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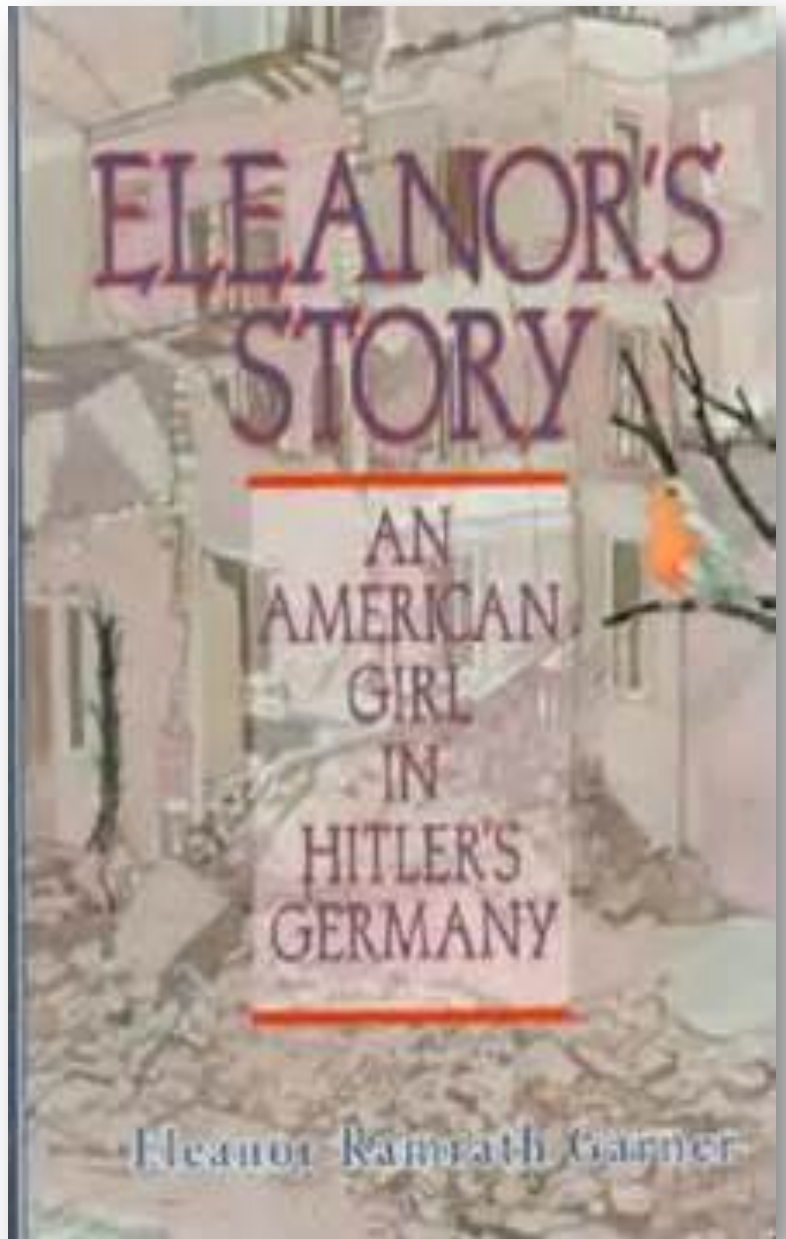


Building Communities that
Support Children's Reading

Eleanor's Story

by Eleanor Ramrath Garner

Non-Informational Text
New Mexico/Colorado
Grades 7-8



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Eleanor's Story

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Synopsis

Eleanor's Story

Eleanor's Story is the dramatic autobiography of Eleanor Ramrath Garner's youth, growing up as an American caught in World War II Berlin. It's a story of trying to maintain stability, hope, and identity in a world of terror and contrasts. During the Great Depression, when she is nine, Eleanor's family moves from her beloved America to Germany, where her father has been offered a good job. But war breaks out as her family is crossing the Atlantic, and they cannot return to the United States. Eleanor tries to maintain her American identity as she feels herself pulled into the turbulent life roiling around her. She fervently hopes for an Allied victory, yet for years she must try to survive the Allied bombs shattering her neighborhood. Her family faces separations, bombings, hunger, the final fierce battle for Berlin, the Russian invasion, and the terrors of Soviet occupancy. This compelling story immerses us in the daily struggles of surviving World War II as a civilian. It puts a very human face on the horrors of war and helps us understand that each casualty of war is a person, not a number.

