



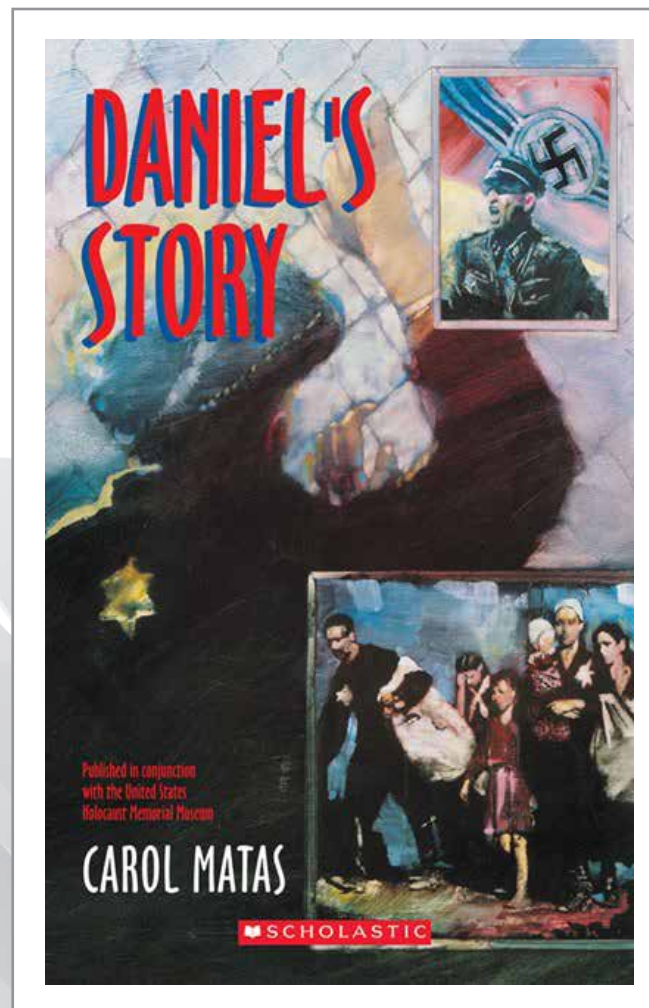
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Daniel's Story

Carol Matas



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Daniel's Story

Carol Matas

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Analysis, evaluation,
prediction, research,
inference

Comprehension

Literary terms and
application

Writing

Description, compare/
contrast, diary and journal,
letter, poetry, eulogy,
newspaper article, ending
chapter, writing contest

Listening/Speaking

Drama, personal experience,
discussion

Fine Arts

Skit, art, collage,
photography

Across the Curriculum

Geography, history, music,
math

Genre: historical fiction

Setting: World War II—Frankfurt, Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz, Buchenwald

Point of View: first person

Tone: somber, serious

Themes: courage, hope, survival, family

Conflict: person vs. society, person vs. person

Summary

Daniel narrates his life from Frankfurt, Germany, to the Lodz Ghetto, and finally to the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Daniel takes pictures at each location, and he uses these pictures to describe his life—the brutality of the Nazis, the terror of living in a concentration camp, and the hope he tries to maintain through it all. Daniel writes about loved ones that die, the loss of friends, the few who survive, and the harsh realization that one person is capable of persecuting, terrorizing, and ultimately destroying another.

About the Author

Personal: Carol Matas' early dreams of success were not in the literary field, but in the acting field. As a teenager in Winnipeg, Manitoba, she took acting classes during summer vacation. After that experience she believed she was headed for a professional acting career. After earning a degree in English at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, in 1970, she did graduate work at the Actor's Lab in London, England. Returning to Toronto, she acted professionally for four years. Ms. Matas married Per Brask and had a daughter (1977); consequently, she did not return to acting. Instead, she continued writing, which she had begun as a hobby.

Professional: Carol Matas' hobby did not immediately turn into a career. She received many rejections from publishers until 1982, when a publisher accepted her first novel, *The D.N.A. Dimension*. Since then, she has published 25 novels and plays, which include historical fiction, realistic fiction, science fiction, and adventure. Her special interest in the Holocaust stems from her husband's stories of his father's and grandfather's experiences with the Danish resistance and the rescue of Danish Jews. Matas' works have earned her several honors. She wrote *Daniel's Story* in response to a request to write a children's novel for the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. The novel was to complement a display in the museum. The novel was a huge success, receiving Ontario's and Manitoba's Provincial Readers' Choice award, as well as being nominated for the Governor General's Literary Award in Children's Literature.

