choice is a crucial part of the JCAT experience. When students portray characters that they want to play, they tend to be more invested in the simulation and, as a result, have a much more rich and meaningful experience.

Yet not all characters translate well to the Jewish Court of All Time (we'll email you a list of suggested characters). This is why we recommend that you guide your students toward characters using the following two questions as criteria:

(1) Is the character relevant—or can he/she relate—to the themes of the scenario? Characters do not need to be people who are from the places, cultures, and times directly involved in the scenario. However, if the characters have experiences or ideas related to the scenario's fundamental themes, they are going to be richer and more productive to play. For example, while Queen Isabella of Spain (coming from a different time, place, and culture) might not seem directly relevant to a scenario about free speech and dealing with political extremism in the 21st century, she very certainly has strong ideas about the nature of leadership and how leaders should respond to dissent or threats. Characters who have been persecuted in some way, or even generally misunderstood, can also bring unique perspectives.

(2) Is the character reasonably easy to research and find relevant materials on? Many characters in JCAT don't have recorded views on the exact scenario your students will be engaging in, and that is part of the great learning challenge. The answers aren't in the back of the book or searchable on Google. But in order for students to both learn about and portray their 'characters' accurately and productively in the simulation, they'll need some source material upon which to base their portrayals. Some people, while quite famous, don't have many recorded views or beliefs about things like citizenship, free speech, security, immigration or other issues we will talk about. Thus, students playing such characters usually end up feeling very frustrated with their inability to participate fully in these discussions. We therefore recommend that students look for characters who have known perspectives on some of the themes of the scenario.

Here are some other things to consider as you begin the character selection process...

Don't limit yourself to political, religious and military leaders. Many students have had a great time portraying figures from the worlds of art, or science, or business. We've even had some very memorable portrayals of fictional characters, whether characters from novels or characters from a play.

Sometimes it's helpful to broaden our thinking about appropriate source material on which a character portrayal might be based. Playing a politician is often more straightforward, because many of them have a public record, and speeches or writings that convey their beliefs. How about challenging your students to think about how a different kind of character sees the world, though, or about the criteria by which such a person might assess a situation? How, for example, might a photographer think about truth as contrasted with a

political leader, and how might your student use that photographer's work to shape her character portrayal?

We advise you against choosing biblical figures. Those past JCAT participants who've chosen biblical characters have too often found themselves frustrated, lacking the source material upon which to base an ongoing character portrayal. Of course, you are welcome to assign such characters to your students, but know that in order for such experiences to be successful and rewarding for your students, they will require much more consistent support and mediation on your part.

Think about the "mix" of characters in your group. Classroom discussions are much richer if you have a nice variety of characters, representing different places, times, points of view, and walks of life.

Extremist characters. One of your students may express an interest in playing a character that could be regarded as an extremist. Of course, such an appellation often says more about the person so labelling someone else than it does about the person being described, and playing such a character can represent an exciting, and deeply challenging "point of entry" for a student. If your student asks to portray someone whose views you regard as blatantly sexist or racist, we want to say that teachers *have* sanctioned such choices, but always with the proviso that they would work closely with the student so that it wouldn't be a matter of their student being licensed simply to spit venom, but rather so that they would think seriously and sensitively about how that person sees the world. Handled thoughtfully, having such characters in the mix can challenge everyone in productive ways...and remember that we're here to help you think things through at any juncture.

4) Students research and write character profiles

What is a Profile?

In 2–3 paragraphs, we ask that your students write a first-person narrative in which they tell everyone something about what they are known for, the kind of person they are, their experiences, their beliefs and their passions. In talking about their character and in telling everyone something of their "story", we would like for them to get a sense of their beliefs and (if possible) about the social or personal context that shaped their point-of-view. We would invite them to consider tackling questions like: Is your character a "doer" or a "thinker"? What might your character have to say about our responsibilities to one another? Who or what should one be most loyal to, and when is it acceptable to oppose governments and leaders?

Why Write A Profile?

We're hoping to meaningfully enhance this research task with an aspect of "real-world" applicability. The students' work on this Profile is a culmination of their research into their character, but **it is also a means to teach other students about their character, serving the specific function of trying to push**

the students to "become" their character a bit more. We encourage the students to write this Profile as if they were their character, picking up the pen to tell others, somewhat informally, about who they are and what "makes them tick".

In putting together their profile, we ask that the students try to give their readers a sense of the times in which their character lived, **responding through their profile to one or more of these questions:**

- *What was your world like? Peaceful, or a world at war? Who were your enemies?*
- *What were the greatest dangers you faced? What were the greatest dangers ordinary people of your times faced?*
- *Who were the people closest to you? What kinds of people were closest to you?*
- *What mattered most in terms of social relations? Was it race? Religion? Gender? Social class?*
- *What do you think your character sounded like?*
- *Was your character a snob?*
- *What ideas did your character champion?*
- *What kinds of people would have gotten on his/her nerves?*

One of the challenges of this activity is to try and represent one's character, as much as possible, from the character's own perspective. Sometimes the character will have done things we don't agree with, or that we might question from our present-day perspective. While we encourage the students to think about such issues, we ask them to do so primarily so that you can present their character's thoughts and motivations in as genuine a manner as you can. Our advice in a nutshell: Be your character, take some dramatic license, and have some fun writing your Profile.

Looking at Sample Profiles: A Great Pre-Writing Activity for you and your students

Let's talk profiles. We want to briefly illustrate a couple of important ideas/suggestions for writing your profile. Be forewarned ;-) that we won't be showing you a "perfect" profile, because we believe that there are multiple paths to a great profile, and we want you to find the one that suits you and your character. We do, however, want to talk about and illustrate three ideas that we hope you'll keep in mind as you create your masterwork:

- First, remember that while your profile should tell the other guests about your life story and your accomplishments, it should also give people a feel for what kind of person your character is, and what her personal style is (that's what we mean when we posed the question of "what makes your character tick?" in the previous section).

- Secondly, don't be afraid to be conversational in your Profile...it can be a very helpful tool in making your character feel like a real person, someone that others will want to seek out and speak with.
- Finally, use your profile to give your fellow guests some sense of the ideas and beliefs that are important to you.

Let's look at a Profile for Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis:

Greetings everyone. You might know me as Louis Dembitz Brandeis, Originally, Some people know me as Judge Brandeis. I was born on November 13, 1856, to Adolph and Fredrika Brandeis. My family immigrated to the U.S. from Prague following the failed revolution of 1848. They soon developed a successful grain-merchandising business. I was born in Louisville, Kentucky and attended Louisville Male High School; I graduated at the age of 14 with the highest honors. My family and I moved back to Europe for two years where I studied at the Realgymnasium Annenshule in Dresden. Later, I returned to the U.S. in 1875, where I entered Harvard Law School. In 1877, I graduated Harvard Law School with the highest grades in the class of any student that ever attended Harvard Law School. In 1916, I, Justice Brandeis was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson to be the first Jewish Supreme Court Justice of the United States. A couple years after, at the outbreak of World War 1, I became the famous American Zionist. In 1914 to 1915, I began a speaking tour to support the Zionist cause. Sadly, I died in Washington D.C, on October 5, 1941. In 1948, a private university located in Waltham, Massachusetts, was named in my honor.