NM/Colorado Common Core State Standards

- RI. 7-8.3** I can analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
- RI. 7-8.6** I can determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
- W.7-8.1** I can write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning, relevant, and sufficient evidence.
- W.7-8.3** I can write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W. 7-8.4** I can produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W. 7-8.6** I use technology to produce, publish, and display information flexibly and dynamically.
- W. 7-8.7** I conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- W. 7-8.9** I draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- SL. 7-8.4** I can present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- SL. 7-8.5** I can make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

High Level Questions

Eleanor's Story



Before Your Read

In order to understand where Eleanor's story begins, students need some understanding of geography and the history and economics of post-World War I and the Great Depression.

- On a map of the eastern United States, find Philadelphia; Stratford, New Jersey; the Poconos. On a map of Germany before World War II (see map in the book), find Münster, Berlin, Bremerhaven, Eslohe.
- Interview grandparents and others in their seventies and eighties. What was the Great Depression like? What happened when parents lost their jobs? What attitudes did Americans have toward Germany and Hitler in the late 1930s?
- To prepare students for the major life-altering events of the story, ask students: What would you do if your parents announced you were moving to a country across the ocean—one that speaks another language and has a culture very different from your own? What is the most frightening thing that has happened to you? How would you feel if your parents could do little to help?
- Encourage students to find a synopsis of the effects of the Treaty of Versailles on the German economy during the 1920s. What was the situation in Germany that prompted Hitler to rise to power? (See the Prologue to the book.)

As You Read

The book divides itself into four parts. Discuss the following questions and issues as you read each part. Also, to help students keep a chronological sense of the story, begin a time line and update it as students read. On one side of the line, record events in Eleanor's life (age, school, location); on the other, list major events in the 1930s and '40s that affect her life.

Childhood in the States: Chapters 1-2

- Are there American youngsters with immigrant parents in your classroom or community? How are they treated, parents and children?
- If you have moved, what do you miss most about your old community? If you haven't moved, what would you miss most? What do/would you miss least? What treasures would you bury? (Choosing four items based on remembering a specific time or place could be a class or small-group project, with each group specifying the time and place.)
- How would you respond to the news of war if you were captain of the SS Hamburg?

Adjustment to Germany: Chapters 3-6

- Imagine you are living in a place where you can understand the language but cannot read or write it. What would worry you the most? How would you adjust in school?
- What if you discovered that your good manners were perceived as bad manners in your new culture?
- Would you like to go to an all-girls or all-boys school? Why or why not?
- Have you ever experienced divided loyalties?
- Eleanor discusses the importance of Hitler Youth. What organizations (public and private) in your school or community have similar purposes to the Hitler Youth? How would the Hitler Youth of the 1930s compare to Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts of today? What recent events have made you aware of or changed your attitude toward public or private youth groups?
- Compare and contrast school curriculum and atmosphere in wartime Germany with students' experiences of today.

Horrors and Reality of the War: Chapters 7-11

- "Childhood Lost," the title of Chapter 7, offers a variety of discussion possibilities. Before and after reading the chapter, what does the title mean? Many teens have already lost their childhoods. Think and write to discover the sorrows and joys of leaving your child-self behind. (If you have not yet left the security of childhood, you can interview older siblings or relatives.)
- How does Eleanor face violent death so frequently and not go crazy?
- Eleanor finds escape and solace in reading. What books or stories have been important to you and why?
- Two themes stand out in this section: the attempt at normalcy in abnormal conditions and the importance of identity papers. Both are related to events/experiences probably outside the realm of most contemporary teens. What have been the most dramatic events in your life? How did those around you act or react? What papers or records are vital to you?
- Both Frank and Eleanor face decisive moments in relationship to the safety and dignity of others, Frank on the subway and Eleanor in the castle. How do you react to teasing of unpopular students, to jokes that insult persons or groups that are different from you?

