

TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: TEACHING HOLOCAUST LITERATURE

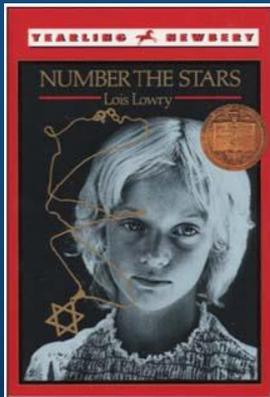
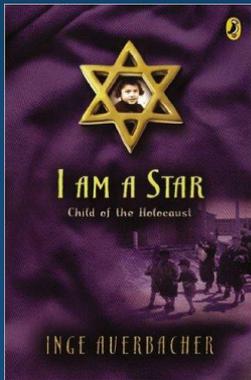
Friday, December 4, 2015

Why Teach Holocaust Literature?

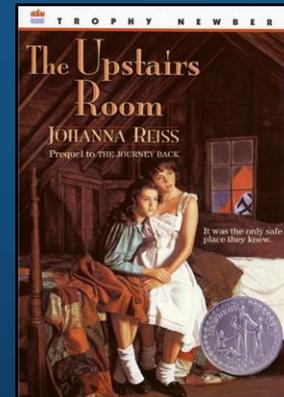
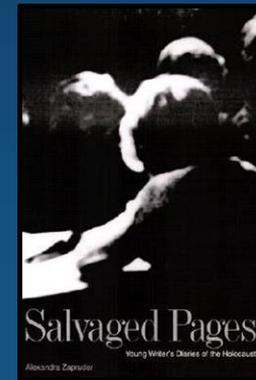
Holocaust literature may:

- Provide students with new perspectives and engage them in ways that textbooks and other traditional media cannot.
- Give a voice to the victims; they and the events in their lives can be seen from their perspective.
- Help students make personal connections through individual accounts.

Holocaust Literature encompasses various literary genres:



- Novels
- Graphic novels
- Short stories
- Drama
- Poetry
- Diaries
- Memoirs
- Allegory



Holocaust Literature

- Is based on real historical events
- Reveals truths about human nature
- Provides models of heroism and dignity
- Confronts the human capacity for evil
- Honestly characterizes the reality of the Holocaust

Studying Holocaust Literature helps students:

- Develop respect for human decency by comparing and contrasting the behaviors and decisions of the characters.
- Recognize heroes among the protagonists.
- Appreciate the dignity within the lives of the victims through their responses to their experiences.
- Recognize the roles chosen by or forced upon people: examine the choices and choiceless choices with which people were confronted.
- Analyze language used to deceive - euphemisms.

How to Choose Holocaust Literature

Is it historically accurate?

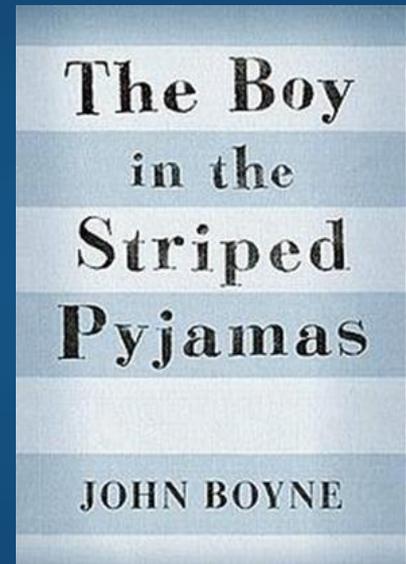
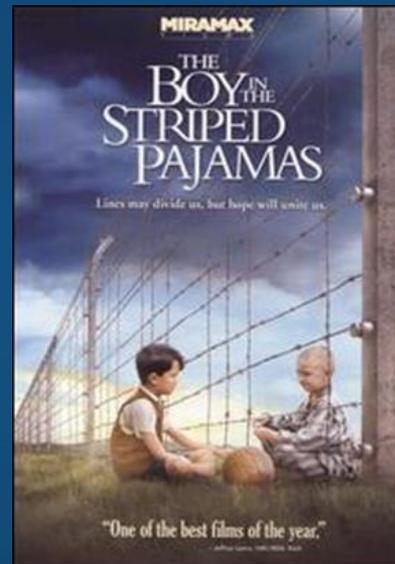
Did the events really happen?

Is the sequence of events accurate?

Could the events have really occurred?

Are the characters realistic?

Is the setting (time and place) appropriate?



Is this piece appropriate for your class?

