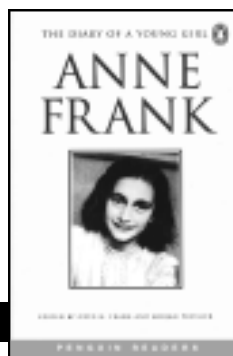


## Teacher's notes

# The Diary of a Young Girl

by Anne Frank



## S U M M A R Y

**T**he *Diary of a Young Girl*, written between 1942 and 1944, is probably the most famous personal diary ever published and one of the most important literary works of the Second World War. It was written by a teenage Jewish girl whose family was forced into hiding in Amsterdam during the German occupation. It is a work which is given extra pathos by the fact that we know something which the author did not know — that her family's hiding place would be discovered and that she would end up being captured and ultimately killed in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

The diary paints a touching and honest account of the feelings and experiences of an ordinary girl growing up in extraordinary circumstances. The everyday concerns of an adolescent girl — family relationships, boyfriends, hopes and dreams for the future — are contrasted with the horrific details of a secret life in hiding under constant fear of discovery. The book has become an important landmark in Jewish literature and history, as well as a powerful weapon against bigotry and racism.

## ABOUT ANNE FRANK

Anne Frank was born in Frankfurt-am-Main on 12th June 1929. Her parents were Jewish and she had a sister three years older than herself. In 1933 the family fled from Germany to escape persecution by the Nazis and her father found a position as a manager in a company in Amsterdam. Anne was given a diary for her thirteenth birthday and began writing in it the next day. She had a passion for writing and mentions in her diary that she plans to become a writer or journalist when she grows up. Anne managed to keep her diary going throughout the time her family was in hiding; her last entry was written just before the hiding place was discovered and soldiers arrived to take the members of the family off to concentration camps. After the war was over, her diary was published and became an immediate success. It has remained in print ever since, and the story of Anne's life has been made into a Hollywood film.

Anne was a bright and cheerful girl but she had few real friends, and while her family was in hiding she had almost nobody to talk to. Thus her diary became the 'best friend' that she never had. She confided her deepest secrets and emotions to the pages of her diary, freely describing her romantic feelings about boys, her sometimes sharp

reactions to the people around her, and her fear and hatred of the war. Most readers of the diary come away feeling that they have really grown to know the lonely girl who refused to be silenced by circumstances.

## BACKGROUND AND THEMES

*The Diary of a Young Girl* gives a unique insight into the situation in which Jews found themselves during the Second World War. It is an important part of the literature of one of the most shocking episodes in human history — the Holocaust — the extermination of over six million Jews at the hands of the German Nazi party. The Nazis believed that the Jews were an inferior race and they pursued a policy of genocide both in Germany and in the countries they occupied. At first Jews were captured and sent to concentration camps as slave labour but eventually these camps became extermination centres fitted with gas chambers with the deliberate aim of murdering as many Jews as possible. Anne Frank ended up at one of the most notorious of these 'death camps', Bergen-Belsen. There is now a foundation in honour of Anne Frank and the Amsterdam house she hid in has become a museum where visitors can visit the secret annexe and see an exhibition on her life and the Holocaust in general.

One of the many ironies of Anne Frank's story is that her family had already tried to escape from anti-semitic persecution and were in Amsterdam because they thought it a safe haven. Amsterdam had had a long history of offering refuge to exiled Jews, the city's liberal reputation dating back to the first wave of Jewish refugees who arrived in the 17th century. Unfortunately, the Netherlands was invaded by Germany in May 1940, the Queen and the government fled to safety in England and the Germans set up an occupying administration which imposed harsh anti-Jewish laws. Despite the strict regulations and harsh punishments, many Dutch people took great risks in helping Jews to escape or to hide from the authorities. In fact, Anne and her family were only able to survive for so long because of the bravery of their friends in Amsterdam.

