

# **Prestwick PowerPacks™**

**Practical Activities for Comprehension and Key Skills**



# **Number the Stars**

**by Lois Lowry**

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**Activity I: Map Identification** **Pre-Reading**

The events in *Number the Stars* take place in Northern Europe during the German occupation. Though the story takes place only in Denmark, it is important to understand where the surrounding countries are located in relation to this country, as many are mentioned throughout. Remember, the threat of German occupation did not reach only these neighboring countries, but it also affected many others with its widespread carnage.

On the following MAP OF NORTHERN EUROPE, identify the following seven countries:

- |         |         |         |        |        |        |             |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|
| Denmark | Finland | Germany | Norway | Poland | Sweden | Netherlands |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|

**MAP OF NORTHERN EUROPE**



Next, using an encyclopedia or the Internet, determine which countries were occupied by Germany during World War II, and which were not. Identify these countries by coloring those that were occupied red, and those not occupied blue. Then, discuss possible escape routes Jewish citizens may have taken from Denmark to reach an unoccupied country and freedom.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity II: Identifying Theme****Pre-Reading**

Before reading Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*, take a moment to consider the following two writing prompts. These prompts deal with fear and hiding—two concepts that help develop the overall theme of the story. Choose the prompt to which you feel you can reply best and compose a one page, three-paragraph response. After writing a rough draft, proofread and revise your paper for mistakes and organization before writing a final copy.

- Imagine what it would be like to live in isolated hiding. What everyday necessities would you have to give up? How would this affect your relationships with friends and family?
- Imagine what it would be like to live in constant fear, where at any moment you could be taken away and forced to change your life forever. How would your everyday routine be affected? Would you be able to live your life to the extent that you are living it now? Explain.

Use the **WRITING PROCESS GUIDELINES** to format your response.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity I: Context Clues

## Chapters 1–3

Sometimes a reader can determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word simply by using information found in the sentences that surround the new word. Sentences oftentimes hint at or allude to the meaning of a word based on the placement of that word in the sentence. The following sentences are from chapters one through three of *Number the Stars*. Determine the definition of the words in bold type by using clues in the given sentences. If you are still stuck, refer to the pages as noted and try reading the paragraph as a whole for a clearer context. The first one has been done for you as an example.

## Chapter 1

1. “Far back, little Kirsti was **plodding** along, her face in a pout because the girls hadn’t waited for her.” (Pg. 2)

**Plodding** means: to move along at a slow pace

2. “He **prodded** the corner of her backpack with the **stock** of his rifle.” (Pg. 3)

**Prodded** means: \_\_\_\_\_

3. “She glanced through the window, down to the street corner where the soldiers stood, their faces **impassive** beneath the metal helmets.” (Pgs. 9-10)

**Impassive** means: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 2

4. “Thinking of Lise, her **solemn**, lovely sister, always made her sad.” (Pg. 13)

**Solemn** means: \_\_\_\_\_

5. “Mama had been **crocheting** that evening three years ago: the lacy edging of a pillowcase, part of Lise’s **trousseau**.” (Pg. 14)

**Crocheting** means: \_\_\_\_\_

**Trousseau** means: \_\_\_\_\_

6. “Her fingers moved rapidly, turning the thin white thread into an **intricate** narrow border.” (Pg. 14)

**Intricate** means: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 3**

7. "Kirsti **dawdled** just behind them or **scampered** ahead, never out of their sight." (Pg. 18)

**Dawdled** means: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scampered** means: \_\_\_\_\_

8. "'I did not!' Kirsti said **haughtily** from the bedroom doorway." (Pg. 19)

**Haughtily** means: \_\_\_\_\_

9. "He was a tall teenager with thick glasses, **stooped** shoulders, and **unruly** hair." (Pg. 20)

**Stooped** means: \_\_\_\_\_

**Unruly** means: \_\_\_\_\_

10. "Copenhagen had a **curfew**, and no citizens were allowed out after eight o'clock." (Pg. 22)

**Curfew** means: \_\_\_\_\_

11. "He grinned, kissed her cheek, and **ruffled** her long hair." (Pg. 23)

**Ruffled** means: \_\_\_\_\_

12. "Later, once more in her bed beside the warm **cocoon** of her sister..." (Pgs. 25-26)

**Cocoon** means: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity II: Characterization** **Chapters 1–3**

Different authors reveal their characters' personalities in different ways. Some authors reveal descriptions on the surface, while others suggest a personality trait less openly through a character's thoughts or actions. Sometimes the way a character is viewed by another also lends credibility to his or her nature.

Chapters one and two of *Number the Stars* offer valuable insight into the personalities of the three young girls: Annemarie, Ellen, and Kirsti. Specific passages reveal evidence that provide clues to who they really are and how they act. In the following **CHARACTERIZATION CHARTS**, list as many character traits as you can about each of these characters as revealed in the first two chapters. Next to the trait, record the passage and page number that led you to this conclusion. The first one has been done for you as an example.

