

Escape From Darkness

The incredible story of how one small country saved thousands of its Jewish citizens during World War II

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 990L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to *Scope Online*.

Learning Objective: to identify key ideas and details in a narrative nonfiction article

Featured Skill: key ideas and details

Additional skills covered in this lesson plan: figurative language, cause and effect, author's craft

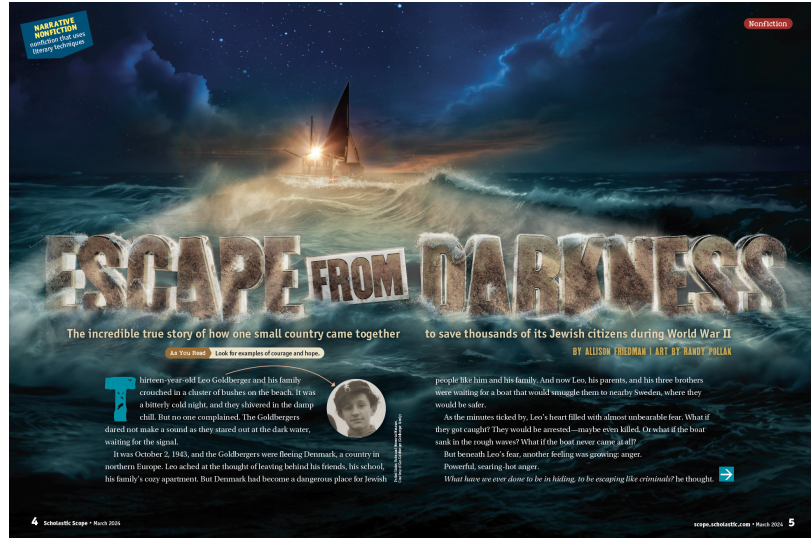
Essential Questions:

- How is hate created? How can it be stopped?
- What is the power of courage in the face of adversity?
- Why should we learn about the past?

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core Anchor Standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, W.2, SL.1, SL.2

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



Your Teaching Package

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

Audio:

- Article read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Video:

- "Beyond the Story"

Differentiated Articles:

- Lower-Lexile version
- Spanish language version

Connected readings from the *Scope* archives:

- Special Collection: Stories of World War II and the Holocaust

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Video Discussion Questions
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Featured Skill: Key Ideas and Details
- Choice Board
- **Core Skills Workout:** Summarizing,* Text Features, Nonfiction Elements
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck
- Quiz*

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (30 minutes)

Preview Vocabulary (15 minutes)

- Project the Google Slides version of **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. Highlighted words: *atrocities, deported, empire, marred, occupiers, rampant, refuge, refugees*. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Optionally, print the PDF version or share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.

Watch a Video (15 minutes)

- Watch the **Beyond the Story video**, in which a Scholastic Kid Reporter will walk students through an exhibit at New York's Museum of Jewish Heritage. Have students respond to the **Video Discussion Questions** (available in your Resources tab) in small groups or pairs.

2. Read and Discuss (45 minutes)

- Invite a volunteer to read the As You Read box on page 4 or at the top of the digital story page.
- Read the article once as a class. (*Differentiation: Share the lower-Lexile version or the Spanish version of the article.*) Optionally, have students listen to author Allison Friedman read her article aloud while they follow along. The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Divide students into groups to read the article again and respond to the following **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking** questions, also located in the Resources tab.

Close-Reading Questions

(30 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **Consider these lines: “Prejudice and hostility toward Jewish people, known as antisemitism, simmered for centuries. Then, in the 1930s, this prejudice boiled over into monstrous hatred and deadly violence.” What does Friedman’s use of figurative language in these lines help readers understand about antisemitism?** (figurative language) *The phrase “simmered for centuries” helps readers understand that prejudice toward Jewish people had been slowly developing for a long time, like a pot of sauce or soup simmering on a stove. The phrase “boiled over into monstrous hatred” helps readers understand that this prejudice erupted into an overwhelming and uncontrollable force, taking on a horrific and deadly form.*
 2. **According to the article, how was Hitler able to gain so much support for his hateful ideas and beliefs?** (cause and effect) *According to the article, Hitler took advantage of the humiliation and struggles Germans were facing following their defeat in World War I. He promised to make Germany strong and powerful again. While making these promises, he took advantage of many people’s deeply ingrained antisemitism, presenting Jewish people as the cause of Germany’s problems. He spread this lie in his speeches, unfairly blaming Jewish people and making them a scapegoat for the nation’s woes.*
 3. **According to the article, besides smuggling Jewish Danes out of Denmark by boat, what other acts of resistance did individuals and groups in Denmark take against the Nazis?** (key ideas and details) *The Nazis had made it illegal to report on Germany’s crimes, but Danish citizens printed secret newspapers to spread information about Nazi atrocities. Danish citizens bombed factories and trains containing Germany’s war supplies. A German officer warned Danish leaders of plans to round up Jewish citizens and deport them to concentration camps; the warning allowed people to go into hiding. Thousands of people across Denmark hid Jewish citizens in attics, churches, schools, and hospitals.*
 4. **Consider the numbers and statistics Friedman includes in the section “The Right Thing.” Why does she include them? What do they help readers understand?** (author’s craft) *Friedman provides the following numbers and statistics in the section “The Right Thing”: 7,220 Jewish Danes were brought to safety; 6 million Jewish men, women, and children were murdered by the Nazis—two out of every three European Jewish people; thousands of Danes risked their lives to save their Jewish countrymen and countrywomen; more than 98 percent of Jewish Danes survived the war. Together, these numbers and statistics help readers understand the scale of the Holocaust and its devastating impact on the Jewish population of Europe, and also just how successful and courageous the Danish rescue operation was.*
- As a class, discuss the following questions.

