

Number the Stars

By Lois Lowry



1990 Newbery Medal Winner

A Teaching Guide

By Margaret Whisnant

from
Number the Stars by Lois Lowry
A Novel Teaching Pack
by Margaret Whisnant

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Copenhagen, Denmark
1943. . .

Ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen
and her best friend Ellen Rosen
race along the street on their way home from school.

Their game is brought to a terrifying halt
by a German soldier.
There are others like him on every corner.
Nazis. . .

One fateful October morning
the Danes join forces to accomplish the impossible,
to ***number the stars***,
to save their friends and neighbors
one by one. . .

Soon, Annemarie finds herself caught in the dangerous game
of life or death. . .



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Chapter Summaries

1 *Why Are You Running?*

- Best friends Annemarie and Ellen race to the corner of a Copenhagen street on their way home from school to the building where they both live.
- Blond-haired, ten-year-old Annemarie is a good runner while her friend Ellen, who has dark pigtails, is not.
- With the girls is Annemarie's little sister Kirsti.
- German soldiers have been in Denmark for three years, and the race is brought to a halt by one of them, who demands to know why Annemarie is running.
- One of the two soldiers prods Annemarie's backpack with the stock of his rifle while Ellen stands before them in fear.
- Kirsti orders "Don't" to the soldier who strokes her curls and says she is like his own little girl.
- The frightened girls decided not to tell their mothers about the incident, but Kirsti rushes ahead and chatters the whole story to Mrs. Johansen, Annemarie's mother, and Mrs. Rosen, Ellen's mother.
- Mrs. Johansen and Mrs. Rosen are "having coffee together"—hot water flavored with herbs—as they do on many afternoons.
- Mrs. Johansen comments to Mrs. Rosen that the soldiers must be edgy because of the latest Resistance incidents.
- Annemarie and her family are able to receive news of the sabotage against the Nazis when Peter Neilson brings copies of an illegal newspaper for them to read.
 - Mother warns Annemarie that it is important to be one of the crowd and not give the soldiers reason to remember her face.
 - The family has bread but no butter or sugar to make cupcakes. Mother says there will be cupcakes again when the war ends and the soldiers leave.

2 *Who Is the Man Who Rides Past?*

- Annemarie tells Kirsti a bedtime story about a king and queen and their beautiful daughter.
- The people of Denmark love King Christian who lives in a real palace in the center of Copenhagen and rides through the streets of the city each morning greeting his people.
- Annemarie remembers how, when she was a little girl, the king had waved to her and her older sister Lise.
- Three years earlier, shortly after Denmark surrenders to the Nazis, Papa overhears a German soldier ask why the king doesn't have a bodyguard as he rides by. A boy tells the soldier that all of Denmark is the king's bodyguard.
- Papa says that any Danish citizen, including him and Mama, would die to protect the king. Annemarie shivers, but says she would, too.
- Papa explains that the king surrendered to the Nazis rather than fighting to prevent Danish people from dying and the country from being crushed the same as Norway.
- There are German soldiers in Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France, but not in Sweden.
- Now, three years later, Sweden is still free.
- Annemarie's eighteen-year-old sister Lise died in an accident two weeks before her wedding to Peter Neilsen. Her things are still kept in the blue carved trunk in Annemarie's bedroom.
- Peter, Lise's fiancé, has not married, but he still comes to talk to Mama and Papa about things Annemarie does not understand. He is always in a hurry.
- Since Lise's death, Papa seems tired and much older.
- Annemarie thinks the whole world has changed and only the fairy tales remain the same.

3 *Where is Mrs. Hirsch?*

- As September passes, everyone remembers the struggles of the last winter with no fuel for the cold nights.

Word Lists with Definitions

(Arranged in Story Order—Some Words Found on Multiple Pages)

Part 1: 1 Why Are You Running—5 Who is the Dark-Haired One?

