

# Life in World War II

Book Project – 4th Grade

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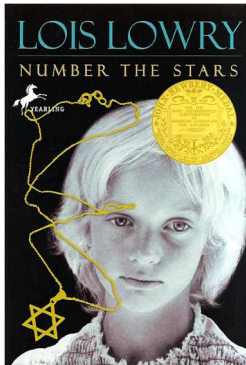
Teaching Literature and Culture – Elisabeth Pölzleitner, Dr. phil.

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# Life in World War II

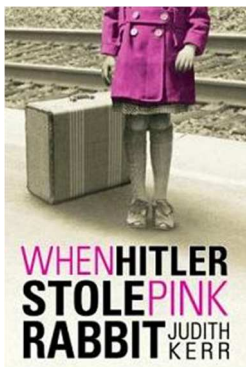


**Rating:**

**Characters:**

**Plot prediction:**

**Impression:**

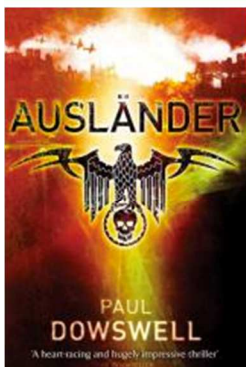


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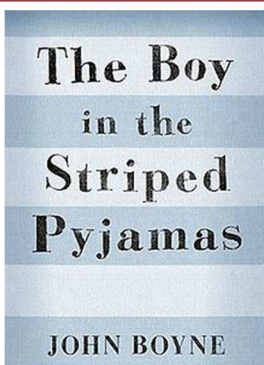


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**Rating:**

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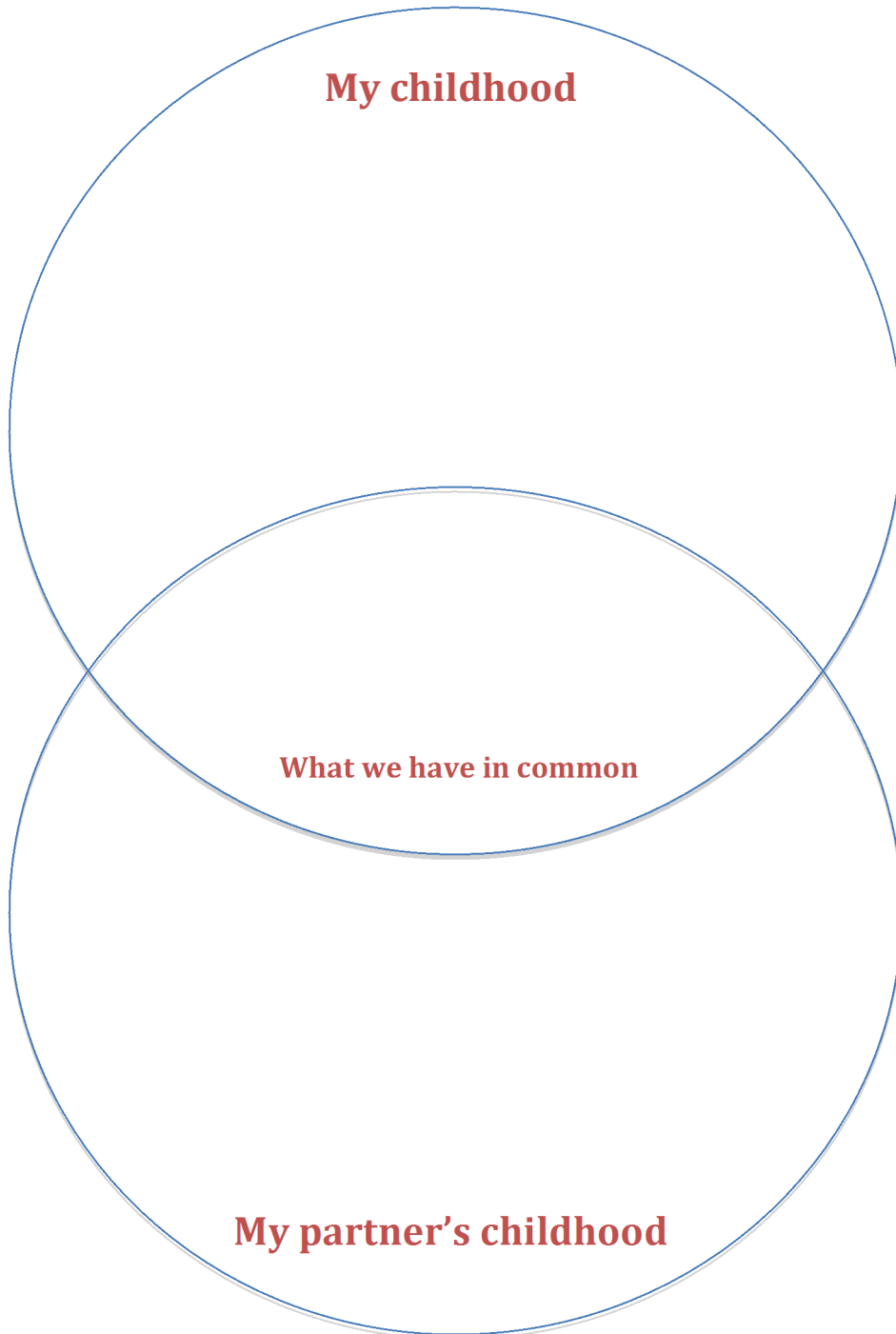
**Plot prediction:**

