

TEACHER'S GUIDE

*Under the Iron Bridge*

**KATHY KACER**

**UNDER  
THE  
IRON  
BRIDGE**

A Holocaust Remembrance Book for Young Readers

GUIDE BY

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***Under the Iron Bridge***



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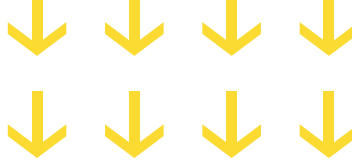
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## ***Before Reading***

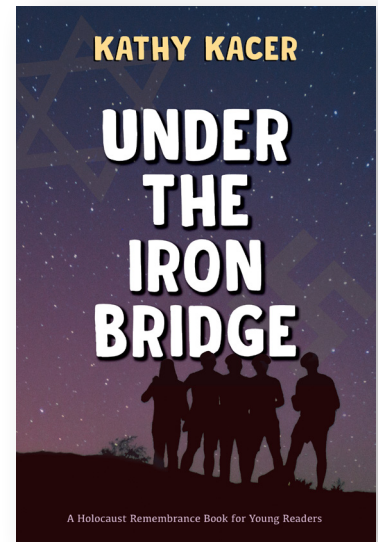
It is important to have a discussion with students before reading the book, to talk about the Holocaust and touch on the fact that horrible things happened. It would be helpful for the teacher to know if any material contained in this book could remind students of similar traumatic events in their own lives, or events they've heard of in their family history. Inform students that parts of this story contain antisemitism and traumatic events. Remind students that if they get overwhelmed and need to take a break, they can do so. As a teacher, do your own research to be as well-informed as you can. For example, the Montreal Holocaust Museum has resources for teaching about the Holocaust: <https://museeholocauste.ca/en/resources-training/teaching-holocaust-middle-high-school/>.

Engage with the students in a discussion about what they know about the Holocaust, why Adolf Hitler introduced laws to limit the freedom of Jewish people and other marginalized groups, and what stories, real or fictional, they have read or seen about Jewish people during the Holocaust.



## Part A: Story Summary

*Under the Iron Bridge* is a historical novel based on the little-known story of the Edelweiss Pirates, a loosely organized group of Christian resistance fighters in Germany between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. Mostly from working class families, they initially formed because of their opposition to the racism and regimentation of Adolf Hitler's Germany. Instead of wearing the drab uniforms of the Hitler Youth, they expressed their individuality and rebellion by dressing in brightly coloured clothes. As they witnessed Hitler's power growing and antisemitism taking over the country, the movement evolved. They became a group that sabotaged the Nazis' efforts to persecute Jews. When they could, they also rescued Jews from deportation to concentration and death camps and helped them to hide within occupied or neutral countries.



The story is set in 1938 in Düsseldorf, Germany, where a teenager named Paul Ritter lives with his parents, who are doctors. At the beginning of the story, Paul is a typical boy who attends high school and is under pressure to become a member of the Hitler Youth. The Hitler Youth, which includes boys from the ages of ten to seventeen, was formed several years before Hitler rose to power. Its sole purpose was to indoctrinate young people with Nazi propaganda, with its music and visual symbols of power, and to inundate them with antisemitic rhetoric, which portrayed Jews as thieves, liars, and murderers. Its mission was to build loyalty for Nazi principles and a perpetual army that blindly followed Hitler's orders to persecute and murder Jews without question.

Under increasing peer pressure, Paul becomes a member of the Hitler Youth, but he is very uncomfortable with its racist rhetoric, paranoia, and violence. Paul is young but has a conscience and a strong sense of ethics. He and his parents are aware of the Nazis' injustices against the Jews but are too afraid to publicly oppose them for fear of being punished or imprisoned themselves.

One day as Paul is visiting the beach, he meets a group of teenagers singing protest songs against Hitler. Unlike Paul, they are dressed in brightly coloured, bohemian clothes and freely expressing their anti-fascist views. One of them named Kiki tells him that the group is called the Edelweiss Pirates and that their mission is to thwart Nazi activities as much as possible. Paul is attracted to their free spirits and their willingness to defeat Nazism and help Jews who are being persecuted.



Paul lives a double life. He feels forced to remain in the Hitler Youth but, at the same time, secretly participates in the sabotage activities of the Edelweiss Pirates. Tension in the story increases as he finds it more difficult to hide his secret activities from his family and friends.

The chapter book, written by Kathy Kacer, is 232 pages in length; explores the themes of Nazism, mind control, conscience, and propaganda; and is appropriate for readers twelve years and older. For classroom use, this book would work well for students from grades seven to nine who have some knowledge of the Holocaust and are exploring the nature of racism. The book could also be used as part of the course curriculum for English as a Second Language students at the Intermediate or Senior level.

**Important note about the chapters and dates**

Some of the chapters have specific dates. For chapters 1 to 20, the dates are fictitious. However, the dates from chapters 20 through 28 are real and refer to the specific dates of Kristallnacht, the Night of the Broken Glass.



## ***Part B: Pre-reading Activities***

Use these activities to prepare students to read the story. They practice their listening and speaking skills in small groups to express their opinions and feelings about key ethical issues presented in the novel. There is also a note-making activity that requires students to read background information on the Holocaust and answer questions that will help them appreciate the historical context of the novel.

### **Activity 1: Problem Solving—What Would You Do?**

This group activity has students discuss how they would feel and what they would do in these problem-solving situations, which are similar to the ones in the story. This activity on values clarification introduces them to moral and ethical issues in the novel.

Give each student this worksheet.

