



Reading Guide



The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play

by Frances Goodrich & Albert Hackett
Newly Adapted by Wendy Kesselman



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INTRODUCTION

The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play has a complex genesis. In 1955, Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett adapted for the stage the diary of the life-loving Dutch teenager, Anne Frank, who died in a concentration camp of typhus. The diary, recovered by Anne's father, Otto, ten years earlier, recounts in vivid and emotionally honest detail the two years that Anne and seven others, including her family of four, spent in hiding from the Nazis in a small storage Annex above Otto's former business. Published (through Otto's efforts) as *The Diary of a Young Girl*, Anne's story was a deeply human account of the Holocaust, read by millions. In 1997 and 2016, playwright Wendy Kesselman adapted the play for a new audience. Gone was the framing device of Otto Frank's flashback. In its place was a fluid sense of time expressed through radio broadcasts, voice-overs, vignettes, and deft use of the two-tiered set of the Annex. The play begins with the arrival of the two families in their forced refuge, and the first character's voice heard is Anne's, confiding in her diary and the audience or reader.

Frances Goodrich and her husband Albert Hackett collaborated on numerous award-winning plays and screenplays during their long and prolific careers. They wrote *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play* for the stage and later adapted it into a feature film. The play won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1956. Wendy Kesselman has authored or adapted more than sixteen plays and has written for film and television, including a TV adaptation of *A Separate Peace*.

As students read *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*, ask them to think about some of the important themes and messages within. What lessons does the story of Anne Frank have to offer current and future generations? How does the play convey those lessons?

USING THIS READING GUIDE

This reading guide presents lessons to support the teaching of Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett's *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*, newly adapted by Wendy Kesselman. Organized by sections of grouped pages, the lessons preview key vocabulary words and include close reading questions. The lessons identify a key passage in each section that will help you guide students through an exploration of the essential ideas and events in *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*. This passage will also serve as the jumping-off point from which students will engage in their own StudySyncTV-style group discussion.

Each section of the reading guide also includes a list of comparative texts—provided in *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play* Full-text Unit on StudySync—that go along with that section. For each comparative text, the reading guide includes important contextual notes and ideas for relating the text to *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*.

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK: A PLAY

TEXT SECTIONS

- 6 **ACT I, PAGES 9-17: Into the Loft**
Otto and Edith Frank, and daughters Margot and Anne arrive at a secret loft above Otto's former Amsterdam business. They are followed soon after by Peter van Daan and his parents. With the assistance of friends Miep Gies and Mr. Kraler, the two Jewish families prepare to make a home in this closed-off Annex, hiding from the Nazis until the war's end.
- 10 **ACT I, PAGES 17-30: A New Arrival**
Two months after the families move into the loft, dancing and flirting yield to tensions. Anne and Peter tease each other; the van Daans quarrel with Anne and each other; Anne fumes at her sister and mother. One night, Miep and Mr. Kraler come with an urgent request to help Mr. Dussel, a Jewish dentist seeking refuge. The families welcome Dussel to stay in the loft with them.
- 14 **ACT I, PAGES 30-39: Celebration and Fear**
Several months have passed. Anne is haunted by nightmares and finds comfort in her father's love. The families celebrate Hanukkah together, and Anne happily surprises everyone with presents. Their celebration is interrupted by sounds downstairs. Apparently it is a thief. His identity remains unknown.
- 18 **ACT II, PAGES 40-47: Life at a Standstill**
It is January 1, 1944, and time has brought both familiarity and, for Anne, self-discovery. Mr. Kraler and Miep bring a cake to celebrate the new year, but inevitably the families squabble and Mrs. Frank and Mrs. van Daan each long for understanding. Anne and Peter, once at odds, begin to form a bond of friendship.
- 21 **ACT II, PAGES 47-53: A Threat and an Embrace**
General griping about Mrs. van Daan's cooking and the dimming hopes for victory are followed by a more immediate danger: a worker downstairs has made a veiled threat of blackmail triggered by his suspicions about the Franks' hiding place. For Anne, a growing romance with Peter brings euphoria.

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK: A PLAY

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ACT II, PAGES 53-61: In Spite of Everything

Following a chilling radio broadcast about evacuations of Jews from occupied Holland, Mrs. Frank catches Mr. van Daan stealing food, and the families erupt in a bitter feud. Then Miep brings news of the Allies' invasion, kindling dreams of liberation. Their hopes are fleeting, however. Tipped off to the hidden Annex, a Nazi officer and two Dutch collaborators barge in and arrest the group. Otto Frank, the only one of the eight to survive the war, recounts the tragic fate of his family, the van Daans, and Dussel in the camps.

ACT I, PAGES 9–17: Into the Loft

KEY PASSAGE | Act I, pages 15-16

In this passage, Anne is alarmed to see Peter tearing off his yellow star that identifies him to Nazis as a Jew. When Anne warns Peter that he risks arrest if the Nazis see him outside without the star, Peter points out that he won't be going out. Realizing their ironic freedom in concealment, Anne joins Peter in tearing off and burning her star. Anne tries to draw Peter out on possible mutual acquaintances, but he seems to be a bit of an introvert. Anne is delighted to see that her father ("Pim") has remembered to bring her movie star pictures; then she finds her diary, and is touched when Pim presents her with his own fountain pen as a gift.

WHY IT'S KEY

This passage presents important details that reveal the characters of Peter and Anne, individually and interpersonally. It establishes a first step in the evolution of their relationship, perhaps the most important relationship between any characters in the play. It also underlines two basic conflicts in the play: Jews refusing to be defined by their enemies; and the reality of confinement for Anne in her thwarted desire to go downstairs.

