



Teaching Notes & Resources

Key Stage 3/4

Themes: Holocaust | WWII | Identity | Family | Memoir

Purchase *The Daughter of Auschwitz*



SCAN ME

The Daughter of Auschwitz: The Girl Who Lived to Tell Her Story

By Tova Friedman

Ages 12+ Discussion Notes

The notes and reading questions included here are suitable for classroom, library or book group sessions supervised by a teacher.

Please note:

This resource is designed to support teaching on or around the Holocaust.

It contains potentially sensitive and/or upsetting topics that may emotionally impact students. Some content may be upsetting for some children due to experiences in their own past.

It is advised that teachers consider whether it is appropriate to use Tova Friedman's book and this corresponding resource with your students. If you choose to do so, it is important to ensure that appropriate support is available for anyone affected in any way by its content.

Please be aware that it may not be appropriate for the children in your class to independently research further into this topic due to the harrowing information and images freely available on the internet.



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Part 1 – Pre-Reading

Prior Knowledge

Before reading, assess students' knowledge by making notes together in the following categories. What do they know already about World War II and the Holocaust? What further research do they need to do, and what questions do they have?

1. World War II: Overview	2. The Causes of World War II	3. The Battle of Britain and the Blitz
4. The Rise of Hitler and the Nazis	5. Persecution of Jews in Europe, 1933–1939	6. The Holocaust, 1939-1945



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Important Vocabulary

Together, write definitions for the terms below. It may be helpful to add to these definitions as you read the book together.

Allies	
Antisemitism	
Appell	
Arbeit Macht Frei	
Auschwitz-Birkenau	
Concentration Camp	
Crematorium	
Dachau	
Extermination Camp	
Final Solution	
Fuhrer	
Gas Chambers	
Gestapo	
Ghetto	
Hebrew	
Holocaust	
Judenrat	



Important Vocabulary

Together, write definitions for the terms below. It may be helpful to add to these definitions as you read the book together.

Kinderlager	
Kindertransport	
Kosher	
Kristallnacht	
Matzah	
Nazi	
Nuremberg Laws	
Passover	
Pogrom	
Rabbi	
Selektion	
Shabbat	
Shoah	
SS	
Swastika	
Third Reich	
Torah	
Treblinka	
Untermenschen	
Yom Kippur	



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Part 2 – Important themes and ideas in the book

Record ideas about each theme as you read *The Daughter of Auschwitz* as a class. How is each theme explored? Encourage students to add some themes of their own.

Theme	Notes
Prejudice	
Discrimination	
Family	
Memory	
Resilience	
Survival	
The Past	
Trauma	



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Part 3 – Reading Questions

Discuss the questions while reading *The Daughter of Auschwitz: The Girl Who Lived to Tell Her Story*.

- What do you learn about Tola and her family in the Prologue? Why do you think Tola doesn't want to touch her birthday cake?
- How does Tola feel in her new home in America? What is different about her new home?
- What challenges does Tola face at school in America? How does she feel about these challenges?
- How important is it for Tola to tell her story? Why?
- What is the impact of including a Prologue?
- What do you learn about Hitler in Chapter One? Use this chapter to write an overview of Hitler's beliefs and motivations.
- Where was Tola born? On a map, track Tola's journey as events unfold in the book.
- What was life like in the ghetto? Pick out examples from Tola's experiences in Chapter One.
- Tola is so young when she experiences great trauma. How does Tola try to survive the awful things that are happening around her?
- What do the Nazis do on Friday 30 October 1942? Where are the 'packed trains' taking the Jewish people?
- How important is the theme of imprisonment in the book? When or how are Tola and her family imprisoned?
- Where is Starachowice? What are Tola and her family expected to do here?
- How important is Tola's relationship with her parents in the book?
- What rules does Mama give Tola in the labour camp at Starachowice?



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- Sometimes Tola puts a brave face on for her parents. Can you find examples? Why do you think she does this?
- In Chapter Three, Tola describes her only 'real companion' as 'constant hunger'. What does she mean?
- What is the Kinderselektion in Chapter Four? How does Tola survive it? How do you feel reading her account of this event?
- What do you think Tola fears the most throughout the book? Does this ever change?
- Why does Tola get 'the overwhelming sense that [she] might be the last Jewish child in the world'? How does she feel about this?
- Tola's mother and father are separated in Chapter Five. How do you feel reading this section?
- Tola and her family are often sat in dark, cramped spaces without light. How do you think this impacted them?
- What does Tola feel when she arrives at Auschwitz? (Chapter Five). Why does she have to remove her clothes?
- Why do the Nazis shave Tola's hair? What is the impact of shaving the heads of Jews in camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau?
- What was life like in Birkenau? Pick out examples from Tola's experiences.
- Why does Tola end up in the infirmary? This isn't the first occasion or the last when she considers herself to be 'incredibly lucky'? Can you identify these moments?
- Tola is taken to the Kinderlager in Chapter Eight; the first time she is separated from her mother. How do you feel reading this section of Tola's story?
- Who was Josef Mengele? Why was he known as the 'Angel of Death'?
- What tattoo does Tola receive in Chapter Nine? What does the tattoo signify?
- Tola is surrounded by death in her young life. How far do you agree with this statement?



- Why does Tola feel a 'sense of power' after scaring another girl at the end of Chapter Nine? What do you think is happening to Tola?
- Who sends Tola a package in Chapter Ten? How does Tola feel to receive this package?
- Why does Tola escape the 'showers'? What was happening in the wider context of the war that potentially saved her life?
- Why do you think Tola initially 'recoils' when she is reunited with her mother? Why is this a complicated moment for Tola?
- How many times in the book does Tola try to follow her mother's advice and 'make [herself] invisible'?
- Why do the Nazis set the barrack on fire in Chapter Eleven?
- Tola often refers to her mother as her 'saviour'. What does this mean? In what ways is this true?
- What is the atmosphere when the Russian soldiers first arrive in Chapter Twelve? How does this change as the chapter progresses?
- Tola's mother frequently tells her 'not to benefit from the dead'. What does she mean by this?
- How does Tola feel returning to Tomaszów Mazowiecki? Does she still consider it to be 'home'?
- Tola is reunited with some family members; who are they?
- What happens to Tola's aunt, Helen?
- How is Tola treated when she returns to school in Tomaszów Mazowiecki?
- Even though the ordeal of the concentration camps is over, Tola and her family still face huge challenges. What are these challenges?
- Why do you think Tola is surprised to be travelling to Germany at the end of Chapter Thirteen?
- What questions does Tola ask the rabbi at the end of Chapter Fifteen? What is she worried about?



- Tola tells Lilly in the Epilogue: 'For my family and the rest of the Jews from Europe, life will never be the same.' What does she mean?
- Why does Tola choose to 'speak out' and share her story? How does Tola's story inspire a future that is more hopeful?
- How do you feel as you reflect on the book? What events or revelations stand out to you?
- What questions would you ask Tova Friedman about the writing of this book?



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