

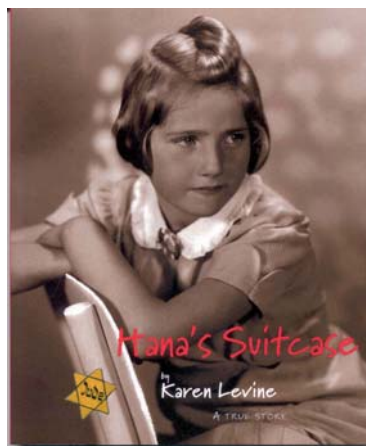
Hana's Suitcase

-Karen Levine

A book study

Don Flaig

2003



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Hana's Suitcase

Introduction for the teacher

Hana's Suitcase is an elegant book combining the biography of the short life of Hana Brady, a Holocaust victim, and the efforts of Fumiko Ishioka to piece together the story of her life, seventy years later. Fumiko is the curator of the children's Holocaust education centre in Tokyo. The title of the book comes from Hana's suitcase, which was loaned to the centre for a display of children's articles, intended to help the museum's visitors understand how the Holocaust affected children. The suitcase, bearing Hana's name, generated so much interest that Fumiko felt compelled to track Hana's story down.

You and your students will follow these two remarkable stories in parallel as they come together in a beautiful and touching conclusion of life and joy rising out of suffering and death.

The book brings many issues to the fore:

- What happened during the Holocaust and how were people, especially children, affected?
- What was World War II about and why were Jewish people persecuted with such intensity?
- What is the nature of forgiveness and how is it possible to go on after great suffering?
- What is the nature of hate and why is hate so prevalent in books and on the internet?

You will need some background information as questions arise. You will need to treat some aspects of the Holocaust with sensitivity, especially if you have students who are Jewish or who come from Israel or Palestine. Many students have relatives who fought in the wars and the book will be providing a different context for what they already know.

I suggest that you avoid dwelling on the more intense details of the concentration camps and gas chambers, yet you do not want to appear to be avoiding the issue completely. I recommend the book, "The Devil's Arithmetic" for a more inside view of what life might have been like in a concentration camp. Students can always do their own research in the public libraries or the internet.

A note of caution is appropriate when "surfing" the net. There may be many Internet sites which promote hate and you should be careful in the classroom if you access the net with your students.

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Introduction for the Students

You are about to read about the story of a young girl named Hana who lived in Europe during the time of the Second World War. You will also read about a young woman from Tokyo, in the present time, who took it upon herself to teach children in

Japan about an important and tragic event called the Holocaust and how it affected people.

Hana Brady and her brother George are the two main characters in the part of the book dealing with the Holocaust. They lived in a town called Nove Mesto, in Czechoslovakia. They lived happily with their mother and father until the events of the Holocaust changed their lives. As you will see, they attended school, played and did chores much like you do.

Fumiko Ishioka is the young woman from Tokyo. She is the curator of the Tokyo Holocaust Education Resource Center. There, children like you are learning about the Holocaust and know Hana and George's story.

You are about to become part of the growing number of people who know about Hana, George, Fumiko and what the Holocaust means for us all.

Let us begin.

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The Tokyo Holocaust Education Center



Suggested Activities

- 1) Map Work
 - a) Have the students locate Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic) in an atlas.
 - a) Nove Mesto is in Moravia, a province in eastern Czechoslovakia. Internet searches will provide several hits for Nove Mestos, so be sure you are looking in Moravia. Skiing is mentioned in the book, and there is a Nove Mesto showing pictures of a ski resort. That may be it. picture To the Children's Holocaust Centre in Tokyo (or email, from their site)
- 2) Time lines
 - a) Have the students make timelines of the events in Hana and George's story, and then one showing the events in Fumiko's search. Consider have the students work in pairs or groups. You may want to give them a copy of a blank table (provided) or a copy of the table with the dates only and they could fill in the blanks with what happened (also provided). Another option could be to have them build their own timeline, with you providing the dates from the table with dates only.
 - b) You may want to do this activity as you or the students read through the book.
- 3) Point of View
 - a) Write a story from Silva's point of view, telling the events: Mother taken away, Father taken away, children taken, looking for them, crossing the town and going to Uncle Ludvik's, finding the children, licking their faces, etc.
 - b) Uncle Ludvik was so sad to see his niece and nephew leave that he couldn't drive them himself. Write a story from his (or Aunt Hedda's) point of view from the point when he learns that Hana and George's parents are no longer with them.
- 4) Letter writing
 - a) To the Children's Holocaust Centre in Tokyo (or email, from their site)
 - i) Share what you have learned and how you feel about what you have read.
 - b) Imagine you could write to the author. Or, send your letter to the author c/o the publisher (address and website on inside cover of the book).
 - i) Share what the book has taught you and how you feel about the story.
 - ii) Share how you feel about how things turned out in the end.
 - c) To characters in the book: Hana, George, Uncle Ludvik, etc. Imagine you could ask them questions about what they have lived.
- 5) Write your autobiography
 - a) Hana's Suitcase is like a biography. Make your biography in a scrap book using pictures or drawings that tell your story, much like the photo album George was able to preserve. Imagine that it will be found a long time in the future by an archeologist and write the archeologist's comments upon finding such a valuable item! You could add pictures cut out of catalogues to show what we wear now or what things we do.
- 6) Art and Photography
 - a) Obtain some black and white film or use a digital camera with a black and white setting or sepia tones to simulate photography before color photos were available