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Ideas taken from Pölzleitner (2015:9)

# What was your childhood like?

**What do you still remember about your childhood?** What did you do in your free-time when you were about 9 years old? What problems did you have? What were you afraid of? What responsibilities did you have? What were your chores? Put your information in the first circle, then get together in pairs and find out what your neighbor's childhood was like. Put his or her information in the second circle. In the middle section write down all the things you had in common.



## Children in WW2

**In pairs, look at the four pictures below and discuss them. What are the children doing? How are they feeling?**





**Now look at the explanations below.** First decide which explanation goes with which picture. Then discuss the following questions: Did you guess correctly when you saw the pictures for the first time? How do the pictures make you feel now? What were these children's fears? What did they do in their free time? Write 3-4 sentences for each picture.

1.) Not an ice lolly! These children are eating carrots on sticks, instead of ice creams, because of wartime rationing.

Our thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2.) A family goes into an Anderson air raid shelter in their garden, 1939. Each person carries a gas mask in a little box.

Our thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3.) November 1940, and children sleep in hammocks in the London Underground. The electric track was switched off, for safety, when people sheltered in Tube stations.

Our thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4.) A photo of a bomb-damaged street, 1943. The boys have made a swing from ropes tied to a lamp post.

Our thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

all pictures taken from  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/world\\_war2/children\\_at\\_war/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/world_war2/children_at_war/)

# Start reading your book... but read through tasks 1-3 first!

While reading the book, make sure to have some sticky notes with you – it will make your life a lot easier!

## 1.) Getting to know the main character

Collect information about your main character. Write the information into the boxes. You don't have to stop reading and immediately write down what you have found out, you can also put in a sticky label and copy the information at some other point.

<b>Fears</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Friends</b>
<b>Hobbies</b>	<b>Problems</b>	<b>Family</b>

