

STUDY GUIDE TO THE BROADWAY PLAY, *The Diary of Anne Frank*

How to Use This Guide

This guide was developed to help teachers prepare students coming to see the play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and to aid classroom research and discussion afterward. It has been prepared primarily for educators of grades five and up, and designed to enrich classes in history, English and drama, as well as ethics, psychology, language arts and communication.

Before reading the diary or seeing the play, ask yourself – what have you heard about Anne Frank? What do you think you know about her story?

To aid the educator in placing the play and diary in the context of the Holocaust and World War II, a section on historical background of the play discusses the events leading to the formation of the Third Reich and the history of the Holocaust and of the Frank family. The section entitled “Making Connections” offers a selection of ideas and suggestions for classroom activities and individual projects for both middle- and high-school students. A timeline and glossary are also included.

Additional notes, including the history of the play itself, notes on the “characters” in the play, a list of organizational resources and bibliography can be used separately or in conjunction for a range of classroom projects.



Historical Context of the Diary of Anne Frank

Anne Frank’s life and death linked much of the history of the Third Reich and the Holocaust. Anne Frank was four years old when Hitler came to power in 1933. Innocent men, women and children were systematically stripped of their rights and sent to their deaths. Six million Jews were killed during the Holocaust, and more than one million of them were children under the age of sixteen. Anne was one of them.

WORLD WAR I AND ITS AFTERMATH

From 1914 to 1918 (World War I), and again from 1939 to 1945 (World War II), the ideologies and tools of the modern era, such as nationalism, bureaucracy and technology, were harnessed for the purpose of killing on a mass scale.

Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, described World War I as the “war to end all wars.” It resulted in the death of over 8.5 million people in battle and millions of civilian deaths, in addition to the state-sanctioned genocide of the Armenian people by the Turkish government, the break-up of empires, and revolution among nations. Not since 1815 had the map of Europe been so extensively redrawn with the end of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman Empires and the creation of new countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania.

The victors, including Britain, France, and the United States, signed a series of complex peace settlements including the Treaty of Versailles, which the Allies presented to Germany in May 1919 as an ultimatum. It demanded the severe reduction of German military power, payment of reparations, loss of territory, and included the statement that Germany had been responsible for the war.

THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC (1918-1933): An Experiment in Democracy

In 1918, the Weimar government was established and for the first time in its history, Germany was a republic. Even though there was a period of prosperity and cultural achievement in Germany in the 1920s, the Weimar government failed to gain widespread support. German military victories and effective war propaganda left many Germans shocked when they were informed that Germany had lost the war. Many people were further angered by what they considered the harsh terms of the Versailles Peace Treaty. The terms of the treaty and the end of the German Empire both contributed to the popularity of the *dochstosslegend*, the “stab in the back” theory. This scapegoating theory held that the Germans had not been defeated on the battlefield, but stabbed in the back by enemies within. This theory was taken up and promoted by military leaders and by Hitler, who accused the Weimar government, Social Democrats, Communists, Jews, and others of being traitors to the German people.

The Weimar government was unstable and struggled to maintain a pluralist society, at times cooperating with the military to put down political opposition. The 1929 stock market crash (and the ensuing economical depression, unemployment, and inflation) along with continued outrage at the Treaty of Versailles contributed to the growing appeal of radical and nationalistic philosophies. Fascist political parties were born and grew in strength during the inter-war years, from Italy to Hungary, Spain and Germany. In Germany, fascism came to power under the leadership of Adolf Hitler and the Nationalist Socialist German Workers’ Party (Nazi Party).

The Anne Frank Story and the Holocaust in Holland

Annelies Marie Frank was born on June 12, 1929, in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany. She was the second daughter of Otto and Edith Frank. Anne and her older sister Margot (born February 16, 1926), were born in the post-World War I era and they, along with their parents, were German citizens under the laws of the Weimar Republic (1918-33).

Otto Frank, Anne’s father, was born in 1889, in Frankfurt, Germany – where his family could trace their roots back to the 17th century. Edith Frank-Hollander, Anne’s mother, was born in Aachen in 1900. Against the background of the Wilhelminian Empire, they grew up in an era of fierce European nationalism and rivalry along with extraordinary cultural and technological achievements. In 1914 their lives, like millions of others throughout the world, were dramatically changed when World War I began. Among the men who enlisted in the German Army, to serve the German “Fatherland,” were Otto Frank and one of his brothers. Another twenty-nine year old, Adolf Hitler, volunteered in the List infantry of the Bavarian Army and served as a dispatch runner on the front for over four years. For both Otto Frank and Adolf Hitler, the effects of World War I would transform their lives and that of the world around them.