## Activity 1: Problem Solving—What Would You Do?

### DIRECTIONS:

- a. Choose three classmates to make a group of four.
- b. You should have your own copy of your worksheet to make notes.
- c. Assign a group member to be the notetaker and two others to report the decisions and comments of your group. The fourth member should be the one to check that you have good details and that your spelling and grammar are correct.
- d. Discuss each one of these situations and make decisions of what you would do and why.
- e. Your group will have 30 minutes to finish the activity. Then, we will take it up as a class. The two reporters in your group should be prepared to talk about your decisions and reasons for each situation.

### SITUATION 1:

A new student has just come into your class. Your class doesn't have anyone who is the same nationality. You see a few of your classmates are calling him names and making fun of him. You know that he is being treated unfairly. What do you do?

### YOUR ACTIONS

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### YOUR REASONS

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### SITUATION 2:

Your teacher is always criticizing one particular student. She never praises him or tells him he's doing good work, even though she's usually very good at praising other students, including yourself. How do you feel about what's happening? What would you do?

#### YOUR ACTIONS

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#### YOUR REASONS

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### SITUATION 3:

You are in a shopping mall with a group of other kids from school. You are in a store trying on clothes when one of them walks out of the fitting room wearing one of the pieces she's tried on under her coat. But she hasn't paid for it. Everyone else in the group does the same thing and tries to pressure you to follow their example. What would you do?

#### YOUR ACTIONS

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#### YOUR REASONS

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**SITUATION 4:**

You are out alone on the street and see a group of people you know who are harassing some other kids in your neighbourhood. They are swearing and calling the kids rude names because of their ethnicity, skin colour, and religion. What would you do?

**YOUR ACTIONS**

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**YOUR REASONS**

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**SITUATION 5:**

The mosque in your neighbourhood has been vandalized. Furniture has been broken and rooms turned upside down. Swear words and racist insults have been painted on the inside and outside of the building. You see a community notice asking for volunteers to help clean up the building. You ask your friends to help, but none of them want to, but your parents are going to volunteer. What would you do?

**YOUR ACTIONS**

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**YOUR REASONS**

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## Activity 2a: Creating a Point-Form Note Fact Sheet on *Under the Iron Bridge*

The goal of this activity is to give your students important background information about the Holocaust in Germany, which is provided in the back of the book.

Provide a copy of the following worksheet to each student. If you want the students to work individually, you can evaluate it. Depending on their strengths, have them work in pairs or groups of three, and use it as a non-evaluated introduction to the book.

If your students are completing it for evaluation, give them between 30 and 45 minutes to complete all the questions. Another option is to assign each group only three or four questions and then take them up orally as a class.

## Activity 2b: Learning about Important History in the Book

### DIRECTIONS:

- a. Read the section called Author's Note from pages 213 to 219 in *Under the Iron Bridge*.
- b. Then, answer the questions below using complete sentences.
- c. Please use your own words. **Do not copy directly from the text or use an electronic or paper dictionary.**
- d. Correct details are important. Please proofread your answers to improve spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

1. What is a good definition of "propaganda?" Read the section on propaganda and write a one sentence definition using your own ideas.

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2. What do you think "racial antisemitism" means?

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3. When a country's government practices racial antisemitism, how would that change the culture and education in that country?

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4. What does it mean when people are “brainwashed?”

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5. What kind of organization was the Hitler Youth?

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6. What activities did the Hitler Youth participate in?

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7. How did the Hitler Youth force young people to harm their families?

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8. What happened during Kristallnacht? How did that event affect Jews in Germany?

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**9.** Explain the reason that the Nazis gave for their destructive activities on Kristallnacht.

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**10.** What happened to many Jewish people during Kristallnacht?

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**11.** What does Kristallnacht mean in English?

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**12.** Give your own definition of a resistance fighter.

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**13.** In what situations would there be resistance fighters?

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**14.** Why would it be unusual for the Edelweiss Pirates to be resistance fighters?

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**15.** Why would the Edelweiss Pirates be opposed to the Hitler Youth?

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**16.** Why did the activities of the Edelweiss Pirates become more dangerous in World War II? What activities did they participate in during that time?

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**17.** Why did the Edelweiss Pirates become recognized as Righteous Among the Nations?

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## Activity 3: Elements of Storytelling

Before reading the book, review the vocabulary that is used to describe and analyze stories. This vocabulary would include terms such as plot, character, character development, protagonist, antagonist, theme, setting, symbolism, climax, and conflict. There are many worksheets at all grade levels available online, which you can use to help your students prepare and practice using these terms in literary analysis.



## ***Part C: Reading***

### **Activity 4: Chapter Questions**

These are specific questions that can be used in several ways. For example, they can be used as guided reading or review if you are reading parts of the book aloud together. Have the students look at the questions before reading each chapter, and then they can answer them orally after reading. A second option would be to assign some of them as group or pair classwork or homework. Some questions can be used for tests.

Almost none of these questions ask students to give plot details. Instead, they focus on higher-level cognitive skills requiring them to analyze characters, express and support opinions, and predict events. Some questions ask students to clarify their values about the moral and ethical issues that the protagonist, Paul, deals with throughout the novel.

#### **PROLOGUE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1938 (PAGES 3–6)**

1. What is a prologue? Why do you think an author includes a prologue at the beginning of a book?
2. Why are the Hitler Youth destroying the synagogue?
3. Why doesn't Paul try to stop the Hitler Youth? What would you have done if you were in Paul's place?
4. Does Paul's friend Harold feel the same way as he does? How do you know that?
5. What is about to happen to the Jewish people being lined up in front of the synagogue?