Character: Peter's small act of defiance in ripping off the yellow star shocks Anne and then teaches her a lesson in political self-assertion: refusing to be branded. Anne is intrigued by Peter, but comes up empty when she asks about his social connections. He's shy, she concludes. But like her, Peter stands up for his beliefs, defends his territory. What Anne values is clearly revealed: friendships, movie stars, writing, and her diary—a combination of friendship and writing. Also emphasized is Otto Frank's sensitivity to his daughter's character, both in his warning and his present.

Setting: The entire play takes place in one single setting: the Annex where the families hide. This setting is almost its own character in the story, and will greatly influence the behavior of the families—shown in this passage when Anne is chastened for unthinkingly heading downstairs to get pencils. Furthermore, by limiting the setting to one confined space, the play enables its readers and audience members to feel as though they are there in the cramped Annex as well.

Dialogue and Stage Directions: The passage shows the importance of dialogue in defining character; and stage directions in providing context through tone and action. Peter’s careful but strong-willed nature comes out in his blunt statement that receiving the star was the worst day of his life. Anne’s impulsive, narrative style comes through in her recollection of people trying not to look but being unable not to look at the star; and in her fizzy energy over her fame, Mouschi, movie stars, and Pim’s pen. Stage directions provide focus on actions that matter— the burning of the stars; the introduction of the diary and the pen; and a telling reference to Mrs. Frank’s despair in contrast to Mr. Frank’s reprimand.

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Discussion Prompt: Based on the “rules” that Otto explains, what are some difficulties you foresee? How might the Franks and the van Daans struggle in the face of these constraints? Discuss as a class how life in a confined space with no connection to the outside world might affect the Franks and the van Daans in the weeks, months, and even years to come. Be sure to reference specific details from the play in your discussion.

CCSS: RL.8.1, RL.8.3; SL.8.1.A, SL.8.1.C, SL.8.1.D

VOCABULARY

tableau

tab•leau *noun*

A group of people arranged in a motionless pose to represent a scene

The actors posed in a tableau that was supposed to illustrate Washington crossing the Delaware River.

stylized

styl•ized *adjective*

Represented in a free, imaginative way

The company logo consisted of a stylized cow jumping over a half-moon.

conspicuous

con•spic•u•ous *adjective*

Standing out or easily noticeable

Motorists often get lost on the way to the national park, because road signs are far less conspicuous in sparsely populated areas.

ration book

ra•tion book *noun*

A booklet containing stamps entitling a person to a limited quantity of an item, often used during a war shortage

I used the last stamp in my ration book to buy an orange.

betrayed

be•trayed *verb*

Put persons in danger after revealing secret information about them

Homer was a hero when he betrayed the robbers’ plans to steal the Queen’s tiara.

borne

borne *verb*

Endured

“I have borne enough of your rude remarks!” Mr. Dibble exclaimed, seizing the bully by his lapels.

CLOSE READ

QUESTION 1: Why does Peter remove the yellow Star of David from his coat and then burn it?

Sample Answer: Peter is removing the symbol of his identity as defined by the Nazis in order to humiliate him. Now that he has no reason to go outside, Peter runs no risk of being arrested for not wearing the star. In his confinement he is paradoxically exercising his freedom to defy the Nazis.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 2: What is the relationship between the Franks and the van Daans? Explain, citing textual evidence.

Sample Answer: Mr. van Daan and Mr. Frank were business partners before the Nazis made Otto Frank give up his business. Otto Frank thanks Mr van Daan for helping him when he first arrived in Amsterdam and praises him as an excellent business partner.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 3: What event forced the Franks' decision to move to the secret Annex with the van Daan family?

Sample Answer: Anne's sister Margot was called up by the SS and ordered to report to the Westerbork transit camp, which meant being shipped out with other Dutch Jews to a concentration camp. The van Daans were facing the same fate.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 4: What details about Anne's special likes and interests do we learn about or infer from the text ?

Sample Answer: We infer that Anne loves Amsterdam from her reaction to hearing the Westertoren clock, and from her list of pastimes the Nazis forbade the Jews, we infer that she enjoys theater and movies and sitting in her garden. We know that she likes cats, movie stars, the radio, and reading, and infer her love of writing from her care for her diary and reaction to receiving her father's fountain pen.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 5: What rules does Mr. Frank insist the families follow between eight and six, and why?

Sample Answer: Mr. Frank insists on absolute quiet between eight and six—no shoes, no flushing the toilet, minimal movement—because during those hours the workmen downstairs would hear them and their secret hiding place would be revealed.

CCSS: RL.8.1

COMPARATIVE TEXTS

Text: *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*, Scene 1 (1955)

Compare to: Act I, pages 9–11 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play* (2016)

Connection: When *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play* was first adapted by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett and adapted in 1997, the first major change was to the opening scene, which impacted the play’s entire structure. The original Act I Scene 1, included here in its entirety, establishes a framing device in which Otto Frank returns to the Annex with Miep Gies in November of 1945, months after the war’s end. Benumbed, he is about to leave when Miep presents him with Anne’s diary, which he begins to read, fueling a play-long flashback that covers their two-year ordeal in the Annex. In the accompanying StudySyncTV episode, one of the students wonders why the play begins with Otto Frank and Miep rather than with Anne herself. Comparing the original scene with pages 9–11 (through the end of Anne’s voice-over) in the adapted play addresses that question and reveals other likenesses and differences to discuss and write about. (Note: see additional Lesson Plan for this text in the StudySync library)

Text: *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank

Compare to: Act I, pages 10-16 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*

Connection: It was on the twelfth of June in 1942 that Anne received a diary as a birthday present. For the following two years, only the first month of which was spent in relative freedom, Anne recorded her innermost thoughts in the diary, which she affectionately refers to as ‘Kitty’. These excerpts from her diary reveal the Franks’ transition to a life in hiding, beginning with the turmoil the family is thrown into when Anne’s older sister Margot receives a “call-up” notice. Knowing what horrors these notices foretell, the Franks are forced to pack up only what they can carry, and rush into hiding at a moment’s notice. In the play, the diary is often referred to, but its content, on which all events are based, takes the form of Anne’s voice-overs, snatches of radio broadcasts, and dramatizations. How do these two presentations of events—the diary entries and the play’s enactments—compare?

