



# Hana's Suitcase

by Karen Levine

## **TEACHER'S GUIDE**

by Helen Wolfe  
*with updates from Larry Swartz*

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Ages 9–13 / Grades 4–8

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## BOOK SUMMARY

*Hana's Suitcase* tells the true story of Hana Brady, a young Jewish girl from the former Czechoslovakia, who was persecuted and died during the Holocaust, along with almost all of her family. The book, told in both flashback and flash-forward, has three main characters: Hana Brady, her brother George, and Fumiko Ishioka, the young curator of the Tokyo Holocaust Education Center. In 2000, Fumiko requested that artifacts be sent to her museum so that she might better teach Japanese children and adults about the Holocaust. Among the few artifacts that Fumiko received was a suitcase painted with the name "Hanna Brady," a date, and the word *Waisenkind*, the German word for orphan. Fumiko became curious about the owner of the suitcase and began to trace clues to the story of Hana Brady and her family during the Holocaust. The flashback chapters describe how Hana, her brother, and their parents are systematically deprived of their civil and human rights, and ultimately sent to concentration camps. On the other hand, the flash-forward chapters describe how Fumiko pieces together the puzzle to ultimately learn the fate of Hana and her family. Since its release in 2002, *Hana's Suitcase* has won countless awards including The Canadian Library Association Book of the Year for Children, The Silver Birch, and the National Jewish Book Awards.

The story is appropriate for children nine to thirteen years old who are in grades four to eight. Its themes include the Holocaust, Combatting Antisemitism and Anti-Racism, Cultural and Religious Tolerance, Acceptance of Differences, Lessons of History, and the Importance of Legacy. *Hana's Suitcase* has 120 pages.

## PART A PRE-READING AND MEDIA LITERACY ACTIVITIES



### Activity 1: Researching Vocabulary About the Holocaust

If your students have access to a computer, you could have them use a search engine to do the following activity.

Give the students 30 to 60 minutes to research these words about the Holocaust. Then take up the definitions, taking contributions from different groups. Create a **HANA'S SUITCASE WORD WALL**, which would include student-written definitions of the terms as well as any pictures that they found. Once the students have started reading the book, include pictures of Hana Brady, the Brady family, Fumiko Ishioka, and Karen Levine.

## Activity 1: Important Vocabulary in *Hana's Suitcase*

Directions:

1. Working in groups of three or four, find the meaning of these important terms that appear in *Hana's Suitcase*. Use the search engines that your school allows you to use.
2. Working with your partner(s), write the meanings of these words. Use your own words. Please do not copy from a dictionary.
3. If you can, try to find and print out at least one picture that goes along with your definition.

THE HOLOCAUST:

THE NAZI PARTY:

ADOLF HITLER:

RACISM:

JEWS:

JEWISH:

ANTISEMITISM:

DEPORTATION:

CONCENTRATION CAMPS:

EXTERMINATION:



## **Activity 2: Guest Speaker on the Holocaust**

Another option for students to learn more about the Holocaust would be to invite a guest speaker on the subject. Contact your local Holocaust Education Centre, Jewish Community Centre, or synagogue to request a speaker used to working with children. That person would likely be a Holocaust survivor, or a second- or third-generation descendant of a survivor. Encourage the speaker to bring any family photographs or artifacts that would help the students connect to the topic. Finally, post the Holocaust vocabulary from **Activity 1** on a chart or Smartboard near the speaker to reinforce the content.

For students in Toronto, the **Toronto Holocaust Museum** is available for school visits and Survivor Speaker Programs. Visit: <https://torontoholocaustmuseum.org/visit/school-visits>



### **Activity 3: Journal Response to Speaker**

As a follow-up to the guest speaker, have the students answer journaling questions in their journal books, your class website, or a blog that you have created for the book. Here are some open-ended journaling questions that you can ask them.

To differentiate instruction, allow those students who have difficulty with writing to use some form of graphic text such as sketches or drawings to express their ideas. Under each drawing, they can write complete sentence captions to answer the questions.