There are some definite things to like about this Profile. Most notably, it offers a very succinct story of the major events in Justice Brandeis' life, and a reader certainly gets a feel for why Brandeis is such a noteworthy figure. Reading it, however, we don't get much of a sense of the justice's beliefs, or his personal style. Now, we should say that it is hard to get a feel for someone's personal style. If you read a good encyclopedia entry about Louis Brandeis, there might be no mention of his manner, or whether, for example, he was a haughty sort of person, or someone who comfortably spoke the language of the "man on the street." You might also have to make some guesses about what beliefs would be most important to him, or about what he would find irritating or frustrating. We want to ask that you try to do some of this educated guessing, though. A lot of the time, this is exactly what historians have to do. Such guessing is known as "interpretation." As you read about your character, and perhaps read her writing or a quote from a speech, think about how she sounds to you, and think about what leads you to think. Part of what we hope will be both fun and challenging for you is to build an image of your character--like you were going to portray him in a play or a movie--based on your research. This is what we mean when we talk about combining intellectual work and imaginative work...you need both parts. We hope that you will take a risk, and that you'll remember that everyone else is trying to figure out the riddle of their character, so you aren't alone! Now, let's look at this Profile for the American "businessman" (and notorious gangster), Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel:

Who am I? You'd be a fool for not knowing! I'm only gonna tell you once, so listen up good! I'll be flat out straight with you, I'm a gangster. It got me killed, too. I took 5 shots to the head, on the sad, sad day of June 20, 1947. Do you people modern times have a holiday for me? Well, you should. My real name, Benjamin faded at a very young age. It was always Bugsy! Do you know what "Bugsy" means? Crazy, I have been known to have quite a temper when things don't go my way. You people say I "invented" Vegas. What is this nonsense? I was the first one to see it as a gambling Mecca. I had wife, and two daughters. I was raised a Jew, but never practiced. I was a total hoodlum as a kid. I had the best friend anyone could have, Meyer Lansky. We used to light stores on fire if they didn't pay us a dollar. Anyone who would like to gamble at my casino, The Flamingo, is welcome to. Thanks for listening.

Do you learn a lot about Bugsy Siegel's life story? Well...yes and no. There aren't too many "He was born here and went to school there" kind of details, but as he speaks to us, we learn about how he got his name, what he accomplished, and why he's famous. Do you get a feel for the kind of guy he was? You bet!! He jumps right off the page, doesn't he? Mr. Siegel has a personality, and you want to get to know him (even if you may not like him). We want you to find the voice of your character in your own way, but we thought that this brief profile might give you some ideas, and perhaps a bit of inspiration. If you treat your character as a friend, and let yourself have some fun with words and ideas, we're confident that you'll write the perfect profile for your character!

Alternative Profile: Turn your character into an ACTION FIGURE!

In this activity, you will use your research to turn your character into an action figure/doll (complete with actions, accessories, and more!). You can use this activity in parallel with writing profiles or, if it makes better sense for you, have your students create an "action figure" out of their character, take screenshots or photos of it, and post the images in your GALLERY as an alternative to the written profile. Of course they can hand draw their images or use web tools to do so.

PART 1: BRAINSTORM

After you've researched your character (including looking at available images and videos), brainstorm responses to these questions:

1. ACTION: What does my character do? (For example: write, play sports, protest, etc).

2. **OUTFIT:** What kind of clothing does my character usually wear (or famously wear)? (For example: a uniform)

3. **ACCESSORIES:** What items or objects did they usually use or have with them? (For example, sports equipment, writing utensils, art supplies, etc).

4. **SAYINGS:** Is there a quotation or saying that either this character is known for, or that **you** think summarizes what they're all about?

5. ***BONUS* SETTING:** Where can your character most often be found? (For example: sports arena, battlefield, protest, nature, laboratory, etc)

PART 2: DESIGN

You are now ready to design your action figure/doll. You can print and draw on the templates on pages 3-4 (you can also click [here](#) for pdf template) or design your own!

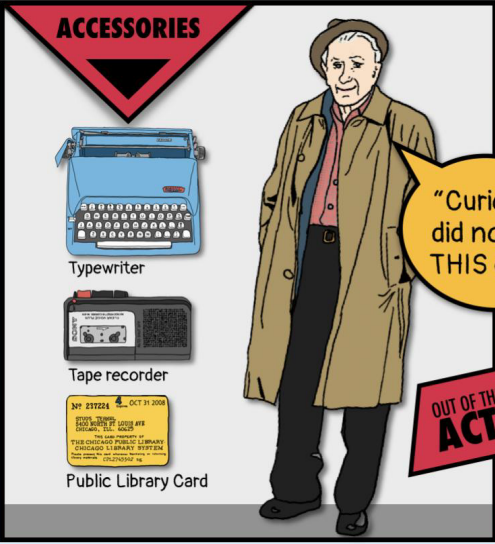
Get as detailed, colorful, and creative as you want! See an example on the next page for some ideas!

SAMPLE ACTION FIGURE

Front and back

LIMITED EDITION

ACCESSORIES



Typewriter

Tape recorder

Public Library Card

PLACE OUT OF TIME

TALKS

"Curiosity did not kill THIS cat!"

OUT OF THIS WORLD ACTION

Sits!
Stands!
Writes!
Reads!
Interviews!

STUDS TERKEL
Author - Historian - Broadcaster

ALL ABOUT ME



I was born Louis Terkel in 1912 in the Bronx, New York. But my "hometown" is Chicago, where my family moved when I was 9. My parents ran a boarding house. Between the boarding house and "Bughouse Square" (a park where all sorts of people would stand up on soapboxes and say whatever they wanted), I became fascinated with people and their stories.



For decades, I had a radio show where I played music, and talked to people (famous and not). Because of the show, everywhere I went, people would talk to me and I would listen and record. Those conversations became books: oral histories told by the people you never read about in history books.

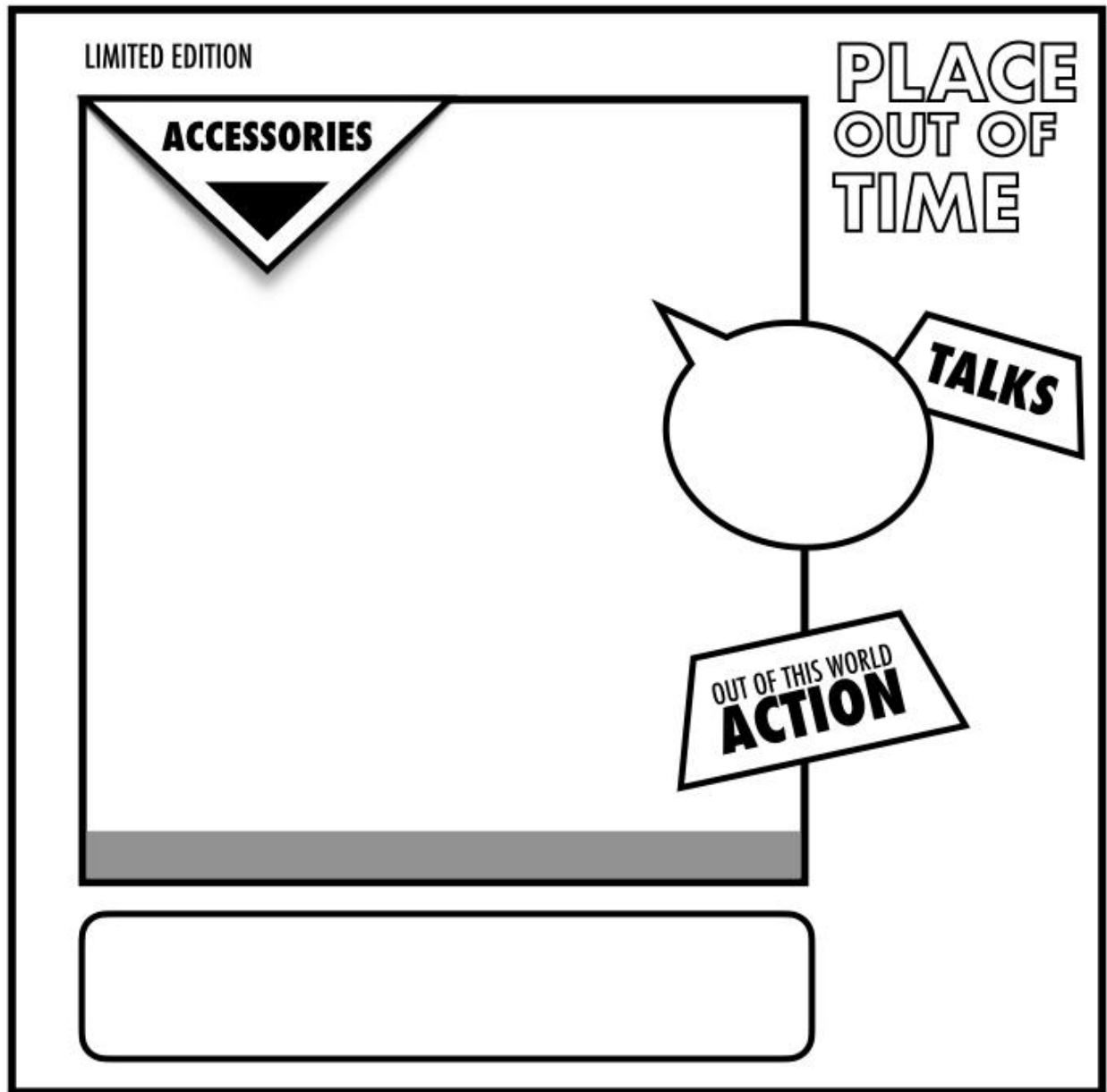
I 'checked out' of life in 2008 when I was 96. I told my son that I wanted my epitaph to say, 'Curiosity did not kill this cat.'