Text: “Amsterdam” by Oliver H.G. Leigh

Compare to: Act I, pages 9–16 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*

Connection: On pages 13 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*, Anne hears the chimes of the Westertoren, Amsterdam’s most famous church. Her mother complains about the sound but Anne loves it. Clearly she remains loyal to the Amsterdam she knew in better times, including its traditions. But the Nazi-occupied Amsterdam outside the Annex in 1942—the year Anne and her family went into hiding—was far different than the Amsterdam of just decades before, a vibrant and thriving metropolis. This geographical essay, written at the turn of the 20th century, offers a travelogue of a “novel and uniquely interesting city” untouched by violence or tumult, a portrait of a time and place that Anne might hear in the Westertoren bells.

ACT I, PAGES 17-30: A New Arrival

KEY PASSAGE | Act I, pages 26-27

This passage consists of Anne's voiceover as she takes refuge in her diary following a quarrel with her mother. The Franks and van Daans have agreed to accommodate a new addition to their group, Mr. Dussel, a dentist. Ordered by Mrs. Frank to share her room with Mr. Dussel, Anne vents her contempt and disrespect for her mother, then confides her excitement at Mr. Dussel's impending arrival. The passage concludes with Mr. Dussel in the Annex, stunned to be safe and among friends. They indulge in a toast to Dussel.

WHY IT'S KEY

This passage clearly shows how Anne relies on her diary to confide and to vent her emotions, including her preference for her father over her mom. Through the convention of rendering the diary through Anne's voiceover, we enter Anne's innermost sanctum and see its therapeutic value as Anne is able to shift her mood to the excitement of Mr. Dussel's arrival. In the dramatization of that arrival, we see Anne and the others as the veterans of the Annex now, a kind of empowerment or a temporary pause before further complications and tensions.

Conflict: Mr. Dussel's arrival comes after multiple overlapping scenes of teasing, quarreling, instances of going too far and resulting fury between Anne and Peter (his shyness vs. her talkative joking), Mr. van Daan and Mrs. van Daan (his cigarettes), Anne and Mr. van Daan (her impulsivity vs. his traditional values) Anne. and Mrs. van Daan (Anne spilling milk on her coat), Anne and Margot (Anne's jealousy) and Anne and her mother. All these contestants are able to call a truce and be on their best behavior with the arrival of the new outsider, Mr. Dussel.

Theme: The themes of strife and relief wind their way through the play on multiple levels. Against the day-to-day strife in the Annex is juxtaposed the hideous external strife of the Nazis just outside, brought in through the sound of police sirens and news of disappearances of friends conveyed by Miep and Mr. Dussel. Meanwhile, each person has his or her own means of relief: Mr. van Daan's cigarettes, Mrs. van Daan's fur coat and memories of beaux, Mr. Frank's reading, Anne's diary. Do the two forces balance each other? Yes and no.

Dramatic Irony: Readers and audiences alike know that Anne Frank does not live to fulfill her dreams of becoming a “famous writer or singer or dancer,” but the character Anne doesn’t know this yet, of course. This device, when readers or audiences know more than the characters themselves know about specific situations or outcomes, is called *dramatic irony*. *The Diary of Anne Frank* is filled with dramatic irony, as knowledge of the characters’ eventual fate adds sadness and poignancy to seemingly unremarkable moments. We do know that thanks to Otto Frank, Anne’s dream of being a famous writer was fulfilled.

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Discussion Prompt: Can you relate to the tensions between characters in this section of the play? Discuss the generational and/or ideological “divide” between Anne and Mr. van Daan. How would you describe their respective worldviews? Can you think of any similar generational or ideological differences you have with your parents, grandparents, and so on? What about Anne’s differences with her mother, sister, and Peter? Share examples as a class, and discuss what these examples have in common with the different points of contention in the play.

CCSS: RL.8.1, RL.8.3, RL.8.6; SL.8.1.A, SL.8.1.C, SL.8.1.D

VOCABULARY

quicksilver

quick·sil·ver *adjective*

Highly changeable in mood or objective
We knew that her anger would soon pass, owing to her quicksilver personality.

menorah

me·nor·ah *noun*

A traditional Jewish candle-holder symbolizing the eight nights of Hanukkah
While my brother lit the candles in the menorah, we sang the blessing in Hebrew.

infuriating

in·fur·i·at·ing *adjective*

Causing anger and exasperation because of a certain behavior or state of affairs
My cousin has an infuriating habit of interrupting people when he’s arguing with them.

feverishly

fe·ver·ish·ly *adverb*

Done with haste, urgency, and intensity
The children worked feverishly to clean up the kitchen mess before their mother came home.

clockwork

clock·work *noun*

The mechanical workings inside a clock, instrument, or toy, symbolizing precision and reliability.
The butler took pride when people compared the smooth running of his household to the clockwork of a fine watch.

CLOSE READ

QUESTION 1: What is the purpose of the long block of stage directions on page 18? Why do you think stage directions were chosen here rather than dialogue?

Sample Answer: The stage directions offer a view of the two families pursuing their chosen means of relaxation: reading, studying, sewing, carving, and writing. It reveals more information about the characters through actions rather than words and lets the reader draw conclusions in a thoughtful way. It also shows a wordless portrait of engagement, escapism, boredom, and impatience, depending on the character.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 2: How does Anne tease Peter? Why does she do it?

Sample Answer: Anne hides his shoes and then plays keep-away with them. She wears Peter's coat and imitates him. She trips him as he's going to his room. She is possibly trying to break him out of his shyness by teasing him, as a means of befriending him.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 3: Why does Anne struggle to get along with her mother? What does her statement that she will have to mother herself tell you about Anne?