- lanky** Ungracefully thin and tall; bony; ungainly. (p. 1)
- residential** Characterized by private residences; the area where people live. (p. 1)
- prodded** Poked or jabbed, especially with something pointed. (p. 3)
- sneering** Having a scornful facial expression, characterized by a slight raising of the upper corner of one lip. (p. 3)
- obstinate** Stubborn; not yielding to argument, persuading, or pleading; headstrong. (p. 4)
- hoodlums** Young street ruffians, especially those belonging to a gang; thugs or gangsters. (p. 5)
- sabotage** An underhanded, secret interference with production, work, etc., in a factory, plant, etc., as by enemy agents during wartime or by employees during a trade dispute; an undermining of a cause. (p. 8)
- solemn** Serious, sober, without joy or mirth, as a person's face, speech, or mood. (p. 13)
- crocheting** Performing the needlework done with a needle having a small hook on one end for drawing the thread or yarn through intertwined loops. (p. 14)
- trousseau** The possessions, such as clothing and linens, that a bride assembles before her wedding. (p. 14)
- intricate** Complex; complicated; difficult to understand, work, or make. (p. 14)
- enormous** Greatly exceeding the common size, extent, etc.; huge; immense. (p. 15)
- fiancé** A man engaged to be married; the man to whom a woman is engaged. (p. 17)
(**Note:** **fiancée** A woman engaged to be married; the woman to whom a man is engaged.)
- dawdled** Moved slowly; wasted time; loitered. (p. 18)
- rationed** Restricted to limited amounts, as during war time; distributed in fixed portions. (p. 18)
- haughtily** Snobbishly; arrogantly proud; scornfully (p. 19)
- curfew** An order, usually in wartime or civil emergencies, establishing a specific time in the evening after which certain regulations apply, especially that no civilians or other specified group of unauthorized persons may be outdoors or that places of public assembly must be closed; a regulation requiring a person to be home at a certain time, as imposed by a parent on a child. (p. 22)
- courageous** Possessing or characterized by the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc. (p. 26)
- sprawled** Lying or sitting with the body and limbs spread out awkwardly; spread out in an irregular manner. (p. 27)
- sophisticated** Altered by education, experience, etc. so as to be worldly-wise; not naive. (p. 27)
- glowering** Looking or staring angrily or sullenly; showing a brooding ill-humor. (p. 27)
- exasperated** Irritated or provoked to a high degree; extremely annoyed; infuriated. (p. 28)
- pondered** Reflected or considered with thoroughness and care. (p. 29)
- disdainfully** Done with contempt; scornfully; treated as unworthy or beneath oneself. (p. 29)
- carousel** A revolving, circular platform with wooden horses, or other animals, benches, etc., on which people may sit or ride, usually accompanied by mechanical or recorded music; merry-go-round; a continuously revolving belt or track or device on which things are placed for later retrieval; a circular tray on a projector for holding slides. (p. 30)
- designated** Marked or pointed out; specified; named. (p. 30)
- belligerently** Done in a quarrelsome, warlike way; combatively; aggressively (p. 31)
- submerged** Put or sunk below the surface of the water; covered with water; immersed (p. 32)
- awed** Overwhelmed with a feeling of reverence, admiration, fear, etc., produced by that which is grand, sublime, extremely powerful, or the like. (p. 33)
- dubiously** Doubtfully; of uncertain outcome (p. 34)
- imperious** Domineering in a haughty manner; dictatorial; overbearing; urgent (p. 39)
- intoned** To speak with a singing tone; to utter in a monotone (p. 39)
- contentedly** Happily; done in such a way as to express pleasure or being pleased. (p. 43)
- abruptly** Suddenly or unexpectedly; terminating or changing suddenly; curtly; brusquely. (p. 43)
- frantically** Desperately; involving wild excitement, fear, passion, or pain; frenzied. (p. 45)

Dictionary Digs

Part 1: 1 *Why Are You Running*—5 *Who is the Dark-Haired One?*

Use a dictionary to find answers for the following questions about some words you will encounter as you read **Number the Stars**. Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each number.

