

WELCOME TO ESL GRADUATE STUDIES

**NUMBER THE STARS
BOOK CLUB**

CHAPTER ONE

28 & 29 MAY 2025



45-SECOND SUMMARY

GIVE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ASSIGNED READING
IN 45 SECONDS OR LESS.



In Chapter 1, Annemarie and her friend Ellen are racing home from school when they are stopped by two Nazi soldiers. The soldiers are suspicious and ask questions, but they eventually let the girls go. At home, Annemarie and her sister, Kirsti, tell their mother (Mrs. Johansen) and Ellen's mother (Mrs. Rosen) what happened. The mothers are concerned. Ellen's mother, Mrs. Rosen, seems especially worried. The girls talk about life before the war and how things have changed in Copenhagen. The chapter shows that life is now filled with fear, and even children must learn to be careful.

COMPRENSION QUESTIONS

- WHO ARE THE MAIN CHARACTERS INTRODUCED IN CHAPTER ONE
- WHY ARE THE GIRLS RUNNING DOWN THE STREET?
- WHAT NICKNAME DO ANNEMARIE AND ELLEN SECRETLY GIVE TO THE TALL SOLDIER?
- HOW DOES KIRSTI'S REACTION TO THE SOLDIERS DIFFER FROM TO ANNEMARIE'S AND ELLEN'S?
- WHAT DOES ANNEMARIE NOTICE ABOUT THE WAY THE SOLDIERS SPEAK DANISH?

VOCABULARY BUILDER

CHOOSE 3–5 IMPORTANT OR INTERESTING WORDS FROM THE READING.

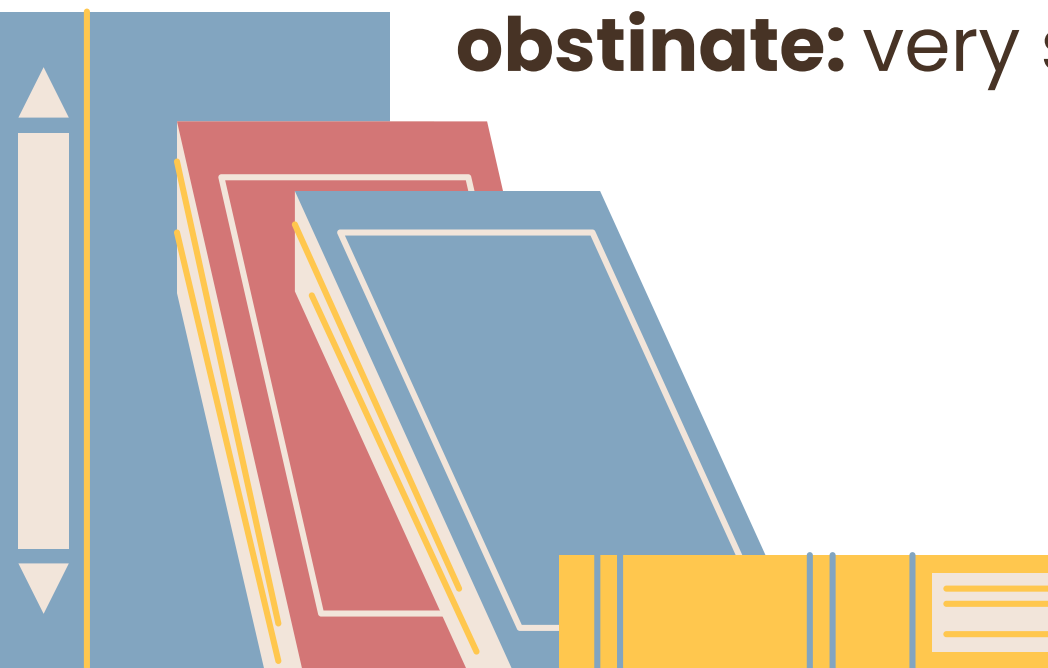
stocky: short and strong-looking, with a solid or wide body