#### **CHAPTER 1: TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 1938 (PAGES 7–14)**

1. This chapter takes place three months earlier than the prologue and is called a "flashback." Why would an author include a "flashback" chapter?
2. What were the different ways that Hitler showed his power and built his popularity?
3. How does Paul's friend Harold feel about being a member of the Hitler Youth? Why does Harold feel this way?
4. Read the author's description of Harold on page 9. Why do you think Harold in particular would be attracted to Hitler and his ideas?

5. Why is Paul especially upset about what Hitler says about Jewish people?
6. Why don't Paul's parents want him to defend Jewish people?
7. What are Harold's final words to Paul? Why would Harold say that to him?

## CHAPTER 2: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1938 (PAGES 15–25)

1. Why doesn't Paul want to worry his parents?
2. Read the author's description of Mama on page 16. What adjectives describe her personality?
3. Why does Herr Bentz, Paul's teacher, read the book *The Poisonous Mushroom* to his class? What "lesson" is he trying to teach? What do you think of this lesson?
4. How would this lesson affect the students?
5. Why had Jewish teachers and students disappeared? Where had they gone?
6. Why is Paul worried about Analia?
7. Read the description of Paul and Analia's day at the beach on pages 19 to 21. What kind of relationship do they have?
8. How do we know that the situation is getting worse for Jews from Analia's conversation with Paul?
9. What word describes what's happening to Analia's parents and other German Jews? If you know of any other group who has faced that kind of treatment, now or in the past, describe that situation.
10. What is Herr Bentz encouraging his students to do if anyone, including their parents, speaks out against Adolf Hitler? What do you think of his advice?
11. Why does Herr Bentz tell Paul to write the essay?

## CHAPTER 3: (PAGES 26–30)

1. Why do you think Ernst is more loyal to Hitler than his parents?
2. How do we know that Harold sometimes doubts what Herr Bentz tells him about Jews? What do Harold's doubts tell you about his personality?
3. Where have the Jews who have disappeared been taken?
4. Why do you think Analia stopped seeing Paul?

5. On page 29, Ernst says, “Anyway, they’re just Jews, so who cares what happens to them?” What do these words show about his attitude and personality?

#### CHAPTER 4: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1938 (PAGES 31–43)

1. Why does Paul decide to go to the Hitler Youth meeting? Give two or three reasons.
2. Read the description of the fairground where the Hitler Youth meetings are held (page 33). How would the boys at the meeting feel about this setting?
3. Why would the Hitler Youth boys like their uniforms?
4. Why does Paul say that making the “Sieg Heil” salute “felt like a betrayal of all that he believed in” (page 34)?
5. In Paul’s opinion, what important values are the Hitler Youth ignoring?
6. How does the behavior of the young man at the megaphone remind you of an army officer?
7. Why does Harold say that being in the Hitler Youth makes him feel important (page 37)?
8. Why doesn’t Harold agree with Paul’s objections about Ernst and the Hitler Youth? Summarize his reasons.
9. Describe what Paul and Harold see at Ernst’s house. What has Ernst done? Where has his parents been taken?
10. Read Papa’s description of the Gestapo on page 42. What is the purpose of an interrogation?

#### CHAPTER 5: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1938 (PAGES 44–49)

1. Is it a good idea for Paul’s parents to have an honest conversation with him about Hitler’s power? Why or why not?
2. Explain Paul’s conflict with his parents about joining the Hitler Youth.
3. Papa says to Paul, “It’s what’s in your heart that matters. Not the clothes you wear” (page 47). Why does Papa say this to him?
4. What brave suggestion does Paul pose to Harold?
5. How would most of the new recruits feel after hearing Franz’s words and taking the oath? Why would they feel this way?

## CHAPTER 6: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1938 (PAGES 50–55)

1. Why does Paul ride home on his bicycle so quickly?
2. Explain the “test of courage” (page 51) that Paul and the other Hitler Youth recruits have to take.
3. Why does Franz make Max retake the “test of courage”? What happens to Max when he takes it again?
4. How does Franz react to Harold’s injury? Why does he react this way?
5. Why does Ernst say that Harold is weak?

## CHAPTER 7: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1938 (PAGES 56–63)

1. Why do the Hitler Youth take different kinds of training?
2. Why do you think Ernst is trying to become Paul’s “new best friend” (page 57)?
3. Read the description of Frau and Herr Wagner when the Gestapo brought them back to their home (page 57). What do you think happened to them while they were away?
4. Read the description of the young people that Paul sees at Lake Kaarst (pages 58–59). What are several differences between them and the Hitler Youth? How does Paul feel about them?
5. Why does the blond girl try to stop Paul as he approaches her group?
6. What does the girl mean when she says, “Our cause is bigger than our fear!” (page 62)?

## CHAPTER 8: (PAGES 64–71)

1. Why is Paul surprised by the appearance of the new boys he meets?
2. What would happen if those in the Hitler Youth found out that some of its members are also in this group?
3. Explain why the group calls itself the Edelweiss Pirates.
4. How do the Pirates recognize each other?
5. Explain why Luka has become one of the Pirates.

6. Why can we say that Kiki and some of the Pirates are living “double lives?” Why do they choose to live this way?
7. The Pirates say that there are “other kinds of resistance” (page 70). What kinds of resistance could people Paul’s age use against the Nazis?
8. How do we know that Hitler is building his power in Düsseldorf?