- to everyone. Use the pictures to make a class photo album or have the students decorate their photo with old-fashioned clothing or hats.
- i) You can use a photocopier and blow up the photos so the students don't work with the original.
 - ii) Put the photos in a box or can and give it to them when they graduate in Grade 12, as a kind of time capsule. Include other items from their year with you.
- 7) Organize a field trip to the Galt Museum to understand how documents can be preserved so that people in later times can investigate history, as Fumiko did.
- a) Or organize virtual field trips to museums:
 - i) VMC (if you become a member, they email links)
(1) <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/>
 - ii) Galt Museum
(1) <http://www.galtmuseum.com/index.htm>
 - iii) Canadian Museum of Civilization
(1) <http://www.civilization.ca/indexe.asp>
- 8) Poetry
- a) The images in the book lend themselves well to written images, as well as the strong feelings we have when we read it.
 - b) Teach different forms of poetry and write, using the themes in the book. Here are some links showing you "how to":
 - i) Haiku
(1) <http://www.toyomasu.com/haiku/#howtowritehaiku>
 - ii) Cinquain
(1) <http://jfg.girlscouts.org/How/make/cinquain.htm>
 - iii) Diamonte
(1) <http://edtech.sandi.net/literacy/3.6/diamonte.html>
 - iv) Other forms of rhymed or non-rhyming poetry
 - v) Have them decorate their poems with borders and backgrounds, suitable for display.
- 9) Journal writing
- a) Imagine you are Hana or George.
 - i) Write a page or two that could be in his or her journal, were it possible for them to have one. Try to capture the feelings you might imagine them to have at that particular moment in the story.
 - ii) In your own journal, put down your feelings as you read this book. Put down questions you would like answered.
- 10) A message in a bottle
- a) Hana and George wrote down all the things that were bothering them at the beginning when the Nazis began to persecute the Jews (page 25).
 - i) Have each student make a list of all the good things that happen to him or her and have them put their lists in a jar, which you could open later in the year, at Pentecost, for instance.
 - ii) Discuss the value of writing down things that make you sad or angry, instead of acting out and doing something that makes things worse (see the Health Curriculum Wellness Outcomes for cross-curricular possibilities).

11) Links to Art

- a) Have the students do art in various media of the symbols in the book, such as the Star of David, trains, playground swings, a message in a bottle:
 - i) Watercolour
 - ii) Pencil crayons
 - iii) Fabric arts
- b) Make bread dough ornaments with names of the people you are giving them to carved into them.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

(with answers)

(Note: questions are keyed to Bloom's Taxonomy... 1-2: Knowledge, 3-4: Comprehension, 5-6: Application, 7-8: Analysis, 9-10: Synthesis, 11-12: Evaluation)

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Hana and George's Life in Nove Mesto

(Before the Nazis came)

- 1) Where is Nove Mesto? (p.5, middle of what was then Czechoslovakia, in a province called Moravia)
- 2) What was Hana's job in the store? (p. 8, helper, kept the shelves stocked, clean and tidy, slice yeast, chisel lumps off the sugar loaf, weigh spices, twist paper into cones to hold candy)
- 3) What can you say about the Brady family and their role in the town of Nove Mesto? (p. 6, Father was an amateur actor, he called the cross-country ski races, he was a volunteer firefighter, the Brady family welcomed artists in their home and fed them, p. 8, They held the general store in the town, Mother took food to the poor people who lived on the edge of town)
- 4) How would you summarize Hana and George's childhood in Nove Mesto? (answers will vary: happy, normal, lots of friends, p. 15: played on the swings, p. 16: played in winter making snow forts, skating, close family ties)
- 5) What questions would you ask Hana and George in an interview about their days in Nove Mesto during the time before the Nazis? (answers will vary)
- 6) What facts would you select to show that Hana and George were well accepted by the children of Nove Mesto? (no one noticed or cared that they were Jewish, they went to school and took part in the school plays (picture on page 7), they played with the other children, skated on the pond, built snow forts)