1. Did our guest speaker do a good job explaining the Holocaust? Give your opinion and reasons for it.
2. During the Holocaust, the Nazis did terrible things to Jewish people. What are three terrible things that they did? Why do you think they did them?
3. If you were a Jewish person living at that time, how do you think you would feel? Give three feelings and reasons for them.
4. What are three artifacts (photographs, objects, documents) that the speaker brought that helped you to understand the Holocaust? Name each artifact and explain how each one helped you to understand the presentation better.
5. If you were a friend or neighbour of someone Jewish during the Holocaust, do you think you would or could have done anything to help that person? If the answer is yes, describe what you feel you could have done to help your friend or neighbour. If the answer is no, explain your reasons for not helping that person.





## **Activity 4: Review Elements of Storytelling**

If your students are not familiar with the terms used to analyze and interpret stories, you should give them definitions for the following: plot, characters, protagonist, antagonist, theme, setting, symbol, flashback, and flash-forward. The last two terms are particularly important since the story is told using these two techniques.

There are many grade- and age-appropriate worksheets available online which will help your students learn or review these terms.



## **Activity 5: Comparing Family Photographs**

The book includes photographs of Hana Brady, her brother, George, and their parents. Below is an activity where your students bring in photographs of themselves as young children or pictured with their family members. Have them sit in groups and describe to their group members when and where their own pictures were taken and what they were doing with their family members. Make sure the students have their copy of the book with them as they are doing this activity. They can then compare their own childhood photographs with the pictures of Hana and her family. The purpose of the activity is to have your students develop a connection to George and Hana, and empathy for their hardships. Guide their discussion by having them answer the following questions.

1. How old are you in your family pictures?
2. Find pictures in the book of Hana and George together, where they are about the same age as you. What are they doing in those pictures? Are their hobbies and activities the same as or different from what you would do? Did they enjoy some of the same activities as you do now? Which ones? Why would some of their activities be different?
3. Find some pictures of Hana and George together, as brother and sister, and with their parents. What are some words (adjectives) that you can use to describe their family? What are some words you can use to describe their relationship as brother and sister?
4. Find some pictures taken of Hana and George after their mother and father were sent away from them. What were they doing in those pictures? What feeling do you get about them when you look at them? Think of words to describe those feelings.
5. How are the pictures of George and Hana at the beginning of the book different from the ones at the end of the book? Why are they so different?
6. Find photographs showing that George and Hana travelled and lived in different places. Do you have photographs of when you travelled to different places? If you do, what are some differences between the reasons you travelled and why Hana and George needed to travel?



## **Activity 6: Tracking Hana's Journey**

Research and find a map of Europe as it existed after Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939. Make sure that all the countries, as well as concentration and labour camps, are labelled clearly. As you are reading the book with your students, keep track of the places where Hana and all of her family are sent.

## PART B

# READING ACTIVITIES



### **Activity 7: Chapter Questions**

The following are chapter questions that can be used in different ways. You can choose ones that are appropriate for your students' level and maturity. Some questions can be asked orally to review plot, setting, characterization, and theme. Others focus on values clarification and require students to express their feelings and opinions about the persecution of the Brady family and Jews during the Holocaust. You can also assign some questions as homework, evaluated class work, or for tests or quizzes.

## **Activity 7: Chapter Questions**

Before reading or assigning these questions, review the terms “flashback” and “flash-forward” so that students are familiar with the chapter structure of the book.

### **Chapter 1: Tokyo (pages 2–4)**

1. Describe the suitcase.
2. Where did the suitcase come from?
3. What was the big mystery about the suitcase?
4. Who is Fumiko Ishioka?
5. What did Fumiko promise?

### **Chapter 2: Nové Město na Moravě, Czechoslovakia, 1930s (pages 5–9)**

6. What are five important facts about the town of Nové Město na Moravě?
7. What kind of work did the Brady family do?
8. Describe Hana and George's father. What are some words you would use to describe him as a person?
9. What were some of the activities of the Brady family? What are some words you could use to describe their lives?
10. How do we know that the Bradys were generous people?
11. How do we know that the Bradys were creative people?
12. Find proof that Hana's mother was a kind and generous person.
13. How did Hana and George try to help their parents in their business?
14. What was the religion and culture of the Brady family? Do you know anyone who is part of that religion or culture? If you do, please share any information you know about it.
15. How did Mr. and Mrs. Brady help Hana and George to understand their culture and religion? Why was doing that important for them?

