

I Am David



By

Anne Holm

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This 66 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter of *I Am David* and is comprised of four different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language and Extension Activities

A portfolio cover (page 7) as well as a Checklist (page 6) are included so that students may track their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include perseverance, courage, sacrifice, loyalty, personal growth, overcoming difficulty, Communism, concentration camps.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Working with anagrams.
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify the climax of the novel.
4. Five W's Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Design an Information Card

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Synopsis

David lay quite still in the darkness of the camp, waiting for the signal.

“You must get away tonight,” the man had told him. “Stay awake so that you’re ready just before the guard is changed. When you see me strike a match, the current will be cut off and you can climb over – you’ll have half a minute for it, no more.”

David escapes from a concentration camp and flees across Europe. He is utterly alone – who can he trust? What will await him back home?

And all the while he knows that *they* may catch up with him... [Courtesy of the publisher]

Author Biography

Anne Holm

Anne Holm, born **Else Anne Lise Jørgensen** in Oksbøl, Denmark (Sept 10, 1922 – Dec 27, 1998) was a Danish journalist and children's writer. Her books were written mainly for young readers, although they are also quite popular with adults. Her best known book is *I Am David* (1963) which was also published as *North to Freedom*. It won the ALA Notable Book award in 1965, the 1963 Best Scandinavian Children's Book award and the Boys Club of America Junior Book Award Gold Medal. She also wrote *Peter* (1966), which tells the story of a teenage boy who travels in time to ancient Greece and medieval England.



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Name: _____

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main protagonist of *I Am David* is a fascinating young boy, David, who is a prisoner in a Communist concentration camp. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting protagonist?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

interfere	intended	repulsive	accustomed	penetrate
catastrophe	disposal	obstacle	imperceptible	partition

1. The warden never _____ for the prisoners to be deprived of their supper.
2. The two farmers built a rock wall to act as a _____ between their fields.
3. The whisper of the hummingbird’s wings was _____ to the listeners.
4. The _____ of the explosives will have to be done with great care.
5. Within five minutes my mother will _____ with our conversation.
6. The steel-tipped arrow will likely _____ a suit of armor.
7. The moat proved to be a serious _____ to the attackers.
8. The spread of small pox was a _____ to the people of Europe.
9. The neighbors soon became _____ to the noise of the construction.
10. I found the very thought of eating an octopus to be quite _____.

Questions



1. Anne Holm is a very skillful writer. What **atmosphere** does she create in the very opening paragraph of this novel?

2. Describe the **setting** at the beginning of Chapter One.

3. As the novel opens, what was David being urged to do? What was David's opinion of the man who was urging him to do this?

Good to Know

Salonica (Thessalonica) is the second largest city in Greece. Today the metropolitan area of the city has a population of over one million people. It is considered as the cultural center of the country. Two of the books of the Bible are addressed to the church in Thessalonica.



4. Cite one example of David's courage in this chapter.

5. David used a _____ to guide him on his journey. He was told to travel south until he reached the city of _____.

6. Describe how by taking a serious risk, David was able to speed up his journey.

7. Why do you think that David hadn't allowed himself to think of Johannes for the past three years?

8. Johannes died of a _____.

9. Describe in detail how David reached Italy from Salonica, Greece.

10. When David finally reached the shores of Italy at the end of Chapter One, what impressed him the most?

Language Activities



A. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. An example from Chapter 1: ... *when fear grew to a sharp-pointed terror...* In this example **fear** is personified – *growing* as if it were a living thing.

a) Why do you think personification is a literary device used by many authors?

b) Create your own example of personification.

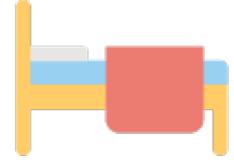
c) **Bonus:** Keep your eyes open for another example of personification. When you find one, come back to this page and record it below.

B. Write the plural of the following nouns from this chapter. Careful – you may wish to consult a dictionary for some of these words.

Singular Noun	Plural Noun
man	
match	
knife	
victory	
person	
tooth	
lorry	
Italian	
body	
beauty	

C. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **PAN** can also form the word **NAP**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters.

Each of the words in the left-hand column are found in the first chapter.

