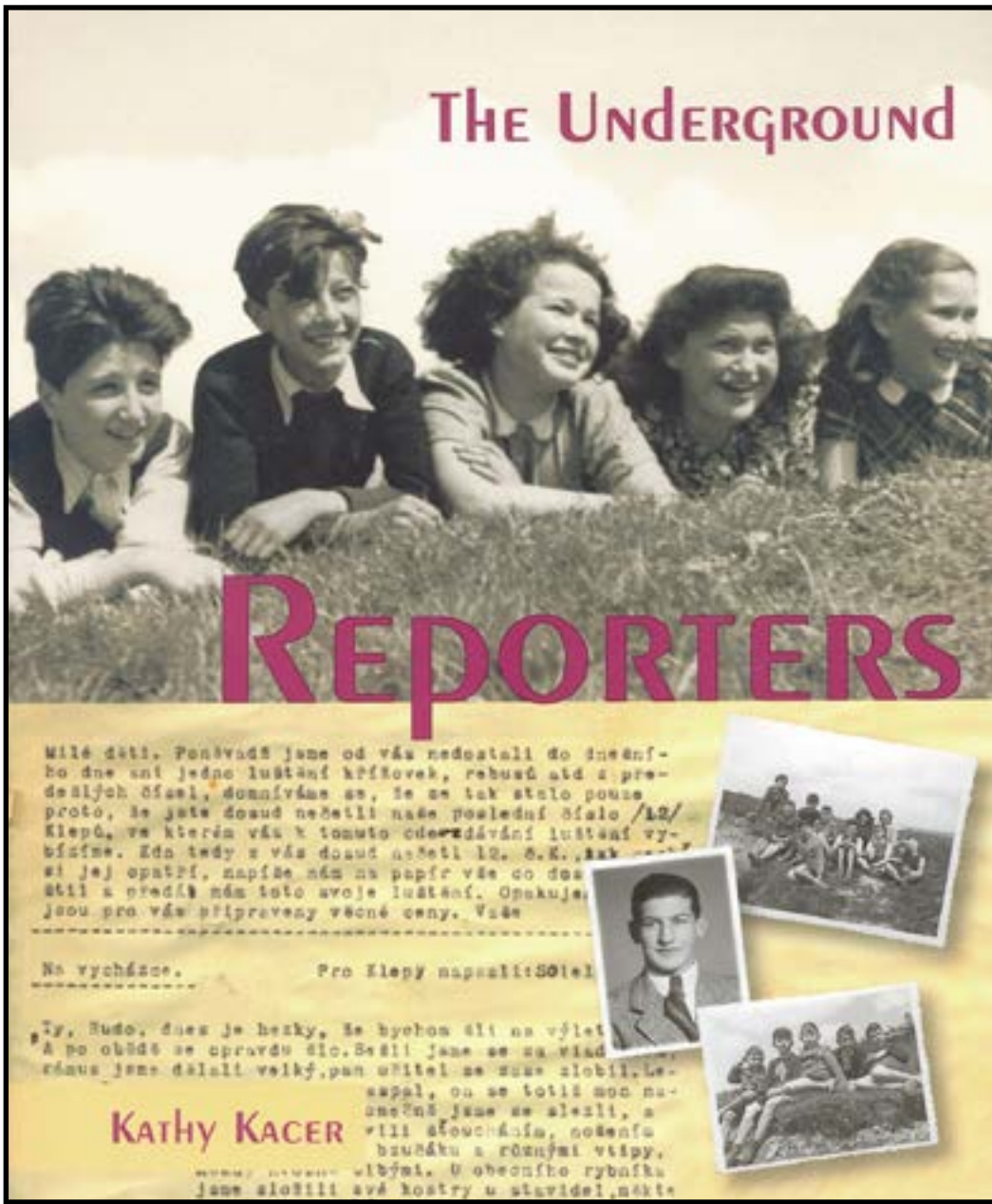


Grades 4 – 8; Ages 9 – 12



# The Underground Reporters

Written by Kathy Kacer  
 Guide written by Larry Swartz  
 Teacher's Guide

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# *The Underground Reporters*