Amidst the turmoil of Weimar Germany, Otto and Edith Frank married in 1925, and Otto pursued an industrial career. In 1929, the year Anne Frank was born, the stock market in New York crashed, and an already unstable Weimar government was further undermined by economic depression, unemployment, and inflation.

In 1933, as the Nazis came into power, the Franks decided to move to Amsterdam in the Netherlands, which had been neutral during World War I and had the reputation of being a safe haven for religious minorities. Otto Frank left Frankfurt for Amsterdam first, to set up a branch of his family’s company called the “Opekta Works,” which produced pectin, an ingredient used in jam.

“I lived in Frankfurt until I was four. Because we’re Jewish, my father immigrated to Holland in 1933...My mother, Edith Hollander Frank, went with him to Holland in September, while Margot and I were sent to Aachen to stay with our grandmother. Margot went to Holland in December, and I followed in February, when I was plunked down on the table as a birthday present for Margot.”
(Anne Frank: *The Diary of A Young Girl*, June 20, 1942)

After seven years in Amsterdam, Anne Frank felt at home in their apartment at 37 Merwedeplicen. She and her sister attended school, went to the beach, and had both Jewish and Christian Dutch friends. The Frank family had made what appeared to be a good decision and were adjusting to their new life.

Like so many other refugees throughout Europe during World War II, the Franks’ belief that they had a safe haven was

shattered when Nazi armies violated Dutch neutrality. The Nazi bombing of Rotterdam killed 1,000 people and within five days the government surrendered under threat of further bombings in May of 1940. Queen Wilhelmina and her government went into exile in London.

The Nazis appointed Artur Seyss-Inquart as Reich Commissioner for the Occupied Dutch Territories. He was an Austrian Nazi who had demonstrated his brutal anti-Semitic methods with his role in the early Austrian union with Germany. At first Anne and Margot were still able to socialize with their friends and attend school, but soon the Nazi administration in the Netherlands, along with the Dutch civil service, began issuing and carrying out anti-Jewish decrees, stripping Jews of their rights as citizens and human beings and isolating them from their fellow Dutch citizens. Otto Frank, aware of what the Nazi decrees had done to Jews in Germany, anticipated as best he could what was going to happen and turned his business over to his non-Jewish, trustworthy colleagues. Anne had to leave her Montessori School to attend the Jewish Lyceum.



“Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees; Jews were required to wear a yellow star; Jews were forbidden to use streetcars; Jews were forbidden to ride in cars, even their own; Jews were required to do their shopping between 3 and 5 p.m. Jews were required to frequent only Jewish owned barbershops and beauty parlors; Jews were forbidden to be out on the streets between 8 pm and 6 am.... Jews were forbidden to visit Christians in their homes; Jews were required to attend Jewish schools. You couldn’t do this and you couldn’t do that. But life went on” (June 20, 1942).

The Diary

“I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support.” (June 12, 1942).

On June 12, 1942, Anne Frank’s parents gave her a small red-and-white plaid diary for her thirteenth birthday. She named her diary “Kitty.” More than seventy years later, this diary has become one of the most widely read personal journals of all time. It has been translated into 70 different languages and has sold more than 30 million copies.

The diary became a way for Anne Frank to express her feelings and dreams, to explore how she felt about becoming a woman, and her evolving identity. Through writing she gave voice to her inner self. She recorded the fear and trauma of living during World War II and the “hunting” of the Jews.

On July 6, 1942, Anne and her family were forced to go into hiding. She wrote on July 8, 1942:

“Margot and I started packing our most important belongings into a school bag. The first thing I stuck in was this diary.... Preoccupied by the thought of going into hiding, I stuck the craziest things into the bag, but I’m not sorry. Memories mean more to me than dresses.”

For over two years, Anne wrote about her life with seven other people in hiding: her parents, her sister, the van Pels family, and Mr. Pfeffer. She also wrote about the beloved helpers, the war going on around her, and her hopes for the future.

On March 29, 1944, Anne heard over the radio that the Dutch government wanted people to save their wartime diaries for publication after the war. Mr. Bolkestein, the



Cabinet minister, speaking on Dutch broadcast from London, said that after the war a collection would be made of diaries and letters dealing with the war. She decided to rewrite her diary entries as a novel that would be entitled *Het Achterhuis*, generally translated as “The Secret Annex.”

