

Theatreworks USA presents the Living Voices production of

# Through the Eyes of a Friend: The World of Anne Frank



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## **Anne Frank and the Holocaust**

### **Introduction to the Guide**

This guide can help your students begin to understand Anne Frank and, through her eyes, the war Hitler and the Nazis waged against the Jews of Europe.

Anne's viewpoint is invaluable for your students because she, too, was a teenager. Reading her diary will enhance the *Living Voices* presentation. But the diary alone does not explain the events that parallel her life during the Holocaust. It is these events that this guide summarizes. Using excerpts from Anne's diary as points of departure, students can connect certain global events with their direct effects on one young girl, her family, and the citizens of Germany and Holland, the two countries in which she lived. Thus students come to see more clearly both Anne and the world that shaped her.

### **What was the Holocaust?**

The Holocaust was the planned, systematic attempt by the Nazis and their active supporters to *annihilate* every Jewish man, woman, and child in the world. Largely unopposed by the free world, it resulted in the murder of six million Jews.

Mass annihilation is not unique. The Nazis, however, stand alone in their utilization of state power and modern science and technology to destroy a people. While others were swept into the Third Reich's net of death, the Nazis, with cold calculation, focused on destroying the Jews, not because they were a political or an economic threat, but simply because they were Jews.

In nearly every country the Nazis occupied during the war, Jews were rounded up, isolated from the native population, brutally forced into detention camps, and ultimately deported to labor and death camps. Jews everywhere in Europe were unconditionally targeted for death; all were to share the same fate. An estimated 65 to 70 percent of all the Jews in Europe, including virtually all German and East European Jews, were killed.

### **Why Should We Teach About the Holocaust?**

The Holocaust is a watershed in the history of Western civilization and has irrevocably changed our thinking about humanity. If we seek a world in which our children are neither victims nor perpetrators, neither bystanders nor collaborators, we must educate them about the Holocaust through critical, rational thought. The study of the Holocaust, its central significance in our time, and its repercussions might well present the most important lessons our children can learn.

### **Meet Anne Frank**

Anne Frank was 13 when she went into hiding in an attic at the back of a factory in Amsterdam, Holland. Until then, Anne's childhood had been carefree. Out-going, friendly, and fun-loving, Anne was typical: she liked chocolate and ice cream, movies and books, Ping-Pong and bicycling. In school, her teachers called her a chatterbox. She was strong in composition but not in algebra, and she believed her sister, Margot, was smarter than

she was.

A thoughtful girl, Anne longed for a friendship that went beyond fun and joking. When her father gave her a diary for her 13th birthday, she decided that the diary would become her best friend. She called the little book “Kitty.” When told to fill her school satchel to go into hiding, the first thing she packed was her diary.

Through reading this diary, we can understand Anne’s life in hiding. But what conditions changed Anne’s carefree life so drastically? Why was she in hiding?

### **1918-1933: Germany between the Wars**

Anne’s family had lived in Germany for centuries. Although Jews in this predominantly Christian country had long suffered periodic persecution, they had contributed greatly to German life. They were only one percent of the German population, but their success in every field enriched Germany, Europe, and the world.

Jews were composers, musicians, singers, actors, and authors. Jewish scientists were in the forefront of new developments in medicine, physics, chemistry, and technology. Jewish professors taught in the most prestigious universities in the country. German Jews were also great religious thinkers, philosophers, economists, psychologists, and psychiatrists; their contributions revolutionized each of these fields.

As good Germans, Jews were patriotic and loyal. They had fought bravely for Germany in the *Great War of 1914-1918* and proudly displayed their medals of honor. They believed they had been accepted as one with the German people.

Anne and her sister were born in Frankfurt, one of many German cities where well-to-do Jewish families such as the Franks had for years been respected. But Germany was a troubled country at the time of Anne's birth in 1929. Germany had lost the Great War, and its proud citizens felt humiliated by the defeat. The victorious countries, including the United States, France, and England, authored the Treaty of Versailles, a peace treaty that compelled Germany to accept the responsibility for starting the war, give up territory, and pay a great deal of money (reparations) to the countries whose lands it had damaged. Germany was obligated to decrease the strength of its army and its navy so that it could never start another war. It was also forced to restructure its political system to reflect democratic principles.

