

educator's guide

GIRL IN THE BLUE COAT

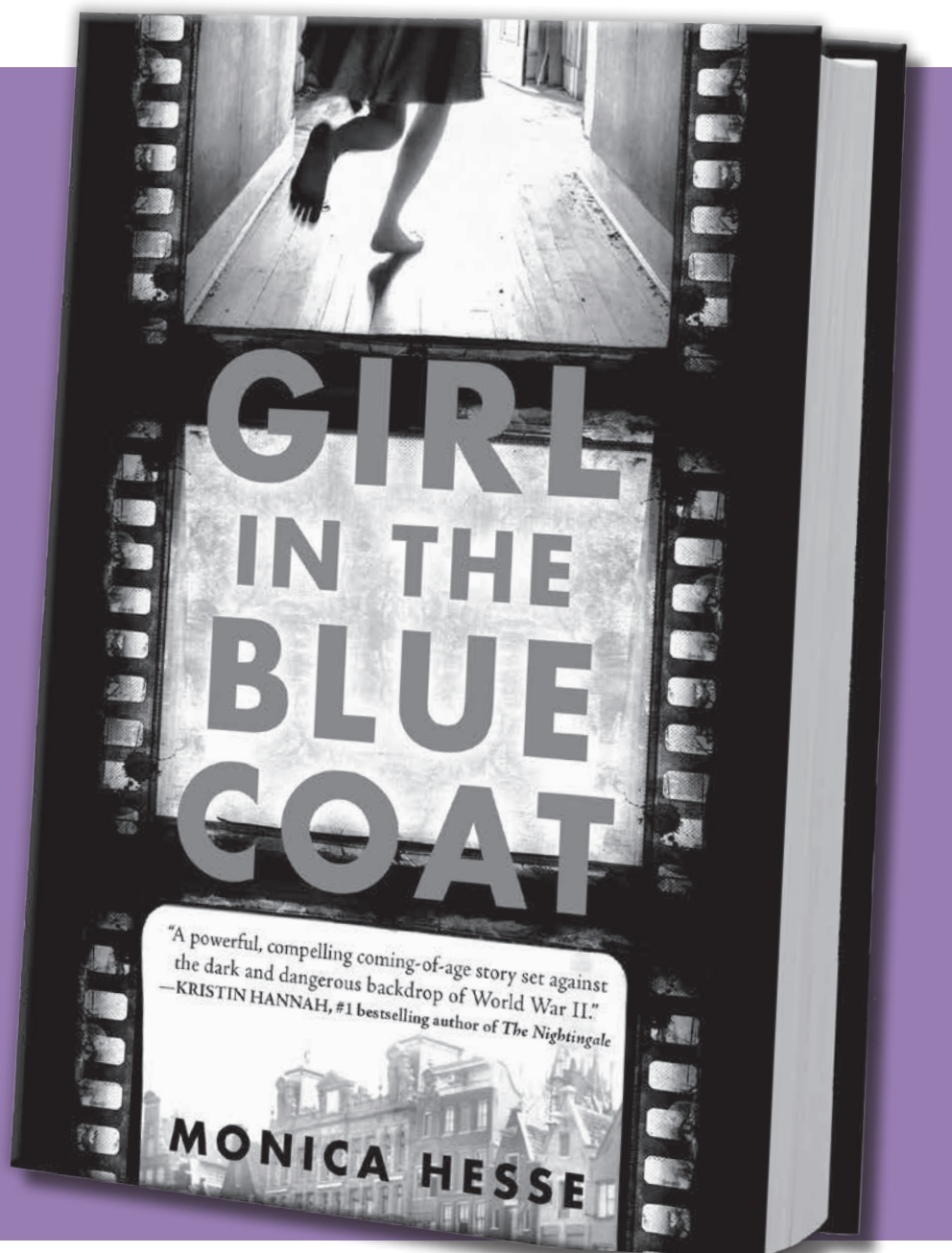
Curriculum connections

- ❖ Social Studies
- ❖ Vocabulary

Ages: 12 and up

by

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HESSE**



VOCABULARY BY CHAPTER

1. dismount, illicit, comrades, haphazard
2. onderduiker, deportation, rational
3. immigrated, flouted, avert, momento
4. lyceum, profiteering, voraciously, waylaid
5. periphery, traipsing, amateur, blockaded
6. exerted, anise, pretense, composure, sutures
7. infinitesimal, vouch, sadistic, sycophants
8. vindictive, mirthless, altruistic, resistance
9. audacious, propaganda, intricately, varnish
10. pantomime, fanaticism, incredulously
11. dialogue, repugnant, improbably
12. imperceptibly, constituents
13. profusely, cryptic, absentmindedly, rational
14. prospective, residential, proprietor
15. valise, chastise, atrocities
16. mundane, perfunctorily, sentimentality
17. dictate, lunatic, listlessly
18. repelling, rationally
19. ordinary, impeccable, parquet
20. farce, razzia, foreground
21. brash, transit, obsequious, bludgeoned
22. euphoric, jeopardize, reprieve, resigned
23. coherent, intimate, impersonate, disheveled
24. contingencies, practicalities
25. enormity, tattered
26. craggy, exhilarated, cobblestone
27. reckless, dumbfounded, gesture
28. observant, banal
29. drudgery, quaint, resigned, inappropriately
30. puckered, uncertainly, doppelganger
31. illicit, infinitely, dignified
32. exasperated, hysterical
33. interloper, amalgamation

VOCABULARY

Before beginning the novel, have students pick 15 words from the provided list or choose the ones you'd like to focus on as a class. Then, offer students some choices to show how they've mastered the words by selecting two of the following activities to complete:

Context

Write sentences that reveal the meaning of the word in the context of an original sentence.

Simile/Analogy

Write a simile or analogy for each of the words (that makes sense, of course).

Crossword

Create a crossword puzzle based on the words that provides clues and definitions to solve the puzzle. In addition, provide an answer key. (Example—Clue: a person who is in a place they do not belong; Answer: INTERLOPER.)

Symbol

Create a symbol (or simple sketch) that will help you remember the meaning of each word. FYI: the use of color has been proven to enhance memory.

*To challenge advanced students, consider assigning additional words.

WHILE READING

Have students read the prologue and the first chapter. As they read, ask students to write on an index card everything that they learn about Hanneke and her life in Amsterdam. The information may be stated directly or implied, so students should be able to cite where in the book they found it. Students can use this index card as a bookmark as they continue reading. Using the back of the card, have students track all the clues Hanneke is given about Mirjam and her disappearance. Again, make sure students note the page number where the evidence was revealed for easier discussion later.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Hanneke react to Mrs. Janssen's story of Mirjam Roodvelt? Why do you think she reacted that way?
2. What is the significance of the scene with the Biermans that Hanneke witnesses during lunch with her parents?
3. Why does Hanneke believe that her old boyfriend, Bas, would not recognize her? How does that impact her thoughts about finding Mirjam?
