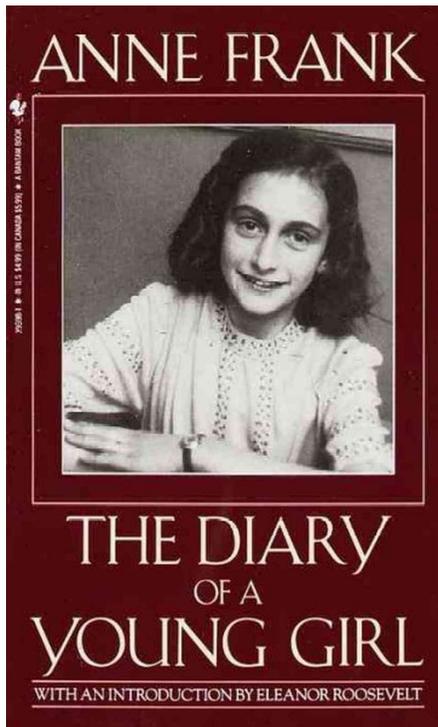


Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

Literature Guide



This unit plan focuses on *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, a powerful firsthand account of a young Jewish girl hiding from the Nazis during World War II. Through her diary, Anne Frank provides insights into the challenges of living in hiding, the impact of war on families, and the resilience of the human spirit. This unit will help students understand historical context, explore themes of identity and hope, and develop empathy through literature.

Studying *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* allows students to connect with history on a personal level. The diary format encourages reflection and fosters critical thinking about the experiences of individuals during the Holocaust. By examining Anne's thoughts, feelings, and aspirations, students will gain a deeper understanding of the impact of prejudice and the importance of acceptance and compassion.

Grade Levels: 9-12

Essential Question:

How does reading the first-person experiences of an individual living through the Holocaust affect our understanding of the event as a whole?

Objectives:

- Students will use precise language when writing about or discussing the Holocaust.
- Students will understand the Holocaust happened to individuals.
- Students will make thoughtful and intentional descriptions of the events of the Holocaust without making broad comparisons or oversimplifying.
- Students will understand the Holocaust was a crime perpetrated on individuals by individuals, and the stories are family history for the victims.

In this literature guide, you will find:

- Introduction
 - Pre-teaching Note
 - Historical Context
 - Cultural Resistance Discussion
- Reading Questions
- Questions to Consider After Reading
- Concluding Activities
 - Discussion
 - Culminating Essay
 - Projects and Activities
- Multimedia and Supplementary Resources

Introduction

Pre-teaching note: There are many different published versions of Anne Frank’s diary. In some earlier editions, Otto Frank eliminated passages in which Anne wrote about her changing body and budding sexuality; these passages have been reintroduced into many recent editions. Depending on the age of your students, you may wish to prepare them for these passages.

Historical Context: Before engaging in the book study on *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, teachers will want to set the historical context of the Holocaust, as defined by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million European Jews by the Nazi German regime and its allies and collaborators. The Holocaust was an evolving process that took place throughout Europe between 1933 and 1945. By the end of the war in 1945, the Germans and their collaborators killed nearly two out of every three European Jews. While Jews were the primary victims, German authorities also persecuted and killed other groups for their perceived racial or biological inferiority: Roma; people with disabilities; some of the Slavic peoples (especially Poles and Russians), and blacks. Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological or behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and homosexuals.

Explore the question: How did the rise of Nazism and their policies impact Jews living in Germany, as well as those living in other German occupied countries in Europe? Build additional context using the following steps:

1. Historical background on the history of antisemitism, the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi assumption of power in Germany, World War II and the Holocaust.
2. Read [“The Netherlands During the Holocaust” narrative](#).
3. Contextualize the life of Anne Frank using the [Road to WWII and the Holocaust timeline](#) and/or the USHMM timeline linked under “Multimedia and Supplementary Resources.”

Cultural Resistance Discussion: What is the purpose and impact of diaries during wartime?

Reading Questions

Below are reading comprehension questions for students by book section.

Section 1: The Beginning of the Diary (June 12, 1942 - July 5, 1942)

1. Why does Anne start writing a diary, and what does it reveal about her personality?
2. How does Anne describe her life before going into hiding?
3. What insights do you gain about Jewish life in Amsterdam during the German occupation?

Section 2: Moving into the Secret Annex (July 6, 1942 - November 19, 1942)

1. How does Anne describe the process of moving into the annex?
2. What were Anne's first impressions of living in hiding?
3. How do the dynamics between the families start to develop during this period?
4. How does Anne cope with the loss of freedom and privacy?

Section 3: Life in the Annex (November 20, 1942 - February 27, 1943)

1. What routines does the group establish to maintain a sense of normalcy?
2. How does Anne's relationship with her mother evolve in this section?
3. What does Anne reveal about her inner thoughts and struggles with identity?

