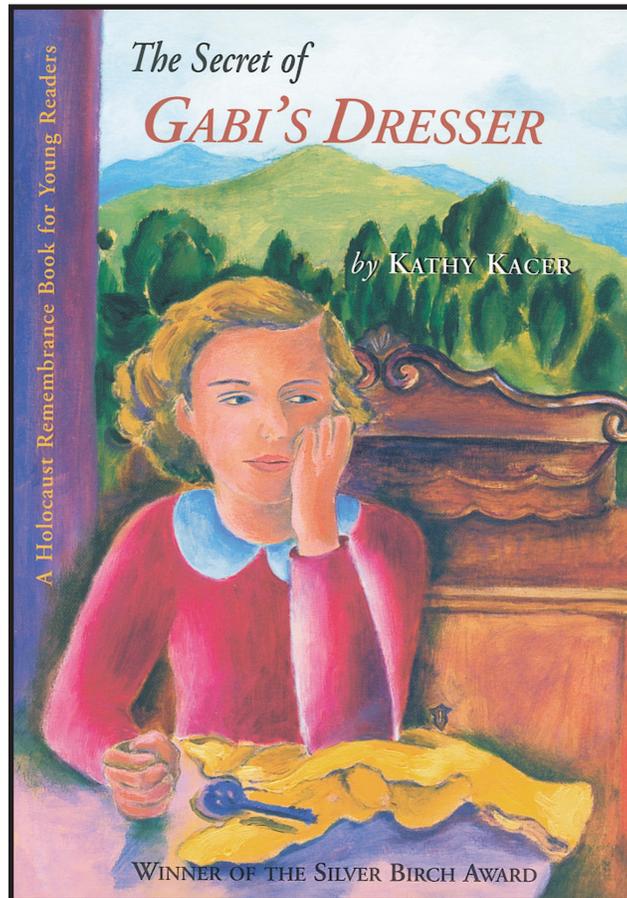


Second Story Press

Intermediate Level ESL

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

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The Secret of Gabi's Dresser

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Book Summary

The Secret of Gabi's Dresser is a work of historical fiction. It tells the story of the author's grandmother, Gabi Kohn, trying to survive under the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia during the Holocaust. The book begins with Gabi, now the grandmother of two young children, recounting her childhood and life as a Jewish girl encountering anti-Semitism. Mostly told in flashback, Gabi narrates to her grandchildren the constant threats and dangers of living in her native country during the Holocaust.

All of a sudden, when Gabi is thirteen years old, her father tragically dies, leaving her and her mother to survive on their own. At the same time, World War II rages on, and more and more Jewish families leave their hometown, afraid of being captured and sent to prisoner or death camps. Gabi's mother, an intelligent courageous woman, understands well that her strong, young daughter could be taken away by the Nazis at any time. So, she devises a plan to hide Gabi inside the dresser, which holds many of the family's treasured keepsakes, in their living room.

The Secret of Gabi's Dresser is a chapter book originally written for children from nine to thirteen years old who speak English as a First Language. It is appropriate for ESL students of the same age, but also for those studying at the intermediate ESL level ranging from middle school to adults. The book explores universal themes such as multiculturalism, survival, friendship, bullying, and racism. Written in 1999 by Kathy Kacer, it is the winner of both The Silver Birch and Canadian Jewish Book Awards, and is a Holocaust Remembrance Book for Young Readers. It has 128 pages.

PART A

Listening, Speaking and
Pre-Reading Activities



ACTIVITY 1

Understanding Jewish Culture, History, And Symbols

Before you start reading, it would be useful to introduce students to Jewish culture and religious references found in the story. This is a sentence completion activity.

There are many Internet websites that students can use to access the information.

After the work is checked, display the best examples of students' work on a Jewish Culture, History, and Symbols area or WORD WALL in your classroom.

Give your students this worksheet.

 ACTIVITY 1

Understanding Jewish Culture, History, and Symbols

Directions:

- a. This is a research activity where you will learn some important information about Jewish history, symbols, and culture.
- b. Use any search engine or subscription databases allowed by your school.
- c. Research the information below and finish each sentence with at least one fact that you have found.
- d. Draw a picture or find a picture or graphic online and put it beside your completed sentence.
- e. After you finish, we will take up your answers. Your worksheet answers and pictures will be part of a WORD WALL that we will use as we read this book.

