



Teaching Notes & Resources

Key Stages 2 & 3

Themes: The Holocaust | Poland during WW2 | Antisemitism | Trauma | Grief and loss | Family | Friendship | Freedom | Survival | Refuge | Immigration | Voice | Remembrance

Purchase *The Girl Who Sang*



SCAN ME

The Girl Who Sang

By Estelle Nadel, illustrated by Sammy Savos

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES FOR AGES 10+

Subject Checklist: History | English | PSHE | Citizenship

Note: It is advised that teachers read this book themselves before sharing with children in a classroom setting as it contains distressing content. Please be aware that children are likely to find aspects of the story upsetting so it is important to provide support and adequate time for reflection.

ABOUT THE BOOK

A beautifully illustrated graphic novel recounting the heart-rending true story of a young girl's struggle for survival during the Holocaust, suitable for children age 10+.

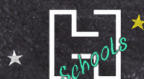
Born to a Jewish family in a small Polish village, Estelle Nadel - then known as Enia Feld - was just seven years old when the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939. Once a vibrant child with a song for every occasion, Estelle would eventually lose her voice as, over the next five years, she would survive the deaths of their mother, father, their eldest brother and sister, and countless others.

Estelle would weather loss, betrayal, near-execution, and spend two years away from the warmth of the sun - all before the age of eleven. And once the war was over, she would walk barefoot across European borders before finally crossing the Atlantic to arrive in New York City - a young woman carrying the unseen scars of war.

The Girl Who Sang is an enthralling first-hand account written by Estelle Nadel for children learning about the Holocaust in the later stages of the primary curriculum. Beautifully rendered in bright hues with expressive, emotional characters, illustrator Sammy Savos masterfully brings Estelle's story to a whole new generation of readers.



Discover more books at
HachetteChildrens.co.uk



Discover more resources at
HachetteSchools.co.uk



Pre-read Activities

Book cover prompts

- What is a 'memoir'? Have you read any other memoirs?
- How old do you think the girl on the front cover is? How do you think she feels in the picture?
- What can you see in the background? Do you recognise any of these images from history lessons, books or films?
- The book begins shortly before the start of the Second World War. What do you know about the Second World War?
- The book is set in Poland. Can you find Poland on a map?

Key Words

Here are some words you will encounter as you read the book. Each time you come across one of these words, write the definition in the table below:

Passover	
Matzah	
Synagogue	
Hitler	
Nazi	
Ghetto	
Gestapo	
Holocaust	
Rescuer	



Discover more books at
[HachetteChildrens.co.uk](https://www.hachettechildrens.co.uk)



Discover more resources at
[HachetteSchools.co.uk](https://www.hachetteschools.co.uk)



Discussion Questions

Prologue

1. The first two pages of the prologue contain images without any narration. Can you describe what happens on these pages?
2. Have a look at page 3. Where do you think the character is?
3. What questions do you have in your mind at the end of the prologue?

Part 1: Innocence, 1939–1942

1. What do we learn about Enia in the first six pages of part 1? Can you think of three words to describe her?
2. Why do you think Part 1 is titled 'Innocence'?
3. How would you describe the atmosphere in the house as the family prepare for Passover on pages 10 – 12?
4. Foreshadowing is a literary technique in which the author hints at something that will happen in the future. How does the author use foreshadowing on page 19? What impact does this have on you as a reader?
5. Compare the images of Enia and her family walking through Borek on pages 22 and 23 with the images of Enia and her mother walking through Borek on page 36. How are the images different? What has changed in Borek and why?
6. Imagine you are one of Shia and Minashe's school friends. How do you feel when you hear that Shia and Minashe have been banned from attending school?
7. How do you think seven-year-old Enia felt when she overheard her father and his friends talking about Hitler and the war on pages 42-44?
8. Study pages 45 and 46 carefully. What information do you get from the pictures on these pages that you wouldn't get if you just read the words? How do you think Chaya feels during the conversation with Maria Kurowska and why? What impression do you get of Maria Kurowska?
9. In October 1939, the German authorities began to establish ghettos in towns and cities across occupied Poland. What do you learn about the ghettos in Krosno and Warsaw on pages 42 and 43?
10. Pages 27 and 59 contain panels with no images, just text. Why do you think the illustrator has chosen to use text in this way? What effect



Discussion Questions continued

Part 2: Hidden, 1942–1944

1. Why do you think the neighbour refuses to let the family hide in his house for more than a night on page 65?
2. What does the image on page 67 tell us? How do you feel as you look at it? Why do you think the illustrator has chosen to make this image cover a full page?
3. How do you think the children feel when Mamchu leaves the attic to get food?
4. Where does Mamchu go to get food?
5. What do you think motivates Maria Kurowska and Pudlina to help the family? What risks are they taking?
6. Where were Sonjia and Moishe taken?
7. What do you think the words 'it's not just the Germans who are dangerous' on page 148 mean? Who else is dangerous?
8. How is Enia's life at the end of this section different to her life two years ago?
9. What emotions have you experienced whilst reading this section of the book?
10. What examples of courage and compassion have you seen so far in the story?