MADE IN USA

PLACE OUT OF TIME



YOUR TURN!
Front



YOUR TURN!

Back

MADE IN

PLACE
out of
TIME


PLOT-2021

MADE IN

**PLACE
out of
TIME**



JCAT Week-By-Week

In this section you'll find instructions for posting character profiles and all of the discussion threads that we'll be posting during each week of the simulation.



JCAT Postings: Week-by-Week

*Please know these we *may* tweak these postings or the order in which we post them in response to events that occur...thanks in advance for your understanding!*

Week 1: Forum Posts - Thursday Oct. 9- Friday Oct.17 **Introductory Posts**

How to Post Your Profile

To post your Profile...

- First, choose and download a picture of your character to your desktop as a GIF or JPEG file.
- Next, click on **My Profile** and then, on the next page (which is your character's page) click on **Edit Profile or Picture**.
- This will bring you to a page where you can enter/copy in the text of your Profile and upload the picture you've saved of your character.
- If you should ever need to amend your Profile, you can access the text by going back to your **My Profile** page, and then clicking again on **Edit Profile or Picture**.

Discussion #1: What did you bring with you?

JCAT members are some of the most brilliant and fascinating people of all time and tend to own lots of fascinating things. In recent years, however, due to luggage restrictions on airplanes, trains, and teleportation machines, JCAT members have had to "travel light."

So, we would like you to comment below and tell us about one object that you brought with you, something you simply could not leave behind because it means so much to you. (Maybe it's a gift someone gave you, or an object that symbolizes something important to you—like an accomplishment.)

Prompt:

In the comment box below, tell us:

1. What was the ONE object that you HAD to bring with you to JCAT?

2. Why is this object so important to you?

(After you've answered, talk to **at least 2** others about their objects)

Discussion #2 Accepting An Apology

Think about whether you have ever had to give or receive an apology. The great sage Maimonides (Rambam) said that “when a person who has done wrong asks for forgiveness, one should forgive that person with a complete heart and a willing spirit...you should not seek revenge or bear a grudge”

Prompt:

What do you think about Rambam’s statement?

(After you've answered, respond to the comments of **at least 2** others)

Week 2: Forum Post-week of Oct. 20: Journey of the St. Louis



Sol Messinger with his parents on the MS St Louis

My name is Sol Messinger.

The year was 1939.

The Nazis had taken control of Germany (where I lived) and everything had become awful.

I was seven and my friends were suddenly beating me up and calling me a “dirty Jew.”

My dad was arrested and taken to a refugee camp.

Somehow he got out, and my parents got tickets to Cuba on a ship called the St. Louis and received permission to move there.

I didn’t want to go, but mom and dad said we’d be safe there, and we *weren’t* safe in Germany anymore, and we had to go...**right away**.

After a long ride, we got to Cuba and they wouldn’t let us off the ship.

Yes, you heard that right...they wouldn’t let us off the ship!

Dad said that people who hated Jews and feared immigrants put pressure on the Cuban President, and only a very few passengers were allowed off the ship to come into Cuba.

The President broke his promise to let us in.

We waited on that ship for DAYS.

Finally, we left Cuba and tried to enter the United States, but they said no, too.

They said there was an American law that said they could only allow in so many Germans each year, so they sent us back to Europe.

How could they do that?

My family wound up in France and I was so angry.

The Nazis came there too, and we had to hide. We were always scared.

Three years later my family boarded another ship.

This time we made it to America...to Buffalo, New York.

I grew up and got to raise a family and live in peace and become an old man.

It felt like a miracle.

Later I learned that the Nazis had killed lots of people who were on the St. Louis with us, but I got to live.

This story is one that people living today must hear, and that's why I think the FDR

Memorial should include the story of the MS St. Louis.

Prompt:

What stands out for you from Sol's story?

Did you or your family ever have to overcome something terrible or difficult like this in your own life? Please tell us about it.

After you comment, please respond to the reactions of at least two other guests.

Week 3 Forum Post - week of Oct. 27-Nov. 2: How was the St. Louis talked about in 1939?

Let's take a close look at a newspaper account (taken from the New York Times of Thursday, June 8, 1939) describing what took place when the MS St. Louis was turned away from Cuba.

Here's the text of the article:

The saddest ship afloat today, the Hamburg-American liner St. Louis, with 900 Jewish refugees aboard, is steaming back toward Germany after a tragic week of frustration at Havana and off the coast of Florida. She is steaming back despite an offer made to Havana yesterday to give a guarantee through the Chase National Bank of \$500 apiece for every one of her passengers, men, women and children, who might land there. President Laredo Bru still has an opportunity to practice those humanitarian sentiments so eloquently expressed in his belated offer of asylum after the refugee ship had been driven from Havana Harbor. His cash terms have been met. But the St. Louis still keeps her course for Hamburg.

No plague ship ever received a sorrier welcome. Yet those aboard her had sailed with high hopes. About fifty of them, according to our Berlin dispatch, had consular visas. The others all had landing permits for which they had paid; they were unaware that these permits had been declared void in a decree dated May 5. Only a score of the hundreds were admitted. At Havana the St. Louis's decks became a stage for human misery. Relatives and friends clamored to get aboard but were held back. Weeping refugees clamoring to get ashore were halted at guarded gangways. For days the St. Louis lingered within the shadow of Morro Castle, but there was no relaxation of the new regulations. Every appeal was rejected. One man reached land. He was pulled from the water with slashed wrists and rushed to a hospital. A second suicide attempt led the captain to warn the authorities that a wave of self-destruction might follow. The forlorn refugees themselves organized a patrol committee. Yet out of Havana Harbor the St. Louis had to go, trailing pitiful cries of "Auf Wiedersehen." Off our shores she was attended by a helpful Coast Guard vessel alert to pick up any passengers who plunged overboard and thrust them back on the St. Louis again. The refugees could even see the shimmering towers of Miami rising from the sea, but for them they were only the battlements of another forbidden city.

It is useless now to discuss what might have been done. The case is disposed of. Germany, with all the hospitality of its concentration camps, will welcome these unfortunates home. Perhaps Cuba, as her spokesmen say, has already taken too many German refugees. Yet all these 900 asked was a temporary haven. Before they sailed virtually all of them had registered under the quota provisions of various nations, including our own. Time would have made them eligible to enter. But there seems to be no help for them now. The St. Louis will soon be home with her cargo of despair.

Her next trip is already scheduled. It will be a gay cruise for carefree tourists.

Prompt:

What emotions did the article make you feel? What descriptive details in the article made you feel as you do?

(If you happened to be alive at this time and recall hearing about the St. Louis in the news, please tell us about that)

After you comment, please respond to the reactions of *at least* two other guests.