Author: Kathy Kacer

Guide by: Larry Swartz

## About the Book

**A group of young Jewish friends create a newspaper during World War II to keep their spirits and hopes alive.**

In Budejovice, a quiet village in Czechoslovakia, laws and rules were introduced to restrict the freedom of Jewish people during the dark days of World War II. A small shack became the community centre—a place to escape from persecution and discrimination. It was here that some brave young people decided to create a magazine that would prove to themselves and their community that they were still creative, energetic, and adventurous. The magazine, *Klepy* (which means “gossip”), was born on August 30, 1940, and over the following two years, twenty-two issues were created and circulated.

John Freund was one of the young “reporters” who contributed to the magazine. In April 1942, John and the other one thousand Jews of Budejovice were deported to the Terezin ghetto. Most of these deportees were immediately sent on to Auschwitz and to their deaths. John was among a handful of Jews in Budejovice who survived the war. He currently lives in Toronto. Remarkably, copies of *Klepy* also survived. *The Underground Reporters* chronicles the lives of the young people who contributed to the newspaper.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathy Kacer is an award-winning author who has written more than twenty books that focus on stories of the Holocaust. Her work includes picture books, historical fiction, and nonfiction writing. As a child of Holocaust survivors, Kathy Kacer is a passionate advocate of Holocaust stories and has claimed that she feels personally

responsible for collecting stories and passing them on to the next generation. In the book *Teaching Tough Topics* by Larry Swartz, Kathy Kacer writes: “I think that the lessons we can learn—lessons about hatred and power, but also lessons about compassion, strength, and selflessness are lessons for the ages. Remember this: Every time you remember the history, and every time you talk about it, you are honouring someone who lived and possibly perished during that time. You are giving meaning to their lives. And that is a remarkable thing” (2020 p. 69).

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Creating an Underground Newspaper

- In 1940, fifteen-year-old Ruda Stadler created a newspaper as a way to resist the new laws that were persecuting Jewish people. As the newspaper grew in size, it was considered to be a magazine.
- Stadler named the publication *Klepy*, which is Czech for “gossip.”
- The first edition was circulated amongst young people who, when they finished reading *Klepy*, signed their names on a sheet and then passed the newspaper on to another reader.
- *Klepy* included poetry, drawings, cartoons, jokes, articles on sports, and some personal stories.
- The newspaper served the purpose of connecting Jewish friends in Budejovice and was a lifeline for the Jewish youth.
- A team of contributors worked “underground,” usually finishing their work before curfew time of eight in the evening.
- Ruda believed that the magazine could be not only entertaining, but a forum where important ideas were discussed.
- A call was put out for readers to contribute editorials to *Klepy*. Ruda was in charge of a section entitled “Listarna” (editorial comments).
- Each edition was longer and more elaborate than the one before. The newspaper grew from five, to fifteen, and then to twenty-five pages.

- The twentieth edition of *Klepy* was published in September 1941. Discouraged by what was happening to the Jews, Ruda resigned as chief editor, saying that “he’d written everything he could write” (p. 96). He was proud of this publishing endeavour since it gave Jewish people a sense of pride.
- Milos Konig became editor of the last two issues of *Klepy*. Fearing for the safety of the contributors, he decided it was time to close down the newspaper.
- In total, twenty-two issues of *Klepy* were published.
- When the Jewish people were deported to the Terezin ghetto, Ruda presented the magazine to a former housekeeper named Thereza, to keep the copies safely hidden.
- In the 1970s, John found Irena Stadler who was living in Prague. After the war, Irena had managed to retrieve the newspapers from Thereza, the housekeeper.
- Copies of *Klepy* survived. Kathy Kacer met with John Freund in his Toronto apartment. He showed Kacer copies of the newspaper, and asked her to do something with the story.

