



I AM DAVID

Educator's Guide

Dear Educator,

I fell in love with the story of *I Am David* when I was first given the book by Walden Media. I'd always wanted to do a movie about a person seeing the world for the first time, and David's journey as a refugee – from the darkness of his oppressed past to his new life trusting people – seemed the perfect story to tell onscreen. I've always been drawn to stories about outsiders; it's a theme that is explored in a historical and emotional context in *I Am David*. In order to place the story in a true historical setting, I did research working with an expert on the subject of prison camps. Thus I was able to discover that the allegorical gulag in Anne Holm's book was actually based on the Communist labor camps, which were run by the Soviet-dominated governments of Eastern Europe from 1944 to 1962. Little is known in our country about these camps, and I hope that this film engenders more study about this dark chapter of world history. I would like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is the most amazing organization. To have them endorsing this film, as a filmmaker all I can say is: there is literally no better stamp of approval and recognition for a film like this. By discussing totalitarianism and beliefs that would force a child like David into a labor camp, students might gain a better understanding of world events. And by letting them see life from the point of view of a boy who has overcome a life stripped of comfort and security, it's my hope that they can get a better appreciation for the bounty – and freedom – many of us take for granted.

With thanks,

Paul Feig

Writer/Director

I Am David



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USING THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed for teachers to help integrate the film and book *I Am David* into the classroom through an interdisciplinary approach to subject matter. It can be used in conjunction with the *I Am David Gameboard Activity*. Activities are targeted to students in grades 5-9 and comply with national content standards. Each lesson also includes an "adaptation" with suggestions for how to scale the lesson for use with younger students and/or with students for whom English is a second language. The reproducible worksheets and lesson plans cover subject areas including social studies, language arts, geography, visual arts, and character education.



CREDITS

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About the Film

I Am David is adapted from Anne Holm's internationally acclaimed novel of the same name. It is the story of a 12-year-old refugee boy, David, who escapes a Communist labor camp carrying a compass, a pocketknife, a sealed letter, a bar of soap, a half loaf of bread, and instructions to go to Denmark. For the first time in his young life, David is thrust into the free world as he travels across Europe at the start of the Cold War. David's journey is one of discovery – during which David loses his mistrust of humanity and finds the ability to smile, share, trust, and ultimately, to love.

I Am David addresses the cruelties, politics, and suffering of warfare while celebrating the resilience and abiding optimism of youth.

About Anne Holm

Anne Holm was born on September 10, 1922 in Denmark. Educated in Denmark, she began her training as a journalist upon completing school. Her first book was published in 1956. Two other Danish titles followed before Holm had *I Am David* published in 1963 by Gyldendal in Copenhagen (in Danish), and in English the same year by Harcourt Brace and Company (U.S.) and Methuen (U.K.). The English-language version carries the title *I Am David* in the U.K. and was formerly known as *North to Freedom* in the U.S. It has since been re-titled *I Am David* in its latest published edition by Harcourt, Inc.

The novel has been in print continuously since its original publication. This is significant because it indicates that the book is considered a classic. *I Am David* has been televised, radio broadcast, and successfully translated in sixteen countries and on four continents.

A member of the Danish Authors' Society, Anne Holm traveled extensively throughout Europe, acquiring a modest proficiency in German, Italian, French, and English. She was married to Johan Christian Holm in 1949 and they had one child. Not shy about her politics, Holm once said, "No secret about it – I am all for king and parliament, and against dictatorships..." Anne Holm died in 1998.

I Am David has won numerous awards, including the Prize for the Best Scandinavian Children's Book in 1963, ALA Notable Book in 1965, and Boys Club of America Junior Book Award Gold Medal.

David's World in Ruins

Grade levels: 5-9

Subjects: Language Arts, Social Studies

National Standards:

- **Language Arts:** NCTE/IRA: Standard 1: Reading for Perspective; Standard 2: Understanding the Human Experience
- **Social Studies:** NCSS: Standard 2: Time, Continuity and Change

Duration: Two 45-minute class periods

Materials: Student worksheet, writing materials, dictionaries

Use this lesson to summarize the historical backdrop against which David's story is set.

