



To: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents

From: Mrs. Dyogi and Ms. Garcia (6<sup>th</sup> grade  
Homeroom/Junior High English)

October 19, 2016

Dear Parents,

We will begin reading the novel *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry in two weeks (starting Nov. 2) and would like to give you a summary of the book as it relates to the Holocaust and WWII.

**Summary:** *Lowry's Number the Stars is a simple yet poignant novel about a young girl's contribution to the resistance movement in Denmark during World War II. Annemarie Johansen, a 10-year old girl living in Copenhagen, is faced with the knowledge that the Nazis are beginning to "relocate" the Jews in her city. Ellen Rosen, a neighbor and classmate of Annemarie's, is Jewish. Through a series of small acts of bravery, Annemarie and her family help the Rosens escape into neighboring Sweden, in a boat with a false bottom, operated by Annemarie's Uncle Henrik. Annemarie is called upon to ensure the Jews' safe passage when she has to deliver a package to Henrik, in the dark, because her mother has broken her ankle and cannot walk. Annemarie successfully delivers the package, and only later learns what could have happened had she not been able to dodge the soldiers who stop her in the woods. Once the war is over, Annemarie's parents tell her that her older sister, Lise, was part of the resistance movement and was killed for it. Annemarie realizes that she too, has helped Jews escape and feels proud to know and be friends with Ellen, even though she doesn't know if she'll ever see her friend again. At the end of the book, Annemarie decides to wear Ellen's Star of David necklace, as a sign of her friendship, until Ellen returns and can wear it herself.*

**Important Themes:** *Lowry weaves together the themes of bravery and family to demonstrate the power of small acts of heroism. With strong role models, Annemarie is able to be brave when she needs to be, and she admires the Rosens for their strong family traditions and religious beliefs, which they continue to practice until the day they are forced to leave their Copenhagen apartment.*

**Language:** *Although the language in Number the Stars is surprisingly simplistic, young adults in a wide variety of reading readiness would be able to use this text as a learning tool, both for the message and the language employed. Lowry uses direct speech, simple yet telling figurative language, and a sense of humor to invite the reader to go beyond the text. Students as young as 5th graders have read this book, as have 10th and 11th graders, all with success and meaning.*

**Questions:** *How can one person make a difference? What is bravery? What is prejudice and why does it exist? What is dignity and who has it/doesn't have it? What is the significance of Ellen's Star of David necklace? What's the role of "family" in this novel?*

(written by Gwen Gray from [http://theliterarylink.com/ss\\_number\\_the\\_stars.html](http://theliterarylink.com/ss_number_the_stars.html))

An extended summary of *Number the Stars* can be found at <http://www.gradesaver.com/number-the-stars/study-guide/summary>

**If your child will be joining the class novel study, please make sure that he/she has his/her OWN COPY of *Number the Stars* before Wednesday, November 2.**

**\*\*Please sign the attached form giving your child permission to read this novel and participate in the novel study.** If you would like to OPT OUT, your son/daughter will be assigned the novel *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell for independent study. The summary can be found here: <http://www.gradesaver.com/island-of-the-blue-dolphins/study-guide/summary>.

Blessings,  
Mrs. Dyogi and Ms Garcia

## ***Number the Stars* Parent Permission Form**

PLEASE CHECK ONE AND RETURN THIS FORM BY **FRIDAY, OCT. 21:**

- I give my child, \_\_\_\_\_,  
permission to read *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry. I understand that the historical context of this book relates to the Holocaust and World War II. Age-appropriate discussions surrounding this novel will address sensitive topics such as concentration camps, genocide, and heroic efforts to save lives during a very tragic time in world history.

- OR -

- I **do not** give my child, \_\_\_\_\_,  
permission to read *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry. Because I am choosing to opt out of the class novel study, I understand that my child will be reading *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell as an alternative and will be monitored by his/her English teacher for independent study.

PARENT NAME (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_