Although Anne was only thirteen when she started writing her diary, she had a mature understanding of the world and of human relationships. She paints a vivid picture of life in hiding but she doesn't see herself as a victim and doesn't dwell on her sufferings. The diary is full

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of optimism and Anne's sense of humour is obvious from the way she describes her companions and some of the dilemmas she faces. She talks honestly about the changes in her body, her feelings about boys and the petty jealousies and rivalries between herself and her companions in the secret annexe. The book is not simply a reminder of the atrocity of genocide and the suffering of the Jews during the war, it is also a gripping account of a young girl's innermost feelings as she starts to become a woman.

## Communicative activities

*The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the reader, and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopiable Student's Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of discussion and pair/groupwork questions, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access centre.*

### ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

- 1 Ask students whether they write a diary, and if so, why. Ask them to keep a diary while they are reading this book.
- 2 Ask the class to tell you anything they know about the Second World War. Ask students to come up and write a word, a date, or a fact about the war on the board. Encourage students to mention the holocaust and the German invasion of other European countries. Ask the class if they have seen any films or read any books about the war.

### ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

Saturday 13 June 1942–Friday 21 August 1942 (pages 1–10)

On page 1 and 2, Anne tells the story of her family background. Ask students to make up a questionnaire to find out about the families of their classmates. Each questionnaire should have ten questions. Start them off by writing these example questions on the board:

Where and when was your mother/father born?

Where and when did your parents get married?

When students have completed their questionnaires they can go around the room interviewing their classmates and filling in the questionnaires. Completed questionnaires can be displayed on the classroom walls.

Monday 21 September 1942–Sunday 13 June 1943 (pages 10–19)

Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Ask each group to discuss how Anne spends her time in the Secret Annexe. They then decide how they would spend their time there. Ask them to make a list of ideas and to compare it with the ideas from other groups. Then take a vote and make a 'top ten' list of activities for your class.

Tuesday 15 June 1943–Tuesday 14 March 1944 (pages 19–29)

Divide the class into small groups to discuss the following questions:

Why do you think the British and Americans bombed Holland? Is it right to bomb cities full of innocent people in war time?

Saturday 18 March 1944–Tuesday 11 April 1944 (pages 30–38)

Ask students to look at Anne's entries for 19th and 22nd March. Do they think Peter loved Anne or not? Ask all the students who answer 'yes' to form one team and all the students who answer 'no' to form another team and organize a debate between the teams.

Sunday 16 April 1944–Afterword (pages 41–51)

Divide the class into groups to discuss this question:

Anne describes her 'two sides' – the deep side and the light-hearted side. Do you think one side or the other side is the 'real' Anne? Do a lot of people have 'two sides'? Why is this?

### ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

- 1 Set the following as a class discussion or as a homework writing task:  
Why is Anne's diary so important for people today?  
What can we learn from it?
- 2 Ask students if they have been writing a diary while they have been reading *The Diary of a Young Girl*. If so, what have they learnt from this experience? Ask them if they think they will continue to write it.

## Glossary

*It will be useful for your students to know the following new words. They are practised in the 'Before You Read' sections at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)*

**Saturday, 13 June 1942–Friday, 21 August 1942**

**annexe** (n) a separate building that has been added to a larger one

**attic** (n) a space or room under the roof of a house

**bookcase** (n) a set of shelves for keeping books on

**concentration camp** (n) a prison where large numbers of ordinary people are kept, especially during a war, and are treated extremely cruelly

