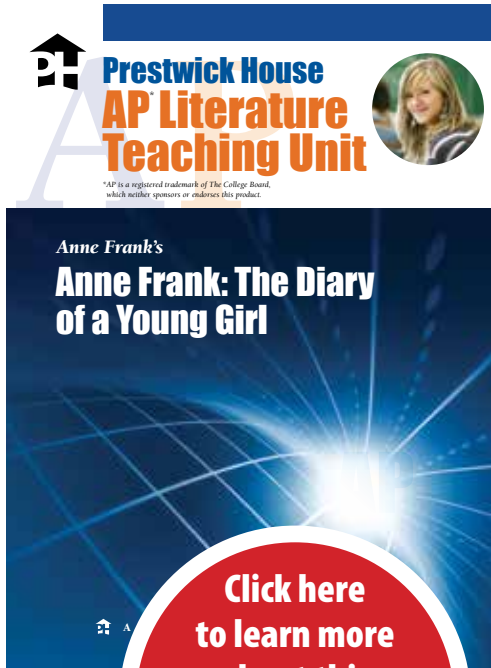




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Teaching Unit

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

by Anne Frank

written by Rhonda Carwell



Prestwick House

Item No. 305393

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. analyze the impact of the genre choice of diary versus autobiography.
2. trace the development of motifs of:
 - hope and optimism
 - love
 - isolation
 - search for identity
 - family
 - generosity and compassion.
3. analyze the importance of narrative perspective in relation to events that occur.
4. respond to multiple-choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Exam.
5. respond to free response items similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Exam.
6. offer a close reading of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel.

Introductory Lecture

Anne Frank was born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1929. She had one sister, three years older, named Margot. By all accounts, Anne had a happy life with her family, until the forced isolation of the Secret Annexe. She enjoyed school, had many female and male friends, and had little to worry about, given the fact that her parents were somewhat wealthy.

The terms of surrender that ended World War I brought devastating hardship to the country of Germany. Blaming Germany for the war and the overwhelming death and destruction it caused, the victorious Allies imposed a series of punishments and reparations that eventually led to the rise of the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler. As the responsible party, Germany was forced to disarm, repay the governments of France and Britain for the cost of the war, and stripped of various territories. German national pride suffered a huge blow as well—in some part simply because of the defeat, which German propaganda had dismissed as impossible.

In 1919, the National Socialist German Worker's Party, or Nazi Party, was formed in response to the anger and injustice felt by many people in Germany. At the time, it was mostly a group of out-of-work soldiers, but in time it rose to become the strong German government known as the Third Reich, led by Adolf Hitler.

Adolf Hitler was just another disgruntled soldier who found himself without a job once the Treaty of Versailles ended World War I was signed and forced the change in Germany to a democratic government without a strong military force. It soon became apparent that Hitler was a skilled orator whose speeches could move crowds of people to action. This ability gave him the power to rise in leadership within the Nazi Party. In his speeches, he spoke of a return to national pride, rearmament, and a commitment to a racially “pure” Germany. He placed much of the blame for Germany's failure on the Jewish people and communists who supposedly had been traitors to the German nation, which led to their defeat in the First World War. Following his incarceration, which was the result of a failed attempt at a coup in Munich, Hitler reorganized the Nazi party, skillfully maneuvered his way into the position of *Führerprinzipur* (leader principal) and waited for an opportunity to overthrow the current German government. He did not have to wait long.

The Great Depression of 1929 brought about consequences that were felt throughout the world. The Germans, already in a stricken economic state, were impacted greatly since most of their economy was built on foreign capital, loans and trade. When loans from America were due and the demand for German exports dried up, industry and resources ground to a halt, resulting in layoffs, bank failures, and inflation. It seemed that overnight, the standard of living for the middle class was over—ruined by events Germans had no control over. Many German people suffered from poverty and began to look to their government for solutions. This was the opportunity that Hitler had waited for.

