



# Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

## Discussion Guide #2

Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion.

---

### DIARY ENTRIES: November 10, 1942 – March 31, 1943

---

#### Comprehension:

- Who comes to live in the hiding place with the Franks and the Van Daans, and what is this person's profession? How does this person's arrival affect the sleeping arrangements in the Secret Annex?

A dentist whom Anne calls Mr. Dussel joins the people hiding in the Secret Annex. He takes up residence in Anne's room, so Margot must sleep in the same room with her parents.
- Why is Mr. Dussel so surprised to see the others in the Secret Annex?

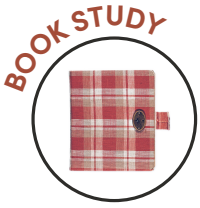
Mr. Dussel had heard and believed the stories about the Franks' and Van Daans' whereabouts. He thought they had left the Netherlands and were in another country. He wasn't aware that it was all an elaborate ruse.
- What news does Mr. Dussel bring about the outside world in Amsterdam, and how does it make Anne feel?

Mr. Dussel brings "gruesome" news. He tells them of people who have been "taken off to a dreadful fate." He shares how the Nazi police go around to houses that they suspect have Jewish people living there. This news makes Anne feel both sad and guilty. She feels "wicked sleeping in a warm bed" while others are suffering.
- While Anne's initial impression of Mr. Dussel is positive, how does it change by the end of 1942?

Anne thinks Dussel is "an old-fashioned disciplinarian" who preaches to her about the correct ways for children to behave, which don't align with her own behavior. Worse than that, Mr. Dussel reports her failings to her mother, eliciting even more lectures about her poor behavior. Anne finds it difficult to share her small space with Mr. Dussel. In December, she talks about how her "roommate" is constantly shushing her, even at night. She finds him more "exasperating and egotistical" all the time. She finds it particularly upsetting when he switches on the light very early on Sunday mornings to do his exercises.
- On January 13, 1943, Anne describes the horrors of the war for the people of Amsterdam. How are people suffering, and what types of things does she describe?

Most people in Amsterdam are suffering as a result of the war. People, presumably Jewish people or people deemed undesirable by the German authorities, are being dragged from their homes. They're only allowed to take a small knapsack of belongings and cash, which is usually stolen from them. Families are being torn apart, and children often come home to find their parents gone. Others in Holland, such as the Christians, are experiencing their young sons being forced to go to Germany to fight in the war. Children have inadequate clothing in the cold weather—no coats, socks, or hats—and there's not enough food to go around. People are desperate and have resorted to begging in the streets.
- What frightening episode does Anne describe on Thursday, March 25, 1943? What other, more minor thing happens that is upsetting to Anne in particular?

Peter and Margot heard things happening in the warehouse the previous evening. They also heard someone fiddling with the door. Then Pim and Peter heard more bangs, as though someone was in the building. Eventually, the sounds stopped, and everyone assumed that the "burglars" had left. In fact, when all was quiet, everyone started to doubt that it had actually happened at all. However, as Anne states, "Incidents like these are always accompanied by other disasters." One of the other "disasters" is that the bells of the Westertoren clock, which she's always found so comforting, have stopped chiming.



# Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

## Discussion Guide #2

Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion.

---

### DIARY ENTRIES: November 10, 1942 – March 31, 1943

---

#### Comprehension (continued):

- What does Anne refer to as her “time killers”? Why does she call them this?

Anne's “time killers” are the courses that she takes, including shorthand and Greek and Roman mythology. She calls them “time killers” because they help the time seem to go by more quickly. These “time killers” make the time when they can leave the Secret Annex feel nearer.

#### Analysis:

- What is the tone and purpose of the Van Daans' welcome letter to Mr. Dussel, titled “Prospectus and Guide to the Secret Annex”? Why do you think the Van Daans wrote a letter like this?

The tone is humorous and ironic. It pretends that Dussel's stay in the Secret Annex is like going on a holiday or vacation, rather than the horrible reality of having to go into hiding. It talks about it being “located in beautiful, quiet, wooded surroundings in the heart of Amsterdam.” It says, “Price: Free. Diet: Low-fat.” At the same time, the letter provides important information to help Mr. Dussel understand what's expected of him in his new home. It says, “Free-time activities: None allowed outside the house until further notice. Use of language: It is necessary to speak softly at all times.” The Van Daans probably wrote a letter like this as an attempt to bring humor to an otherwise severe situation.

- On December 13, 1942, Anne says, “Our thoughts . . . are like a merry-go-round.” She also remarks about having seen two Jewish people as she peeked out the window. She says that it was “as though I were gazing at one of the Seven Wonders of the World.” What does Anne mean in these two similes?

Anne implies that their thoughts keep circulating through the same series of topics. Their thoughts go from the Jews, to food, to politics, and back again. When she sees Jewish people outside the window, she says that it's like gazing at one of the Seven Wonders of the World because it is such a rare sight. At this point in the war, most Jewish people in Amsterdam have likely left, are in hiding, or have been taken off to concentration camps.

#### Personal Connection:

- Consider Anne's “time killers” and the purpose they serve in her life. What are your “time killers,” and when do you find yourself relying on them? Explain.

Student answers will vary.



# Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

## Discussion Guide #2

Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion.

---

### DIARY ENTRIES: April 1, 1943 – August 9, 1943

---

#### Comprehension:

- On April 1, "April Fool's Day," Anne says that she's not in the mood for pranks. What misfortunes does she talk about that day?