- _____ 1. Which of the following is something likely to be found **sprawled**? (A) a professionally decorated room, (B) two young boys sitting on the floor building a model rocket, (C) a marching band participating in a parade.
- _____ 2. A person making lace with thread and a needle having a small hook on one end is (A) **crocheting**, (B) **dawdling**, (C) **weaving**.
- _____ 3. Which of the following is **not** a correct use of the word **carousel**? (A) a ride on the **carousel**, (B) a courageous **carousel**, (C) the **carousel** on the projector.
- _____ 4. A **synonym** for **abruptly** is (A) desperately, (B) absentmindedly, (C) suddenly.
- _____ 5. What is someone's true feeling if he or she smiles **scornfully**? (A) terrible fear and dread, (B) happiness and well-being, (C) a strong dislike or contempt.
- _____ 6. Which of the following respellings is the correct pronunciation of **trousseau**?
(A) trə'sōō, (B) trōō'sō, (C) trō.sə'
- _____ 7. What word correctly completes the following sentence?
The rowdy theater patrons were asked to leave by the _____ manager.
(A) **exasperated**, (B) **sophisticated**, (C) **designated**
- _____ 8. Which of the following words would **not** be another way to describe a **lanky** teenager?
(A) ungracefully thin and tall, (B) brawny, (C) bony
- _____ 9. Areas where people live in private homes are said to be (A) **commercial**, (B) **industrial**, (C) **residential**.
- _____ 10. The word **hoodlums** generally refers to (A) older people who isolate themselves from society, (B) young ruffians who wander the streets and/or belong to gangs, (C) those people who have no permanent home.
- _____ 11. Which of the following words is an **antonym** of **dubiously**?
(A) indisputably, (B) reluctantly, (C) arguably
- _____ 12. If someone is said to be **awed** by an event, a person, or an object, which of the following emotions **cannot** be involved? (A) fear, (B) admiration, (C) apathy
- _____ 13. Which word correctly completes the following sentence?
I _____ him with my elbow until I got his attention.
(A) **designated**, (B) **pondered**, (C) **prodded**
- _____ 14. What is another way to describe an **imperious** behavior?
(A) meek, (B) dictatorial, (C) inconsistent
- _____ 15. Someone who is educated and wise to the ways of the world can be described as (A) **intricate**, (B) **unwavering**, (C) **sophisticated**.
- _____ 16. Behavior that is **unwavering** is characterized by (A) determination, (B) belligerence, (C) disdain.
- _____ 17. The word **fiancé** is unique in that it refers to a *man* to whom a woman is engaged. Which of the following words designates the *woman* to whom a man is engaged?
(A) **fiancéss**, (B) **fiancée**, (C) **fiance**
- _____ 18. To say that something is **rational** means that it is (A) extremely expensive, (B) very popular and in abundant supply, (C) restricted to limited amounts.
- _____ 19. An **antonym** of **intricate** is (A) convoluted, (B) sophisticated, (C) simplistic.

Short Answer Questions

1 *Why Are You Running?*

1. Where did Annemarie and Ellen live?
2. How long had the soldiers been in Annemarie's country?
3. What did Kirsti do when one of the tall soldiers reached down and stroked her curls?
4. Why weren't Annemarie and Ellen able to keep their encounter with the soldiers a secret from their mothers as they had planned?
5. Who were the Resistance fighters and what was their purpose?
6. Why did Mrs. Rosen ask the girls to walk a different way to school the next day?
7. Why were there no yellow cupcakes with pink frosting as Kirsti wished?

2 *Who Is the Man Who Rides Past?*

1. What kind of story did Annemarie tell Kirsti?
2. What did Denmark's King Christian do each day?
3. Why hadn't King Christian fought against the Nazis as the Norwegians did?
4. Which country was still free from Nazis?
5. Why did Mama and Papa never speak of Annemarie's older sister Lise?

3 *Where Is Mrs. Hirsch?*

1. How had the Johansens compensated for the loss of fuel and the rationing of electricity?
2. When the girls stopped by Mrs. Hirsch's shop after school to buy a button for Kirsti's jacket, what did they find?
3. According to Peter, why had the Germans issued orders to close many stores run by Jews?
4. What was Mama's answer when Annemarie asked how the Hirsches would earn a living?
5. Why did Mrs. Rosen think what the Germans were doing wouldn't affect them?
6. What thought did Annemarie have about helping the Jews?
7. Why was Annemarie glad to be an ordinary person?