lanky: tall and thin, often in a way that seems a little awkward

pout: a facial expression showing disappointment, with the lips pushed out

sulking: acting sad, angry, or silent because you didn't get what you wanted

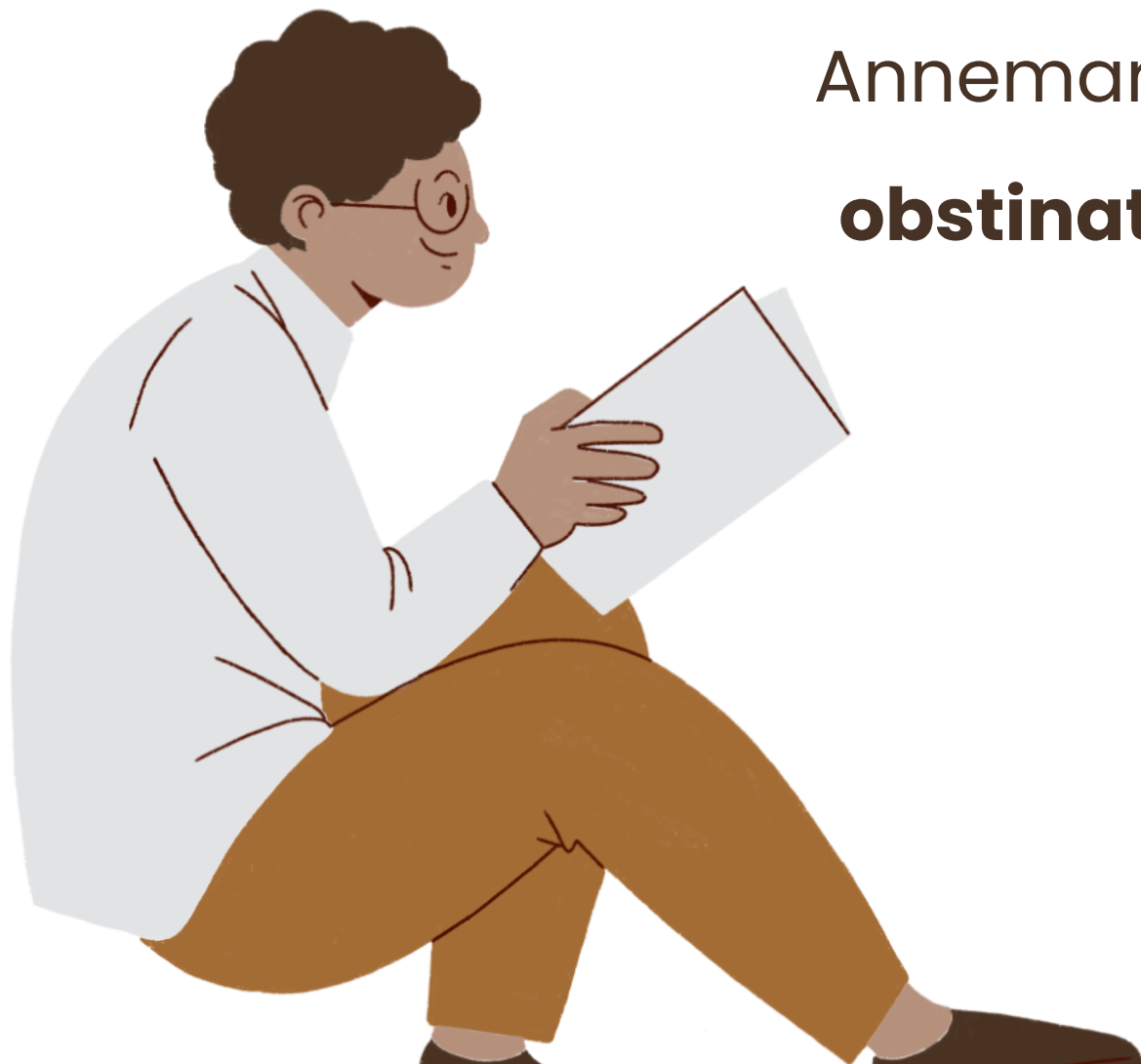
obstinate: very stubborn, refusing to change your behavior or attitude



SOUND SPOTTER

IDENTIFY 3-5 WORDS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO PRONOUNCE OR THAT SOUND INTERESTING.