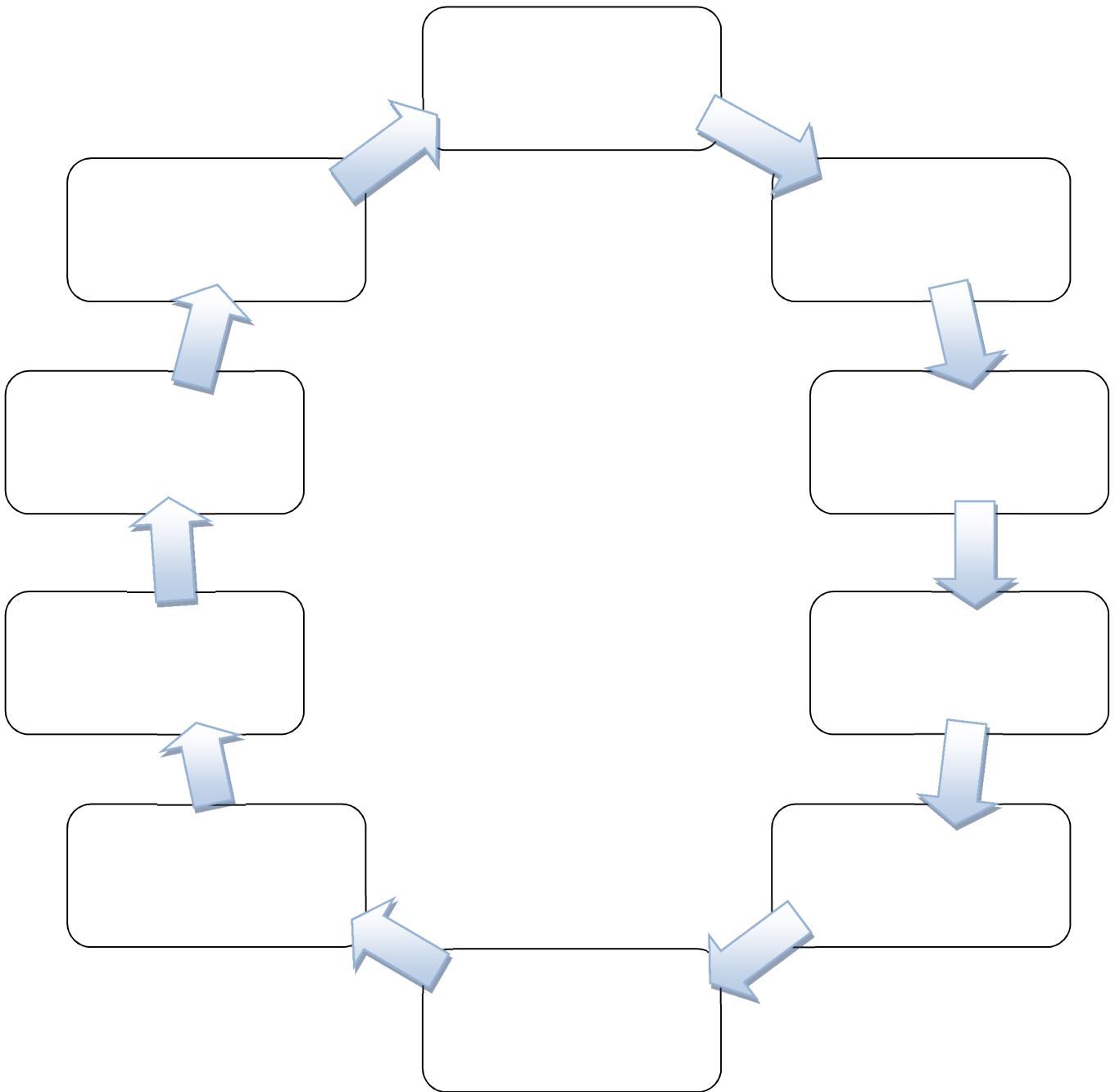
# Word-Cycle

## 2.) New vocabulary

While reading the book, select ten unknown words from the text.

My words: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Choose a starting box in the word-cycle and record one of the words. Relate that word to another on your list and join the two recording your selected word and the relationship. Continue around the circle. Do some of them require a "force" fit? Good! You'll really have to think!



Task taken from Szabos (1984:73)

# Sealing the time capsule

## 3.) Predict the ending

When you have reached the middle of the book, predict the ending of the story. What will happen to the main characters? Where will they be? Will they survive the war? Write your predictions on a sheet of paper and put it in the envelope provided by your teacher. Stick the envelope to this page.



Idea taken from Collie and Slater (1987:31)

# Group Sequence

After you have finished reading the book, get into your book group. Each group member records **three events** that happened in the book. The slips of paper with these events are then placed into a container and drawn out in turn by group members so that each person has three event slips written by someone else.

Together with your group, place all events in their **logical sequence** according to the story. Duplicates may be placed together. Listen carefully to events as they are read to determine whether the ones you have should come before or after the one being discussed.

When you are finished **add any events** you think are important for the story.



Task taken from Szabos (1984:87)

# What if?

Pick 5 characters from your book and write their names in the first column. Decide for each character **what they would be if they were ...**

Character name	... an animal	... a color	... a school subject	... a building	... a food

Now compare the chart with a partner. Do you have different answers? Discuss and explain your choice.

