

Novel·Ties

The Wave



By Morton Rhue

A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with a specific novel consists of instructional material for guided reading. 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.

NOVEL-TIES are either for whole class instruction using a single title or for group instruction where each group uses a different novel appropriate to its reading level. Depending upon the amount of time allotted to it in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in two to four weeks.

The first step in using NOVEL-TIES is to distribute to each student a copy of the novel and a folder containing all of the duplicated worksheets. Begin instruction by selecting several pre-reading activities in order to set the stage for the reading ahead. Vocabulary exercises for each chapter always precede the reading so that new words will be reinforced in the context of the book. Use the questions on the chapter worksheets for class discussion or as written exercises.

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.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Rise of the Nazi Movement

After Germany was defeated in World War I and Emperor Wilhelm II fled, many Germans hoped that if Germany followed the democratic example of the West, the Allies would be more lenient in their demands for war reparations. Thus, in 1918, Germany established its first experiment in republican democracy in Weimar.

The new government had to contend with a disgruntled population that was in despair over losing the war and eager to assign blame for their defeat. The Jews, many of whom had attained positions of wealth and influence despite underlying anti-Semitism in Europe, found themselves in the position of scapegoats. For example, Walter Rathenau, a wealthy Jew who had contributed much to Germany's war effort, suggested that Germany not take an anti-Ally stand. For this, he was condemned as a wartime collaborator and murdered.

In the years that followed, Germany experienced hard times. In the four years from 1919 to 1922, Germany had twenty governments, and catastrophic inflation reduced many to poverty. Dissatisfaction with the status quo fanned the flames of anti-Semitism and racism even among the upper and middle classes.

From this turmoil rose Adolf Hitler, a young Austrian who had served in the war. Embittered by Germany's defeat and the chaotic economic climate of the times, he focused his hatred primarily upon Jews and longed for the authoritarian system under which he had thrived as a soldier. Although he considered himself intellectually above the mass of workers and had never been a worker himself, he joined the National Socialist German Workers' Party in 1919. Like many of the disaffected upper and middle class individuals who had formed the group, he saw in it the opportunity to enlist the support of the masses.

In 1923, with their private army of "Brownshirts," the National Socialists, or Nazis, denounced the Weimar government for permitting the French to occupy the Rhur, and attempted to seize power. The police suppressed the disturbance, and Hitler was sentenced to five years in prison. On his release one year later, Hitler found himself in a much more stable German society that, for the most part, regarded him as a charlatan.

With the arrival of the Great Depression in 1929, Hitler and his party became figures of Napoleonic proportions. No other country suffered more from the worldwide economic collapse than Germany. Hitler was able to use propaganda effectively to inflame feelings of both anti-Semitism and of the Germans' nationalistic pride that had been wounded by the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I. At an election in 1930, the Nazis won 107 seats in the Reichstag (German parliament), where formerly they held only twelve. In 1932, the Nazis won 230 seats, which made them the largest single party in Germany, but still not a majority. Then, in a collaboration between the aristocratic

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? Do you think it will be serious or humorous? Have you read any other books by the same author?
2. Read the Background Information about the rise of the Nazi movement beginning on page three of this study guide. In addition, do independent research to try to discover how the German people could have permitted the atrocities of the concentration camps and the extermination of over six million Jews and millions of others. Did they know? Was it possible not to know? Did they sympathize with what was occurring? Did they ignore what was happening?
3. Arrange to view a documentary about the German concentration camps in World War II. Immediately after watching the documentary, analyze your feelings about what you have just seen. Then examine your feelings again a day or two later. Have your feelings changed?
4. A scapegoat refers to a person or group made to bear the blame for others or to suffer in their place. Consult a dictionary to find the origin of this word. Under what conditions do people look for scapegoats? Who are the individuals or groups that tend to become the victims in these situations?
5. Analyze current fads in the way students dress in your school. What brands of sneakers and jeans are currently in vogue? Do you think your classmates dress this way because of choice or peer pressure? What would happen if one person dressed in a completely different manner? Would that person be tolerated, pressured to conform, or ostracized?
6. Todd Strasser, author of *The Wave*, says that he writes for teenagers for several reasons:

First and foremost, I hope that they will find my books entertaining and perhaps even helpful as they go through the process of forming judgments and opinions on how they shall live.*

Do you think books are effective in helping people form judgments and opinions? Why or why not?

7. This novel is a fictionalized account of events that actually happened in 1969. Why might a school experiment that took place many years ago be of interest today?
8. Before you read *The Wave*, respond to the Anticipation Guide on page six of this study guide. Consider each statement. Write YES or NO in the BEFORE column to indicate whether or not you agree with each statement. After you read the book, return to the guide and respond to the same statements in the AFTER column.

*From *Something About the Author*, Vol. 45, p. 197. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1986.)