Sample Answer: Anne frequently pushes back against her mother's attempts to rein in her "unladylike" behavior. She feels her mother doesn't understand her the way her father does and so is unqualified to make decisions on her behalf. This shows that Anne is headstrong and trying to assert her independence and maturity as she enters adolescence.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 4: What do we learn about Mrs van Daan from her interactions with the Franks? Give specific examples.

Sample Answer: From the way she dances with Mr. Frank, shows her leg, and wonders why she hadn't met Mr Frank first, we can tell she is flirtatious and a bit manipulative, playing off Mr. Frank against her husband. With Anne she is flamboyant and demonstrative when her ego is being stroked. but vindictive and hateful when Anne soils her fur coat She is mercurial and self-centered.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 5: What do we learn about Anne's character from her interaction with Mr. Dussel as her roommate?

Sample Answer: By asking him about Charlotte, she shows she has a natural ability to put people at ease, coupled with an innate curiosity about people. She is gently teasing in her remark about being a suitable companion and sensitive to Dussel's fears and confusion about the Annex. She shows herself to be empathic and to feel things deeply—the tools of a natural writer.

CCSS: RL.8.1

COMPARATIVE TEXTS

Text: *The Underground Railroad* by William Still

Compare to: Act I, pages 25-27 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*

Connection: Miep Gies and Mr. Kraler typify the efforts of a kind and brave few who helped to hide Jews during the Holocaust. But such acts had a long history. Finding a safe haven for Jews like Mr. Dussel mirror the courage and organization shown by Harriet Tubman and many others in the years before the U.S. Civil War, guiding slaves to freedom through a network of safe houses known as the Underground Railroad. Tubman was one of many heroes chronicled in William Still's *The Underground Railroad Records*, which features the accounts of more than a thousand former slaves who passed through Still's quarters as "station master." This particular excerpt chronicles one of Tubman's expeditions to guide a group of former slaves to freedom.

ACT I, PAGES 30-39: Celebration and Fear

KEY PASSAGE | Act I, pages 38-39

In this passage, Anne and company, after allowing the spirit of Hanukkah to relax their tensions, suddenly face the possibility that a downstairs intruder, tipped off to their presence, could easily use the information for leverage with the Nazi police. Feeling more vulnerable than ever, Anne insists that they leave the loft at once. Mr. Frank urges Anne and the others not to give in to panic, and to be encouraged by their survival so far. Then he asks Anne and Margot to sing the Hanukkah song that they started to sing before the intruder interrupted them. The brave stance eventually falters and Anne, in a voice-over, describes her fears as a series of scenes that plague her imagination, especially one in which she is caught between a looming sense of danger and a shrinking window of escape.

WHY IT'S KEY

The passage shows the constant battle the group must fight against the enemy of fear and panic, this time kindled by the intrusion of an outsider—a thief whose knowledge of their presence (when Peter knocked over a chair) constitutes a breach in their defenses. Otto Frank convinces the group to rally those defenses in the form of hope, faith, and togetherness, symbolized by Hanukkah. But an upbeat conclusion to this first act would belie the grim reality of the group's fate, which is foreshadowed in Anne's presentiments of looming danger and dimming hope.

Theme: The opposites of fear and hope are the important themes in this passage. As Mr. Dussel and then Anne give in to recrimination and panic, and a feeling of helplessness dispels the warmth and joy engendered by Hanukkah—Anne's presents, the group's daydreams of post-liberation pleasures—it is up to Otto Frank to pick up the torch, or menorah, of hope. His hope is based on faith—a simple belief that fear is self-destructive and self-defeating, while hope is strengthening and calming. But in this instance, fear, perhaps reduced from panic to uneasiness, proves the stronger force, justifiably or not. The various members of the company show that fear and hope are not absolute, but lie on a spectrum depending on one's resources at the time. No one shows this flux more vividly than Anne, whose emotions take her from nightmare to salvation all in one diary entry.

Context: Hanukkah is the Jewish celebration commemorating the rededication of the Second Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Every night for eight nights, candles on the *menorah* are lit in honor of the holiday. Talmudic legend states that after the Judean guerilla army called the Maccabees prevailed over the Greek forces of Antiochus in the 2nd century B.C.E., they found in their temple only enough oil to light the lamps of the temple for one night, but miraculously the oil lasted for eight nights until a new supply of oil arrived. The practice of lighting the menorah is derived from this Talmudic legend. The song Otto Frank requests, “Maw os tzur,” is a traditional Hanukkah song whose opening lines praise God as the “mighty stronghold of my salvation” and promise rites of thanksgiving when the House of Prayer is restored.

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Discussion Prompt: Why do you think the Franks, van Daans, and Dussel make a point to celebrate the holiday of Hanukkah? Discuss the meaning and importance of this ritual in light of the trauma of war and oppression the group must endure. What does their choice to honor the holiday tell you about the themes of hope and fear, and the roles of faith and tradition in highly stressful situations?

CCSS: RL.8.1, RL.8.2; SL.8.1.A, SL.8.1.C, SL.8.1.D

VOCABULARY

counter

count•er *verb*

Work against, have an opposing effect

Drinking plenty of liquids and getting lots of rest can counter the severity of a cold.

pretense

pre•tense *noun*

A phony claim; an act of pretending to be what one is not

The stranger’s pretense of being a cowboy fell apart when he put the saddle on the wrong way.

liberated

lib•er•at•ed *verb*

Allowed to go free from a state of captivity

After their captors fled, the prisoners were liberated from the damp dungeon.

looms

looms *verb*

Appears ahead in a menacing or ominous way

The deadline for my history essay looms like a growling dog in a dark alley.

impenetrable

im•pe•ne•tra•ble *adjective*

Unable to be penetrated or broken into

Her former friends now met her attempts at conversation with an impenetrable wall of silence.