“Of course, everyone pounced on my diary. Just imagine how interesting it would be if I were to publish a novel about the Secret Annex. The title alone would make people think it was a detective story.” (March 29, 1944).

As Anne rewrote whole sections of her diary on loose sheets of paper, she gave pseudonyms to the residents of the Annex: Mr. Pfeffer became Albert Dussel, Mr. and Mrs. van Pels became Mr. and Mrs. van Daan, and Peter van Pels became Peter van Daan. The helpers’ names were also changed (only in the 1947 edition): Miep Gies became Miep van Santen, Bep Voskjuil was Elli Vossen, Johannes Kleiman became Mr. Koophuis and Victor Kugler was Mr. Kraler.

On August 4, 1944, the Nazis raided the Secret Annex and arrested the residents. Anne’s entire diary, notebooks, and loose sheets of paper, remained behind in the Annex.

Otto Frank survived Auschwitz and returned to Amsterdam after the war ended. After Otto found out that Anne, Margot, and Edith had died, Miep Gies gave him Anne’s diary. As he read the entries, he was deeply moved by his daughter’s descriptions of life in the Annex, her thoughts and her feelings. He decided to publish the diary to honor his daughter’s wish to be a writer.

It was not easy for Otto to find a publisher for Anne’s work. He was told that no one wanted to read about what happened to the Jews. Finally, a newspaper called *Het Parool* printed a story about Anne’s diary that captured the interest of Contact Publishers, a Dutch company. In June, 1947, Contact published 1,500 copies of the first Dutch edition of the diary. Within a few years the Contact edition was translated into German, French, and English.

The first edition omitted almost thirty percent of Anne’s original diary. Otto Frank deliberately excluded some sections in which Anne expressed negative feelings about her mother, believing that Anne would not want such views made public. Additionally, Contact was a conservative publishing house and was uncomfortable printing Anne’s entries concerning her sexuality.

Otto Frank bequeathed the diary to The Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, or RIOD). RIOD received Anne’s writings after Otto’s death in 1980. Scholars associated with RIOD were particularly interested in refuting the accusations, by neo-Nazi Holocaust deniers, that the diary was a hoax. To prove it was written during the 1940’s, RIOD performed tests on the paper, ink, and glue used in the diary. Tests were also performed on Anne’s handwriting, comparing samples from the diary with her other writings, which included letters with dated stamp cancellations.

In 1986 RIOD published the Critical Edition of Anne’s diary. This edition contains a series of essays about the diary and about the Frank family. It also contains all of the entries Otto and the Contact publishers had removed from the original 1947 edition. Entries that Anne rewrote after March 1944 are placed next to the original entries to show Anne’s development as a writer. The 1986 edition also includes transcripts of the tests verifying the authenticity of the diary as well as some of Anne’s short stories and sketches written in the Annex.

In 1995, fifty years after Anne Frank’s death and the end of World War II, Bantam Doubleday Dell published the Definitive Edition. This edition is based on a new English translation of the original Dutch text, and contains entries that both Otto Frank and Contact Publishers omitted from the 1947 edition. By restoring sections from the original unpublished diary, the 1995 edition makes readers aware of the complexity and sensitivity of Anne Frank, an adolescent struggling to find her own identity amidst turbulent and tragic times. As a writer and a chronicler of the history of her times, the richness of Anne Frank’s voice is conveyed in the Diary.

Ideas for Research and Discussion

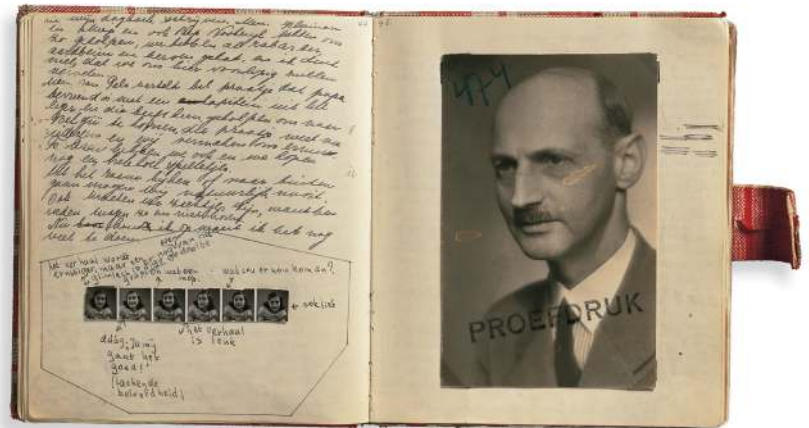
IDENTITY

Personal and Family Identity

“Forgive me Kitty, they don’t call me a bundle of contradictions for nothing! Anne writes in one of her final entries. (July 21, 1944)

What are the different ways that each of us define ourselves? What pieces make up who we are? How do we identify others?

