

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## English 9

### *Paper Clips Documentary Guide*

**Background:** In 1998, the students of Tennessee's Whitwell Middle School embarked on a classroom project in their small community. Their Paper Clips project sparked one of the most inspirational and profound lessons in tolerance, in the least likely of places. The school's principal, Linda Hooper, created the Paper Clips project to help her students to grasp the enormity of human suffering during the Holocaust. The idea was to collect paper clips to represent Jewish victims of the Holocaust - an idea that touched a chord among Holocaust survivors, their families, and even world leaders and celebrities as word of the project spread.

*Directions: During the film, take notes. There will be a quiz on this material!*

1. Why did the students of Tennessee's Whitwell Middle School begin studying the Holocaust? What were the teachers hoping they would learn about?
2. Many people are surprised at the unexpected location of the project. Describe the town of Whitwell, Tennessee. How many people live there? How diverse is the town in terms of its racial, ethnic, and religious make up? What stereotypes about small, southern towns might have made outsiders think it was unlikely for this project to start in Whitwell?
3. Why did the students decide to start collecting paper clips to help visualize the vast numbers of victims? What was the symbolic significance of paper clips to the Holocaust?
4. At first, the project got off to a slow start. The project started snowballing after it received attention from Peter and Dagmar Schroeder. Who are these people, and what did they do to bring attention to the project?

5. How many paper clips did the students want to collect at the start, and why did they choose this number? How many paper clips did the students receive in the end?
  
6. One of the most moving and emotional parts of the Paper Clip Project for Whitwell students was the participation of survivors of the Holocaust. Four survivors, Samuel Sitko, Joe Grabezak, Rachel Gleitman and Bernie Igielski spoke to students, faculty and community members at a community program. Zvi Gill, a survivor, author, and journalist said, “The Age of the Survivors is drawing to a close. Before long no one will be left to say, I was there, I saw, I remember what happened. All that will be left will be books of literature and research, pictures and films, and multitudinous testimony.” What makes it so important for people to hear first-hand from the survivors their stories of the Holocaust? What is it about this experience that can’t be replaced by books or movies?
  
7. Describe the permanent memorial the school uses to house the paper clips. What is the history of this memorial? How is it a fitting memorial to house these paper clips?
  
8. Why are there 11 million paper clips in the memorial instead of the initial number the students set out to collect? What do the extra paper clips symbolize?