Endings and Beginnings: Chapters 12-16

- Before and after reading these chapters, describe what happens when a war is over.
- What is life like amid the ruins? How does it change from wartime patterns? What do the citizens and refugees need? What do the community and national leaders need to do to bring life back to near-normalcy? Does anyone really win in a war?
- After reading about Eleanor's experience with the robin and the spring colors, what is the meaning of the cover? What modern-day experiences have you had that are (or would you expect to be) similar to this (beauty where there is ugliness, hope after utter despair)?
- What are the endings at this point in Eleanor's life? What are the beginnings? How have you experienced the push/pull of growing up, the desire to be free of parental supervision mixed with an understanding of the need for parental support?
- Two emotional responses seem to be constant for wartime survivors: survivor's guilt (why did I live?) and post-traumatic stress. How did Eleanor experience these responses in Germany and after she returned to the United States?
- Eleanor and Frank return to Stratford and to their old house. After a nostalgic look, she decides it's time to go. Where or what does she mean?

After You Read: Interdisciplinary Connections

Language Arts

- What can you learn about Eleanor from her poetry, both her own and what she quotes?
- What poetry would you write/choose to represent your life and attitudes?
- How does Eleanor use simile, metaphor, figurative language to give depth to her experiences?
- What role did books play in Eleanor's life? in her family's lives? How might the books have influenced her parents' attitudes about the war and the Nazis?

Social Studies: Experience, Purpose, and Outcome of War; Mass Communications; Propaganda; Nazism; Dictators, Facism

- How do Eleanor's experiences compare with those of other teens in World War II? (if you are not sure, dig deeper and find narratives by German youth, survivors of the camps, teens and soldiers in Allied armies for comparative purposes. How is Eleanor's experience unique?)
- Of the wars you have read about, watched in movies or on TV, or studied, what are some universal experiences of war?
- Over the centuries, what has changed in the experiences of war, from the soldiers' and the citizens' perspectives?
- How does World War II differ in purpose from other wars? Why is it being discussed so much today?
- Looking at the maps in the book, how do Germany's borders differ before and after the war? Why did the Allies divide Germany, and what was the long-term outcome of that division?
- What media have been used over the centuries to promote, inform the public about a war? Why does a government inform the public about a war? What mass media did Eleanor see, listen to, and watch?
- What's the purpose of propaganda? How was it used in World War II Germany, England, America? What messages were the governments trying to convey? What are some present-day political and commercial messages/propaganda (e.g., in advertisements: thin is beautiful, men must manly, etc.)?
- What does Nazi stand for? What were the beliefs of the Nazi party? How did it become a political party? How did Adolf Hitler come to power?
- How did the Nazi party come to power? Why did the Nazis hate the Jews and other non-Aryans? Could a similar movement gain power today? If so, where and why? How would or should other governments respond?
- What was Eleanor's family's experience with the Nazis?
- What is a dictator? How was Hitler a dictator? What other countries had dictators during WW II? What leaders in the world today are dictators? What is/was life like under those dictatorships?
- What is facism? How does it relate to a dictatorship? How and why did facism rise and fall?

Sciences: Nutrition; Public Health; Natural Resources; Technology

- Eleanor mentions food often and the importance of food to survival. Using nutritional guidelines, compare the food that was available to her family, with the food necessary for good health. Investigate and report on the various diseases related to nutritional deficiencies. What natural or man-made situations in the world today cause the citizens to suffer from malnutrition?
- Why is clean water important to public health?
 - What is the public sewer system for? What happens if it does not work or is broken?
 - What diseases thrive and spread during a war or a natural disaster? Why? What needs to be done to control them?
 - What pestilence thrives and spreads during a war or a natural disaster? Why? What needs to be done to control them?
- What are natural resources? What value do they have to civilians and military? How does the presence of natural resources influence the strategies of war? What role did natural resources play in WW II for Germany, for the Allies?
- What kinds of technology (in WW II and today) are used to destroy life or property? What are some different kinds of bombs (land mines, chemical, conventional, atomic/nuclear)? What must citizens/countries do to defend against them? How can/should these technologies be used for peaceful purposes?