# Character Profile

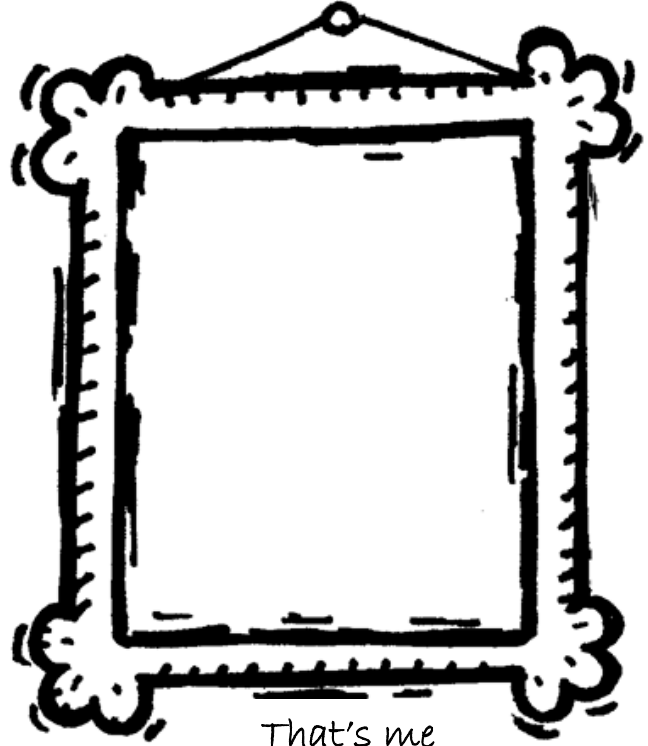
Your main character has been given a friendship book. Create his/her profile. For the bottom section, think of other facts about the main character that you would add to the book.

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

I live in: \_\_\_\_\_

My birthday: \_\_\_\_\_

My brothers and sisters: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



That's me

My favorites

Food: \_\_\_\_\_

Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Clothes: \_\_\_\_\_

Subjects in school: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Games: \_\_\_\_\_

My hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Things I like: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Things I don't like: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I'm good at: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When I grow up I want to be: \_\_\_\_\_