Anne writes that Mr. Kleiman is ill and will be bedridden for at least three weeks. Bep has the flu, and Bep's father is sick in the hospital, perhaps with an ulcer that will need surgery. Also, Mr. Frank is upset because the managers of a company related to Opekta are coming, and he's worried that the talks will not go well. He's gone over the important parts with Mr. Kleiman, who is now ill, but he's not had the time to brief Mr. Kugler.

- What is the importance of radios to those living in the Secret Annex, as well as to others in the country?

Radios are people's connection to the world outside their homes and outside the country. It gives them news of the progress of the war, which is generally encouraging, though things are bad at home. Anne calls the radio a "morale booster," whose "wondrous voice" cheers them and gives them hope.

- Why do Anne and the others get so excited about Miep's deliveries on Saturdays? What does Anne say are their only diversions?

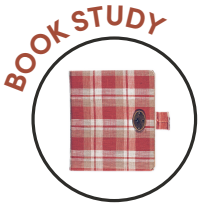
Along with groceries and the like, Miep brings five library books on Saturdays. Anne and the others cherish them because the only diversions while living in hiding are reading, studying, and listening to the radio.

- What disagreement do Anne and Mr. Dussel have in mid-July, and how is it resolved?

Anne wants to use the table in their shared room for a few extra hours each week. She asks politely, but Mr. Dussel refuses. Anne discusses the matter with her father that evening, and he helps her decide how to approach Mr. Dussel. However, she goes against his advice, and Anne and Mr. Dussel end up arguing more. Anne goes to her father again, and he talks to Mr. Dussel, defending Anne against Dussel's criticisms and arguing on her behalf. The matter is resolved when Anne is allowed to use the desk at the requested times, even though Dussel isn't happy about it.

- On July 26, 1943, Anne writes that the previous day was a very "tumultuous" day. What does this mean, and what happened?

The day was "tumultuous" because of many jarring happenings and a mix of ups and downs. The day began with warning sirens because war planes were passing by. When the sirens sounded again later, bombs fell all around them, shaking the house. Soon, they could see columns of smoke rising outside, enveloping the sky in a gray fog. Eventually, things calmed down, but more sirens and air raids later in the day and deep into the night kept everyone from sleep. Around 7:00 a.m the next morning, Anne woke to the sound of urgent voices. This time, it was good news, giving everyone in the Annex renewed hope for the end of the war. Mussolini, Italy's dictator and ally of Germany, had resigned.



# Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

## Discussion Guide #2

Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion.

---

### DIARY ENTRIES: April 1, 1943 – August 9, 1943

---

#### Comprehension (continued):

- What does Anne think of as the most peaceful time of the day?

Anne describes the time after lunch when everyone else naps but she studies as the “the quietest hour of the day.” She seems to savor this time, making the most of it until Dussel awakes and wants the desk back for himself.

- In her diary entry on August 9, 1943, how does Anne describe each of the nine people at their dinner table? Think of a few words or a phrase for each person that demonstrate how Anne sees them.

Answers will vary, but may include something similar to the following:

- Mr. van Daan is conceited and thinks too highly of his own opinions.
- Mrs. van Daan is selfish and overly talkative.
- Peter van Daan is quiet and always hungry.
- Margot is quiet and barely eats.
- Mrs. Frank (Mother) is not shy about eating or expressing her thoughts.
- Mr. Frank (Father) is modest and unselfish.
- Anne is a “bundle of nerves.”
- Mr. Dussel is gluttonous and unaware—or unconcerned—about what others think of him.
- Bep is easy to please and pleasant to be around.

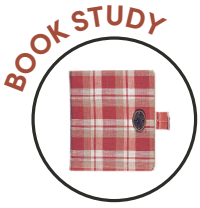
#### Analysis:

- For Anne's birthday, her father writes her a poem. What part of the poem best demonstrates Pim's understanding of Anne's feelings and perceptions about the situation in the Annex? Explain.

Answers will vary, but may mention these lines:

“One's own shortcomings are nothing but fluff,  
 But everyone else's are heavier stuff.  
 Faultfinding comes easy when this is our plight.  
 But it's hard for your parents, try as they might,  
 To treat you with fairness, and kindness as well;  
 Nitpicking's a habit that's hard to dispel.”

This part of the poem shows that Anne's father understands that Anne feels upset with how her parents treat her. It also suggests that he thinks Anne may find fault with her parents while minimizing her own flaws, and vice versa.



# Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

## Discussion Guide #2

Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion.

---

### DIARY ENTRIES: April 1, 1943 – August 9, 1943

---

#### Analysis (continued):

- On July 16, when there is a “real” break-in, why does Pim likely go down to the private office to turn the radio to a German station?  
*It would be less suspicious to have the radio on a German station than to have the radio tuned to an English station or any other station that broadcasts information unsympathetic to the German cause. If anyone, even burglars, were to suspect that people were hiding from the authorities in the building, they could turn them in to the German police.*
- On the day of July 26, 1943, why does Anne put the phrase “escape bag” in quotation marks?  
*Anne knows that there really is no escape from the Secret Annex, even if it were being bombed. As Jewish people hiding in a country run by Nazis, there is nowhere they could go without being discovered and likely taken away to their deaths. Therefore, her “escape bag” is really useless, except as something to hold onto while the bombing continues.*

#### Personal Connection:

- What do you think of the way that Anne treats her mother, as she writes about it on April 2, 1943? Who do you relate to more—Anne or her mother? Why?  
*Student answers will vary.*