Arts: Visual, Performing

- The author stresses color, its lack during the war, and its importance in her life today. What colors are important to you? What impact do various colors have on people?
 - What kinds of art are used today as therapy? Why?
- How did theater and music play a part in the revival of Berlin?
 - Find recordings of Gretel’s prayer from the opera Hansel and Gretel, excerpts from The Magic Flute, examples of Wagner from The Ring Cycle, the German national anthems from World War II and today, and jazz from the mid-1940s. Listen to these selections while reading the sections where they are mentioned. Find a piece of music to “illustrate” a piece of your own writing.
 - What is your favorite music today? Why is it meaningful to you?
 - What kinds of music help identify specific eras? How does the choice or preference of music characterize (what does it say) about that era?

Religion/Faith/Spirituality - Note: These broad questions are intended to address Eleanor’s spirituality and how it helped her to survive the war. In general terms they might help students to think about their own spirituality. The questions are not intended to promote one faith over another. Discussion of these issues depends on the age, experiences, and maturity of your students.

- How did Eleanor’s faith or spirituality influence her survival? How have you seen faith influence the outcomes of other life stories you are familiar with?
- What is the difference between religion and spirituality? What does faith mean?
- What is the role or purpose of faith, of religion? How does Eleanor’s spirituality change as she grows and experiences the depths of the war? How does her spirituality or faith differ from what she learns from the Catholic Church?
- What did her mother mean when she talked of food for the soul?

Personal Integrity - Integrity is a word that is often misunderstood. If students check a dictionary or thesaurus, they may find such synonyms as virtue, honesty, honor, principle, trustworthiness. Many of these are words that students can apply to situations in their own lives. Often more interesting than synonyms, and more revealing, is the derivation of a word. Integrity is related to a math word, integer, a single number. The actions and values of a single person of integrity are consistent and support that individual’s belief in what is right. Many of the people Eleanor encounters in Germany are able to maintain their personal integrity despite the difficult circumstances that face them every day; some do not. The following are suggested discussion or writing prompts to further a conversation of integrity.

- Is Eleanor’s father a person of integrity? Is her mother a person of integrity? *Support your answer with specific examples, either from the family’s time in the United States or in Germany.*
- What was the level of integrity of the ship captain during the family’s voyage to Germany in 1939? What was his primary responsibility: the ship or his nationality? Does his changing the colors of the ship reflect integrity or lack of integrity? *(This question cannot be adequately discussed without agreement about the definition the students will be using, and without students researching the ship. Was it commercial or military? Who or what owned the ship? Who employed the captain? What were the international maritime rules about the nationality of a ship?)*
- The persons influencing the events of the 1930s and 1940s are indirectly referred to in the book, but their personal integrity or lack of it certainly impacted Eleanor’s life. Brainstorm two to five people of importance in Germany and the United States from 1930 to 1945. Decide on their level of integrity and support your answers with historical facts. (The number and choice of people will vary considerably depending on the level of students involved.)

- Can a person have integrity if the values they are reflecting are generally judged to be evil? Although this appears to be a closed-ended question, thoughtful complete answers must include your definitions of integrity, evil, and values, and then how those ideas influence history. *Discussion of this question has the opportunity to address some of the historical issues that cause the reality of Eleanor's experiences.*
- Consider the situations in these books where the main characters had to make a decision, particularly one involving the difference between what they are supposed to say, versus what they want or know is right to say.
- How do the characters in this book choose? How do they decide when they must listen to their hearts?
- How do people make decisions when they disagree with decisions or policies of the authorities or of the government

The Holocaust - The stories that perhaps most influence our understanding of World War II are those from the Holocaust. Students from late elementary school through high school—and indeed into college— hear and process these stories in a variety of ways. Students in any classroom will have a varying degree of knowledge and understanding of this dark and heroic time in world history. For all classrooms, it may be appropriate to begin discussion by having students find the definition of a holocaust. Depending on the age and experience of your students, the following questions may help guide the class discussion.

- How does great destruction by fire relate to World War II? What kinds of things did Eleanor see that would apply to the definition of a holocaust?
- How have you heard this word used, especially when it is capitalized?
- What happened in the Nazi death camps that led historians to use the word Holocaust to describe the treatment of prisoners, particularly Jews, by the Nazis during the war?
- What groups did the Nazis target?

Thank you to: <http://www.holocaust-trc.org/eleanors-story/>

Vocabulary Introduction

Eleanor's Story

A selection of vocabulary words are identified for each reading section. The vocabulary meanings are according to the context of the writings. You may want to either add to this list or decrease it depending on your students. You can decide whether to introduce vocabulary before reading the section, during, or after.