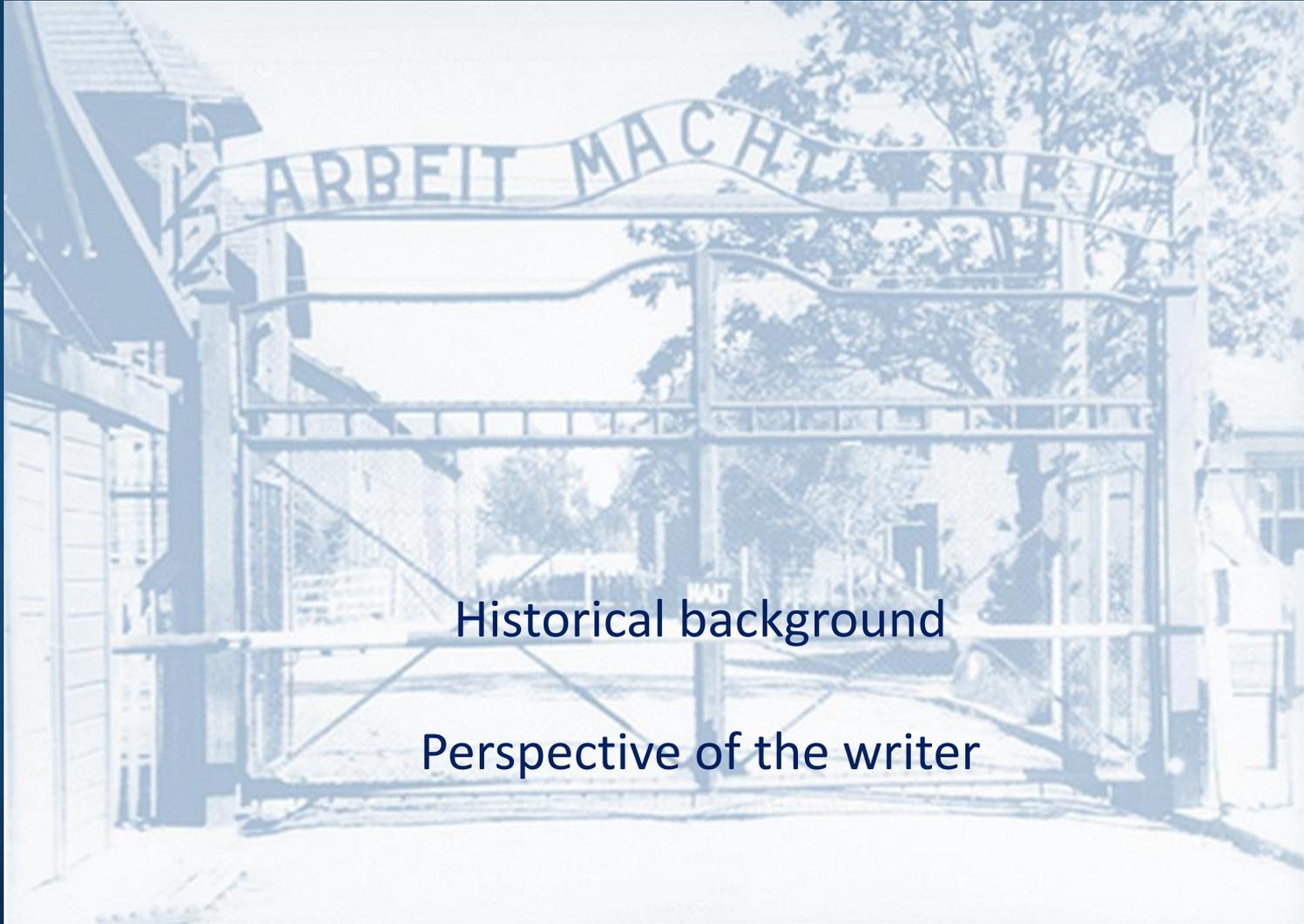
Academic Issues

- Is the reading level accessible?
- Does it address your students' interests?
- Do your students have sufficient background to understand this piece's place in the context of Holocaust history?
- Does it stimulate questions and encourage discussion?
- Can readers draw their own conclusions?
- Are students challenged to examine their own behavior and values?
- Does it invoke memory and inspire students to learn more?

What criteria should we use to determine which materials are age appropriate for our students?

- Are your students developmentally ready to encounter this piece of literature?
- Do the depictions respect the dignity of the victims?
- Do the depictions respect the sensibilities of your students?
- Have their parents been informed about the selections you have chosen?

Content, Context, Complexity



Historical background

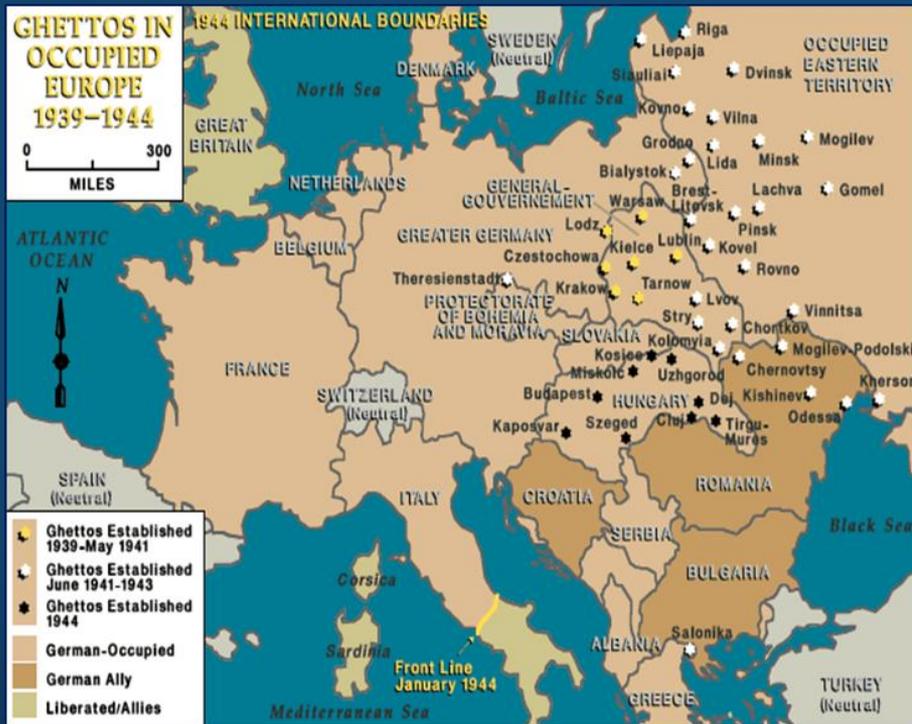
Perspective of the writer

What is the setting of the work?

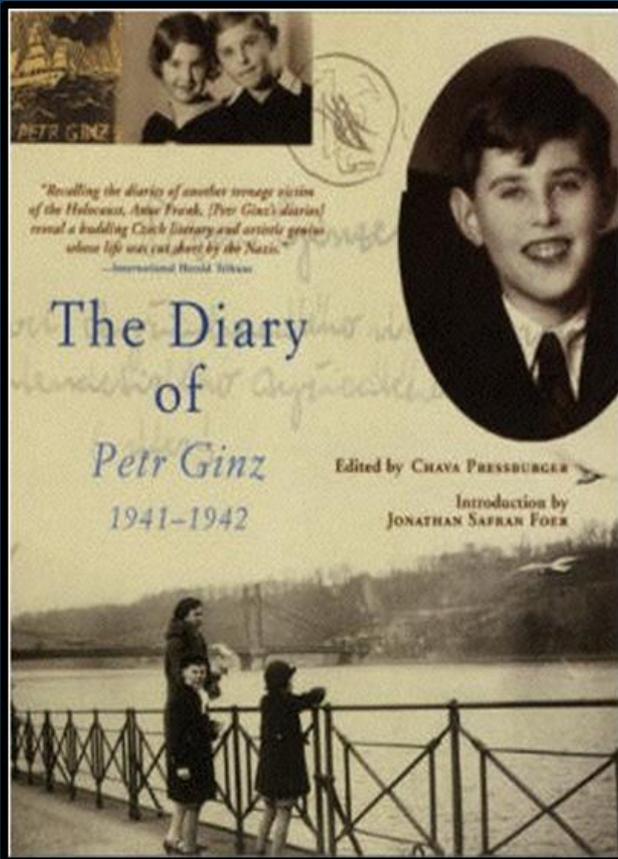


PLACE AND DATE

What other historical events were taking place during that time?