“As I’ve told you many times, I’m split in two. One side contains my exuberant cheerfulness, my flippancy, my joy in life and, above all, my ability to appreciate the lighter side of things. By that I mean not finding anything wrong with flirtations, a kiss an embrace, an off-color joke. This side of me is usually lying in wait to ambush the other one, which is much purer, deeper and finer. No one knows Anne’s better side, and that’s why most people can’t stand me.” (August 1, 1944)



What does Anne mean by this? How are Anne’s images of herself contradictory?

How would you describe Anne Frank?

How does the actress playing Anne in *The Diary of Anne Frank* show the contradictory sides of Anne’s personality?

On June 12, 1942, Anne writes:

“I don’t fit in with them, and I’ve felt that clearly in the last few weeks. They’re so sentimental together, but I’d rather be sentimental on my own. They’re always saying how nice it is with the four of us, and that we get along so well, without giving a moments thought to the fact that I don’t feel that way.”

Have students find diary entries that reflect how Anne sees herself as part of her family; as a daughter; and as a sister.

How would you describe yourself? Have students write descriptions of themselves without revealing their names. Then, collect and distribute them in different order and have the students read the anonymous descriptions to each other and guess who is the author.

Otto Frank was born in Frankfurt, Germany where his family could trace their roots back to the 17th century. How far back can you trace your family’s roots? Have students research their family roots and develop a family tree. Or, students can research their family names and present an oral history on their findings.

Religious Identity

“Who knows, maybe our religion will teach the world and all the people in it about goodness, and that’s the reason, the only reason, we have to suffer. We can never be just Dutch, or just English, or whatever, we will always be Jews as well. And we’ll have to keep on being Jews, but then, we’ll want to be” (April 11, 1944).

The Franks were in hiding from the Nazis because they were Jews. Describe how Anne writes about herself in terms of her identity as a Jew? How do her feelings for her Jewish background change over the course of her years in hiding? Why do you think her feelings change?

“We’ve been strongly reminded of the fact that we’re Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights, but with a thousand obligations. We must put our feelings aside; we must be brave and strong, bear discomforts without complaint, do whatever is in our

power and trust in God. One day this terrible war will be over. The time will come when we'll be people again and not just Jews!" (April 11, 1944)

What do you think Anne means in this comment?

Define the terms stereotype and scapegoat. What does Anne's comment say about stereotyping? About anti-Semitism?

Research events related to stereotyping and scapegoating in different societies.

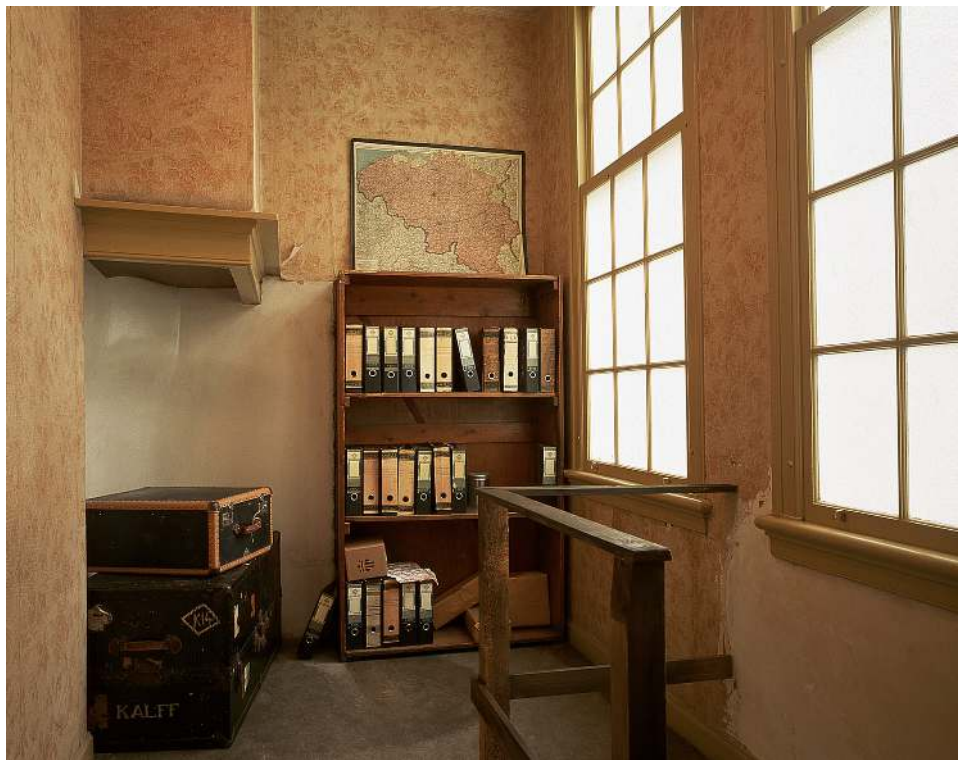
Research hate groups and racial and religious bigotry in the U.S. today. Have students organize a campaign to promote racial, religious, cultural understanding in their school. Their campaign could use posters, newsletters, PSAs (public service announcement) for the school's public address system, etc.

