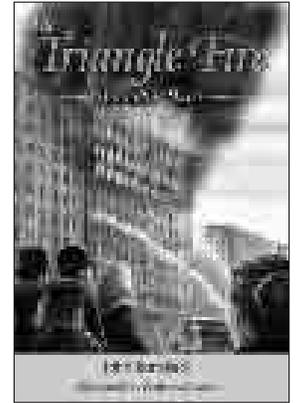


The Triangle Fire: Hannah's Diary

by John Bonallack

Illustrated by Andrew Burdan



Book Summary

This historical narrative draws on actual events to tell the story of recent immigrants, Hannah and her father. In their efforts to start a new life in the United States, they endure terrible living and working conditions and survive a life-threatening fire.

Features of the Book

- Historical and factual information in a fiction text
- Cultural and geographical references
- Diary format
- Different text forms

Purpose

The Triangle Fire: Hannah's Diary can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:

- S** asking questions to deepen understanding and explore personal response to a text;
- S** analysing the importance of setting in historical fiction;
- S** comparing and contrasting different accounts about past events.

Investigation Tools

- Digging Deeper – Investigating the Disaster, page 29
- Making Connections – Sweatshops – Then and Now, pages 30–31
- What's the Background? – Immigration Boom, page 32

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Asking questions to deepen understanding and explore personal response to a text
- S** Analysing the importance of setting in historical fiction
- S** Comparing and contrasting different accounts about past events

Introducing the text

Ask the students to discuss what it might feel like to move to a new country.

- *Why might a family make such a move?* (new opportunities; better jobs, education, or quality of life; turmoil in their home country)

Explain that people who have moved to a new country are called immigrants.

- *If you were an immigrant, what questions might you have about your new country?*
- *How would you feel if only part of your family could move?*

Distribute the books and explain that this is a story about a father and daughter who have moved from Europe. Ask the students to study the cover picture.

- *How can you tell that this story is set in a different time?*
- *What questions do you have?*

Encourage the students to ask questions and look for historical details as they read.

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read “Immigration Boom” on page 32, then read Hannah’s diary entries for January 1st and 3rd.

Ask them to think about what Hannah might be feeling and what questions she might have about her new life and her family back home.

- *What questions might be going through her mind?*
- *Have any of your questions been answered so far? Can you think of any more?*

Discuss how asking questions can help you to make connections and think more carefully about a story.

Model some questions, such as:

- *Why has the author used a diary form?*
- *What are some differences between Hannah’s life and my own?*
- *How would I respond if I were Hannah?*

Ask the students to try using this strategy as they read to the end of page 15. They can write down their questions as they read.

Discuss the students’ questions. Ask them to continue using this strategy as they read to the end of page 22.

- *How did the setting influence your questions?*
- *What questions did you have about the historical details?*
- *How can you tell that the author conducted research to write this story?*
- *What does the factual information add?*

Ask the students to read to the end of page 28.

Encourage them to use the afterword to decide which details were researched and which were imagined. Ask the students to locate examples of both kinds of details.

- *Why would the author need to invent certain details?*
- *Do you think the newspaper articles are real or invented? How do you know?*
- *What would you like to know about Hannah’s life after the fire?*
- *Why did the author switch from Hannah’s diary to newspaper articles? (to add a sense of drama, to show the fire from an objective perspective)*
- *What might Hannah have written about the fire? How would it be different from what was written in the newspaper?*

Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson, during later reading sessions as mini-lessons, or as independent activities.

S Asking questions to deepen understanding and explore personal response to a text

Ask the students to check the labels of their clothing, looking for garments made in other countries. Ask them to read the information on page 30 and think of some questions they would like to ask someone who works in a modern sweatshop.

✎ The students can record their ideas on the blackline master on page 87.

S Comparing and contrasting different accounts about past events

Ask the students to imagine Hannah’s life on the first anniversary of the Triangle Fire. The students can work in pairs to write both a diary entry from Hannah’s perspective and a newspaper article titled “Hannah Stein, Sweatshop Fire Survivor”.

