



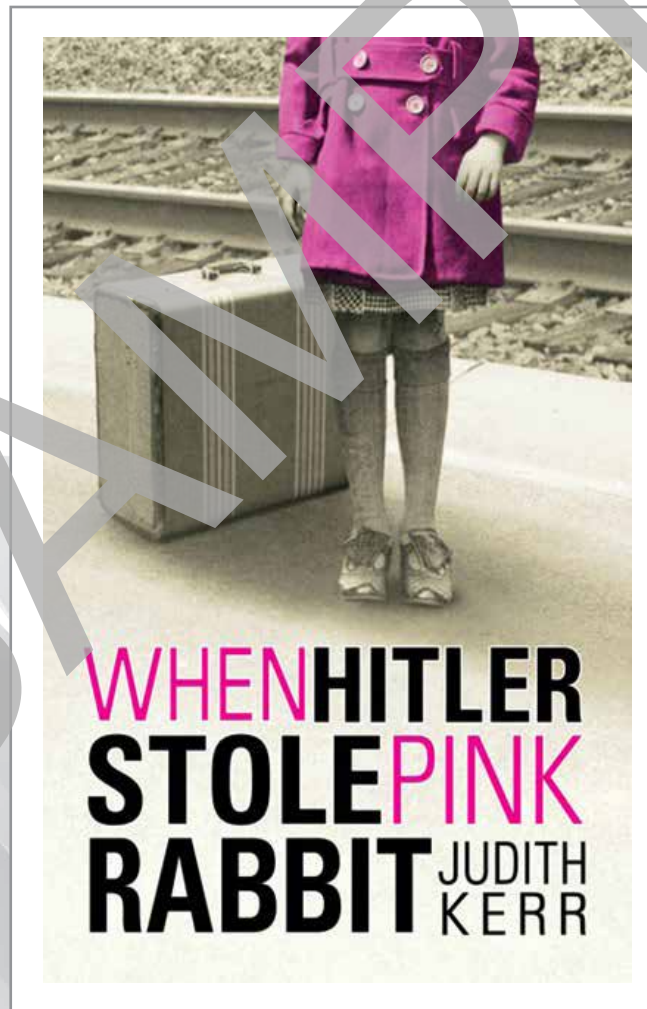
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit

Judith Kerr



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit

Judith Kerr

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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Summary

Based on the author's years as a refugee during the Second World War, this story tells of Anna and her family as they flee Germany just before Hitler is elected and takes over the government of Germany in 1933. The family moves to Switzerland, then France, and finally to England, learning new languages and coping skills as they barely stay ahead of the web for the Jewish people being woven by Hitler. Through it all, Anna realizes that the most important thing is that the family stay together, no matter what.

About the Author

Judith Kerr was born June 14, 1923, in Berlin, Germany. She was the daughter of a well-known German writer and drama critic. She studied at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London, in 1945. Kerr later married Nigel Kneale, a writer, in 1954.

A children's author and illustrator, a textile designer, and a scriptwriter, Kerr's books arose out of the fabric of her life. The picture books were for her two children, and many of her ideas came from them and from her husband, from stories that amused them. It was her husband who encouraged Kerr to write *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*. She said of that book, "I found it incredibly difficult to write. When it was printed and I couldn't change it any more, it was the most satisfying thing that I had ever done. I wrote the book for my children, who have often asked what it was like to lose one's home, one's country, and even one's language. I wanted to explain that it was not nearly as bad as it sounded—that given good parents and a bit of luck one can cope with such difficulties and even enjoy the process. But perhaps even more than this, I wanted to write something about my parents. In spite of all the trouble and tragedies around us, my brother and I probably had a happier and more satisfying childhood than most."

Book World commented about *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*, "The story is kind, intelligent, well-written, and honest. It is about people who care for education, for good manners, for mutual decency."

Note: Please be selective, and use discretion when choosing the activities that you will do with the unit. It is not intended that everything be done, but that discretionary choices made are most appropriate for your use and group of students. A wide range has been provided, so that individuals as well as groups may benefit from these selections.