Vocabulary activities could include giving the word and definition, and then having the students give the definition in their own words, drawing a picture of what the particular word means to them, including a synonym/antonym, the part of speech, etc... The students may also write original sentences using the vocabulary words, finding the words on the pages and making a guess based on context clues.

Students may be quizzed on each section of words, assign them to write their own stories with vocabulary words, or play games to reinforce word meanings.



Vocabulary-Eleanor's Story

Prologue

reparations	compensations; damages
patriotic	loyal; devoted; nationalistic
annexed	seized; occupied
purify	cleanse; refine
blitzkriegs	an intense military campaign intended to bring about a swift victory
extermination	extinction; slaughter
regime	government

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter One – Stratford September 1938 – August 1939

bewildered	confused
dirigible	an airship; blimp
steward	keeper
cesspool	drain; sewer
switch	whip
stern	serious
annexing	occupying
foreboding	threatening; dark feeling

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter Two – Changes – August 1939 – September 1939

purser	an officer on a ship
scuttle	rush
gangplank	a movable plank used as a ramp to board or get off from a ship or boat
preoccupied	worried
firsthand	personally
persistent	continual

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter Three – Early Days in Berlin – Fall 1939 – Spring 1940

astonished	surprised
peculiar	strange
cosmopolitan	diverse; multicultural
infuriated	furious
embassies	groups; taskforces
Gestapo	secret state police in Germany
corridor	passageway
tormentor	bully
reprimand	scold
deliberately	purposely
inkwell	jar containing ink
envisioned	imagined
alcove	a corner hideaway
revulsion	disgust

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter Four – Hitler Youth and a Visit to Stolp – Spring 1940 – Summer 1941 decoration

intrigued	fascinated
exempted	excused
flourish	decoration
calisthenics	exercises
exasperation	frustration
rousing	inspiring
berating	criticizing
promenade	walkway
rations	restrictions
elite	privileged
burrowed	buried
dispersed	scattered

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter Five – Entrance into High School – Summer 1941 – Winter 1941/42

era	period of time
permeated	flooded
furrowed	creased
fraternization	socializing; collaborating
expeditions	missions
lyricists	writers
lament	cry; grieve
soliloquy	speech
perspective	viewpoint
prejudice	prejudgment
martyrs	victims
uncompromising	inflexible; stubborn
sanctus	musical beginning of a hymn
catastrophic	disastrous

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter Six – First Communion... - January 1942 – Fall 1942

incendiary	inflammable; combustible
excursions	trips; journeys
plagued	overwhelmed
munitions	weaponries
naive	trusting; gullible
predicaments	messes; difficulties; dilemmas
conjured	raised; summoned
demerit	mark of imperfection or failure
incidentals	minor expenses
subdued	passive; serious; quiet
quarantined	isolated
suppress	withhold; bury
denounced	condemned
disposition	mood; personality; temperament
listlessness	slowness

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter Seven – Childhood Lost – January 1943 – March 1943

mockery	sham; charade
commandeer	seize; hijack
stoic	tolerant; patient; passive
exquisite	beautiful; delicate
fervently	passionately
vague	unclear
reconnaissance	scouting; investigation
debris	wreckage remains
vulnerable	defenseless; helpless; exposed

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter Eight – A Special Birthday... - Spring 1943 – Fall 1943

shrapnel	shell fragments
droned	hummed
forlornly	sadly
evacuees	refugees; emigrants
incessant	nonstop
remnants	leftovers
feudal	primitive; medieval
entourage	support staff
agonized	worried
sinister	threatening

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter Nine – Move To Waldenburg – Winter 1943 – Summer 1944

rancid	foul smell; rotten; stinking
inferiority	weakness; lowliness
corridors	passageways

Chapter 10 – Waldenburg – Late Summer – 1944 – Winter 1944/45

inhibitions	phobias; fears
fruitless	unproductive
antagonistic	aggressive; hostile
denounced	accused; blamed
aghast	horrified; shocked
sufficiently	adequately
buffet	rock; batter; pound
dilemma	problem; predicament
inconclusive	questionable; uncertain
brandishing	displaying

