

Classroom Guide

The Klipfish Code

written by [Mary Casanova](#)

published by Houghton Mifflin, 2007

ISBN: 978-061888-393-6

A note to the teacher: The activities for this book were designed for students old enough to read and process the content of this book.



Themes:

- ◆ Difficult Choices
- ◆ Truth, Lies and Secrets
- ◆ Loyalty

About the Author

Mary Casanova is an award-winning children's author of novels and picture books. Much of her work stems from her life on the Minnesota-Canadian border yet, increasingly, Casanova's research takes her as far away as France and Norway. Wherever her stories are set, Casanova engages readers of all ages with stories that both entertain and challenge readers.

Regionally, her honors include two Minnesota Book Awards, a Fellowship in Literature by the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, and Career Opportunity Grants by the Minnesota State Arts Board. Nationally, her book awards include: American Library Association "Notable," Aesop Accolades by the American Folklore Society, Parents' Choice "Gold" Award, Booklist Editor Choice, and others. Voted on by children, her books frequently land on state children's book award lists across the country. You can learn about all of Mary's books and explore her writing journal by visting her website: www.marycasanova.com.

About the Book

The Klipfish Code is a middle level novel full of excitement and suspense. Twelve year old Marit experiences the Nazi occupation of Norway in 1942. Because her parents bravely stay behind to help the Resistance, Marit and her younger brother Lars must go stay with their grandfather and aunt. Although Grandfather warns Marit to stay neutral, Marit becomes involved with a plan to help the Resistance. Can Marit complete her mission and deliver a secret code? Marit learns about responsibility, secrecy, and loyalty as she takes risks to uphold her beliefs.

This novel incorporates the deep respect for freedom held by the Norwegian people and their careful attempts to thwart the power of the Nazis in their homeland. The heart of the Norwegians, the brave stance of Norway's educators and the spirit of one young Norwegian patriot combine to make this a truly enjoyable and informative novel.

Characters

Marit Gundersen – a fourth grade Norwegian girl

Lars Gundersen – Marit’s younger brother

Mama and Papa Gundersen – Marit’s parents

Bestefar (Leif Halversen) – Marit’s grandfather (Bestefar means grandfather in Norwegian)

Aunt Ingeborg Halversen - Marit’s aunt and school teacher

Hanna Brotten - Marit’s friend

Olaf Andersen – a boy in Marit’s class at school

Henrik - a Norwegian Resistance Soldier

Vocabulary: (Norwegian Vocabulary is on pages 224-227 in the book.)

Allies - the 26 nations that fought against the Nazis during World War II.

code - a system for communication used for secrecy of communication, in which chosen words, letters, or symbols are assigned definite meanings.

invasion – an act of taking over by force someone’s land, property, ideas or beliefs.

Nazi – a soldier and member of the German socialist party under Adolf Hitler.

neutral - not taking part or giving assistance in a dispute or war between others.

refugee - a person who flees for refuge or safety, esp. to a foreign country, as in time of political upheaval, war.

Shetland Bus – the secret naval operation between The Shetland Islands of Scotland and Norway that helped refugees escape during World War II.

Before Reading

Activating Prior Knowledge, Setting the Purpose, and Making Predictions

Discussion Prompts and Activities

◆ **Difficult Choices**

The Klipfish Code is a story of a young girl facing war and making difficult choices about her beliefs. In this story, Marit makes some very difficult choices. Think about a time when you had a hard decision or choice to make. How did you do it? Have you ever read any of Aesop’s fables? If so, which ones do you know? (Note to the teacher: a fable is a short story that teaches a moral or a lesson. Fables have been around almost as long as spoken language and often use animals as the main characters.)

◆ **Truth, Lies and Secrets**

Marit and her family have to keep a lot of secrets to survive the Nazi occupation of Norway. Sometimes, they even have to lie. Is it ever okay to lie? Have you ever had to tell a lie? Why?

◆ **Loyalty**

Being loyal means that you show faithfulness to commitments, promises, allegiance, and obligations. Sometimes, it can be hard to be faithful when you are scared or threatened. Share situations when your loyalty has been tested.