1. JUDAISM is _____

2. THE STAR OF DAVID is _____

3. THE JEWISH SABBATH is _____

4. THE JEWISH SABBATH DINNER is _____

5. A YARMULKA is _____

6. IN JUDAISM, A SHIVA is _____

7. ADOLF HITLER was _____

8. THE HOLOCAUST was _____

9. THE NAZIS were _____

10. ANTI-SEMITISM is _____

 ACTIVITY 2

Values Clarification and Problem Solving

This group activity presents several scenarios similar to those faced by Gabi in the book. Students discuss situations that also occur in modern times, and think about what they would do if faced with similar circumstances. The group's answers can be recorded online, or simply written on chart paper.

 ACTIVITY 2

What Would You Do?

Directions:

- a. Make groups of four to six students.
- b. Take turns both reading aloud the situations below and being the recorder of everyone's answers.
- c. Discuss each situation and decide what would be the best ways to deal with them.
- d. At the end of the activity, all groups will do present one situation and their solutions.
- e. After every situation presented, all students will have the chance to express their points of view.

HERE ARE YOUR SITUATIONS

1. You are a Muslim girl in school who wears a headscarf. One of the other girls in school makes fun of your scarf and tries to pull it off of your head during lunch or recess. What would you do?
2. Your mother and father have a convenience store. One evening, a gang of kids comes in and vandalizes the store. They throw around all of items, break windows, and call your parents rude names. Your mother and father contact the police but they say that they can't do anything to help. What do you think your parents should do next?
3. One of the students in your class is a new immigrant who has just arrived from Africa. The student is starting to learn English. Your teacher is not helping that student with his schoolwork. Also, she tells students not to help that student either and to let him try to figure out the work on his own. How do you feel about how that student is being treated? What do you want to about it?
4. You and Sara have been very good friends since Grade 1. Recently, you have noticed that Sara isn't talking to you very much and you try to ask her if there's anything wrong. She runs away from you at lunch and recess, and hangs out with other kids. Finally, she writes you a note saying that her parents won't allow the two of you to be friends anymore. How would you feel? What would you try to say or do about the situation?
5. You and your friends from the same school usually gather in your neighbourhood ice cream shop during the warm weather. One day, the owner of the shop puts up a sign saying that no one from your school is allowed to come into the shop anymore. When you ask for an explanation, he says that a few weeks

before, soccer players wearing your school's jerseys entered the store, were rude and then ran away without paying. So the owner has decided not to allow any students from your school in his shop. How would you feel? What would you say or do?

6. One of your classmates at school is named Alice. After a long illness, her mother passes away. Alice is an only child. What would you do or say to help Alice through this difficult time in her life? What do people in your religion or culture do when a friend's loved one passes away?
7. You have been afraid of the dark since you were very little. This summer, you are going on camping trip with friends where you will be sleeping outside at night. Your mother and father know that you have this fear and want to help you to deal with your fear before the trip. What could they do to help you to deal with this situation?

 ACTIVITY 3

Role Plays

To differentiate instruction and to improve oral skills, have the students complete role plays and perform one of the situations in the previous activity. Distribute these directions.

 ACTIVITY 3

Role Plays: What Would You Do?

Directions

- a. Find one or more partners. (This depends on the role play that you choose.)
- b. Choose one of the situations in Activity 2.
- c. Create a role play in which you act out what you would do in this situation.
- d. Discuss and decide how you want the situation to end or be solved.
- e. Each person in the role play should contribute ideas to the script, which you can use when you perform it. Your role play will be evaluated for INFORMATION AND IDEAS, CLEAR VOCABULARY, CREATIVITY, and ORGANIZATION.



ACTIVITY 4

Mapping the Story

Provide the students with their own copy of a map of Europe during World War II. The map should include all of the Nazi-occupied countries and also the dates when those countries were invaded by the Nazis. This map is readily available on the Internet. Have the students find Czechoslovakia on the map and write Gabi's name on it. If students have grandparents or other family members who are Holocaust survivors from Eastern Europe, they can write their names on the countries where they came from.

PART B

Reading and Writing Activities

 ACTIVITY 5

Storytelling Vocabulary

Before you start to read the story and assign chapter questions, your students should be introduced to the vocabulary commonly used in storytelling. These words would include PLOT, CHARACTERS, PROTAGONIST, ANTAGONIST, CLIMAX, THEME, SYMBOLISM, FLASHBACK, and FLASH FORWARD. There are many activities and worksheets available online to help students to learn and understand these terms.