#### CHAPTER 9: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1938 (PAGES 72–80)

1. Why doesn’t Paul want to talk to his mother about the Hitler Youth meetings?
2. Predict what “special mission” (page 74) Franz has planned for the Hitler Youth.
3. Read the description of Düsseldorf’s Jews cleaning the streets (pages 76–77). How would you feel if you were one of them?
4. Explain how Paul stops Franz from beating up the old Jewish man. Could you do what Paul does? Why or why not?
5. What does Analia think when she sees Paul? How would she feel about him?

#### CHAPTER 10: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1938 (PAGES 81–85)

1. Read the first paragraph on page 81. What adjectives describe Paul’s feelings about Analia?
2. Why is Paul thinking about the Edelweiss Pirates?
3. Why does Kiki ask Paul to explain why he wants to join the Pirates?
4. Why does Paul defend his decision to stay with the Hitler Youth?
5. How will the Pirates be sure that Paul is serious about joining them?

#### CHAPTER 11: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1938 (PAGES 86–95)

1. Why does Paul treat Kiki like a stranger when he sees her in school?
2. How does Kiki signal Paul? What does the signal mean?
3. Where does Paul meet the Pirates for his test? How do they use this place?
4. Why does Kiki hide her identity as an Edelweiss Pirate from her mother?
5. Read the long paragraph on pages 92 and 93. What are the Pirates doing on the street? Why are they doing this?

6. What does Paul do to pass his test?
7. Read the last paragraph on pages 94 and 95. Summarize the reasons that Paul has decided to become a Pirate.

#### CHAPTER 12: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1938 (PAGES 96–99)

1. Why do artists create graffiti? Have you ever seen or created graffiti? If you have, describe its appearance and meaning.
2. Why would Paul feel threatened at the Hitler Youth meeting or when Ernst talks with him and Harold?
3. In your opinion, how and why has Harold changed since his leg was burned?
4. Describe Paul's conflict as he is talking to Ernst about the graffiti.
5. At the end of the chapter, Harold says to Paul, "You were right about Ernst. He can't be trusted" (page 99). Explain how these words show that Harold's attitude toward the Hitler Youth has changed.

#### CHAPTER 13: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1938 (PAGES 100–107)

1. Why do the Edelweiss Pirates raid a food warehouse?
2. Why does Paul decide to visit Analia's house? Give three reasons.
3. Summarize the messages of the pamphlets that the Pirates have created. Why do they want to distribute them?
4. Read the second paragraph on page 103. How do the events described in the paragraph predict or foreshadow Hitler's influence and power?
5. What doubt does Paul express to Kiki?
6. Can someone your age make a difference in solving problems or changing the world? Give your opinion and a reason to support it.
7. What adjective describes Kiki's view of life and the future? Do you share her attitude or have a different one? Why do you have your view?
8. What danger are the Pirates about to face as they finish depositing their pamphlets?
9. What is Paul's fear at the end of the chapter?



#### CHAPTER 14: MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1938 (PAGES 108–114)

1. What danger could Luka face after the pamphlet drop?
2. Why wouldn't the Pirates try to find out more about what happened to Luka?
3. Why is Paul worried about seeing Ernst at the Hitler Youth meeting?
4. How does Luka look at the Pirates meeting? What does his appearance mean?
5. Read Luka's account of his interrogation by the Gestapo on pages 112 and 113. Summarize the methods that the Gestapo use to get their prisoners to talk. In your opinion, which technique would be the most difficult one to endure? Do you think that you would personally be able to stand this treatment? Why or why not?

#### CHAPTER 15: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1938 (PAGES 115–121)

1. Why is Papa listening to the radio broadcast from London? What does this decision show about his personality?
2. How do Papa, Mama, and Paul feel when the two men visit them at night? Why is Paul especially nervous?
3. Why is Paul glad that he didn't tell his parents about the Edelweiss Pirates?

#### CHAPTER 16: (PAGES 122–128)

1. Why is Paul so worried about where he should stand as the Gestapo officer searches his room?
2. Read pages 122 to 124. How do you feel as you read these pages? How does the author create this feeling for the reader?
3. What does the Gestapo officer find in Paul's room that makes him happy?
4. How is Paul saved from being found out by the Gestapo?
5. How does Paul feel about lying to his parents? Do you agree with his decision to lie? Why or why not?
6. Why is Paul now worried about Harold?

#### CHAPTER 17: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1938 (PAGES 129–132)

1. Read the first paragraph on page 129. Which questions should Paul be the most worried about? Why?

2. Why would we think that Mama has an idea about Paul's activities? Do you think she approves of them? Why or why not?
3. What does Harold do when the Gestapo question him about Paul? What does Harold's action show about his personality and relationship with Paul? Would you have acted the same way? Why or why not?

#### CHAPTER 18: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1938 (PAGES 133–138)

1. What is the meaning of the word "sabotage" (page 133)? Guess the meaning from what you know about the activities of the Edelweiss Pirates so far.
2. What clue does Kiki give Paul about the reason for the next Pirates meeting?
3. How do we know that Kiki is an important member of the Pirates?
4. Why don't most of the Edelweiss Pirates know about plans in advance?
5. Why are the Pirates going to fill the Gestapo cars with sand? Explain how that act hurts the Nazis' activities.
6. What does Luka mean when he says, "We'll lay low again for a while" (page 138)? Explain why it would be important for the Pirates to do this.