Initiating Activities

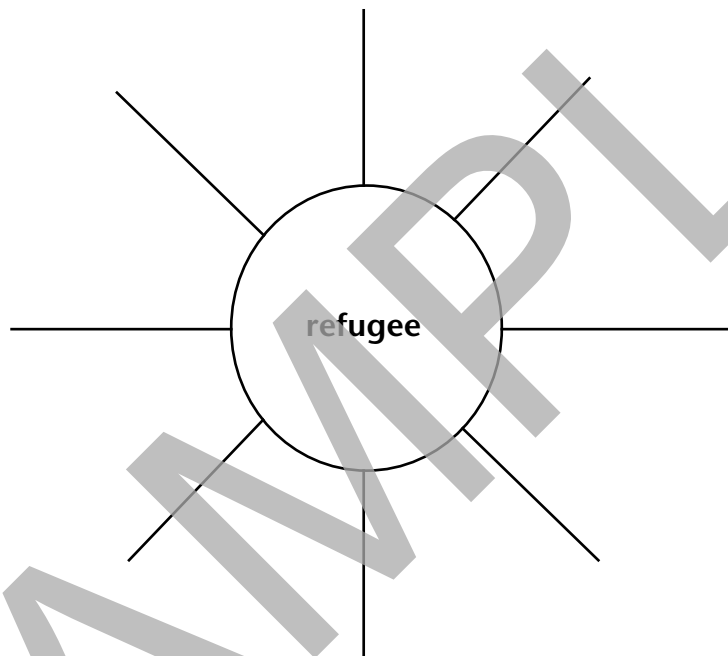
As background music, play a record or a tape of the song "My Favorite Things" from *The Sound of Music*. Have on display some of the students' favorite things such as a team sweatshirt, a mug, a stuffed animal, a book of fiction, a book of poetry, a picture album, etc. Make a large banner that reads, "These Are A Few Of My Favorite Things." Have a discussion with the students about the choices each person makes that relegate certain things as "favorite." What is it that makes something special to an individual? (See Bulletin Board Idea)

Previewing the Book

Look at the cover of the book. How would you describe the expression on the face of the girl? (...pensive?...thoughtful?...serene?...sad?...frightened?) Why do you think that she looks as she does? Where do you think that this story takes place? What do you think that the girl is going to do? Read the title of the book. Why do you think that the author chose this title? (Make a record of responses. Save, and use for comparison purposes with a post-reading activity of the last chapter of the book.)

Prereading Activity

What is a refugee? Brainstorm the word refugee. Make a record of the student responses on a cluster circle.



Prereading Discussion

Invite a person who has been a refugee to speak to the group. Collect newspaper and magazine articles pertaining to refugees and the treatment of refugees in countries around the world. Listen, read and discuss the plight of refugees. Why do people leave their homelands?

Read the summary of the story to the group. Locate Germany, France and England on a world map. (See Teacher Information section, page 35 of this guide, for several focal choices.)

-
2. What does Anna's mother ask her to do? (Page 152, Anna's mother asks Anna to try once more, and then, if by Christmas in two months, Anna feels that she cannot continue, her mother will do something about it.) Does that seem like a fair request to you? Do you have any alternative suggestions? If so, what are they?
 3. What happens to solve Anna's problem? (Pages 153-154, The speaking of French finally becomes automatic to Anna. She no longer has to translate into German.) What one word would you choose to describe what Anna must be feeling when she discovers that this has happened? Make a class list, with no duplicates.

Post-reading Activities

1. Choose or create two things from the same category to represent Anna before and after the French language became automatic to her. For example: two songs, two paintings, two poems, two selections of classical music, etc. Explain your reasons for making your choice.
2. Because of Papa's purchase of the sewing machine, Madame Fernand refers to him, page 163, as "impractical." What does impractical mean? (*Impractical: Unwise to implement or maintain in practice; incapable of dealing efficiently with practical matters, especially financial matters; not a part of experience, fact, or practice.*) The sewing machine that was purchased by Papa was also impractical, in that it was of no use whatsoever. Try to think of something that is impractical. How inventive can you be? Invent an impractical machine, and explain how it works.

Chapter Twenty-One—Pages 164-172; Chapter Twenty-Two—Pages 173-179

Vocabulary

crystallised* 165 reproachfully 166 unimaginative 166 pronouncement 168
surreptitiously 170 obstinately 176
*European spelling

Vocabulary Activity

Complete each of the following comparisons using a vocabulary word. (Sample: GOOD is to BAD as HOT is to COLD.)

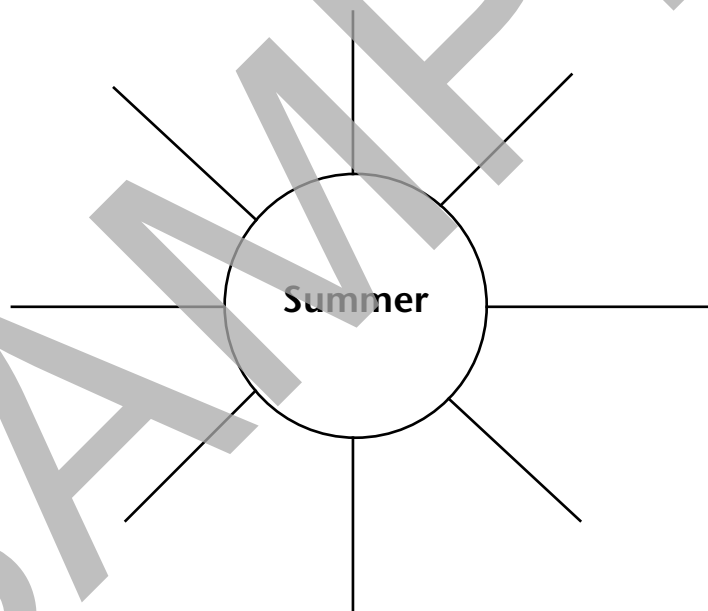
1. UP is to DOWN as _____ is to COOPERATIVELY. (*OBSTINATELY*)
2. GLAD is to HAPPY as _____ is to JUDGMENT. (*PRONOUNCEMENT*)
3. DAY is to NIGHT as _____ is to FANCIFUL. (*UNIMAGINATIVE*)
4. MORE is to LESS as _____ is to OPENLY. (*SURREPTITIOUSLY*)
5. UNHAPPY is to SAD as _____ is to ADMONISHINGLY. (*REPROACHFULLY*)
6. BETTER is to WORSE as _____ is to UNFORMED. (*CRYSTALLISED*)

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Both Anna and Max do very well in school. What happens at the end of the year? (*Page 171, Max wins prix d'excellence, which means he's the best student in his class. Anna passes the certificat d'études and is awarded 20 francs by the mayor for her composition.*) What makes these awards especially gratifying to the children? (*Page 172, They earned them in a language not their own.*)
2. Times get more difficult for the family, and there is talk of the children staying with Omama while Mama and Papa go to England to see if they can start a new life there. What is Anna's reaction to this? (*Page 179, Anna tells her parents that she thinks that the family should stay together. "If you haven't got a home you've got to be with your people." She is afraid that she might really feel like a refugee if they are not all together.*) (See Post-reading Activity #2)

Post-reading Activities

1. On page 173, the author describes the heat of the summer. "It was very hot. You could feel the heat of the pavement through the soles of your shoes and the sun seemed to soak deep into the streets and the houses, so that they did not cool even at night." Think of words/phrases that describe summer. Record them on a cluster circle. Write a brief description of summer, using prose or poetry.



2. Make some predictions. Will the family stay together? Will they stay in France or go to England? What will happen next?

Chapter Twenty-Three—Pages 180-184; Chapter Twenty-Four—Pages 185-191

Vocabulary

equinoctial 186

reprovingly 189

mackintoshes 189