### Chapter 3: Tokyo, Winter 2000 (pages 10–13)

16. Fumiko is the coordinator of a museum. What do you think the coordinator of a museum does?
17. Why do you think it was important to Fumiko that Japanese children understand what happened to people in the Holocaust?
18. What are artifacts? Why was it a good idea that Fumiko used artifacts to help children understand the Holocaust? Look at the picture at the top of page 11 to help you answer the question.
19. Where did Fumiko try to get the first artifacts that she used to teach the children?

### Chapter 4: Nové Město na Moravě, 1938 (pages 14–19)

20. How do we know that Hana was a strong and competitive girl?
21. Do you think that Hana and George were happy children? What proof do you have?
22. What were two of her favourite sports?
23. Who were Hitler and the Nazis? What were they trying to do in Czechoslovakia?
24. What happened in late 1938 that would make Hana and George feel scared?
25. What suggestion did Mr. Rott, Hana and George's neighbour, make to the adults in the town? What did they think of his idea?
26. Do you think that the Jewish families in the town should have followed Mr. Rott's advice? Give reasons for your opinion.
27. When Hana and George launched their walnut boats, what happened to Hana's boat? How did you feel when you read about that? Give a reason for your feeling.

### Chapter 5: Tokyo, March 2000 (pages 20–21)

28. Why would it be important for Fumiko's students to see Hana's suitcase? Explain how having the suitcase would help them understand Hana better.

29. Name the places where Fumiko wrote. If you can, research the locations of these places and then plot them on your map of Europe during the Holocaust.
30. What important information did Fumiko get from the museum at Auschwitz?

### **Chapter 6: Nové Město na Moravě (pages 22–27)**

31. List the things that the Nazis forced the Jews of Czechoslovakia to do after they invaded the country in March 1939. These rules are called prohibitions and restrictions.
32. What do you think the words “prohibitions” and “restrictions” mean? Try to think of good definitions without using a dictionary.
33. How would you feel if you had to obey all of these rules? Why would you feel this way?
34. Why would the Nazis make Jews obey these laws?
35. Why did Hana’s friend, Maria, stop coming over to her house to play? If you were Maria’s parents, would you have done the same thing? Give your opinion and a reason for it.
36. How did Hana’s mother try to make her feel less lonely?
37. Why do you think the Nazis took away the radios from all the Jews?

### **Chapter 7: Tokyo, March 2000 (pages 28–29)**

38. Describe Theresienstadt. Describe the town and the way the Nazis used it during the Holocaust.
39. Theresienstadt was a Jewish ghetto during the Holocaust. What is a ghetto?
40. What did Fumiko learn about the terrible things that happened to the people who were sent to Theresienstadt?
41. Fumiko also learned about interesting activities people did in the camp. What were they?
42. Why was Fumiko excited about what she learned about the children in the camp?

**Chapter 8: Nové Město na Moravě, Autumn 1940–Spring 1941 (pages 30–32)**

43. What was another restriction that the Nazis put on Jewish children?
44. Why was Hana so upset by this restriction? If you were in her place, how would you feel about it?
45. How did Mr. and Mrs. Brady make sure that their children could continue their education?
46. What happened to the Brady family in March 1941?

**Chapter 9: Tokyo, April 2000 (pages 33–34)**

47. What did Fumiko learn after she wrote a letter to the Terezin Ghetto Museum?
48. What artifacts did Fumiko receive from the museum? How would she feel about getting them?
49. Look closely at the picture on page 34. What did Hana draw? Hana was in a prison camp. Why do you think she would draw this kind of picture?