CLOSE READ

QUESTION 1: What new tension has emerged between Anne and Dussel since the previous section? Why is it a source of conflict?

Sample Answer: Dussel is continually bothered by Anne's loud cries brought on by her nightmares. He's worried that her noise is putting them all in grave danger.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 2: What is the "phase" that Anne is going through in Act I, pages 31–42, and how does it affect her relationships with her parents?

Sample Answer: As she is entering adolescence, Anne has grown more distant from her mother and closer to her father. After her nightmare, she will only talk to her father. She admits to him that she doesn't love her mother.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 3: How does Anne surprise the others in honor of Hanukkah? How do they react?

Sample Answer: Anne surprises the others with presents she's made for each of them in honor of the holiday. Everyone is very grateful for her gifts, and it alleviates some of the tension between Anne and her mother, as well as between Anne and the van Daans.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 4: What accounts for the power of Hanukkah to change the mood of the hiding group? What evidence proves that it works?

Sample Answer: Observing Hanukkah reminds the group of their strong traditions that have historically sustained Jews in centuries of persecution and warfare. That commonality, represented by the menorah candles, the Hebrew prayers, and song, distracts the group from their differences and creates a mood receptive to Anne's gift-giving, a welcome part of the tradition. Even after the interruption of the thief and dire speculation, the Hanukkah song has a healing influence, if temporary.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 5: What point made by Mr. Dussel concerning the thief creates a sense of new exposure and endangerment among the members of the group? How do their reactions differ?

Sample Answer: Dussel points out that the thief, aware of their presence, can sell this information to the Nazi police. Mrs. van Daan scoffs at the idea of a thief going to the police, but Dussel says that knowledge of hiding Jews has valuable bargaining value. Mr. van Daan agrees. Anne panics and wants to leave the Annex, but Otto counsels a firm resolve.

CCSS: RL.8.1

COMPARATIVE TEXTS

Text: *An Interrupted Life* by Etty Hillesum

Compare to: Act I, pages 31-32 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*

Connection: Though she is certainly the best-known diarist to emerge from the Holocaust, Anne Frank was not the only Dutch woman living during the Nazi occupation whose diaries were published posthumously. Etty Hillesum was a Jewish woman who lived in Amsterdam at the same time as Anne, though Etty was in her mid-twenties when the Frank and van Daan families went into hiding together. Etty's diaries and letters were written from 1941 to 1943—when she died at Auschwitz at the age of twenty-nine—and were compiled and published in 1981 in a collection titled *An Interrupted Life*. In this excerpt, comprised of diary entries from June and July of 1942, Etty reflects on her internal struggle to find beauty and hope in her day-to-day life. As Anne struggles with her fears and confides in her father for support on pages 31 and 32, read about Etty's own fears and family relationships as the situation in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam grows steadily worse.

Text: *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor E. Frankl

Compare to: Act I, pages 33-37 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*

Connection: Viktor E. Frankl was an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist who survived the unfathomable horrors of a Nazi concentration camp. He wrote about his experiences in *Man's Search for Meaning*, both a memoir of his own experiences as well as a general discussion of human psychology in the face of terrible suffering. In this excerpt, Frankl explains how he and other prisoners found even the smallest traces of happiness and hope in the direst of situations. His discussion offers a companion piece to pages 33 to 37, in which the Franks, the van Daans, and Dussel join together to celebrate Hanukkah—until the intruder reminds them all of their vulnerability. Though they are confined inside the attic, they are still safe and alive for now, as Otto implores the group to find courage and faith and join with him in a Hanukkah song.

ACT II, PAGES 40–47: Life at a Standstill

KEY PASSAGE | Act II, pages 45-47

In this passage, another fight between Mr. and Mrs. van Daan (over Petronella's fur coat) precipitates hard feelings all around after Mrs. van Daan snaps at Anne and embarrasses Peter. On the pretext of giving Anne her piece of cake, Peter follows Anne to her room and apologizes for his parents. The two teenagers make common cause and Peter confides how important Anne has been to him, cheering him up when he needed a lift. They both open up to each other as friends and Anne is overwhelmed with feelings of sweet longing.

WHY IT'S KEY

Dramatic Structure: More than a year has passed since the conclusion of Act I. Anne's occasional narration (adapted directly from the pages of her diary) establishes some of the changes that transpired in 1943, which the narrative of the play skips. By beginning Act II with Anne confiding her physical and emotional development, the play introduces a more "mature" Anne, thus defining the passage of time and naturally building on her new attraction to Peter in this passage.

Dialogue, Stage Directions, and Narration: Pages 46-47 offers an opportunity to see the three main dramatic formats working together in succession: dialogue (between Peter and Anne); stage directions (describing Anne's wordless, but contagious, dance of happiness) and narration or monologue—Anne's private voice, the voice of her diary, and her "sweet secret." The juxtaposition of the three formats will clarify how they each have a unique role to play: character development through the revelation of dialogue; description of action and unspoken thought; the deeper feelings that emerge through a character's soliloquy or voice-over.

Point of View: Utilizing voice-over narration gives the play a distinct mix of two points of view: first-person and third-person. Since we aren't given this "window" into any of the other characters, we experience events in the attic through Anne's point of view. The result of this hybridization of POV is closest to what would be called, in a novel, a close third-person POV, in which the action is observed externally but colored by the inner thoughts of one of its protagonists.

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Discussion Prompt: How do you think the “change” that Anne is experiencing will affect her in the scenes ahead? What changing emotions and interests might she experience? Discuss how Anne might behave differently than she did in Act I, and the new challenges she will face in her life. What clues does the language in her narration give us about this? Refer to specific lines in the passage to support your insights.