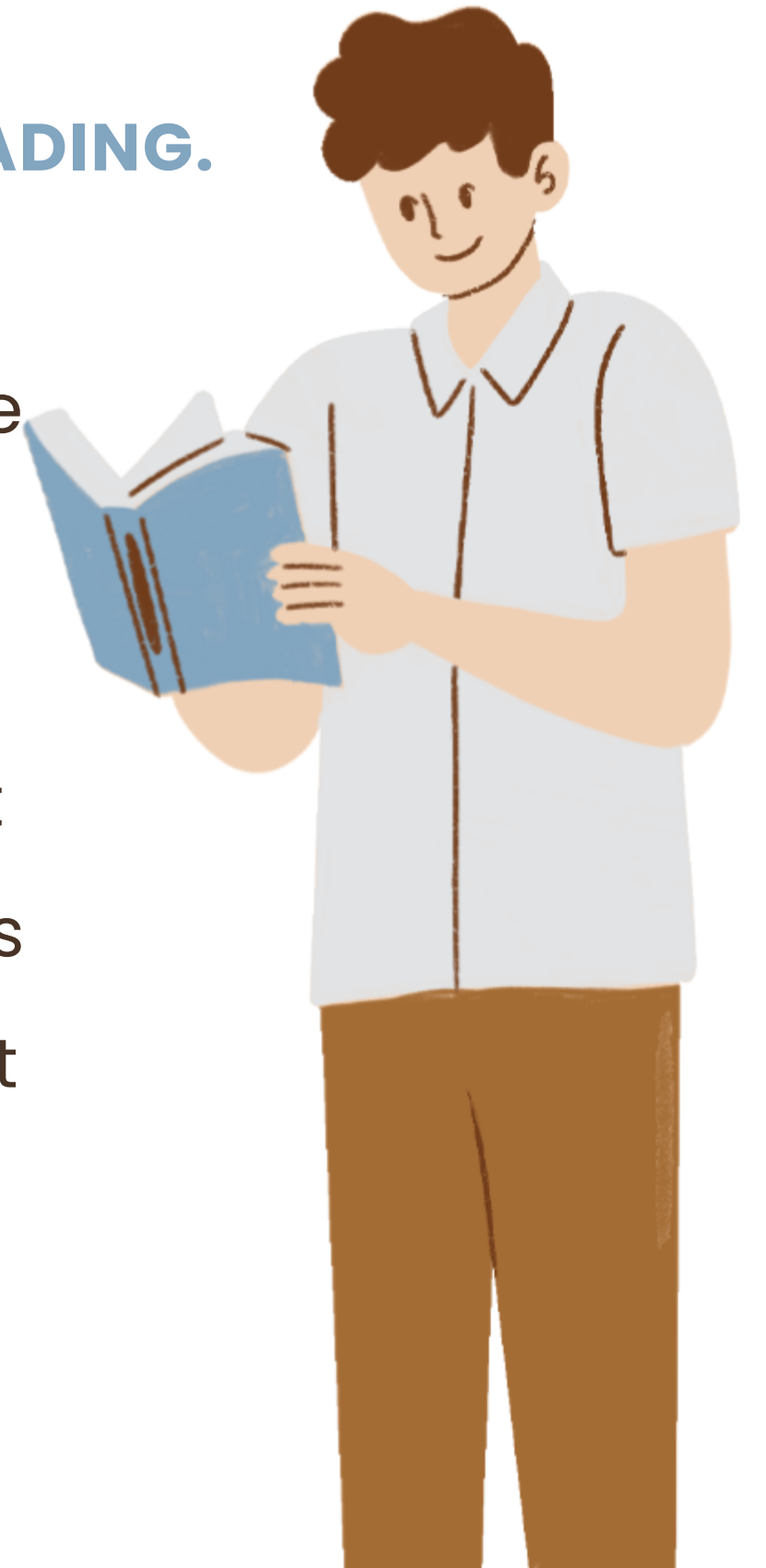
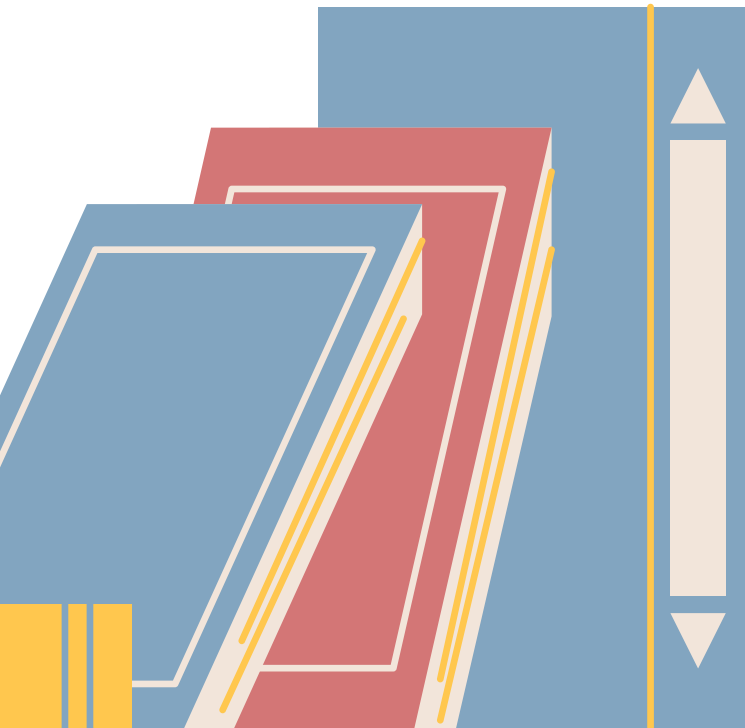
“The **soldier** reached down and **stroked** her little sister’s short, **tangled curls**. ‘Stand still, Kirsti,’ Annemarie ordered silently, praying that somehow the **obstinate** five-year-old would receive the message.”