**Week 4 Forum Post - week of Nov. 3–9 FDR
Speaks**

Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Jewish Court of All Time:

I, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, sit before you today to outline the facts behind the United States and its involvement with the MS St. Louis, and to explain why it is not necessary or appropriate to include its story in my presidential memorial. It is undeniably true that the United States did not accept the refugees from the MS St. Louis. However, I fear that people today do not understand the complexities of the situation of 1939: there were a number of policies at play that prevented us from taking action. The most significant was the Immigration Act of 1924, a policy regarding the number of immigrants the U.S. would take from any particular country (see the chart below). The count for Germany was quite high, and the U.S. had already far surpassed the amount of Germans allowed in under the immigrant quota for the year. This is where I received the greatest amount of pushback regarding the decision to prevent the passengers from entering our nation, but as you see on the chart, these quotas were set up in 1924 for a reason. **If I were to break the rule for this group of people, I would have had to break it for everyone, and more and more people would have come.**

Who Was Shut Out?: Immigration Quotas, 1925–1927

In response to growing public opinion against the flow of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe in the years following World War I, Congress passed first the Quota Act of 1921 then the even more restrictive Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson-Reed Act). Initially, the 1924 law imposed a total quota on immigration of 165,000—less than 20 percent of the pre-World War I average. It based ceilings on the number of immigrants from any particular nation on the percentage of each nationality recorded in the 1890 census—a blatant effort to limit immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, which mostly occurred after that date. In the first decade of the 20th century, an average of 200,000 Italians had entered the United States each year. With the 1924 Act, the annual quota for Italians was set at less than 4,000. This table shows the annual immigration quotas under the 1924 Immigration Act.

<i>Northwest Europe and Scandinavia</i>		<i>Eastern and Southern Europe</i>		<i>Other Countries</i>	
Country	Quota	Country	Quota	Country	Quota
Germany	51,227	Poland	5,982	Africa (other than Egypt)	1,100
Great Britain and Northern Ireland	34,007	Italy	3,845	Armenia	124
Irish Free State (Ireland)	28,567	Czechoslovakia	3,073	Australia	121
Sweden	9,561	Russia	2,248	Palestine	100
Norway	6,453	Yugoslavia	671	Syria	100
France	3,954	Romania	603	Turkey	100
Denmark	2,789	Portugal	503	Egypt	100
Switzerland	2,081	Hungary	473	New Zealand & Pacific Islands	100
Netherlands	1,648	Lithuania	344	All others	1,900
Austria	785	Latvia	142		
Belgium	512	Spain	131		
Finland	471	Estonia	124		
Free City of Danzig	228	Albania	100		
Iceland	100	Bulgaria	100		
Luxembourg	100	Greece	100		
Total (Number)	142,483	Total (Number)	18,439	Total (Number)	3,745
Total (%)	86.5	Total (%)	11.2	Total (%)	2.3
(Total Annual immigrant quota: 164,667)					

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1929), 100.

Not to mention that the U.S. was slowly recovering from the Great Depression. Jobs were being created and sustained for the families that already resided in the U.S., but the economy was fragile, and many feared that allowing in more than the suggested amount of immigrants would take jobs away from Americans. I was an adamant advocate for hard-working Americans, and I did my best to make decisions that would benefit as many people as possible.

Politically, it would have been dangerous for me to support any policy that would drag the United States closer to war in Europe so soon after World War I. The majority of Americans were ISOLATIONISTS; they wanted the United States to keep out of Europe's problems. This included many leaders in Congress whose permission I would have had to get to change the immigration quotas. Even the President of the United States must follow his country's laws. If I pushed too much to help the Jews, I might have lost political support and opened up the way for antisemites like Charles Lindbergh and his followers to come to power.

My Jewish advisors at the time, such as Rabbi Stephen Wise, understood this-why can't more of you? Not to mention, American Jews LOVED me- 85 to 90 percent of Jews voted for me in every election!

It is easy to analyze history through the morality of your own time. It is also easy in hindsight to say that the United States should have done more for the passengers. In truth, we did a lot! The United States ensured that the St. Louis passengers could safely enter four European countries that were then at peace and that were accepting immigrants. When the MS St. Louis began its voyage back to Europe before the war started in September 1939, we could not have known its ultimate fate. We could not have known that Hitler would invade most of Europe—and we did not yet know about his death camps, his “Final Solution”. To assume that the United States willingly sent the passengers of the MS St. Louis to their deaths is to ignore history and signifies a failure to understand the time period in which this happened. It's all well and good for people who weren't residents of the US in 1939 to say that I should have done more...it's so easy to be critical after the fact. I acted in good faith to protect my people, my country and our laws—why should I be treated like a villain on my own memorial?

Prompt

FDR argues that at the time of the St. Louis in 1939, he didn't know about Hitler's plans to exterminate the Jews and that he did what he could to help Jewish refugees within the law, given the conditions and attitudes of the time.

What in FDR's testimony is convincing to you? What isn't? What would you like to know more about?

After you comment, please respond to the reactions of *at least* two other guests.

Week 5-week of Nov.10-Nov. 16 Would you have apologized?

In our discussions of the MS St. Louis passengers and how they were treated, many questions have arisen about actions taken by FDR. Next week we'll discuss and vote on the demand by the survivors of the MS St. Louis and their descendants to add a reference to the St. Louis and the fate of its passengers to the FDR Memorial in Washington D.C. This week, though, we want to pick up on our earlier conversation about apologies and what makes them meaningful.

Some say apologizing is a sign of strength, while others see it as a sign of weakness. Is apologizing a necessary acknowledgment of wrongdoing that can lead to healing? Is it about making the person giving the apology feel or look better?

Let's apply this to our case.

In 2012—73 years after the MS St. Louis came to the US and was turned away—Deputy American Secretary of State William Burns offered an official apology for American actions at that time. He stated that when the US government was asked to admit the St. Louis passengers the dangers for Jews in Nazi Germany were already known, “and yet the United States did not welcome these tired, poor and huddled passengers as we had so many before and would so many since. Our government did not live up to its ideals. We were wrong.” Burns stated that to show that it had learned the lessons of The St. Louis, the US would be vigilant in the face of antisemitism and would work to prevent future atrocities like the one that the MS St. Louis passengers were fleeing. (The full text of his statement is [HERE](#)).

Prompt

Now...if you had been the American president, would YOU have apologized for America's actions regarding the MS St. Louis?

Tell us what you would have done and why, and then respond to the reactions of *at least* two other guests.

Week 6/7: Forum Post/Voting—week of Nov.

17-Thanksgiving “Should the FDR Memorial be changed?”

Voting will begin on Thursday, November 20th and will run through Thanksgiving

Members of JCAT, we’ve arrived at the final step in our case: our vote on the appeal by Sol Messinger and the St. Louis Group that, in addition to the apology from the American government, the FDR Memorial should be altered to include a plaque informing viewers about the MS St. Louis and the fate of its passengers. To help you think through this question, we asked Sol Messinger to say a few words about this appeal, and we then invited the designer of the FDR Memorial, Lawrence Halprin, to talk about why he opposes making this change.

First we hear from Sol Messinger:

“The members of the St. Louis Group are angry that FDR continues to be celebrated as a hero while the story of the St. Louis is largely forgotten, even in a time of growing antisemitism in the United States. The 2012 apology is not sufficient. We must do everything possible to remember the story of the St. Louis, so that Americans can learn from it and ensure that its leaders never repeat such a tragic mistake. The FDR Memorial is the perfect place to tell this story, and we know that we can honor FDR even as we recall his terrible decision. People visiting the memorial can learn that FDR was a great man, but also a flawed one—after all, we study history to learn the truth, not to pretend that our leaders are perfect!”

Now we hear from Lawrence Halprin:

“I am deeply sympathetic to what the St. Louis passengers endured, and their story must be heard by all. Their proposal is the wrong way to go about this, however. Just as we seek to honor the memory of the St. Louis passengers, we must honor the work of the artist and the integrity of the artist’s work. A memorial, like a painting or a musical recording, captures the artist’s vision *at that moment*. Imagine our deciding that we needed to go through art galleries and repaint great paintings to include things we feel today *should* have been depicted in the painting, or that we decide should be depicted differently! We have better ways of accomplishing what the St. Louis Group asks of us. Historians can write books and museums and teachers can tell stories not previously told. Let us **please** not remake art—once we start to do that we will NEVER stop!!”