This Treaty hurt the Germans economically; payment of reparations caused high inflation and unemployment. It weakened them politically; they had to learn the complexities of a new, democratic German government based on free elections. But most of all, it hurt their pride. They had considered themselves to be the most cultured, distinguished, and civilized people in Europe, and now many of them were hungry, out of work, humiliated, and worried about their future. Above all, they were angry. But they coped with these problems and were putting the past behind them when the economic effects of the worldwide *Depression of 1929* swept through Germany and made their situation even worse.

### **The Rise of Adolf Hitler**

When *Adolf Hitler* campaigned for election as Chancellor (Prime Minister) and offered a policy of *Deutschland ueber Alles*--Germany above all else--nationalistic Germans listened. They wanted to see their country regain its power and prestige. Hitler took advantage of this desire and of their anger and frustration and connected these feelings to the long-standing contempt many Germans had for the Jews. Hitler preached that the Jews were the cause of Germany's misfortune. Using vicious anti-Jewish propaganda to promote *Nazi* ideology, he described the Jews as members of an inferior, alien "race" that was polluting the purity of the German, "*Aryan*" race. He blamed the Great War on the Jews and preached that the ultimate aim of the Jews was to destroy Europe.

Many Germans believed him, because contempt for Jews had been a part of Christian culture since the Christian religion began. Christianity taught that Jews had killed Jesus (although in fact the killing was done by the Romans), so some Germans had been brought up with anti-Jewish beliefs based on religious grounds.

But Germans were beginning to see Jews as different and threatening, a reaction that had nothing to do with Christian beliefs. Some associated Jews with the despised political party of the *Communists*. Others considered Jews "outsiders" who had their own languages, Hebrew and Yiddish, as well as different customs, foods, and holidays that seemed strange to non-Jews. Some despised the Jews because Jews seemed to be able to maintain their identity and culture no matter where they lived. Even without a national homeland (Israel was not founded until 1948), they seemed to be truly one people.

### **Nazi Racial Anti-Semitism**

The so-called "scientific" theory that the Jews were a race and not just a religion became popular in the late 19th century. This was far more dangerous than the Christian contempt for Jews, because Christianity encouraged Jewish conversion to its beliefs, but racial *antisemitism* branded Jews as unacceptable outsiders no matter what they believed.

Hitler used racial antisemitism to his advantage, claiming that Jews had strange and repulsive physical characteristics, low mental abilities, unstable and dangerous emotional tendencies, and even different and impure blood. He was a spellbinding speaker who understood his audience. He stressed that Jews were different from Aryans and that this difference was dangerous, telling the Germans what they wanted to hear. He simplified complex issues and promised the Germans a better life and a glorious future without Jews and their dangerous influences. The Nazi doctrine of German racial superiority gave the Germans a *pseudo-scientific* basis for their long-standing anti-Jewish feelings. This ideology demanded the elimination of the Jews in order to have a healthy Germany, and this view became more and more appealing to many Germans.

In January 1933, after the elections in which Hitler's *National Socialist* (Nazi) party won 44 percent of the vote, Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany by President *Paul von Hindenburg*. He established a coalition government and began to dismantle the fragile democracy that existed, eventually demanding and receiving from the German Parliament the power to form a totalitarian government with absolute control in his hands.

## **Persecution of the Jews**

The persecution of the Jews began almost immediately. In March, the Jewish mayor of Frankfurt was replaced by a Nazi, and the *swastika* flag flew from the town hall. In April, there was a state-organized *boycott* of Jewish shopkeepers, doctors, and lawyers. The boycott was brief, but it was the first instance of official antisemitism, sponsored by the government and enforced by the police. Soon, all public servants with at least one Jewish grandparent were fired. The Nazis demanded a quota that limited the number of Jews in all professions. According to the Nazis' beliefs, there was room in the country only for pure white Germans, the "Aryans"; Jews were not Aryans. Jews, the Nazis insisted, competed with Aryans for living space.

It was at this time that the Frank family left Germany. Anne was not yet four years old. **1933-1940:** *"As we are Jewish, we emigrated to Holland in 1933,"* Anne wrote, *"where my father was appointed Managing Director of Travies, Inc."*

Mr. Frank chose Holland because it had remained neutral during World War I; Jews there had not been persecuted; and Holland accepted Jews as immigrants. He had business connections there and had been considering the move even before Hitler came to power. When he opened a branch of his business in Amsterdam, the Franks settled comfortably into their new community.

Throughout the 1930s their life in Holland was happy. Anne and Margot attended an excellent private school, and the family had friends within a wide circle of immigrants like themselves as well as Dutch citizens.

