ANNE FRANK’S LIFE AND TIMES

INTRODUCTION

Although Anne Frank’s diary was published more than 50 years ago, in 1947, it is still very popular all over the world today. Translated into numerous languages, it is studied widely by students in the United States and other countries. In spite of her tragic fate and the difficult circumstances under which she wrote most of her diary, Anne appears to be a normal girl, growing up with the same pains, joys, and desires as any teenager today. That is why students enjoy reading her diary. Moreover, as teachers, we hope that studying her life and diary will help students understand the pain and suffering caused by prejudice and racism. There will be international events in June 2004 on the occasion of what would have been Anne Franks’ 75th birthday.

Objectives

- To study a biography through images and dates
- To talk about the past (simple past / continuous past)
- To read an extract from Anne Frank’s diary
- To acquire vocabulary (dates, introductions, birthday presents)
- To understand the main points of an interview

Material

- Photocopies of the worksheet, pp 38-39, which proposes an extract from The Diary of A Young Girl; photographs of her life; a map of Europe showing the places where she lived
- The two interviews about Anne Frank on New Standpoints Live: 19.2, “At the Anne Frank Center”; NS 19.3, about the play “The Diary of Anne Frank” (for classes européennes or upper-intermediate students)

PROCEDURE

- Start by asking students their birthdays. Have them read and write these dates correctly: (February 23rd or 23 February) and use the model for their own birth date. Have them read years: 1988 (nineteen eighty-eight, 2003 (two thousand and three) etc.
- Then have students ask their classmates what they got for their last birthday. Suggest vocabulary on the board if necessary. (a watch, a hi-fi, money, clothes, CDs, video or computer games, books, comics, concert tickets, a game console, musical instruments, rollerblades, a basketball or football...). You can also ask them what their “best birthday present ever” was.
- Hand out the worksheet and go over each activity before students complete it.

Activity A: An extract from the Diary

The activity will enable students to work on vocabulary and to understand the text.

Activity B: A Short Life

Important events in Anne’s life are explained with both words and images. The semi-guided wh-questions will help revise asking questions. NB: The last wh- has been left open on purpose.

Activity C: Forced Migrations

Students can follow Anne Frank’s forced migrations all over Central Europe, from where she was born to where she died. Students should identify where each of the major events listed took place by city and country. Once the activity is completed they should discuss why she was forced to move so many times.

GOING FURTHER: ORAL COMPREHENSION

The two recorded interviews related to Anne Frank are for upper-intermediate students. Following are some detailed comprehension questions.

19.2 At the Anne Frank Center (NYC): interview with the director, Elizabeth Feerick

- Introduction: Why is Anne Frank famous? How old would Anne Frank be today? How old was she when she died? Where did she die?
- First question: Students should say why young people find meaning in her story. What does Elizabeth say about the importance of the diary for young people?
- Second question: Have students write down all the words used to describe Anne. Discuss.

19.3 The Play, “The Diary of Anne Frank”: interview with actor Stephen Press?

- Introduction: Is this interview about the book? Who is Stephen Press?
- First question: Write down all the things he says Anne is saying in her diary (I want to...)
- Second question: Why does he think the play is not a tragedy? What is the love story?
- Third question: Write down all the details about Anne’s romance with Peter.

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1. THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL, BY ANNE FRANK

The following extract is from the beginning of Anne’s diary. First read the extract. Then read the list of definitions on the right (Activity A). Underline the words in the text that the definitions refer to. Then write them next to their definitions.

Sunday, 14 June 1942

I’ll begin from the moment I got you, the moment I saw you lying on the table among my other birthday presents. (I went along when you were bought, but that doesn’t count.)

On Friday, 12 June, I was awake at six o’clock, which isn’t surprising, since it was my birthday. But I’m not allowed to get up at that hour, so I had to control my curiosity until quarter to seven. When I couldn’t wait any longer, I went to the dining-room, where Moortje (the cat) welcomed me by rubbing against my legs.

