

Courage in a Time of Terror

The incredible story of a teenage girl who saved 13 Jewish men, women, and children during the Holocaust

About the Story

Lexile: 900L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objectives:

to identify key ideas in an article about the Holocaust and write a speech honoring one teen's heroism

Key Skills:

mood, figurative language, key ideas and details, compare and contrast, text structure, interpreting text

Essential Questions:

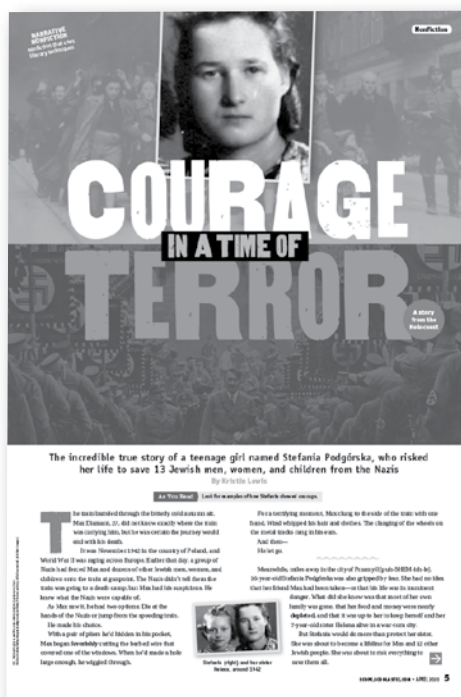
- Why is it important to learn about people from the past?
- Where does courage come from?
- How can we triumph over hate?

Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards:

R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, W.2, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Video: Beyond the Story

Audio:

- The article
- Vocabulary

Differentiated articles:

- Lower-Lexile version (printable)
- Spanish version (printable)

Literature Connections: ideas for connecting to curricular texts

Skill Builders to print or project:

- Vocabulary
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Preparing to Write: Remembering Stefania Podgórska
- Video Discussion Questions
- **Core Skills Workout:** Summarizing*, Text Features, Text Structure
- Quiz*
- Nonfiction Elements*
- Contest Entry Form

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1 Preparing to Read

Watch the video.

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

- Project or distribute the **Video Discussion Questions** for students to preview.
- Watch the video, which introduces the time period and events described in the article.
- Discuss the questions as a class.

Preview vocabulary.

(8 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Vocabulary Words and Definitions**. Highlighted words: *defied, dehumanizing, depleted, feverishly, gaunt, genocide, harboring, prying*

2 Reading and Discussing

Read and discuss the article.

(45 minutes, activity sheets online)

- Have a volunteer read aloud the As You Read box on page 5.
- Play the audio version as students follow along in their printed magazines.
- Have students work in groups to discuss the following close-reading questions.

Close-Reading Questions

What is the mood of the introduction?

How does author Kristin Lewis create this mood? (mood) *The mood is terrifying and suspenseful. Lewis creates this mood by introducing readers to Max at a climactic moment: He is deciding whether to die at the hands of the Nazis or jump from a moving train. Sensory details, such as “Wind whipped his hair and clothes” and “The clanging of the wheels on the metal tracks rang in his ears” also help create the mood, as does the paragraph break between “And then—” and “He let go.”*

On page 6, Lewis writes, “For centuries, antisemitism—prejudice against Jewish people—had smoldered in Poland and across Europe. Soon it would explode into an inferno of violence and death that nobody could have imagined.” What type of figurative language is Lewis using? What purpose does it serve? (figurative language) *Lewis is using a metaphor to describe the rise of antisemitism in Europe in the 1930s. Her use of “smoldered” helps readers understand that prejudice and hatred had long been present but had been constrained, like embers burning slowly, with smoke but no flame. By writing that antisemitism would soon “explode into an inferno,” Lewis helps readers understand that this hatred suddenly began to rage out of control like an enormous blazing fire.*

What was life like for Stefania in Przemyśl in 1938? How did her life change when the Nazis took control? (key ideas, compare and contrast) *When Stefania moved to Przemyśl, she found life to be exciting and energizing. She enjoyed the beautiful streets and the delicacies the city had to offer and found a good job working for the Diamants, who treated her like family. When the Nazis took over Poland, everything changed. The Diamants were sent to a ghetto, and Stefania lived in constant worry and fear for them.*

How does the section “Hitler’s Vicious Lies” contribute to the article? (text structure)

This section explains how Poland came to be under Germany’s control, starting with Hitler’s rise to power in the 1930s.

In your own words, summarize what the character based on Stefania says in the excerpt from the *The Light in Hidden Places* on page 7. (interpreting text) *The character based on Stefania says that visiting the*

ghetto made her realize that what the Nazis were doing was pure evil—that what was being done to Jewish people was not some sort of “mistake,” and that there was nothing to empathize with or try to understand about Hitler and his followers.

- Reconvene as a class to discuss the following critical-thinking questions.

Critical-Thinking Questions

▶ **What do you think motivated Stefania to take the enormous risks of sneaking food to the Diamants in the ghetto and hiding 13 people in her attic?** *Answers will vary. Students will likely say that Stefania loved the Diamants like family, which likely motivated her to help them. You can infer that she was a selfless person with tremendous courage and empathy, and that she had a strong sense of right and wrong. The excerpt from the novel suggests that she was motivated by a powerful desire to defy the evil she witnessed.*

▶ **Hitler and his followers blamed Germany’s problems on Jewish people. In general, why might people place blame for a problem on a person or group that is not responsible?** *Students may offer that when*

there is no simple answer as to who is at fault, people try to create a simple answer. Having someone to blame may create the sense that justice is possible: If there is someone at fault, there is someone to punish. Racism and other biases also play a role in the unfair assignment of blame.

▶ **The article describes a dark time in history. Much of it does not shed a positive light on human behavior. What in the article *can* give us hope?** *Answers will vary. Students may say that the fact that Stefania risked her life to help others and defy evil shows that people can rise above fear and act with compassion for others. Her courage can serve as an inspiration, and the fact that she saved the lives of 13 people can give us hope that our actions really can make a difference.*

3 Skill Building and Writing

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Have students complete **Preparing to Write: Remembering Stefania Podgórska**. This activity will prepare them for the writing prompt on page 10. *For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.*

Differentiate and Customize

For Struggling Readers

What is a hero? What makes Stefania Podgórska a hero? Answer both questions in a well-organized paragraph. Use text evidence to support your ideas.

For Advanced Readers

Consider the saying “Whosoever saves a life saves an entire universe.” What do you think it means? How does it apply to Stefania’s story? Answer both questions in an essay.

For Poets

Write a poem about Stefania Podgórska. Consider who the speaker of the poem should be—Stefania, someone she helped, Helena, or you.

For Book Critics

Read Sharon Cameron’s novel *The Light in Hidden Places*, and write a review of it. The review should include a summary of what the novel is about, as well as an analysis of how the story is told and the key characters.