Description:

The novel *I Am David* creates an ambiguous, allegorical time and place, pointing to the presence of totalitarian regimes, a complex political landscape and paranoid forces intent on eliminating personal freedoms. The film *I Am David* makes many of these impressions more concrete, setting *I Am David* in a Bulgarian labor camp during the Cold War. At the outset of both the film and novel, David escapes from a labor camp and begins his courageous journey home across the perilous countryside.

Objectives:

- To read a summary of the historical backdrop against which the story is set.
- To recall facts about post-World War II Europe.
- To introduce the political time period known as the Cold War.
- To make inferences about the effects of the historical and political backdrop on David's character.

Procedures:

1. Read with students the Student Worksheet, *David's World in Ruins*, Part I.
2. Summarize with students the origin of the "iron curtain" and the start of the Cold War.
3. Ask students to complete the worksheet *David's World in Ruins*, Part II.
4. Invite students to make inferences about the effects of the historical backdrop on David's character.

Adaptations:

Students can work independently or in small groups to complete the worksheet comprehension questions. Some students may benefit from having the questions written out on the board in advance and reading the selection aloud as a class, stopping to answer the questions orally as the selection is read, before filling out the student worksheet by themselves.

Useful Resources:

- The Open Society Archives sponsors a powerful exhibition about labor camps called "Forced Labor Camps: An On-line Exhibition" at: www.osa.ceu.hu/gulag.
- To read the complete text of Winston Churchill's "Sinews of Peace" or "Iron Curtain" speech, see: www.winstonchurchill.org or the book *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History*, selected and introduced by William Safire, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1992, p. 785-795.
- For further reading about the devastating impact of the Soviet gulag system on Europe after World War II see *Gulag: A History* by Anne Applebaum, New York: Anchor Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., 2003.

Assessment:

Assess students on the basis of their answers to student worksheet questions, and on the inferences they make in discussing the lives of citizens of post-World War II Eastern Europe.

Extensions:

Invite someone from your community who once lived in a Communist country to speak to the class about life under a Communist government.



David's World in Ruins (Part 1)

Read this account of what life was like in Europe after World War II. It will help you understand the world David travels through in order to find his way home.

After World War II ended in 1945, much of Europe lay in ruins. Cities, rural areas, communications, and transportation systems were destroyed. Over fifty million people were dead, including over six million Jews, many of whom had been murdered in Nazi concentration camps. Led by the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, the Allied forces had worked together to defeat dictator Adolph Hitler's Germany and Germany's ally, Japan, along with other Axis countries in their bid to take over the world. But almost immediately after the War, relations between Allied countries began to fall apart.



Map with locations of forced labor camps in Bulgaria from 1948-1954 and a copy of *News From Behind the Iron Curtain*, published monthly by the Free Europe Press, from 1954.

By the end of World War II the Soviet Union had driven German soldiers back to Germany. However, Soviet soldiers were still in many Eastern European countries. The leader of the Soviet Union, dictator Joseph Stalin, had promised the Allies that as soon as possible he would allow free elections in these Eastern European nations and withdraw his soldiers. But right after the War, Joseph Stalin broke his promise. The Soviet soldiers did not withdraw, and by 1948, every Eastern European country was under the control of the Soviet Union.

The government of the Soviet Union was *communist*, which comes from the word “communal,” meaning “of the group.” Communists believe that practicing religion and holding private property should be forbidden. The communist government of the Soviet Union did not believe in a free press. Disagreement by citizens with the government was against the law, and people could be put in prison if their beliefs were different from

what the government wanted people to believe. The rights of individuals did not matter. In practice, the government of the Soviet Union was a dictatorship of the proletariat (*proletariat* means “the poorest class of working people”). A very small group of leaders controlled the lives of all citizens. In countries with Communist governments, the government owned all factories and workplaces. There was no independent economy, no independent newspapers, no independent courts, and no independent legislature.

But now, after World War II, on one side was the United States and Great Britain and on the other was the Soviet Union. In fact, on March 5, 1946 the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Winston Churchill, made a famous speech at Westminster College, in Fulton, Missouri. With United States President Harry Truman in the audience, Winston Churchill warned about Eastern Europe becoming separated from the rest of Europe because of what the Soviet Union was doing. To make his point more forcefully, Churchill used the image of a giant iron curtain coming down on Eastern European countries, separating them from the rest of Europe:

“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Vienna, and Sofia; all these famous cities lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere.”