 ACTIVITY 6

Chapter Questions

These questions can be used to check students' comprehension of the story, its characters, setting, conflict, and themes. Use the questions for guided reading, formative individual and group work, and summative evaluation.

Chapter Questions

Chapter One (pages 9-15)

1. Who are Paul and Vera? How are they related to each other?
2. Where does the story start? Who are Paul and Vera visiting?
3. What is their name for their grandmother? What language do you think the name comes from?
4. What is the grandmother's real name?
5. How often do Paul and Vera visit their grandmother? How often do you see your own grandparents?
6. How do Vera and Paul feel about their grandmother?
7. Why do they like her stories about her childhood the best?
8. Where and when did their grandmother grow up? What is the name of that country now?
9. What does grandmother show the children? How did grandmother's family use it when she was a child?
10. Babichka says to the children, "This dresser was my secret hiding place." (page 13) As the first chapter ends, what do you think is going to happen next?

Chapter Two (pages 16-24)

11. What is the setting (time and place) of this chapter?
12. Read Babichka's description of her childhood home on page 16. Would you like to live in, or even visit, a place like this? Give reasons for your answer.
13. What terrible event was happening in Europe and her country when Gabi was growing up?
14. Babichka's family and some of her neighbours were Jewish. What do you know about the Jewish religion, people, and culture? Use the Internet or any search engine available in your school to find out some facts about being Jewish.
15. Describe life on Babichka's farm in your own words.
16. Why couldn't Gabi be with her best friend, Nina, on Friday afternoon after school? What does the "Sabbath" (page 19) mean? Does your religion have a Sabbath? If so, what are people supposed to do on the Sabbath?

17. How did Gabi and Nina feel about each other's cultures and religions? What words describe their attitudes about each other's religions?
18. Why do you think some Christian people treated religious Jews badly?
19. How did Gabi's family choose to observe their religion?
20. What happened to Gabi's friend David? What did Jewish people do when incidents like this happened? Why do you think they reacted this way?
21. How do we know that the Sabbath was a special time in Gabi's house?

Chapter Three (pages 25-33)

22. In Gabi's home, workers helped her mother to prepare the Sabbath. What does that tell you about the way that her family lived?
23. Describe the Jewish Sabbath traditions. Are they similar or different to your own religion's traditions?
24. Who sometimes joined Gabi's small family for the Sabbath dinner?
25. Why do you think Gabi has happy memories of the Sabbath dinner? Give some reasons.
26. How did Gabi feel about what her classmate Martin said?
27. Who were Adolf Hitler and the Nazis? What were the "rumours" about how they were treating Jewish people in Germany?
28. What did Papa tell Gabi about the situation of Jewish people in Czechoslovakia? Do you think that he believed what he was telling her?
29. What unkind comment did Gabi's classmate Dora say to her? Where did Dora learn these ideas?
30. What bad news did Mamma's sister in Germany write about in her letter?
31. What was *Kristallnacht* or the Night of the Broken Glass? How did this event harm Jewish people? Use your school's subscription databases to research some information about this event.
32. What was Papa's attitude about the terrible events that were happening to Jewish people?
33. Why did Gabi say that "this Friday night felt different."?(page 33)

Chapter Four (pages 34-39)

34. What happened to Gabi's friend Armin in the schoolyard?
35. How did Mr. Reich, one of the teachers, try to help the Jewish students?

36. What did most of the teachers in Gaby's school do about the treatment that Gaby and her Jewish schoolmates were getting?
37. What are the main ideas of Gaby's conversation with her father? Why do you think Gaby felt very "grown up" when he talked to her? In your opinion, should Papa have been so honest with Gaby, or not? Give reasons for your opinion.
38. Do you think that Papa was a good father to Gabi? Why or why not?

Chapter Five (pages 40-47)

39. Why was Gabi afraid to help when one of her Jewish friends who was being bullied? Have you ever helped a friend or classmate who was being bullied? What did you do to help that person?
40. Why do you think that Dora, and Nettie, Gabi's non-Jewish friends, were unfriendly to her?
41. Why did Gabi think that her friendship with Nina was "in trouble"? (page 41)
42. What was Nina's brother doing? What do you think about his new job and actions?
43. What happened to Mr. Reich, Gabi's teacher? _
44. How did Mr. Cherny react when Gabi asked him about Mr. Reich?
45. What did Gabi understand about Mr. Reich's disappearance? How did she feel about what happened to him?
46. How do we know that Papa's illness was getting worse?
47. Why did Gabi stop talking to her mother about what happened at school? What does that show about her character?

