

Teacher Guide

Grades 5–6

Number the Stars

Lois Lowry

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NUMBER THE STARS

by
Lois Lowry

Teacher Guide

Written by
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Note

The 2011 Sandpiper paperback edition of the novel, © 1989 by Lois Lowry, was used to prepare this guide. Page references may differ in other editions. Novel ISBN: 978-0-547-57709-8

Please note: Parts of this novel deal with sensitive, mature issues. Please assess the appropriateness of this novel for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Creative thinking, inferring,
predicting, summarizing,
supporting judgments

Literary Elements

Character analysis, setting,
conflict, theme, symbolism, point
of view, author's purpose

Vocabulary

Definitions, root words, compound
words, synonyms

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, presentation,
dramatization

Writing

Short story, personal narrative,
dialogue, poetry, fairy tale, essay,
report

Critical Thinking

Brainstorming, research,
compare/contrast, cause/effect,
analysis, evaluation

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—history and
time lines, geography and maps,
World War II, the Holocaust, the
Danish Resistance, Enigma
code, patriotism, Danish and
Jewish cultures, Hans Christian
Andersen; Science—Denmark's
Black Sun, Atlantic herring;
Health—typhus, ethics, survival;
Math—graphs, foreign currency
exchange rate, computation;
Art—design, illustration, model;
Music—composition; Cooking—
butter recipe

Chapters 16–17

Because of Annemarie’s bravery, Uncle Henrik reveals to her that, like Peter, he is part of the Danish Resistance. He also reveals that soldiers searched his boat but did not find the Jews hiding in the secret compartment. This was mainly because the handkerchief Annemarie delivered contained a special drug that temporarily ruined the Nazis’ dogs’ sense of smell. Two years later, the Danes celebrate the end of the war. Annemarie learns that the Nazis executed Peter and that her sister Lise’s death was not an accident; she was also killed as a member of the Resistance. Annemarie looks into Lise’s trunk and remembers hiding Lise’s Star of David inside. She decides to wear the necklace until Ellen returns.

Vocabulary	
confronting	
roam	
invade	
complicated	
conceal	
receded	
brave	
grief	
amid	
rejoicing	
clasp	

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Annemarie milk Blossom? What does this tell you about Annemarie? (*Everyone but Annemarie is gone from the room, and the cow is uncomfortable. Answers will vary. Annemarie is kind and caring, wanting to make Blossom comfortable. She also demonstrates maturity by taking on an adult task, particularly one she’s never done before without being asked.*)
2. How does Uncle Henrik define bravery? Why does he think Annemarie acted bravely? (*Uncle Henrik tells Annemarie, “That’s all that brave means—not thinking about the danger.” [p. 123]. Annemarie risked her life to bring Lise’s package, even though she was frightened. She did what needed to be done to save the Rosens.*)
3. Annemarie never guesses that Peter belongs to the Danish Resistance. What clue did you miss? Did you guess the truth about Peter? (*Peter brought Mama and Papa the Resistance newspaper, *De frie Danske*, and was always on the move. Answers will vary.*)
4. How are Jews escaping from Denmark to Sweden? What do the Nazis do that almost stops the escape? How do the Danes respond? (*The Jews sail to Sweden hidden in small compartments of boats. The Nazis are aware that Jews are escaping, but when their searches fail to uncover the boats’ secret compartments they bring trained dogs to locate the hiding Jews. Danish scientists develop a special drug that attracts dogs and that temporarily ruins their sense of smell. Each boat captain is given a treated handkerchief to use whenever soldiers and their dogs search a boat.*)
5. What might have happened if Annemarie had not delivered the handkerchief to Uncle Henrik? (*Answers will vary. The soldiers and dogs that boarded Uncle Henrik’s boat that day would have discovered the Rosens and the others in the hidden compartment. The Jews would have been sent to concentration camps, and Uncle Henrik most likely would have been arrested or killed. The experience would have clued the soldiers about hidden compartments on other boats, endangering more Jews and fishermen in the Resistance.*)
6. Uncle Henrik believes Annemarie will be Lise’s maid after the war ends. Do you think the time apart will affect their friendship? (*Answers will vary.*)
7. How do you think Peter’s last moments affect the Johansens? (*Answers will vary. The Johansens are devastated that Peter was executed, however, they are proud of Peter for his courage and his willingness to sacrifice his life to help others. Most likely, the Johansens are honored that Peter considered them family and remained devoted to Lise.*)

8. Did you guess that Lise had belonged to the Danish Resistance? Why do you think Mama and Papa withheld the truth about Lise’s death from Annemarie until the war ended? *(Answers will vary. Mama and Papa probably felt Annemarie was safer—and could be braver—if she did not know Lise had been a member of the Resistance. Perhaps knowing the Nazis killed her sister would have made Annemarie angry and defiant, endangering her every time she encountered a soldier.)*
9. Why does Annemarie want to wear Ellen’s Star of David necklace? *(Answers will vary. The necklace reminds Annemarie of Ellen and their friendship, and wearing it demonstrates Annemarie’s confidence that Ellen will soon return. Despite Annemarie’s earlier disbelief that the stars could be numbered, the Star of David on the necklace symbolizes something of great importance to Annemarie—her friendship with Ellen. The necklace may also symbolize freedom and national pride in post-war Denmark.)*