- 7) What are the parts of their life in Nove Mesto that are most like your life now? (sports, school, snow forts, close family ties, etc.)
- 8) Why do you think Mr. and Mrs. Brady were such generous people? (their parents taught them to be generous, their religion encouraged this, they had much to give, etc.)
- 9) Suppose you could go back in time and play with Hana and George. What would you do to prepare them for the coming time when they would not be allowed to play with the other children? (answers will vary)
- 10) Imagine your family lived like the Bradys. Who in your family would do what? i.e. manage the store, be a volunteer firefighter, take food to families on the outside of town, etc.
- 11) What is your opinion of the life that Hana and George had in Nove Mesto? (answers will vary).
- 12) Would it have been better if Hana and George knew what was going to happen to them when the Nazis came? Why? (answers will vary).

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Hana and George's Life in Nove Mesto (after the Nazis came to power)

- 1) What was the example of foreshadowing that Karen Levine used, on page 19? (Hana's little walnut shell boat sank, on New Year's Eve)
- 2) List three things that Hana and George were no longer allowed to do? (couldn't leave the house at certain hours of the day, couldn't shop at certain stores, couldn't travel, couldn't go to movies, skate on the pond, go to the gym, etc.)
- 3) How would you contrast your life with Hana and George's life now? (answers will vary)
- 4) What can you say about how the Brady family was treated, at this point, in Nove Mesto? (answers will vary)
- 5) What approach would you use to make you feel better, if you were in Hana and George's place, when their friends were no longer allowed to play with them? (Hana and George put their feelings on paper and buried them in a bottle...students should come up with other ideas, such as might have been taught in the Health curriculum)
- 6) If you could choose one thing to make Hana and George a little happier at this point in their lives, what would it be?
- 7) Why do you think it was so important for Mr. Brady to hear the news on the radio? (p. 26, They needed to make sense of everything happening, they wanted to protect themselves and their children, etc.)
- 8) What was the function or the reason behind all these laws against the Jews? (it gave the Nazis power, it gave Hitler a reason to go to war, it made the German people forget Hitler's evil acts)
- 9) What would have happened if the other townspeople helped the Bradys out? (p. 26, the Nazis would have punished their whole families or arrested them)

- 10) Imagine you could change history. Propose a solution that would have protected the Jews in Czechoslovakia. (answers will vary)
- 11) What choice would you have made if you were Hana's or George's friend?
- 12) What is your opinion of what the Nazis did to the Jewish people during the Second World War?

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Hana and George's life in Theresienstadt

- 1) Who was Hana's close friend in the barracks? (p. 78, Ella)
- 2) What were the lists at the main entrance of Hana's building for? (p. 78, announced who was leaving by train)
- 3) How would you compare Hana's experience in the barracks with George's? (Hana had to stay inside, George learned to be a plumber, Hana was younger)
- 4) How would you summarize Hana's experience in Theresienstadt? (This was a time of loneliness, fear and hunger, away from her parents, etc.)
- 5) What examples can you find to show that people stuck up for each other in Theresienstadt? (secret classes in the attic, Ella helped Hana, they saved food for each other, they made games, they sang songs to cheer each up, etc.)
- 6) Identify one way that you would like someone to help you out if you were in Hana or George's place in Theresienstadt.
- 7) Why do you think people helped each other out so much in Theresienstadt? (answers will vary, but should include ideas of courage, the need to stand up against a common enemy, people show their best qualities under adversity, etc.)
- 8) Why do you think the Nazis kept the people in such poor conditions? (they were easier to control, it would be very expensive, they were victims of hate laws, they were being persecuted, etc.)
- 9) Suppose you could change one thing to make life easier in Theresienstadt. What would it be? (answers will vary)
- 10) Can you think of an original way for people to keep up their spirits under terrible conditions such as there were in Theresienstadt?
- 11) What would you recommend we do if we saw people being treated as less worthy than us, here in Canada? (answers will vary, but might include ideas of contacting MLAs or MPs, writing to the editor of a paper, speaking about it in a classroom meeting, talking to parents, etc.)
- 12) What would you recommend we do to see that no one is ever again treated as the Jewish people were treated by the Nazis? (answers will vary)

