

Novel·Ties

JOURNEY TO AMERICA

Sonia Levitin



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with the novel *Journey to America*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Preview the book by reading the title and author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. At what time and place do you think this story occurs? Do you know anything about this era? Have you read any other books about this era?
2. *Journey to America* tells about a family of German Jews in the late 1930s who try to escape persecution under Adolph Hitler. Read the Background Information on page two of this study guide and do some additional research to learn about the treatment of German Jews at this time. How do you think you would have reacted if you were a Jewish child living in Germany? What would you have found most difficult to bear?
3. View any films or filmstrips available about the way Adolph Hitler rose to power in Germany. What strategies did Hitler use? Why do you think they were successful?
4. The family in this novel leave most of their belongings behind when they flee Germany. Besides clothing, the children can take only a few of their prized possessions. If you had to leave your home and could take only five of your possessions with you, which would you choose? Explain why you would choose these items.
5. The girls in this novel are first separated from their father, then their mother, and finally from each other. What effect do you think being separated from family members has on children? Was there any time when you were separated from a member of your family? If so, how did you react?
6. Sonia Levitin, the author of *Journey to America*, was an avid reader as a girl. When Levitin was eleven, she wrote to Laura Ingalls Wilder, an author she admired. Speaking of the incident, she recalls:

To my great joy, I received a reply, which remains among
my treasures to this day. *

What living author do you most admire? Decide what you would want to tell this author in a letter. Then actually write the letter and send it. If you don't have the author's address, ask your librarian to help you locate it.

7. Use the map on page four of this study guide to find the location of the action of the novel. As you read the book, trace the route the family takes from Berlin to LeHavre, where they get the boat to America. After you do this, you might want to locate a world map to see the distance that the family travels from LeHavre to America.

* From *Something about the Author*, Vol. 69, p. 132. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1992.)

GOOD-BYE TO PAPA

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. concealing | a. bring secretly |
| 2. organizer | b. ceremony |
| 3. penalty | c. open, bold resistance to authority |
| 4. defiance | d. punishment |
| 5. smuggle | e. hiding |
| 6. sacrifice | f. solemn promise |
| 7. ritual | g. person who arranges things |
| 8. oath | h. giving up something valued for the sake of something else |

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- In Hitler's Germany, Christians who disobeyed the law and worked for Jews risked the _____ of going to prison.
- Since Jews were not able to take money with them when they left Germany, some tried to _____ it out.
- Hating the Nazis, the woman spoke with _____ in her voice as she stated she would not obey their evil laws.
- Because Mother is a good _____, the family knows she will accomplish their move in an orderly manner.
- The children swore a sacred _____ not to tell anyone of their family's plan to leave Germany.
- The girls had difficulty _____ their tears as they left their home and friends behind.
- Leaving their home so quickly, each family member had to make the _____ of leaving valued possessions behind.
- In many homes it is a(n) _____ to read to children before bedtime.