1 Why Are You Running?

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Annemarie and Ellen were (A) sisters, (B) best friends, (C) cousins.
- _____ 2. Even though she knew she couldn't win, Ellen agreed to (A) race to the corner with Annemarie, (B) enter the race at school, (C) race with Kirsti.
- _____ 3. Annemarie and Ellen lived in (A) Munich, Germany, (B) Copenhagen, Denmark, (C) Amsterdam, Holland.
- _____ 4. Annemarie was tall and had silvery blond hair while Ellen was (A) tall and had bright red hair, (B) was short with blond hair, (C) was shorter and wore her dark hair in pigtails.
- _____ 5. Just as she reached the corner, Annemarie was stopped by (A) a woman with a baby, (B) a command to halt from a German soldier, (C) a policeman.
- _____ 6. The German soldier asked Annemarie (A) directions to a restaurant, (B) where she lived, (C) why she was running.
- _____ 7. German soldiers had been in Denmark for (A) three years, (B) less than a week, (C) a year.
- _____ 8. Annemarie recognized one of the soldiers as the one she and Ellen called (A) the Horse, (B) the Giraffe, (C) the Monster.
- _____ 9. The tall soldier said Kirsti (A) should stay off the street, (B) would be arrested if he caught her running again, (C) reminded him of his own little girl.
- _____ 10. In the presence of the soldiers Ellen's dark eyes were (A) bright and her cheeks rosy, (B) closed and her cheeks flushed, (C) wide and her cheeks were pale.
- _____ 11. Kirsti was (A) Ellen's little sister, (B) Annemarie's little sister, (C) a younger neighbor the girls looked after.
- _____ 12. When the soldier tried to stroke her curls, Kirsti (A) pushed his hand away and said, "Don't," (B) giggled, (C) ran.
- _____ 13. The girls lived (A) in small cottages located side by side, (B) in a large apartment building, (C) on different floors in a large house.
- _____ 14. On every corner in the city there were (A) two German soldiers, (B) policemen on duty, (C) vendors selling food.
- _____ 15. The "coffee" Mrs. Johansen and Mrs. Rosen had together many afternoons was actually (A) tea, (B) hot water flavored with herbs, (C) a chocolate drink.
- _____ 16. The soldiers were in Copenhagen because the country of Denmark was (A) being protected from invasion, (B) under Nazi occupation, (C) refusing to fight.
- _____ 17. Because her parents received and read an illegal newspaper, Annemarie knew (A) there was resistance against the Nazis in the form of sabotage, (B) people were afraid to fight, (C) the war was almost over.
- _____ 18. The Danish Resistance fighters were determined to (A) kill all the Nazis, (B) keep from being caught, (C) bring harm to the Nazis however they could.
- _____ 19. Mrs. Rosen asked the girls to take a different route to school because it was important that (A) they not argue with a soldier, (B) they knew their way around the city, (C) the soldiers did not have a reason to remember their faces.
- _____ 20. Because of the war, (A) the girls didn't have clothes that fit, (B) there was a shortage of butter and sugar, (C) schools were closed.



6

Is the Weather Good for Fishing?