## Czechoslovakia: Five Facts

- Czechoslovakia was a landlocked state in Central Europe, independent from Austria-Hungary in 1918.
- In 1938, Czechoslovakia lost territories to Hungary and Poland, and the state ceased to exist between 1939 and 1945 due to the Munich Pact.
- After World War II, the pre-1938 Czechoslovakia was re-established.
- In 1989, Czechoslovaks peacefully deposed their communist government.
- On December 31, 1992, Czechoslovakia split into two states: the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

## LEARNING GOALS

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Learn a true story about a group of young Jewish people who collaborated as underground reporters during World War II as a form of resistance.
- Consider the various components of a newspaper.
- Gain information about the harsh day-to-day realities and treatment of Jewish people during the rise of Nazism.
- Understand the rise of antisemitism under Hitler's power.
- Read and interpret a historical nonfiction text about resilience and hope.
- Develop compassion for Jewish people who were desperate to survive in concentration camps.
- View and respond to photographs that depict citizens of a small town in Czechoslovakia during World War II and images from an underground newspaper.
- Ask questions and learn about the history of the Holocaust.
- Share their responses to the text through reading, writing, discussion, and the arts.

# PREPARING TO READ *THE UNDERGROUND REPORTERS*

## Activating Prior Knowledge and Experience

### 1. Moving Time

In the book *The Underground Reporters*, Jewish families were forced from their homes and sent to live in ghettos. Eventually, they were transported to concentration camps.

- a. Have you ever moved homes? Why did you need to move?
- b. If you were only allowed to take two possessions from your home with you, what might you take?
- c. Did the Jewish people have any choice about leaving their homes?
- d. How might they prepare themselves for this traumatic move?
- e. What contemporary stories of the refugee experience (where families are forced to flee) are you familiar with?

### 2. Working “Underground”

- a. Discuss the meaning of the word “underground.” (On a literal level, the underground is the area below the earth’s surface. An underground activity is secret and usually illegal.)
- b. Why would people choose to work underground in times of war?
- c. What might an “underground reporter” do?
- d. What are some of the benefits of working underground? What are some of the challenges of working underground?

### 3. *Klepy*

Kathy Kacer tells the true story of a group of young Jewish citizens in a small city in Czechoslovakia who chose to work “underground” to create a newspaper, *Klepy*. The creator of *Klepy*, fifteen-year-old Ruda Stadler, created the publication as a way to resist the new laws that were persecuting Jewish people.

- a. Why was it important for the Jewish youth to create this newspaper?
- b. What kinds of content might you expect to read in this newspaper?
- c. What would the underground reporters need to be especially careful about?
- d. Was it more important for this newspaper to be entertaining or educational/thought-provoking?

### 4. About the Holocaust

It is important to use a trauma-informed approach to teaching this material by following the below recommendations:

- a. Know your students.
- b. Inform them that parts of the story include antisemitism and intimidation by soldiers.
- c. Allow students to take a break when they need to.
- d. Inform parents that your class will be reading a story and learning about the Holocaust, so families can support students at home as needed. Share the book summary with the students’ families.
- e. Check in with students along the way.
- f. Avoid compare/contrast questions.
- g. Avoid role play or writing in the voice of a Holocaust survivor or a soldier.
- h. Avoid displaying or sharing symbols of hate or horrific imagery.
- i. Do your research. For example, the Montreal Holocaust Museum (<https://museeholocauste.ca/en/resources-training/teaching-holocaust-middle-high-school/>) provides some tips and resources for teachers.

## Discussion Questions

- a. What facts do you know about the Holocaust, Auschwitz, and Hitler?
- b. Why did Adolf Hitler introduce laws to limit the freedom of Jewish people? Why did he want to rid the world of Europe's Jews?
- c. What information do you know about concentration camps?
- d. What stories have you read or movies have you seen about the Holocaust?