National Identity

"My first wish after the war is to become a Dutch citizen. I love the Dutch, I love this country, I love the language, and I want to work here. And even if I have to write to the Queen herself, I won't give up until I've reached my goal." (April 11, 1945)

What does a national identity mean? What was Anne's nationality while she was in hiding? What does she mean when she writes "Hitler took away our nationality long ago." (October 9, 1942)

Research the term nationalism. How has national identity been used to justify discrimination and war? Can nationalism be a positive source of identity? Overall, do you think nationalism has a positive or negative role in history?



Suggestions for Further Readings

In addition to the memoirs and histories listed throughout the Guide, an excellent starting resource is the online resource entitled, Teaching about the Holocaust by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum which can be viewed on their website at <http://www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-about-the-holocaust>. The annotated sections listed in this guide range from memoirs and diaries to literary criticism and videography. Students will also be enriched by a post-play viewing of the Jon Blair documentary film "Anne Frank Remembered," or the documentary *The Short Life of Anne Frank*, both available from the Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect.

The following is a list of works on Anne Frank and on the Holocaust in Holland:

Works About Anne Frank

- *Anne Frank, The Diary of a Young Girl, Definitive Edition*, ed. Otto H. Frank and Mirjam Pressler, (Doubleday, 1996)
- *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Critical Edition*, eds. David Barouw and Gerard van der Stroom (Doubleday, 1989)
- *Tales from the Secret Annex* (Doubleday, 1996)
- Miep Gies (with Alison Gold), *Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Hid the Frank Family* (NY, 1988)
- Francis Goodrich and Albert Hackett, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, (NY, 1956)
- Willy Lindwer, *The Last Seven Months of Anne Frank* (Anchor, 1992)
- Ralph Melnick, *The Stolen Legacy of Anne Frank* (Yale Univ. Press, 1997)
- Menno Metselaar and Ruud van der Rol, *Anne Frank: Her Life in Words and Pictures* (Macmillan, 2009)
- Melissa Muller, *Anne Frank: The Biography* (Metropolitan, 2013)
- Mirjam Pressler, *Anne Frank's Family* (Anchor, 2012)
- Ruud van der Rol and Rian Verhoeven, *Beyond the Diary: A Photographic Remembrance*, (Viking, 1993)

Works About The Holocaust In Holland

- G.J. Colijn and Franklin Littell, eds. *The Netherlands and Nazi Genocide* (Lewiston, 1992)
- Louis de Jong, *The Netherlands and Nazi Germany* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1990)
- Etty Hillesum, *An Interrupted Life and Letters from Westerbork* (Holt, 1996)
- Jaap Polak and Ina Soep, *Steal a Pencil for Me* (Lion Books, 2000)
- Jacob Presser, *Ashes in the Wind: The Destruction of Dutch Jewry* (Wayne State Univ. Press, 1998)
- Eva Schloss, *Eva's Story: A Survivor's Tale by the Step-sister of Anne Frank* (London, 1988)
- Dick van Galen Last and Rolf Wolfswinkel, *Anne Frank and After: Dutch Holocaust Literature in Historical Perspective* (Amsterdam Univ. Press, 1997)