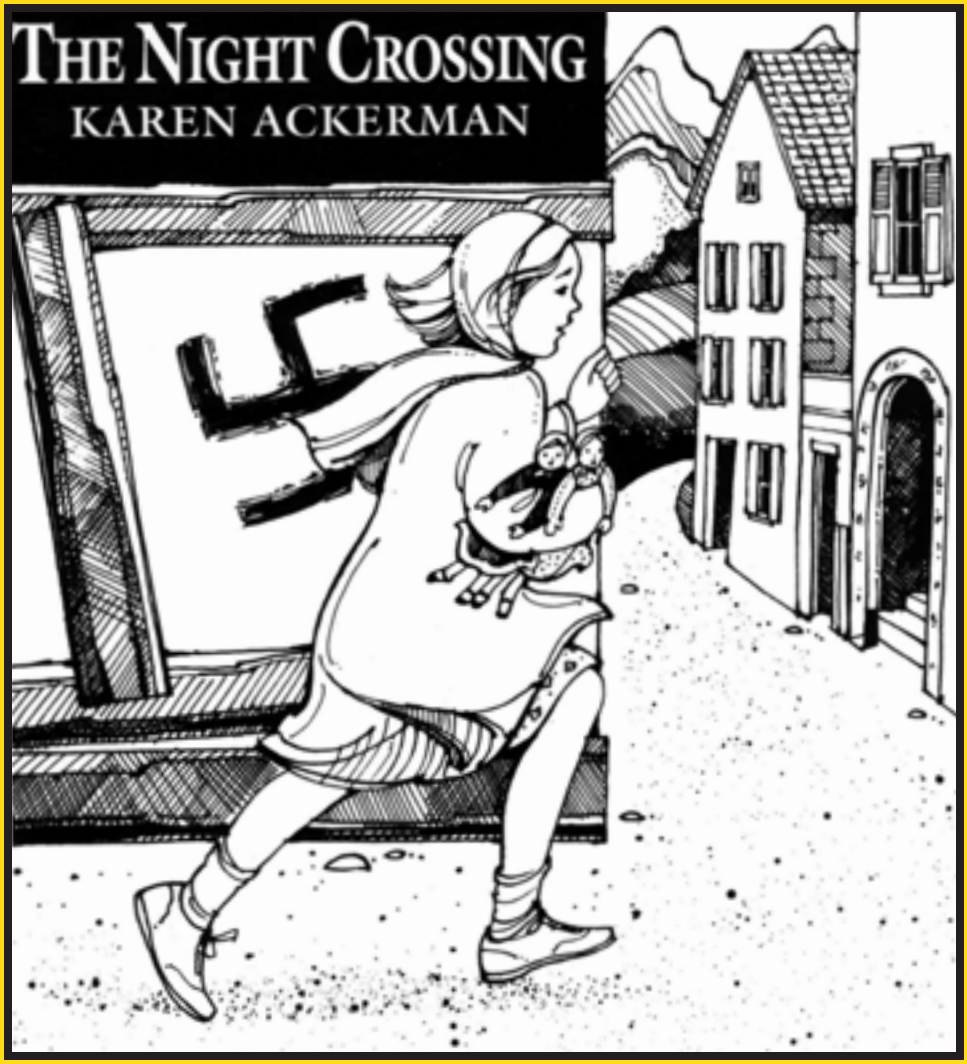
Novel·Ties



A Study Guide

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with the book *The Night Crossing*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel on its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for guided reading by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter or group of chapters; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover of the book. What do you think the book will be about? Do you think it will be funny or serious? Where and when do you think the story takes place?

2. Read the dedication at the beginning of the book. Then read the Background Information on page two of this study guide and do some additional reading to learn more about the Holocaust and World War II.

3. Look at a globe or world map. Find Austria, Switzerland, and the part of the Alps that forms their common border. As you read the book, trace the path that Clara and her parents might have taken as they escaped their homeland in Innsbruck, Austria. Then locate the British Isles and trace the route Clara's family may have taken to their final destination in England.

4. Anti-semitism refers to discrimination against or prejudice toward Jews. Have you ever noticed any examples of anti-semitism in your community? Have you noticed examples of prejudice leveled against other racial or ethnic groups in your community? What do you think causes these attitudes and behaviors? What could be done to end attitudes of prejudice?

5. Imagine what it would be like to find that your life, as well as the lives of others in your family, was in danger in the country where you have always lived. Where might you seek safety? How would you get there if travel were not allowed? What would you take with you?

Chapter 1 (cont.)

Questions:

1. Why did Clara's father want his family to leave Austria?
2. According to Clara, how had life changed for her family?
3. What caused Clara's bad dream?
4. What had happened to Mr. Duessel's bakery shop?
5. Why were Gittel and Lotte important to Clara?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think Clara's father didn't plan to leave Austria sooner?
2. Why do you think Clara's best friend was among the children who had chased her?
3. Do you have anything that you treasure in the same way that Clara treasured the two straw dolls?
4. How was Grandmother's night crossing similar to the one Clara faced?

Literary Device: Symbolism

A symbol is an object that stands for an idea, a person, or a place. For example, the American flag stands for the country, for freedom, and for democratic government. What do you think the two straw dolls symbolized for Clara?

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Writing Activity:

Imagine that you had to flee your home. Write about the clothes you would wear and the things you would carry with you.