CHARACTER TRACKER

DESCRIBE ONE CHARACTER'S TRAITS OR ACTIONS IN THE READING.

Kirsti Johansen is Annemarie's five-year-old sister. She is strong-willed and talkative. Kirsti doesn't fully understand the danger around her and acts boldly, even when it's not safe. At home, she complains about not having frosted cupcakes to eat. Her behavior shows she is still a little girl who misses her old life and doesn't yet understand the seriousness of the war.

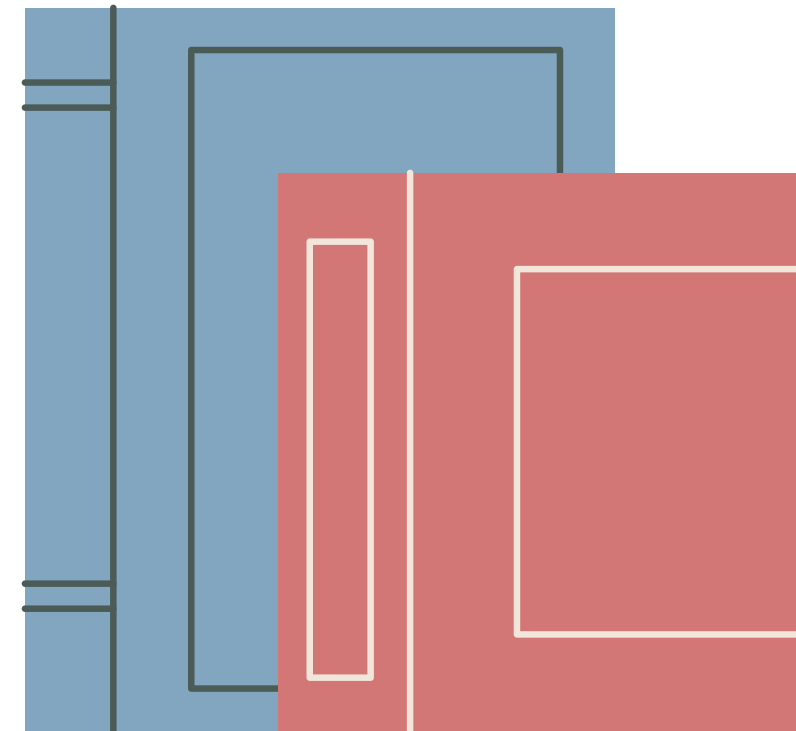
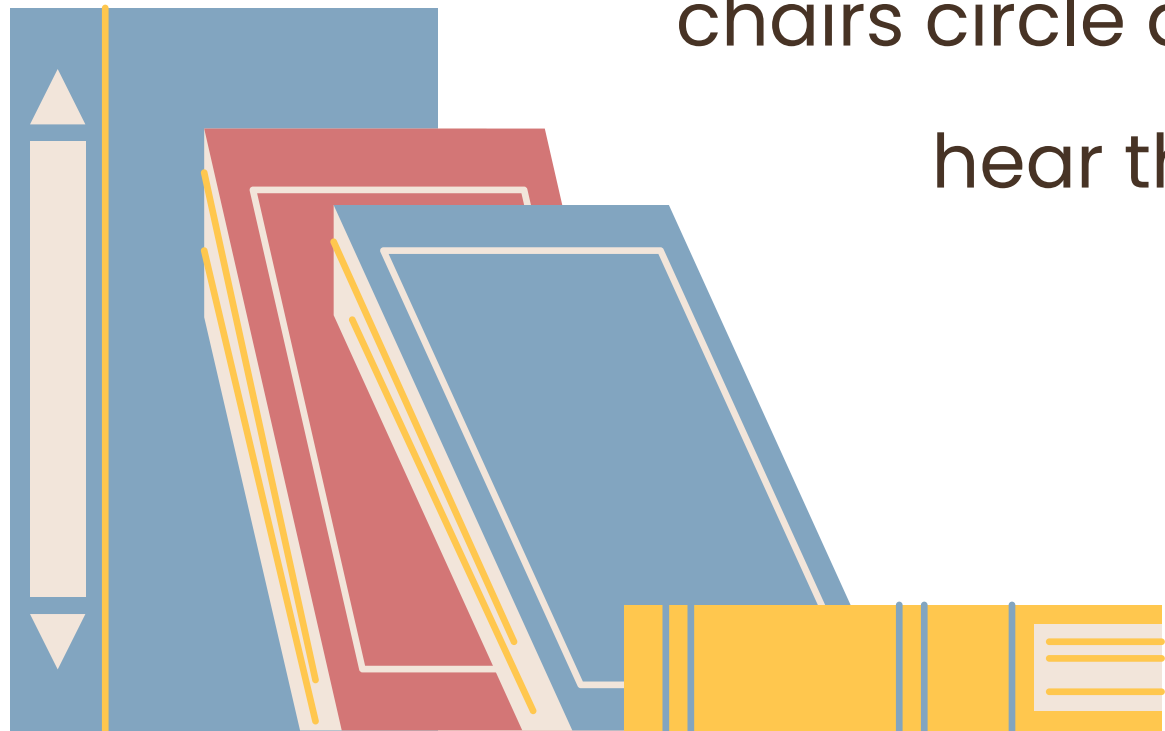


SCENE SETTER

PICK ONE PLACE FROM THE STORY AND USE CREATIVE, DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE TO DESCRIBE IT.