CCSS: RL.8.1, RL.8.3, RL.8.4; SL.8.1.A, SL.8.1.C, SL.8.1.D

VOCABULARY

incomprehensible

in•com•pre•hen•si•ble *adjective*

Unable to be understood

The waiter listed the daily specials so fast he was nearly incomprehensible.

exquisite

ex•quis•ite *adjective*

Delicately or uniquely beautiful

The princess received an exquisited topaz ring on her sixteenth birthday.

longing

long•ing *verb*

Desiring deeply

The leader of the expedition was longing to see his family after a year on the moon.

intimate

in•ti•mate *adjective*

Very close and confiding

We have been intimate friends since I comforted her when we were six years old.

reverie

rev•er•ie *noun*

A happy trance-like state of self-reflection

The teacher called his name repeatedly but he was immersed in a reverie about winning the lottery.

CLOSE READ

QUESTION 1: Do you sympathize with Mrs. van Daan’s possessiveness about her fur coat? Or do you support Mr. van Daan’s belief that she needed to give it up and move on? Explain why you support the position of your chosen character.

Sample Answer: Pro Mrs van Daan: Everyone is entitled to keep at least one important possession to calm them in times of stress. Mental health is more important than money. **Pro Mr. van Daan:** His wife is being selfish. The coat is worth a lot of money and they desperately need the money for food. Pragmatism trumps sentimentality.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 2: What does Dussel accuse Mr. van Daan of doing in Act II, page 42. How do we know his accusations have some merit?

Sample Answer: Dussel accuses Mr. van Daan of eating larger portions of food than the others. Although Mr. van Daan denies it, it's clear from his actions—not cutting a piece of cake for Margot at first; his eagerness to take Anne's piece—that there is some truth to this accusation.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 3: How has Anne and Peter's relationship changed? Why do you think this has happened?

Sample Answer: Anne and Peter have grown friendlier and more comfortable with one another, in part due to the discovery that they have common interests. Furthermore, Anne has entered puberty, awakening a host of new emotions and ways to relate to other people, boys in particular, while Peter, for his part, has become less shy.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 4: How does Margot react to Anne's budding relationship with Peter? Why is Anne worried about her reaction?

Sample Answer: Margot states that she's jealous that Anne has "something to get up in the morning for," even though she isn't directly jealous of Anne becoming close with Peter. Anne is worried because she doesn't want to upset her sister or cause any resentment.

CCSS: RL.8.1

COMPARATIVE TEXTS

Text: *Anne Frank Remembered* by Miep Gies

Compare to: Act II, pages 41-44 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*

Connection: Act II begins on January 1st, 1944, with a special visit from Miep Gies, who arrives with a cake for the company to share in honor of the new year. Who was this young woman? Little about Miep Gies was truly known until the publication of *Anne Frank Remembered*, Miep's own account of how she helped the families hide from the Nazis from 1942 to 1944. This excerpt is an account of their initial days in hiding, as Anne and her family were forced to adapt to a life that was abruptly removed from everything they had known before. Reading this, students can see how life for Anne and the others had changed over the course of a year and a half in hiding—and how one woman's bravery remained constant throughout it all.

ACT II, PAGES 47-53: A Threat and an Embrace

KEY PASSAGE | Act II, pages 49-51

In the immediate aftermath of Mr. Kraler's disturbing report about a potential blackmailer, Anne rushes to comfort her distraught mother. Then Anne hears on the radio that the Dutch Minister of Education is encouraging a collection of diaries and letters as a personal testimony of the Dutch people's courage during the war. She sees her diary as literature. Thus buoyed, Anne dresses for another *tete-à-tete* with Peter, and checks to make sure Margot is not jealous of their budding, but so far platonic, romance. Reassured, not even the impatient Mr. Dussel can ruffle Anne's composure.

WHY IT'S KEY

Dramatic Structure: This passage functions as a transition between two major events—the report of a blackmailer and the kiss and embrace between Anne and Peter. A lot gets accomplished in this bridge scene: Anne comforts her mother; Anne's writing is officially validated by the Dutch government's call for wartime personal records, and Anne clears space for her desires by winning Margot's blessing and not letting Mr. Dussel cramp her style.

Character: Besides serving to lubricate the gears of the plot—establishing the need for love in an imperiled world—the passage clearly shows Anne's character development: her growing confidence and maturity; a new tenderness toward her mom, excitement about herself as a writer, and maintaining a balance between her love for Margot and her desires for herself. She is confident, centered, and self-possessed. Peter is obviously conquering his shyness as he opens up to Anne, though he gives her credit for cheering him up.

Radio: The voice of the radio—informing, reassuring, upsetting, encouraging, and above all connecting to the outside world—is arguably a ninth character residing in the Annex. Sometimes it speaks in the comforting voice of the BBC; other times it speaks with Nazi shrillness and sows despair. Students can examine radio as a ninth character and discuss its contributions to the plot as well as compare Radio to human characters as well as to Diary.

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Discussion Prompt: Much of the play’s structure and conflict arise from the interaction between the “outside” characters and the “inside” characters—the eight Annex dwellers. Discuss that interplay between the insiders and Miep, Kraler, the thief, the rumored blackmailer, and the various voices on the radio. Analyze how it affects the tone and events of the play.

CCSS: RL.8.1, RL.8.3, RL.8.6; SL.8.1.A, SL.8.1.C, SL.8.1.D

VOCABULARY

blackmail

black-mail *noun*

The act of demanding that someone do something (usually give money) in exchange for the demander not revealing secret information
The president of the company ordered all the documents to be destroyed, fearing that one of his employees might attempt to use them as blackmail.

nature

na-ture *noun*

Set of character traits that determines how a person is likely to behave
It wasn't in Kevin's nature to bear a grudge for more than two minutes.

luxuriant

lux-ur-i-ant *adjective*

Lush, dense, and abundant
In the meadow, the horses had their fill of thick, luxuriant grass.

super-fi-cial

su-per-fi-cial *adjective*

On the surface; not at all profound or sophisticated
When describing her brother, she used superficial details relating to his appearance.

enraptured

en-rap-tured *adjective*

Immersed in intense joy; caught in a happy spell
In the film, the characters are all enraptured by the power of love.