Critical-Thinking Questions

(10 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. In literature, light is often a symbol of positivity, goodness, and life, while darkness is often a symbol of negativity, evil, and death. In this article, what is the “darkness” and what is the “light” that broke through it? How does Friedman weave images of darkness and light throughout her article? *The darkness in this article is the horror, cruelty, and loss caused by the Holocaust. Darkness appears in Friedman’s article during moments of fear and uncertainty: the dark night of the Goldbergers’ escape on the beach, the icy black water the family must wade through, the police flashlight being kicked out of Leo’s hand when the family is hiding from German soldiers. The lightness that breaks through the darkness is the courageous acts of resistance against the Nazis—first and foremost the protection of Jewish Danes from injustice and suffering. Light appears in Friedman’s article during moments of hope: the rescue boat’s blinking signal in the water, the bright lights of the Swedish shoreline, and candles in windows to celebrate liberation from the Nazis.*
2. Why is it important to study the Holocaust? In particular, why is it important to read about events such as the rescue of Jewish Danes? *Studying the Holocaust provides insights about a significant historical event that helped shape the world we live in today. It also serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of prejudice and how it can escalate into hatred and violence. Reading about events like the rescue of Jewish Danes gives us a model of courage, compassion, and hope, even in the darkest of times, and helps us think critically about the role of bystanders.*

3. Write About It: Key Ideas and Details (45 minutes)

- Have students complete the **Featured Skill Activity: Key Ideas and Details**. This activity prepares them to respond to the writing prompt on page 10 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page:

The Holocaust was a time of great horror and tragedy. Yet there were also acts of courage and hope. Explain how the rescue of Jewish Danes was an act of courage and hope.

- Alternatively, have students choose a task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of culminating tasks. (Our Choice Board options include the writing prompt from the magazine, differentiated versions of the writing prompt, and additional creative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of a story or article.)

Support for Multilingual Learners

These questions are designed to help students respond to the text at a level that's right for them.

Yes/No Questions

Ask students to demonstrate comprehension with a very simple answer.

1. Growing up, did Leo ever feel unsafe being Jewish? *No, he didn't.*
2. Did the Nazis invade countries outside of Germany? *Yes, they did.*
3. Were the Nazis ever in control in Sweden? *No, they weren't.*
4. Did Danish citizens take action against the Nazis? *Yes, they did.*
5. Did Leo and his family make it to Sweden? *Yes, they did.*

Either/Or Questions

Encourage students to use language from the question in their answer.

1. Did most Danes treat their country's Jewish citizens with respect or with prejudice? *Most Danes treated Jewish citizens with respect.*
2. Did Hitler start antisemitism, or had it existed for centuries? *Antisemitism had existed for centuries.*
3. Did Hitler cause antisemitism to increase or decrease? *Hitler caused antisemitism to increase.*
4. Were Jewish Danes smuggled to Sweden or Poland? *Jewish Danes were smuggled to Sweden.*
5. Did Leo and his family escape from Denmark by boat, or did they hide in an attic? *Leo and his family escaped from Denmark by boat.*

Short-Answer Questions

Challenge students to produce simple answers on their own.

1. What was Hitler and the Nazi party's view of the world? *Hitler and the Nazi party held a racist view of the world. They saw anyone who was different from them as less than human.*
2. How did the nation of Denmark take action against Hitler? *Citizens across Denmark risked their lives to spread news of the Nazis' crimes, bomb German war supplies, hide Jewish citizens, and smuggle Jewish citizens out of the country to safety.*

Language Acquisition Springboard: Fill in the five "W" words while reading, then use the answers to generate questions after reading.

Who? (Which person or people is this article mainly about?) *Leo Goldberger and his family*

What? (What event does this article describe?) *one of the greatest rescue operations in history, when hundreds of fishing boats brought thousands of Jewish Danes like Leo and his family to safety in Sweden*

When? (At what time did this event occur?) *in 1943, during World War II*

Where? (In what place or location did this event take place?) *Denmark, a small country in northern Europe*

Why? (What was the reason for or cause of this event?) *A racist man named Adolf Hitler became the leader of Germany. He began invading countries to build an empire based on his hateful ideas. Life became dangerous for Jewish people, so Danish people came together to protect their Jewish friends, neighbors, and colleagues.*

Connected readings from the *Scope* archives:

- [Special Collection: Stories of World War II and the Holocaust](#)