#### CHAPTER 19: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1938 (PAGES 139–143)

1. According to Ernst, what will happen to those who vandalized the Nazis' cars? Why is Paul upset by what might happen to anyone they will accuse of the "crime?"
2. Why does Ernst attack Harold? What adjectives describe Ernst's personality? How does being a leader in the Hitler Youth make him think and behave this way?
3. Predict any sacrifices that Paul may have to make if he wants to continue being an Edelweiss Pirate.

#### CHAPTER 20: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1938 (PAGES 144–151)

1. Read the paragraph on pages 144 and 145. Describe Paul's conflict. What feelings does he have? Why does he have them?
2. Summarize the incident that Herr Bentz announces to the students at the assembly. What are his reasons for telling the students about it? How would he want them to react?
3. Herr Bentz says that "something bigger than anything that has ever been seen so far" (page 146) should be done to the Jews. Predict what he might mean.

4. What is the family wearing that identifies them as Jewish? Why do the Nazis make Jews wear it?
5. Read the last paragraph on page 147, which finishes on page 148. What does the word “ransacked” (page 147) mean?
6. Luka says, “We know something is in the works” (page 148). What does he mean?
7. What makes the Pirates think that the Nazis’ treatment of Jews is getting worse?
8. What event makes the Nazis so angry at the Jews of Düsseldorf?
9. Why does Paul give Stella the rock? How does she feel now that she has it? Do you think it was a good idea to give it to her? Why or why not?

#### CHAPTER 21: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1938, 5:00 P.M. (PAGES 152–160)

1. Read pages 152 and 153. How do the details that the author includes build suspense for the reader?
2. How is Harold and Paul’s relationship changing?
3. Describe what the Hitler Youth group sees in the Jewish section of Düsseldorf.
4. Why can we say that the Hitler Youth is behaving like a mob? Why do they behave this way?
5. How does Harold react when Franz gives him orders? What does his reaction show about Harold’s personality?
6. How are the Nazis humiliating the Jews of Düsseldorf even more?
7. Who does Paul notice in the confusion?
8. What is the name of the specific historical event that the author is describing in chapters 20 and 21?

#### CHAPTER 22: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1938, 6:00 P.M. (PAGES 161–163)

1. Read the first paragraph on page 161. What adjectives describe the way that the Nazi soldiers treat the Jews?
2. What is happening to the Jews standing in front of the synagogue? What will happen when the trucks carrying them reach their destination?
3. What is the Nazi soldier doing to Analia and her parents?

### CHAPTER 23: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1938, 7:00 P.M. (PAGES 164–168)

1. Why does Analia resist when Paul grabs her arm?
2. Why do Kiki and the other Pirates gather at the beach? What are they trying to do there?
3. What choice is Paul willing to take with Analia? Why is his choice risky?
4. Read the second paragraph on page 167. In your opinion, which question that Paul asks himself should he worry about the most? Why?
5. What happens to make Paul afraid?

### CHAPTER 24: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1938, 8:00 P.M. (PAGES 169–176)

1. Read the description of Analia on the first paragraph of page 170. What words describe how she looks and feels?
2. Why does Analia come “out of her daze” (page 171)? Why does that sound or sight have that effect?
3. Explain how Paul tries to protect Analia when they run into Max. What role does he pretend to assume?
4. How does Harold show that his personality and attitude have changed? Why has he changed?

### CHAPTER 25: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1938, 9:00 P.M. (PAGES 177–185)

1. How does Paul realize that the violence that took place in Düsseldorf has happened all over Germany?
2. Why does Paul choose this time to tell his parents about being one of the Edelweiss Pirates?
3. Mama’s words to Paul were “Don’t forget who you really are” (page 180). What does she mean? Why does Paul especially remember these words at this time?
4. What words describe the way that Mama treats Paul and Analia?
5. Read Analia’s account of what happened when the Nazis broke into her home (pages 182–184). If you were Analia, how would you have reacted to this happening to you? Would you have fought back or resisted? Why or why not?
6. What is another way that Mama demonstrates her kindness?

## CHAPTER 26: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1938, 10:00 P.M. (PAGES 186–190)

1. Why does Paul decide to take Analia to the Pirates' meeting on the beach?
2. Paul is more worried about Harold than himself. What does that show about his personality?
3. What other decision shows that Paul is very mature for his age?
4. Paul says that he feels "like someone who had lived a hundred lives" (page 188). Why does he feel this way?
5. Have you ever known anyone who has felt the same way as Paul? If you have, describe that person's experiences and why he or she feels that way.
6. Read the last paragraph of page 189, which finishes on page 190. What feelings are Analia expressing to Paul?
7. Predict what might happen to Analia now that she is separated from her parents.
8. Why is everyone afraid at the end of the chapter?

## CHAPTER 27: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1938, 10:30 P.M. (PAGES 191–195)

1. How does Analia help Paul when they are hiding?
2. What attitude is Mama pretending to have when the Gestapo officer questions her?
3. What suggestion does Papa make to the Gestapo officer? Why is this suggestion a risk? In your opinion, what is Paul's father hoping will happen?

## CHAPTER 28: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1938, 11:00 P.M. (PAGES 196–201)

1. How do we know that Paul is planning to stay away from home for a while?
2. Read the paragraph at the top of page 199. What word describes Paul's feelings about the future of the Jews and Germany? If he is not sure he believes what he's saying, why is he saying it?
3. How would you feel if you had to leave your parents, unsure of when you would see them again?
4. Predict what happens to Paul and Analia after they leave their parents. How does their story continue?
5. How are chapters 21 through 28 different from the previous chapters? How did you feel as you were reading them? Why do you think the author wrote the chapters differently from the previous ones in the book?