Scene: Kirsti and Annemarie Johansen's Home

The home is small but comfortable. Colorful, floral curtains hang in the window and several mismatched wooden chairs circle a table. You can smell fresh bread baking and hear the laughter of children playing outside.



INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS

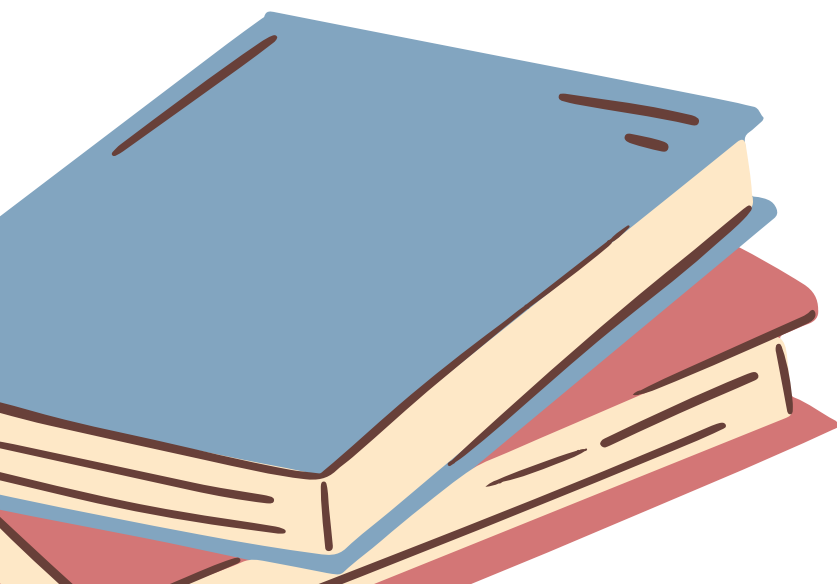
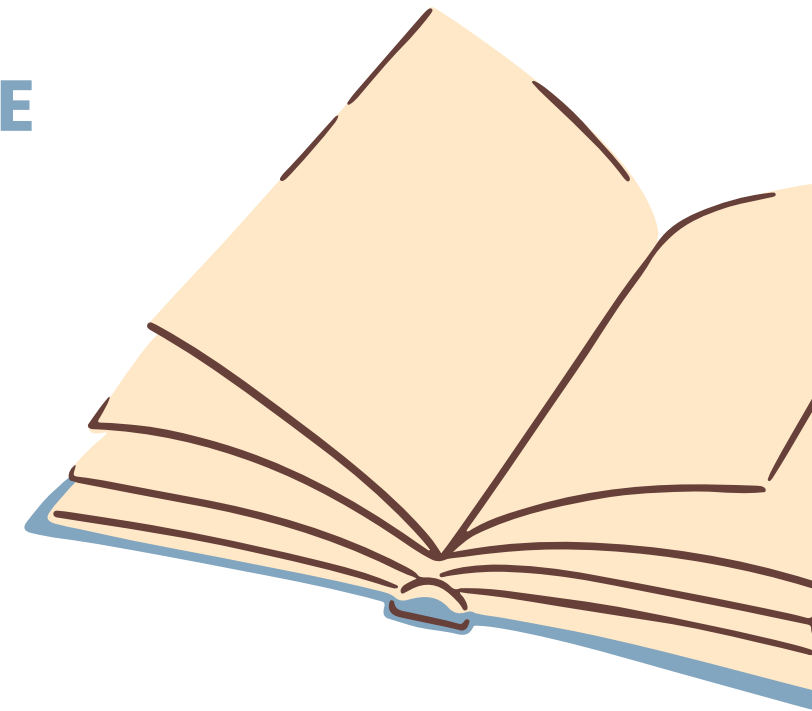
- WHAT DOES THE NICKNAME 'THE GIRAFFE' REVEAL ABOUT HOW THE GIRLS SEE THE SOLDIER?
- HOW DO THE SOLDIERS' ACTIONS SHOW THEIR POWER OVER THE DANISH PEOPLE?
- WHY MIGHT THE MOTHERS CONTINUE TO CALL THEIR HERBAL DRINK 'COFFEE' EVEN THOUGH IT'S NOT REAL COFFEE?
- HOW DOES THE AUTHOR USE KIRSTI'S BEHAVIOR TO SHOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOW CHILDREN AND ADULTS UNDERSTAND DANGER?
- WHY DO YOU THINK ELLEN IS EXTRA SCARED OF THE SOLDIERS?