## PART ONE / Chapters 1–6 (1937–1939)

We are introduced to the characters John Freund and his family, as well as Beda, Frances, Reina, and the Neubauer family. The author paints a clear picture of the small city of Budejovice, Czechoslovakia and describes the everyday routines that the people enjoyed. News of Hitler’s arrival is announced over the radio. Chapters 4 to 6 outline the arrival of the Nazis in 1939 and the laws and restrictions that were forced on the Jewish people as the world outside of Budejovice was trapped in a war.

### Vocabulary

**torah scroll:** (p. 8) compilation of the first five books of the Hebrew bible presented in scroll form

**menorah:** (p. 12) a branched candelabra for the holiday of Hanukkah with nine branches, one for each night of the eight-day holiday, and a lead candle (shamash)

**synagogue:** (p. 12) the building where Jewish congregants meet for worship

**occupation:** (p. 19) the state of being occupied by military force

**swastika:** (p. 23) an ancient symbol of well-being in many cultures; adapted by Hitler as a symbol of hate

**dredge:** (p. 27) to dig, gather, or pull out earth

***Kindertransport:*** (p. 34) trans. “children’s transport;” organized efforts to rescue children from the threat of the Nazis

### Discussion Questions

1. What do we learn about the town of Budejovice in Chapter 1?
2. John Freund’s older brother, Karel, behaved like a bully. He once locked John into a yard. John retaliated by throwing a rock. Was this the best way for John to solve the bullying problem with his brother?
3. How do we know that John Freund was a bit of a troublemaker? How do we know that he was courageous?

4. What was the Munich Pact (p. 22)? How was this pact significant to the fate of the citizens of Czechoslovakia?
5. How do we know that John's father was an optimist and believed that the trouble for the Jews would pass? What reassuring things did he say to his family and to himself?
6. In September 1939, Hitler's voice shrieked over the radio: "The Jews are our misfortune. Workers of all classes and of all nations, recognize your common enemy" (p. 31). How did such hateful words change the lives of Jewish people in Europe? How did these words start a world war?
7. When laws and restrictions were placed on the Jewish people, children who once played with John now kept their distance, afraid of the trouble it would cause their families if they were seen with a Jewish boy. Zdenek Svec, however, was the one Christian who was brave enough to remain John's friend. How did Hitler's laws test the morality of non-Jewish citizens? Were they being selfish in refusing to support Jewish people?
8. We learn that Jewish parents would do anything to protect their children. The "Kindertransport" was set up to transport children to safety in England. John Freund did not want to be sent away from his homeland. What would be some of the benefits of parents sending their children to safety? What would be some of the challenges of parents making this decision?

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY: WRITING / Listing Hitler's Laws and Restrictions against Jewish People**

In the first three chapters of Part One, we learn of two Jewish families, their homes, their community, and their routines. Chapter 4, entitled "The Nazis Arrive", introduces readers to the threat of Nazism in the town of Budejovice in 1939. Kathy Kacer presents a list of rules and regulations that were enforced on the Jewish citizens. Part One ends with a short report of the War in the World in Chapter 6.

Instruct students to complete the following:

1. List five rules and laws that restricted and persecuted Jewish citizens.
2. In groups of two, students can pair up to compare lists.
3. As a class, discuss Hitler’s laws and restrictions on Jewish citizens. Student volunteers can share one item from their list. Ask:
  - a. Why did Hitler enforce these laws?
  - b. Which of the laws were the harshest?
  - c. What were the punishments and consequences for Jewish people who disobeyed these laws?

**RESPONSE ACTIVITY: Completing an “I WONDER...” Sentence Stem to Raise Questions and Make Predictions**

Part One of *The Underground Reporters* introduces us to the citizens of a small town in Czechoslovakia. We are introduced to a few citizens and we learn of how their lives were disrupted when the Nazi’s came to power.

1. Invite students to raise questions and make predictions about what they think will happen in Parts Two and Three of this book.
2. Have students complete the sentence stem “I wonder...”
3. Ask students to list at least five “I wonder...” statements as they consider the people, the war, and the idea of becoming an underground reporter.
4. Students can volunteer to share an “I wonder...” statement.