## EPILOGUE: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1946 (PAGES 203–211)

1. Many novels include an epilogue as the final chapter of the book. Before reading it, predict what kind of information might be in this epilogue.
2. What is special about the date of this chapter?
3. How old is Paul now?
4. What happened to the Jewish section of Düsseldorf?
5. What does Kristallnacht mean in English? Why is it an appropriate name for November 9, 1938?
6. Explain why Paul's optimism about the world's reaction to Hitler and the Nazis turned out to be wrong.
7. Read the third paragraph of page 205. Why was it necessary for the Edelweiss Pirates to get involved in even more dangerous activities? What was their goal?
8. What happened to Luka?
9. What profession is Paul now studying for?
10. Why do you think Paul and Kiki have remained close friends?
11. Explain why it's important to Kiki to be a teacher.
12. Why do you think Paul and Harold remained close friends?
13. Analia and many other Jews who survived became refugees. Have you known any refugees? Why is it difficult to live as a refugee?
14. Predict what might happen between Paul and Analia.

## Activity 5: Understanding New Vocabulary from Context

Understanding the meaning of words from context without using a dictionary is a valuable skill, which accelerates vocabulary development and improves reading comprehension. It would be especially useful for students who speak English as a Second Language or for first-language learners who need improvement in their vocabulary and reading comprehension skills.

In this worksheet, a few words are chosen from each chapter. Students should do the activity one or several chapters at a time. They will be tempted to use an electronic or paper dictionary to help them. Demonstrate that using a dictionary is not useful in understanding vocabulary from context because each word has multiple meanings. They would need to guess the correct meaning of the word in the context that it's being used.



## Activity 5: Understanding New Vocabulary

### DIRECTIONS:

- a. Read each underlined word in the sentence where it is found. Then, on the blank line opposite that sentence, write a synonym or short meaning of that word.
- b. Do not use a dictionary to find the meaning of the word. Instead, guess the synonym or meaning.

Three examples are done for you.

### PROLOGUE

1. This was the cue needed to unleash the other boys in the Hitler Youth Group (page 4). release

### CHAPTER 1

1. "The best way to show our devotion to him is to join up" (page 7). support
2. It was true that Germany under Adolf Hitler was poised to become a superpower (page 8). prepared
3. "The meetings are so inspiring. We sing songs that praise our great *Führer*" (page 9).  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. But he rankled when he heard Hitler ranting about the Jews (page 11).  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. And it sounded ominous (page 14). \_\_\_\_\_

### CHAPTER 2

1. Their number had been dwindling ever since Hitler had introduced his "Law Against the Overcrowding of German Schools" (page 18). \_\_\_\_\_
2. "Of course not. It's dangerous. Subversive" (page 24). \_\_\_\_\_

### CHAPTER 3

1. But, as the list of laws and rules restricting Jews grew, Paul finally faced the truth that her disappearance from his life was about more than just the two of them (page 29). \_\_\_\_\_

### CHAPTER 4

1. Paul imagined Ernst standing up, pointing at him, and declaring this transgression (page 32). \_\_\_\_\_
2. But he was known as one of the less popular kids in the class, and often excluded from activities, or the last one chosen to be part of any team (page 37).  
\_\_\_\_\_

### CHAPTER 5

1. They talked about Hitler and how he was persuading the nation to follow his fanatical ideas (page 44). \_\_\_\_\_

### CHAPTER 6

1. Then he propelled his body and cleared the fire with no difficulty (page 53).  
\_\_\_\_\_

### CHAPTER 7

1. A pang of envy rose inside of him as he turned to watch (page 58).  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Along with everything else, the Nazis had banned music that they called immoral or harmful (page 59). \_\_\_\_\_
3. But this song—talking about being free of Hitler—would be considered evil and treasonous (page 59). \_\_\_\_\_

### CHAPTER 8

1. “That’s kind of what we’re like: persistent and strong” (page 66). \_\_\_\_\_
2. “But there are other kinds of resistance” (page 70). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 9

1. But instead, they were on the ground, forced to do this demeaning labor (page 77).  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. And as he watched, helplessly, Analia's face began to harden into a look of defiance, anger, then hatred (page 80). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 10

1. And even more than that, he was plagued by his own failure to help her (page 81).  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. A girl was singing another protest song, strumming on a guitar (page 83).  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The fire next to him did nothing to stop the trembling (page 83).  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 11

1. It was so subtle that Paul nearly missed it (page 87). \_\_\_\_\_
2. "We call this place our bunker" (page 89). \_\_\_\_\_
3. Adrenaline coursed through Paul's body (page 93). \_\_\_\_\_
4. But there was the added feeling of pure exhilaration (page 94). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 12

1. He described in great detail the graffiti that had been painted on the wall of the building in the center of town (page 96). \_\_\_\_\_
2. "They wrote 'Down with Hitler!' That's an act of treason" (page 98).  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 13

1. One read: *Hitler and his followers will rob you of your rights, step by step, until one day nothing will be left but a system presided over by criminals* (page 102).  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The one that Paul liked best stated: *The German people look the other way while Jews are being oppressed and murdered* (page 103). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 14

3. Harold asked at the end of one meeting. "You seem as jumpy as I feel" (page 110).  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. "Three Gestapo men took turns interrogating me" (page 112). \_\_\_\_\_
5. "Before releasing me, they walked me through a courtyard where I saw three gallows standing side by side" (page 113). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 15