But the decision to leave Germany wasn't so easy for many other Jews. Some watched the rise of the Nazis with concern, but didn't, or couldn't, believe that anything terrible would come of it. Although the Jews were their main target, the Nazis were preaching hatred for certain non-Jewish Germans as well. Nazis arrested people who disagreed with them politically. They categorized gypsies, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, the mentally ill, and the mentally retarded as other "undesirables." Surely Hitler's ravings against so many of Germany's minorities would be proof that he was unfit for leadership, the Jews hoped. Surely a majority of decent Germans would not let the Nazis stay in power. Many Jews who believed this chose to wait out the hard times rather than leave their beloved homeland.

Others were concerned but had no way to earn a living in a new country. They agonized about where to go or whether to go at all. Life continued to worsen for the Jews, but discrimination progressed slowly, so they tried to ignore it. But as the Nazis became more powerful and continued to enact anti-Jewish laws, Jews could no longer ignore the antisemitism that now governed their lives.

## **The Nuremberg Laws**

In 1935 the Nuremberg Laws were passed. These "Race Laws" were designed to perpetuate the myth that Jews were a race, different from and inferior to other Germans, and to identify and separate German Jews from all other

Germans. These laws stripped Jews of their citizenship. They could no longer vote, hold office, or fly the German flag. They could not marry non-Jews on the grounds that Jews were “of impure blood”; intermarriage would “pollute” Aryan pure blood. By law and by threats, Jews were segregated politically, economically, and socially from their non-Jewish friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. Unable to participate in daily German life, Jews were forced to become the outsiders that many Germans had always considered them.

In March 1938, Germany’s army, which Hitler had gradually rebuilt, entered Austria and made it a part of the German empire. There was little opposition from the Austrian people, who readily accepted the racial antisemitism preached in Germany.

### **The Evian Conference**

By now the persecution of the Jews was known throughout the world. In July 1938, at the suggestion of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, officials from 32 countries convened in the French town of Evian to see how they could help. The delegates heard eyewitness reports and facts and figures about the Jews’ worsening plight. But no significant help was forthcoming, not even from the United States. Hitler wanted Germany free from Jews: “*Judenrein.*” The Jews wanted to leave. But there was no place they could go.

### ***Kristallnacht*: Night of Pogroms**

Throughout 1938, the Nazis intensified their persecution of the Jews. During the evening of November 9-10, 1938, throughout Germany and Austria, Nazis smashed Jewish shop windows, destroyed Jewish homes, desecrated and burned virtually every synagogue, murdered close to 100 innocent Jews, and arrested 30,000 men and boys and put them in concentration camps. The Nazis called this night of terror “*Kristallnacht*,” the night of broken glass. Newspapers in many countries reported full accounts of the events. After *Kristallnacht*, the remaining Jews in Germany and Austria tried to leave, but borders were closed to them and quota systems of other countries limited or prohibited them from entering.

### **World War II Begins**

In September 1939 Hitler invaded Poland. France and Great Britain declared war on Germany, beginning *World War II*. Within a year most of the other countries of Eastern Europe would be conquered by the German armies. “Germany above all else” was Hitler’s promise in the early 1930s; now he would try to make that promise a reality.

War is always a time of tremendous sacrifice and distress for innocent civilians, who suffer indirectly as their armies fight one another. But the Nazi assault against the Jews was a war that had as its primary target not armies, not armed soldiers, but every Jewish man, woman, child, and infant in Europe. These innocent civilians were the intentional targets simply because they were Jews.

In less than a year, Germany invaded and occupied Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, and

Holland. In all of these countries, Nazi race laws against the Jews were put into effect and strictly enforced. Thus Jews who sought refuge in Holland now faced the same persecution they had left behind in Germany.

**1939-1943:** *“After May 1940 good times rapidly fled,”* wrote Anne. *“First the war, then the **capitulation**, followed by the arrival of the Germans, which is when the sufferings of us Jews really began. Anti-Jewish **decrees** followed each other in quick succession. Jews must wear a yellow star, Jews must hand in their bicycles, Jews are banned from trains and are forbidden to drive. Jews are only allowed to do their shopping between three and five o'clock and then only in shops which bear the sign 'Jewish shop.' Jews must be indoors by eight o'clock and cannot even sit in their own gardens after that hour. Jews are forbidden to visit theaters, cinemas, and other places of entertainment. Jews may not take part in public sports. Swimming baths, tennis courts, hockey fields, and other sports grounds are all prohibited to them. Jews may not visit Christians. Jews must go [only] to Jewish schools, and many more restrictions of a similar kind [were imposed].”*

The yellow star was a Jewish symbol, the six-pointed Star of David. The Nazis tried to use it as a mark of shame, a badge that would make all Jews visible. First used in Poland and then in virtually every country invaded by the Nazis, the yellow badge effectively separated Jews from the rest of the population and also made them targets for Nazi brutality.