4. Why has Hanneke decided to get involved with finding Mirjam? What would you do if you were in Hanneke's shoes?
5. Describe what happened when Hanneke visits the Jewish school for information on Mirjam. Why was she so careless?
6. Analyze Hanneke's interaction with German soldiers. How does she manipulate the interactions? List the character traits of Hanneke that are revealed by these interactions.
7. Summarize what the reader has learned about Bas and Hanneke by the end of chapter six. Why is the author pacing out the details rather than revealing all of them at once?
8. Imagine you are Hanneke and invited to listen in at the meeting at Leo's apartment. What do you notice about the attendees? What do you think of their purpose?
9. What does Hanneke learn on her walk with Mina and baby Regina?
10. How does Mina handle the German soldier with the empty baby carriage? What does that exchange reveal about Mina? What does Hanneke's reaction reveal about her?
11. Summarize the flashback to the news of Bas's death. Why does Hanneke feel responsible? Decide whether her feelings are justified or not, citing evidence to support your position.
12. Who is a great surprise to Hanneke? Why? What does she learn from Mina about this person's house? What clues does she discover?
13. What's special about Mina's photography? Do you think her work is worth the risk or not? What clues are hidden in the color slides?

14. What problem did Mina create? How does she offer to solve it? How can Hanneke make a difference in this situation? Summarize the plan.
15. How does Hanneke's choice to stay out all night change her relationship with her parents? How have all of these young people changed because of the war?
16. List the steps in the plan that Willem and Hanneke create to save Mirjam and the camera from most dangerous to least.
17. What happens between Ollie and Hanneke as they wait for transport? How does it change their understanding of each other, and their relationship? What does it make Hanneke realize about the war?
18. Where have they taken Mirjam? How does everyone react to the news? Were you surprised by this event?
19. How does Hanneke pay her respects to Mirjam? Why does she keep everything a secret from her parents? Would you be able to keep something like this from your own parents?
20. After the funeral, when the group goes on a bike ride, Hanneke has an epiphany. What was it? Why does she react the way she does?
21. Who was the person buried? How is Hanneke certain of it, and how does this realization change her mood and thoughts?
22. Explain Christoffel's part in the whole story. Why does Hanneke have great empathy for him?
23. Summarize what Hanneke learns at the inn about that fateful night. How did things go so terribly wrong?
24. Throughout the book, Hanneke often reflects on her friend Elsbeth. How does this relationship mirror the friendship between Mirjam and Amalia?
25. Explain the significance of this quote: "Maybe we can't barter our feelings away, trading good deeds for bad ones and expecting to become whole (p.300)."
26. Read the author's note. How did the author's training as a journalist help her write this book?
27. How does the author keep tension throughout the story? Whose story fascinated you most and why?
28. Why do you think the author chose to close the story with a memory of the narrator and her first love?