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Fumiko's Search

1. How did Fumiko come to possess Hana's suitcase? (p. 12, she spoke personally with the assistant director of the museum of the concentration camp at Auschwitz)

2. How did the children in Tokyo figure out how old Hana was when she was sent to Auschwitz? (p. 20, the date on the suitcase was a clue)
3. Rephrase in your own words: “It would be easier for them to put themselves in her shoes.” (see page 41) (easier to understand how Hana lived and what she went through, easier to understand how Hana felt, what she was like as a child)
4. What can you say about how Fumiko kept on searching for information about Hana? (she was very tenacious, she wouldn’t stop, she was driven by curiosity and a need to know more, etc.)
5. What questions would you ask of Fumiko, in an interview?
6. What other way would you use to find out information about somebody you knew very little about?
7. Why do you think people are so interested in the Holocaust? (it was such a terrible thing to do, it causes us fear to think we might go through something like it, we do not want such things to happen again, we have trouble understanding it, etc.)
8. Compare Fumiko’s search with a detective story you have read.
9. What way would you design a museum to tell about the Holocaust? Write briefly about how you would display pictures and objects, and how you would interest young people in what you have to share. Make a little sketch of the building you are imagining.
10. What do you predict will happen next with Fumiko’s museum?
11. What objects would you select to interest young people in your town or city in learning more about the Holocaust?
12. How important is it, in your opinion, for Fumiko to continue to teach us about the Holocaust?

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Suggested Reading

Other books for student to read on similar topics and themes:

- a) The Devil’s Arithmetic: Jane Yolen, Scholastic
 - i) Tells the story of a young Jewish girl who is transported back in time to experience life in a concentration camp.
- b) The Diary of Anne Frank
- c) Number the Stars: Lois Lowry, Dell
 - i) Ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen and her friend live in Copenhagen in the 1940’s and must deal with the changes the Nazis bring to their lives.
- d) The Breadwinner: Deborah Ellis, Scholastic
 - i) Parvana is a young girl in Afghanistan. We experience life under the Taliban in very recent times.
 - (1) See also the sequel: Parvana’s Journey
- e) The Secret of Gabi’s Dresser: Kathy Kacer, Second Story Press
 - i) The heroine, Gabi, recounts how as a young Jewish girl she lived on a family farm in Eastern Europe during the Second World War.
- f) Clara’s War: Kathy Kacer, Second Story Press

- i) A wonderful new work of historical fiction by the Silver Birch Award-winning author of The Secret of Gabi's Dresser.

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Links

Tokyo Holocaust Education Resource Center

<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/holocaust/tokyo/English/index.html>



Small Wings Site

<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/holocaust/tokyo/toppage7.htm>

Second Story Press

<http://www.secondstorypress.on.ca/>

A CBC site about Hana's Suitcase, including more pictures and comments from the author, Karen Levine, Fumiko Ishioka, George Brady and members of the Small Wings

http://radio.cbc.ca/programs/thismorning/sites/people/hanassuitcase_010119/hana_main.html

Email link to the museum in Tokyo

Holocaust@Tokyo.email.ne.jp

Unicef Cartoons showing children's rights

<http://www.unicef.org/crcartoons/>

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Answer keys

Fumiko's Timeline

Winter 2000	Fumiko met a few Holocaust survivors in Israel. Their optimism and joy of living astonished her.
Winter 2000	Fumiko visits Auschwitz. She asks to be loaned some objects that belonged to a child in a concentration camp.
March 2000	Hana's suitcase is a mystery to the children in Japan. Fumiko promises to find out about "Hanna". Fumiko writes letters and gets a reply from Auschwitz saying Hana was in Theresienstadt.
March 2000	Fumiko learns that, although Theresienstadt was a terrible place, children were taught art there. Could a drawing be from Hana?
April 2000	Fumiko receives photos of Hana's drawings.
Spring 2000	The children form "Small Wings". They write poems and make a newsletter. Fumiko opens the exhibit.
Terezin June 2000	More and more people come to the museum. Fumiko decides to go to Terezin.
July 2000	She flies to Prague and takes a bus to Terezin. The museum is closed.
July 2000	Fumiko cries. She decides to go back in and meets Ludmila, who helps her. Fumiko learns that Hana had a brother who may be alive. Fumiko rushes back to Prague.
Prague July 2000	Fumiko meets Mr. Kotouc in Prague who is George's friend. She goes back to Tokyo with George's address.
Tokyo August 2000	Fumiko writes to George.
Toronto August 2000	George receives Fumiko's letter.
Tokyo September, 2000	Fumiko receives George's letter and the photos of Hana.
Tokyo March 2001	George and his daughter, Lara Hana, meet Fumiko and the Small Wings in Tokyo.