Section 4: Growing Tensions and Personal Growth (March 1, 1943 - March 14, 1944)

1. How does Anne's relationship with Peter develop? Why does she feel conflicted about it?
2. In what ways does Anne demonstrate maturity as the diary progresses?
3. How do external events (such as bombings and news of the war) affect the morale of those in hiding?

Section 5: The Final Months (March 15, 1944 - August 1, 1944)

1. How does Anne reflect on her dreams and aspirations?
2. What changes do you notice in her writing style and outlook on life?
3. Why do you think Anne's diary ends so abruptly? How does this impact you as a reader?

Questions to Consider after Reading

1. Character and Personal Growth

- How does Anne's personality change over the course of the diary? What events or realizations contribute most to her growth?
- In what ways does Anne struggle with her identity, especially as a teenager living in such unusual circumstances?
- How does Anne's relationship with her mother evolve? Why is their relationship so strained at times?
- What does Anne's writing reveal about her level of maturity compared to her age?

2. Daily Life in Hiding

- What strategies did the residents of the Secret Annex use to maintain a sense of normalcy?
- How did the physical confinement affect Anne's mental and emotional well-being?
- What role did routine, education, and hobbies (such as writing) play in Anne's ability to cope with life in hiding?
- What are some specific examples of how the people in the Annex had to adapt their behavior to avoid detection?

3. Historical Context

- How does Anne's diary help you understand the realities of Jewish persecution during World War II?
- What insights does Anne give into the fear, discrimination, and danger that Jews faced in Nazi-occupied Netherlands?
- How does Anne react to the news about concentration camps and what does this show about her awareness of the war?

4. Relationships and Conflict

- What tensions arise between the members of the Secret Annex and why? How are these conflicts handled?
- What does Anne's relationship with Peter reveal about her need for connection and understanding?
- How does Anne describe her father, and why is he such a central figure in her emotional life?

5. Writing, Dreams, and Hope

- Why is writing so important to Anne? How does it help her process her experiences and emotions?

- What are Anne’s hopes and dreams for the future? How do these reflect her personality and outlook on life?
- Despite her circumstances, Anne often expresses hope and optimism. What passages stand out as examples of this? Why do you think she maintained this perspective?

6. Style and Structure

- How does the diary format affect your understanding of Anne’s story? How might her story have been different if it had been written as a traditional narrative?
- How does Anne’s voice change over time—from the beginning of the diary to the end?
- What makes Anne’s writing powerful and relatable to modern readers?

7. Moral and Philosophical Reflections

- What does Anne’s diary teach us about human resilience and the will to survive?
- How does Anne’s story challenge or deepen your understanding of prejudice, tolerance, and human rights?
- What lessons from Anne’s diary are still relevant today?
- How is the diary an example of cultural resistance?

Concluding Activities

Discussion (adapted from USHMM): Using information on the timeline, discuss or ask students to reflect in writing:

1. Can we learn about the Holocaust by just reading *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*? What are we missing when we do this?
2. Since Anne’s diary ends in August 1944, readers do not generally learn about what happened to the residents of the Secret Annex after they were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Do you think it is important to understand what happened to the residents of the Secret Annex after Anne’s diary ends? Why or why not?

Culminating Essay:

On July 15, 1944, in one of her final and most famous diary entries, Anne wrote: “It’s difficult in times like these: ideals, dreams, and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It’s a wonder I haven’t abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart.”

Ask students to reflect in writing: Why do you think this quote appeals to so many people?

Projects and Activities:

- [Socratic Seminar](#)
- Creative Writing: Write a diary entry from the perspective of another character in the annex
- Research Project: Investigate one aspect of life in hiding during WWII and present findings
- Art and Reflection: Create a visual representation of a key theme from the diary
- Drama and Role-Play: Reenact a scene or create a monologue as Anne reflecting on her experiences
- Debate: Discuss the ethical responsibility of preserving and publishing personal diaries
- Investigate the lives of [Eva and Heinz Geiringer](#), contemporaries of the Franks

Multimedia and Supplementary Resources

- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has a fully developed unit on the teaching of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*
<https://www.ushmm.org/teach/holocaust-lesson-plans/exploring-anne-franks-diary>
- Documentary: <https://www.annefrank.org/en/education/product/132/video-the-short-life-of-anne-frank/>
- Virtual tour of the Anne Frank House
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ce89Q2thz8E>
- Anne Frank House Website <https://www.annefrank.org/en/museum/web-and-digital/>
- [Profiles of the Frank Family](#)
- [Character Development](#)
- [The play vs. the Diary](#)
- [Bibliography](#)
- [USHMM Timeline Activity](#)