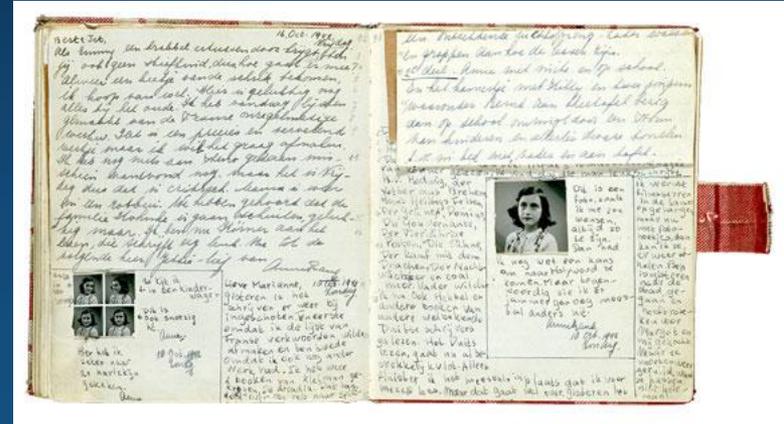
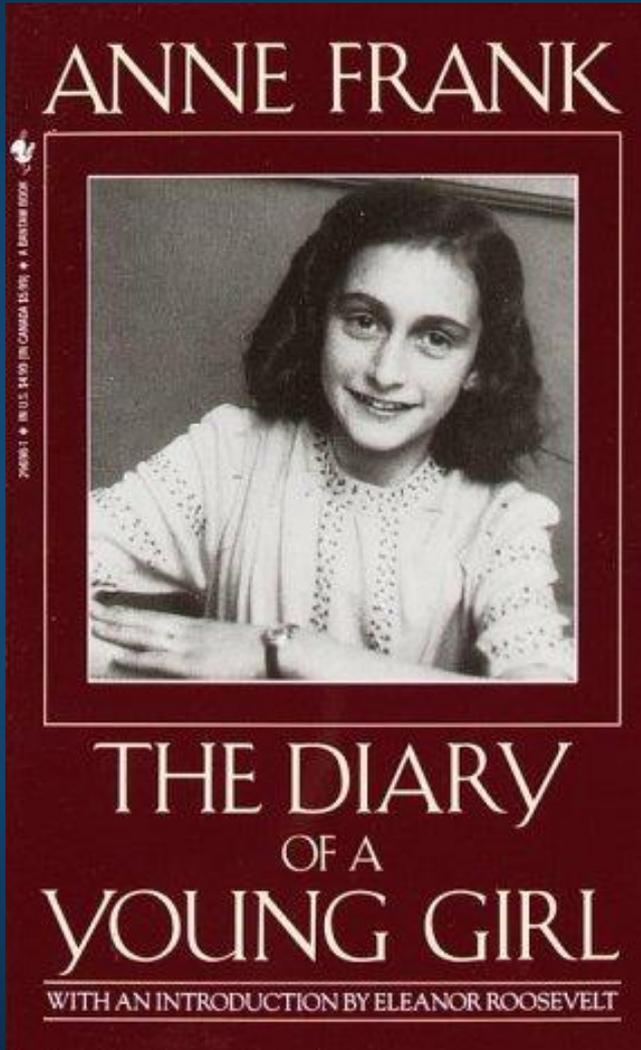


Writing in the Moment...



Moon Landscape, 1942-44, Theresienstadt
Yad Vashem, Art Museum Collection

Writing in the Moment...



Context



What may be problematic in teaching about the Holocaust using *The Diary of Anne Frank*?

One of many diaries written by adolescents during the Holocaust.

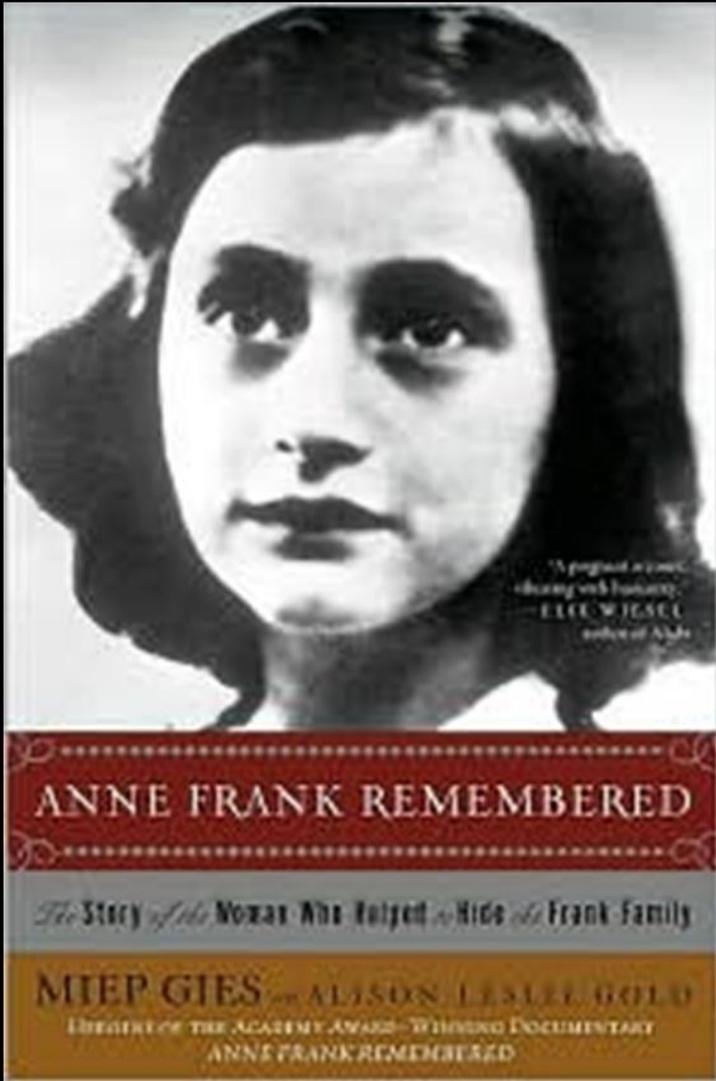
Often analyzed based on its universal themes.

Tells of one type of Holocaust experience – children in hiding.

Tells the history of the Holocaust in only one geographic location.

Doesn't tell much about the discovery, arrest, deportation and death of Anne.