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Hana and George's Timeline

Nove Mesto 1930's	Hana and George lived in Nove Mesto, the only Jewish children.
1938	The Nazis were in power in Germany and marched into Czechoslovakia. Some Jews left for America. Hana's candle went out.
1939	The Nazis declared the Jews evil. George and Hana not allowed to go to the movies, parks, skating. They put their thoughts on paper in a bottle, buried under the swings.
Autumn 1940 – Spring 1941	Before Hana could enter Grade 3, Jewish children were no longer allowed to attend school. Hana's mother is taken away.
Autumn 1941	Hana's mother sends her gifts made of bread, from Ravensbruck. They are forced to wear stars. Hana's father is taken away.
Winter 1941 – 1942	Uncle Ludvik comes to take Hana and George to live with him and Aunt Hedda. Silva finds her way across town to be with them.
May 1942	Hana and George are deported to Theresienstadt. They spend four days in a warehouse where Hana celebrates her 11 th birthday.
May 1942 The Deportation Centre	They travel by train to Theresienstadt. The trip takes a few hours. George and Hana are separated.
Theresienstadt 1942 – 1943	Hana meets Ella. She is confined to the building. She attends secret classes in the attic of Kinderheim L410. She takes art lessons from Friedl Dicker-Brandeis
Theresienstadt	Hana finally gets to see George again.
Theresienstadt 1943 – 1944	Their grandmother arrives, and dies there after three months.
September 1944	George is sent away to the east, to Auschwitz.
October 23, 1944	Hana and Ella go by train to Auschwitz.
January 1945	Auschwitz is liberated. George is freed.
May 1945	George arrives back to Nove Mesto. Months later he learns that Hana was killed on the day she arrived at Auschwitz.
March 2001	George and his daughter, Lara Hana visit the Center in Tokyo.

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Fumiko's Timeline

Winter 2000	
Winter 2000	
March 2000	
March 2000	
April 2000	
Spring 2000	
Terezin June 2000	
July 2000	
July 2000	
Prague July 2000	
Tokyo August 2000	
Toronto August 2000	
Tokyo September, 2000	
Tokyo March 2001	

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Hana and George's Timeline

Nove Mesto 1930's	
1938	
1939	
Autumn 1940 – Spring 1941	
Autumn 1941	
Winter 1941 – 1942	
May 1942	
May 1942 Deportation Centre	
Theresienstadt 1942 – 1943	
Theresienstadt	
Theresienstadt 1943 – 1944	
September 1944	
October 23, 1944	
January 1945	
May 1945	
March 2001	

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Hana and George's Life in Nove Mesto
(Before the Nazis came)

name _____ date _____

- 1) Where is Nove Mesto? (p.5) _____

- 2) What was Hana's job in the store? (p. 8) _____

- 3) What can you say about the Brady family and their role in the town of Nove Mesto?
(p. 6) _____

- 4) How would you summarize Hana and George's childhood in Nove Mesto? (p. 15, 16)

- 5) What questions would you ask Hana and George in an interview about their days in
Nove Mesto during the time before the Nazis? _____

- 6) What facts would you select to show that Hana and George were well accepted by the
children of Nove Mesto? _____

- 7) What are the parts of their life in Nove Mesto that are most like your life now? _____

- 8) Why do you think Mr. and Mrs. Brady were such generous people? _____

- 9) Suppose you could go back in time and play with Hana and George. What would you
do to prepare them for the coming time when they would not be allowed to play with
the other children? _____

- 10) Imagine your family lived like the Bradys. Who in your family would do what? i.e.
manage the store, be a volunteer firefighter, take food to families on the outside of

town, etc. _____

11) What is your opinion of the life that Hana and George had in Nove Mesto? _____

12) Would it have been better if Hana and George knew what was going to happen to them when the Nazis came? Why? _____

Hana and George's Life in Nove Mesto
(after the Nazis came to power)

name _____ date _____

1) What was the example of foreshadowing that Karen Levine used, on page 19? _____

2) List three things that Hana and George were no longer allowed to do. _____

3) How would you contrast your life with Hana and George's life now? _____

4) What can you say about how the Brady family was treated, at this point, in Nove Mesto? _____