**Chapter 10: Nové Město na Moravě, Spring–Autumn 1941 (pages 35–39)**

50. How did Hana feel after her mother was sent to Ravensbruck?
51. What two special gifts did Hana receive for her birthday?
52. What was Hana's mother trying to tell her by sending these gifts?
53. Describe the three squares of cloth that Hana's father brought home. Why wouldn't Hana and George want to wear them?
54. Why did the Jewish man in the town make the Nazi officer angry?
55. What happened to Mr. Brady?

**Chapter 11: Tokyo, Spring 2000 (pages 40–42)**

56. Look at Hana's drawing on page 40. How do you feel when you look at it? Why do you feel this way?



57. Who were the Small Wings? Look at their photograph on page 41. Think of some ways that these children are similar to you or other kids your age.
58. What were their activities? Why did they do them?
59. What artifacts from the Holocaust did Fumiko have? How did she decide to use them?

### **Chapter 12: Nové Město na Moravě, Winter 1941–42 (pages 43–48)**

60. Who was Uncle Ludvik? Why did he come to Hana and George's house?
61. Why could Uncle Ludvik be in danger?
62. Why couldn't Hana and George go to school with their cousins?
63. Look at the photographs and drawing on pages 46 and 47. What idea or feeling do you get about their life with their cousins?
64. How did George protect Hana from knowing the terrible things that the Nazis were doing?

### **Chapter 13: Nové Město na Moravě, May 1942 (pages 49–52)**

65. What was going to happen to Hana and George on May 14?
66. What did Hana worry about now?
67. How do you think Hana would feel about having her birthday in the warehouse?

### **Chapter 14: Tokyo, June 2000 (pages 53–54)**

68. Why would many visitors want to see the exhibition "The Holocaust through Children's Eyes?"
69. Why would visitors be especially interested in Hana's suitcase and drawings more than anything else in the exhibit?
70. Why did Fumiko decide to travel to the Terezin Museum?

**Chapter 15: Deportation Centre, May 1942 (page 55)**

71. How were Hana, George, and the other prisoners taken to the prison camp?

**Chapter 16: Terezin, July 2000 (pages 56–58)**

72. Why was Fumiko so disappointed when she finally got to the Terezin Museum?

**Chapter 17: Theresienstadt, May 1942 (pages 59–61)**

73. What was Hana's greatest fear when they arrived at the prison camp? Why was she so afraid?
74. Why did George lie to the prison guard about his parents? Do you think that it was all right that George lied? Would you have told a lie? Why or why not?
75. Where did the prison guard send Hana?
76. Look at Hana's drawing at the top of page 60. Hana drew it when she was a prisoner. What ideas was she trying to communicate in her drawing?

**Chapter 18: Terezin, July 2000 (pages 62–63)**

77. How did Fumiko feel when she found out there was no one there to help her at the museum?
78. Why couldn't Fumiko come back to the museum on a different day?
79. What did Ludmila agree to do?

**Chapter 19: Theresienstadt, 1942–43 (pages 64–70)**

80. Describe Kinderheim L410 in your own words.
81. How did Ella and the man who gave out tickets help Hana? Why did they help her?
82. What was Hana's work in the camp?
83. What secret classes did some adult prisoners give?

84. Have you ever taken an art, music, acting, or dance class? Did you enjoy it? How would taking an art class help Hana or the other prisoners?
85. Who was Friedl? Why do you think she told her students to “think of freedom” when they were drawing?
86. What job was George learning to do in the camp? Why would this job help George to survive?
87. What did Hana do to help George stay strong? What did this show about her character?
88. Why did Hana refuse to become close or friendly to her parents’ old friend?

#### Chapter 20: Terezin, July 2000 (pages 71–73)

89. What is a document? Can you name different documents that people have and need?
90. What information was on the document Ludmilla showed Fumiko? A picture of it is on page 73.
91. There was a check mark beside Hana’s name, but not George’s. What did that mean?

#### Chapter 21: Theresienstadt, 1943–44 (pages 74–82)

92. In 1943–44, what changes were happening in Theresienstadt?
93. What news made Hana and George very happy?
94. What were the “dreaded lists?”
95. How did Ella show that she was a real friend to Hana?
96. After George left, how did Hana act when people tried to help and comfort her? Why did she act that way?
97. When Hana packed her suitcase, she took her drawings and a book of stories. Why do you think she would choose those things?
98. Predict what happened to Hana and the other prisoners when the heavy door was closed.