Creating a Classroom Symbol

The Norwegians resisted the Nazi occupation by secretly acting out. They wore paperclips as a symbol of their *solidarity*, or loyalty, to Norway. They wore red caps and other clothing as a symbol of the *Jossings*, or loyal Norwegians. On page 54 in the book, Mary Casanova describes a commonly used symbol to show loyalty and remembrance of the king of Norway, Haakon VII.



Think about your teacher, classmates, and school. Design a symbol that represents these things to display in your classroom.

◆ **Love of Family**

In this book, Marit learns that she does not always understand all of the members of her family. She has some difficulties getting along with and understanding her grandfather. As you read the story, you will follow the relationship between Marit and Lars, Marit and her grandfather, and Marit and her Aunt Ingeborg, and predict and record how these relationships change over five years using the [Relationship Tree](#). Think about your family. Make a relationship tree of your family that will help you to think about the different relationships in Marit's life. Which family member is the most like you? With which family member do you feel the closest bond? Which family member is your greatest challenge?

During Reading

[Questions to Think About](#)

[Double Entry Journal](#)

[Klipfish Bone Story Map](#)

After Reading

[Activity Menu](#)

Other Ideas for Extension:

A symbol of the Norwegian resistance was wearing a paperclip on a lapel; an innocuous item, the paper clip was assumed to be a Norwegian invention, and represented uniting against the occupation.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwegian_resistance_movement

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper_clip

Design a *Bunad*:

The *Bunad* is a traditional Norwegian costume. Norwegians wear this costume at many celebrations. Both men and women wear *bunads*. The man's version often consists of knee length pants and a vest. The woman's version is often a white blouse, an embroidered vest, and a long skirt covered with a white lacey apron. The embroidered design may represent the history of the family or the region of Norway where the family originated.

Look for pictures of *bunads* in the encyclopedia or on the Internet. Design a *bunad* for yourself! The colors you choose and the embroidery design can represent interesting things about your family or personality.

Some places to see *bunads*:

<http://www.lailas.net/bunads>

<http://www.patmoore.org/Bunads.htm>

For Teachers:

The teachers of Norway took great risks to retain their beliefs in educational freedom. Read, *The Diary of Edvard Brakstad*, a first hand account of the Norwegian teachers' resistance and their persecution by the Nazis and the Quislings.

<http://www.infonorway.com/history/ww2/brakstad/diary>

Companion Books:

FICTION

Giff, Patricia Reilly. (1999). *Lily's Crossing*. Yearling Newberg.

Set during World War II, this tenderly written story tells of the war's impact on two children, one an American and one a Hungarian refugee. Lily Mollahan, a spirited, sensitive youngster being raised by her grandmother and Poppy, her widower father, has a comfortable routine that includes the family's annual summer migration to Gram's beach house in Rockaway, NY. History is brought to life through Giff's well chosen details and descriptions. (School Library Journal)

Holm, Anne. (2004). *I Am David*. Harcourt Paperbacks.

David's entire twelve-year life has been spent in a grisly prison camp in Eastern Europe. He knows nothing of the outside world. But when he is given the chance to escape, he seizes it. With his vengeful enemies hot on his heels, David struggles to cope in this strange new world, where his only resources are a compass, a few crusts of bread, his two aching feet, and some vague advice to seek refuge in Denmark. Is that enough to survive?

Pearson, Kit. (1995). *The Sky Is Falling*. Puffin.

Ten-year-old Norah's life, secure despite World War II, is changed drastically when she is evacuated to Canada with her five-year-old brother, Gavin. There she changes from a social child to a sullen bed wetter. Overwhelmed by her own difficulties, she is unable to look after Gavin. The wealthy widow and her browbeaten, spinster daughter who take them in offer little solace to lonely Norah. After an abortive attempt to run away, Norah realizes that as a child, she is helpless to do more than accept and make the best of her situation. Pearson convincingly reconstructs World War II British childhood and has created a whole character in Norah. (School Library Journal)

NONFICTION

Landau, Elaine. (2000). *Norway (True Books-Geography: Countries)* Children's Press.

Panchyk, Richard. (2002). *World War II for Kids: A History with 21 Activities*. Chicago Review Press.

World War II for Kids: A History with 21 Activities by Richard Panchyk provides a comprehensive survey of the era, beginning with Hitler's rise to power in 1933 to the Japanese surrender in 1945 (a time line opens the volume). Wartime letters, interviews with former soldiers, ordinary citizens, and Holocaust survivors provide a personal perspective.