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter 11 – A Dying Berlin... - January 1945 – April 1945

pristine	unspoiled; untouched
uninhabitable	rundown; ruined
propaganda	misinformation; publicity hype
vengeance	revenge; retaliation
subculture	subgroup; subdivision of a culture
ventured	risked; braved
incessant	nonstop

Chapter 12 – Life Under the Russians – April 1945 – May 1945

guttural	rough; throaty; rasping
obstinacy	stubbornness
permeated	saturated; flooded
undeterred	undiscouraged
exasperated	frustrated
scavenged	hunted
succession	series; sequence
emphasized	highlighted; pointed out
imperious	commanding; authoritative

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter 13 – Fifteen and I’m... - May 1945 – Summer 1945

emaciated	thin; withered
gaunt	thin; skinny
vengeance	revenge; retaliation
plunder	loot; steal
sporadically	occasionally
jurisdiction	area; territory; power
rampant	widespread
unsanitary	unclean

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter Fourteen – Occupied Berlin – Summer 1945 – Spring 1946

incandescence	glow
pulverized	crushed
infestations	plagues; invasions
bittersweet	sentimental
immaculate	spotless; clean
wrought	created
entrepreneurs	businesspersons
attributes	characteristics; traits
impromptu	unprepared
sympathizers	supporters

Vocabulary – Eleanor’s Story

Chapter Fifteen – Return to America – Spring 1946 – July 1946

animosity	hatred
repressive	cruel
despaired	lose hope
mercilessly	harshly; unfeelingly
plight	dilemma; predicament
brocade	a rich fabric
fanfare	displaying in a big way; flourish
unobtrusively	discreetly
sultry	sensual
malady	sickness

Chapter Sixteen – Home is the Stranger – July 1946 – December 1946

delicatessen	a store selling cooked meats and salads
savored	enjoyed
no-nonsense	plain; practical
atrocities	cruelties

Teaching with Pictures Introduction

Eleanor's Story

The discipline of history is grounded in reading, and one of the challenges teachers face is trying to teach history to students, who for one reason or another, have a difficult time reading. In addition, most state standards and learnings goals stipulate that the student be able to "identify and interpret artifacts and primary and secondary source documents to understand events in history"—a task that often requires reading at a higher level.

"Teaching with Photographs" includes images from the novel, *Eleanor's Story*. These images address such historical themes as education, industrialization, economics, courage, family relationships, and World War II.

Students may choose the photographs in the novel, or use other photographs from this time period. They will analyze the photographs using Bloom's Taxonomy.

Teaching with Photographs

Eleanor's Story

Knowledge

- How many people are in the picture?
- List all the _____ in the picture.
- How many _____ do you see in the picture?

Comprehension

- What do you think this picture shows? What makes you think that?
- Estimate how many buildings might be in this picture?
- What could you change in this picture that would give you a new idea?
- Estimate how many _____ might be in this picture?
- Does this picture make you feel happy or sad? What makes you say that?
- Is this picture old or new? What makes you say that?

Application

- What might happen next in this picture? What makes you say that?
- If you could talk with one of the people in this picture, what would you say?
- List 3 to 5 questions you have about this picture?
- What might the people in this picture be saying?
- What might the objects in this picture be saying?
- Choose one of the objects in this picture, and list as many adjectives as you can to describe it.

Analysis

- What don't you see in this picture that you think you should see?
- Cover half the picture. How does this change what the picture is about?
- Who is the most important person in the picture? Why do you say that?
- What is the most important object in the picture? Why do you say that?

Synthesis

- What objects could be placed in this picture that would belong?
- Give a new title to this picture. Why did you choose that title?
- Write a caption for this picture that you feel explains what this picture is about.
- Create a new picture that shows what happened right before this picture was taken.
- Turn the picture over and draw what you remember of the picture.
- How does this picture make you feel? Why do you think that is?
- If you were the__in this picture, how would you feel?

Evaluation

- Where might this picture have been taken? Why do you say that
- When might this picture have been taken? Why do you say that?
- Is this picture a good example of a primary source? Why or why not?
- Do you think this is an important picture to study? Why or why not?
- What would you have expected to hear if you had been there when this picture was taken?
- What would you have expected to smell if you had been there when this picture was taken?
- How would you act out the things in this picture?

