

## Commissioner's Book Club: Discussion guide

# Anne Frank's Diary

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## Introduction

B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner's Book Club offers monthly book selections that use stories to help readers connect with human rights issues and build connection with the characters they encounter. We hope to bring together a province-wide community of readers and deepen their understanding of human rights and those who are most affected by human rights issues. This guide has been prepared to assist parents, teachers, librarians and other trusted adults explore themes in the Diary of Anne Frank: the Graphic Adaptation during World Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.

This graphic adaptation of Anne's story provides a new way for young readers to engage with Anne's words, life and the history of the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of a child. Anne, a Jewish teenager, is forced into hiding with her family during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands in World War II. Between 1942 and 1944, Anne kept a diary documenting her experiences living in a secret annex. Her diary captures the thoughts and imaginary world of a child living through the rise of fascism and the Holocaust. Anne's diary ends abruptly when her family was discovered and arrested in 1944. Anne, her sister and mother died in Nazi concentration camps. Her diary was published in 1947 after it was discovered by her father, the lone survivor of her family. Reading about Anne's life offers readers the opportunity to learn about the history of the Holocaust, racism, genocide and the importance of human rights.

## Vocabulary

Genocide	the deliberate and systematic destruction of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.
Dehumanization	the process of denying a person or group of people's humanity and make them seem less than human and less worthy of rights and dignity.
Antisemitism	the hatred of or prejudice against Jews.
Holocaust	the genocide of 6 million European Jews between 1941 and 1945 during World War II.

## Discussion questions

1. What did you think of the story? Is there a moment, image or part of the book that stood out to you?
2. This version of Anne Frank's Diary is a graphic adaptation of the original. Sometimes pictures can help us connect with a story. Did the images help you connect with Anne's experience?
3. What were your favourite or the most powerful images from the book and why?
4. At the beginning of the book there is a page with pictures of all the people in Anne's life during her time in the Annex. How many people on that page survived the Holocaust? Why do you think the author presented the people this way at the beginning of the book?
5. In her diary, Anne records the ways in which Nazi laws and policies denied her, and all Jews, fundamental rights over time, both in Germany and then in the Netherlands. As her rights were denied and the threat of the genocide loomed, she had less freedom and her life changed drastically. What were some of the things she experienced? What were some of the things that the adults in her life were experiencing?
6. Several Dutch people helped to hide the Frank family and the other residents of the Annex, bringing them food, supplies and news of the outside world. In many ways, these people embody what it means to live up to our human rights responsibilities. They never viewed the Frank family as less human, despite the propaganda and lies spread by the Nazis. Why do you think they chose to act this way?



7. Dehumanization of Jews and other groups was an essential part of the Nazi ideology. Making people fear and hate Jews helped the Nazis rise to power. How did Anne describe the dehumanization of Jews in her diary? Do you notice dehumanization of a group or groups of people in contemporary life? Where do you notice it? Online, in person or both?
8. Anne says, “How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” What are some ways you or the people around you are trying to change the world? What role do you think young people have in making change?
9. After the Holocaust, the phrase “Never Again” has been widely used to express the desire to prevent genocide from re-occurring. However, there have been several genocides since the Holocaust, including the Cambodian genocide, the Rwandan genocide and the Bosnian genocide, amongst others. All of these started with dehumanization of a group or groups of people. Why do you think that is?

## Activity prompts

### Image activity

Find an image from the book that best reflects 2 to 3 of the following themes and explain how the image captures the theme:

- a. the fear of the annex being discovered
- b. the persecution of the Jews by Nazis
- c. the terror of the war
- d. the oppressive feeling of being in hiding for so long
- e. dreams of life outside of the secret annex
- f. the Dutch people who helped the Frank family

### Fundamental rights activity

After the Holocaust, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was proclaimed on Dec. 10,1948.<sup>1</sup> The UDHR lists the rights we all have just because we

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<sup>1</sup> “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” United Nations, accessed March 2026, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.



are human. These rights do not need to be earned— they are ours regardless of who we are or what we do. The UDHR also reminds us that ignoring human rights can have dangerous and deadly consequences.

Review the articles of the UDHR and list all of the rights that were denied to Anne and other Jews leading up to and during the Holocaust. Try to find examples from Anne’s diary of these experiences happening to Jews during this time. How many of the rights listed in the UDHR were denied to Anne, her family and other Jews during the Nazi’s rise to power and the Holocaust?

Research other groups of people who were targeted by the Nazis. These may include the Sinti and Roma, people with disabilities, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and LGBTQ2SAI+ people. How many of the rights listed in the UDHR were denied to them?

## **Diary activity**

On March 8, 1944, the Dutch Education Minister in exile encouraged people to record their experiences for future generations. Anne’s diary has become one of the most enduring records of the experiences of Dutch Jews and Jewish children during the Holocaust.

Write a diary entry about a human rights issue that is affecting you or people around you. What would you want to record for history from the perspective of a person growing up right now? Do you think your point of view is different from adults? If so, explain how. Explain why listening to young people (like Anne and like you) talk about human rights is so important.

## **Children’s rights activity**

The Frank family hid in the secret Annex after Anne’s sister, Margot, received a notice that she was to be deported to a labour camp in Germany. Margot was 16 at the time. Children and teens were often separated from their families during the Holocaust. For example, the first transport of Jews to Auschwitz consisted of 997 teenage girls and young women from Slovakia.

The [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)<sup>2</sup> was adopted in 1989 and so didn’t exist when Anne was alive. It lists the rights that all children have, no matter where they live or who they are. It includes the right to be alive, the right to safety and an education.

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<sup>2</sup> “Convention on the Rights of the Child,” United Nations, accessed March 2026, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>.



- What do you think of the list of rights in the UNCRC? Did you know that you and all children under the age of 18 have these rights? Which ones stand out to you most?
- Using the UNCRC, list the rights that were denied Jewish children during the Holocaust.

## Human rights resources

### **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

[UNICEF](#), the United Nations agency for children, has a child-friendly version of the UNCRC. It is available here: [Children's version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child | UNICEF](#)

[The Society for Children and Youth of BC](#) has many educational resources available about child rights, including a poster of a simplified United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. They are available here: [Resources - Society for Children and Youth of BC](#)

### **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has information about and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The full text of the UDHR is available here: [Full text Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). An illustrated version UDHR is available here: [Illustrated Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).

Amnesty International also has an easy-to-understand resource about the UDHR. It is available here: [Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Amnesty International](#)

### **UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide**

In 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) as a response to the horrors of the Holocaust. It is available here: [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#)