..... : \_\_\_\_\_

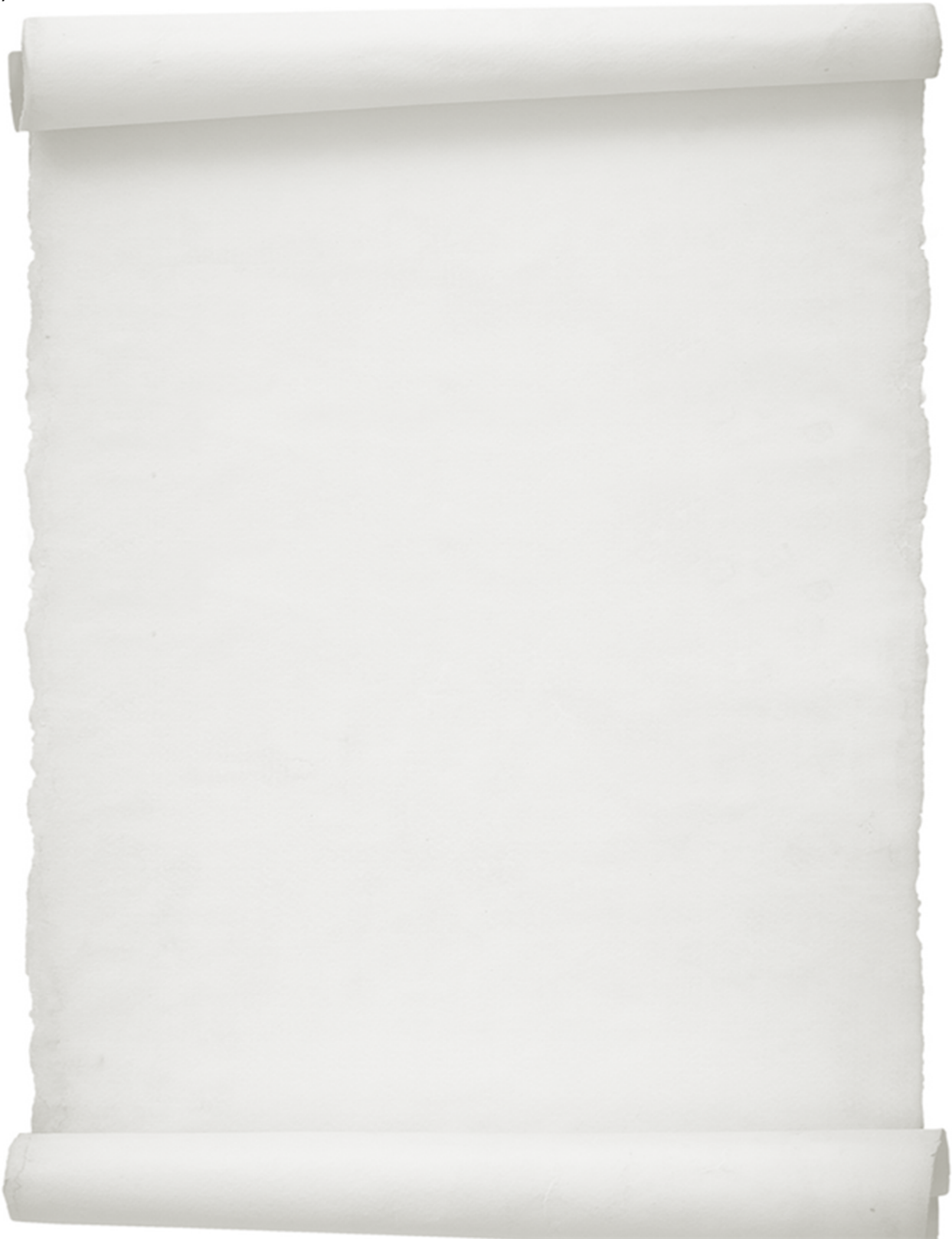
..... : \_\_\_\_\_

..... : \_\_\_\_\_

## Letter to a pen friend

Look at the character profiles created by your classmates and pick the one that you find most interesting. Don't pick the same character as yours!

The profile shows your new pen friend. Imagine yourself as the main character of your book. You are right in the middle of the story and decide to write a letter to your pen friend describing your current situation. Tell him/her about your fears, problems and hopes and ask him/her questions about his/her life.



Pass on your letter to the person who created your pen friend's profile. In return, you receive a letter from the person who picked your profile. Read his/her letter and write a reply.



## Unsealing the time capsule

Now it's time to open your envelope and share your original predictions with your book group. Take turns reading out your predictions and discuss why you made them. Who got closest to the real ending? Which ending do you prefer: the real one, your own or one of your group members' endings? Why?

Take a few notes of your discussion on this page.

# Presentations

You are going to present your book in class. For your group presentation, plan one or several interesting and fun activities. Make sure you get the whole class involved in your activities.

Here are some ideas for your presentations:

## Movie Trailer

Imagine that your book is made into a movie. Shoot a short movie trailer using a real camera or software such as Eyejot or BrainShark.

Make sure you present the main characters and choose some interesting scenes that will help your audience understand what the story is all about. Be creative and get your audience interested in the story but don't give away the ending.

## Character Bags

For each main character, bring a suitable bag or suitcase full of objects that are somehow important to the character. You can also add pictures, letters, important quotes or diary entries. Pick your items wisely so that the audience will get a good picture of the characters' lives.

Divide the class into groups depending on the number of characters. Let each group make predictions about the character's life (family, age, job, hometown, role in the book etc...). Afterwards explain the relevance of each item.

## Act out a scene

Use simple props and costumes to act out one or two scene of your choice.

## Plot on the line

Write seven to ten main events on separate sheets. Add simple drawings and illustrations. In your presentation hang up one picture after the other using clothes-pegs and a string. Talk about each picture using your own words. Don't give away the ending.

## Novel Museum

For the Novel Museum imagine that the characters in your book were REAL people. Our town wants to make their stories public and has, therefore, dedicated a whole room in the museum to these people and their stories. There they show real artifacts from your characters' lives. These objects are presented nicely in showcases and on tables around the room. Each of the objects has a label explaining the importance of the item, where it is from and what role it played.

In your museum display you might show some of the following things:

Maps, short newspaper articles about what happened to your characters, diary pages, letters, objects they used during their adventures, photos, clothes they were wearing, favorite items of your characters...or any other things that play an important role.

Act like tour-guides and present the artifacts to the class. Explain the significance of each item.

## Works Cited

Collie, J. and Slater, S. (1987) *Literature in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Szabos, J. (1984) *Reading – A Novel Approach*. Torrance: Good Apple.