CLOSE READ

QUESTION 1: What arguments do the families have about food and the war?

Sample Answer: They argue about the quality of the food Mrs. van Daan makes and how thin Margot is from not eating, compared to Anne. They argue about the slow progress of the Allies in the war, with some grumbling and others counseling patience.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 2: What does the worker’s observation to Mr. Kraler concerning the bookcase imply?

Sample Answer: The worker thinks he remembers a door where the bookcase is. Having also inquired about the whereabouts of Mr. Frank and then asking for a raise, it suggests that he knows Mr. Frank is behind the hidden door upstairs, and is asking a price for his silence.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 3: What does Anne mean when she says that she wants to keep on living after she dies? Why is this hope ironic?

Sample Answer: She wants to write a novel about her experience in the Annex and hopes it will be so famous, she will live forever as a celebrated writer. Ironically, she has indeed become that well-known since her death.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 4: What does Anne mean by her response to the imagined reaction of her friends to kissing?

Sample Answer: When Anne says that everything is different “now...here,” she means that she and Peter are not bound by the strict social rules of their former life; the circumstances of war and their religion have brought them together more intimately, and they have achieved a certain independence.

CCSS: RL.8.1

COMPARATIVE TEXTS

Text: *Lily’s Crossing* by Patricia Reilly Giff

Compare to: Act II, pages 49–53 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*

Connection: One didn’t have to be in Europe during World War II to be profoundly affected by the Holocaust. People on the other side of the globe were touched in many ways by the events before and during World War II—men were at war, and families were torn apart by the violence across Europe, Northern Africa, and the South Pacific. When the United States entered the war after the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, hundreds of thousands of families across the nation would soon find themselves without a father or husband; elsewhere, millions of first- and second-generation immigrants had family members who weren’t lucky enough to escape the Nazi regime. This excerpt from *Lily’s Crossing*, Patricia Reilly Giff’s Newbery-Award-winning novel, features an American girl, Lily, and an immigrant boy, Albert, both of whom are deeply affected by the war. In many ways, the connection between Lily and Albert mirrors that of Anne and Peter, who find comfort and solace in one another during the most trying of times.

ACT II, PAGES 53-61: In Spite of Everything

KEY PASSAGE | Act II, pages 58-59

In a passage that feels a bit dreamlike, Anne, Peter, and Margot are in the attic washing and eating strawberries from a crateful presumably brought to the group by Miep. Downstairs, the other Franks and van Daans and Mr Dussel are also eating strawberries and playing gin rummy. The children banter about the pleasures of strawberries, and whether they will remember each other after liberation. Peter shocks Anne by declaring his intention to give up his Jewish identity in favor of the safety of being a Christian. Anne reminds him that he will always be Jewish in his soul. Downstairs the adults are interrupted by the abrupt arrival of a Nazi officer and Dutch collaborators who have been tipped off to their hiding place, while upstairs the children retain their happy idyll a few minutes longer, as Anne maintains her belief that “in spite of everything,” people are essentially good.

WHY IT'S KEY

Theme: In this climactic juncture, hope and optimism float on a bed of sensual pleasure—eating strawberries—and the idle contentment of a card game. The question is whether such optimism, juxtaposed with the final intrusion of evil into their shelter, is being portrayed as a naive idealism, defeated by the inevitability of cruelty and malice. Or is the celebration of the human spirit never wasted, despite its ongoing struggle against those intent on destroying it? Anne’s credo, despite the justification for giving up her ideals, still supports the fundamental power of the good.

Dramatic Irony: The play creates two layers of dramatic irony in which the characters are unaware of the dire turn their fate is about to take—first the adults, then the children—while readers and audience members know. This in addition to our knowledge that Anne and all but Otto will shortly die in the concentration camps. Anne’s affirmation that “people are really good at heart” seems to reinforce that irony, or is it the basic faith that enables the human spirit to defeat the cynical “joke’s-on-them” view?

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Discussion Prompt: Moments before the SS arrive, Anne famously states, “I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are really good at heart.” How do her circumstances impact the importance of her message? Considering what’s about to happen to Anne and the others, do you agree? Is she being naive or maintaining her faith for vital reasons? Explain your opinion with textual evidence and examples from your experience.

CCSS: RL.8.1, RL.8.3, RL.8.6; SL.8.1.A, SL.8.1.C, SL.8.1.D

VOCABULARY

frantically

fran·ti·cal·ly *adverb*

Desperately or anxiously

She called her dog’s name frantically until she heard an answering bark.

disconsolate

dis·con·so·late *adjective*

In need of comfort; downhearted

The disconsolate child watched her balloon fly away over the buildings.

concerted

con·cert·ed *adjective*

carried out in a group action; coordinated

All the students worked together in a concerted effort to raise money for the storm victims.

cherished

cher·ished *adjective*

Beloved, regarded with great affection

The stuffed tiger you won for me at the fair is my most cherished possession.

collaborator

col·lab·o·ra·tor *noun*

One who supports and works on behalf of an enemy

She pretended to be a collaborator of the invaders, but she was secretly a spy.

abandoned

a·ban·doned *verb*

Gave up on a plan, belief, or idea

We abandoned our support for the candidate after his police record came to light.

impractical

im·prac·ti·cal *adjective*

Not useful or realistic

His combination fork and knife proved to be clumsy and impractical.

CLOSE READ

QUESTION 1: What is the big revelation regarding Mr. van Daan? What does it explain?