Chapter Six (pages 48-55)

48. What terrible shock and loss happened in Gabi's family? How would you feel if that happened to you?
49. Read pages 49 and 50, which describe what Jewish people do when someone dies. Are these traditions similar or different in your culture or religion?
50. Why couldn't Gabi's aunts, uncles, and cousins join her mother and her for Sabbath dinner anymore?
51. What was happening in Gabi's town to the businesses owned by Jewish people?
52. Why did Mamma think that their farm was "slowly slipping away"? (page 51)
53. Why did some of the farm workers quit their jobs?

54. Why were Jewish customers having trouble doing their shopping?
55. Why were Jewish business owners having trouble keeping articles to sell in their businesses?
56. Why didn't people have enough food to eat?
57. Why do you think Gabi had to change schools?
58. Why were the soldiers of the Slovak People's Party dangerous?
59. Why did Gabi feel deserted by Nina?
60. Why would wearing the yellow star make Gabi angry? Why would the Nazis make Jewish people wear yellow stars on their clothing?
61. Gabi said that she felt like an "outcast." (page 55) What do you think it means to feel this way?
62. How did it help Gabi to remember her father?

Chapter Seven (pages 56-63)

63. How did Gabi's friends, classmates and teachers treat her after her father died?
64. What did Gabi understand about their reasons for treating her kindly?
65. How did she feel about her friendship with Nina?
66. Why would Gabi and all Jewish people be worried about the recent news about the war?
67. What upsetting news about Levosha did Marishka's mother tell them?
68. What plan did Mamma have to keep Gabi safe?
69. How did Gabi react to Mamma's idea?
70. What was Gabi's other hiding plan?

Chapter Eight (pages 64-73)

71. How did Gabi's life and responsibilities change after her father died?
72. Why did the strangers knock on the door of Gabi's house?
73. What is a mezuzah? How did the strangers know it was safe to come to Gabi's house?
74. Where did these strangers come from? What terrible news did they have about their own country?
75. What warning and advice did the strangers give to Gabi and her mother?
76. What happened when Gabi and Marishka were walking to school one day?

77. Explain how Nina rescued Gabi and Marishka from the soldier Ivan.
78. What did Nina's actions prove about her feelings for Gabi? Why did Nina say that she couldn't be friends with Gabi anymore?

Chapter Nine (pages 74-80)

79. Where did Mamma go after the two girls came home and told her what had happened?
80. How did many Jewish families in the town react to the terrible things that were happening?
81. What is a lullaby? Why do adults sing lullabies to children?
82. Read the words of the lullaby that Papa sang to Gabi on page 80. How would repeating these words over and over again help Gabi?

Chapter Ten (pages 81-89)

83. How did Gabi change the way that she did her daily activities? Why did she change?
84. What risky thing did Mamma do to learn the news about the war?
85. Why was the news about the war, both good and bad?
86. Why didn't Mamma wake Gabi up as she usually did?
87. How old was Gabi turning?
88. What was Marishka's bad news?
89. Why was Marushka's family going to America? How were they going to get there?
90. Who offered to help Gabi and Mamma to escape to America?
91. What did they decide to do? Why did they make this decision?

Chapter Eleven (pages 90-94)

92. Why would Gabi need a dress rehearsal?
93. Why was Gabi terrified of climbing into the dresser?
94. How did Mamma threaten Gabi if she didn't want to try hiding in the dresser?
95. Why did she compare her dress rehearsal with her school's fire drills? How were they similar?
96. How did Gabi feel once she was inside the dresser? Why did she feel this way?

97. What did Gabi say to her mother when she calmed down?

Chapter Twelve (pages 95-103)

98. Why did Gabi and Mamma forget about hiding in the dresser?

99. Why were they able to take things belonging to Marishka's family?

100. Why did Mamma tell Gabi to hide in the dresser?

101. Why was Gabi's heart beating quickly when Mamma locked her inside the dresser?

102. Read Gabi's description of what she heard as she was locked in the dresser. (pages 99-101) What do you think was happening in her house as she was hiding?