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. (2005) *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow*. Scholastic

The book is structured around 12 young individuals and their experiences, which clearly demonstrate how they were victims of leaders who took advantage of their innocence and enthusiasm for evil means. Their stories evolve from patriotic devotion to Hitler and zeal to join, to doubt, confusion, and disillusion.

The Relationship Tree

	Before you read!	After chapter 14!	At the end!
Marit and Bestefar 	Make a prediction: What kind of relationship do you think Marit will have with her grandfather?	How has this relationship changed over the first half of the story? What other changes do you predict will happen next?	Did your predictions come true? Were there any surprises?
Draw a picture:			

	Before you read!	After chapter 14!	At the end!
Marit and Lars 	Make a prediction: What kind of relationship do you think Marit will have with her brother?	How has this relationship changed over the first half of the story? What other changes do you predict will happen next?	Did your predictions come true? Were there any surprises?
Draw a picture:			

	Before you read!	After chapter 14!	At the end!
Marit and Aunt Ingeborg 	Make a prediction: What kind of relationship do you think Marit will have with her aunt?	How has this relationship changed over the first half of the story? What other changes do you predict will happen next?	Did your predictions come true? Were there any surprises?
Draw a picture:			

Questions to Think About During Reading

Chapter One: April 1940

How does Marit's dream and the explosion that awoke her, mirror or *symbolize* what is happening in Marit's life during chapter one?

The German's are *invading* Norway. What do you think that means?

Chapter Two: Leaving

Why were Marit and Lars leaving to stay with Bestefar?

As the steamer leaves the harbor and Marit realizes that, "*something larger and more frightening than she could possibly understand had been set in motion.*" What do you think she is thinking about?

Chapter Three: Land of the Midnight Sun

Marit has been living with Bestefar for two months, but has not heard from her parents. How would you feel if you were Marit?

Chapter Four: Refugee

Hanna tells Marit that she is a refugee, *a person who flees to another country for refuge or safety during a time of war or unrest.* How do you think Marit feels about being a refugee? Do you know anyone who might be a refugee?

When Marit goes to Mr. Larsen's shop to see if there is a letter from her mother and father, the Nazi officer becomes suspicious because so many people are gathered there. The Nazis are opening people's mail before they receive it. Why do you think the Nazis tried so hard to keep people from communicating?

The letter appears to be in a code. Why do Marit's parents have to be so secretive?

Chapter Five: Turmoil on the Sea

Bestefar warns Marit to be more careful with her behavior toward the Germans. Marit is angry with her grandfather. Why is Marit so upset with him? Have you ever disagreed with a parent or grandparent?

Chapter Six: The Lighthouse

Marit and Lars find an injured seal pup and try to save it. The Nazi soldier has no mercy for the animal. What does his attitude tell you about his character and his ability to help others?

Chapter Seven: Wind Blown

Grandfather is upset about the traitor Quisling. Usually, he is very careful about his feelings. What do his comments tell you about him?

The Nazis post a sign that warns the Norwegians not to give shelter or aid the enemy. Marit asks, "Who is the enemy?" Can you answer that question?

Chapter Eight: The Bunad

Why did the Nazis forbid Norwegians to wear or make the *bunad*, the traditional Norwegian dress?

Aunt Ingeborg is making Marit a *bunad* in secret. Bestefar tells her not to do it, but she does it anyway. What does this tell you about Aunt Ingeborg?

Chapter Nine: Iced Out

Hanna is "icing out" Olaf, because his parents have joined the Norwegian Nazi Party, the *Nasjonal Samling*. Marit feels badly. Why is she conflicted about Hanna's treatment of Olaf?

Chapter Ten: If You Breathe

Why is this chapter entitled, "If You Breathe?"

The Nazis take away the Norwegian's right to vote. Newspapers are illegal. The mail is being watched and read. How would you feel if you could not write letters, speak to your friends on the phone, or have your own ideas?

The more the Nazis try to control the Norwegians, the more they wear their nisselues, or red hats, and other red clothing to show their loyalty to Norway. What does this tell you about the Norwegians?

Chapter Eleven: Christmas Eve, 1941

Why does Marit feel like a prisoner in her own country?