Still, the Franks and other Dutch Jews were safer than those in other European countries. The German troops advanced through Eastern Europe, rounding up and deporting Jews, forcing them into *ghettos* and brutal *labor camps*. In 1941, Hitler invaded Russia. There, his specially-trained “death squads” began to shoot hundreds of thousands of Russian Jews, throwing their bodies into mass graves.

Mr. Frank worried about the Nazis’ strengthening grip on Europe and the increasing restrictions on Jews in Amsterdam. He realized his choices were severely limited: his family could stay where they were and hope to avoid the Nazis; they could try to leave Amsterdam; or they could go into hiding and make the Nazis think they had left the country. From April to December 1941, Mr. Frank tried desperately to get into the United States, writing to friends and relatives, “It is for the sake of the children mainly that we have to care for. Our own fate is of less importance.” But US immigration was restricted, and he was not granted a visa. He sought haven in Cuba and received a visa on December 1, 1941, but Germany declared war on the United States and the visa was canceled. So Mr. Frank made the best decision he could under the circumstances: the family would hide.

### **Going into Hiding**

*July, 1942: “Daddy began to talk of us going into hiding.... He said, 'You know that we have been taking food, clothes, furniture to other people for more than a year now. We don't want our belongings to be seized by the Germans, but we certainly don't want to fall into their clutches ourselves. So we shall disappear of our own accord, and not wait until they come and fetch us.’”*

### **Help from Dutch Christians**

To succeed, the Franks would need a good deal of help from non-Jews who were willing, at great risk to themselves, to bring them food, supplies, and news. They found these people within their circle of good Dutch Christian friends: two young women, Miep Gies and Elli Vossen, and two older men, Mr. Kraler and Mr. Koophuis. Together, they found and prepared a hiding place in the attic of Mr. Frank's small spice factory. The Franks had planned to go into hiding on July 16, but Margot received from the Nazis a *call-up notice* to report to a labor camp. To avoid this, the Franks entered their hiding place ten days early.

*July 8, 1942*

*"Into hiding--where would we go, in a town, or the country, in a house or a cottage, when, how, where...? These were the questions I was not allowed to ask, but I couldn't get them out of my mind. Margot and I began to pack some of our most vital belongings.... The first thing I put in was this diary, then hair curlers, handkerchiefs, schoolbooks, a comb, old letters; I put in the craziest things with the idea that we were going into hiding. But I'm not sorry; memories mean more to me than dresses."*

The Franks were soon joined in hiding by another family, the Van Daan and their 15-year-old son, Peter. Several months later, as conditions worsened for the Jews, they offered to take in someone else, a dentist named Albert Dussel. Their helpers arranged it.

Although Anne was often depressed by being in hiding, she wrote about being luckier than other Jews.

*"Countless friends and acquaintances have gone to a terrible fate. Evening after evening...the Germans ring at every front door to inquire if there are any Jews living in the house. If there are, then the whole family has to go at once.... No one has a chance of evading them unless one goes into hiding.... I often see rows of good, innocent people accompanied by crying children, walking on and on...bullied and knocked about until they almost drop. No one is spared--old people, babies, expectant mothers, the sick--each and all join in the march of death."*

These were the round-ups, the gathering of Jews for *deportation to concentration camps*. Anne was safe; others were not. She wrote, *"How fortunate we are here, so well cared for and undisturbed....I feel wicked sleeping in a warm bed, while my dearest friends have been knocked down or have fallen into a gutter somewhere out in the cold night.... And all because they are Jews!"*

Miep and the other helpers, as well as *clandestine* radio broadcasts, kept Anne and her family informed. In October 1942, she heard about deportation camps. She wrote, *"These people are...being loaded into cattle trucks and sent to Westerbork [a transit camp where people were detained until they were deported to death camps in Eastern Europe]...If it is as bad as this in Holland, whatever will it be like in the distant and barbarous regions they are sent to? We assume that most of them are murdered. The English radio speaks of them being gassed."*

This incomprehensible news was true. Jews were sent to death camps, where they were killed by poison gas.

### **The effects of the War on the Dutch Civilians**



Anne wrote frequently about the suffering of Dutch civilians and the effects of the war on the rest of the world.