Behind the “iron curtain,” the Soviet Union was establishing repressive governments and labor camps. In labor camps, people who were thought to disagree with the government were imprisoned, forced to do hard work, tortured, and sometimes even put to death for their beliefs. In the year 1952, the year in which the film *I Am David* takes place, over two and a half million people were in labor camps in the Soviet Union. In Bulgaria alone, between 1948-1954 there were 99 forced labor camps. This is the backdrop against which the story *I Am David* takes place.

David's World in Ruins (Part 2)

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Find the answers to these questions from the selection you've just read about the political landscape of Europe after World War II. This will help you to understand some of the perils involved in the journey David makes to find his way home. You will need a dictionary. Write your answers in complete sentences.

1. Roughly how many people died as a result of World War II?

2. What is a "dictator"? (Look up the word in your dictionary and write its definition here.)

3. List the two dictators mentioned in this selection, and the countries of which they were the leaders.

4. Who first used the expression "iron curtain"? What is meant by an "iron curtain"?

5. What is a "labor camp"? Who was put into labor camps? By whom? Why is David in a labor camp?

6. Make up one question of your own about something you think is important to know from reading this selection. Then answer your question.

My question:

The answer:

OPTIONAL FURTHER STUDY:

- Look up the definitions of these forms of government: 1) totalitarian; 2) democratic; 3) socialist; 4) monarchy. What are the main differences between totalitarian and democratic governments? Who rules in a monarchy? Who rules in a totalitarian government?
- Select any two of these countries: Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Denmark. Then find out what kinds of governments they had after World War II.

Europe in the 1950s

Grade levels: 5-9

Subjects: Geography, Social Studies

National Standards:

- **Geography:** National Geography Standards (from National Geographic Society): Standard 1: The World in Spatial Terms
- **Social Studies:** NCSS: Standard 2: Time, Continuity and Change; Standard 3: People, Places and Environments

Duration: Two 45-minute class periods

Materials: Student worksheet, writing materials, colored markers, ruler. See www.walden.com/iamdavid for an interactive map of Europe during the 1950s.

Use this lesson to help students locate key places in Europe that are important to David's story.

Description:

This exercise provides students with an opportunity to locate some of the key places through which David travels as he makes his way across Europe.

Objectives:

- To study a map of Europe in the 1950s.
- To identify key countries and geographical features on a map.
- To make inferences about the difficulty, length and conditions of David's journey based on the identification of David's route on a map.

Procedures:

1. Review with students the names of the countries of Europe and the major bodies of water found on the student worksheet.
2. After students have completed filling in their maps, invite students to make a list with you on the board of personality traits it would take for a 12-year-old boy or girl to be able to safely travel through these countries.
3. Invite students to discuss why basics like food and shelter would be a constant worry for David while traveling across Europe, given what they now know about the political and geographic landscapes.

Adaptations:

For younger students, you may wish to pre-mark David's route on the map worksheets along with subheadings that say, "Journey begins here" and "Journey ends here."

Other students may benefit from a review of the basic features of a map.

Comparing David's journey across Europe with a journey of equal length across the United States may give some students a better understanding of the distance David traveled.

Assessment:

Design a rubric to assess students on their demonstrated understanding of the geography of David's journey home, as indicated by their completion of the map worksheet and their discussion of David's journey.

Extensions:

- With students, label or color in the countries on the worksheet that were under Communist rule at the time the novel takes place (Warsaw Pact Countries) and countries aligned with NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization).



Useful Resources:

- A comprehensive collection of National Geographic maps can be found on an 8 CD-ROM set entitled *National Geographic Maps: The Complete Collection*. It contains a comprehensive map of Europe circa 1957 and can be purchased from the National Geographic Society at: www.nationalgeographic.com.
- To view a political map of NATO and Warsaw Pact countries in Europe during the 1950s and 1960s see: Spielvogel Interactive Maps at: www.wadsworth.com/history_d/templates/student_resources/0534600069_spielvogel/InteractiveMaps/maps_index.html, then click on: "The New European Alliance Systems in the 1950s and 1960s."