**Chapter 22: Terezin, July 2000 (pages 83–85)**

99. Why is this the last flashback chapter in the book?
100. What sad information did Fumiko learn at the Terezin Museum?
101. What was Fumiko hoping? Why was this hope so important to her?
102. Who is Kurt Kotouc? Why did Fumiko need to contact him?

**Chapter 23: Prague, July 2000 (pages 86–88)**

103. What exciting information about George did Kurt tell Fumiko?

**Chapter 24: Tokyo, August 2000 (pages 89–91)**

104. What news did Fumiko need to tell Small Wings?
105. Why did Fumiko ask one of the Japanese children to draw a picture to send to George?
106. How would George feel when he got Fumiko's letter and the drawing of Hana?

**Chapter 25: Toronto, August 2000 (pages 92–95)**

107. Why did George feel guilty about Hana?
108. Explain how George found out what happened to his family.

**Chapter 26: Toronto, August 2000 (pages 96–99)**

109. Who kept the photos of Hana, George, and their family members safe?
110. Explain how George started his own family in Toronto.
111. Read Fumiko's letter to George on page 96. What were specific things that Fumiko asked George for?
112. What did George decide to do?

**Chapter 27: Tokyo, September 2000 (pages 100–102)**

113. What special delivery did Fumiko receive in September 2000?
114. What important information did she learn?

**Chapter 28: Tokyo, March 2001 (pages 103–107)**

115. Who were two important visitors to the Tokyo Holocaust Education Center?
116. What does it mean when someone has “mixed feelings?” Explain why George would have mixed feelings during his visit.
117. Read the poem that Small Wings wrote for Hana on pages 105–106. What were some of the main ideas in the poem? What do you think of the poem?

**Afterword (pages 108–109)**

118. Karen Levine, the author, explained that the suitcase that was delivered to Fumiko was a replica. What is a replica? Explain why the Auschwitz museum sent a replica and not Hana's original suitcase.
119. Do you think that it makes a difference that Hana's suitcase is a replica? Why or why not?



## **Activities 8 and 9: Understanding and Using Idioms**

Idiomatic expressions appear fairly frequently in the book and some students may have difficulty understanding them. Below are two activities that highlight all of the idioms used in the story.

**Activity 8: What is an Idiom?** highlights each idiom, and asks students to give their meanings without using a dictionary. **Activity 9: Using Idioms to Talk About Yourself**, requires students to talk about themselves using idiomatic language.

## Activity 8: What is an Idiom?

An idiom is a group of words that explains one idea that is separate from their literal meaning. Here is an example that most people have heard.

It's raining cats and dogs today, so we need to wear a raincoat and carry an umbrella.

Raining cats and dogs doesn't have anything to do with animals. It means that it's raining a lot. The whole group of words has one meaning.

Directions:

- a. Each sentence below has an idiom from the story that is underlined.
- b. Find the page where the idiom is written. Read the idiom in the sentence where it's found.
- c. Guess the meaning of the idiom and write it on the lines. Please don't use a dictionary. Guess the meaning from the way it is used in the sentence.

1. The Brady family opened its home to artists of all kinds... (page 6)

Opened its home means \_\_\_\_\_

2. The rest of the group was taken aback. (page 19)

Taken aback means \_\_\_\_\_

3. Under the noses of the Nazis and at great risk... (page 29)

Under the noses of means \_\_\_\_\_

4. It would be easier for them to put themselves in her shoes. (page 41)

In her shoes means \_\_\_\_\_

5. **At first glance**, it looked like an ordinary pretty town. (page 56)

**At first glance** means \_\_\_\_\_

6. They **took** Hana **under their wing**. (page 64)

**Took...under their wing** means \_\_\_\_\_

7. Painting and drawing supplies were **hard to come by**. (page 66)

**Hard to come by** means \_\_\_\_\_

8. **Let your imagination run wild**. (page 68)