*January 13, 1943*

*“The Dutch people are anxious, too; their sons are being sent to Germany. Everyone is afraid....The children here run about in just a thin blouse and clogs; no coat, no hat, no stockings, and no one helps them. Their tummies are empty, they chew an old carrot to stop the [hunger] pangs, go from their cold homes out into the cold street.... And every night hundreds of planes fly over Holland.... No one is able to keep out of it; the whole globe is waging war.”*

The war against the Jews continued and intensified in the midst of the world war.

*January, 1943*

*“Day and night more of those poor miserable people are being dragged off, with nothing but a **rucksack** and a little money. On the way they are deprived even of these possessions. Families are torn apart, the men, women, and children all being separated. Children coming home from school find that their parents have disappeared. Women return from shopping to find their homes shut up and their families gone.”*

The military war continued and intensified as well. The German army was losing ground but the repression of the Dutch people increased:

*July, 1943*

*“North Amsterdam was very heavily bombed on Sunday,” Anne wrote. “Whole streets lie in ruins.... There are two hundred dead and countless wounded; the hospitals are crammed. You hear of children lost in the smoldering ruins, looking for their parents.”*

### **Anne Despairs**

*1944: February: “I hear nothing but...talk the whole day long, invasion and nothing but invasion, arguments about suffering from hunger, dying, bombs, fire extinguishers, sleeping bags, Jewish vouchers, poisonous gasses, etc. None of it is exactly cheering.”*

When the adults spoke worriedly of the plight of the Jews, Anne, at 15, heard terrible things and was deeply affected by them. Her protectors tried valiantly to keep her spirits up. But they couldn't keep the grim news from her, and Anne felt despair. She confided to her diary in February 1944, *“I have now reached the stage that I don't care much whether I live or die. The world will still keep on turning without me; what is going to happen, will happen, and anyway it's no good to resist.”*

The Nazis were taking anything that could be of value to the German war effort, and this caused severe shortages among Dutch civilians. The food shortage was a problem for children outside, for Jews in hiding, and for those who helped the Jews using illegally-obtained food coupons.

*March, 1944*

*“The people from whom we obtain food coupons have been caught, so we just have our five ration cards and no extra coupons, and no fats....From tomorrow we shall not have a scrap of fat, butter, or margarine left....Our supper today consists of hash made from kale [a cabbage-like vegetable]....Ugh! the mere thought of eating that muck makes me feel sick.”*

### **The War and the War against the Jews Intensify**

Although the military war was going badly for the Germans, the Nazis intensified their efforts to annihilate the Jews. They requisitioned trains that could have carried their own soldiers and used them instead to transport Jews to death camps. In March the Nazis invaded Hungary.

In Holland, Dutch antisemitism was on the rise. In May, 1944, Anne wrote, *“To our great horror and regret we hear.... That...the Christians blame the Jews...for the fact that...a great many Christians have suffered terrible punishments and a dreadful fate....This morning our vegetable man was picked up for having two Jews in his house.”*

This antisemitism, however, contrasted with the attitudes of those who continued to risk their lives to help Jews, as Anne acknowledged:

*“It is amazing how much noble, unselfish work these people are doing, risking their own lives to help and save others. Our helpers...have pulled us through... till now and we hope they will bring us safely to dry land.... Never have we heard one word of the burden which we certainly must be to them, never has one of them complained of all the trouble we give....That is something we must never forget; although others may show heroism in the war or against the Germans, our helpers display heroism in their cheerfulness and affection.”*

### **Hopes of Liberation**

By May 1944 there was good news. Russian troops had defeated the German army in Russia. Americans had landed in Italy and were defeating the Germans there, too. On June 6, 1944, American and British forces landed on the coast of Normandy, France. General Eisenhower, the Commander of the Allied Forces, announced, “The year 1944 is the year of complete victory.” Anne's optimism returned.

*“Would the long-awaited liberation that has been talked of so much, but which still seems too wonderful, too much like a fairy tale, ever come true? Could we be granted victory this year? We don't know yet, but hope is revived within us; it gives us fresh courage, and makes us strong again.”*

But Anne's hope was not to be realized. German resistance was strong and the Allies did not advance as rapidly or successfully as expected. The killing continued throughout 1944 as the Nazis increased their efforts to destroy every Jew in Europe.