Prompt

JCAT members, should we change the FDR memorial to include the story of the St. Louis? Please share your thoughts on this proposal in the

comments below, and be ready to vote on this proposal when the polls open on Thursday (polls will remain open through next Tuesday)

Week 8: JCAT Concludes, Part 1: December 1-7

Reflections on the vote

(If the proposal is accepted by JCAT) What should be said on the monument about the St. Louis? *Please limit your response to 50 words, and feel free to collaborate on your response with another JCAT guest/s*

Week 9: JCAT Concludes, Part 2: December 8-14

Say goodbye to your fellow guests

Green Room Reflections (including writing a message of farewell to your character)

Establishing Character

In this section you'll find activities to do to help students get into character, to heighten their playful spirit of engagement, and to draw contrasts between self and character.



PLAYING YOUR CHARACTER IN CLASS AND ONLINE

This section includes activities that you can do in class and also samples of interactions from previous simulations that can help give students an idea of how they might portray their character (and how they might think their way into doing so).

We will be talking about what governments, religious bodies, and international organizations should do regarding our trial topic. We will also be talking about what we, as individuals, should be doing and thinking about. As you think about these issues, embrace the challenge of playing a character—historical, contemporary, or literary—who has something to say on these issues. This means that you'll need to learn enough about your character to be able to speak in a voice that fits with your sense of the person and their beliefs. What do you think your character sounded like? Was she a woman of the people? Would he look down his nose at others? Have some fun with it, and when you're writing in character, be true to your vision of your character in her/his time. You'll need to take your best guess in response to the kinds of questions written here, and that's fine. As you learn more about your character, allow yourself to play a bit.

The "Take a Stand" Activity

Set the room up so that the tables are in a U shape, where one tip of the U represents strongest possible agreement, the other strongest possible disagreement, and everywhere else along the U represents weaker agreement or disagreement. Then get everyone on their feet and read a series of statements--each student is to locate themselves somewhere on the U based on their feeling about the statement (the only forbidden place is in the exact middle) and to be prepared to explain why they placed themselves where they did. You might consider doing this activity early in the term, with the students participating as themselves, and then doing it again later, with the students participating in character. Here are some sample statements that we've used...let us know if you come up with others that work well:

Under certain circumstances, violence is not only justifiable...it is necessary.

Reason has its limits--ultimately, we must trust in G-d

All people are born equal and should be treated as equal

Being a victim justifies harsh measures in the interest of self-protection

Women are perfectly capable of doing everything men can.

A generous spirit is a fine thing, but you must start with your own people.

Character Exploration Lesson Plan

By former Place out of Time mentor Stella Anderson, Master of Arts in dramaturgy from Harvard University and the Moscow Art Theatre School:

We offer these activities as tools to help students with the early stages of character development, so that they do not rely solely on their written profiles. They can also be used as refreshers throughout the semester to ensure that the work of character development does not end when the trial begins. These activities are only suggestions: the idea is to get students thinking about the inner and outer lives of their characters, and to let them be playful as they develop a sense of who their character is.

EXERCISE #1: REMARKABLE SITUATIONS (ACTING/WRITING/SPEAKING)

Objective: Students will consider how their characters might react when confronted with unexpected or difficult situations. Through the process of exploring ethical questions and high-stakes scenarios, students will be better prepared to deal with the various challenges that arise in JCAT.

Directions: Pose a hypothetical scenario to the class and have each student describe how they imagine their character might respond to the scenario, either in writing or verbally. Engage the class in a discussion about the scenarios and ask them to justify their responses.

Questions to Consider: Is my character driven by emotion or reason? Is my character empathetic? Is my character quick to act? Does my character put the needs of others first? Does my character use humor to deal with tough situations? Does my character ask others for help? Does my character lead or follow? Is my character predictable? Does my character think about the consequences of his or her actions?

Variation: Students will respond to the scenarios in character. This approach is more demanding, as students will have employ their characters' voices and mannerisms as they write or describe their reactions, rather than focusing on the reactions themselves.

Sample Situations: Witnessing a Car Accident, Getting Mugged, Preparing an Important Speech, Receiving an Award, Finding a Lost Wallet, Giving a Wedding Toast, Tending to a Sick Family Member, etc.

EXERCISE #2: TALK SHOW (ACTING/SPEAKING)

Objective: Students will consider how their characters might respond to a series of interview questions posed by a talk show host. Through the process of portraying their characters in a public forum, incorporating physicality and voice, students will be better prepared for the public components of JCAT/JCAT.

Directions: Set up two chairs in the front of the classroom and choose a student to play the role of talk show host. Have individual students sit across from the host and engage in a conversation from the perspective of their character. The questions can be related to JCAT/JCAT or they can be about totally unrelated topics.

Sample Interview Questions: Why do you think that you were chosen to participate? Who would you most like to meet and why? Who is your hero? Who inspires you? Etc...

Variation: Instead of a talk show setting, students will face a police interrogator who will ask them questions about a crime. The students can either be suspects or witnesses.

“Making Initial Contact” Lesson Plan & Worksheet

Kim Droscha Floyd (Faculty member at Holt MS in Holt, Michigan) was both a mentor and a facilitator for the Place out of Time project. She developed this worksheet to help nudge her students into making contact with other characters.

Directions: Go to the *JCAT* website and login with your user name and password.

- 1) Click on “Guest List” at the top of the webpage. You may choose four guests to click on and read about. Read their Profiles and then fill out the table below:

Name	Facts about his/her life	What could you talk to this person about?

- 2) Was freedom of speech important to you? If so, is it important to protect the right for everyone, or just certain people?
- 3) Now, message the four people that you included in your table on page 1. Tell them what you think about the importance of freedom of speech. Include some of what you wrote about in question #2.

“Fishbowl Debate” Lesson Plan & Worksheet

Stacie Woodward developed this handout to help her students prepare for an in-character “Fishbowl Debate” in which students were assigned to defend one side of the debate or another.

Name: _____

Official Debate Note Sheet: 10 points possible

Fishbowl: Should the Nazis have the right to speak?

This is the one item that you may bring with you into the fishbowl debate. Therefore, make good use of the space provided so that you may offer well-informed and thoughtful ideas to the discussion. Use the articles provided to prepare yourself.

My assigned position is (circle one):

a. In support of protecting the rights of Nazi protesters to speak

b. Opposed to allowing the Nazi protesters to speak

What is the background of this issue? Be detailed here.

What are the THREE strongest arguments that support my position?

Be prepared for the attack!

The THREE strongest arguments against my position are:	The evidence/arguments that I will use during the debate against each of the attacks are:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

“Homeless Scenario” Lesson Plan

Picture this...

You are walking alone on a cold Manhattan street after an afternoon of shopping. You have a few bags in your hands, and put spare change in your pocket after purchasing a newspaper on the corner of 42nd and Broadway.

As you scurry down the street, bundled in your gloves, hat, and scarf, you notice a homeless man standing outside an abandoned building. He appears to be in his mid-40's and is wearing a thin, ripped overcoat. The five people that just walked by him avoided the empty paper cup that rested on the ground next to him. The man looks at you, sincerely, and says, “Can you spare some change?”

*What is the problem here? (*is* there a problem?)*

What is the first question you would ask about this situation?

What is your conjecture about why this has come to pass?

What (if anything) would you do?

