

Behind the Secret Window

By Nelly S. Toll

Grade Level: 5th

Background Information:

- ✓ The students will have to have some familiarity with the events of World War Two, more specifically, the persecution of the Jewish people by Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party during the Holocaust. Reading the *Preface* and *Historical Note* will aid in building background.
- ✓ Students should have access to a world map so they can reference the many European countries affected by World War Two.
- ✓ On occasion, Jewish words or phrases are used in the story. Students should have the ability to use context clues to determine their meaning, when not directly translated.

Highlight During Reading:

★ Family Tree-

It may be helpful to create a family tree as a class while reading the novel to keep track of the relationships between the characters. The family tree can be used to chart descriptors of each character, and keep track of their whereabouts.

★ Journaling-

The students should maintain journals during the reading of the book to keep track of questions or comments they may have. Journals should be interactive, with peer and teacher comments.

★ Dwellings-

Nelly moves to several different hiding places during the novel. Beginning with her childhood home, I would have the students keep track of her many dwellings, their description, and her feelings living there.

| Location | Who She lived With | Description | Thoughts / Feelings | Elapsed Time |
|----------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

★ Home-

During her isolation, the main character missed very specific things about her life, her home, before the Nazi occupation. The importance of home and having a place to call your own should be a reoccurring topic of

discussion.

Post Reading Activities:

- ✓ Students should extend the novel by connecting it to current day topics: displaced children due to homelessness in the United States, displaced children due to genocide in Africa, displaced children due to famine in Asia and Africa, etc. Students should research current day topics and create a project that demonstrates their understanding. Projects can connect to the math and social studies curriculum through use of data and graphing.