CULTURE CONNECTOR

**FIND ONE ELEMENT THAT CONNECTS TO YOUR HOME CULTURE
OR TO MODERN U.S. CULTURE.**

In this chapter, there is a sense of fear. Parents warn their children to not do or say anything that would attract the attention of the Nazi soldiers.

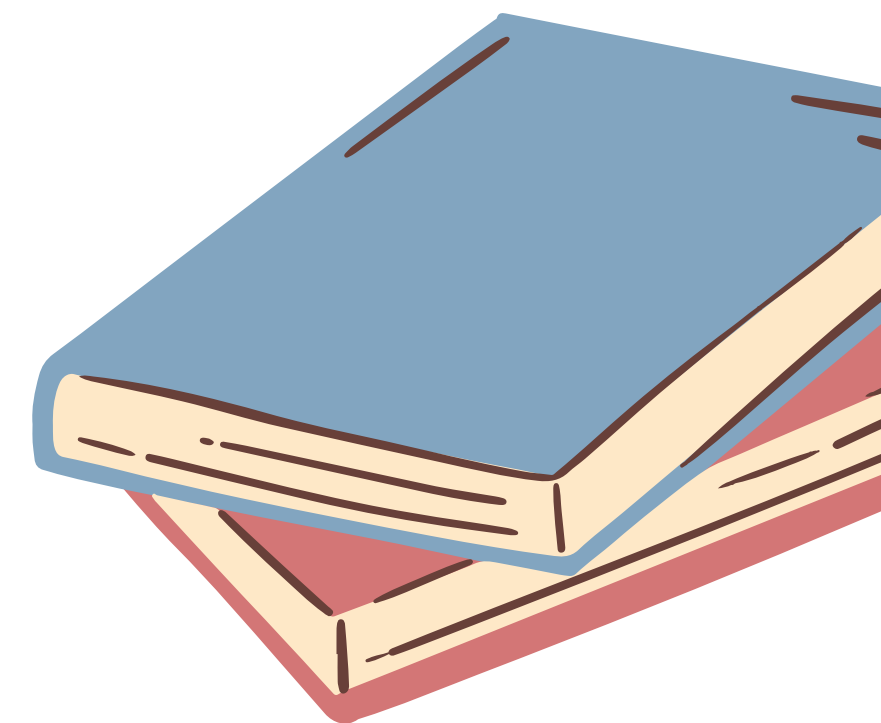
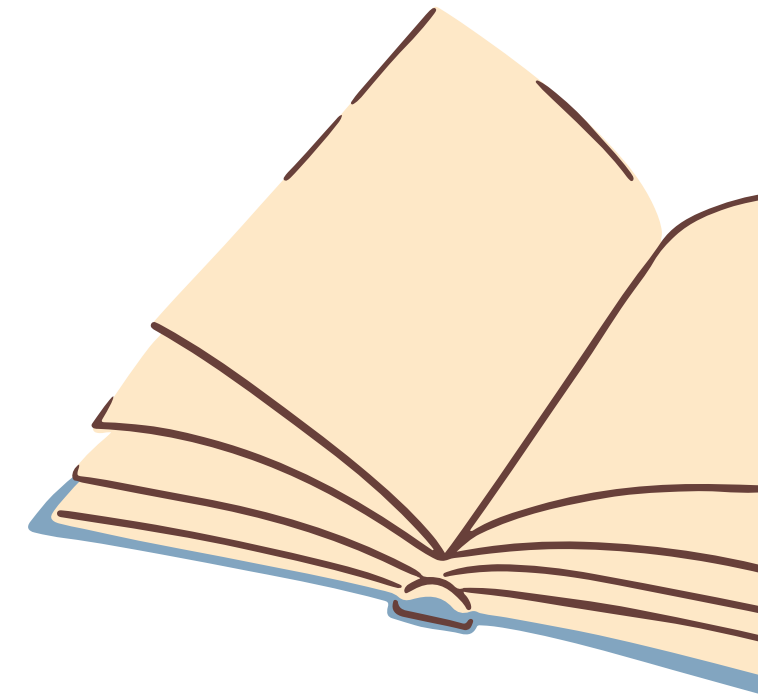
Similarly, many people in America today are afraid. They are nervous to speak out against the injustices they see, and they are worried about how the current political situation will affect their families and friends.