6. Everyone knew that it was a treasonable offense to listen to overseas broadcasts (page 116). \_\_\_\_\_
7. Paul began to squirm under the stare (page 118). \_\_\_\_\_
8. "But make no mistake, they are traitors" (page 119). \_\_\_\_\_
9. His mind was blank; his desperation was growing (page 120). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 16

10. "I just don't like anyone rummaging through my personal things" (page 123).  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. ...*The Poisonous Mushroom*...that terrible story that compared Jews to lethal mushrooms (page 125). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 17

12. If the Gestapo had already gone to Harold's house last night, Paul felt he was already doomed (page 129). \_\_\_\_\_
13. "They talked about the vandalism in the city" (page 131). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 18

1. The Pirates gathered under the iron bridge to prepare for another act of sabotage (page 133). \_\_\_\_\_
2. Harold, on the other hand, seemed to shrink into himself under Ernst's scrutiny (page 133). \_\_\_\_\_

3. That way, if someone was caught, they could legitimately say they had no clue what was going on (page 135). \_\_\_\_\_
4. But also, it was a perfect way to infuriate them (pages 136–137). \_\_\_\_\_
5. His face glowed from the work he had just finished, and he felt more exhilarated than he'd felt in a long time (page 138). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 19

1. Paul feared that the Nazis' payback would be brutal and the Jews were an easy target (page 141). \_\_\_\_\_
2. Harold was becoming more flustered (page 141). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 20

1. Herr Bentz said that a high-level Nazi diplomat by the name of Ernst vom Rath had been shot by none other than a seventeen-year-old Jewish teen named Herschel Grynszpan (page 145). \_\_\_\_\_
2. This young Jewish man had gone to the embassy in Paris where vom Rath was posted (pages 145–146). \_\_\_\_\_
3. "Their store was ransacked by the Nazis today" (page 147). \_\_\_\_\_
4. But while his scars had nearly disappeared, his resolve to get back at the Nazis had only deepened (page 148). \_\_\_\_\_
5. It meant that the Nazis had closed ranks and were keeping whatever this retaliation was a complete secret (pages 148–149). \_\_\_\_\_
6. "The Jewish teenager who killed vom Rath—he went to look for vom Rath after his own parents were arrested and deported to the concentration camps" (page 149).  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 21

1. "Yes, the Jews are indeed a curse" (page 154). \_\_\_\_\_
2. "Our glorious Führer has decreed that it's time to teach the Jews of Europe a lesson" (page 154). \_\_\_\_\_
3. But before Franz could shout more orders, there was another commotion up ahead (page 159). \_\_\_\_\_

4. Several of the men wore skullcaps on their heads (page 159).  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 22

1. He longed to do something—anything to help her (page 162).  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. If they fell, they were in danger of being trampled by those coming up behind them (page 163). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 23

1. Behind him, other boys from the Hitler Youth were still preoccupied with stoking the flames of the fire in the synagogue (page 167). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 24

1. At the very least, he would report Paul's desertion to Franz (page 169).  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. She moved as if in a trance, numbly placing one foot in front of the other (page 170).  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Perhaps in this bedlam, he'd be able to get Analia to his house unnoticed (page 170).  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. For one frantic moment, he thought it had to be Ernst (page 171).  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 25

1. The only sound in the room was the low buzz of indistinguishable voices coming from the radio (page 180). \_\_\_\_\_
2. The fear and sadness of the night seemed to have faded in Analia, replaced with a calm resolve and firmness (page 182). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 26

1. Kiki's message—*get to the beach*—had resonated in Paul's mind (page 187).  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The urgency to leave was weighing on him, like a heavy bag cutting into his shoulders (page 190). \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 27

1. "Where else would he be on this night when all of Germany is declaring its allegiance to the Führer?" (page 193). \_\_\_\_\_
2. Their fate would be sealed along with the fate of his parents (page 195).  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 28

1. And hopefully when other countries hear about all that, they'll condemn Hitler (page 199). \_\_\_\_\_

## EPILOGUE

1. They had fought side by side as members of the Edelweiss Pirates throughout the war, continuing to thwart the efforts of the Nazis whenever and wherever they could (page 205). \_\_\_\_\_
2. Over time, Paul and Kiki had gone from being comrades to friends to close companions and confidantes (page 206). \_\_\_\_\_
3. "We were so young and naïve" (page 210). \_\_\_\_\_



## ***Part D: Writing***

### **Activity 6: Creating an Outline for a Character Paragraph**

This activity is a good review for students in grades 7 and 8 about the need to create a chart outline when preparing to write a well-organized paragraph. It can be done as practice in pairs or small groups or as an assignment to be done by each student, either to be evaluated or not evaluated.



## Activity 6: Creating an Outline for a Character Paragraph

Who is the protagonist of *Under the Iron Bridge*? Create a chart where you identify that character and four personal qualities about that character. Make sure to use specific vocabulary for these qualities and specific details and examples as your proof.

1

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Protagonist's Name:   |  |
| Personal Qualities:   |  |
| Proof from the Story: |  |
|                       |  |

2

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Protagonist's Name:   |  |
| Personal Qualities:   |  |
| Proof from the Story: |  |
|                       |  |

3

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Protagonist's Name:   |  |
| Personal Qualities:   |  |
| Proof from the Story: |  |
|                       |  |

4

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Protagonist's Name:   |  |
| Personal Qualities:   |  |
| Proof from the Story: |  |
|                       |  |

## Activity 7: Writing a Character Paragraph

The purpose of this activity is to have students use the outline created in Activity 6 to write a well-organized character paragraph. If your students haven't had a lot of practice in paragraph writing, there are many paragraph writing worksheets available online that will teach or review paragraph organization and writing.