Sample Answer: Mrs. Frank catches Mr. van Daan in the act of stealing food from their rations. Previously, they had believed that some of the food was being eaten by rats.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 2: How does Mr. Dussel raise tensions higher during the uproar over Mr. van Daan?

Sample Answer: Mr. Dussel, who sides with Mrs. Frank and is scrupulous about the rules, sets about dividing up a sack of potatoes, which gets on everyone's nerves, especially Margot's.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 3: What news does Miep bring that changes the mood of the group? How do the members of the group react to the news?

Sample Answer: When Miep arrives with the news that the Allies have landed in Normandy, it calms the tensions between the families. The Franks hug and weep; Mr. Dussel turns his math skills to figuring the distance between Normandy and Amsterdam. Anne and Margot talk about the future; Mrs. van Daan reminisces with her husband about romantic times when they had plenty to eat.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 4: What effect does the image of her friend Hanneli have on Anne? What does it foreshadow?

Sample Answer: Anne's vision of Hanneli as she currently suffers in the concentration camp makes Anne feel guilty for feeling hopeful and gives her a sense of looming doom and a vision of a smoking chimney which foreshadows Anne's own death in Bergen-Belsen.

CCSS: RL.8.1

QUESTION 5: What is the meaning of Otto Frank's last words in the play: "All that remains"?

Sample Answer: He means that Anne's diary is all that remains to tell the story of the group hiding for more than two years in the Annex, and that it is all that remains of his family as he knew them.

CCSS: RL.8.1

COMPARATIVE TEXTS

Text: *The Zookeeper's Wife* by Diane Ackerman

Compare to: Act II, pages 54–55 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*

Connection: During the Holocaust, good hiding places for Jews were at a premium—and under constant threat of discovery. The Franks, Van Daans, and Dussel hid in a secret attic above an Amsterdam storefront; others hid in basements, cellars, barns, or anywhere else they could avoid detection, even if it was only temporarily. One of the most unique of all hiding places, as documented in Diane Ackerman's *The Zookeeper's Wife*, was the Warsaw Zoo: its animal cages served as a makeshift shelter for hundreds of Jews during World War

II, under the supervision of Jan and Antonina Zabinski, the Polish-Christian zookeepers. As depicted on pages 54–55 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play* and this excerpt from *The Zookeeper's Wife*, the tensions and pressures of life in hiding took their toll on many.

Text: *Rescue: The Story of How Gentiles Saved Jews in the Holocaust* by Milton Meltzer

Compare to: Act II, pages 59–60 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*

Connection: The story of Oskar Schindler was told most famously in the 1993 film *Schindler's List*, based on the award-winning novel *Schindler's Ark* by Thomas Keneally. Schindler was a German factory owner who, under the guise of allegiance to the Nazi party, saved over a thousand Jews from deportation to the concentration camps. How he did this involved a cunning blend of bribery and deceit, convincing high-ranking Nazi officials that his Jewish factory workers were necessary to help manufacture enamelware and armaments for the war, when in fact—as the war progressed—his sole purpose was to keep them away from the camps. As *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play* comes to its tragic resolution on pages 59–60, Anne's most famous words stand in defiance of her circumstances and offer a bittersweet reminder of those who, like Oskar Schindler, showed decency and humanity in the presence of evil: "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are really good at heart."

Text: *Hana's Suitcase* by Karen Levine

Compare to: Act II, pages 60–61 of *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*

Connection: Though Anne died at Bergen-Belsen in March 1945—only weeks before British troops liberated the camp—her diary endures as a testimonial of the Holocaust. The power of an artifact such as Anne's diary lies in its endurance: though Anne is gone, her diary will always serve as a reminder of the horrors she experienced and the strength of the human spirit. More than fifty years later, a group of children in the Tokyo received a reminder of their own when a suitcase that once belonged to a young girl named Hana Brady arrived at the Japanese Holocaust Education Resource Center, courtesy of the Auschwitz Museum. Like Anne's diary, the suitcase was an artifact that carried a whole life's story within. This excerpt from *Hana's Suitcase* traces the efforts of Fumiko Ishioka, director of the Holocaust Education Resource Center, who used this suitcase to bring the tragic story of Hana Brady to light.

WRITE TO REVISIT

INFORMATIONAL WRITING

Prompt: Research the story of a person not included or mentioned in this unit who died or lived during the Holocaust. A number of different resources are available: the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, headquartered in Washington D.C., is a [good start](#), as is [Yad Vashem](#), the International Institute for Holocaust Research. These are two resources among many. Learn about the person’s heritage, their history, and their experiences, and then think of a creative way to tell their story: a presentation, a website, a poem, a short film, and so on. The medium is up to you, but it should communicate what you learned about the person you researched and what lesson or lessons they have for future generations.

CCSS: RI.8.7, RI.8.8; W.8.3.A, W.8.3.B, W.8.3.C, W.8.3.D, W.8.3.E

PERSUASIVE WRITING

Prompt: As a Romanian-born survivor of Auschwitz who wrote more than fifty books on the subject, Elie Wiesel was one of the leading voices of the Holocaust experience. To prepare for this writing assignment, read Elie Wiesel’s “Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech,” available in the StudySync Library, and reflect on the wide range of experiences you’ve read about in this unit—including Anne Frank’s. In his acceptance speech, Wiesel implores future generations: “If we forget [the lessons of the Holocaust], we are guilty, we are accomplices.” What are some of the lessons that, in your own personal opinion, we must never forget? Write an essay identifying at least three important lessons you have learned from this unit. Your essay must draw from *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play* as well as the supplementary readings. Be sure to cite specific examples from the different texts to illustrate each of your three points.

CCSS: RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3; RI.8.1, RI.8.2, RI.8.3, RI.8.6, RI.8.9; W.8.2.A, W.8.2.B, W.8.2.C, W.8.2.D, W.8.2.F, W.8.9.B



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