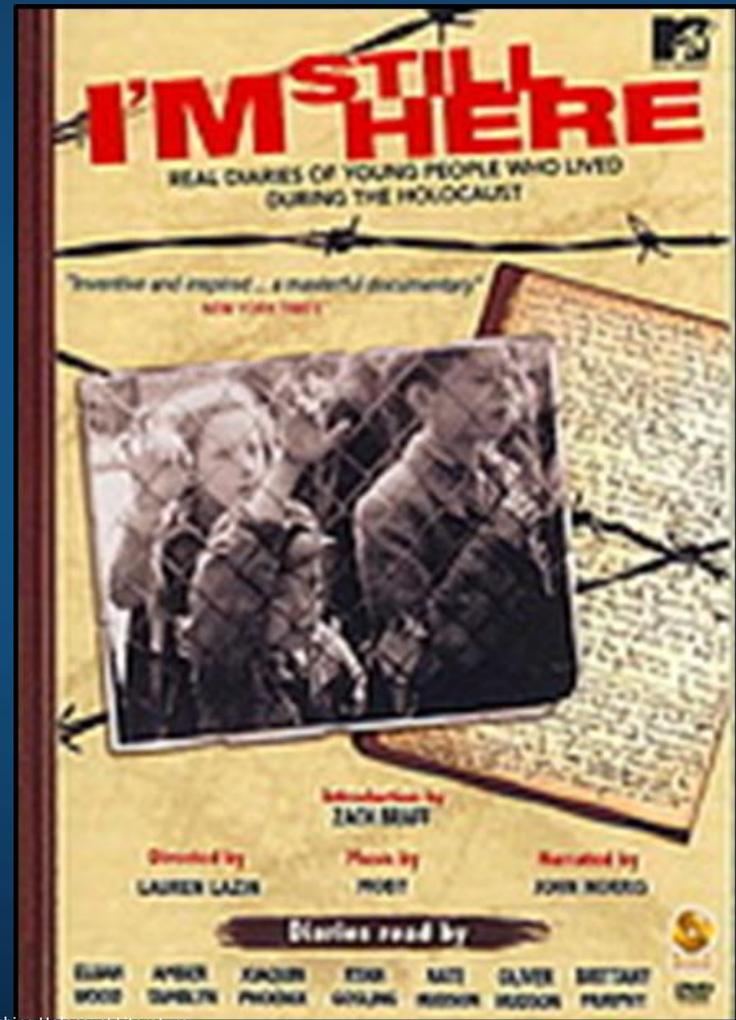
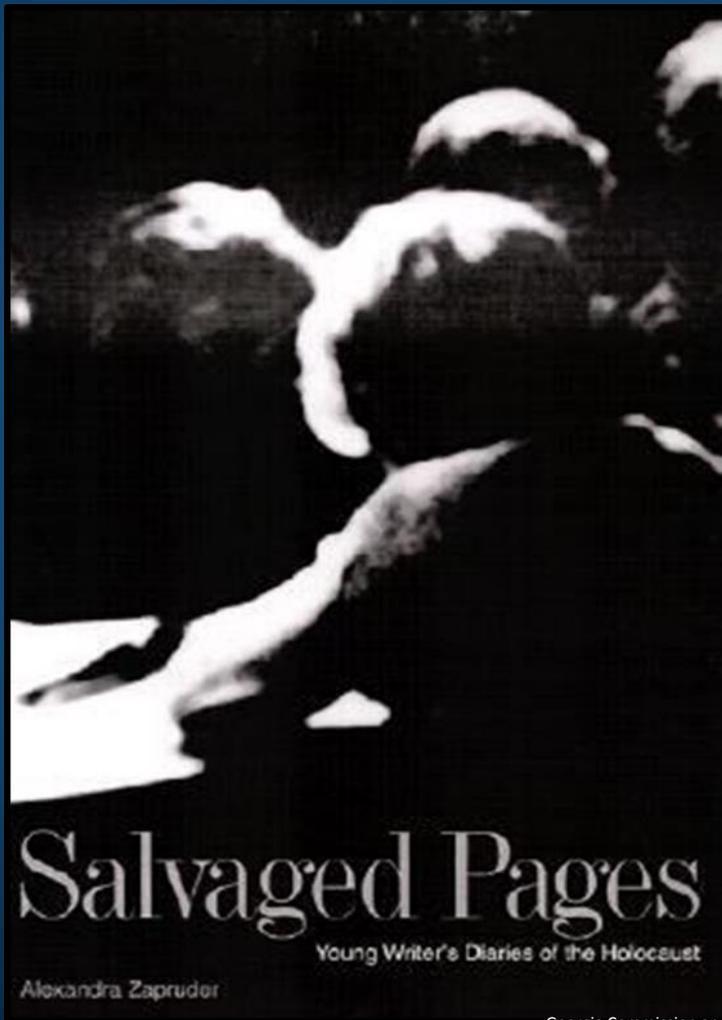
Has been published in numerous editions.



Imagine young people would grow up with the feeling that you have to be a hero to do your human duty. I am afraid nobody would ever help other people, because who is a hero? I was just an ordinary housewife and secretary."



Writing in the Moment...



Writing in the Moment...



January 7, 1943

January 13, 1943

Moshe Flinker: Fear of Arrest and Deportation
pp. 110 – 111 Salvaged Pages

Context



Writing in the Moment...



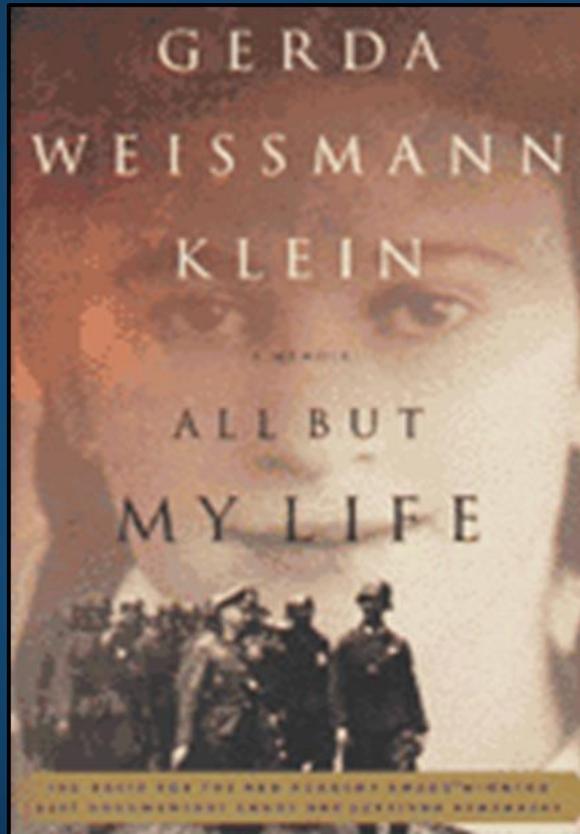
Friday, December 26, 1941

Miriam Korber:
Extreme Conditions in the Djurin Ghetto
pp. 254 – 255 Salvaged Pages