103. What sound and image helped to calm Gabi down? In your opinion, why did this memory help her?

Chapter Thirteen (pages 104-110)

104. How did Gabi react when Mamma let her out of the dresser?

105. What had happened while Gabi was hiding?

106. What would have given the soldiers the idea that Gabi was somewhere in the house?

107. How did Mamma distract the soldiers from looking inside the dresser?

108. What character traits did Mamma demonstrate in dealing with soldiers and the dangerous situation?

109. Why didn't Mamma care that the soldiers took her valuable jewellery?

110. Why was Mamma's hand bleeding?

111. What did they both believe about Papa? Do you believe that our loved ones who have died are still part of our lives? Why or why not?

Chapter Fourteen (pages 111-115)

112. How did Gabi feel about remaining in her house after the soldiers had been there?

113. Gabi said that the dresser had been her "sanctuary." (page 112) What did she mean?

114. What happened to Gabi's bedroom? How would you feel if the same thing had happened to you?

115. What was Mamma's idea about the Kos family?

116. Why did Mamma feel that they should go into hiding together?

117. What were Gabi's precious belongings in her room that she would not be able to take with her? If you were Gabi, what one possession would you take with you? Give a reason for your choice.

Chapter Fifteen (pages 116-121)

118. What is the setting of the last chapter of the story? What proof do we have?

119. What is Babichka's description of her life hiding with the Kos family?

120. What did Gabi and Mamma do when the war ended?

121. What had happened to their house while they were away? How do you think Mamma and Gabi felt about it when they returned to the village?

122. What piece of furniture did Mamma demand from the new owner of the house? Why do you think that piece of furniture was so important to her?

123. How did Gabi and her mother get to North America?

124. Why do you think Gabi has kept the dresser in her home for such a long time?

125. How do you think Gabi's grandchildren will think of the dresser after hearing the story behind it?

126. What kind of symbol has the dresser become for Gabi?

 ACTIVITY 7

Vocabulary From Context

This activity helps students guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary without the use of a dictionary or any technology. Do not assign all of this exercise at one time. Instead, assign it one or several chapters at a time after reading the chapters aloud with students.

Hand out this activity sheet to students.

 ACTIVITY 7

Understanding New Vocabulary

Directions

- Below you will find new vocabulary from each chapter.
- Give the meaning of each underlined word or group of words from the sentences.
- Do not use a dictionary or any technology. Instead, guess the meaning of the words. Try to think of a synonym (one word that means the same) or write the meaning in a few words.

Here is an example.

She could see how annoyed her brother was, but it was fun to taunt him in this way.

tease

Chapter One (pages 9-15)

- The children wasted no time in polishing off their servings and asking for seconds. (page 11)

- Often, when she started a story about her homeland, she would pause, as if her thoughts had drifted, many years and many miles away. (page 14)

- The outside of the dresser was carved with elaborate decorations. (page 14)

Chapter Two (pages 16-24)

- I didn't really know it at the time, but this was a critical period in Czechoslovakia's history and indeed in the history of the world. (page 16)

- It would have a devastating impact on people everywhere, especially Jews like us. (page 17)

- "I'll bet you can't remember the Hebrew blessing we taught you." (page 20)

7. Many of these people looked at the Jews with a combination of resentment and fear. (pages 20- 21)

8. The very religious Jews were the target of most of these incidents. (page 21)

9. My friend David was cornered by them one day. (page 22)

10. I cherished these treasures as if they were my own. (page 24)

Chapter 3 (pages 25- 33)

11. Our house was bustling as the Sabbath dinner was prepared. (page 26)

12. But it was there in our living room, one Friday evening, that we first talked of the disturbing events that were already beginning to change our lives. (page 29)

13. “Hitler and his army despise the Jewish people.” (page 30)

14. But it’s hard to believe these rumours could be true. (page 30)

15. But she spoke with assurance, as if she was certain every word she was saying was true. (page 31)

Chapter Four (pages 34-39)

16. I was so preoccupied with my thoughts that I did not hear my father enter my room. (page 35)

17. In this case, the authorities in Germany are making us the scapegoat for poverty and unemployment. (page 36)

Chapter Five (pages 40-47)

18. But I began to notice that whenever Nina's brother appeared on the scene, Nina would become withdrawn and distant. (page 41)

19. Then one day the most disturbing thing of all happened at school. (page 42)

Chapter Six (pages 48-55)