Poetry Analysis

Eleanor's Story

This step-by-step guide will assist students in reading and understanding poetry.

Poetry is found throughout *Eleanor's Story*. Students will choose a piece of poetry found in the novel and analyze the piece they selected. *They may also research and select poems written during this era.*

1. **Title:** **If there is a title, does it define the subject matter of the poem's focus? If there is not a title, after reading the poem, give it a title.**

2. **First Reading:**
 - Read the poem silently to gain a first impression.
 - What is the narrative in the poem (what is happening)?
 - Make some notes on your first impressions.

3. **Second Reading:**
 - Read the poem again – carefully, analytically and out loud.
 - Take note of punctuation; notice images that stand out; listen to the rhyming pattern and the rhythm of the words

4. **Meaning**
 - Identify the obvious meaning and then look for implied meaning (s). What do you think the poet is trying to say?

5. **Consolidation – Putting it all together**
 - Read the poem again to combine your appreciation of its meaning.

6. **Theme/s**
 - Identify the main theme of the poem

7. **Analysis**
 - Are there poetic techniques such as: **similes; metaphors; alliteration; personification; onomatopoeia; assonance?**
 - Other structures such as: **repetition; tenses; different voices; different themes in stanzas.**
 - Use of vocabulary and language? (Find the meaning of words you are not familiar with)
 - Listen to the tone of the poem. What is it? Does it change?
 - What is the poet's message or intention in writing this poem?

8. **Interpretation**
 - What issues are raised about society/relationships or life?
 - Now use the above notes and information to write an analytical essay about the poem/s you have been analyzing.

Character Comparison

Eleanor's Story and *The Book Thief*

Students will compare the main character of *The Book Thief* to Eleanor Ramrath Garner, the author of *Eleanor's Story*.

Character 1

Character 2

Character Similarities

Character Differences

Extension Activities

Eleanor's Story

Deliberate Acts of Kindness

Subject: Responsibility/Character

Grade Levels: Pre-K through 12

Objectives:

- to recognize and honor the kind acts of Holocaust liberators and rescuers
- to cultivate students' ability to do kind acts
- to realize the importance of those acts to others

Background:

Throughout World War II, citizens of Europe rescued Jews and others from Nazi persecution. In Denmark, most of the Jewish community was boated to Sweden. Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg led an effort that saved thousands of Hungarian Jews. Underground efforts led many Jews to safety, and countless individuals protected Jews in hiding. Whether a rescuer helped save the lives of thousands or just one, the good done by the rescuer impacts the world far into the future.

Procedure:

- Share the stories of rescuers and survivors.
- Encourage students to look for ways that they can make a positive difference in someone's life.
- Consider joining the Kindness and Justice
- Challenge, which documents and compiles kind acts of children to show that together they make a great difference in the world.

Resource:

Kindness and Justice Challenge Website - <http://ww1.kjchallenge.org/>

Thanks to: <http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/activity/35plan/kindness.htm>

More Extension Activities

Picture books: A story can be read as an opening to a new topic or a discussion. For example, the following books: *Terrible Things* (An allegory of the Holocaust) by Eve Bunting; and *The Yellow Star, The legend of King Christian X of Denmark*, by Carmen Agra Deedy.

Video tapes: Videos are a wonderful resource. A large variety of genres are available, and in class they can be used either in full length or by selecting parts. For example: Documentary movies about Kristalnacht, Adolph Hitler's biography, the life in ghettos, Ghetto Warsaw uprising; or fiction movies like *The devils arithmetic*, *Life is beautiful*, *The writing on the wall*; or Art movies like *Der Hztter Lubliner* (the last Jew in Loblin) and testimonies of survivals or witness such as *The courage to care*, to name just a few.

Individual projects: Students can do research about one individual or one group who lived at the time of the Holocaust. Next, they design a poster with the information, followed by a presentation to the entire class. Example for such project subjects include: Mordechai anielewicz, Janusz Korczak, Anne Frank, the Kinder Transport, the Danish Rescue, and Partisans. In these types of projects students deepen their learning and are responsible to relay their knowledge to their peers.

Group projects: Similar to the Individual projects but done in a group.