Part 3: Liberation, 1944–1947

1. What happened in Borek, Poland, in 1944?
2. Why did Enia have to be carried out of the barn?
3. How do you think Enia and Shia felt when they first went back to their home?
4. What difficulties did Enia, Shia and Minashe experience after they were freed?
5. Why did Enia and her family leave Borek?
6. Many Jewish people left Poland after the war. Which countries did they travel to?

Part 4: A New Beginning, 1947–1951

1. Can you mark the path that Enia took after leaving Borek on a map?
2. How do you think the other passengers on the ship felt when they heard Enia sing?
3. Do you know the name of the statue that Shia and Enia saw on the horizon when they arrived in New York? How do you think they felt when they saw it?
4. What hardships did Enia experience once she arrived in America?
5. Why do you think Enia wanted to change her name?



Discussion Questions continued

Part 5: The Girl Who Sang

1. Why do you think Estelle chose to name the book, 'The Girl Who Sang'?
2. What do you admire about Estelle?

Afterword

1. How is this book similar or different to any other books you have read about the Second World War, or set during the Second World War?
2. What insight and understanding do you think a memoir can give you that a non-fiction informational text can't? (And visa-versa?)
3. Why do you think Estelle chose to begin and end the book when she did rather than focusing just on the war years?
4. Why do you think the illustrator has chosen an illustration of the blue sky for the background of the afterword?
5. Speaking about his grandparents' generosity towards Enia's family, Tadeusz says, "They did not make sacrifices; they just did what they knew they needed to do" (page 248). What do you think he means by this?
6. How do you feel about the rescuers? Can you think of some words to describe them?
7. Who would you recommend this book to and why?
8. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. You can read a simplified version of the declaration [here](#). Which of the human rights on the list were Enia and her family denied by the Nazis? What does Enia's story teach us about the importance of human rights?
9. How does The Girl Who Sang help you clarify your own personal values – the things that are important to you and that you value in others?
10. Voice is a theme in the book. How did Estelle use her voice in different ways throughout her life? How did her voice help her, and how did it help others? How would you like to use your voice?



Theme 1: Graphic Memoir

The Girl Who Sang is a graphic memoir (which is a type of non-fiction graphic novel).

Discussion questions:

Do you think the graphic memoir format is an effective format in which to tell this story? Why?

- How do you think your experience of reading the book would have been different if it was written in prose?
- In what ways is reading the book like watching a film and in what ways is it different?
- Read 'How to Make a Comic Page' at the end of the book. Why did the illustrator decide to use a 'hand-drawn look' for this book?
- What sources did the illustrator use to inform her drawings?
- How do you think Estelle felt the first time she saw the illustrations?
- If you could ask the illustrator any question, what would you ask her?

Activity: Reading Images

Here are some common graphic novel terms:

- Panel – the square or rectangle that contains an illustration. A panel can be any size from full page to very small.
- Inset panel – a panel within a larger panel.
- Gutter – the space between panels.
- Speech bubble – a shape that contain the words a character speaks.
- Caption – a box that contains the narrative or information about the events taking place.
-

Here are some techniques an illustrator may consider when illustrating a scene in a graphic novel:

- Perspective – an illustration might be from the narrator or a character's perspective or from an omniscient perspective.
- Angle – an illustration might be from a bird's eye view, a high angle (looking down) or a low angle (looking up).
- Focus – an illustration might be close-up (as though zoomed in) or a long shot (as though zoomed out).
- Sound effects – words (often onomatopoeia) or shapes that suggest sounds.
- Motion lines – lines that show movement.

Different illustration techniques are used to convey different events, moods and emotions. Have a look at the panels from *The Girl Who Sang* on the following pages. For each panel (or set of panels), discuss with a partner what you can see. Which illustration techniques have been used and why do you think the illustrator has chosen to use these techniques? What effect does the image have on you as a reader? Write notes about your observations in the table on the next page.



