

Lesson 1: Survey the Text

2 Class Periods

**Reading Skills: Activating Relevant Prior Knowledge
 Questioning**

Purpose:

Surveying the text before reading allows students to gather background information about the text and activate prior knowledge they may have about the Holocaust. It also helps the students generate questions about the text that set a purpose for reading and motivate students to read.

Materials Needed:

One copy of *Four Perfect Pebbles* for each student
An overhead machine, blank transparency sheets, and overhead markers
OR A tablet of chart paper and markers

Process:

Work together as a whole-class group. As you work through the steps of the survey, ask the students to share background knowledge they have and questions that occur to them. Make a T-chart on transparency sheets or chart paper. On the left side, record the students' questions; on the right side, record background information that the students share. Keep these notes for during and at the conclusion of the unit.

These are the things to notice during the survey:

- Notice the title and sub-title. Ask students what ideas they connect to the word "Holocaust" in the sub-title.
- Notice the authors' names.
- Look at the photos on the covers. Notice how the portrait is set over a background photo.
- Read the excerpt and summary on the back cover.
- Notice the photo facing the title page inside the book and the caption underneath it.
- Notice the copyright date.
- Read the dedications.
- Read the Table of Contents.
- Flip through the book and look for the two sections of photos. Look at the photos and read the captions.
- Read the Prologue.

Example Questions:

- Why is the book called Four Perfect Pebbles?
- Who are the people in the background picture on the cover? Are they getting on a train? Where are they going?
- How old was Marion when her family was first affected by the Nazis?
- How old was she when she was liberated?
- Did all of the family survive?
- If the family escaped to Holland, why weren't they free of the Nazis?
- Why is one of the chapters titled "The Greatest Disappointment"? What was this disappointment?
- Why is Chapter 7 titled "Freedom and Sorrow"? If you were free, wouldn't you be happy?
- Was the family able to stay together or were they separated during their imprisonment?
- What was the yellow star in the photo used for?
- What was the "Hitler Youth"?
- What was Kristallnacht?
- Why was the synagogue blown up?
- Why was Walter Blumenthal imprisoned at Buchenwald?
- What was Westerbork? Why did the Blumenthals live there?
- What is typhus?
- What is a "Youth Aliyah" home?
- Why did the family go to Peoria?

NOTE: See photocopies of the responses from one class as an example of what a completed chart might look like.