Write either **Yes** or **No** in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Did Annemarie's mother suggest that Ellen change her hair color to blond?
- _____ 2. Had Lise's hair remained dark as she got older?
- _____ 3. Was Papa afraid the Nazis might look for Jewish children in the schools?
- _____ 4. Did Papa say today was the day to take the girls to Uncle Henrik's?
- _____ 5. Did Mama think it was safer if she traveled alone with the girls?
- _____ 6. Did Uncle Henrik leave for work at five o'clock in the morning because he was a policeman?
- _____ 7. Was it possible to stand on the edge of Uncle Henrik's meadow and look across the water to Sweden?
- _____ 8. Did Annemarie understand the telephone conversation between Papa and Uncle Henrik?
- _____ 9. Did Papa ask Uncle Henrik if the weather was good for fishing?
- _____ 10. Was it true, as Papa told Uncle Henrik, that there were lots of cigarettes available in Copenhagen?
- _____ 11. Was it really Ellen, and not cigarettes, that Mama was taking to Uncle Henrik?
- _____ 12. Had Ellen gone several times with Annemarie to visit Uncle Henrik?
- _____ 13. Did the soldier on the train try to trick Mama by asking her if she was going to visit her brother for the New Year?
- _____ 14. Did Kirsti's comment about her shoes make the soldier chuckle and move on?
- _____ 15. Was the walk from the train to Uncle Henrik's house just a few hundred feet?
- _____ 16. Had Annemarie's mother grown up near the village where Uncle Henrik now lived?
- _____ 17. Had Uncle Henrik teased Mama and her friend Helena, when they were children, by telling them scary ghost stories?
- _____ 18. When Mama was a girl, did her dog Faithful follow her into town and wait for her to come out of the schoolhouse each afternoon?
- _____ 19. Could Mama and the girls see the gray sea beyond the grassy meadow?
- _____ 20. Did Annemarie run ahead to see Uncle Henrik's house first?



8

There Has Been a Death

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. In the kitchen, Annemarie found Kirsti on the floor trying to teach the gray kitten to drink water instead of milk.



- _____ 2. Because he kept a cow, Uncle Henrik had cream, milk, and butter for his visitors.
- _____ 3. The Nazis didn't have any interest in taking food from farmers.
- _____ 4. In the sunlit kitchen, with oatmeal, cream, and a bird in the apple tree outside the door, the soldiers and the danger they represented seemed no more than a frightening ghost story to Annemarie.
- _____ 5. During the day, the girls picked armloads of wildflowers and arranged them in bouquets that crowded all the table tops in the house.
- _____ 6. Mama thought Uncle Henrik was a good housekeeper.
- _____ 7. Uncle Henrik stopped smiling when he said tomorrow would be a good day for fishing.
- _____ 8. Annemarie knew that Danish fishermen went fishing only when the weather was good.
- _____ 9. According to Uncle Henrik, Mama had prepared the living room so that Great-aunt Birte, who had died, could rest at home in her casket before burial.
- _____ 10. Annemarie remembered seeing Great-aunt Birte only once.

Think, Write, Create

Chapter Activities

1 *Why Are You Running?*

Annemarie and Ellen, along with every citizen of Copenhagen, had to live under the watchful eyes of German soldiers who had taken control of their country.

- In what ways were Annemarie and Ellen able to live a “normal” life in spite of the fact that enemies were in control of their country?
- If you had been in Annemarie and Ellen’s shoes, what **two** things do you think would have frightened you the most?
- What **three** things would you pick as the **major** concerns for Mrs. Johansen and Mrs. Rosen? Would the adults and children have the same outlook on their situation? Explain.

Annemarie’s mother said the Nazis were probably edgy because of the latest Resistance incidents.

- How was the Resistance different from the way a regular army fought against its enemy?
- In your opinion, is Resistance fighting more or less dangerous than being a soldier? Explain your position.
- Would you classify the Resistance fighters as **heroes**? Why or why not?

Because of the war, Annemarie’s family and most of the people of Denmark had to live without such every-day foods as coffee, butter, meat, and sugar.

- If you suddenly found yourself in the same situation, which food(s) would you miss the most? Explain why.
 - What items would your **whole family** have the most difficulty doing without? Which people would be most affected?
 - Prepare a two day menu (including school lunches) that **does not** include butter, meat, and sugar. Keep in mind that the three items are *ingredients* in certain dishes, which would mean using a different recipe or totally eliminating the dish. How appealing is your menu?
-

2 *Who Is the Man Who Rides Past?*

Kirsti begged Annemarie to tell her a fairy tale—a fanciful story of legendary people, creatures, and deeds. Because she lived in a country ruled by a much-loved king, Kirsti asked that the story have a king, a queen, and a beautiful princess.