Europe in the 1950s

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

In the movie *I Am David*, the guard tells David, “You must get this envelope to Denmark. First, head south to Salonika and hide on a ship that’s going to Italy. When you arrive there, travel north as far as you can.” Locating information about where David traveled on the map provided will give you a better understanding of the difficulty of David’s journey to freedom. His journey begins when he escapes the labor camp in Belene, Bulgaria.

Instructions:

Use the map provided to locate places that are important to the story of *I Am David*. Fill in your answers in the spaces provided. This will help you to understand the distance and peril involved in David’s journey as he makes his way across Europe to Denmark.

1. List the countries that share a border with Bulgaria.

2. A “landlocked country” is a country that is not bordered by any seas or oceans. Is Bulgaria a landlocked country?

3. Find the city of Salonika in Greece. By what other name is this city called?

4. According to the book *I Am David*, David washes ashore near the city of Salerno, Italy. Draw the route David could have taken from Balene to Salonika, then draw the route you think his ship may have sailed. Name two bodies of water the ship must have sailed through.

5. In the book and the movie, David rescues a girl named Maria and then stays with her family near a town called Perugia, in Italy. Find Perugia and with a red marker draw the route David might have taken to get from Salerno, Italy to Perugia.

6. What small country that was neutral during World War II lies directly north of Italy?

7. The book mentions that David crosses into Switzerland near Lugano, Switzerland. With a blue marker draw the route David might take from Perugia, Italy to Lugano with a blue marker.

Europe in the 1950's (Continued)

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

8. In the book, David leaves Sophie somewhere near Lugano, Switzerland and continues to travel on foot. David goes through several Swiss cities, including Lucerne and Basel. From Basel David passes through Frankfurt, Germany, then goes on to Kolding, Denmark, and finally arrives in Copenhagen. Draw this last stretch of David's journey onto your map with a green marker.

9. Why do you think Paul Feig, the writer/director of the movie *I Am David*, chose to change the last part of David's journey from the way it is described in the book?

10. Using the scale provided on the map and a ruler, estimate the distance of David's journey.

11. Applying what you learned from the worksheet *David's World in Ruins*, tell why you think the guard told David to take the path he did.

12. Using the map, make up a question of your own about David's journey and then answer your question.

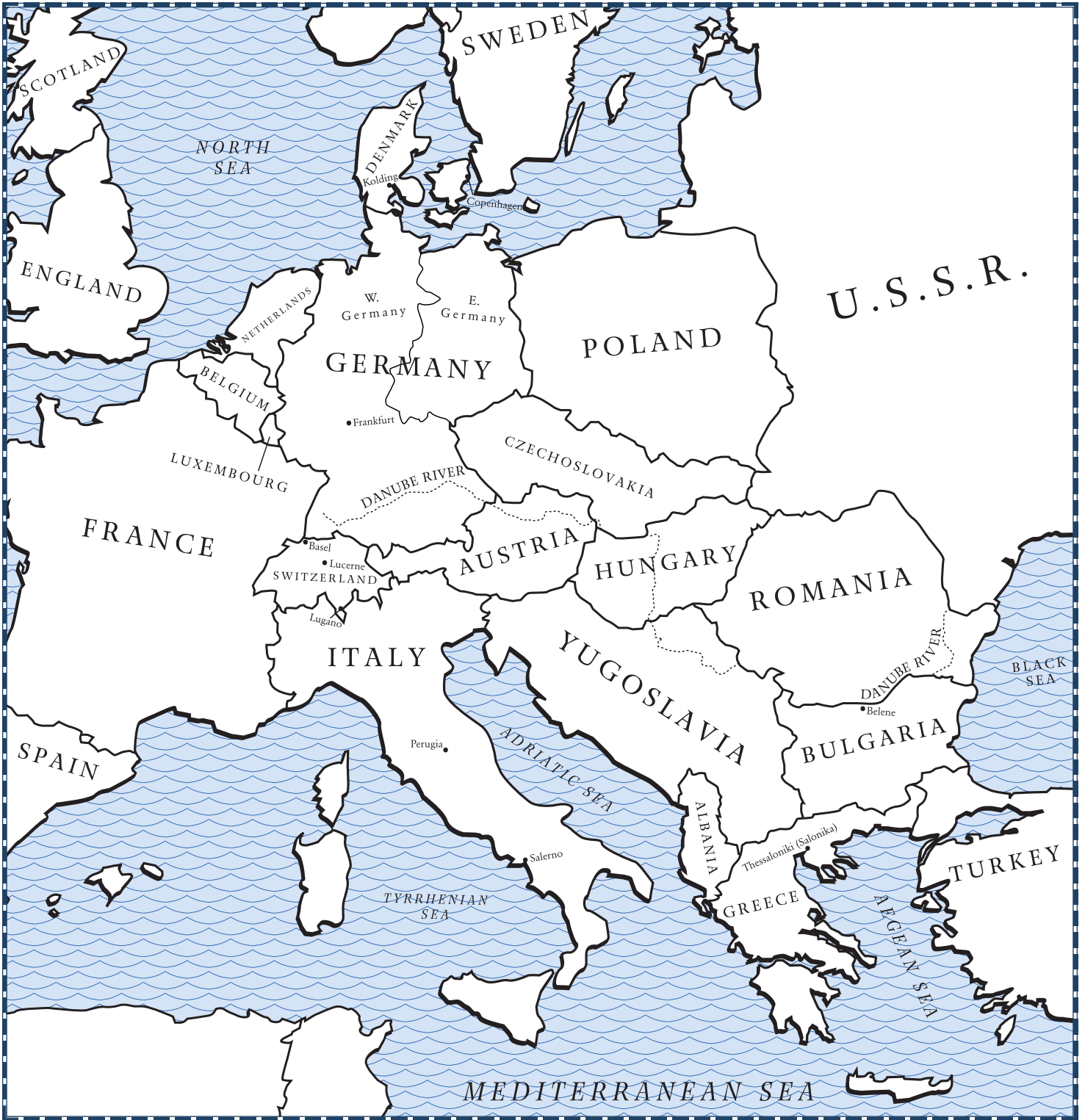
My question:

