

# ***Number the Stars***

**Lois Lowry**

## **UNIT 1 (Chapters 1-4)**

### **Preview**

#### *About the Book and Author*

Have you ever wondered what it means to be brave? Or wondered if you would have the bravery needed to protect friends and family in an emergency?

Annemarie Johansen, the main character in *Number the Stars*, faces these struggles as she works with the rest of Denmark to protect Jewish friends and neighbors from the threat of imprisonment, and even death, during World War II.

*Number the Stars* is a work of *historical fiction*, meaning that the big parts of the story are true (like German occupation of Denmark in World War II), while smaller parts (like specific events and characters) may not have happened *exactly* as they are told. Why would Lois Lowry, the author, decide to mix truth and imagination? She was inspired by the real-life experiences of her friend Annelise Platt, who was a Jew living in Copenhagen at the time of German occupation in 1943. By mixing the experiences told to her by Annelise with the strength of her own imagination, she was able to create a story that would captivate children and adults alike, and get them to reflect on themes of bravery, loyalty, and sacrifice.

Lois Lowry has written over 30 books, of which *Number the Stars* and *The Giver* are the two most popular. She has won many awards for her writing, including the Newbury Medal for both *Number the Stars* and *The Giver*. As you will see in *Number the Stars*, Lowry writes because she wants to help end conflict in the world. She says, "I try, through writing, to convey my passionate awareness that we live intertwined on this planet and that our future depends upon our caring more, and doing more, for one another."

If you enjoy *Number the Stars*, consider reading more of Lois Lowry's books; many are available through Amazon.cn.

#### *World War II and Judaism*

World War II (two) was a global conflict that lasted from 1939-1945. Many different, smaller conflicts split the world into two opposing groups: the Allies and the Axis. Japan wanted to control much of Asia, and Germany wanted to control Europe. The Allies wanted to limit the control of both countries, and restore order and peace to threatened nations.

Here are the countries that fought for each side:

Allies	Axis
United States	Germany
Britain	Japan
France	Italy
USSR (or Russia)	Hungary
Australia	Romania
Belgium	Bulgaria
Canada	
Denmark	
Greece	
Netherlands	
New Zealand	
Norway	
Poland	
South Africa	
Yugoslavia	



Here is a map that shows the location of Allies and Axis powers:



A central conflict in *Number the Stars* is between the German forces (or the Nazis) and Jewish citizens in Denmark. German leadership, specifically Adolf Hitler, believed that Jewish people caused the decline of German society and wanted to kill or imprison all Jewish citizens in Europe to restore power to the German nation.

World War II was the deadliest war in human history, and took the lives of more than 6 million (6,000,000) Jews at the hands of German Nazi forces. *Number the Stars* tells the story of one community and how they faced the challenges of WWII.

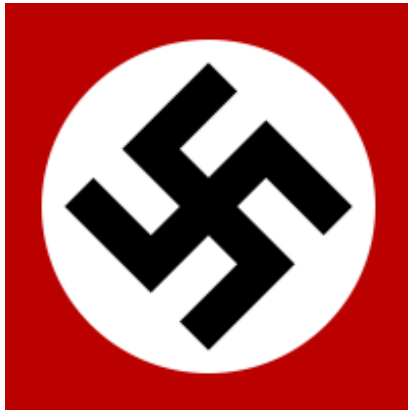
## Vocabulary

Nouns	Verbs
<b>Rifle</b> 	<b>Pretend:</b> To act as if something is one way when it really is not.  “Annemarie and Kirsti like to <b>pretend</b> that they are princesses who eat cupcakes all day.”
<b>Occupation:</b> When the military forces of one country go to another country and take control.  In Number the Stars, there is the <b>occupation</b> of German (Nazi) forced in Denmark.	<b>Hesitate:</b> To wait for a minute before doing or saying something, often because you have to think or make sure you are doing the right thing.  “Annemarie <b>hesitated</b> before talking to the German soldier. She didn’t want to say something that would get her in trouble.”
<b>Fairy tale:</b> A fictional story that often about princes and princesses or mystical characters such a fairies, witches, or talking animals. These stories are usually told to children.	<b>Reassure:</b> To say or do something to lessen fear or doubt in someone else.  “When she saw that Annemarie was worried, Annemarie’s mother <b>reassured</b> her with a hug and a kiss.”
<b>Trunk</b> 	
<b>Fiancé:</b> the person you plan to marry.	
<b>Ration:</b> a limited amount of something, such as food, that each person or family can get during war time.  In Denmark during Nazi occupation, the <b>rations</b> were small and limited, as you will read in the book.	

**Kroner:** the type of money in Denmark. Like the US Dollar or the RMB.



**Swastika:** the symbol of Nazi forces



**Curfew:** a set time that everyone must return home by, usually set by the government in war time or during an emergency.

**Boom:** a loud noise created by a bomb going off, or by something natural like thunder.

**Naval fleet:** the boats and sailors that protect a country