### **The Families are Discovered**

The Nazis were aided by *collaborators*, who reported Jews in hiding in return for some small payment from the Nazi secret police. It was such a Dutch informer who provided the Nazis with information about the Franks and the

others with them. On August 4, 1944, a truck stopped in front of the factory. The police marched straight to the third-floor bookcase that concealed the hiding place and demanded access. Outside, Miep and Mr. Kraler could do nothing to help; inside, the families could do nothing to resist arrest.

Upstairs, the Nazis demanded valuables; they found silverware and a Chanukah menorah. They emptied Mr. Frank's briefcase onto the floor to make room for the silver. The soldiers had been ordered to leave no documentation behind. But when they emptied the briefcase, Anne's diary fell to the floor and remained there as the group was taken away.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank, Anne, Margot, Mr. and Mrs. Van Daan, Peter, and Mr. Dussel were forced downstairs and into the truck. They were taken to Nazi police headquarters in Amsterdam and then sent to Westerbork, the transit camp, to wait for deportation to a death camp.

On September 5, 1944, the Allied armies liberated southern Holland, but that success came too late to save Anne. She and her family were already aboard a freight train along with the last thousand Jews to be shipped out of Holland.

### **September 1944: Deportation and the Death Camps**

Each freight car, jammed with 75 people, had only a small barred window, and the doors were sealed shut. For three days the train traveled slowly. On the third night it stopped at *Auschwitz*, the infamous *death camp* in Poland. As the weak, hungry, terrified people were pulled out of the cars, they were met by searchlights, police dogs, and shouts of Nazis who separated the men from the women. Here Anne said goodbye to her father, not knowing it would be for the last time.

Life in Auschwitz almost defies description. According to survivors who were with Anne, she was depressed by the horror and painfully aware of the deaths around her. But she remained relatively strong, and in October 1944 she and Margot were sent to *Bergen-Belsen*, a camp in Germany. Mrs. Van Daan was sent to Bergen-Belsen in November.

Mr. Van Daan died in the gas chambers in Auschwitz. Mrs. Frank remained in Auschwitz, where she died of disease and starvation. Mr. Dussel and Peter died in different camps in Germany.

### **1945 and After**

In January 1945 the Allies reached Germany, and the Russians liberated Auschwitz and freed the remaining prisoners, including Mr. Frank, about two weeks after Mrs. Frank's death.

But there was no hope for the people at Belsen, where there was chaos, starvation, and *typhus*. Mrs. Van Daan died there, and in March 1945 Margot and Anne died within a few days of one another, just two months before the Allies defeated the Nazis.

After regaining strength, Mr. Frank made his way back to Amsterdam, stopping to inquire if other refugees had news of his family. Only after he returned home did he receive official notification that his wife and daughters had

died. Miep and Elli, who had been saving Anne's notebooks and diary for her, gave them now to Mr. Frank. They were all that remained of his life during the Holocaust.

In April, Holland was completely liberated by the Allies, and the Nazis and their collaborators were arrested. On April 30, 1945, Hitler's reign of terror came to an end: he died, not at all like the conquering hero he wanted to be, but by committing suicide. In May, the German Army surrendered unconditionally.

By June of 1945, World War II ended, and with it, the war against the Jews. Six million Jews had been killed. They were not traitors or enemies of the state; they were not at war with Germany: they were killed simply and solely because they were Jewish. One and one-half million of those murdered Jews were children.

## After Viewing “Through the Eyes of a Friend”:

### Considerations for Students and Teachers

#### I. Questions for Review, Reflection, and Research

##### Review:

1. What circumstances existed in Germany after World War I that again brought to the surface the hostility of Germans toward Jews?
2. As Hitler rose to power, what were the signs that life for the Jews was going to worsen?
3. What percentage of the 70 million Germans were Jews? What made the Germans come to believe that such a small group had to be eliminated from Germany?
4. What were the results of the Evian Conference?
5. What facts make it clear that the war being waged against the Jews was an action separate from the military war? How did the military war make the assault on the Jews easier for the Nazis?
6. Food shortages affected the Dutch population. What were the implications of this for the Jews in hiding? For their protectors?

##### Reflect:

1. The anti-Jewish decrees came slowly at first. How do you think Jews and non-Jews would have reacted if they had come all at once?
2. How do you think Hitler interpreted the results of the Evian Conference?
3. We read today that terrible things are happening to people in other countries. Yet we often do nothing in response, even if we feel saddened or upset. Why does this happen?
4. Should collaborators have been punished after the war? Explain.
5. Mr. Frank originally showed the diary only privately as a memorial to his family. What are your thoughts about his decision to have it published?
6. Anne’s diary is read the world over. Why is this important? What accounts for its vast popularity?

