

The Diary Of A Young Girl Anne Frank

About the Book and the Author

Anne Frank was born in Germany on 12 June 1929. She moved with her family to Amsterdam in 1933 when the Nazis came to power in Germany. Anne and her family were trapped in The Netherlands when the Nazi invasion began in 1940. Anne began to keep a personal diary on her thirteenth birthday. She wrote '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'. In July 1942 the Frank family and four other people went into hiding in a secret annex. At first Anne wrote the diary for her eyes only but in 1944 she heard a radio broadcast from London which said that it would be important to collect eyewitness accounts of the suffering under Nazi occupation. Anne decided that when the war ended she would publish a book based on her diary and she started to rewrite and edit it.

The group in the annex stayed hidden for two years but were finally betrayed, arrested and transported to concentration camps. Anne died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen. Her Father Otto was the only survivor of the secret annex. He returned to Amsterdam and found that Anne's diary had been saved. An edited version was first published in 1947 but more original passages have since been added to Otto Frank's selection.

Anne is perhaps the most famous victim of the Holocaust but as an ordinary Jewish teenager she represents the millions who died because of one group's hatred of another.

Book Group Activity for secondary students aged 14+

Discussion Questions

1. Anne begins to write her diary just for herself but when she decides that she wants to turn the diary into a book what changes does she make to the original text and why do you think she made them?
2. why did Otto publish the diary and why do you think he asked for an edited version to be released, instead of the full text, in 1947?

3. Anne is only thirteen when she begins to write her diary. What evidence can we find within the diary of what could be called typical teenage struggles and dilemmas as opposed to problems caused by living in hiding? In what ways did living in hiding make these problems even more difficult?
4. in the early pages of the diary Anne lists what she calls 'the trouble for the Jews'. What other evidence is there, in her account of life before hiding, of anti-Jewish legislation making daily life difficult? Which of Anne's plans and expectations change as a direct result of this legislation?
5. choose two characters living in the secret annex and discuss Anne's relationship with them. What evidence is there of contrasting feelings which change over time?
6. how did continual confinement in a small place influence the way individuals behaved and felt towards each other?
7. on 4 August 1943 Anne tries to describe a typical day in hiding. Which part of the day do you think a teenager would find the most difficult and for what reasons?
8. the diary gives us a glimpse of the life of the office workers who helped Anne and her family. What precautions must they have taken to hide the group for so long and what risks did they take?
9. Anne writes of going through a dance phase and making an 'ultra modern' costume. How does she attempt to keep in touch with developments in the world outside the annex? How far is her attempt successful?
10. how does Anne define love (2 March 1944)? In what ways is this definition very different from one a 21st century teenager might give and in what ways is it similar? Who does Anne love?
11. on many occasions Anne writes of her feelings towards her mother. Would you say that this is evidence of a typical mother and teenage daughter relationship? What does Anne believe about the role of mothers in general?
12. Anne sometimes writes down thoughts which she thinks might shock her parents. What or with whom are these thoughts connected? How does she justify them and why, since they might shock, do you think she wrote them in a diary she intended to publish?
13. 'I wanted to be brave but it was hard.' What fears does Anne describe? What evidence do we have of other fears which she does not put into words?

14. in her final diary entry Anne writes about being split in two. She attempts to describe her own character. From your reading of the whole diary how accurate is her personal character study?

15. if you had to write a new prologue to *The Diary Of A Young Girl* for the 21st century, what would be the most important point you would try to make and why do you think this point is a vital one for modern readers?