Why does Bestefar lie to the Nazi when he asks about Marit's parents?

Chapter Twelve: Miss Halversen's Stand

Aunt Ingeborg stands up to a Nazi Officer in front of her students. What might happen to Aunt Ingeborg? Why did she choose to take a stand?

Chapter Thirteen: Unspoken Thoughts

The teachers of Norway have united by refusing to teach the Nazi philosophies or ideas to their students. Teachers begin to disappear! Why didn't the teachers do what the Nazis wanted?

Marit begins to believe that Bestefar is a quisling, a Norwegian loyal to the Nazis, and not a jossing, or loyal Norwegian. What do you think and why?

Chapter Fourteen: Distant Dreams

Why is it so important to Aunt Ingeborg that Marit have her bunad?

Chapter Fifteen: New Orders

The Nazis take Aunt Ingeborg away for refusing to teach their beliefs. What do you think will happen to her?

Chapter Sixteen: A Desperate Plea

Why does Marit choose to help the injured man from the Resistance? What might happen to her because of her choice?

Chapter Seventeen: The Kraken

Marit tells Lars a story about the Resistance soldier. Why doesn't she tell him the truth?

Why does Marit give the Nazi soldier her blanket?

Chapter Eighteen: In Hiding

Marit makes another decision to help the Resistance by delivering the Klipfish code. She is disobeying her Bestefar and the Nazis by doing so. What do Marit's choices tell you about her character and beliefs? What would you do if you were Marit? What feelings is Marit experiencing?

Chapter Nineteen: A Bucket of Klipfish

Marit makes up another story to tell Lars as she completes her mission and delivers the Klipfish code. Why doesn't she tell Lars the truth?

Chapter Twenty: Ancient Walls

Marit and Lars are in the open sea in their rowboat avoiding killer whales and mines, but thinking about the ancient church and the history of Norway gives her hope. Why do you think that this makes her hopeful?

Chapter Twenty-One: Troubled Mission

Marit is sure that Bestefar will be very angry and blame her for taking Lars in the rowboat and getting lost. Do you think she will tell him the truth about where they went?

Chapter Twenty-Two: Infection

When Henrik, the Resistance soldier becomes very ill, Marit ask for help from Hanna's mother. Why doesn't she ask Bestefar?

Chapter Twenty-Three: Warning

Why does Olaf come to warn Bestefar about the Nazis? Why doesn't Bestefar thank him?

Chapter Twenty-Four: At Risk

Bestefar brings Marit and Lars to the boathouse and Marit learns about 'The Shetland Bus.'
How have your thoughts and feelings about Bestefar changed?

Chapter Twenty-Five: Valuable Cargo

Marit finally tells Bestefar about the Resistance soldier. They have to work together to try and save the soldier. What does Marit learn about Bestefar?

Chapter-Twenty-Six: The Shetland Bus

Bestefar and Marit had to tell each other many lies in this story. Why? Would you have told your grandfather the truth if you had been Marit?

Chapter Twenty-Seven: Homecoming

Five years have passed since Marit left her home to stay with Bestefar. How has she changed?

