

Section 1

Loyalty

Chapters 1–3

*Your Life is a Gift that is one of a kind.
Love, respect, and hope,
Always keep those three in mind!*

— Ruzia & Leopold Knoblauch



The Knoblauch family (from left): Oskar, sister Ilse, mother Ruzia, father Leopold, and brother Siegmund. Leipzig, Germany, 1932.
Photo: The Knoblauch family.

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Photo: The Knoblauch family.

Lesson One

Lesson 1 of 2: Intro, Reading
Duration: One class period

Overview

Day one of a new book is an opportunity to build excitement and interest for this new experience. You may wish to prepare an anticipatory set or a dramatic and fun introduction to “hook” students. For example, in Chapter 1, Oskar describes sights, sounds, and smells of his hometown of Leipzig, Germany. One idea would be to bring flowers into the classroom to elucidate the colorful wildflowers that are described growing around the city (pages 8 and 9). Another option would be to bring small cookies or pretzels corresponding to Oskar’s description of the treats found in the Grossman’s Bakery (pages 6–8).

Teaching the Holocaust is an emotional experience as students confront the inhumanity of Nazi crimes. *Hope Chest* underscores inspirational messages that are a focus of Oskar’s presentations and book. Throughout *A Boy’s Story, A Man’s Memory*, Oskar references lessons instilled in him by his parents that helped him to remain positive and hold on to hope even in the most desperate of circumstances. Each section of the *Hope Chest* student journal begins with an inspirational quote. These quotes, as well as students’ *Hope Chest* journal entries, provide compelling prompts for class discussion.

Prior to class, write the essential questions and guiding question for the section on the board. Add vocabulary listed at the beginning of Section 1 to the Word Wall. Discuss vocabulary prior to the reading to build meaning behind words, concepts, and ideas that may be unfamiliar. Key terms and ideas that you may wish to discuss prior to reading Section 1 include:

- Foreshadowing
- Primary and secondary sources
- World War I
- Rise of fascism and the Nazi Party
- Hitler Youth
- Loyalty

Vocabulary

- Militia: Group of supplementary military force, recruited from otherwise non-military citizens. (page 12)
- Upheaval: Sudden significant change. (page 28)
- Anti-Semitism: Prejudice against people of the Jewish faith. (page 19)

Historical Context

Chapter 1

- 1930, Leipzig Germany; Leipzig is 75 miles southwest of Berlin.
- Leipzig known for:
Headquarters of the German book publishing industry since 1825.
In the 19th century, Leipzig became one of the musical centers of Europe.
By 1930, Leipzig had many botanical gardens, zoos, parks, an observatory, and museums.

- “This, of course, was at the time when the general public in Germany did not widely acknowledge Nazism. However, as time passed, Hitler’s socialist party was slowly creeping through the land, infecting the German population like cancer” (page 11).

Chapter 2

- Themes: bullying; intolerance.
- “In the spring of 1932, my sister, brother, and I sensed that something was happening in Germany” (page 12).
- “With each new day, the Nazi Party membership grew to new levels. To celebrate and show their strength, Hitler’s militia, the Sturmabteilung (SA), marched through the streets of Leipzig in their brown shirts. At first, Gunther and I thought it was fun to see the parades. The two of us marched right along with them; after all, how can any kid resist a parade and not join in. Many people at first jeered and threw things at the marchers, yet others cheered and applauded the brown shirts. Within a few months, the Nazis had a very large numbers marching to the sound of their bands and waving a colorful assortment of flags” (page 12).

Chapter 3

- “At a little after six in the evening, early in the summer of 1936, our train arrived in Kraków My parents left a lot of German-Jewish friends behind that they stayed in constant touch with until shortly before the war broke out in September of 1939. Still, our departure from Leipzig was happy one. We looked forward to going back to normal lives and to being treated like human beings again. A new chapter in our lives began” (page 18).
- “Life in Poland differed from that in Germany in many ways. From the physical point of view, Poland’s interior was not as developed as most European counties. For instance, not all the streets in the cities were paved and neither were the few highways that led out of Kraków. Rail and bus services were inferior compared with the ones in Germany. Poland, though, had just regained its independence in 1918, and it was still a recovering country” (page 18).

Characters

Main Characters:

- Oskar Knoblauch: author of *A Boy’s Story, A Man’s Memory*. Oskar is a Jewish boy born in Leipzig, Germany in 1925. Oskar is 5 years old when the story begins, and it continues to follow his life as he grows up during the tragic events of the Holocaust. Oskar is 19 years old when Kraków is liberated in 1945.
- Ilse Knoblauch: Oskar’s older sister.
- Siegmund (Bubek) Knoblauch: Oskar’s older brother.
- Leopold Knoblauch: Oskar’s father; referred to as “Father” and “Dad.”
- Ruzia Knoblauch: Oskar’s mother.