The answer:

Europe in the 1950s

NAME: _____

DATE: _____



Making Inferences About David

Grade levels: 5-9

Subject: Language Arts

National Standards:

• **Language Arts:** NCTE/IRA: Standard 6: Applying Knowledge

Duration: Two 45-minute class periods or one class period and homework plus discussion

Materials: The novel *I Am David*, notebook or paper, writing utensils

Use this lesson to examine what kinds of inferences other characters in I Am David make about David – and what they see in David that justifies their conclusions.

Description:

Throughout *I Am David* people make judgments about David with only partial information available to them, such as a look in David's eyes, or an expression on his face. Judgments or conclusions based on incomplete information are called inferences.

Objectives:

- To define making inferences as: conclusions people draw based on the evidence they have about something – or someone.
- To examine what kinds of information are used to make conclusions about David – and why.

Procedures:

1. Examine with students the scene on page 25 of the Harcourt edition of the novel when the Italian sailor says to David, "I don't think you're all there." Invite students to explain what they think the sailor means by this statement. Then invite students to describe what it is about David's appearance or manner that would make the Italian draw this conclusion or inference.
2. Next, ask students to recall from the film that the baker fetches a police officer so that the officer can talk with David. What can you infer from the fact that the baker gets a police officer?
3. Ask students to complete the worksheet *Making Inferences About David*.

Adaptations:

Some students may wish to work in pairs, taking turns reading and discussing the quotes referenced on the worksheet before writing about inferences that can be drawn from them.

Assessment:

Design a rubric to assess students on the thoroughness of their responses to quotes from the film and the inferences they draw from these quotes.

Extensions:

Discuss with students the kinds of information people use to make inferences about others:

- What kind of information allows people to truly know what others are like?
- Are there times when it is important to make inferences about others?
- Why is it so important for David at first to trust the inferences he makes about the people he meets?



Useful Resources:

• Related to making inferences is the art of making a deduction. Deduction is when you apply a general rule to a particular case. For example: 1) Hot things hurt you. 2) The stove is hot. 3) The stove will hurt you.

But making deductions isn't always useful. For example: 1) People who miss the bus must take a taxi. 2) There are people in this taxi. 3) They must have missed the bus. To find out more about making deductions, see "Write 101.com" at: www.write101.com/W.Tips43.htm.