EMOTIONS EXPLORER

CHOOSE A MOMENT THAT MADE YOU
FEEL SOMETHING (HAPPY, SAD, SURPRISED, ANGRY, ETC.).

I felt **admiration** and **pity** when I read about Mrs. Johansen and Mrs. Rosen “having coffee.” The narrator explains, “There had been no real coffee in Copenhagen since the beginning of the Nazi occupation. Not even any real tea. The mothers sipped at hot water flavored with herbs.”

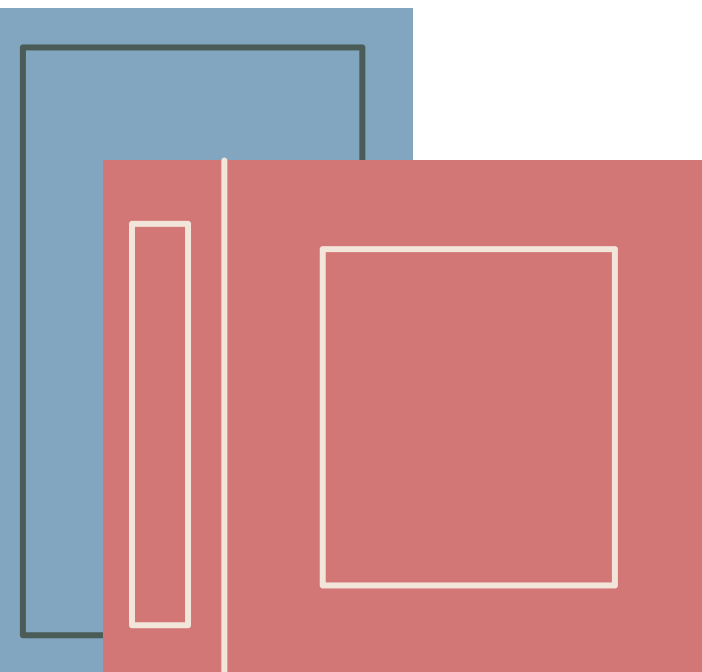


PASSAGE PICKER

CHOOSE ONE SENTENCE OR SHORT PASSAGE THAT YOU FOUND MEANINGFUL OR POWERFUL.

“**When** will there be cupcakes again?” [Kirsti asked.]

“**When** the war ends,” Mrs. Johansen said. She glanced through the window, down to the street corner where the soldiers stood, their faces impassive beneath the metal helmets. “**When** the soldiers leave.”



GRAMMAR CATCHER

FIND ONE INTERESTING GRAMMAR STRUCTURE OR PATTERN IN THE READING.

“Behind her, Ellen also slowed and stopped. Far back, little Kirsti **was plodding** along, her face in a pout because the girls hadn’t waited for her.”

Grammar Question?:

I wonder why the author used the past continuous tense (was plodding) instead of the simple past tense (plodded)?

Perhaps the author chose “was plodding” (past continuous) instead of “plodded” (simple past) to show that the action was **ongoing at that moment** in the story. The word choice paints a picture of Kirsti still moving slowly in the background even though Ellen and Annemarie suddenly stopped because the soldier ordered them to.