We use this scenario both to help the mentors get into character, and as a tool to help them think about the relationship between themselves and their character. We also make use of lots of questions like those connected with the scenario above—we want the mentors to think about why they think that their character thinks as s/he does, and to practice articulating that thinking. Our conjecture is that if the mentors get in the habit of asking why questions of themselves, they can use these kinds of questions to help the students think through the choices they make in their character portrayals. Our goal for the mentors (and ultimately, for the students) is that they can explain why they had their character say this or that. Since there is no definitive answer to the question of what (for example) Maimonides would say about whether or not the French ban on the wearing of religious apparel in schools is just, for example, we focus on the intellectual and imaginative act of thinking about what the issues of the case are, what we know about who Maimonides is and what was important to him, and then making connections between the two dimensions that they can articulate. The mentors will be trying to help you help your students to take stock of all the resources they have available to help them decide what their character will say (and why).

We also encourage the mentors to play their characters with flair and a sense of style. We'll ask them to exaggerate characteristics or to take another character into their confidence (an example from the mentor's guide: “Consider the possibility of creating distance between your public self and your private self--“I had to say this publicly, but just between us the truth is...””). Of course, the students often teach the mentors about embracing a sense of theatricality in their character play, so we spend a lot of time looking at student work in class, and

thinking about what we can learn from the words of a given character, and what we see the student trying to do in her portrayal. In addition to trying to equip the mentors with a variety of strategies for engaging the student characters, we regularly plan out wrinkles that we'll throw into the evolving story, so that we can hold the interest of your students, and give them more experience dealing with the unexpected.

You should know that we have some tools that we use to assist the mentors and to help you keep on top of things. The mentors are each assigned a group of “Buddies,” to whose work they pay more careful attention, and who they will seek to engage through private messages. We try our best not to let a student slip through the cracks and feel left out, though if one of your students is having trouble getting engaged, please let one of the project directors know—we have a few tricks up our sleeves for bringing student characters into the action. We also have a section of the website called “Player Summaries” where you can see all of the posts made by any of your students.

Finally, we cordially invite you to get involved in the simulation. You will be assigned a character, and though not all teachers choose to participate, most do, and many report that it puts a productive twist on things to use your character (in class and/or online) to draw out your students. Teachers report that their students are quite willing to suspend disbelief and interact with the teacher “in character.” Of course, if you want to get sneaky, we're here to help. ;-)

We can, for example, set you up with **two** characters, so that you can both disclose to the students who one of your characters is, and keep the other character a secret! In short, we want to help you in whatever ways that we can, so we cordially invite you to contact us whenever you have questions or suggestions.

Navigating the Website

This section offers help for your students to navigate the website and help for you to access records of the activity (and IDs) of your students.

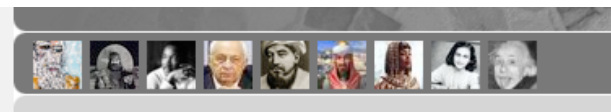


JCAT WEBSITE QUICK GUIDE

<http://jcat.icsmich.org>

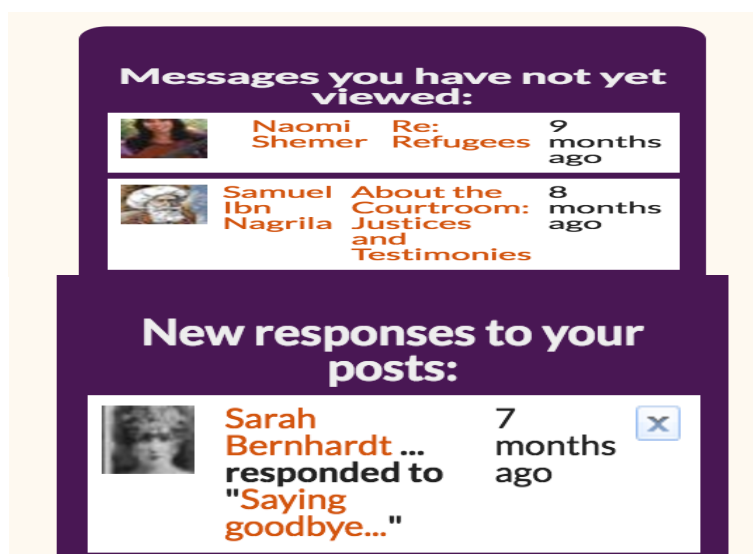
The Picture Bar

The “picture bar” near the top of the screen shows the guests who have most recently posted or edited something on the site. The guest with the most recent activity appears at the left. Click the thumbnail image to go to that guest’s profile and see his or her latest activity.



Staying Current

At the center of the home page as you access the site you will see the *latest announcement, mail messages* to you that you have not yet viewed, *responses to comments you’ve made on public posts*, and *featured posts from various sections of the site*. Click the **MORE** link at the end of the listed thumbnails of each posting to view that item in full, in the area where it was posted.



LATEST ACTIVITY

Most recent postings in any area:



Comment on "Is our verdict sufficient?", by Richard Feynman on September 20, 2016 20:43
They should definitely have to change their constitution. One's freedom to practice his/her religion has an intrinsic nature to conflict with others' freedom to not have to be exposed to religion. ...[\(more\)](#)



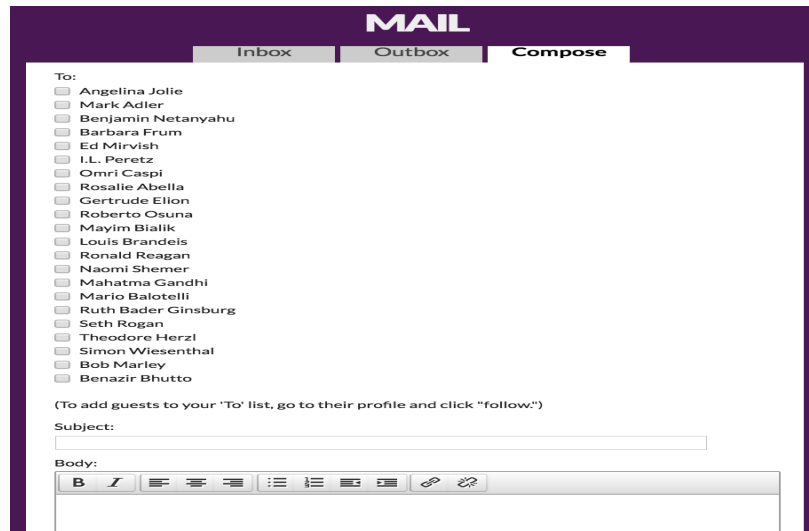
Comment on "A place for farewells", by Sofia Reinhardt on August 29, 2016 14:11
Interesting point![\(more\)](#)

The "**Latest Activity**" tab allows you to see the most recent posts by all guests, regardless of where on the site they were posted.

Mail

Mail is JCAT's private mail system. Click on **mail inbox** to find your messages, which will appear with their titles in bold.

In order for a guest to send an individual message to another guest, she or he must first "follow" that guest (see "Guest List" below). Once you follow a guest, mailing them will become an option once you click on **Compose Mail**, as in the example shown here.



Notifications



There is also a tab for "notifications" -- messages informing you that someone has responded to a *public* post of yours.

Discussions & Declarations—Forum Posts

Forum Posts are the means by which guests participate in discussions in JCAT, as well as how they make declarative statements.

After clicking on **Forums**, follow along the left to find forum discussions and to respond yourself, to reply to posts by others, or to start a forum discussion.



Exhibit Hall

The Exhibit Hall is a set of "rooms" where guests can examine and discuss sets of documents, images, or media that provide background or evidence for the consideration—see the EXHIBIT HALLS on page 44 for more detail. It is also the location for the **committee** meetings in which small groups will have discussions about the major issues and questions that we are faced with.

Profiles/Guest List

The Profiles/Guest List link provides access to each guest's Profile, status updates, and recent activity. Any guest can "follow" another guest, and see a list of activity by all the people that one is "following."

Following someone also allows you to send a private email to that guest through the Mailbox.

Bookmarks

Interested in one of the discussions that's unfolding in response to a forum post? Would you like to see what comments are evoked by an interesting posting? **Bookmark** it! If you bookmark any discussions on JCAT, you will receive notifications when any comments have been posted in that discussion. It's a great way to stay on top of important conversations.