**Extension Activity: “Voices in the Head”—A Drama Convention**

“Voices in the Head” is a dramatic learning strategy where students in a role share their thoughts and feelings or puzzlements about what is happening in the drama. Students can draw on their “I wonder...” statements to participate in a “Voices in the Head” drama activity. Tell the students to imagine that they are a citizen of Budejovice. Students can stand to share an “I wonder...” statement when the teacher taps them on the shoulder or points to them. To avoid repetition, encourage students to have one or more statements to reveal in the case that someone has said the same statement they were considering.

## PART TWO / Chapters 7–23 (1940–1942)

### Vocabulary

**camaraderie:** (p. 56) mutual trust and friendship among people who spend time together

**persecution:** (p. 56) hostility; ill-treatment based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or political beliefs

**ghetto:** (p. 57) a poor urban area mostly occupied by a minority group; under Hitler’s power, Jews were separated from society by being forced to live in ghettos

**collaborate:** (p. 58) join forces or cooperate on a project or activity to create something

**discriminate:** (p. 82) make an unjust or prejudicial distinction in the treatment of people especially on the grounds of ethnicity, sex, age, or disability

**resistance:** (p. 85) the refusal to accept or comply with something; the ability not to be affected by something

**oppressive:** (p. 86) unjustly inflicting hardship, especially on a minority group

**The Final Solution:** (p. 101) Hitler’s plan to kill all Jewish people in Europe

**deportation:** (p. 101) the action of forcing someone to leave a country

**Theresienstadt:** (p. 103) a transit camp for Czech Jews deported by the Germans to forced labour camps and concentration camps

### Discussion Questions

1. What was the role of the Kile (Key-leh) council? Why were some Jewish people willing to be part of the Kile, while some were not? What would be your choice? Why? Watch this video and reflect on how hard it is to make decisions in the moment: <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/eve-shalen-group>

2. Describe the Swimming Hole. Why was it so important to the Jewish children?
3. Why does Ruda feel so strongly about establishing a newspaper? What was the purpose of the newspaper/magazine?
4. Ruda encourages other boys to contribute to the newspaper and he would write the editorials. An editorial is an opinion piece. Opinions by the writer are based on analyses of recent events and issues. What issues does Ruda write about in the second edition? If you had a school newspaper, what issue would you write an editorial about today?
5. Which restrictions placed on the Jewish people do you think were the most challenging? How did these laws particularly effect the young people of Budejovice?
6. “Well, the one thing that can’t be restricted is our minds. No one can forbid us to think” (p. 70). What does this statement mean to you? Can you think of any place in the world today where people would find this idea relatable in their lives?
7. Why do you think the young people were so motivated to contribute to *Klepy*? If you were invited to contribute to the magazine, how would you want to contribute (e.g., poem, illustration, personal story, joke, comic, report, or editorial)?
8. “All the same, he believed in the strength of his writing and in the power that came from *Klepy*” (p. 75). What is the power of *Klepy*? What does it mean to the Jewish community of Budejovice as more and more restrictions are placed on their lives?
9. Frances realizes that the Nazi soldiers are not much older than her. How did young German men come to enforce the laws of the Nazis (i.e., Hitler Youth)? How were the Nazis able to turn the German people against the Jewish people?
10. The reporters want to write more important articles about how their lives are changing and how they want to act against these changes. Why would this be dangerous? What decision do they make in terms of the kind of writing they will print? Do you think this was the best decision?

11. In 1941, the Jewish people of Budejovice were ordered to wear a yellow star on their clothes. What was the purpose of this order? How did people respond?
12. *Klepy* had given people dignity in these terrible times. Why was this so important? How had they lost their dignity?
13. Why, after producing twenty issues, does Ruda decide to end the publication of *Klepy*? Why was it important to preserve copies of the newspaper? How would reading these newspapers be important for generations (including today's generation) to understand the history of the Jews in World War II?
14. What was the purpose of Theresienstadt? Have students research Theresienstadt, come up with their own questions about it, try to formulate answers, and then discuss and reflect in small groups or as a class.
15. The people of Budejovice experienced many challenges when they had to pack up and report for deportation. Which events in Chapters 21 and 22 did you find particularly sad? Why?