Context

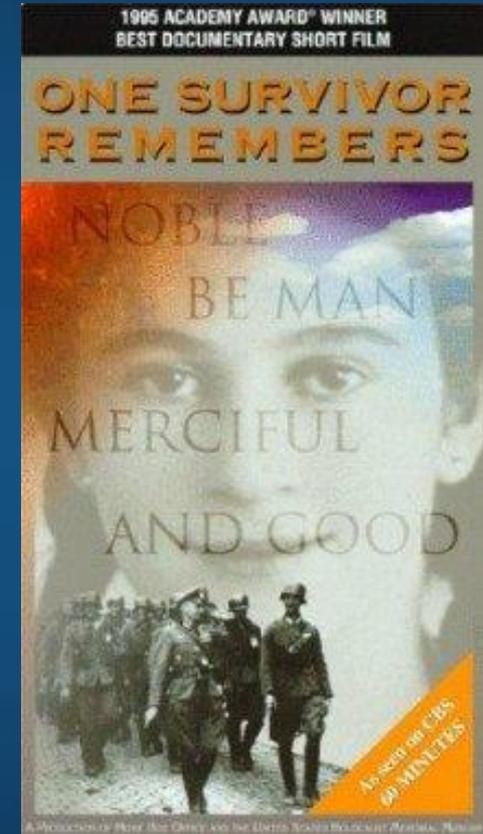


Memory and Reflection



"Ise, a childhood friend of mine, once found a raspberry in the concentration camp and carried it in her pocket all day to present to me that night on a leaf. Imagine a world in which your entire possession is one raspberry and you give it to your friend."

- Gerda Weissmann Klein

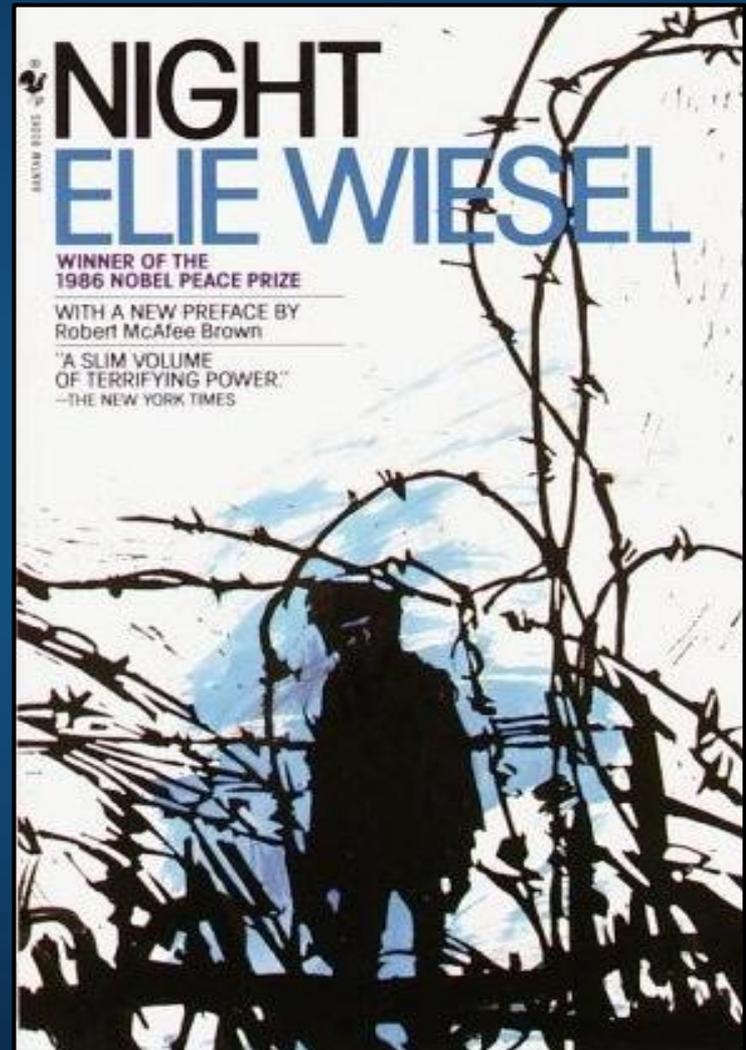


Memory and Reflection

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.

Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never.

- Elie Wiesel





Former prisoners of the "little camp" in Buchenwald stare out from the wooden bunks in which they slept three to a "bed." Elie Wiesel is pictured in the second row of bunks, seventh from the left, next to the vertical beam. Buchenwald, Germany, April 16, 1945.
— National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.; US Holocaust Memorial Museum

What might be problematic about teaching Night?

Descriptions are sometimes graphic and may be disturbing to students.

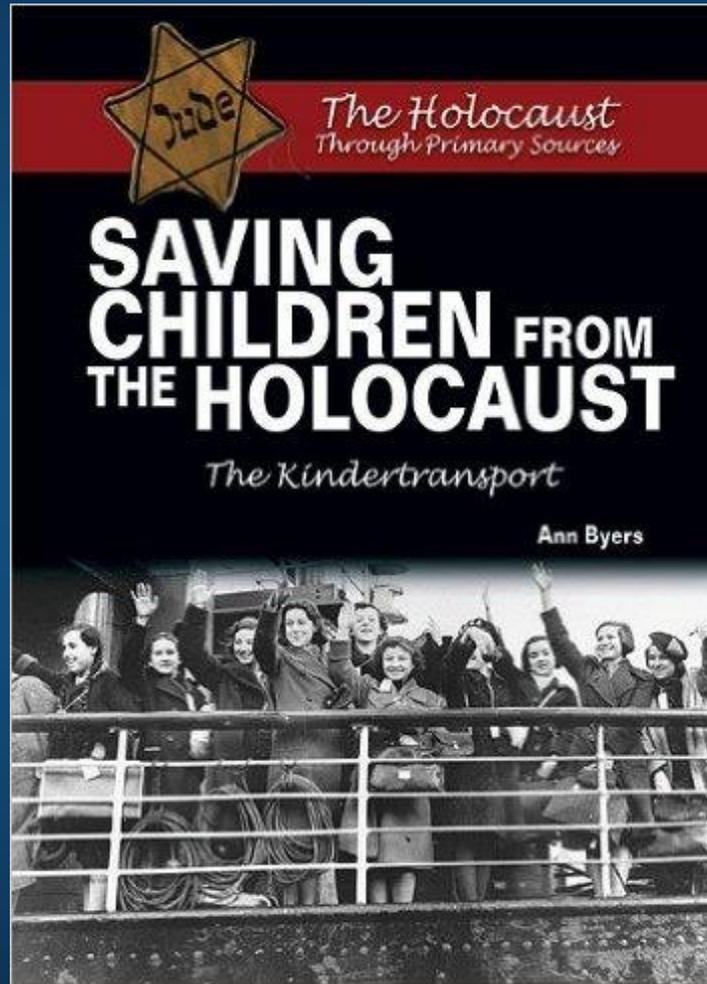
The relationship between Elie and his father devolves as Elie fights for his own survival.