**ration book** (n) a book containing tickets that allows you to buy a fixed amount of something such as food or petrol

**store** (n) a supply of something that you keep to use later

**warehouse** (n) a large building for storing large quantities of goods

**Monday, 21 September 1942–Sunday, 13 June 1943**

**air raid** (n) an attack in which a lot of bombs are dropped on a place by planes

**Allies** (n) the countries, including Britain, the USA and the USSR, that fought together in the Second World War

**arrest** (v) if the police arrest you, they take you away because they think you have done something wrong

**authorities** (n) the people or organizations that are in charge of a country

**invasion** (n) an occasion when one country's army enters another country by force

**prayer** (n) words that are said when you are praying to God

**quarrel** (v) to have an argument

**Tuesday, 15 June 1943–Tuesday, 14 March 1944**

**period** (n) the time when a woman bleeds each month

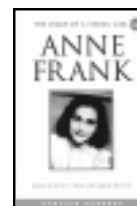


## Student's activities

### Photocopiable

These activities can be done alone or with one or more other people. Pair/group-only activities are marked.

## The Diary of a Young Girl



### Activities before reading the book

Read the introduction and correct the mistakes in these sentences.

- 1 It is 1942 in Holland. It is the time of the First World War.
- 2 The Frank family decide to hide in a secret house.
- 4 Another Jewish family, Mr and Mrs Peter, join the Franks.
- 5 Life in the hiding-place is full of happiness and dangers.
- 6 The Germans took Anne away to a concentration camp with her father.
- 7 Anne died just after the British soldiers arrived.
- 8 The book is also a story about love and hate for the future.

### Activities while reading the book

#### Saturday 13 June 1942–Friday 21 August 1942 (pages 1–10)

##### June 1942 (Pages 1–4)

- 1 Answer these questions:
  - (a) Why does Anne want to write a diary?
  - (b) Where did the Frank family come from originally?
- 2 Anne and her family are Jewish. What restrictions are imposed on Jews in Holland at this time? Make notes under these headings:
  - (a) Clothes
  - (b) Travel
  - (c) Shopping
  - (d) Going out
  - (e) Education
  - (f) Entertainment
  - (g) Visiting friends.
- 3 Why do the Germans make these rules for the Jews? Talk with a friend or write a paragraph with your own ideas.

##### July/August 1942 (Pages 4–10)

- 1 Answer these questions:
  - (a) Anne's father says 'We may have to go into hiding soon.' Why is this necessary?
  - (b) What preparations has her father made for their hiding place?
  - (c) Why do the Frank family have to go into hiding on 8 July 1942?
  - (d) Who gets food for them?
  - (e) How do the Frank family listen to the news?
- 2 Match each name with the correct description.
  - (a) Margot
  - (b) Jan

- (c) Miep
  - (d) Mr Kleiman
  - (e) Mr Kugler
  - (f) Mr Van Daan
  - (g) Peter
  - (h) Bep Voskuijl
  - (i) a friend and colleague of Anne's father
  - (ii) the man whose office hid the entrance to the hiding place
  - (iii) son of Mr and Mrs Van Daan
  - (iv) a 23 year old typist
  - (v) Anne's sister
  - (vi) Jan's wife
  - (vii) an employee of Mr Frank's company
  - (viii) a manager at Mr Frank's company
- 3 Mr Kugler builds a bookcase to hide the entrance to the secret annexe. Can you think of other ways to hide an entrance? Maybe you could use a big painting, or a curtain. Talk about your ideas with a friend or write a paragraph.

#### Monday 21 September 1942–Sunday 13 June 1943 (pages 10–19)

##### September–November 1942 (pages 11–16)

- 1 Answer these questions:
  - (a) How do the people in the annexe manage to wash?
  - (b) Describe several ways in which the authorities search for Jews.
- 2 Fill the gaps in the sentences with the correct words.
  - (a) Anne is studying ..... and Peter is learning English.
  - (b) Anne and her father are drawing their family .....
  - (c) ..... thinks that Anne is spoilt.
  - (d) One day they couldn't use the toilet because somebody was doing ..... downstairs.
  - (e) The English radio says that the jews are sent to ..... at Westerbork.
- 3 Read about the food in the Annexe on page 13. What food would you keep if you were in this situation? Write a list.