### RESPONSE ACTIVITY: WRITING / Becoming a *Klepy* Reporter

Have the students imagine that they are part of a team of underground reporters for *Klepy*. Students can choose from the following headlines (or invent one of their own) to create an article that might have appeared in the newspaper.

- RUDA STADLER: PROFILE OF AN INSPIRING REPORTER
- REMEMBERING OUR SWIMMING HOLE: A PLACE TO PLAY AND BE FREE
- NAZI THREATS DESTROYING JEWS DAY-BY-DAY
- FORCED TO END: THE LAST DAYS OF *KLEPY*
- BEING DEPORTED: AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN FREUND

## RESPONSE ACTIVITY: WRITING POETRY

Several poetic contributions were written to describe the experiences and feelings of the Jewish youth as their city came under the Nazi's power (i.e., "Playground Poem" [p. 55] and "After a Snowstorm in January" [p. 84]).

Invite students to create a rhymed or free verse poem that might have been published in *Klepy*. They may write about a specific event (i.e., enjoying the swimming hole), friendships, the threat of laws (curfew), family circumstances (i.e., losing their jobs, losing their homes), or fears of being deported. Some poems could also be about the importance of *Klepy*.

## RESPONSE ACTIVITY: WRITING A NEWS REPORT / Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

Write a news report about a classroom, school, or community event. It could be one of the following categories:

- personal interest story
- world news
- national news
- local news
- entertainment
- sports

Consider the components of a successful news report. Ask students to consider the six questions of good reporting as they collect and organize your information:

- a. Who is involved?
- b. What happened?
- c. Where did it happen?
- d. When did it happen?
- e. Why did it happen?
- f. How did it happen?

Make your report stronger by including the following:

- a headline that contains strong adjectives, action words, alliteration, and perhaps names of people and places
- an illustration or photograph to accompany the report

### **VISUAL ARTS: Creating an Illustrated Cover for an Edition of *Klepy***

By the fourth edition of the magazine, a young artist by the name of Ramona (really Karli Hirsch) was in charge of illustrating the pages and designing beautiful covers. Several images that appear in *The Underground Reporters* show drawings, comics, or illustrations that might appeal to the readers (p. 51, p. 54, p. 59, p. 60, p. 62, p. 88, p. 97).

Using information from the book, students can create a cover page that they think might have been featured on the cover of an edition of *Klepy*. Students can choose to include characters, places, or an event that has been described. Some students may consider creating an image to convey the word “gossip” (the English word for *Klepy*).

NOTE: Point out the mixed-media style often used to create illustrations for the newspaper. The artist created cartoon-like drawings and took photographs of young people in Budejovice, which he added to his illustrations, thus creating lively cartoons and comic strips. Some students may wish to imitate this style for their own art.



## PART THREE / Chapters 24–31 (1942–1945)

### Vocabulary

**barracks:** (p. 121) a building or group of buildings used to house a specific group of people (e.g., labourers, prisoners)

**bar mitzvah:** (p. 128) the religious initiation ceremony of a Jewish boy who has reached the age of thirteen

**concentration camps:** (p. 134) a place where a large number of people (e.g., persecuted minorities such as Jewish people) are deliberately imprisoned; prisoners were forced into hard labour and awaited mass execution.

**mazel tov:** (p. 136) a Jewish phrase expressing “congratulations” or “good luck”

**Auschwitz:** (p. 139) a Nazi concentration camp situated in German-occupied Poland during World War II

**gas chambers:** (p. 141) an airtight room that can be filled with poisonous gas as a means of execution

### Discussion Questions

1. Despite the horrid conditions at Theresienstadt, the prisoners gained hope through the arts. Describe the arts education the youth received. Why were these lessons so important to the children?
2. Arna suggested the boys create a newspaper, the *Bobrick*. How was this newspaper similar or different from *Klepy*? Why was it important to create a new publication?
3. How were the Jewish people in Theresienstadt able to keep their traditions alive?
4. Describe John’s bar mitzvah.
5. When Viktor and Irena are married, Viktor breaks the glass, which is an important Jewish wedding tradition. This tradition is to remind the bride and groom that life is fragile. Explain why this tradition is so meaningful in Theresienstadt.

