

Study Guide for the Novel: "Number the Stars," by Lois Lowry

React to Your Reading!

1. When Ellen becomes an adult, do you think she will be bitter? Why or Why not?
2. When Ellen is older how will she remember Annemarie and her family? How might she reconcile her feelings towards the Johansen family with her feelings towards the German soldiers?
3. What kind of dreams do you think Ellen and Annemarie will have, as they grow older? What other long term psychological effects might result from their childhood experiences?
4. Why did non-Jewish families like the Johansen's want to help Jewish families and individuals like the Rosen's, while other families didn't care? What motivated young men and woman like Peter and Lise to risk their lives saving Jews while fighting the Nazi occupation of their country?
5. Only 11 percent of the nearly 1.7 million European Jews under the age of sixteen in 1939 survived the Second World War. There were somewhere between ten thousand and one hundred thousand Jewish children who were hidden during the Holocaust, who were not caught and who survived. *Why was the number of saved children, though significant, relatively small?*
6. What do you think it would be like to have one's childhood cut short at ten years old? What would that mean?
7. If Ellen could extract revenge on the Germans, do you think she would? Why or Why not?
8. Could the Holocaust happen again? Do you think a few "insane" leaders caused the Holocaust or did the majority of people support it? How might a future Holocaust be prevented?
9. What other groups besides Jews were singled out by Hitler for persecution?

Reading for Understanding

1. Summarize the setting of the story (Time, location, backdrop of major events, etc.).

20. What was the significance of the "handkerchief" in the story? Why was it effective? Who developed it?
21. Fully describe Danish *resistance* to the Nazis as described in the book. What types of organized resistance were used?
22. Through her experiences what did Annemarie discover about *courage*, *pride* and *friendship*?
23. How did Annemarie change from the beginning of the story to the end?
24. How do you think the Psalm (Psalm 147), quoted on pages 86-87 connects to the ending of the story? To the title of the story?
25. What effect do you think religious and spiritual faith might have on an individual's ability to endure hardship and persecution?
26. What is the significance of the Jewish New Year for Jews?
27. The author makes masterful use of suspense in this story. What are the most suspenseful parts? What is the story language that helps build tension in those scenes?
28. How do you think Ellen was feeling and what was she thinking when she fiercely promised Annemarie that she would one day return? (p.96)
29. As a piece of historical fiction, what is the relationship between the fictional and "real" parts of the novel?

Key Concepts and Terms

Prejudice (religious, economic, philosophic, racial)

anti-Semitism

Holocaust

Genocide (Define, Discuss causes, examples in history)

Stereotype

Ethnocentrism

Racism

Final Solution

Concentration Camps

Collaborators

Perpetrator

Bystander

Auxiliaries

Scapegoat

Ghettos

Slave labor

Propaganda

Resistance (passive, slowdown, direct, moral, economic, physical)

Kristallnacht

Einsatzgruppen

Optional Activities/Extra Credit

1. *Viewpoint/Perspective*- The student will write a series of three letters or poems. Each writing sample will be from the same person (a family member, friend, etc.). The three letters or poems will expose a significant incident, an event or a tragic circumstance at three different times.
2. Describe an historical event depicted in the novel using a *graphic organizer*. Incorporate into the graphic organizer the following:

- The event description
- Who
- What
- Where
- Why
- How
- Significance

(3) Create a *Found Poem*. A Found Poem is a collection of luminous words or phrases quoted from a piece of literature. When read aloud, these words or phrases selected from the text form a Found Poem that focuses on the essence of the text. The Found Poem can be created after a piece of text or after an entire text is read. The Found Poem should enable the class to return to the text to focus on those vivid words or

phrases used by the author.

Chapters 1-5

1. Begin a *Double Entry Journal*. This Journal should be *continually updated* as you read the novel. The Journal is to be completed as follows:

In column one, copy phrases or sentences from the novel and class reading or discussion that you find intriguing or interesting or important. In column two, write your thoughts, ideas or opinions about these phrases or sentences. Your responses might indicate what the passage means, what it reminds you of, what you don't understand, how you feel about it, or any comment that seems appropriate.

Example:

Passage from Document	Response to Passage
1)...A voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia	1)...This was the first time in history that a group of people created a government where there was none before.
2)...By virtue hereof, to enact constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices from time to time...	2)... They promised to keep freedom and justice by laws, a just constitution and having elected officers.
3)... As shall be thought most meet and convenient for the good of the colony...	3)...Any laws will be made primarily for the convenience of the people of the colony

2. *Split Open Mind*. The split "open mind" represents a character a different time periods of their life. Fill in the head with symbols, images, drawings, and/or words that represent what your character is thinking or feeling.

4. The *Literary Fishbowl* is an activity in which a small group of students engages in a discussion of a literary text *while the remainder of the class observes*. Participants interact with others to create meanings in response to the novel, constructing new insights as they speak and listen to the insights of others.

- A. Form a group of three to four students.
- B. Group members prepare for discussion by reading and annotating the text and preparing notes. In addition, each member will write **three** starter questions that they believe will provoke a rich group exploration of the text.
- C. Each participant shares **one** question about the story. All participants pose a question before any are answered.
- D. Collaboratively, the group decides on **one** of the questions to begin with.
- E. Allow the discussion to develop naturally from the initial question. Return to other questions as needed, pose and respond to new ones that arise.
- F. Continue discussion for the time allotted, exploring the story as fully as possible.
- G. Each participant will be *evaluated* based on the following criteria:

- *Contributes* ideas freely
- *Initiates* and stimulates discussion with provocative questions
- Offers thoughtful and sound interpretive *insights*
- Provides *feedback* or builds on comments.
- *Listens* to others open-mindedly; is respectful of all contributions
- *Encourages* others to participate
- Helps keep the discussion focused; synthesizes or *summarizes* at times
- Provides *enthusiasm*, warmth and seriousness
- Helps maintain group harmony; *Manages conflict*
- Anchors discussion to text.

1. Select one "*React to Your Reading!*" question. Write a brief essay (1-2 pages) in response to your question. Essays will be evaluated based on thoughtfulness, use of supporting detail, resourcefulness, creativity, etc. Essays may be shared during *whole class* discussion.
2. Choose two *Key Concept Terms*. Write the terms' definitions *and* relate your definitions to the events in the novel and class/small group discussions.

Chapters 6-12, 13-17 (Including After Word)

1. Continue making entries in your Double Entry Journal.
2. Do a Split Open Mind representation for your chosen character.
3. Assigned Groups should be prepared to go before the class and discuss Sections 1-5. Please review the description of the Literary Fishbowl Activity to know what is

expected and how group participants will be evaluated.

4. Select **one** "*React to Your Reading!*" question. Write a brief essay (1-2 pages) in response to your question. Essays will be evaluated based on thoughtfulness, use of supporting detail, resourcefulness, creativity, etc. Essays may be shared during *whole class* discussion.
5. Choose **two** *Key Concept Terms*. Write the terms' definitions *and* relate your definitions to the events in the novel and class/small group discussions.

Reading for Understanding

1. Choose **three** "*Reading for Understanding*" questions. Write brief, one to two page essays in response to the questions you chose. Essays will be evaluated based on thoughtfulness, use of supporting detail, resourcefulness, creativity, etc. Essays may be shared with the class during *whole class* discussion.