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INTRODUCTION

Read through any curricular documents, and you will find that the work expected of students is expressed using such academic terminology as *describe*, *determine*, *develop*, *support* and *cite*. Requirements such as these cannot be met via the comprehension-question worksheets and culminating quizzes that have long been the staples of literature guides designed for classroom use. The primary objective of those traditional activities was to make sure that students were keeping track of what was happening in the section of the novel that they had just read. Very little rigour and synthesis was asked of students – and usually none until the entire novel was read.

From a teacher’s standpoint, this style of classroom analysis misses multiple opportunities to delve deeply into the details that make a specific piece of literature a classic. From a student’s standpoint, this way to reflect on literature is monotonous and inflexible, and it fails to nurture the momentum experienced when one is invested in a compelling work of art. That is why the guides in the *Rigorous Reading* series aim to do much more: they aim to transform the reading of a great novel into a journey of discovery for students.

Instead of merely asking students what happened in any given section, this resource asks questions that require closer reading and deeper analysis – questions such as, “Why did the author choose to include this information?” and “How does this information further the plot or offer more insight into the themes, characters, settings, etc.?” And instead of waiting until the end of the novel to put the pieces of the puzzle in place, students will learn to add to and alter their understanding of the novel *as they are reading it*. The various activities in this resource systematically prompt students to consider and appreciate the many ingredients the author has combined to form the novel as a whole.

A CUSTOM RESOURCE

This in-depth guide has been written specifically for Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*. The lessons and activities have been structured and scaffolded to maximise the experience of reading and teaching this novel.

To prepare your students for their reading of *Number the Stars*, utilise the **novel information** and **pre-reading activities** included on pages 7–9 of this guide. Included in this section is information about the book and its author, along with activities designed to acclimate students to the themes and/or concepts present in the book they are about to read.

This resource provides activities that help foster comprehension and reinforce knowledge of literary elements as students read *Number the Stars*. These **section activities** allow students the opportunity to process short sections of the novel individually, laying a strong foundation for their ability to engage more deeply with the chapters to come. For each section of the novel, students will complete individual and collaborative activities that encourage close reading, referencing textual evidence and drawing their own conclusions about the text.

Additionally, this resource provides students with another avenue through which they can reflect on recurring literary elements, while also connecting personally with the novel. Each student maintains his or her own **Interactive Novel Log**, using it as a way to consider and then reconsider various aspects of the novel.

Upon completion of the entire novel, students can synthesise their ideas about the novel by completing several individual and/or collaborative **post-reading activities** on pages 54–73. This section of the resource includes such larger assignments as group projects and writing assignments.

On pages 74–75, **vocabulary** lists are provided for each section of the novel, along with suggestions for ways to teach vocabulary during reading and after completing the novel.

At the end of this guide, an **answer key** is provided for activities that require specific answers.

Key Notes

For a description of Interactive Novel Logs and how to use them in your classroom, see page 5 of this guide.

An ideal way to use this resource would be to follow the complete lesson plan given on page 6 of this guide.

The use of multiple texts can help build and extend knowledge about a theme or topic. It can also illustrate the similarities and differences in how multiple authors approach similar content or how an individual author approaches multiple novels. See the bottom of page 7 for suggestions about using *Number the Stars* as part of a text set.

When teaching other novels in your classroom, consider using the specific ideas and also the general approach presented in this resource. Ask students to mine small sections of a novel for clues to theme and characterisation. Examine the craft, structure and purpose of selected passages. Explore inferences and encourage connections.

This guide is designed for use in years 4–6. This levelling has been determined through the consideration of various educational metrics. However, teacher discretion should be used to determine if the novel and guide are appropriate for lower or higher years, as well.

KEEPING NOVEL LOGS

Great works of literature are complex texts, and complex texts are multi-layered. They enrich and reveal as they go along. Successful readers are those who “go along” with the novel, too. Interactive Novel Logs give students a place and a space to record their thoughts and observations as they journey through the book. After each section of the novel is read, students use their Interactive Novel Logs to track the introduction and development of such literary elements as plot, setting, theme, characterisation, craft and structure, while also choosing their own ways to connect the novel to their own life experiences.