6. How did Ruda die? What does his death tell you about him and the way he chose to live his life right up until the end?
7. John worked hard to be reunited with friends from Budejovice and to track down *Klepy* so many years after he left for Canada. Why do you think this was so important to him? What would finding *Klepy* mean to him?
8. Why did Irena’s children give the original editions of *Klepy* to the Jewish Museum in Prague? What would visitors to the museum learn about the Holocaust through *Klepy*?
9. John told his story to the author, Kathy Kacer, and asked her to share his story through this book. They spent many hours together. Why is it so important to John and other survivors that their stories be told in films and books to be seen and read by so many people like you?

#### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY: VISUAL ARTS / Creating an Illustration**

On page 123, readers are presented with an artist’s rendition of the bunk beds in barracks in Theresienstadt. Students can create a black and white illustration (with pencil or charcoal) to describe the conditions which the Jewish people lived in Theresienstadt. For the illustration, have students isolate a sentence from Chapter 24 or Chapter 25 and create an image that would bring visual meaning to the text (e.g., “These buildings surrounded by a large fenced square, a muddy wasteland in the centre of town. A high wall patrolled by the guards enclosed the entire town” [p. 118]; “The warehouse quickly became crowded, and people had to lie pressed closely against each other” [p. 119]).

#### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY: SOCIAL STUDIES / Mapping**

Have students work in pairs to investigate the location of different European countries involved in World War II (i.e., Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany, Poland, England, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France).

#### **Extension Activity:**

Have students identify the capital cities for each of the countries they have investigated, and list at least one other city name.

## EPILOGUE (pages 147–154)

The epilogue to *The Underground Reporters* describes what happened to the characters in the story and the fate of the magazine. After reading the epilogue, have students answer the following True/False questions:

1. Many of the underground reporters from Budejovice survived the war.

True

False

2. Ruda Stadler continued to fight for his rights even after being sent to a concentration camp.

True

False

3. John Freund moved back to Budejovice after the war.

True

False

4. John Freund and Irene Stadler reunited in Prague.

True

False

5. The twenty-two editions of *Klepy* survived, but were in terrible condition.

True

False

6. The entire collection of *Klepy* resides in the Jewish Museum in Prague, Czech Republic.

True

False

(#1 = False; #2 = True; #3 = False; #4 = True; #5 = False; #6 = True)

## AFTER READING *THE UNDERGROUND REPORTERS*

### WRITING: Recognizing and Describing Minor Characters

Throughout the book, readers are introduced to Jewish and non-Jewish people who supported the Jewish citizens of Budejovice. Have students write a description of how the following people showed compassion:

- ZDENEK SVEC (Shvets), John's good friend (p. 14; p. 24)
- AUNT ELSA, Frances Neubauer's aunt (p. 30; p. 77)
- MR. VORISEK (Vor-ee-shek), a farmer (p. 37)
- RABBI FERDA, (p. 60; p. 86)
- JOSEPH FRISCH, a teacher (p. 59)
- THEREZA, a Christian housekeeper (p. 109)
- ARNA, a house leader in the children's barracks at Theresienstadt (p. 126)

### ORAL LANGUAGE OR DRAMA: Interviewing in Role OR Writing a Report about *The Underground Reporters*

To prepare for writing this book, the author Kathy Kacer interviewed Holocaust survivors John Freund and Frances Neubauer.