Making Inferences About David

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Understanding how and why people make inferences will help you better understand how other people see David, and why they respond to him as they do.

Instructions:

Consider these statements from the film.

“There’s something about him. His face, his eyes. They are not the eyes of a normal boy.”

1. What details about David’s physical appearance and the look on his face does the baker see that allow him to make this inference?

“... The world is filled with terrible people, Maria, and they all do terrible things – I’ve seen them.”

2. What do you think Maria infers about David’s past from what he tells her about “terrible people”?

“When I look at the boy in the picture, I see a very intelligent person, a very serious person, and a good person.... But that’s as far as I can see because he doesn’t want to let the world see any further.”

3. What does Sophie see in David that makes her infer that David doesn’t want to let people get to know him?

Memory: Comparing the Novel and Film

Grade levels: 5-9

Subjects: Language Arts

National Standards:

• **Language Arts:** NCTE/IRA: Standard 3: Evaluation Strategies; Standard 6: Applying Knowledge

Duration: Two 45-minute class periods

Materials: Student worksheet, writing materials

Use this lesson to study the use of flashback as a narrative device in the film and the role of David's memories in the novel.

Description:

The role of memory is central to both the book and film versions of *I Am David*. In the film, the audience learns about David's memories of his mother, his good friend Johannes, camp life, and the role of the prison guard through *flashbacks*, or scenes from David's past presented in the present. In the novel, David's memories of Johannes' remarks play an important role in the narrative.

Objectives:

- To explore the use of flashbacks as a narrative device in the film *I Am David*.
- To explore the role of memory within the narrative of the novel *I Am David*.
- To compare flashbacks presented in the film with David's memories of Johannes in the narrative of the novel.

Procedures:

1. Define with students the word *flashback*: scenes from the past presented in the present.
2. Invite students to discuss what they learn about David's life through the flashbacks in the film *I Am David*. How do the flashbacks deepen the audience's understanding of David's character?
3. Ask students why one flashback is repeatedly shown in the film. What is the effect of the repetition of this particular flashback?
4. Invite students to recall wisdom that Johannes offered David in the novel, which David remembers as he travels to Denmark.
5. Write the column headers from the student worksheet on

the board and discuss possible entries under each header with students.

6. Ask students to complete the worksheet exercise.

Adaptations:

Some students may wish to illustrate how the flashbacks or the memories of Johannes' wisdom affected David.

Assessment:

Assess students on the basis of their contributions to class discussions and through their responses on the student worksheet.

Extensions:

Lead a discussion with students about the role of memory in people's lives, and why it is important that some events be remembered across generations and time. You may wish to focus the discussion with this statement: "A people who don't know their past have no future."



Useful Resources:

- The Library of Congress devotes an entire section of its website to what it calls "American Memory." See: <http://memory.loc.gov>.

Memory: Comparing the Novel and Film

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Movie: A Flashback David Has	How This Affected David
1.	

Novel: Something David Remembers Johannes Telling Him	How This Affected David
2.	

Movie: A Flashback David Has	How This Affected David
3.	

Novel: Something David Remembers Johannes Telling Him	How This Affected David
4.	

Movie: A Flashback David Has	How This Affected David
5.	

Freedoms and Rights

Grade levels: 5-9

Subjects: Social Studies, Language Arts, Visual Arts

National Standards:

- **Social Studies:** NCSS: Standard 3: Evaluation Strategies
- **Language Arts:** NCTE/IRA: Standard 6: Applying Knowledge; Standard 7: Evaluating Data
- **Visual Arts:** CNAEA: Standard 2: Using Knowledge of Structures and Functions; Standard 6: Making Connections Between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines

Duration: Two 45-minute class periods

Materials: Internet, markers, posterboard; copies of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (available as a downloadable file at: www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm).

Use this lesson to examine the concept of basic rights or freedoms – rights David was deprived of – and their significance for people throughout the world.

Description:

Students can learn to appreciate the freedom they have, and freedoms people like David do not have, by examining what President Franklin Roosevelt called the “Four Freedoms” (as depicted by artist Norman Rockwell), and by studying the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is a United Nations document, not a U.S. one, and is therefore different than the Four Freedoms.