Supporting Characters:

- Renate Dorfmann: neighbor and best friend to Oskar’s older sister, Ilse.
- Uncle Adolph: Oskar’s uncle, who lived with the family while in Leipzig.
- Karl Dorfmann: neighbor to Oskar’s family.
- Gunter Dorfmann: Oskar’s friend and neighbor.
- Herr and Miriam Grossman: local bakery owners.

- Horst Werner: athletic club coach.
- Frau Bergheimer: superintendent of Oskar’s apartment building in Leipzig.
- Aunt Itka: Oskar’s mother’s sister, who met Oskar’s family in Modlnica (small village near Kraków) and rented a small apartment for Oskar’s family.
- Cousin Rose: Oskar’s cousin; daughter of Aunt Itka.
- Zbigniew Mankewicz: Oskar’s Catholic friend in Kraków.
- Marina: woman who helped with the laundry, owned a small farm.
- Jasiek: Marina’s husband; farmer.
- Mrs. Kaminski: Oskar’s family’s new unfriendly neighbor.

Essential Questions

- How do we form and shape our individual identities?
- How do our decisions help guide our individual paths?

Guiding Questions

What makes a true friendship? What are the characteristics of a true friend?

Objectives

At the end of Section 1, students will be able to:

- Articulate an understanding of Nazi Party ideology.
- Identify examples of the Nazi Party’s influence on German people.
- Locate Germany and Poland on a map.

Materials

- Students K-W-L charts
- *A Boy’s Story, A Man’s Memory: Remembering the Holocaust 1933–1945* (if accessing online, select Section 1)
- *Hope Chest* student journals
- Map of Europe prior to World War II
- White board and/or large poster board
- List of vocabulary for Section 1: chapters 1–3

Activities

Prior to class:

- Write the essential and guiding questions on the board.
- Post the map of pre-WWII Europe somewhere prominent in the room.
- Write vocabulary found in Section 1 on the Word Wall.

Anticipatory Set:

- To engage students with a new book, incorporating special treats relating to the text helps build excitement about the subject.

For example, in Chapter 1, Oskar describes sights, sounds, and smells of his hometown of Leipzig, Germany. You may wish to bring flowers into the classroom to elucidate the colorful wildflowers that are described growing around the city (pages 8 and 9).

Alternately, bring in small cookies or pretzels corresponding to Oskar’s description of the treats found in the Grossman’s Bakery (pages 6–8).

Lesson

Duration: 40 minutes

- While taking attendance, ask students to take out their K-W-L charts.
- As a class, review “What I Learned” together. Write student responses on the board to complete the chart.
- Introduce *A Boy’s Story, A Man’s Memory: Remembering the Holocaust 1933–1945*
Over the next several weeks, we will be reading an autobiography written by a Holocaust survivor. The story follows a boy named Oskar, who was very much like you, and his family as they struggle to survive the Holocaust in Nazi-era Germany and Poland. The story begins in Leipzig, Germany, in 1930. Five-year old Oskar lives a happy life with his mother, father, older sister and brother, and uncle. Oskar is confused as his neighbors, classmates, coach, and even his friends and teachers begin to treat him and his family differently.

• You may also wish to discuss other terms and themes as it fits within your curriculum, including:

Foreshadowing
Primary and secondary sources
World War I
Rise of fascism and the Nazi party
Hitler Youth
Loyalty
- Introduce the Word Wall

Discuss vocabulary that students will come across in the reading.
- If treats or flowers were brought in, you may wish to incorporate these elements into your lesson
In the first couple of chapters, Oskar uses imagery and sensory language to paint a picture of what growing up in his hometown of Leipzig was like (introduce anticipatory set).

• Pass out *Hope Chest* student journals.
- Reading: Read Section 1, chapters 1–3. It is recommended to read the first chapters together as a class.

Lesson Two

Lesson 2 of 2: Journal and Critical Thinking Activity
Duration: One class period

Overview

In this lesson, students will reflect upon and engage more deeply with the reading by sharing their journal entries and creating art in response to the text. At the end of Chapter 3, Oskar describes a storm on the horizon. Students are asked to predict what the significance of this might be to the plot. This question asks students to infer meaning and predict what might happen next. As students share their ideas, not only will they verbalize their understanding, but as they listen to other ideas, they will also consider new perspectives and further synthesize information. The discussion closes by students sharing questions they have at the end of Section 1 (Chapter 3).