Monarchs continue to exist in some countries, but our way of life, being devoid of royalty, has led to the creation of unique characters to populate our modern version of the fairy tale. Everything from dinosaurs to sea sponges entertain children and adults alike.

Imagine that you have a chance to create an idea for a fairy tale for a group of television executives looking for **something new**. You will not be required to present a complete story. What the executives need are the **characters** (good guys and bad guys), the **setting**, some **possibilities for adventure**, and **problems to be solved**.

If your idea is chosen, you could be rich! Create your presentation. Include illustration boards, drawings of your characters, etc. anything you believe will sell your idea. (See **Graphic Organizer #1**)

Think, Write, Create

Whole Book Activities

Annemarie and Ellen were best friends, but they certainly weren't exactly alike. They were different in their religion, their appearance, and their interests, to name a few. However, their friendship was based upon important common traits such as **tolerant** and **understanding natures**, **cooperative attitudes**, and **caring spirits**. Some of these special bonds were demonstrated in the way they treated other people as well as each other. For example, Ellen's capacity to care was evident when she helped Kirsti accept her fish-skin shoes.

Find other behaviors and conversations from the story that explain how Annemarie and Ellen could be such good friends even with their differences. Write a composition about **A Picture of Friendship**. (See **Graphic Organizer #4**)

When the Hirsch family disappeared, Mama explained the event by saying "*Friends will take care of them. That's what friends do.*"

- Though the author does not explain exactly what happened to the Hirsch family, how do you know they were safe?
 - Tell the story of their disappearance as you imagine it in your own words.
-

The author cleverly put a clue to the event or problem that Annemarie would face in the title she gave to each chapter of **Number the Stars**. The title for chapter 1 for example—**Why Are You Running?**—is a clue to the encounter Annemarie had with the Nazi soldiers at the street corner.

Divide a sheet of paper into three columns with the headings **Chapter Names**, **Event or Problem**, **Another Name**. On the left, write the seventeen chapter names. In the second column, name the event or problem that Annemarie encountered in the chapter. In the third column, write another possible title for the chapter based on the same event or challenge.

The dictionary definitions of the words **hero** and **heroine** is a *man (a woman) of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his (her) brave deeds and noble qualities*. In their efforts to help save their friends, each member of Annemarie's family, including an unintentional contribution from Kirsti, proved to be a hero or a heroine.

Find evidence in the story to affirm that Papa, Mama, Annemarie, and Kirsti all fit the definition of a hero or a heroine. Explain how each deed resulted in a forward step toward saving the Rosens. For example, Papa agreed to stay home while his wife and daughters made a dangerous journey to Gilleleje. As a result, the German soldiers were not suspicious, and Ellen was able to leave Copenhagen safely.

When you have gathered the information, write a composition about **A Heroic Family**. (See **Graphic Organizer # 5**)

Use the internet to find information about Gilleleje, the town where Uncle Henrik lived. Write a report about some important events that took place here during World War II. How did fishermen such as Uncle Henrik "fight" the Nazis using their wits and courage instead of guns?

A Stupendous Fairy Tale. . .

Imagine that you have a chance to create an idea for a ***fairy tale*** for a group of television executives who are looking for ***something new***. You will ***not*** be required to present a complete story. What the executives need are the ***characters*** (good guys and bad guys, or maybe they're not human), the ***setting***, some ***possibilities for adventure***, and ***problems to be solved***. If your idea is chosen, you will probably be rich!

Use the form below to organize your thoughts and then create your presentation. Include illustration boards, drawings of your characters, etc. anything you believe will sell your idea.

Characters
(What or who are they?)
(Good guys? Bad Guys?)

Setting
(Describe the place where the characters live.)
(Will it be part of the story?)

Adventure Possibilities
(the weather, the setting,
character's job, etc.)

Conflict/Problems to be solved
(good guy VS bad guy, mystery, treasure, etc.)

Fairy Tale Proposal:
Story Name: _____