To bookmark a post, click the  icon next to that post. To unbookmark, click the  icon.

The Green Room

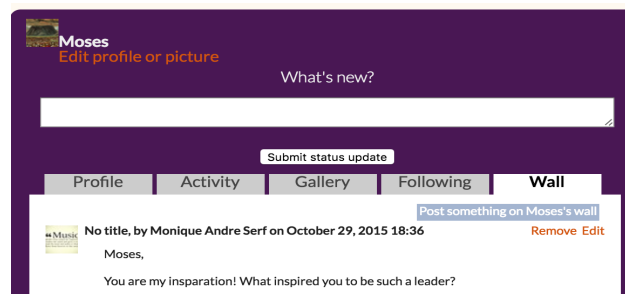
The Green Room is a place where players can temporarily put aside their character personas and talk to each other in their own voices. Postings work in the same way as in the Great Hall and other areas of the site, but character names are not shown (there is an internal record of the posting author, however, for accountability purposes).

The Wall

The Wall feature is a place where players can post public comments directed at a specific character...all guests can respond to any wall post.

Posting Your Profile

To post your Profile, start by clicking on My Profile and then, on the next page (which is your character's page) click on Edit Profile or Picture:



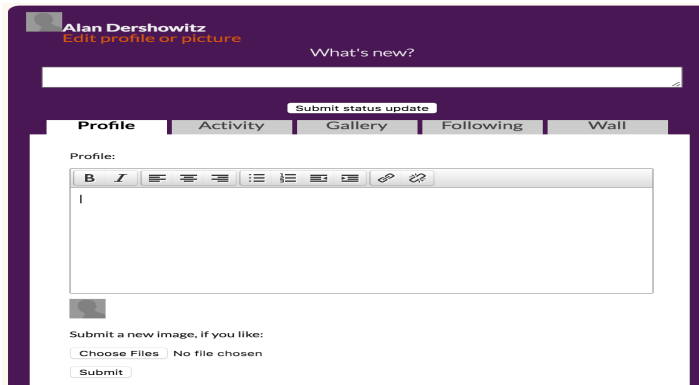


Alan Dershowitz
[Edit profile or picture](#)

This will bring you to a page like the one shown here, where you can enter the text of your Profile, along with a picture to accompany it (download the image to your desktop first).

When you paste in the text of your Profile, we recommend cutting and pasting from word into a non-formatted word processing program like **notepad** (PC) or **textedit** (MAC), and then copying again before pasting into the browser) along with your picture.

If you should ever need to amend your Profile, you can access the text by going back to your **My Profile** page, and then clicking again on **Edit Profile or Picture**.



Viewing your students' online work

This guide will show you how to view your students' login names and passwords, public postings, and mailboxes in a consolidated way. It assumes that you have been given your own character with facilitator privileges. (If you're not sure, contact the project directors).

1. First, log on with your own character's login and password.

2. Along the right hand side, you should see a link that says, "Facilitators only: view user logins and activity."

Facilitators only:

- view user logins and activity

3. The link will bring up a list of characters that are assigned to your class. (Contact the project directors if these characters are not the ones you expected to see).

Students

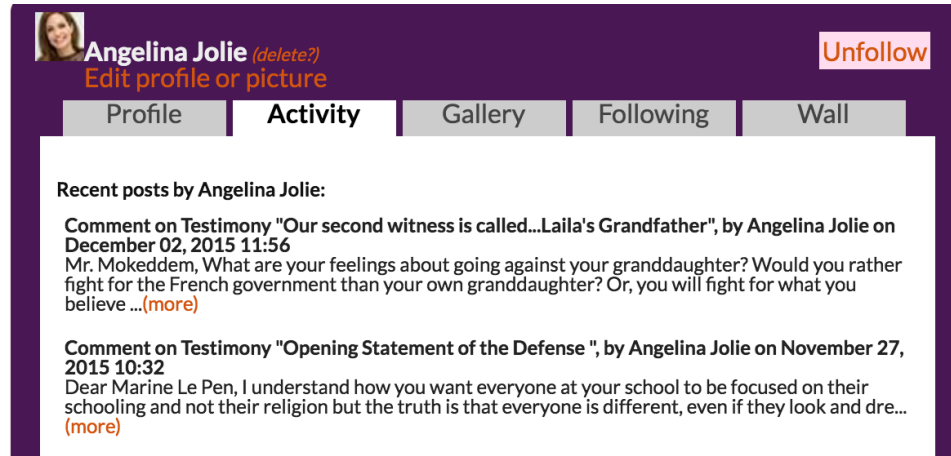
Angelina Jolie: angelie@terrace-f15: thuspume ([change pwd](#)) ([profile/public posts](#) | [mail](#) | [all posts](#))

Barbara Frum: frum@terrace-f15: quanawe ([change pwd](#)) ([profile/public posts](#) | [mail](#) | [all posts](#))

Ed Mirvish: mirvish@terrace-f15: chokyste ([change pwd](#)) ([profile/public posts](#) | [mail](#) | [all posts](#))

Each character name is followed by that character's login and password. (*The colon is not part of the login or password*). After the password, there is a link to each character's profile (which has a list of their public posts), a second link to secretly view that character's mailbox, and a third link to see everything that character has posted (publicly or privately) in one long list.

4. The "Activity" tab will show that character's most recent 25 or so posts, but if you want to see more than that, click the "show all public activity" link at the very bottom.



Digital Citizenship

In this section you'll find the JCAT Digital Citizenship guidelines, created by a team of JCAT facilitators



JCAT Digital Citizenship Guidelines

Introduction for TEACHERS

The JCAT simulation is an opportunity for students to engage in imaginative, creative work for an extended period of time. There are many facets to participating in JCAT-- researching one's character, developing a "writer's voice," cultivating empathetic understanding of one's character and the characters of others, writing with clarity and precision, and practicing digital citizenship. These mutually reinforcing practices provide students the opportunity to grow socially and emotionally as writers, thinkers, and civil discourse cultivators as well as in the acquisition of content. In this creative process, each year situations arise in which the posts of some students are deemed to have "crossed a line" by another student, a teacher, a university student mentor or a project director. Because we view the fostering of skills and dispositions of civil discourse and digital citizenship as such crucial goals of JCAT, we have developed guidelines for character interaction in the unique JCAT context.

With great appreciation, we share with you the following-- the product of a summer 2020 workshop in which seven veteran teachers addressed the questions of civil discourse and digital citizenship in JCAT.

*Civil Discourse and its online cousin Digital Citizenship have many definitions but at heart and in the context of JCAT, we take them to mean **advancing the conversation, however controversial it may be, in a respectful way.***

We might do well to think of **civil discourse as a skill** that we're asking students to develop and cultivate: how to moderate tone, how to be thoughtful, finding a balance between authentic content and respectful tone. This requires a lot of mental work and it takes practice for most kids (and adults), particularly in an online environment.

In JCAT we are always walking a thin line between maintaining a safe and supportive space and allowing young people to grapple with challenging and sometimes troubling ideas and actions from human history. A main goal of the endeavor is to help students understand that one can challenge another character's ideas without resorting to personal insults, and they can criticize and even repudiate other characters' actions without resorting to invective and threats.

The following suggested guidelines are offered with our shared understanding that such a code of conduct, like every other aspect of JCAT, **is facilitated in partnership with JCAT teachers** who have on-the-ground relationships and face-to-face contact

with the students. The role of teachers in establishing and supervising guidelines for digital citizenship in JCAT is crucial. The project directors and university student mentors, the other “adults in the room,” are grateful for the opportunity to take responsibility with you for maintaining a safe and productive environment together for our students. These guidelines are addressed to the students.

JCAT Digital Citizenship Guidelines FOR STUDENTS

Welcome to JCAT. Thank you for taking on the role of an engaged citizen of our learning community. You are not taking part in this simulation alone. None of us would learn much if we just answered prompts and signed off. Meaningful discussion and learning are only possible if we all take time to understand what others are saying to us and around us, and to engage respectfully, even if we disagree. Citizenship (digital or otherwise) is not an individualistic thing. In life or online, you will always be interacting with other perspectives.