Word	Anagram	Clue
spoke		Prods.
others		Fired again.
table		Sound made by a sheep.
partly		Not very much of something.
later		Change.
bread		Removed clothing.

D. Find three examples of the following parts of speech from this chapter.

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives

Extension Activity



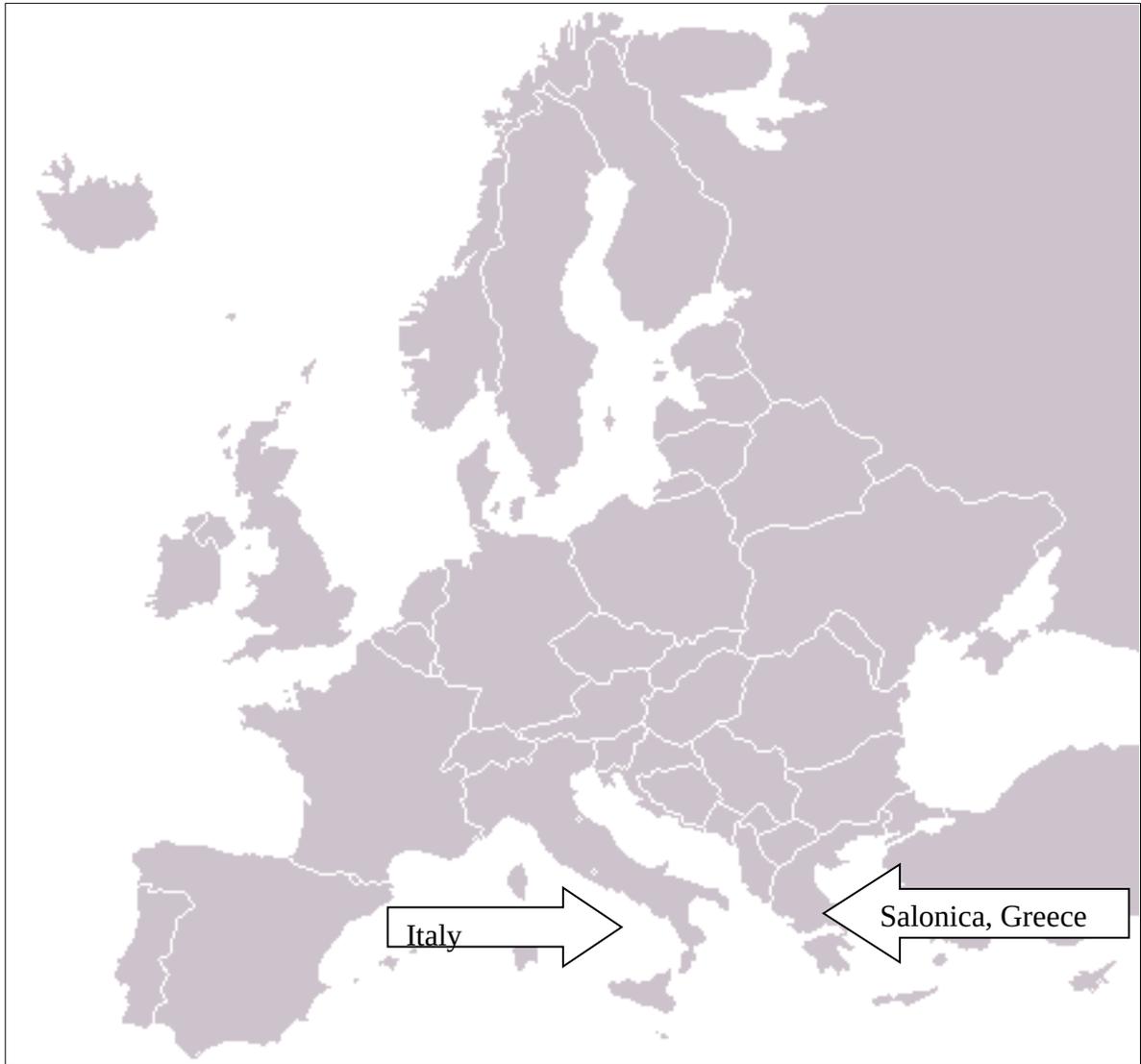
Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel.



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of *I Am David*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6



Map of Europe