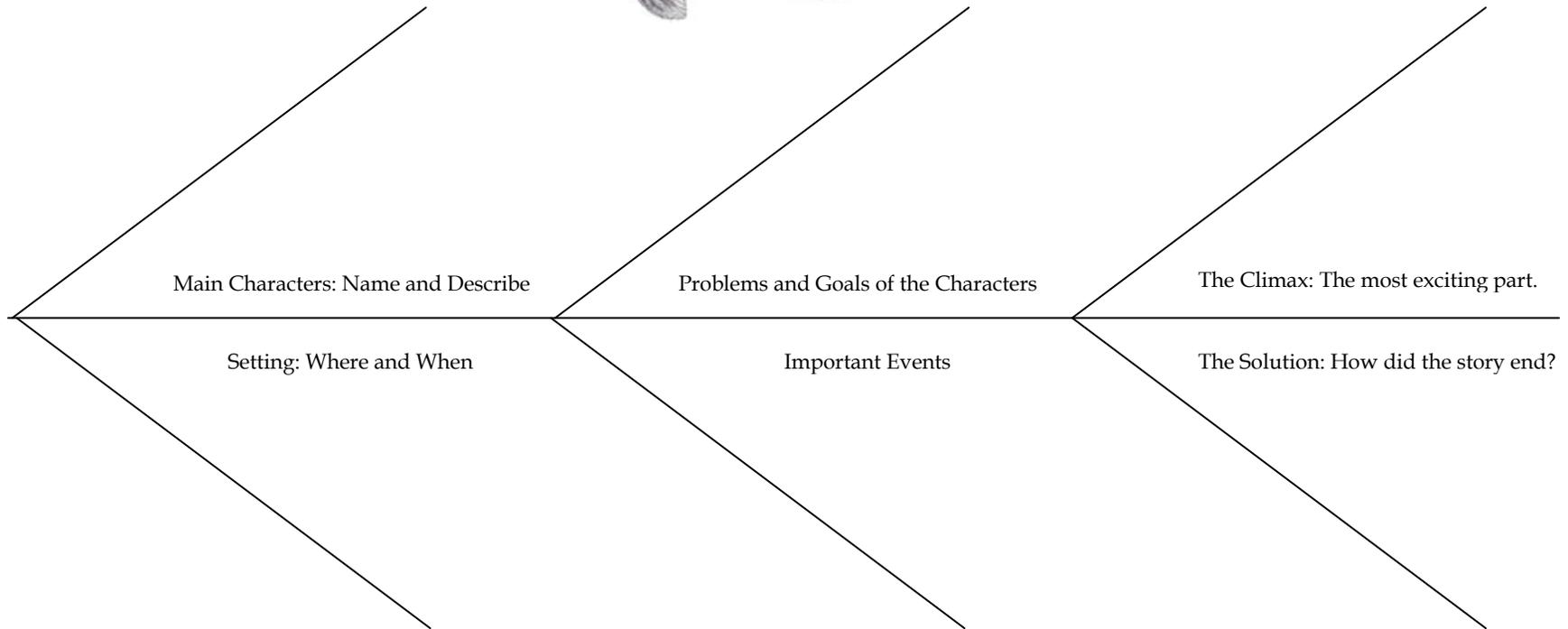
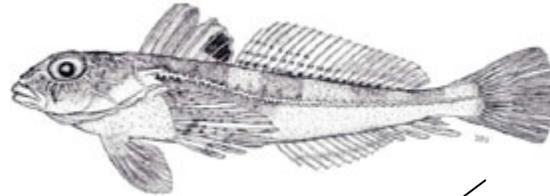
Double Entry Journal

Read the passage or quote from the book. Go back and reread that section. Think about what it means. Think about the feelings of the characters. Respond to the quote or passage on in the left column.

Quote or passage from the book	Your thoughts, feelings, and ideas
As the steamer leaves the harbor, Marit realizes that <i>"something larger and more frightening than she could possibly understand had been set in motion."</i> What do you think she is thinking about? (14)	
The Germans' post pictures of German and Norwegians shaking hands with the caption, "All for Norway!" Marit tells Lars, <i>"Don't believe it. All for Norway is a lie."</i> (p. 6)	
A Nazi tries to make friends with Marit. <i>"You needn't be afraid,"</i> he said. <i>"We're not monsters."</i> Marit screams inside, <i>"You're worse than monsters!"</i> (p. 39)	
<i>"Bestefar,"</i> she asked, her voice shaking with anger, <i>"it says you can't aid the enemy. But who is the enemy?"</i> (p.56)	
<i>Everyone started to wear nisselues, red stocking caps like those worn by gnomes. And if not nissleues, then they wore red caps, scarves, or sweaters as a sign of unity.</i> (p. 70) Why?	
<i>With her heel, Marit carved a large "V" in the road.</i> Why? (p. 79)	