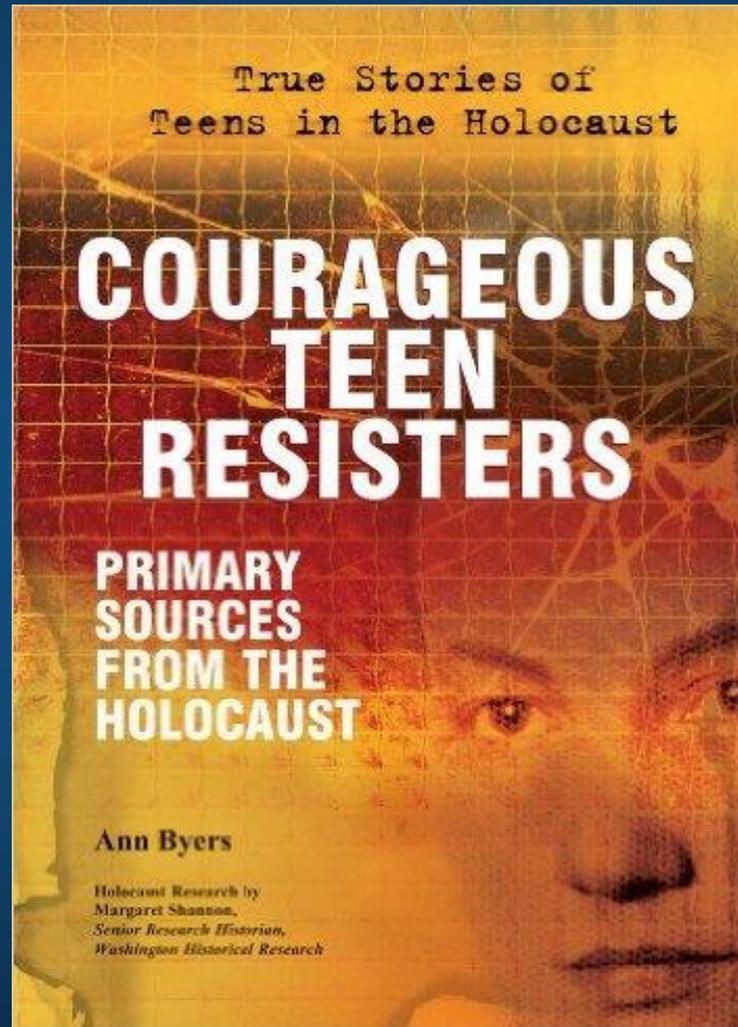
U.S. President Barack Obama (3rd from L), German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Buchenwald concentration camp survivor Elie Wiesel (R) and International Buchenwald Committee President Bertrand Herz (L) visit the former Buchenwald concentration camp on June 5, 2009 near Weimar, Germany.
--Getty Images, Europe