##### December 1942–13 June 1943 (pages 16–19)

- 1 Are these sentences true or not true?
  - (a) At night Mr Dussel tells Anne to be quiet.
  - (b) Anne thinks the end of the war will be soon.
  - (c) Anne and her family have enough money.
  - (d) Anne gets into her mother's bed when she is frightened by the guns.

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## Student's activities

- (e) Mr Dussel shares his food with the other people in the Annexe.
- 2 On page 18 Anne's mother says 'I don't want to be angry with you. I can't make you love me!' Why do you think Anne doesn't love her mother? Compare your ideas with a friend or write a paragraph.

### Tuesday 15 June 1943-Tuesday 14 March 1944 (pages 19-30)

#### 15 June 1943-January 1944 (pages 19-24)

- Put these sentences in the right order.
  - Burglars break into the warehouse and steal some money.
  - The British get to Naples.
  - The Frank family have to give their radio to the authorities.
  - Schipol airport is bombed.
  - Anne thinks about her period and the changes in her body.
  - Lots of bombs fall on North Amsterdam.
  - Mr and Mrs Van Daan have an argument about selling her best coat.
- The bombing of Amsterdam was so frightening that Anne and her family consider leaving the Secret Annexe. Why didn't they leave?
- On page 23 Anne says 'I need a friend, and I'm going to try Peter.' Do you think Peter will be Anne's friend. Do you think she wants a friend or a 'boyfriend'? Talk about your ideas with a friend or write your answer.

#### February 1944-14 March 1944 (pages 24-30)

- Answer these questions:
  - What do the Germans threaten to do if the Allies invade Holland?
  - Why is this threat so frightening?
  - Why does Anne say 'I have something to look forward to now' on 18th February?
  - In what ways does Anne feel that she and Peter are similar?
- Look at page 25 and fill the gaps:  
'I ..... about Peter from morning to night. I ..... about him, and see his ..... when I wake up.' Can you explain Anne's feelings about Peter? Write a sentence.

### Saturday 18 March 1944-Tuesday 11 April 1944 (pages 30-41)

#### 18 March 1944-28 March 1944 (pages 30-33)

- Answer these questions:
  - What does Anne think that parents should tell their children about sex?
  - Why does Anne start to think that Peter loves her?
  - What happens when a plane crashes on top of a school?

- Do you agree with Anne's opinions about teaching children about sex? Explain your answer in two or three sentences.

#### 29 March 1944-11 April 1944 (pages 34-41)

- Make a list of five problems which ordinary Dutch people have at this time, according to Anne.
- Why does Anne write 'I thought I was going to die that night' on April 11th.
- What ambitions does Anne have for her future career? If Anne had survived the war, what do you think she would have done with her life? Talk about your ideas with a friend or write a paragraph.

### Sunday 16 April 1944-Afterword (pages 41-51)

#### 16 April 1944-5 June 1944 (pages 41-46)

- Answer these questions:
  - How does Anne feel when Peter kisses her for the first time?
  - Why does Anne want to be rich?
  - What happens to Anne's feelings about Peter during May 1944?
- Read what Anne says about stealing and murder on page 44. Do you think that it is OK to steal when you haven't got enough money to buy food? Write down your opinion.

#### 6 June 1944-Afterword (pages 47-52)

- Answer these questions:
  - What happens in France on 6th June 1944?
  - How does Anne feel about nature? Have her feelings changed since being in the Secret Annexe?
  - Which member of the Frank family survives the war?
  - Who finds Anne's diary and looks after it until the end of the war?
- On 4th August the police arrest Anne and her family. Imagine that Anne wrote her diary for that day. Write her diary for her.

## Activities after reading the book

- Imagine that you had met Anne Frank. Use the photograph on page 39 and the information in the book. Write a description of Anne's face and describe the type of person she is. Write about her likes and dislikes and her way of thinking.
- Did your opinion of Anne change as you read the book? What did you think of her at first? What do you think of her now? Do you like her?