Major Characters

Daniel: young Jewish boy; narrates the story of his life after being deported from Germany and taken to Poland; takes pictures at each concentration camp to which he is sent

Father: WWI hero; remains with Daniel through deportation and the various concentration camps; returns with Daniel to Lodz

Mother: remains with Daniel through deportation; dies in Auschwitz

Erika: Daniel's younger sister; loves to play the violin; dies after the liberation of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp

Uncle Peter: photographer; deported to the Dachau concentration camp as a result of a 6-year-old parking ticket; dies in the camp

Auntie Leah: Uncle Peter's wife; shot by the Nazis when she refuses to be separated from her children

Rosa: young Jewish girl from Poland; meets Daniel in the Lodz Ghetto; reunites with Daniel in Lodz after the war

Adam: young Jewish boy; meets Daniel in the Lodz Ghetto; recruits Daniel for the resistance movement in Auschwitz

Peter: young Jewish boy; befriends Daniel on the march from Auschwitz to Buchenwald; dies from a severe beating after the liberation

Karl: older Communist man; photographer at Buchenwald; recruits Daniel and his father for the resistance movement

Initiating Activities

1. Art: Invite a professional photographer to show students old cameras and pictures and explain the photographic process of the 1940s.
2. Research: Use Web or print resources to research the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Show pictures and film (if available) of the museum's exhibits, focusing on the exhibit titled "Daniel's Story: Remember the Children."
3. Prior Knowledge: Have students begin the KWL chart on page 5 of this guide. Encourage students to share their charts with classmates. At the end of the novel study, combine the students' charts to create a classroom bulletin board.
4. Predictions: Have students begin the Prediction Chart on pages 6–7 of this guide. This activity will continue as they read the novel.

Vocabulary Activities

1. Vocabulary Wheel: Using the graphic on page 8 of this guide, have students review words from the vocabulary lists in each section.
2. Vocabulary Journal: Have students create vocabulary journals. Encourage the use of vocabulary-related terms to decorate the covers (e.g., alphabet letters, parts of speech). For each new vocabulary word, students write the word and its definition on a journal page. Have students find examples of the word used in print and paste the examples into their journals. Magazine clippings depicting synonyms and antonyms of the vocabulary words could also be included.
3. Charades: Divide the class into two teams. Have one team act out a vocabulary word while the other team guesses which word they are portraying. Teams take turns acting out and guessing words.
4. Target Words: Have students create quizzes matching the vocabulary words with their definitions.

Using Dialogue

Directions: Choose some dialogue from the book. Fill in the chart to evaluate the purpose of the dialogue and whether or not it is effective in moving along the plot.

Extra Credit—extra bits of dialogue I remember from my outside reading

Who is speaking?

How is the plot advanced with these words?

Dialogue on Pages

What is special about the dialogue?

What does the dialogue tell me about the characters speaking?

Part One—Pictures of Frankfurt, pp. 1–35

Using a photo album, Daniel introduces his family—parents, sister, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents. Daniel uses the album to trace their lives from normalcy in Frankfurt to terror in the Lodz Ghetto. Through the eyes of 14-year-old Daniel, this section introduces Hitler's Nazi regime, its philosophy, and the brutality that would change the lives of millions of Europe's Jewish citizens.

Vocabulary

disoriented (3)
rucksack (4)
shambles (5)
storm trooper (8)
chancellor (9)
Parliament (9)
vermin (12)
newsreel (16)
visas (19)
pact (21)
looting (22)
quota (24)
ration cards (25)
petty (32)
consulate (33)
deported (34)

Discussion Questions

1. Why is the photo-album framework an effective way to present the story? (*The photos provide a “tangible” way for the reader to view situations as Daniel describes them. The photos make the story realistic and personal.*)
2. What can you conclude about Daniel's family from the pictures he describes? (*a close and loving family; supportive of each other; spend a lot of time together; ambitious and well-educated; talented; hard-working; ancestors had lived in the area for 1,000 years, throughout*)
3. Once Hitler came to power, why didn't Daniel's family leave Germany? (*They did not really believe that things would get as bad as they did. In England, Winston Churchill had been warning about Hitler for years, but most countries ignored his warnings. Jews had been persecuted before and had survived, so they expected to do it again. When the family finally decided to leave, there was no place for them to go. Other countries had refused to shelter the Jews, and Hitler's Nazis were gaining too much power and control. pp. 9–24*)
4. How does the Hitler Youth uniform give Daniel freedom? Is it true freedom? (*The society that he is in accepts the uniform, but it does not accept Daniel as a Jew. With the uniform he blends in; therefore, he can go wherever he wants to go. He says it gives a young man “power, respect, and freedom.” However, it is the freedom gained through identification with a group, not individual freedom. Wearing the uniform enables Daniel to take pictures that he otherwise could not have taken. pp. 26–28*)
5. Daniel takes pictures to preserve memories. Describe the things he did not wish to take pictures of or remember. (*Daniel could not take pictures of the box of Uncle Peter's ashes sent to the family from Dachau. Later, he could not take pictures of the family's deportation to the Lodz Ghetto, the invasive body searches, and the horrors he saw in Lodz. pp. 31–35*)
6. **Prediction:** What will life in the Lodz Ghetto be like for Daniel?

Supplementary Activities

1. Literary Elements: Use the Metaphors and Similes chart on page 9 of this guide to record examples of literary devices used throughout the novel. For example: **Metaphor**—Erika: “a little mouse” (p. 16) **Similes**—“stamp on us as if we were bugs” (p. 17); “I can see them in my head like photos” (p. 31)
2. Literary Analysis: Begin the plot graph on page 10 of this guide. You will continue this activity as you read the novel.
3. Writing: In a brief essay, explain the symbolism of the Hitler Youth uniform for the Germans and the Star of David for the Jews.