A little after seven I went to Daddy and Mummy and then to the living-room to open my presents, and you were the first thing I saw, maybe one of my nicest presents. Then a bouquet of roses, some peonies and a potted plant. From Daddy and Mummy I got a blue blouse, a game, a bottle of grape juice, which to my mind tastes a bit like wine (after all, wine is made from grapes), a puzzle, a jar of cold cream, 2.50 guilders and a gift token for two books (…) a plate of homemade biscuits which I made myself, of course, since I’ve become quite an expert at making biscuits), lots of sweets and a strawberry tart from Mother. And a letter from Grammy, right on time, but of course that was just a coincidence.

ACTIVITY A: WORDS AND DEFINITIONS

1. a bunch of flowers ____________________________________________
2. fruit juice ___________________________________________________
3. Dutch money __________________________________________________
4. a message (from her grandmother) ______________________________
5. a plant for in the house _________________________________________
6. a piece of clothing _____________________________________________
7. a beauty product _______________________________________________
8. a dessert _____________________________________________________
9. sweets/candies _________________________________________________
10. a game ______________________________________________________
11. other flowers __________________________________________________
12. a gift coupon _________________________________________________
13. one of her nicest presents _______________________________________

What can you conclude about Anne, her parents and her life from this list?
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

ACTIVITY B: After reading about Anne Frank’s life and looking at the photos (page 39) write down the questions corresponding to these dates.

1929: When _____________________________?
1930: What ____________________________?
1933: Why _____________________________?
1934: What _____________________________?
1940: Which ____________________________?
1941: Where ____________________________?
1942: What _____________________________?
1944: Wh _____________________________?

ACTIVITY C. A MAP OF EUROPE (1945)

Look at the map on the next page that shows the different places Anne lived, and answer the following questions with the name of the city and country.

1. Where was she born? _________________________________________
2. Where did she write her diary? _________________________________
3. Where was the first concentration camp she was sent to? ____________
4. Where was the second camp? _________________________________
5. Where was the third camp, in which she died? ___________________
2. A SHORT LIFE

12 June, 1929 Anne Frank was born in Frankfurt, Germany on 12 June. Her family is Jewish, and she is the second daughter.

1930 The photograph on the right is taken of Anne and her sister, Margot, with their father. Anne later puts the photo in her album and writes “Daddy with his kids”.

1933 Adolf Hitler comes to power in Germany as leader of the Nazis. He blames the Jews for all of the country’s problems. It becomes impossible for Jews to live normally in Germany. So the Frank family moves to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where Otto Frank starts a new business.

1934 Anne adapts to her new life quickly. She learns Dutch, makes many friends and enjoys school.

1939 Hitler’s armies invade Poland.

1940 On 10 May, the Germans occupy the Netherlands. The Franks are not safe any more, but it is too late to leave the country again. The Nazis begin imposing restrictive measures against the Jews. They must wear a yellow star that says “Jew”. They can’t own a business, take a tram, bus or car; buy sugar or walk on the same street as other people.

Autumn 1941 Anne must change schools, because a new law says Jewish children cannot go to school with other children. They can only go to school with other Jewish children and teachers. More and more laws are passed separating the Jews from other Dutch people.

12 June, 1942 Anne’s parents give her a diary as a present for her 13th birthday. She writes in it: “I hope I shall be able to confide in you completely (...) and I hope that you will be a great support and comfort to me.”

10 July Anne’s older sister, Margot, is told to report to a transit camp. The family goes into hiding in “The Secret Annex” — a part of Mr Frank’s office. Another family, the Van Pels, joins them on 13 July, and an eighth person comes in November. They receive food, help and visits from people who worked for Anne’s father.

1944 On 4 August, a police van stops at 263 Prinsengracht, the address of the Secret Annex, where the Franks and the others have been hiding for more than two years. Three Dutch policemen and their Austrian Nazi commander arrest them all. Anne’s diary is left scattered on the floor. One of the families’ helpers picks it up and keeps it.

3. FORCED MIGRATIONS

[Map showing forced migrations from Europe during World War II, including Westerbork, Bergen-Belsen, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and other key locations.]