As with the previous activity, you can use this activity as pair or small group practice or as an evaluated individual assignment. Ensure that students use the outline to create the paragraph; have them keep and show their outlines when they write their paragraphs. Give them these directions:

### DIRECTIONS:

Use the outline that you created in Activity 5 to write a character paragraph about the protagonist. Your character paragraph should include these parts.

- a. **A title:** a phrase that describes the topic of your paragraph.
- b. **A topic sentence:** a complete sentence that introduces the topic of your paragraph.
- c. **A body:** a few (4–6) sentences that give your main ideas and supporting details about your topic.
- d. **A concluding sentence:** a complete sentence that restates and summarizes your topic and maybe also ends with an original idea about it.

Make sure to check and proofread your paragraph to improve ideas and correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary.

## Activity 8: Creating an Outline for an Opinion Paragraph

This is an outline activity to help students organize their ideas for an opinion paragraph.

### DIRECTIONS:

Would you recommend that students your age read *Under the Iron Bridge*? If you would, why? If you wouldn't, why not? State your opinion and three reasons to support it. Your reasons can refer to the characters in the story, the conflicts that are created, the theme that is the message or moral, or any other aspect of the story.

Complete the outline below, which would then help you to write a complete opinion paragraph.

**Topic Sentence:** In my opinion,

---

---

| REASONS             | SUPPORTING DETAILS/EXAMPLES |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| My first reason is  | a.<br><br>b.                |
| My second reason is | a.<br><br>b.                |
| My third reason is  | a.<br><br>b.                |

**Concluding Sentence:** In conclusion,

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---

---

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## Activity 9: Writing an Opinion Paragraph

Students can use the outline created in the previous activity to write an opinion paragraph. If you wish them to have extra practice before completing this activity, there are many grade-level appropriate opinion writing practice worksheets available online. Focus specifically on the vocabulary used in expressing opinions.

Depending on their readiness and experience in opinion writing, you can organize your students in small groups or pairs to write the paragraph as a practice activity or an evaluated assignment.

### DIRECTIONS:

Use the outline created in Activity 8 to write an opinion paragraph on whether or not you would recommend that people your age read *Under the Iron Bridge*. Make sure that your opinion paragraph includes these parts:

- a. **A title:** a phrase that expresses your opinion.
- b. **A topic sentence:** a complete sentence that clearly expresses your opinion.
- c. **A body:** several (4–6) sentences that give your three reasons to support your opinion and at least one detail or example from the story to support your opinion.
- d. **A concluding sentence:** a complete sentence that restates your opinion and perhaps gives an original idea about the book.

Make sure to check and proofread your paragraph to improve ideas and correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary.



## ***Part E: Extension***

These activities can be used at any time before, during, or after you've finished reading the book to enhance your students' understanding and appreciation of its message and historical significance.

### **Activity 10: Journaling**

These are journaling topics that you can assign students to explore their feelings and opinions of issues explored in the story. You can create an online journal where students can write and respond to each other or have them write in individual journal books, either handwritten or inputted on to the computer. Create a rubric that evaluates each individual entry or all of them and takes into consideration ideas, organization, spelling, grammar, and punctuation. You may also want to suggest a minimum word count for each entry.

#### **HERE ARE THE TOPICS:**

- 1.** In your opinion, should Paul have told his parents about being an Edelweiss Pirate long before he did? Why or why not? What would you have done? Give reasons for your decision.
- 2.** The leaders in the Hitler Youth persuaded its members to be racist and cruel and to commit violent acts on innocent people. They used the techniques of propaganda to accomplish their goals. Give a definition of "propaganda" without using a dictionary. Using examples from the novel, what are at least two techniques or methods that they used to get young people to follow them? In your opinion, why did these techniques work so well?
- 3.** In your opinion, who is the most courageous young person in the story? Give your opinion and three reasons for your choice. Refer to details from the story to support your opinion.
- 4.** Do you think that either or both of Paul's parents suspected him of opposing the Nazis in Düsseldorf before he told them about his activities? Give your opinion and proof from the story that supports it.
- 5.** In the story, Ernst is the character who shows the most loyalty to the Hitler Youth and Nazism. He is a teenager about the same age as Paul. What would make someone his age so committed to racism and violence and be able to persecute innocent people?

6. The Edelweiss Pirates were teenage rebels who opposed the government and authority of their corrupt country. Do you know of any group of rebels from yours or any other country in the past or present who have also been rebellious in fighting injustice? If you do, describe those young people and their activities. Feel free to ask your parents or other family members for help in providing details to answer this question.
7. There are a few situations in the book that show the Hitler Youth treating innocent people in evil and cruel ways. Do you think that some people are simply born evil? On the other hand, do you feel that people become evil and cruel because they are influenced by other people?
8. The Edelweiss Pirates were teenagers who worked tirelessly to fight the Nazis. Is there an injustice that you would fight to change in the same way? Would you be able to fight like the Pirates did, sacrifice and sometimes die for that cause? Which cause would that be? What would you be prepared to do to fight for it? If you couldn't, what would prevent you from making that kind of commitment?

## Activity 11: Oral Presentation

The same topics in Activity 10 can be also used to create a five- to ten-minute evaluated oral presentation. According to your students' skills and experience, create a rubric with specific criteria that you would use for evaluation. If necessary, model a presentation and provide them with support such as instructional videos or Internet material to help them prepare and present successful presentations.