Objectives:

- To define the words *freedom* and *right* through concrete examples and illustrations of each.
- To examine Norman Rockwell's paintings of President Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms.
- To read through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and discuss its importance.
- To compare the articles of the Declaration with the Four Freedoms.
- To illustrate one of the 30 articles of the Declaration, of the student's own choosing and design.

Procedures:

1. Review Rockwell's creation of Roosevelt's Four Freedoms.
2. Examine Rockwell's Four Freedoms by asking students to do a visual inventory, i.e., to describe what they see in each illustration in as much detail as possible. Then invite students to discuss the impact or significance of images, colors, and lighting in each image.
3. Read about the origin and drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at: www.unhchr.ch/udhr/miscinfo/carta.htmv.
4. Download copies of the Declaration at: www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm.
5. Read through with students the thirty articles of the Declaration, stopping after each to invite students to give examples of a violation of the article, and an example of the exercise or expression of the article.
6. Distributing poster board and markers, invite students to illustrate and label one of the articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Useful Resources:

- *Norman Rockwell's Four Freedoms: Images That Inspire a Nation*, by Stuart Murray and James McCabe, Stockbridge, MA: Berkshire House, 1993. This book tells the story of the creation of Rockwell's masterpieces, and includes full color plates of each.

When students have finished, invite them to discuss their choices of imagery, color, and composition in illustrating one of the articles.

Adaptations:

Invite younger students to make collages illustrating the articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. You may also wish to invite interested students to work on their posters or collages in groups. Some students might enjoy consciously imitating Norman Rockwell's style in their depictions of the articles of the Declaration. Students for whom English is a second language may wish to do bilingual captions for the articles they illustrate.

Extensions:

- Make a gallery of students' article illustrations and invite classmates from other classes to come to the exhibition.
- Hold a school-wide essay contest inviting students to write an essay about which of the articles or Four Freedoms they feel is most important – and why.
- Invite students to illustrate President Roosevelt's Four Freedoms exploring different imagery than Norman Rockwell's.
- Enter UNHCR's World Refugee poster contest. (See www.usaforunhcr.org for details.)

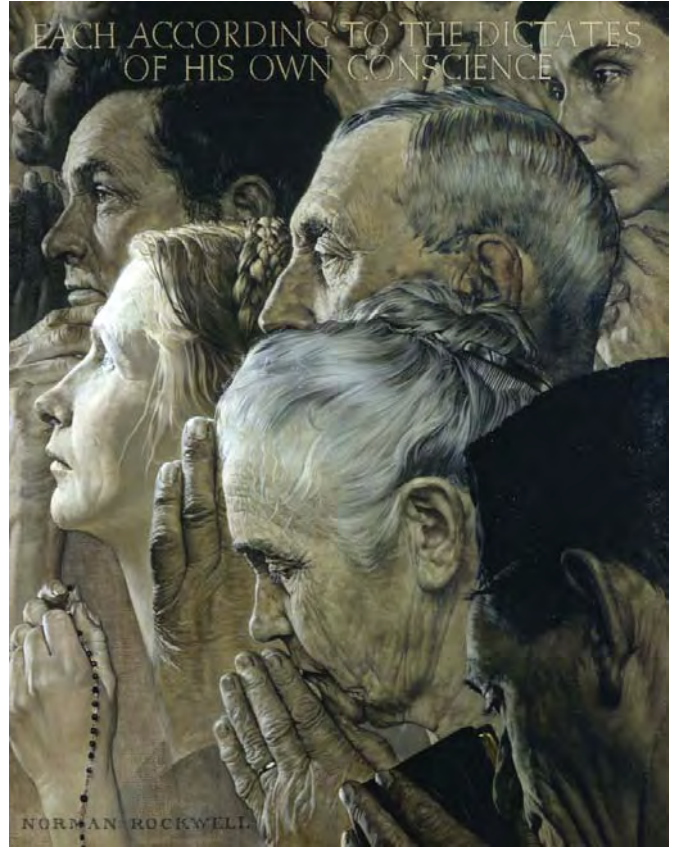
Assessment:

Assess students on their discussion of the choices they made in their artwork, and on how successfully students completed their illustrations.

