The Boy Who Fought Hitler
Ben Kamm escaped the Warsaw ghetto to become a partisan fighter

About the Article

Levels
Lexile Level: 900L
Guided Reading Level: V
DRA Level: 50

Learning Objectives
Students will identify main ideas as they build knowledge and learn vocabulary related to the Holocaust.

Content-Area Connections
Social studies: World War II, the Holocaust

Key Skills
Main ideas, vocabulary, text features, author’s craft, cause and effect, inference, key details, analyzing, explanatory writing

Standards Correlations
This article and lesson support the following Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.6, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, L.5, L.6
Check our website for more standards information.

Your Teaching Support Package
Here’s your full suite of materials, all of which you’ll find at storyworks.scholastic.com:

Video: “Behind the Scenes: The Boy Who Fought Hitler”

Audio:
- On-level version
- Lower-Lexile version

Differentiated article:
- Lower-Lexile version (printable)

Activities to print or project:
- Vocabulary
- Video Activity
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions*
- Core Skills Workout: Text Features, Summarizing,* Main Ideas, Text Structure
- Comprehension Quiz*
- Questions for English Language Learners

For Teachers: Strategies for Teaching the Holocaust
*Available on two levels
realize that even though he lived in a different time and place, in many ways he was just like kids now.

• Reread the section “Hateful Lies.” How did Hitler convince Germans and other Europeans to turn against the Jewish people around them? What happened as a result? (cause and effect) When Germany was struggling after World War I, Hitler told lies claiming that Jews were to blame for the country’s problems. As a result, people burned synagogues and destroyed Jewish-owned businesses. By the end of the war, Hitler’s Nazi Party had killed 6 million Jewish people.

• In the section “Nazi Invasion,” what happened on October 12, 1940? How did this affect Ben and his family? (cause and effect) On that date, Nazis started moving all the Jews in Warsaw, Poland, into a tiny area called a ghetto. Ben’s family lived in one small room. Illness spread through the ghetto; there was little food; and people were treated as if they weren’t humans.

• Reread “Jewish Fighters.” What does this section header refer to? (main idea) It refers to Jews who joined others to fight back against the Nazis. These fighters, called partisans, lived on bases hidden in forests, and they took action to disrupt the Nazis’ fighting, like stealing weapons and sabotaging railroads. They also sheltered Jewish families.

• Based on “Terrible Rumors,” what do you learn about the kind of person Ben was? (inference) You learn that Ben was very brave as a partisan fighter. You also see how devoted he was to his family and the risks he took to try to rescue them.

• In “Luck and Sorrow,” what was the partisan base where Ben lived like? (key details) It was like a small town, with 1,600 people. In addition to the fighters, there were helpers like cooks and cobblers.
• What happened to Hitler and the Nazis when the war ended? What happened to Ben? (key details) Hitler committed suicide. Many Nazis were executed for their crimes. Ben had lost his family, but he moved to America and rebuilt his life.

**Critical-Thinking Questions**

• In the end, Ben says he considers himself lucky because he’s “alive and can tell the story.” Why is telling the story important? (analyzing) It is important so that people in Ben’s time and in future generations know what happened. It can be hard to imagine what people went through in the Warsaw ghetto, and how bravely the partisans resisted the powerful Nazis. By telling his story, Ben helps others picture what Jews experienced, which in turn helps people make sure it doesn’t happen again to anyone.

• Some stories have more than one main idea.

  In this article, what is a main idea about what happened during World War II? What is a main idea about Ben and the partisans? (main ideas) A main idea about World War II is that across Europe, Hitler and his Nazi Party made Jewish people the target of lies and hatred. In Warsaw, Jews were forced into a tiny area called a ghetto. A main idea about Ben and the partisans is that they bravely fought back against Hitler’s forces.

3. **Skill Building**

**Featured Skill: Main Ideas**

• Distribute the main ideas activity and have students complete it in groups. Then invite them to respond to the writing prompt at the bottom of page 9.

**Ideas to Engage and Inspire**

• Explore a Website The website of the Jewish Partisans Educational Foundation, www.jewishpartisans.org, offers information and videos about the partisans, including clips of an interview with Ben Kamm. Some of the content will enhance the article for readers. But we highly recommend previewing the site first to decide which parts are appropriate for your students.

**Differentiate and Customize**

**For Struggling Readers**

Gather students in a small group and lead a brainstorm for words to describe Ben Kamm. Try to come to a consensus on which words best describe him, then ask students to find text evidence to support each one.

**For ELL Students**

Go over these expressions from the article, which might be unfamiliar to ELL students:

- fanned the flames (p. 6): made worse
- a glimmer of hope (p. 8): a little bit of hope
- with his family’s blessing (p. 8): with his family’s approval
- took his own life (p. 9): killed himself

**For Advanced Readers**

As students respond to the writing prompt on page 9, guide advanced readers to do research about the partisans and include information from at least one other source in their speech.

**For Small Groups**

After reading the article once as a class, divide students into groups for a second read. Ask half the groups to annotate details that show what Ben Kamm was like and how he fought Hitler. Ask the other half to annotate details that show how Hitler and the Nazis treated Jewish people. Then regroup as a class to share findings.