The Critical Thinking Arts Activity allows students to listen to music that Oskar uses to describe the hills and fields of flowers around Kraków. They will then interpret the music in their own way by creating artwork as they listen to the music. An informational sheet on symbolism is provided to help students understand the symbolic use of color. This activity will not only actively engage students with the reading to gain deeper understanding, but it will also spark their imagination and curiosity. Audio clips can be found on the enclosed digital resources flash drive in Section 1 and can also be accessed via the Hope Chest Resources website in Section 1 of the Media & Images file.

Essential Questions

- How do we form and shape our individual identities?
- How do our decisions help guide our individual paths?

Guiding Questions

What makes a true friendship? What are the characteristics of a true friend?

Objectives

At the end of Section 1, students will be able to:

- Define vocabulary listed in Section 2.
- Recognize literary devices that include foreshadowing, symbolism, and imagery.
- Demonstrate understanding of symbolic use of color in visual art.
- Interpret visual imagery from music to demonstrate understanding of sensory language.
- Articulate ideas about what it means to be a true friend and characteristics of friendship.

Materials

- *Hope Chest* student journals
- Symbolism reference sheet
- Blank paper
- Markers, colored pencils, and/or watercolor paint
- Paint brushes (if using watercolor paint)
- Cups for water (if using watercolor paint)
- Audio clips can be found on the enclosed digital resources flash drive in Section 1 and can also be accessed via the Hope Chest Resources website in Section 1 of the Media & Images file.
 - Antonin Dvořák: Slavonic Dances, op. 46, no. 4, Tempo di Minuetto in F Major by Václav Neumann & Czech Philharmonic Orchestra.
 - Johann Strauss II: *Frühlingsstimmen (Voices of Spring)*, op. 410 by The Russian Symphony Orchestra.

Activities

- Reflect on student journals.
- Critical Thinking Activity.

Lesson

Duration: 35 minutes

- While taking attendance, have students take out *Hope Chest* student journals.
- Ask students if they would like to share their journal entries. (10 minutes)
 - Question: “At the end of Chapter 3, Oskar describes a storm on the horizon. What do you think the significance of this might be to the plot? Write one or two paragraphs.”
- Ask students what questions they are left with in Section 1. (5 minutes)
- Critical Thinking Arts Activity. (20 minutes)
- Pass out Symbolism sheet, blank paper, markers, colored pencils, and/or watercolor paint.
- *Color can be used by artists and in many other aspects in the world around us, such as in advertising and logos, to communicate using a common language of color.*
 - Ask what comes to mind when they think of certain colors: green, blue, yellow, etc.
 - If you see green in the logo of a restaurant, what kind of food would you think is sold there?*
 - Can you think of examples in the text in which Oskar uses color to convey symbolic meaning?*
- Review the Symbolism sheet together.
 - We will use what we know about symbolism to create a piece of artwork inspired by the music Oskar says he thinks of when he looks at the hills and flowers around his home.*
- Read passage on page 28.
 - In Chapter 3, page 28, Oskar compares the landscape to a melody of Johann Strauss or a dance by Antonin Dvorak. While listening to the clip(s), write or draw what the music makes you think about.*

Audio clips can be found on the enclosed digital resources flash drive in Section 1 and can also be accessed via the Hope Chest Resources website in Section 1 of the Media & Images file.

Antonin Dvořák: Slavonic Dances, op. 46, no. 4, Tempo di Minuetto in F Major by Václav Neumann & Czech Philharmonic Orchestra.

Johann Strauss II: *Frühlingsstimmen (Voices of Spring)*, op. 410 by The Russian Symphony Orchestra.

Reflection

Duration: 5 minutes

- After playing the clips, have groups of four share their artwork with each other.
Are there commonalities? How is there artwork similar and different?
- Ask students to share with the class the similarities and differences when comparing their artwork to others.
- Have students store their artwork in a safe place in the classroom.

Section 1: Student Journal Answer Key

Reading

As you read through chapters 1–3, keep in mind the theme, “Loyalty.” Why do you think that loyalty was chosen as a theme? Provide examples from the text.

- Answers will vary.

Vocabulary

- Militia: **Group of supplementary military force, recruited from otherwise non-military citizens. (page 12)**
- Upheaval: **Sudden significant change. (page 28)**
- Anti-Semitism: **Prejudice against people of the Jewish faith. (page 19)**
- Student-selected vocabulary word: **answers will vary.**