20. Stories and merriment no longer filled each room of our house. (page 49)

21. Even Mr. Reich was a teacher at this school, and it was wonderful to be reunited with him. (page 52)

22. At times I hated her for deserting me, but then, I would feel sorry for her. (page 53)

23. I felt like an outsider, an outcast. (page 55)

24. He had told Mamma that our neighbours would never turn their backs on us. (page 55)

Chapter Seven (pages 56-63)

25. At first, when I went back to school, my friends went out of their way to be nice to me. (page 56)

26. At first, I felt awkward and self-conscious about all the attention. (page 57)

27. Rallies proclaiming Germany's conquests were held in the larger cities. (page 58)

28. Marishka's mother looked anxious, and she kept glancing over her shoulder as if she thought someone might be following her. (page 59)

29. Some people had been beaten in the streets because they were defying the laws by breaking curfew, travelling without a permit or not wearing their stars prominently enough. (page 60)

30. Under no circumstances would I leave without my mother. (page 62)

31. I knew I was grasping at straws, but I had to have a plan. (page 63)

Chapter Eight (pages 64-73)

32. The soldiers go from house to house, rounding up Jewish families and moving them to the train stations. (page 66)

33. Resistance is impossible. (page 66)

34. For days I thought about the family and the man's ominous warning. (page 67)

35. "Let's look on the bright side," she said. (page 69)

36. Quietly but deliberately she put herself between us and Ivan. (page 72)

Chapter Nine (pages 74-80)

37. Finally we told her how Nina had saved us by luring the soldier away. (page 74)

38. That night, Marishka and I lay in bed for a long time, talking about the close call. (page 75)

39. Today Nina had shown me that she was still a loyal friend, that the pact between us still mattered to her. (page 77)

40. In my mind's eye I could still see the soldier's stick swinging over my head. (page 79)

41. And I had to keep my wits about me if I was going to stay that way. (page 79)

Chapter Ten (pages 81-89)

42. My birthday had always been the most anticipated day for me. (page 83)

43. She promised she could help us get out of the country by supplying us with forged travel documents that would identify us as Christians. (page 87)

44. Such papers were nearly impossible to come by, but with the right connections, officials could be bribed. (page 87)

45. Would this meagre space be enough to protect me the day I needed it? (page 88)

Chapter Eleven (pages 90-94)

46. Deep down, I knew she was right. (page 90)

47. I bent to peer inside the dresser. (page 92)

48. But, the wood surrounding me was rough and hard to my touch, and the isolation was unbearable. (page 93)

49. I was hysterical as I fell to the ground, rubbing the welt already forming on my head. (page 93)

Chapter Twelve (pages 95-103)

50. In the face of these complaints, the campaign of persecution slowed down for a period of time. (page 95)

51. In the end, we vowed that we would see each other again in the future. (page 96)

52. The danger we had been dreading was on our doorstep. (page 97)

53. The full impact of what she was saying began to sink in, and for a moment I couldn't move. (page 97)

54. I was in danger of passing out. (page 100)

55. I hugged my knees closer to my chest and prayed this ordeal would end soon. (page 100)

56. Here I was, thinking that soldiers were about to break into the dresser to find me, when in fact my own little kitten was about to betray me, by scratching and mewling at the door. (page 101)

Chapter Thirteen (pages 104- 110)

57. How could they have overlooked the dresser? (page 106)

58. I pictured her on the floor, her hands thrashing in the air, her frantic shrieks cutting through the soldiers ears. (page 107)

59. The bloody marks defined how fiercely she had protected me; how much she loved me. (page 109)

Chapter Fourteen (pages 111-115)

60. As soon as we pulled ourselves together, Mamma and I began to clean up the house. (page 111)

61. Long after the rooms had been tidied up, I still felt that there were defiling marks on everything in our home. (page 111)

62. It had been my good luck charm, my sanctuary; the best hiding place we could have found. (page 112)

63. I was stunned. (page 113)

64. It was senseless to stay any longer. (page 114)

Chapter Fifteen (pages 116-121)

65. And some of the peasants were eager to turn us in. (page 117)

66. “Like the time you gave me that lucky penny to hold, when I auditioned for the play at school” (page 120)



ACTIVITY 8

Journalling

Journaling will allow students to express their feelings and opinions about the story. Create an online journal, which will allow students to respond not only to specific questions, but to each other's entries.

Give the students these guidelines.