Reading from diaries: The Diary of Anne Frank is a famous one and it can be used for this activity. There are many others, as I mentioned before the book *Salvaged Pages, Young writers' diaries of the Holocaust*, by Alexandra Zapruder, is a collection of diaries. By reading from diaries two main objectives can be accomplished; first, students learn about the life and thoughts of the individuals, and second, they learn about the situation during this time period in general.

Discussions: Discussion should play a major role in teaching the Holocaust for middle-school students. Students like to be challenged, to think, and to express their own point of view. For example, while teaching the Nuremberg laws, students can be asked to make their own laws before starting to learn about the actual laws that were passed in 1935. Then, while learning about the actual laws, ask the students what can they learn from each law. Examples include: the forbidding of mixed marriages indicate that mixed marriages were common between Jews and Arians; forbidding of employing maids under the age 45 shows that Jews were well heeled and it was common to have maids in their houses.

Old photos: Photos can be brought from books or by students (if they have a family that lived in Europe before and during the Holocaust). These can be used in several ways. For example, from some photos students can learn about the life before the Holocaust, also others about life in the ghettos, concentration camps, and more. (Photos can be downloaded from the websites of Yad-Vashem and the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.).

Poems written by victims: The book *I never saw another butterfly*, which contains children's drawings and poems from Terezin Concentration Camp (1942-1944) is an exceptional collection that can be used to read out loud in class or to be illustrated by students, or as a reflection of the life and thoughts that occupied the writers' minds.

Art-work of victims: For example: The book, *David Olère—The Eyes of a Witness*, published by The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation in Paris in 1989. Olère’s pencil sketches and color paintings capture the everyday events in the concentration camps during the Holocaust. There are also portraits of some Nazi soldiers and layouts of the crematoriums. The work of David Olère has exceptional documentary value. No photographs were taken at Auschwitz of what went on in the gas chambers and crematoria. Only the memories of Olère, reproduced as art in his drawings and paintings, give an account of the horrible reality. He was the first to draw the plans and cross-sections of the crematories in order to explain exactly how the Nazis ran their death factory. He did not sketch for pleasure while at Auschwitz; there he was forced to work as an illustrator and to write and decorate letters for the SS.

Create art work about the holocaust: This activity can follow a class about art from or about the Holocaust, or after a lesson about the life in the ghetto. Students can make art from the point of view of people in the ghettos or as outsiders. A large variety of material can be used, paint, water colors, pencils, crayon and so on. By using this activity students can express their understanding in a unique way.

Make a memorial for the Holocaust: This activity can follow a visit to a Holocaust memorial, after looking at photos or slides of Holocaust memorial around the world, or before doing one of the above. The students can design and build their own memorials, and exhibit them at the school. This exhibit, for example, can add to Yom Ha’Shoah ceremonies.

Class library: A lending library helps to expend the learning out of the class. There are many books. Here is a short list of books that can be the beginning of such a class library: *The cage* by Ruth Minsky Sender; *Of Heroes, Hooks, and heirlooms*, by Faye Sifton; *Number the stars*, by Lois Lowry; *Stones in Water*, by Donna Jo Napoli; *The Devil’s Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen; *Friedrich* by Hans Peter Richter; *Until we meet again* by Michael Korenblit and Kathleen Janger; *Escape from the Holocaust* by Kenneth Roseman.

Maps: Maps of Europe before and during world war II, Maps of concentration camps, ghettos, death camp and more. By using maps students can identify the places which they are learning about and they can attain a deeper understanding of the development of the war and the Holocaust.

Resources

Two of the finest, most complete bibliographies of books and videos are available through:

Holocaust Memorial Museum 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW Washington, D.C. 20004
www.ushmm.org

Yad Vashem Jerusalem Israel www.yadvashem.org

More information can be found on the following websites:

www.ushmm.org United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

www.facinghistory.org Facing History and ourselves

www.yadvashem.org Yad Vashem Jerusalem Israel

www.auschwitz.org

www.chgs.umn.edu The center for the Holocaust, University of Minnesota

www.mjhnyc.org Museum of Jewish heritage, NY

www.gfh.org.il The Ghetto fighter house

www.annefrank.com Anne Frank center U.

Thank you to Rachel Raz Isreal