5) What approach would you use to make you feel better, if you were in Hana and George's place, when their friends were no longer allowed to play with them? _____

6) If you could choose one thing to make Hana and George a little happier at this point in their lives, what would it be? _____

-
-
-
- 7) Why do you think it was so important for Mr. Brady to hear the news on the radio? _____
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-
-
- 8) What was the function or the reason behind all these laws against the Jews? _____
-
-
-
- 9) What would have happened if the other townspeople helped the Bradys out? _____
-
-
-
- 10) Imagine you could change history. Propose a solution that would have protected the Jews in Czechoslovakia. _____
-
-
-
- 11) What choice would you have made if you were Hana's or George's friend? _____
-
-
-
- 12) What is your opinion of what the Nazis did to the Jewish people during the Second World War? _____
-
-
-

Hana and George's life in Theresienstadt

- 1) Who was Hana's close friend in the barracks? (p. 78) _____
-
-
-
- 2) What were the lists at the main entrance of Hana's building for? (p. 78) _____
-
-
-

- 3) How would you compare Hana's experience in the barracks with George's? _____

- 4) How would you summarize Hana's experience in Theresienstadt? _____

- 5) What examples can you find to show that people stuck up for each other in Theresienstadt? _____

- 6) Identify one way that you would like someone to help you out if you were in Hana or George's place in Theresienstadt. _____

- 7) Why do you think people helped each other out so much in Theresienstadt? _____

- 8) Why do you think the Nazis kept the people in such poor conditions? _____

- 9) Suppose you could change one thing to make life easier in Theresienstadt. What would it be? _____

- 10) Can you think of an original way for people to keep up their spirits under terrible conditions such as there were in Theresienstadt? _____

- 11) What would you recommend we do if we saw people being treated as less worthy than us, here in Canada? _____

- 12) What would you recommend we do to see that no one is ever again treated as the Jewish people were treated by the Nazis? _____

Fumiko's Search

Name _____

date _____

1. How did Fumiko come to possess Hana's suitcase? (p. 12) _____

2. How did the children in Tokyo figure out how old Hana was when she was sent to Auschwitz? (p. 20) _____

3. Rephrase in your own words: "It would be easier for them to put themselves in her shoes." (see page 41) _____

4. What can you say about how Fumiko kept on searching for information about Hana? _____

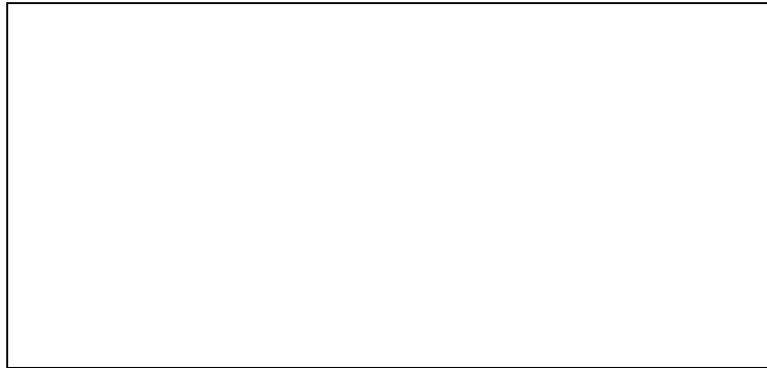
5. What questions would you ask of Fumiko, in an interview? _____

6. What other way would you plan to find out information about somebody you knew very little about? _____

7. Why do you think people are so interested in the Holocaust? _____

8. Compare Fumiko's search with a detective story you have read.

Fumiko's search	book, titled:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
9. What way would you design a museum to tell about the Holocaust? Write briefly about how you would display pictures and objects, and how you would interest young people in what you have to share. Make a little sketch of the building you are imagining. _____



My museum

10. What do you predict will happen next with Fumiko’s museum? What could Fumiko do next? _____

11. What objects would you select to interest young people in your town or city in learning more about the Holocaust? _____

12. How important is it, in your opinion, for Fumiko to continue to teach us about the Holocaust? _____

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Some Pictures

George, Fumiko and Karen in the CBC studio, broadcasting their interview.



George, Lara Hana and the Small Wings in the museum in Tokyo.



The Small Wings have a celebration to welcome George to Tokyo.



Hana's suitcase.



Children looking at the suitcase, in the glass case in the museum.



George, Fumiko and Karen visit St. Patrick's School in Taber, Alberta.



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