**Let your imagination run wild** means \_\_\_\_\_

9. But hearing it spoken, seeing it on paper was still **a blow**. (page 83)

**A blow** means \_\_\_\_\_

10. Fumiko **beamed from ear to ear**. (page 88)

**Beamed from ear to ear** means \_\_\_\_\_

11. Fumiko had been **a bundle of nerves**. (page 100)

**A bundle of nerves** means \_\_\_\_\_



## Activity 9: Using Idioms to Talk About Yourself

Directions:

- a. Form groups of three.
  - b. Turn your chairs or desks around so that you are facing each other.
  - c. Discuss these questions that use some idioms from the story, which you learned in Activity 9.
  - d. You will have 30 minutes to do this in your group. Then, we will follow up with a class discussion.
- 
1. Have you ever been **taken aback** by what someone said or did? Describe what happened and why you were **taken aback**.
  2. When you were reading about Hana and George's experiences, did you feel that you were **in their shoes**? When did you feel that way?
  3. When you came to this class, what did you think **at first glance** when you walked into the room?
  4. Has someone ever **taken** you **under his or her wing** when you needed help? Talk about that person and how he or she helped you.
  5. Is there something in your home that is **hard to come by**? If there is, what is it? Why is it **hard to come by**?
  6. Have you ever received news that was **a blow**? What happened? When and why did it happen? How did you feel when it happened?
  7. Describe a time when you **beamed from ear to ear**.
  8. When was the last time you were **a bundle of nerves**? Talk about that time. Why did you feel that way?

## PART C

# WRITING ACTIVITIES



### **Activity 10: Paragraph Modelling and Analysis**

This activity can be used either as an introduction to, or review of, paragraph writing. It focuses on descriptive writing and character analysis. You can use handouts to have students work on the assignment, and take up the assignment using a Smartboard. Using a Smartboard will allow as many students as possible to answer and to analyze the paragraph for the whole class.

Have students form groups of four to six. Ask them to read the paragraph below and complete the activities that follow.

This activity would be most useful to students in grades five or six who have had experience in paragraph writing.

## Activity 10: What Makes a Good Paragraph?

Directions:

- a. Read this paragraph.
- b. Then complete the activities below. If you wish, work with one or two partners to complete the activities.
- c. You will have 30 minutes. Then we will take up the assignment as a class.

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### Fumiko Ishioka: An Amazing Woman

Fumiko Ishioka is one of the main protagonists of *Hana's Suitcase*. Fumiko is a woman who lives in Tokyo, Japan. She is a slight Japanese woman with long, straight hair. And she's a very special person. First of all, she is extremely intelligent. Fumiko's first language is Japanese, but she speaks, reads, and writes English very well. We know this because she communicated with several people in English to discover Hana's story. For example, she wrote letters to get the Holocaust artifacts for her museum, and she wrote to George in Toronto to ask for photographs of Hana. Also, Fumiko is very dedicated. For instance, she is the director of the Tokyo Holocaust Education Center, and runs a program so that Japanese children can learn about the Holocaust. She wants Japanese children to learn more about the Holocaust and to realize the suffering people went through. Therefore, she shows children real artifacts like Hana's suitcase and talks about the experiences of Jewish children who were the same age. Fumiko also has another personal quality. It is determination. For example, after Hana's suitcase was delivered from the Auschwitz museum, she worked like a detective to find clues about Hana. Fumiko never gave up. She found out that George was alive. She wrote him a letter to obtain more information about Hana and to request photographs of her and the Brady family. In conclusion, I really admire Fumiko because we would not know about Hana's story without her.

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Follow these directions and answer these questions to learn more about how a good paragraph is organized.

1. Underline the title. What words in the title tell us the writer's opinion of Fumiko?

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2. Underline the first sentence of the paragraph, which is called the TOPIC SENTENCE. Why is it a good idea to write a topic sentence in a paragraph? Is this a good topic sentence?

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3. The middle of the paragraph is called the BODY. How many ideas about Fumiko are in the body of this paragraph?