##### Research:

1. What is propaganda? How did it help promote Nazi ideology? Explore its uses in Nazi Germany as a weapon against the Jews.
2. What were the demands of the Treaty of Versailles? How did they contribute to the decline of Germany and the rise of antisemitism?
3. Examine the Nuremberg Laws and explain how each furthered the Nazi goal of forcing the Jews to leave

Germany.

4. The Evian Conference was convened to explore the possibilities of offering the Jews a refuge. How can you explain the failure of the conference to succeed in its goal?

5. Research and discuss the rescue activities of Joop Westerweel, Corrie ten Boom, and Marion Pritchard, other Dutch Christians who helped Jews in Holland.

6. Fortunately, we have the testimony of many victims and survivors. Discuss the study of diaries as primary source material. Why are they so valuable? Read other Holocaust diaries or memoirs written by survivors and compare them with Anne's diary. Some good choices of memoirs are *The Upstairs Room* by Johanna Reiss, *Dry Tears* by Nechama Tec, *Hide and Seek* by Ida Vos, *Touch Wood* by Renee Roth Hano, *A Bag of Marbles* by Jo Joffo, *Behind the Secret Window* by Nelly S. Toll, and *Clara's Story* by Clara Isaacman.

## **II. Additional Thoughts and Questions for Deliberation and Discussion:**

*"I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquility will return again."* When Anne wrote those words, she did not know her fate. When we look at our world today, not knowing our future, do we share Anne's optimism?

As we learn about the darkness that shadowed the world during the Holocaust, we think about our hopes for our future and the ways we can help realize those hopes. When you ask questions that arise from your study, you will discover no easy answers. Remember, though, that the Holocaust was unique; nothing like it had ever occurred before. We are all trying to understand how and why it happened, and why other genocides continue today in spite of everything we know about the causes and consequences of the Holocaust.

People who lived during the Holocaust assumed, or were forced to take, different roles. Some were perpetrators, who did the round-ups, the deportations, and the murders. Many were bystanders, who did nothing to help the targeted people. A few were helpers or rescuers, who helped or saved Jews. There were the Jews themselves: babies, children, teens, young adults, parents, the elderly. The questions that follow help you to consider each of these groups as you think about what the Holocaust means to you today.

1. Many people mistakenly think that the Nazis were inhuman monsters or insane. But the perpetrators were ordinary people with spouses and children and pets whom they loved. They were often highly educated: many were MDs and PhDs. They knew perfectly well what they were doing. They were not monsters but humans, basically just like us. If we accept that Nazis were more or less ordinary people, what do we have to face about ourselves?

2. The bystanders, by their unwillingness to get involved, aided in the destruction of millions of innocent people. Were those people themselves changed by having stood by? Could more people have tried to help the Jews? If more good people had helped, could the Nazis have been stopped?

3. Some people helped the Jews by offering them forged identification, food, or shelter for a night when they were on the run from the Nazis. Others did even more, building hiding places for them to stay for months or even years at a time and caring for them, just as Miep Gies and her friends did for the Franks. These rescuers were the few brave souls who risked their lives to save others. How do their actions challenge us to consider our responsibility to others in need? Are we our “brother’s keeper”?

4. The Jews were persecuted and destroyed simply because they were Jews. How does their plight move us to consider the consequences of the racism that exists in our society today and the genocide occurring in other countries? Does our awareness of the murder of innocent people end our innocence about human nature?

5. On July 15, 1944, Anne wrote, *“It’s really a wonder that I haven’t dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart....I can hear the ever-approaching thunder, which will destroy us too.... In the meantime, I must uphold my ideals, for perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to carry them out.”* Do you believe that “in spite of everything, people are really good at heart”? Do you feel that in our world today your ideals may be “impossible to carry out” as much as you feel a need to uphold them? Explain.

6. Tragically, religious and racial hatred of “the other” still causes death and despair around the world. What is one international event that you are now learning about that is fueled by hatred? Do you have an idea for helping the people who are being killed by such hatred? How can we as individuals act to try to repair whatever part of our world is torn by prejudice and racism?

## **For the Teacher: Background Notes: The Jews in Holland during World War II**

Germany invaded Holland on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1940. It was a complete surprise: Holland expected to remain neutral as it was during World War I. The Nazi occupation was swift. In days all important areas of the country were seized. The prime minister and his cabinet fled to England and set up a government-in-exile. After fierce fighting near Arnhem and the bombing of Rotterdam, Holland was forced to surrender. Nazi rule brought identity cards, food rationing, black-outs, and persecution of Dutch Jews.