RESEARCH

Ask students to create a pamphlet like one a tourist might pick up for an overview of one of the locations listed below:

- Amsterdam
- Rembrandt Square (Het Rembrandtplein)
- Jewish Cultural Quarter of Amsterdam
- Amsterdam’s National Holocaust Memorial (the former Hollandsche Schouwburg)
- University of Amsterdam
- The Hague (Den Haag)
- Kijkduin

Encourage students to use reliable, accurate sources and to cite them, as necessary. No more than 10% of their writing should be a direct quote from a source. Students need many opportunities to practice the research skills of paraphrasing material into their own words, finding key quotes, and summarizing information. Share the graphic organizer below to help guide their work.

<p>SOURCE INFORMATION: (Title, Homepage, etc.)</p>
<p>Author:</p>
<p>Date of Publication:</p>
<p>KEY QUOTE: Choose only the most important information and cite it EXACTLY as the original. Use quotation marks to denote where it begins and ends.</p>
<p>PARAPHRASE: Put information into your own words. Use no more than three words in a row from the original.</p>
<p>SUMMARY: What is the most important idea? Why does this information matter to a reader?</p>

WRITING

Ask students to select two of the topics below to illustrate their understanding of the novel and the literary elements within it.

Letter Writing

Write a letter from the perspective of one character in the book to another, summarizing key events and your response as the character to them.

Summary

Write a one-sentence summary for each chapter. In addition, find a key quote that best represents that chapter and cite it correctly.

Character Analysis

Discuss the development of a key character in the novel, using quotes to back up your assertions. Choose a round, dynamic character for this assignment.

Setting

Write two paragraphs about the setting of the novel and how it impacts the plot. Remember that setting includes historical time period, location, weather, and time span (a single day, a year, etc.).

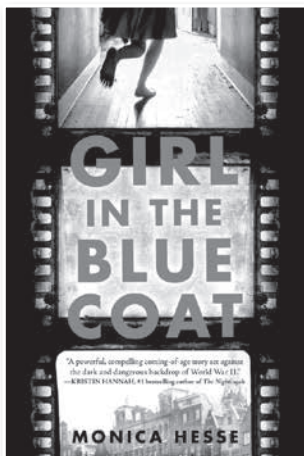
Theme

Write two well-developed paragraphs discussing one of the major themes in the novel. Use at least two quotes, and embed them correctly into your essay.

Creative

Write a scene between two characters that is not currently depicted in the novel. It can be a flashback, prequel, or a sequel to the story but it must stay true to the characters. Be certain you follow the conventions of dialogue, which must be included.

about the book

GIRL IN THE
BLUE COAT

HC 978-0-316-26060-2

Also available as an audiobook
and ebook

Amsterdam, 1943.

Hanneke spends her days procuring and delivering sought-after black market goods to paying customers, her nights hiding the true nature of her work from her concerned parents, and every waking moment mourning her boyfriend, who was killed on the Dutch front lines when the Germans invaded. She likes to think of her illegal work as a small act of rebellion.

On a routine delivery, a client asks Hanneke for help. Expecting to hear that Mrs. Janssen wants meat or kerosene, Hanneke is shocked by the older woman's frantic plea to find a person—a Jewish teenager Mrs. Janssen had been hiding, who has vanished without a trace from a secret room. Hanneke initially wants nothing to do with such dangerous work, but is ultimately drawn into a web of mysteries and stunning revelations that lead her into the heart of the resistance, open her eyes to the horrors of the Nazi war machine, and compel her to take desperate action.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

- ★ “Her characters come alive, and what one of them says about photographs—that they make everything so current, just like real life—could describe the book itself.” —*Booklist*
- ★ “A gripping historical mystery in which people and places, including the title character, are often not what they appear.” —*Publishers Weekly*
- ★ “Teens will relish the chance to become acquainted with this brave, flawed heroine and breathlessly tag along on her courageous journey.” —VOYA

about the author



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