1. Ask students to imagine that they were a reporter who has been hired to write an article about *The Underground Reporters*. To prepare for the article, they will have a chance to talk to Kathy Kacer about her interviews with John and Frances.
  - a. Students can meet in groups of three to brainstorm questions that they will ask Kathy Kacer about what she learned about John's and Frances' experiences before and after being deported to Theresienstadt.

- b. Students can improvise an interview between Kathy and magazine reporters. What questions will the reporters ask? What stories will Kathy reveal?

### Extension Activity: Writing a Magazine Article

1. Students can work independently to write a magazine article that pays tribute to *The Underground Reporters*. Their report could answer the following questions:
  - a. Who were the underground reporters?
  - b. What stories might reporters who survived share about their life in Budejovice and their experiences collaborating to write *Klepy*?
  - c. What stories might they reveal about being under Nazi threat?
  - d. What stories of being a survivor might they describe?

### WRITING: Creating a Class Newsletter

(Source: *Write to Read* by Larry Swartz, Pembroke Publishers, 2022)

Students can collaborate to create a class newsletter. The following information can serve as a guide for planning, developing, publishing, and sharing a class newsletter.

1. Work together as a class to decide on the content for your newsletter. Content for class newsletters (usually made available digitally on a class website or blog) can vary from month to month. Consider the following:
  - an overview of curriculum strands (e.g., *In math, we are learning... In social studies, we are exploring...*)
  - activities and projects the class is working on
  - literature that has been shared (e.g., read-alouds, literature circles, novels)
  - congratulations on accomplishments (e.g., winning teams, awards)

- future plans (e.g., trips, projects, assemblies)
  - fundraising initiatives (classroom or school-wide)
  - samples of student work
  - an interview with a student or school staff member
  - important dates to remember (e.g., class excursion, PD days)
  - jokes or riddles
  - comic strips
  - word puzzles
  - events taking place in your grade division or the school community
2. Consider organizing students into groups of newsletter editors to complete tasks (illustrating, copy editing, formatting the newsletter, etc.). Each month, different students can be responsible for different tasks.
  3. Make sure that everyone in the class appears at least once in every newsletter. A special feature can include a list of names alphabetically and how each student has participated. For example:
    - “We collected these interesting words this month...”
    - “Our favorite books this month are...”
    - “This month we learned...”

### COMPLETING SENTENCE STEMS:

#### Making Connections and Sharing Opinions

Present the following sentence stems to the students that will allow them to share their reactions to *The Underground Reporters*:

1. Something **I learned** about the Holocaust is...
2. I was **surprised** to learn...
3. I was **sad** when...
4. I was **frustrated** when...

5. I was **upset** when...
6. I was **proud** of...
7. I made a **connection** to something in my life when...
8. This is a story about **hope** because...
9. This is a story about **kindness** because...
10. This is a story about **friendship** because...
11. This is an **important** story to read because...
12. Here's **what I would tell someone** about this book...
13. I **wonder**...

Students can complete every statement or choose at least six statements to respond to. Once completed, students can work in small groups to compare their answers.

This activity could be also presented as a Reproducible Master, with the following instructions: “Read each of the sentence stems below. Complete at least six statements that invite you to share the different emotions you experienced when reading *The Underground Reporters*.”

## Further Reading

### Picture Books

Bat Zvi, Pnina and Margie Wolfe; illus. Isabelle Cardinal, *The Promise*

Nonfiction, \$18.95, ISBN: 978-1-77260-058-2

Kacer, Kathy; illus. Gillian Newland, *The Magician of Auschwitz*

Nonfiction, \$18.95, ISBN: 978-1-927583-46-3

Kacer, Kathy; illus. Juliana Kolesova, *The Brave Princess and Me*

Fiction, \$18.95, ISBN: 978-1-77260-102-2

Renaud, Anne; illus. Richard Rudnicki, *Fania's Heart*

Nonfiction, \$18.95, ISBN: 978-1-77260-057-5

Upjohn, Rebecca; illus. Renné Benoit, *The Secret of the Village Fool*

Nonfiction, \$18.95, ISBN: 978-1-926920-75-7

### Middle Grade

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