The Dutch Jewish population in 1940 was about 140,000, of whom 24,000 were refugees. Some 90,000 Jews lived in Amsterdam, the largest Jewish community in Holland. Most were poor; a minority were professionals. Between May 1940 and the summer of 1941 the Nazis gradually removed Jews from public life.

Although Jews had lived reasonably freely in Holland for centuries, antisemitism was not unknown. A Dutch Nazi party thrived in the 1930s; its members welcomed their German counterparts. Thousands of Dutch men assisted by rounding up Jews, sometimes as brutally as the Germans.

The first mass arrests of Jews began in February 1941. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, 400 Jewish men and boys were grabbed from streets and homes, beaten, and taken away. No one knew where they had been taken. In June another 230 Jews disappeared. To protest, the Dutch, and especially its Communist party, organized a two-day strike, one of the most significant acts of West European resistance during the war. Nazi troops moved in to restore order.

Eventually Jews were excluded from schools and compelled to wear the yellow star. By July 1942 unemployed Jewish men, forced to leave their homes, were told they would work in Eastern Holland. In fact, they were taken to concentration camps. This was when Anne Frank's family decided to go into hiding.

In 1944, after two years in hiding, the Frank family was betrayed, tracked down, arrested, and taken to Auschwitz.



## Glossary

1. Annihilate: To destroy totally and completely.
2. Antisemitism: An extreme and irrational social rejection of Jews based on religious, economic, and especially racial hostility.
3. Aryan: A non-Jewish Caucasian German considered by the Nazis to be racially superior to all other people.
4. Boycott: An economic sanction against all Jewish shopkeepers and service people organized by the Nazis on April 1, 1933.
5. Call-up notice: A summons from the Nazis to various citizens in occupied countries to report for work in labor camps in Germany or Poland. Jews were usually taken not to work but to their deaths.
6. Capitulation: Surrender to the enemy.
7. Clandestine: Secret
8. Collaborator: The term used to describe anyone who helped the Nazis.
9. Communist: One who believes in communism, the political creed that asks everyone to contribute according to his abilities and receive according to his needs.
10. Concentration camps: Places in Germany and Poland used to confine Jews and others the Nazis considered “undesirables.” In the camps people died of starvation or disease or were worked to death.
11. Death camps: Places in Poland designed by the Nazis to murder Jews by gassing, starvation, overwork, and disease. Auschwitz was the most infamous and largest death camp, where over two million people were murdered by the Nazis from 1940-1945.
12. Decree: An authoritative command or proclamation.
13. Deportation: The removal, or "resettlement," of Jews from Nazi-occupied countries to labor or death camps.
14. Depression: Called the Great Depression, a period of economic crisis and low business activity that began just after the stock market crash in New York in 1929 and continued through the 1930s, affecting the entire Western world.
15. Ghettos: Areas of cities in Eastern Europe to which Jews were restricted and from which they were forbidden to leave.
16. Great War: Another name for World War I, 1914-1918. England, France, the United States, Russia, and other countries (the Allies) fought against Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria (the Central Powers).
17. Hindenburg, Paul von: President of the democratic German government before Hitler came to power. He appointed Hitler Chancellor of Germany in January, 1933.
18. Hitler, Adolf: Hate-filled leader of the Nazi party and Germany from 1933-1945. He waged a military war in Europe and a campaign to destroy the Jewish people that almost destroyed Western civilization itself in the

process.

19. Labor camp: A type of concentration camp in which people were worked to death and then replaced by new workers. Most people didn't survive more than three months in labor camps.

20. National Socialist German Workers Party: Came into being in 1920 and soon was led by Hitler. It acquired national political power in 1933. NAZI is the abbreviation of the German words for the National Socialists.

21. Pseudo-scientific: Something falsely represented as the scientific truth.

22. Reparations: Compensation payable by a defeated country to another country for damages or loss suffered as a result of war.

23. Rucksack: Bookbag, backpack, knapsack.

24. Swastika: An ancient religious symbol used by Hitler as the official symbol of the Nazi party.

25. Typhus: An acute, infectious disease transmitted by lice or fleas. Anne Frank died from typhus.

26. World War II: A war fought between the Allies (mainly the United States, England, France, and Russia) and the Axis countries (mainly Germany, Italy, and Japan) from 1939 to 1945.