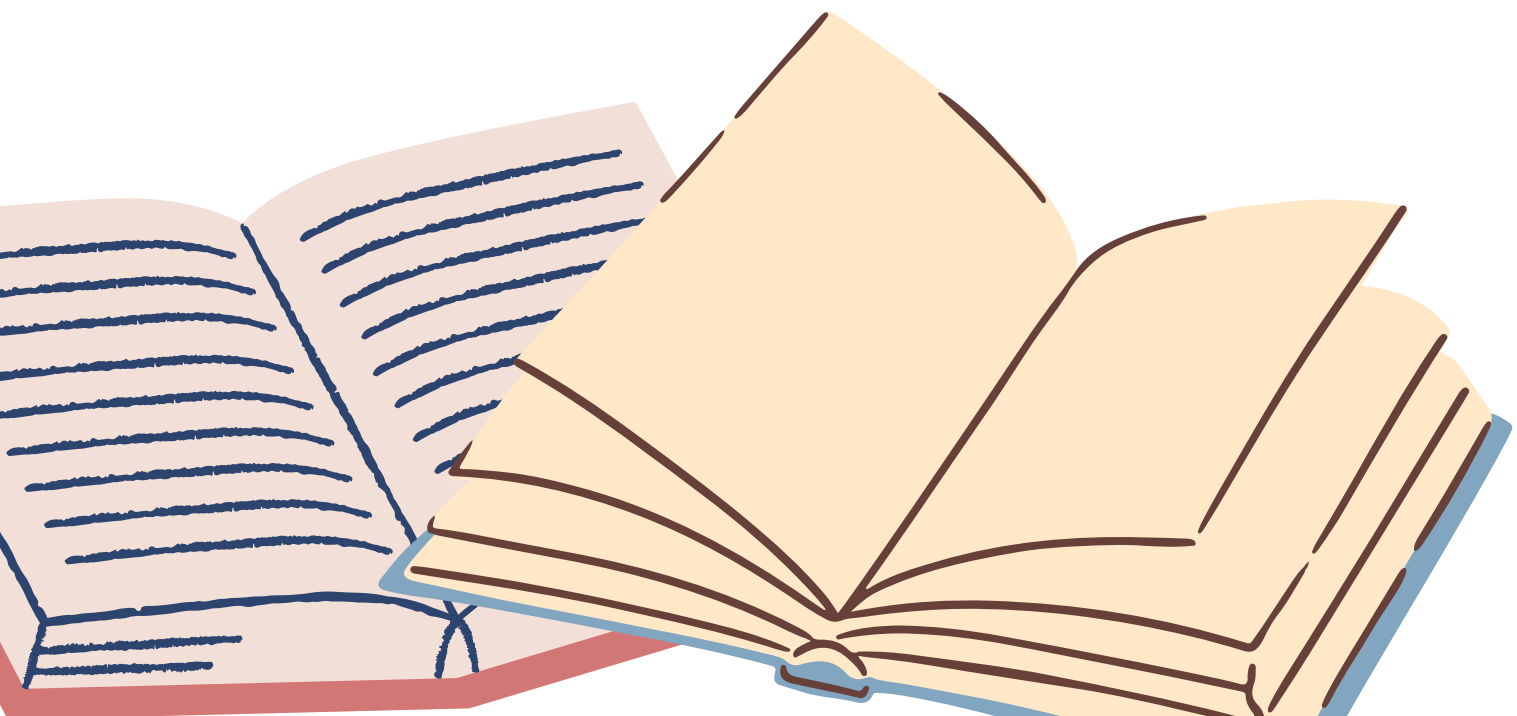
PERSONAL CONNECTION

- HAVE YOU EVER FELT NERVOUS WHEN TALKING TO SOMEONE IN A POSITION OF AUTHORITY? HOW DID YOU HANDLE IT?
- HAVE YOU EVER STAYED CALM TO SUPPORT SOMEONE ELSE?
- HAVE YOU EVER CHANGED YOUR BEHAVIOR BECAUSE YOU WORRIED WHAT OTHERS WOULD THINK?
- CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME WHEN A CHILD DIDN'T UNDERSTAND A SITUATION THAT YOU KNEW WAS SERIOUS?
- HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOU NEEDED TO BLEND IN OR BE 'ONE OF THE CROWD'? WHEN? WHY?

PREDICTION MAKER

MAKE A THOUGHTFUL PREDICTION ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN NEXT.

I think that Nazi soldiers will begin to act violently toward children in Denmark.



ESL Book Club Assignments (Chapters Two & Three)

Student:	Responsibility:	
Arsenia / Auricelia	45-Second Summarizer:	Give a brief overview of the assigned reading in 45 seconds or less.
	➤ Skills practiced: summarizing, sequencing, time awareness	
Cristy / Stefanie	Vocabulary Builder:	Choose 3–5 important or interesting words from the reading.
	➤ Skills practiced: vocabulary acquisition, context clues, paraphrasing	
Marisela / Flavia	Sound Spotter:	Identify 3-5 words that are difficult to pronounce or that sound interesting.
	➤ Skills practiced: noticing pronunciation patterns, asking for help, listening	
Carolina / Karina	Scene Setter:	Pick one place from the story and use creative, descriptive language to describe it.
	➤ Skills practiced: spacial thinking, descriptive language, making inferences	
Lily L. / Ira	Culture Connector:	Find one element that connects to your home culture or to modern U.S. culture.
	➤ Skills practiced: making comparisons, speaking about culture, critical thinking	
Maria / Erika	Character Tracker:	Describe one character’s traits or actions in the reading.
	➤ Skills practiced: character analysis, using descriptive language	
Mariana / Fatemeh	Emotions Explorer:	Choose a moment that made you feel something (happy, sad, surprised, angry).
	➤ Skills practiced: emotional vocabulary, personal connections, speaking fluency	
Sasha / Banu	Passage Picker:	Choose one sentence or short passage that you found meaningful or powerful.
	➤ Skills practiced: reading aloud, text analysis, expression	
Lori / Lori	Grammar Catcher:	Find one interesting grammar structure or pattern in the reading.
	➤ Skills practiced: grammar awareness, noticing language in context	
Lily S. / Monica	Prediction Maker:	Make a thoughtful prediction about what might happen next.
	➤ Skills practiced: inferencing, using evidence from text	