 ACTIVITY 8

Class On-Line Journal

Directions:

- a. While we are reading *The Secret of Gabi's Dresser*, you need to write five journal entries. Each entry should be at least fifty words and be in complete sentences.
- b. Here are some questions that you can answer when you write your entry.
 1. What did you learn about Gabi's or Mamma's character? How did you learn about it?
 2. What did you learn about the way Jewish people were treated in Gabi's town? Why do you think Jewish people were treated this way?
 3. What was the climax of the story? Give a reason for your opinion.
 4. What was the main idea or message of the chapters or part of the story that you are writing about?
 5. Do you think that it was right for Gabi to tell this story to her grandchildren? Give reasons for your opinion.
 6. If you were a non-Jewish friend or neighbour of Gabi and her mother, how would you have helped them to survive in this situation?
 7. What interesting information did you learn about Jewish culture and religion that you did not know about before?
 8. Is Jewish culture or religion similar to or different from your own culture or religion? Explain.
- c. Make sure to date your entries. Also, cite the chapters or page numbers that you have read to help you to write your entry.
- d. You can also write an entry where you agree or disagree with another classmate's entry. If you do that, make sure that give reasons for your opinion.
- e. When we finish reading the book, your five entries will be marked for INFORMATION AND IDEAS, ORGANIZATION, AND WRITING SKILLS.

PART C

Extension/Enrichment Activities



ACTIVITY 9

Oral Presentation: Packing A Suitcase

When Gabi and her mother leave their village and go into hiding in the mountains, Gabi packs a small suitcase of precious belongings to take with her. This presentation requires students to choose five to ten of their own precious possessions to take if they had to leave their homes.

Pass out these instructions.

 ACTIVITY 9

Oral Presentation: Packing My Suitcase

Directions:

- a. Near the end of the book, Gabi and her mother decided to leave their home. Gabi had to choose which important possessions to take with her, not knowing whether she would ever be back.
- b. Imagine that you were in the same situation. Choose five to ten items that you would take with you. Don't think about everyday items, or food. Instead, focus on pictures, books, toys, or other items that have a special meaning for you.
- c. Make a list like this that you can use for your presentation.

PACKING MY SUITCASE

ITEM

1. my baseball and bat

WHY WOULD I TAKE IT?

I love baseball and want to play it
wherever I go

- d. You will use your list to make a five-minute presentation.
- e. You could also bring in some or all of the items that you would pack.
- f. Your presentation will be marked for creativity, language, and interest.



ACTIVITY 10

Visit to a Holocaust Education Centre

If your students are at least twelve years old, organize a visit to a Holocaust Education Centre and a guided tour of its exhibits. Have them respond to the visit by journaling about their impressions of that experience. Have them write a thank you letter to their guide after the visit.



ACTIVITY 11

Watching the Play: The Secret of Gabi's Dresser

A dramatic version of the book was written in 2007 and is occasionally performed. A teacher's guide for the play is available through the Simon Wiesenthal Centre.



ACTIVITY 12

Images Of The Holocaust Collage

To differentiate instruction for students who are more creative, have them research and find pictures of the Holocaust to create a collage. The collage can also include strong adjectives or nouns that reflect their feelings about learning about the Holocaust and reading the book.

 ACTIVITY 14

Guest Speaker

Contact your local Holocaust Education Centre to arrange for a guest speaker to speak to your students. A speaker who would be most appropriate for this book would be a child survivor of the Holocaust.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

Helen Wolfe has been an educator for almost 40 years. She has a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education and has earned professional certification in Senior English, ESL, Law, Special Education, and a Guidance Specialist.

Helen is experienced in all grade levels from Kindergarten to Grade 12. She has taught in a wide variety of public and private school settings. Since 1988, her focus has been as an adult educator in secondary school credit programs. During that time, she has written, revised, and implemented many courses of study in English, Social Science, and English as a Second Language.

In 2011, she wrote *Terrific Women Teachers*, a non-fiction chapter book for young readers that is part of the Women's Hall of Fame Series from Second Story Press. Her belief is that every student, even those with language and other learning challenges, has the right to read and appreciate well-written children's literature. That philosophy of inclusion motivates her to write teacher's guides to help make quality literature accessible to all learners.

Helen lives in Toronto and continues to work in adult education and ESL.

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about this guide or would like to get in touch with Helen Wolfe, please send an e-mail to info@secondstorypress.ca.

FEEDBACK

Let us know about your experience using this guide by completing a short online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CQHKZG5>