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4. All of the words that describe Fumiko's physical appearance and character are ADJECTIVES. Circle them and then make a list of all of the adjectives in the paragraph.

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5. At the beginning of many sentences, you see several words and phrases separated by a comma. Find these words and make a list of them. These words are called TRANSITION or signal words. Their job is to signal to the reader that an idea is changing.

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6. Underline the last sentence in the paragraph. This is called the CONCLUDING SENTENCE. What kind of idea is in this sentence? Why should we write a concluding sentence?

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## **Activity 11: Writing a Character Paragraph**

After completing **Activity 10**, students can write their own character paragraphs about Hana. It could be a practice paragraph completed in small groups, or an evaluated assignment completed by each student.

## **Activity 12: Writing a Character Paragraph About Hana**

Directions:

Write a paragraph about Hana that has the following information and ideas about her.

1. What she looked like.
2. Three personal qualities about her character. These words should be adjectives.
3. For each quality you name, give an example from the story that proves that she has that quality.

The paragraph should have these important parts:

- a. An interesting title.
- b. A first topic sentence that tells you who or what it is about.
- c. A body that describes what Hana looked like and some of her personal qualities.
- d. A concluding sentence that finishes the paragraph.

## PART D

# EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



### **Activity 12: *Hana's Suitcase* True or False**

By answering True / False questions, students will have the opportunity to consider details about the people, places, and events that are presented in *Hana's Suitcase*.

Students can work independently or in pairs to answer the 15 questions. Once completed, students can work with others to compare their answers.

## Activity 12: *Hana's Suitcase* True or False

Directions:

Answer the questions without using handouts or the book.

### Part A: True or False

For each of these sentences, write **T** if it is **TRUE**, or **F** if it is **FALSE** or not true.

1. *Hana's Suitcase* is the story of a girl who really lived. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The story only happens in Nové Město na Moravě, Czechoslovakia. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The Bradys were the poorest family in their town. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Hana had both a brother and a sister. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Hana and her family enjoyed participating in winter sports. \_\_\_\_\_
6. The first person in the Brady family to be deported was Hana's mother. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Hana and the other children at Theresienstadt did not have any activities to occupy their time in the camp. \_\_\_\_\_
8. George and Hana lived in the same building in Theresienstadt. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Hana was not very creative. \_\_\_\_\_
10. The Japanese children that Fumiko taught were called Small Wings. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Hana had her thirteenth birthday while she and George were waiting in the warehouse to be deported in Theresienstadt. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Many prisoners were artists, musicians, and teachers who taught other prisoners music and art. \_\_\_\_\_



13. Hana and George were deported from Theresienstadt at the same time. \_\_\_\_\_
14. George moved to Toronto and became a successful architect. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Hana died in Theresienstadt. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Part B: Changing False Sentences to True Sentences**

There are a few false sentences in Part A. Choose three false sentences. Change them so that they are true sentences. You need to change only one or a few words.

For example:

George was younger than Hana.                      **F**

Change to:

George was older than Hana.

Use the lines below to write your new sentences.

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### **Activity 13: Writing a Letter to Karen Levine or Fumiko Ishioka**

This activity would demonstrate your students' understanding of the story and also allow them to express their feelings about reading it. It would be a logical closure to reading the book and could be an evaluated task at the end of the unit.

The letter writing activity below would be appropriate for students in grade five or six. It could also be simplified for younger students.

If your students have not done letter writing, provide them with instruction and practice activities before assigning the activity below. There are many age- and grade-appropriate activities on letter writing available online.

## Activity 13: Writing a Letter to Karen Levine or Fumiko Ishioka

Directions:

1. Write a letter to either Karen Levine or Fumiko Ishioka.
2. Follow the directions and you will have a good letter.
3. On a separate sheet of paper, draw a picture of the most interesting part of the letter and hand it in with your letter. Don't forget to sign your picture too.

**Write today's date**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_, (This is called the greeting)

**The first paragraph (The Introduction)**

Introduce yourself.

Tell your grade, your school, and your teacher.

Explain that you have been studying *Hana's Suitcase*.