Reading Images

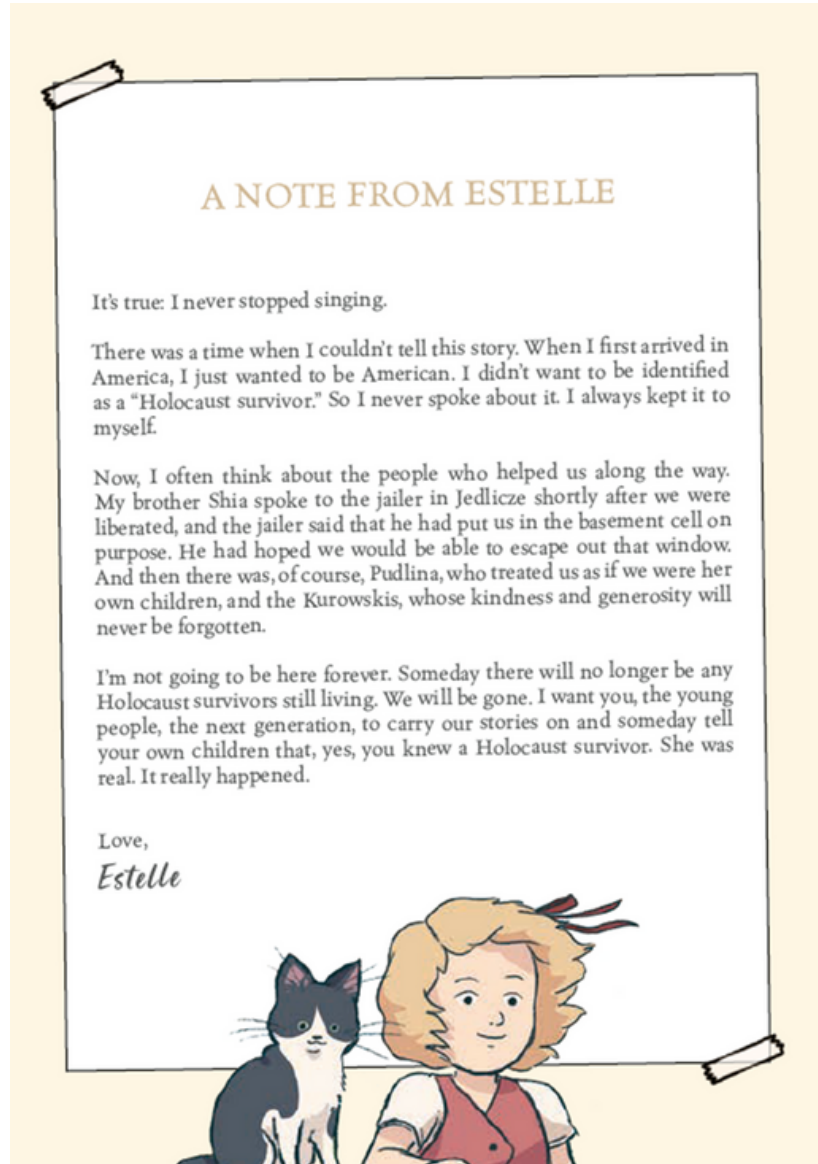
Page	Panel	Illustration techniques used	Effect on reader
			
			
			
			
			
			

Challenge: Why not have a go at drawing a graphic novel panel of your own? On page 252, we learn that, as an adult, Esther sung in temples across America. Perhaps you could draw a picture of adult Esther singing? What illustration techniques could you use to show how Estelle feels as she sings? Who might be in the audience watching her?



Theme 2: Reflections

Extract from page 254



Discussion Questions

1. Why didn't Estelle talk about her experiences when she first arrived in America?
2. Can you list the different people who showed Estelle kindness during the events of the book?
3. The Girl Who Sang is a story of unimaginable suffering and trauma. It is also a story of bravery, hope and compassion. Choose one image from the book that you think best represents each of these themes: courage, hope, love, friendship. Compare your chosen images with a partner and explain the reasons for your choice.
4. Why do you think Estelle chose to write this book?
5. What is Estelle's message to the young people of today?
6. Why do you think it is important that we remember the stories of those who lived through the Holocaust?