Materials needed for each student:

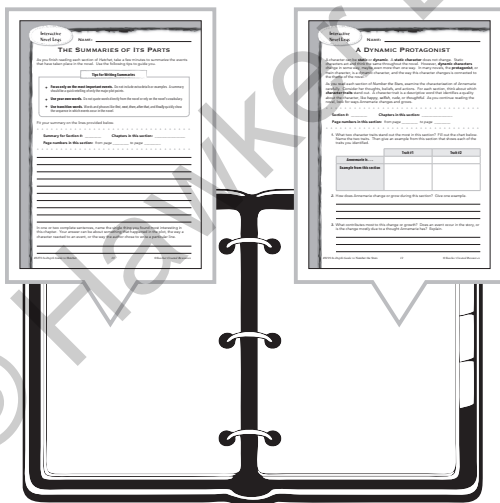
- ✦ a three-ring binder or presentation folder
- ✦ a blank sheet of plain paper with holes punched for the title page
- ✦ two or three sheets of blank lined paper for the Table of Contents
- ✦ several extra sheets of paper (both lined and plain) for student’s responses to the “Ideas for Your Interactive Log” prompts at the end of each section

Key Notes

One Interactive Novel Log can be kept for multiple novels, in which case a larger three-ring binder will be needed. If it will be used only for the activities included in this guide for *Number the Stars*, a smaller binder or presentation folder will be adequate.

Assembling the Interactive Novel Log:

1. On the plain paper, allow students to design and decorate their own title page. Have them write “Interactive Novel Log” and “*Number the Stars*” in the middle of the page. They should include their name and class at the bottom.
2. Add blank lined paper for the Table of Contents. Have students write “Table of Contents” at the top. They will add to this list as they create new pages.



3. Before reading each section of the novel, photocopy and distribute new copies of the Interactive Novel Log worksheets (pages 10–17). Directions for completing these activities can be found in the “Teacher Instructions” that begin Section I (page 18).
4. For the final activity in each section, photocopy and distribute the “Section Log-In” page for the section. Follow the directions given. Students select one or more of the four topics in the “Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log” section and create an Interactive Novel Log page that responds to that topic.

5. After the class has completed the entire novel and the post-reading activities, you may have students include the “My Book Rating” worksheet (page 73) as a final entry in their Interactive Novel Logs.

NOVEL INFORMATION

Book Summary

The year is 1943, and 5-year-old Kirsti Johansen can't really remember a time when there were no German soldiers patrolling the streets outside her family's Denmark apartment. Her sister Annemarie can. She remembers a time of laughter and freedom, a time before the Nazis came to occupy her city. It seems like forever ago when she could run on the street without being questioned and when she had an older sister who was engaged to be married. And now, a terrible situation threatens to get worse. The owner of the button shop has disappeared, and news of more "relocations" has begun to surface. The Nazi party is taking Jewish people from their homes and businesses. Where are they taking them? Annemarie and her family don't know, but they do know that they can't allow their friends, the Rosens, to be among the "relocated".

Number the Stars is story of Annemarie and others like her who are forced to find great courage within themselves. It is a tale of the heroism of an entire country and the bravery of one young girl, who learns that she is capable of more than she would have ever thought possible. In 1990, this work of historical fiction was awarded the Newbery Medal.

About the Author

Lois Lowry is an American author who was born in Hawaii in 1937. Due to her father's career in the U.S. Army, Lois and her family lived in many places during her childhood. After World War II, her father was stationed for a time in Japan, and the family lived there for three years.

Lois married when she was only 19 years old, and she and her husband had four children. While raising her children, Lois earned a degree in English Literature in 1972. It was not until age 40 that she wrote and published her first novel, *A Summer to Die*. Eventually, she became a full-time writer and enjoyed great success. Two of her novels – *Number the Stars* and *The Giver* – were awarded the Newbery Medal, the highest honour given to American literature written for children. Lowry has written in many genres and about many subjects. She is known for tackling tough issues and making them understandable and accessible for young readers.

Make It a Text Set!

The following novels can form ideal text sets with *Number the Stars*. (**Note:** Vet books in advance to ensure they are appropriate for your students.)

Other Novels by Lois Lowry	Books by Other Authors
<p><i>The Giver</i> (1993)</p> <p><i>Gathering Blue</i> (2000)</p> <p><i>The Messenger</i> (2004)</p> <p><i>Son</i> (2012)</p>	<p><i>Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl</i> by Anne Frank</p> <p><i>The Yellow Star: The Legend of King Christian X of Denmark</i> (a picture book) by Carmen Agra Deedy</p>