Supplementary Activities

1. Art: Design a symbol of freedom that Mama may have hung in the Rosens’ apartment.
2. Math: In three weeks, almost 8,000 Danish Jews were smuggled from Denmark to Sweden. Twenty percent of them escaped through Gilleleje. Assume the average fishing boat held 12 refugees. How many boat trips were made from Gilleleje? *(Answer: approximately 133 boat trips, $8,000 \times .20 = 1,600$ Danish Jews who left from Gilleleje; $1,600 \div 12$ refugees per boat = 133.33)*
3. History: Read the personal account of Anette Atsmon, a Jewish girl carried to Sweden by the Danish people. Her story can be found at <http://thanks.scandinavia.org/the-rescue/denmark/the-story-of-anette-atsmon/> (active as of time of publication). Teachers should limit students’ research to this Web site.
4. Creative Writing: Write a letter from Ellen to Annemarie, telling her about the boat trip and about life in Sweden.
5. Comprehension: As a class, predict which events in *Number the Stars* are true and which are fictional. Then read and discuss the “Afterword” beginning on page 133 of the novel.

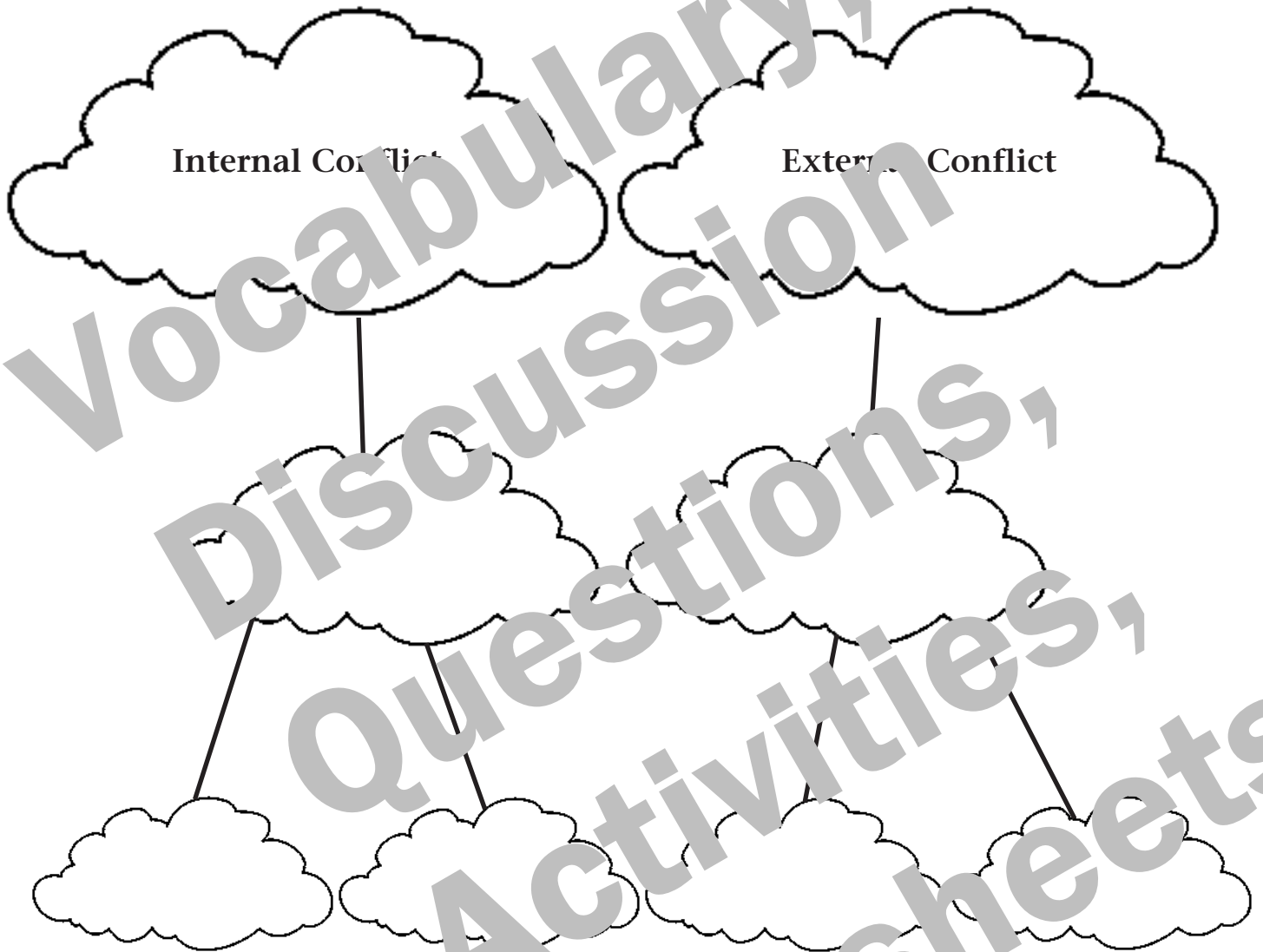
What Do You See Coming?

Directions: Before you begin reading, look at the following parts of the novel. Based on each part of the novel listed, make a prediction. Write your predictions in the boxes provided.

1. Cover	2. Table of Contents	3. Introduction	4. First Page

Clouds of Conflict

Directions: Choose one internal conflict and one external conflict that Annemarie faces because of the war. Use the clouds below to explain how each conflict is resolved.



Bravery

Directions: The following characters from the novel act bravely. Fill in the dotted rectangles with an example of bravery for each character.