Freedom and Rights



Freedom of Speech



Freedom to Worship



Freedom from Want



Freedom from Fear

Norman Rockwell Art Collection Trust, The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge

The Courage to Care

Grade levels: 5-9

Subjects: Character Education, Social Studies, Language Arts

National Standards:

- **Character Education:** Chicago Public Schools Character Education: Standard 2: Trait of Courage
- **Social Studies:** NCSS: Standard 4: Individual Development and Identity
- **Language Arts:** NCTE/IRA: Standard 2: Understanding the Human Experience

Duration: Two 45-minute class periods

Materials: Writing materials

Use this lesson to examine the reasons behind the actions that Johannes and Sophie took on David's behalf, and to reflect on the connection between empathy and courage.

Description:

Johannes looked after David in the labor camp, even when it was dangerous for him to do so. Sophie helped David on his journey to Denmark by providing him safe surroundings and not turning him in to the authorities. What made them do these things?

Objectives:

- To examine character motivation: specifically, why Johannes and Sophie helped David.
- To explore courage as a virtue, and situations in which empathy for others leads to courageous action.
- To cite examples from real life of people acting courageously on behalf of others.

Procedure:

1. Summarize with students the ways in which Johannes and Sophie helped David – in the book and in the film.
2. Ask students about what experiences Johannes and Sophie had in their own lives that made them want to help David.
3. Ask students about moments they have witnessed when one person stood up for, or aided, another person.
4. Invite students to discuss moments they have witnessed when no one stood up for someone in need of help.



5. Challenge students to explain what some of these quotations mean to them. You may want to write the quotations on the blackboard:

Courage is fear that has said its prayers.

– **Karl Barth**

Every man has his own courage, and is betrayed because he seeks in himself the courage of other persons.

– **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage.

– **Confucius**

Courage is like love; it must have hope for nourishment.

– **Napoleon**

Cowards die many times before their death.

– **William Shakespeare**

6. Encourage students to define courage for themselves by writing about a moment when they acted courageously.

Adaptations:

With younger students, you might invite them to write a courage poem by completing the sentence stem: “*Courage is when _____*” five times. Some students may benefit from having student essays about courage read aloud before they begin composing their own. (See Useful Resources.)

Assessment:

Design a rubric to assess students on their demonstrated understanding of courage as indicated by the examples they cite and on their reflections of its larger meaning.

Useful Resources:

- The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum sponsors an annual essay-writing contest for Boston Public School sixth graders about moments when they have demonstrated courage. Winning essays are compiled into a powerful collection entitled *The Courage of Boston's Children*, which can be obtained by contacting the Max Warburg Curriculum, Inc.: www.maxcourage.org.
- To learn more about the courage of a modern-day “David,” read about Mawi Asgedom, who fled his war-torn homeland of Ethiopia at the age of three and eventually earned a full-tuition scholarship to Harvard University. His inspirational book is entitled *Of Beetles and Angels*, Chicago: Megadee, 2000. See: www.mawispeaks.com.
- The UNHCR provides an extensive collection of free teaching materials about refugees. To find out more, visit www.unrefugees.org. See also the *I Am David Gameboard Activity*.

Forced labor camps were first built by Russian rulers known as Czars. The camps took a far more lethal form almost immediately after the Russian Revolution in 1917, when the czar was overthrown and a Communist government was put into place. (Remember that in the novel *I Am David*, David is wary of reading anything written after 1917.)

By 1921 there were already 84 camps in 43 Soviet provinces. The Gulag – the system of forced labor camps – continued to grow, and reached its greatest capacity in the early 1950's. By this time, camps could be found in many Soviet-influenced countries like Bulgaria, and were very important to the Soviet economy. From 1929, when the Gulag began its major expansion, until 1953, when Joseph Stalin died, the best estimates are that some eighteen million people passed through this gigantic system. Another six million were forced to live in the remote Kazakh deserts or the frigid Siberian forests in permanent exile or in exile villages. When Stalin died, much of the system of forced labor camps faded away, but did not disappear altogether.

Even in the 1980s President Ronald Reagan and Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev (who was the grandson of Gulag prisoners) were still discussing the Soviet camps that held political prisoners.

– adapted from *GULAG: A History* by Anne Applebaum.



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