Discover more books at
HachetteChildrens.co.uk



Discover more resources at
HachetteSchools.co.uk

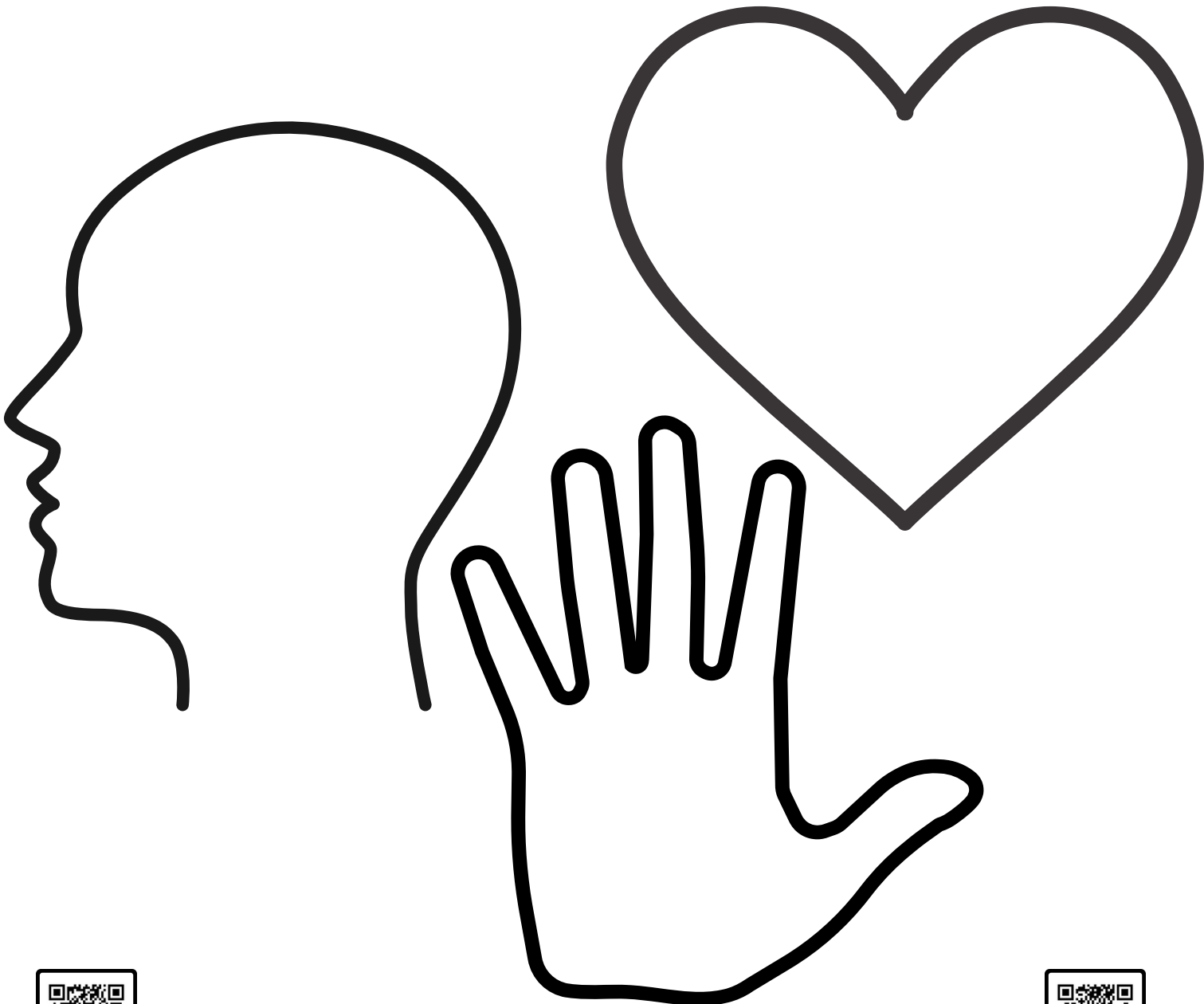


Activity 1: Head, Heart, Hands

Take a moment to reflect on your experience of reading Estelle's book. What do you know that you didn't know before? In what ways has reading the book changed you?

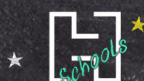
- In an outline of a head, write down one thing you've learnt from reading this book.
- In an outline of a heart, write down three emotions you felt whilst reading.
- In an outline of a hand, write down one thing you will do as a result of reading this book. For example, perhaps you will talk to family members about the book, write a review to help share the book with others, organise a remembrance service on Holocaust Memorial Day, take action against discrimination or to support refugees and asylum seekers today, or learn more about WW2.

Share your responses with your classmates. How were your reactions to the book similar or different?



SCAN ME

Discover more books at
HachetteChildrens.co.uk



Discover more resources at
HachetteSchools.co.uk



SCAN ME

Resources created by



SCAN ME

Discover more books at
HachetteChildrens.co.uk



Discover more resources at
HachetteSchools.co.uk



SCAN ME