Primary Sources

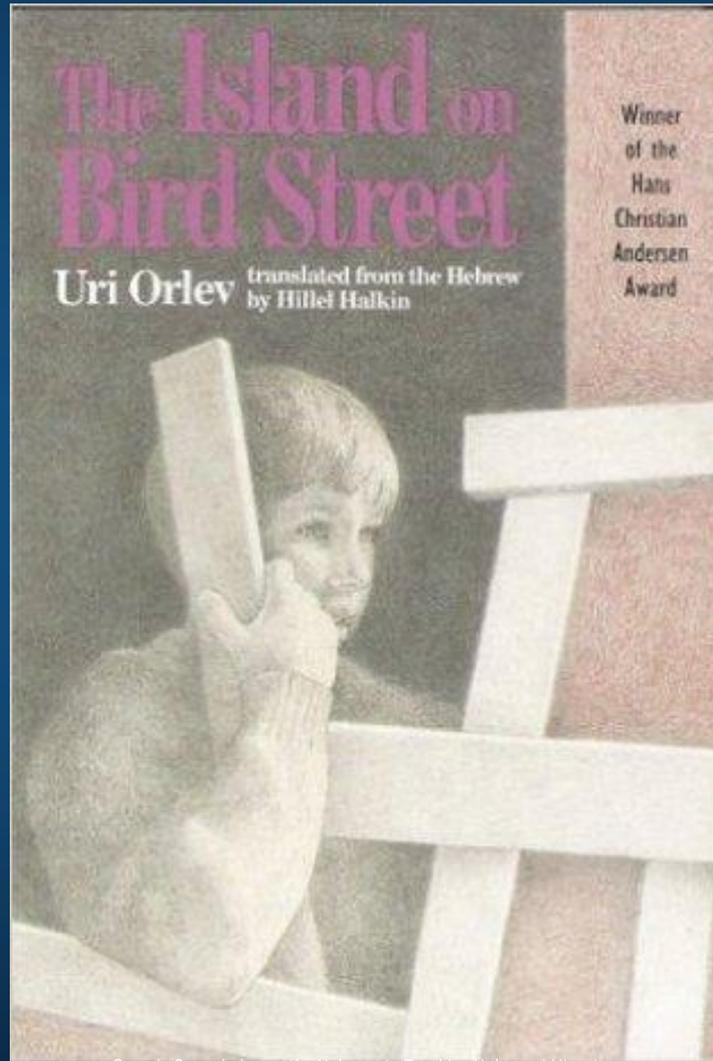
Rescue



Non-Fiction Resistance

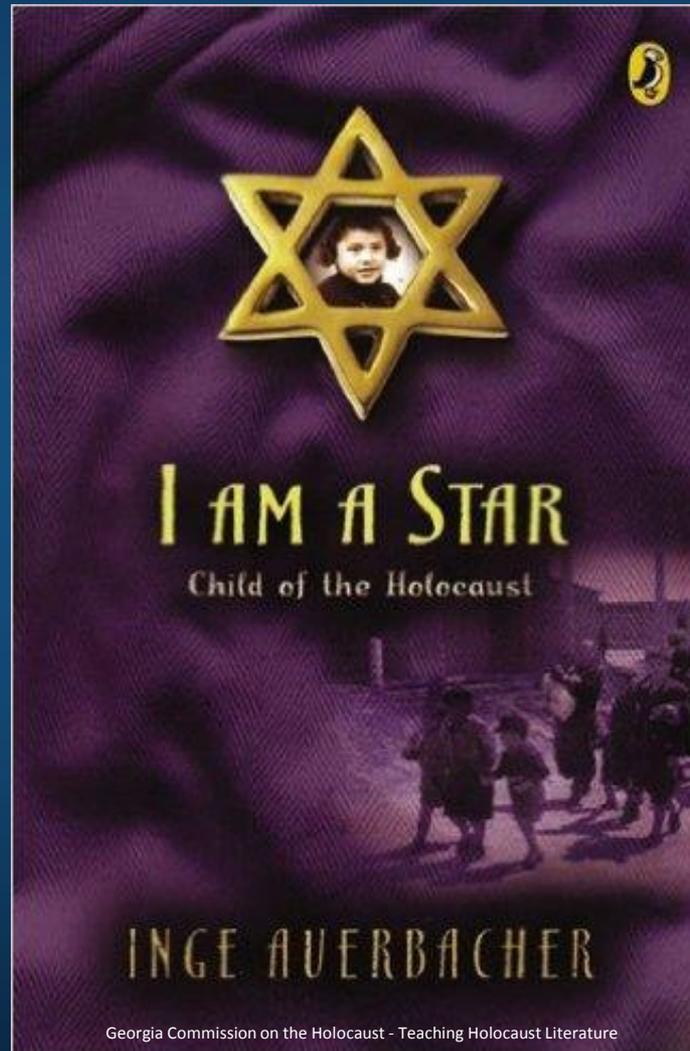


Semi Autobiographical Novel Resilience and Resourcefulness



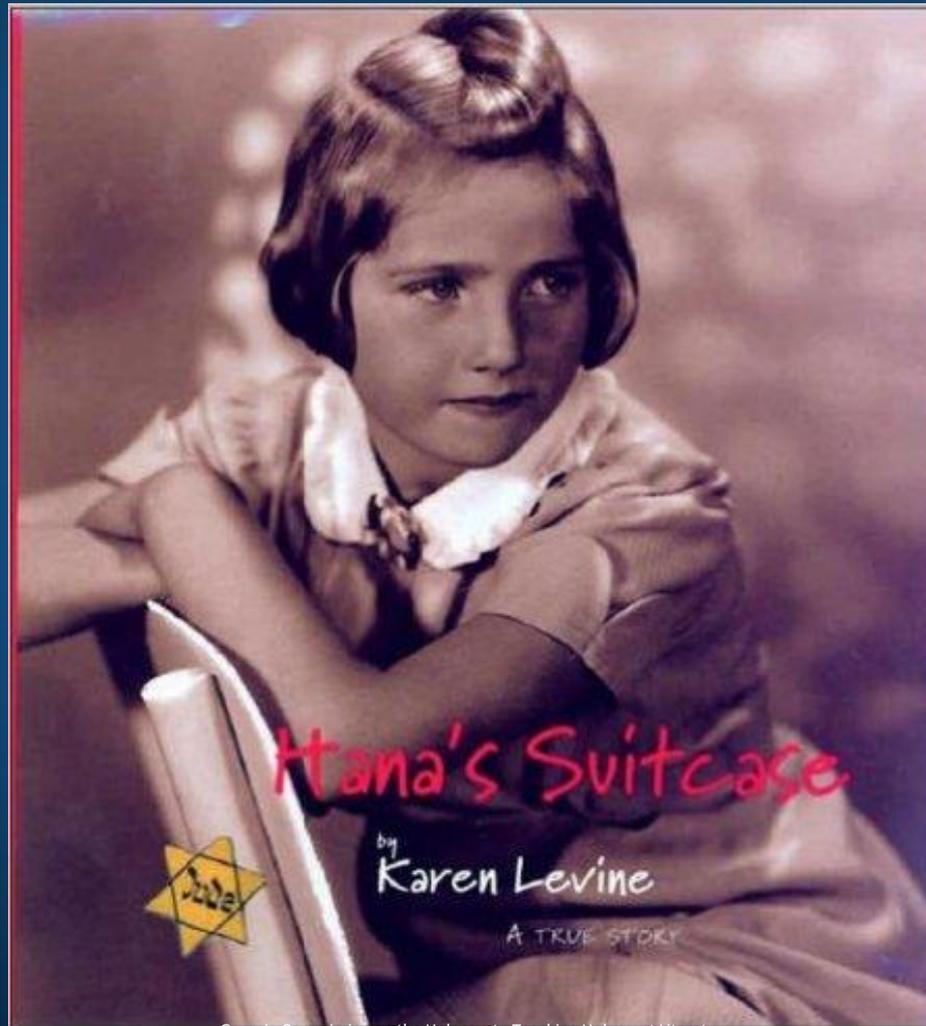
Memoir

Hope

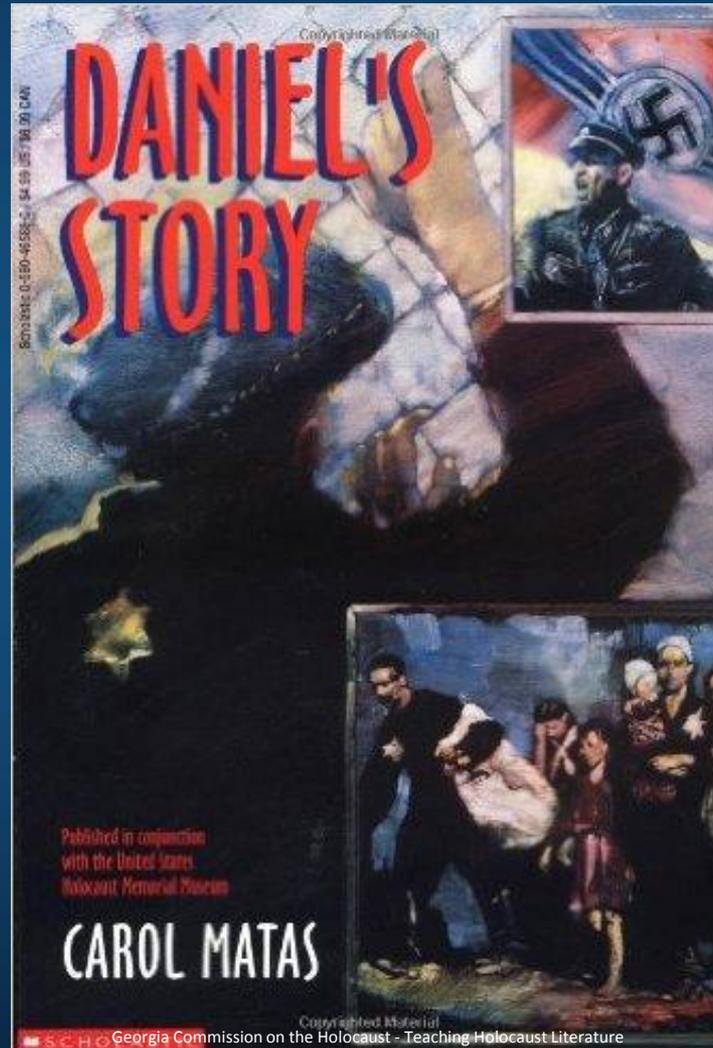


Non-Fiction

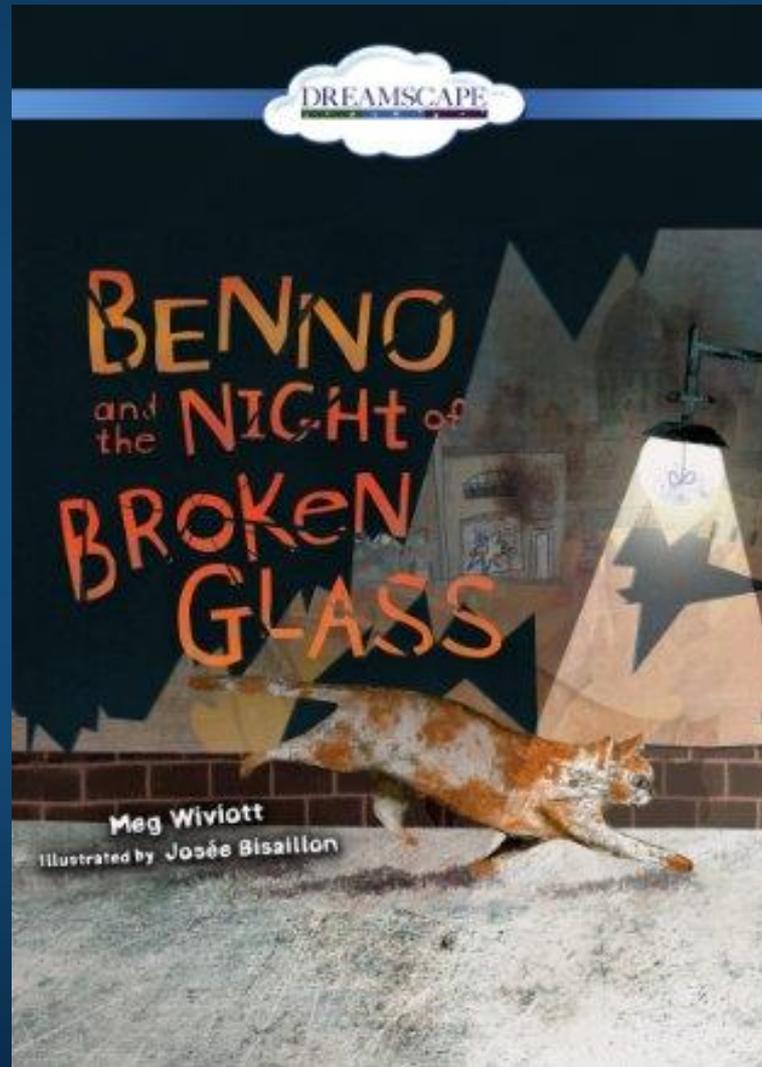
Courage and Perseverance



Historical Fiction

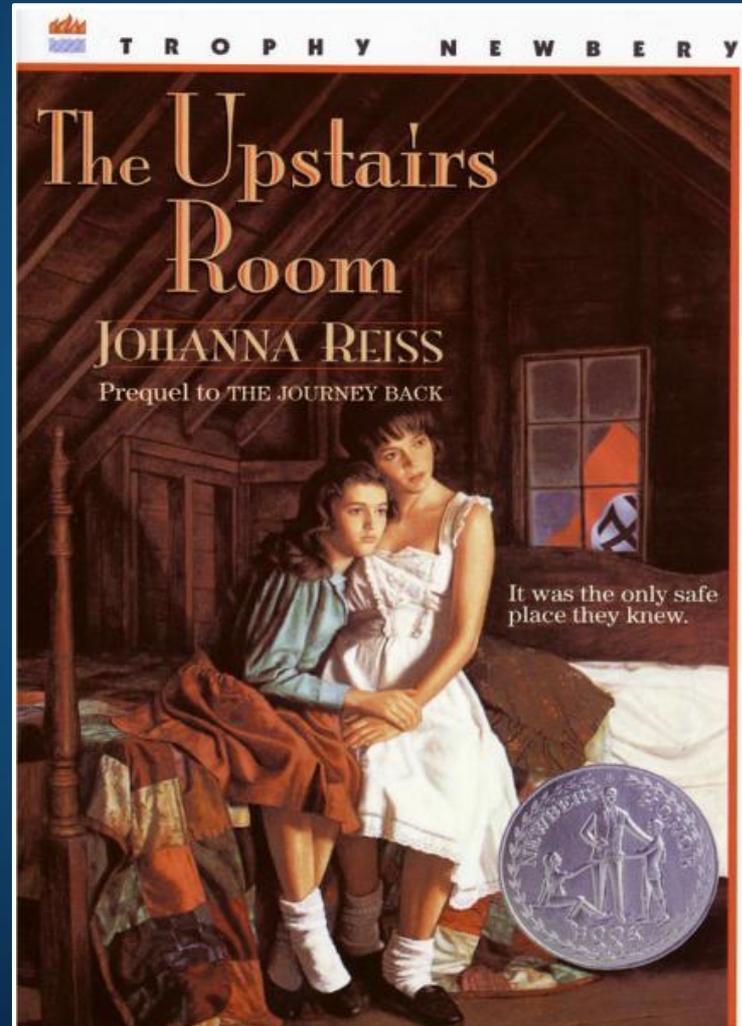


Historical Fiction



Semi-Autobiographical Novel

Hiding



Children and Their Rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child came into existence on September 2, 1990. It recognized the special needs and vulnerability of children.

All children have the right to love and care.

All children are equal.

All children have the right to adequate and healthy food.

All children have the right to go to school.

All children have the right to health care.

All children have the right to play.

No children should have to work.

No child should be abused.

No child should be the victim of violence and war.

Children can express their own opinions.

Children can choose their own religion.

Children can meet any one they like.

Children have the right to information.

How were these rights were taken away from Anne Frank and other children during the Holocaust?