Give one feeling or opinion about the book. Give one reason for your opinion or feeling.

**The second paragraph (The Body)**

Explain three parts of the story that are important to you.

Why are each of those parts important to you?

Give your opinion of Hana, George, or Fumiko. You can give your opinion of one person or all three people. Give reasons for your opinion.

**The third paragraph (The Conclusion)**

Tell if you would recommend the book to another student your age.

Why would you, or would you not, recommend it?

Thank the person for reading your letter.

**Yours sincerely or truly,** (This is called the closing)

Sign your name.



## **Activity 14: Oral Presentation: Packing My Suitcase**

This activity asks students to think about packing a suitcase in preparation to leave their homes. Rather than focusing on the terror of being deported, the activity asks them to imagine that they are leaving their homes because of a natural disaster such as a flood or a storm, which causes the power to go out. Both of these situations have occurred in Canada. Also, assure them they will not go alone but will have their family with them.

The activity requires them to bring or make a suitcase. If possible, make some boxes available in the classroom that students can decorate and use as suitcases in their presentations.

Allow students class time to prepare their presentations so that you can also monitor and guide them if necessary.

## Activity 14: Oral Presentation: Packing My Suitcase

Imagine this situation:

*You need to leave your home for some serious reason. It could be a problem with weather such as a flood or bad storm. Maybe the electricity has gone out in your house, and you don't have lights and can't use the appliances, your computer, or home telephone.*

*Your parents have decided that you need to leave your house and stay with other family for a while. You're not sure how long you'll be away from home. Your parents and any brothers or sisters are coming with you.*

Directions:

1. Ask your parents if you can borrow a small suitcase from your house. If you can't bring a suitcase, make one. Get a box and cut it in half so it looks like a suitcase. Then put the lid on the box. Decorate the inside and outside so that it looks like a suitcase.
2. You are only allowed to take ten things with you. Everything must fit in your suitcase. You don't have time to make or buy anything. Brainstorm and make two lists that would look like the ones below. When you decide on your lists, write them out neatly.

### Packing My Suitcase

**5 things I need**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**5 things I want**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3. You are going to give an oral presentation for 5 minutes. Show each object on your list. Also, explain your reason for choosing that object.
4. You will have time in class to prepare your presentation. Find a partner and practice doing your presentation in front of your partner. Ask your partner to give you any suggestions to make it better.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

**Helen Wolfe's** career spanned over forty years in publishing, social work, and education. Her extensive teaching experience was in special education, history, English, guidance, and English as a Second Language (ESL). For almost thirty years, her work focused on helping ESL adults to achieve their potential. Helen also authored over thirty teacher's guides to accompany books and a documentary for students of all levels and ages, with a particular focus on Holocaust literature and education. In 2011, Second Story Press published her first non-fiction chapter book for young readers, entitled *Terrific Women Teachers*. Her second, *Unstoppable: Women with Disabilities* (2021), profiles ten Canadian and international women with disabilities who have not only contributed to their respective countries, but changed society's perceptions of what a person with a disability can accomplish. Her last book, *World Shakers: Inspiring Women Activists* (2023) that highlights women that had the courage to shake the world and make a path for other women to follow, was released posthumously.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Film/Video

If available, these two documentaries can be shown to provide students background information on Hana Brady and her family, and can supplement the reading of the book:

- The Passionate Eye, *Hana's Suitcase: An Odyssey of Hope*, CBC, November 2004
- *Inside Hana's Suitcase*, Larry Weinstein, February 2009

### Websites

- To learn more about the Brady family and their legacy, visit the **Hana's Suitcase** website: <https://www.hanassuitcase.ca/>
- The **Montreal Holocaust Museum** also provides educational guides and additional learning activities when reading *Hana's Suitcase*.  
Visit: <https://museeholocauste.ca/en/activities/hana-suitcase/>
- To learn more about Fumiko Ishioka and the **Tokyo Holocaust Education Center**, visit: <https://www.npokokoro.com/about-us>
- To learn more about **Second Story Press** and see other titles, visit: <https://secondstorypress.ca/>