Please keep the following in mind as you join the JCAT conversation:

- All your posts should be in your character’s voice and as appropriate *as possible* to your character’s point of view and life experiences *without using the offensive and demeaning language your character might use*.
- The JCAT simulation is academic work. **We** (teachers, university student mentors, project directors) **can and will be looking at your posts**, whether in a discussion “forum,” on another character’s wall, or in a private message.
- The imagined setting of JCAT is a *courtroom* and, as such, **the dignity and decorum of the court** requires that those present conduct themselves appropriately. Inappropriate comments will be labeled “**in contempt of court.**” As a starting point, think about how you speak differently in class as opposed to when you are in the cafeteria, at lunch, or at recess.
- **Name-calling and insults** are out of bounds not only because they are hurtful, but because they are vague. Your character can say something controversial, but does his/her posting add to the quality of the conversation? It actually takes more effort, research, and thinking to write effectively with specific references to a character’s life or the issues under discussion. Everyone’s thinking should be growing from the comments you post.

For example, Isabella, the queen of Spain who expelled all the Jews from her kingdom in 1492 could justify her actions (from HER viewpoint) as morally necessary. She could say, 'we needed complete unity to the one true faith'--without resorting to insults and antisemitic comments about Jews.

- Use reasonable and respectful language because in **JCAT all communication is in writing**. Without visual facial cues, joking and sarcasm are hard for readers to “see” and your comment may come across more harshly than you intended.
- You ought not send any **private messages that might be threatening, insulting, or disparaging**, even if they are “in character.”

Additional JCAT Digital Citizenship Guidelines FOR TEACHERS

What to do if you or your student see something on JCAT that you think is “crossing a line”

We all mess up from time to time: no matter how many rules and guidelines we implement, it is inevitable that at some point some students are going to overstep the bounds. Due to the asynchronous nature of JCAT, there is no way to predict who (student, teacher, university student mentor, project director) will see these types of posts first. Please keep the following in mind:

- When something potentially offensive is posted, it has been **standard practice** in JCAT for facilitators (teachers, project directors, university student mentors) to try, whenever possible, to **“keep things in play,” which is to say, to undertake corrective action and responses in character.** (“I realize you’re a dictator, Mr. Mussolini, but everything I know about you tells me you are far too tactful and diplomatic to use that kind of language.”) Please encourage your students to respond in this vein as well.
- If apologies are appropriate, we ask you to strive to **show students how to correct “screw-ups” and make amends in character**—a process that in and of itself provides a valuable learning experience, sometimes through an in-class discussion to broaden the learning experience and model for other students.
- Please also either take a screenshot or copy and paste the offensive text into an email to one of the project directors (Meredith, Jeff, Michael, Rebecca). We will never summarily remove a student’s post, but there are extreme cases in which these posts are removed quickly in consultation with the student’s teacher.

EXPLICIT JCAT 2025 GUIDELINES:

We purposefully do not include these on the handout for students, but please be aware that these lines cannot be crossed:

- no epithets, slurs (no “N” word); (no “K” word)
 - no threatening language (“killing”)
 - no cursing
-

Extremist Characters

One of your students may express an interest in playing a character that could be regarded as an extremist. Playing such a character can represent an exciting, and deeply challenging "point of entry" for a student. Whether it reflects changing standards across history, or a worldview with which you strongly disagree, if your student asks to portray someone whose views you regard as blatantly sexist or racist, teachers *have* sanctioned such choices, but always with the proviso that they would work closely with the student so that it wouldn't be a matter of their student being licensed simply to spit venom, but rather so that they would think seriously and sensitively about how that person sees the world. Handled thoughtfully, having such characters in the mix can challenge everyone in productive ways. While we need controversial characters in the simulation to “mix things up,” we can delegate this responsibility to university student mentors as necessary. **As the teacher, you have ultimate discretion about parameters for character choice.**

Some points to consider when students request controversial characters:

- When you submit character choices for students in September, we will assume that you have had a preliminary conversation with a student indicating they would like to play an extremist character. This conversation should discuss the student's motives for wanting to play the character and a warning to the student that extreme comments may receive significant pushback throughout the simulation. In addition to exploring their motives, you will need to have a conversation to assess their ability to handle strong pushback.
- Make sure that students portraying potentially volatile characters have the **writing ability and maturity to handle the discourse**. It actually takes more effort, research and thinking to write effectively from the “dark side” so as to convey the character's controversial views without defaulting to insults. A

difficult or controversial character is to be expected to be provocative and this is not a license to offend or hurt another character.

- Students playing historical “villains” should **be conscientious of which websites** they use to research their character, being careful to use reputable academic or news sites rather than political advocacy sites which often distort and misrepresent. As the teacher, be prepared to provide significant oversight, resources, and time.

Suggested Practices/Lessons

1. Explore the JCAT Digital Citizenship Guidelines

We suggest you have a **lesson on civil discourse and digital citizenship** prior to the start of the simulation in which you solicit your students’ input, perhaps linking the discussion to other approaches to social media norms in your school, and then share with students the **JCAT Digital Citizenship Student Guidelines**.

One way to frame the general digital citizenship conversation is provided by the Common Sense organization:

<https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship/lesson/we-are-civil-communicators>

2. Discuss Specific Examples Ahead of Time

Consider developing and providing students with sample postings for them *to practice on* (with thanks to Ben Foote and Deb Netanel, e.g., “On a scale of 1-5, how would you rank this post for its effectiveness? How might it be made more effective?”) which can be very useful. The basic idea here is to **create opportunities for the students to practice the skills of civil discourse** before the simulation begins.

3. Practice with “ Digital Citizenship Sentence Frames” (Deborah Netanel, Rockwern Academy)

- *Scenario: A digital citizen wants to present a new idea that is rooted in evidence but may seem controversial.*

Sentence frame: According to _____, we should think about _____ in this way: _____.

- *Scenario: A digital citizen reads a viewpoint they agree with.*

Sentence frame: Thank you, _____, for presenting your viewpoint. I agree because _____.

- *Scenario: A digital citizen wants to respectfully bring up an idea or viewpoint that is opposite that of the original poster.*

Sentence frame: I appreciate the experience shared by _____, but in my experience _____.

- *Scenario: A digital citizen does not understand the view of someone else in the community and would like more information or an explanation.*

Sentence frame: I realize my views on _____ are limited. _____, would you mind expanding on your idea a bit more?

- *Scenario: A digital citizen wants to acknowledge their new learning as a result of their community interactions.*

Sentence frame: I used to think _____, but now I understand_____.

4. Draft Responses on a Separate Document before Posting

Several JCAT teachers have their students keep a Google doc with drafts of their responses to JCAT prompts. While it is unlikely that you will be able to review EVERYTHING your students post beforehand, it is a good way to slow down the process and give students time to think about what they want to say and how they want to say it. If you have a student who is having a hard time finding the appropriate

balance of content and tone, you will have a ready-made site where you can offer support. A google doc compendium is also useful to students and teachers for reflection on and assessment of JCAT participation.

With Appreciation

*Copious thanks to the following teachers who participated in the **Summer 2020 JCAT Workshop on Digital Citizenship** with Michael Fahy and whose thoughtful contributions and insights are represented in the above:*

Nance Adler – Metropolitan Jewish Day of School, Seattle, WA
Oriane Falkenstein – Bialik Hebrew Day School, Toronto, Canada
Ben Foote -- Portland Jewish Academy, Portland, OR
Amy McClure – Martin J. Gottlieb Day School, Jacksonville, FL
Deborah Netanel – Rockwern Academy, Cincinnati, OH
Ted Pierce – Yavneh Day School, Los Gatos, CA
Jamie Zimmer -- Yavneh Day School, Los Gatos, CA

and to Sabrina Sojourner of Khazbar for her comments in Summer 2021