Questions: Chapter 1

1. Name three things Oskar mentions in the description of his childhood that may have helped to prepare him for what was to come during World War II.
 - Oskar’s parents emphasized maintaining love, respect, and hope, as described in the poem his parents wrote for their children, titled *Gift*. “Your Life is a Gift that is one of a kind. / Love, respect and hope, /Always keep those three in mind!” (page 7)
 - “We repeated this verse constantly throughout the war, especially the one word ‘hope.’ Thanks, Mom and Dad!” (page 7).
 - Oskar’s Uncle Adolph taught the children strict discipline (page 10).
2. Find examples of how Oskar helps the reader to imagine his childhood using the five senses. Write the sentence and the page number. (See, hear, smell, taste, touch)
 - Answers will vary. Answers may include: See – flowers bloom (page 8). Hear – doorbell rings (page 1), jumping down wooden stairs (page 5). Smell – Sweet aroma of freshly baked cakes (page 5). Taste – warm, crisp edges of plum and cherry cakes (page 6). Touch –dried pees pressed into knees (page 9).
3. How was Oskar’s childhood similar to yours at this point in the story? Write at least three examples.
 - Answers will vary. Answers may include: siblings, going to the movies with friends, chores, “playing and getting into mischief,” lives in an apartment, enjoys playing sports/soccer, family plays games together, enjoys bike riding, etc.

Questions: Chapter 2

4. List three examples from the text that demonstrates the spread of the Nazi Party’s influence on the German people.
 - “Many people at first jeered and threw things at the marchers, yet others cheered and applauded the brown shirts. Within a few months, the Nazis had very large numbers marching to the sound of their bands and waving a colorful assortment of flags” (page 12).

- “As we arrived, he (Horst Werner) stood in front of the (athletic club) gate, blocking the entrance. He was dressed in his SA uniform, signifying his place in Hitler’s National Socialist Party.... Werner gestured for Gunter to enter, and while stretching his hand toward us, he said in a loud hateful voice, “You Jews are not allowed here anymore! This club is only for pure Germans! Get lost and don’t show your Jew faces here again!” (page 13).
 - “One morning, my teacher was already in class, and yes, he was dressed in his SA uniform. As I approached him, he advised me very proudly that from now on I would be sitting in the last row. He went on to say that I would be excluded from all sporting and other school activities” (pages 12–13).
 - “During recess I found myself ignored by all the students” (page 13).
 - “All after school play activities with my friends ceased. On many occasions the same boys and girls who just a few weeks ago were my best friends called me dirty names” (page 14).
5. How do you think Oskar’s parents were feeling about the rise of the Nazi Party? Cite evidence from the text.
- “It must have been very difficult for our parents to hide the real truth about the Nazis’ intent for the Jews. Perhaps they felt in time we would learn it. It didn’t take long for the whole truth to come crashing down on us” (page 12).
 - The parents’ private conversation away from the children suggests that they were afraid and nervous and that they did not want to frighten the children (page 12).

Questions: Chapter 3

6. In Chapter 3, Oskar and his family sought refuge by moving from Leipzig, Germany, to Kraków, Poland. Find Leipzig and Kraków on the map on page 2. Draw a line connecting the two cities to trace Oskar’s family’s journey.



7. What was Oskar’s perspective on his Jewish practice and how it differed from the two other Jewish boys in his class?
- “The Jewish religion says that God created Earth in six days, and, of course, he rested on the seventh day. And so the seventh day became the Sabbath, the day of rest. On that day, no manual work of any kind should be performed, no matter how small... True to their religious beliefs, the two boys would not participate in any school activities, nor would they pick up a pen to write with, or pencil to draw with. My thinking on this matter was very simple. I was of the assumption that it wouldn’t be sacrilegious to do all those things, especially while going to school. I was of the belief that people should observe the Sabbath or a Sunday in our modern time in a democratic way. It can be a solemn day or a workday but it also should be a day of fun and play, so that people can enjoy what was created for them!” (page 20).
 - “When asked why I differed from the other two boys, I replied that we are all individuals and look at things from a different perspective. While my own religious view is very liberal, I do tolerate the teachings and rituals of all other faiths. We live in a world society where people are continuously being harassed and singled out for different reasons, or for no reason at all, and it is therefore wise to follow an old saying: ‘When in Rome, do as the Romans do!’”
8. What is the significance behind Oskar sharing his friend Zbigniew’s dreams about the future?
- Many people before World War II had dreams and plans for their future, just as they do today. The war changed course of many peoples’ lives (page 22).
 - Students may also write about how religion was not a barrier between the two friends before Nazi ideology took hold.

Journal

At the end of Chapter 3, Oskar describes a storm on the horizon. What do you think the significance of this might be to the plot? Write one or two paragraphs.

- Answers will vary.

Critical Thinking Activity

At the end of Chapter 3, Oskar compares the landscape to a melody of Johann Strauss or Antonin Dvořák. While listening to the music clip(s), write or draw what the music makes you think about.

- Answers will vary.

Section 2

Persevere

Chapters 4–6

*As long as we are together as a family,
that's all that matters!*

— Leopold Knoblauch



Jewish people from the Kraków Ghetto, who have been rounded up for deportation, are crowded onto the back of a truck in 1942. Photo: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie.