

Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

by Anne Frank

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Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. analyze the impact of the genre choice of diary versus autobiography.
2. trace the development of motifs of:
 - hope and optimism
 - love
 - isolation
 - search for identity
 - family
 - generosity and compassion.
3. analyze the importance of narrative perspective in relation to events that occur.
4. respond to multiple-choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Exam.
5. respond to free response items similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Exam.
6. offer a close reading of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel.

Introductory Lecture

Anne Frank was born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1929. She had one sister, three years older, named Margot. By all accounts, Anne had a happy life with her family, until the forced isolation of the Secret Annexe. She enjoyed school, had many female and male friends, and had little to worry about, given the fact that her parents were somewhat wealthy.

The terms of surrender that ended World War I brought devastating hardship to the country of Germany. Blaming Germany for the war and the overwhelming death and destruction it caused, the victorious Allies imposed a series of punishments and reparations that eventually led to the rise of the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler. As the responsible party, Germany was forced to disarm, repay the governments of France and Britain for the cost of the war, and stripped of various territories. German national pride suffered a huge blow as well—in some part simply because of the defeat, which German propaganda had dismissed as impossible.

In 1919, the National Socialist German Worker's Party, or Nazi Party, was formed in response to the anger and injustice felt by many people in Germany. At the time, it was mostly a group of out-of-work soldiers, but in time it rose to become the strong German government known as the Third Reich, led by Adolf Hitler.

Adolf Hitler was just another disgruntled soldier who found himself without a job once the Treaty of Versailles ended World War I was signed and forced the change in Germany to a democratic government without a strong military force. It soon became apparent that Hitler was a skilled orator whose speeches could move crowds of people to action. This ability gave him the power to rise in leadership within the Nazi Party. In his speeches, he spoke of a return to national pride, rearmament, and a commitment to a racially "pure" Germany. He placed much of the blame for Germany's failure on the Jewish people and communists who supposedly had been traitors to the German nation, which led to their defeat in the First World War. Following his incarceration, which was the result of a failed attempt at a coup in Munich, Hitler reorganized the Nazi party, skillfully maneuvered his way into the position of *Führerprinzipur* (leader principal) and waited for an opportunity to overthrow the current German government. He did not have to wait long.

The Great Depression of 1929 brought about consequences that were felt throughout the world. The Germans, already in a stricken economic state, were impacted greatly since most of their economy was built on foreign capital, loans and trade. When loans from America were due and the demand for German exports dried up, industry and resources ground to a halt, resulting in layoffs, bank failures, and inflation. It seemed that overnight, the standard of living for the middle class was over—ruined by events Germans had no control over. Many German people suffered from poverty and began to look to their government for solutions. This was the opportunity that Hitler had waited for.

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

Sunday, 14 June, 1942 to Wednesday, 2 September, 1942

1. What do the early passages indicate about Anne's life?

2. In what ways is Anne's character revealed in the first few entries?

3. What is indicated by Anne addressing the diary as "Dear Kitty?"

4. What purpose does the diary serve?

5. How is Anne's peaceful childhood tainted?

Saturday, 7 November, 1942 to Monday, 7 December, 1942

1. What does the episode with Margot and the book indicate about Anne and Margot? What does it show about their parents?

2. Why is Anne upset by the interference of her parents in her disagreement with Margot?

3. Anne states, "...I have in my mind's eye an image of what a perfect mother and wife should be; and in her whom I must call "Mother" I find no trace of that image." What does this comment reveal about Anne?

4. What does Anne expect from her diary, "Kitty"?

5. Why does Anne choose to not discuss the war as much as she does the happenings of the Secret Annexe from day to day?

6. What does Anne's description of the spilled beans reveal about her and her writing?

Thursday, 1 April, 1943 to Monday, 23 August, 1943

1. At the opening of the April 1st entry, Anne states, “Misfortunes never come singly.” How is this statement appropriate to the situation she begins to describe?

2. Why does Anne alienate her mother and make no effort to apologize for her slights?

3. What is the underlying cause of Anne and her mother’s disagreements?

4. Anne wonders how the families will return to their “pre-war” characters when the war is over, given that they have changed so much. Why is this unrealistic?

5. Why is dealing with the garbage so important?

Sunday, 2 January, 1944 to Saturday, 12 February, 1944

1. What does rereading her diary entries do for Anne?

2. What realization does Anne come to concerning her mother?

3. The turmoil that Anne feels with puberty is especially difficult for her. Why?

4. What ultimately pushes Anne towards Peter Van Daan?

5. What does Peter Wessel represent to Anne?

6. Why is Anne's attachment to the Peter of her past so strong and vivid?

Monday, 27 March, 1944 to Monday, 8 May, 1944

1. How does Anne's statement about the effect of politics on the adults ring true, even today?

2. How does the cozy picture Anne paints of the Secret Annexe around the radio turn ugly so quickly?

3. Is Anne as good at hiding her feelings as she thinks? Explain your answer.

4. "But, seriously, it would seem funny ten years after the war if we Jews were to tell how we lived and what we ate and talked about here. Although I tell you a lot, still even so, you only know a very little of our lives." What insight does this give us about the annexe? What truth is validated?

5. In Anne's Friday, March 31st entry, she speaks of "they." Who are "they" and what is their importance?

Saturday, 15 July, 1944 to Tuesday, 1 August 1944

1. “All children must look after their own upbringing.’ Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person’s character lies in their own hands.” How does Anne defend these statements and apply them to her philosophy?

2. What is the cause of Anne’s chief complaint and dissatisfaction with her father? What does this dissatisfaction reveal about Anne?

3. Why does Anne feel that she should not have allowed the relationship with Peter?

4. “For in its innermost depths youth is lonelier than old age.” How does this entry apply to Anne? Is it accurate?

5. What must the reader always keep in mind when evaluating a statement like Anne’s declaration: “Is it true then that grownups have a more difficult time here than we do? No. I know it isn’t.”