Hitler and the Nazi party had all the answers and the messages that the German people needed and wanted to hear. He offered something for everyone: work, prosperity, profits for industry, an expansion of the army, social harmony, and restoration of German glory. His speeches and ideas

25. What does Peter mean when he says the adults just envy their relationship when they make rude comments?

When Peter states the adults are envious of them, he feels that the adults are just jealous of their youth and the feelings that they are experiencing together. These are feelings that will never occur again for their parents, and the parents know it.

Monday, 27 March, 1944 to Monday, 8 May, 1944

1. How does Anne's statement about the effect of politics on the adults ring true, even today?

Everyone has an opinion on politics, and nearly everyone enjoys expressing that opinion. With that said, it all it takes is the mention of politics for someone to start the arguments and heated discussions.

2. How does the cozy picture Anne paints of the Secret Annexe around the radio turn ugly so quickly?

While the speeches are on the radio, everyone listens to what is being said in order to establish their arguments and defense in the ensuing debate over the speech. After the speech is over, the discussion starts. Ultimately, the discussion becomes heated and turns in an argument.

3. Is Anne as good at hiding her feelings as she thinks? Explain your answer.

Anne is not good at hiding her feelings from the others, although she believes that she is. Her mother forbids her to go to Peter's room, suggesting that she knows full well what is happening between the two teens. She claims that Mrs. Van Daan is upset as well, indicating that Mrs. Van Daan knows also.

4. "But, seriously, it would seem funny ten years after the war if we Jews were to tell how we lived and what we ate and talked about here. Although I tell you a lot, still even so, you only know a very little of our lives." What insight does this give us about the annexe? What truth is validated?

The annexe is a very complex living situation. It would be impossible to chronicle everything that happens there day to day. Even if one were able to do so, it would be impossible to explain the situation to someone who has not experienced it.

5. In Anne's Friday, March 31st entry, she speaks of "they." Who are "they" and what is their importance?

"They" refers the Allies, mainly the British. "They" are important because they represent hope of liberation.

8. In the May 22nd entry, Anne speaks about the English and their actions and how the Dutch people are reacting. What do Anne's words demonstrate about her?

Anne has very specific opinions about the Dutch and their belief that the English should do all they can to help them. This diary shows the maturity in thought she is capable of. It is also indicates that her views are her own and not those professed by her parents.

9. What does Anne understand about the war that many do not?

Anne writes that many of the Dutch are angry that England seems to be all talk and no action. They want help, and they want it now. Anne writes that England has its own problems to deal with. They are fighting for their land, as well as working to save other nations. No one country is to blame for the Germans' actions. She realizes that all countries ignored what was happening in Germany until it was too late. Now, the saviors of Holland will pick their day and time to help, and Holland will just have to wait.

10. Describe Anne's ambivalence toward the increasing anti-Semitism among Christians?

Anne has learned that many Christians who once supported the Jews now blame the Jews for the problems they face. They believe that Jews gave secrets to the Germans and turned in those who tried to help them. As a result, many Christians died as well. Anne reasons that anyone, no matter the religion, would behave in the same manner if it was necessary to prevent death or torture. From what she knows, the Jews are mistreated horribly, and anything that might prevent this treatment would be used—even if it meant betraying others. If it were the Christians being persecuted, Anne feels that they would react in the same way. Self-preservation is a strong trait in humans.

11. Anne relays a truth she has heard: "What one Christian does is his own responsibility, what one Jew does is thrown back at all Jews." In what way is this sentiment correct?

The sentiment is correct in explaining how all prejudice operates. Such prejudice is based on overgeneralization, applying to all the characteristics and deeds of the individual.

12. What is happening to the tone of Anne's diary entries? What does this suggest?

Anne's entries are becoming increasingly melancholy. Most of her news involves more suffering faced by the people in the annexe and those outside. The news she relays is typically depressing. The shift in tone suggests that Anne is losing hope for their survival. Her notions of humans and their morality are being challenged, and everywhere she looks, she finds discord and turmoil.

13. When Anne speaks of Miep and Eli and Kraler in her May 26th entry, what emotion is apparent? Is it justified?

In this diary entry, Anne sounds bitter. Although she enjoys the friends who bring news of the outside, she is bitter that for a time, they get to enjoy a normal life of outings and fun and conversing with different people. She acknowledges that they too face danger because of their deeds, but their lives are still relatively "normal" and happy.