*CHARACTERIZATION CHART FOR ANNEMARIE*

Trait	Passage and Page Number
outgoing	“ We have to practice for the athletic meet on Friday... ” (Pg. 1)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*CHARACTERIZATION CHART FOR ELLEN*

Trait	Passage and Page Number
pessimistic	“ ‘You know I can’t beat you—my legs aren’t as long.’ ” (Pg. 1)

*CHARACTERIZATION CHART FOR KIRSTI*

Trait	Passage and Page Number
obstinate	“... but Kirsti, always stubborn, refused it and put her hands on her hips defiantly.” (Pg. 4)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity I: Postcard from Tivoli****Chapters 4–5**

Tivoli Gardens is a famous amusement park located in the very heart of Copenhagen, Denmark. Founded by Georg Carstensen, the park opened in 1843, with a variety of attractions. From the very beginning, people could entertain themselves at Tivoli's various restaurants, bandstands, flower gardens, parades, and amusement rides. Fireworks were often set-off after dark over a beautiful lake. Tivoli Gardens even has its own musical orchestra and pantomime acts.

During World War II, however, some of Tivoli Gardens was burned down by the Nazis in an attempt to dampen the Danish peoples' spirits. Despite this temporary setback, Tivoli Gardens has gone on to inspire the likes of amusement parks around the world, including Disneyland. While young Kirsti has never experienced its carousel, fireworks, and bright lights, Annemarie has. Her parents had taken her there several times as a child.

Put yourself in Annemarie's place, and imagine you are spending a fun-filled weekend at Tivoli Gardens as she did when she was a child. Write a postcard letter from Annemarie's point of view, addressed to Uncle Henrik, telling him about the wonderful time you are having. You may wish to mention the food, entertainment, and amusements that highlighted the experience. No postcard is complete without an illustration, however. On the front side of the postcard, be sure to sketch a memorable moment at Tivoli Gardens. Use the **FRIENDLY LETTER MODEL** to help you format your message correctly.

**FRIENDLY LETTER MODEL**

	Your street address Your City, State Zip Code Date
Dear Name,	
<p>Begin your letter here. Use complete sentences to form clearly organized paragraphs. Begin a new paragraph when you finish discussing one topic and want to move on to another topic. Indent the first word of each new paragraph.</p> <p>The purpose of a friendly letter is to share news with friends, family, and other people you know well.</p>	
Your friend, sign your name	



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity II: Cross-Cultural Conflict****Chapters 4–5**

“They didn’t understand the words or the meaning, but they could feel what a special time it was for the Rosens.” (Pg. 33)

Conflict arises where there is a clash of ideas or disagreement. Many instances of conflict arise throughout *Number the Stars*, though one of the most prevalent is the conflict of identity. The Jewish citizens, who are being persecuted in what came to be known as the Holocaust, suffered the greatest personal conflict of all. While the Jews are being taken from their homes and sent to various relocation camps, they are not only losing their lives and their families, but they are also losing their identities. It is because of their beliefs and religious practices that they are being persecuted in the first place. The Jews are denied everything they have been brought up to believe.

In chapter four, Ellen explains the Jewish New Year to young Kristi who cannot understand why she does not celebrate it at the same time, too. We also learn that both Annemarie and Kirsti have been invited to the Rosens’ home to witness the lighting of the Sabbath candles and hear a Hebrew prayer. Annemarie and Kirsti are not familiar with these customs because they come from a nationality and background with beliefs different from those of the Rosens.

In groups of three, research the Jewish way of life; list as many ideas, practices, beliefs, terms, traditions, and holidays of Jewish culture that you come across and give a brief description of each. See who can create the longest list in your class. If you are having trouble getting started, try identifying the following terms: Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Pesach, Judaism, and Anti-Semitism.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity I: Setting** **Chapters 6-7**

*Number the Stars* begins in the streets of Copenhagen and carries the reader by train to the outskirts of the sea along the Danish coast. The Johansen family and Ellen are protected in the shelter and sanctity of Henrik's house by the sea, which offers peace and tranquility, contrasted with the dangers posed by the occupied Copenhagen district.

Using the following **VENN DIAGRAM FOR SETTING**, compare and contrast the two main settings of the story. In the right circle, describe the setting of Copenhagen from the opening chapters of the story. How does the narrator describe this setting visually? In the left circle, describe the setting of Gilleleje where Uncle Henrik lives. How is it different from the description of Copenhagen? Where the two circles overlap, list any similarities that both settings share together. Refer to the novel as often as you would like. Then, when you are finished, use the information you have collected in your Venn diagram to answer the questions that follow.

Part I

*VENN DIAGRAM FOR SETTING*

