

Suggestions to support/modify content and comprehension activities

Activate prior knowledge, especially from general experience:

- 1) Have you watched SOUND OF MUSIC?
- 2) Discuss bullying- that people can do it, but countries can be bullies, too- using power to take over other countries
- 3) Any understanding of racism, skinheads, etc.? If that is not within experience, not suitable to use. If it IS within the learner's experience, this could open a discussion of Hitler's Aryan superiority beliefs and the references in the story.

Develop background knowledge using picture books and other visual sources to establish mental images relevant to the story:

- 1) **The Lily Cupboard**, by Shulsmith Levy Oppenheim 9780064433938
- 2) **The Butterfly**, by Patricia Polacco 9780142413067
- 3) **Let the Celebrations Begin**, by Margaret Wild 9780763670139
- 4) **The Yellow Star** by Carmen Agra Deedy, Henri Sorensen
- 5) **Irena's Jar of Secrets** by Marcia Vaughan

Use other visual resources to get a sense of the place and time.

- 1) This is a short film of actual Ytre Arna- current times, and it plays music, which can be turned off, of course. It gives a pretty accurate sense of the very mountainous, small town place. Many of these homes are more than a hundred years old and are ones I pictured while writing. The difference would be some of these roads would be gravel roads or cobblestone streets, etc. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C97G9MziUM4>
- 2) This clip is from that earlier era, is narrated in Norwegian, (which can be turned off) and shows cars, clothing, etc much more typical of the story. It

- includes some excellent views of the fjord (which could be confusing without a visual image). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UcBPs4M2PI>
- 3) This is a longer clip, which you can preview and share as much as might be helpful. It shows school settings, from the outdoors as well as within classrooms, it might give a sense of the historic era, just to anchor the story in a past time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMn92rRtrMk>
View and choose if any would be helpful.

CONFUSING WORDS:

The insertion/use of Norwegian terms could be confusing. It might be fun to use a few of them in casual conversations/activities just so the idea of other languages wouldn't be so strange. The best example is NEI (Pronounced NIE) for no, TAKK for thanks or thank you. That leads to NEI, TAKK (No, thanks) or TUSEN TAKK (A thousand thanks, or thank you very much). The other is the use of BESTEMOR instead of grandma or grandmother, even though both are used throughout the book. Picturing Mama and Papa is easy, but a young learner could think there are two separate characters, Grandma and Bestemor unless that is discussed. Find out if a nickname is used for grandparents in their families (Gaga, Oma, MiMi, Nana, Grammy, etc.)

There are many other examples, including German ones, but just addressing a few should make the others seem less confusing/upsetting when they pop up. Context clues are intentionally provided but even if they aren't effective, the storyline itself should carry through in most cases and knowing other languages can pop up should make it less of an issue.

Big Picture/synopsis – in simpler format:

Eleven-year-old Mari lives in a very small village on a mountainside in Norway. She lives with her Mama, Papa, and Grandma, who she often calls Bestemor.

She has one sister who lives in a far off city to go to college, and one brother who is also older. He is adult and works at a bank in the village. Mari spends most of her time with her dog, ODIN, and she is very shy. She is also very smart, but since she is the baby of the family, her nickname is Baby Girl or Little One, and she counts on her family to keep her safe.

Mari goes to the village school and knows almost everyone in the village. She is in sixth grade and has always had the same teacher and the same classmates, so they are almost like family to her.

When Hitler was in charge in Germany he tried to take over all the other countries around them. Norway was not fighting the Germans, but Hitler wanted to take over anyway so he could control their land and coastline and food supplies. He sent his armies and navy to take over, but he pretended they were coming to be friendly, to protect the people of Norway from the countries he was fighting.

When that happened, Mari knew it was bad but she was sure her family would protect her. Then she learns how terrible things really are and what she might have to do for herself and her country.

Planning/predicting:

The titles for the chapters in the table of contents could help in tracing/reviewing the plot and scope of the story, especially as it stretches

out over time. Making a timeline (simple- follows a school year, from August just before school starts to June after school lets out) and adding short notes or key words as the story unfolds could help sustain/retain story elements and changes in the character.

In general, I'd advise to only pursue aspects of the story that the learner grasps well and seems to care about. Treating each chapter or episode as a freestanding story could work better than trying to maintain understanding of the full story.

Option to deal with the whole or parts of the story in "chunks". The plot breaks/transitions are organized below:

Part One: Learn about Mari and her life, as well as the changes that frighten and confuse her (First five chapters, pages 1-38)

Part Two: Learning about local resistance (Chapters 6-11, pages 39-75)

Part Three: Mari takes a stand, joins in resistance activities (Chapters 12-16, pages 76-109)

Part Four: New friends, holiday time with family (Chapters 17-22, pages 110-147)

Part Five: Dangers grow (Chapters 18-23, pages 148-181)

Part Six: Birthday, Wedding, and Good-Bye (Chapters 24-end, pages 182- end)