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

Sunday, 14 June, 1942 to Wednesday, 2 September, 1942

1. What do the early passages indicate about Anne's life?

2. In what ways is Anne's character revealed in the first few entries?

3. What is indicated by Anne addressing the diary as "Dear Kitty?"

4. What purpose does the diary serve?

5. How is Anne's peaceful childhood tainted?

Saturday, 7 November, 1942 to Monday, 7 December, 1942

1. What does the episode with Margot and the book indicate about Anne and Margot? What does it show about their parents?

2. Why is Anne upset by the interference of her parents in her disagreement with Margot?

3. Anne states, "...I have in my mind's eye an image of what a perfect mother and wife should be; and in her whom I must call "Mother" I find no trace of that image." What does this comment reveal about Anne?

4. What does Anne expect from her diary, "Kitty"?

5. Why does Anne choose to not discuss the war as much as she does the happenings of the Secret Annexe from day to day?

6. What does Anne's description of the spilled beans reveal about her and her writing?

Friday, 10 September, 1943 to Wednesday, 29 December, 1943

1. What is the tone for the opening of the entry for September 10th? What is it at the end? Why does Anne switch tones so frequently within her entries?

2. Why does it seem that everyone in the annexe suffers from continuous wretched moods?

3. At the end of Anne's description of Mrs. Van Daan's birthday (29 September, 1943) Anne states, "Such are the times we live in!" What is the tone of this statement, and what exactly does Anne mean?

4. Mrs. Van Daan is loath to part with her possessions for fear that she will not have money after the war to buy more clothes. What does this indicate about her and why?

5. In the October 29th entry, Anne writes, "The atmosphere is so oppressive, and sleepy and as heavy as lead. You don't hear a single bird singing outside, and a deadly close silence hangs everywhere, catching hold of me as if it will drag me down deep into an underworld." What can be assumed by Anne's words?

Monday, 27 March, 1944 to Monday, 8 May, 1944

1. How does Anne's statement about the effect of politics on the adults ring true, even today?

2. How does the cozy picture Anne paints of the Secret Annexe around the radio turn ugly so quickly?

3. Is Anne as good at hiding her feelings as she thinks? Explain your answer.

4. "But, seriously, it would seem funny ten years after the war if we Jews were to tell how we lived and what we ate and talked about here. Although I tell you a lot, still even so, you only know a very little of our lives." What insight does this give us about the annexe? What truth is validated?

5. In Anne's Friday, March 31st entry, she speaks of "they." Who are "they" and what is their importance?

6. Why are beans and potatoes so important?

7. Anne claims that her affection for Peter has not cooled. What evidence to the contrary does she provide?

8. In the May 22nd entry, Anne speaks about the English and their actions and how the Dutch people are reacting. What do Anne's words demonstrate about her?

9. What does Anne understand about the war that many do not?

10. Describe Anne's ambivalence toward the increasing anti-Semitism among Christians?

11. Anne relays a truth she has heard: "What *one* Christian does is his own responsibility, what *one* Jew does is thrown back at all Jews." In what way is this sentiment correct?

12. What is happening to the tone of Anne's diary entries? What does this suggest?

13. When Anne speaks of Miep and Eli and Kraler in her May 26th entry, what emotion is apparent? Is it justified?

6. "...Hitler has even been so kind as to announce to his faithful, devoted people that from now on everyone in the armed forces must obey the Gestapo, and that any soldier who knows that one of his superiors was involved in this low, cowardly attempt upon his life may shoot the same on the spot, without court martial." What keen observation does Anne make regarding this edict? What does it reveal about the state of the war and Germany's leader?

7. Anne spends her last diary entry musing about her personality and behavior. To what conclusion does she come? Is it accurate?

8. What is both significant and ironic about the last sentence of Anne's last entry in her diary? Anne's assertion that she could/would be a better person if "there weren't any other people living in the world."

9. What are the broader implications of this final statement?

10. What can be assumed by the abrupt end to Anne's diary?