<p><i>"And do you know what the Nazi philosophy is?" She didn't wait for an answer. "It is believing that you are of a superior race."</i></p> <p>Reread this section and share what you think of this philosophy. (P. 92)</p>	
<p><i>"The Nagel of death," Johanne explained, "even that looks good compared to the Gestapo – the Nazi's secret police. Get it?"</i> What did she mean? (P. 164)</p>	
<p><i>"Marit," Hanna's mother interrupted. "You didn't let your fears stop you from...doing what needed to be done. That's bravery."</i> What did Hanna's mother mean? (p. 181)</p>	
<p><i>"I'm sorry Bestefar," she said, certain that the wind drowned her voice to anyone on shore. "I didn't understand you. When you turned in your radio, I had thought you'd given up completely."</i> Why had Marit thought that? Why did she change her mind? (P. 201)</p>	
<p><i>"A message in code?" Marit asked. "Morse code," he said. "The letter V, for victory."</i></p> <p>Share how you think the characters were feeling at that moment. How had a simple code changed their lives. (P. 207)</p>	
<p>Marit remembered her aunt's words: You must do what you feel is right and so must I. <i>"Would she do the same if she had the chance to do it all over again?"</i> (p. 216) What do you think?</p>	

A Klipfish Bone Story Map



After Reading Activities

Klipfish Code: Activity Menu		
<p>Drawing and Illustrating</p> <p>Choose an exciting event from the story. Design an illustration that captures the ideas and action of that event. Choose an art medium-pencil sketch, crayon, marker, watercolor, etc. – and complete the illustration. The completed assignment includes the planning design and the final work.</p>	<p>Join the Author</p> <p>Write a short story about one of the characters from the book that happens either before the war or after the book ends. Begin with a story map to plan the plot sequence. The completed assignment includes the story map and the story.</p>	<p>Create a Code</p> <p>Work with a partner. Learn about secret writing and creating codes. Design a code system to communicate with one another. Use the code to communicate three ideas about the story, The Klipfish Code. The completed assignment includes the explanation of the code and the record of your communication.</p>
<p>Character Study</p> <p>Choose a character from the story. Use the character map to study their thoughts, ideas, actions, and attributes. The completed assignment is the character map.</p>	<p>Act it Out</p> <p>Find a section in the book where two characters are talking and interacting. Write a short Reader’s Theater dialogue. Practice the Reader’s Theater and act it out. The completed assignment includes the written Reader’s Theater script and the performance.</p>	<p>Norwegian Cooking</p> <p>Read about making Lefse, Klipfish, and other Norwegian dishes. Select a recipe and make the dish. Bring it in to share. The completed assignment includes the recipe and the food!</p>
<p>Comparing Customs</p> <p>Read about the Norwegian <i>bunad</i> online. Think about other countries that have a similar custom. Create a Venn Diagram to compare the two customs. The completed assignment is the Venn Diagram.</p>	<p>Interview</p> <p>Do you know someone that was alive during World War II? Design 6-8 interview questions asking what life was like during that time. Set up a time and interview that person. Write notes about their answers. The completed assignment includes the interview questions with the answers.</p>	<p>Make a Timeline</p> <p>A timeline is a history of events over a period of time that tells a story. Make a timeline that shares the important events in Marit’s life during the story. Use the Internet and other resources to study the major events of the Nazi occupation of Norway to help you with dates. (Example: Timeline: Nazi Invasions)</p>

Story Map

Title of the Story: _____

Name: _____

Setting: Where and when the story takes place?
Main Characters: Who is the story about?
Conflict: What is the main character's problem and goal?

The Plot or Story Events		
Beginning	Middle	End

Resolution: How did the main character/s reach the goal or solve the problem?

Create a Code

One of the ways the Allies fought the Nazis during World War II was to create codes. In the book, *The Klipfish Code*, the Resistance used codes to carry messages to one another that could not be easily understood by the Nazis. Codes and ciphers have been used by the military for centuries in order to keep information confidential and away from unauthorized eyes. Businesses also send information in a coded or encrypted way to protect their trade secrets.

The science of creating coded messages, called enciphering and encoding, and receiving and deciphering and decoding the messages is called *cryptography*. Cryptography is a Greek word. The Greek word *kryptos* means hidden. The Greek word *graphia* means writing.

When you substitute one word for another word or sentence, like using a foreign language dictionary, you are using a code.

Example:

Key: jingle = very hungry
Coded Sentence: I'm jingle!
Decoded Sentence: I'm very hungry!

When you mix up or substitute existing letters, you are using a cipher.

Example:

Key: move every letter in the coded sentence back one letter in the alphabet.
Coded Sentence: J hpu bo B po nz Fohmjti uftu.
Decoded Sentence: I got an A on my English test.

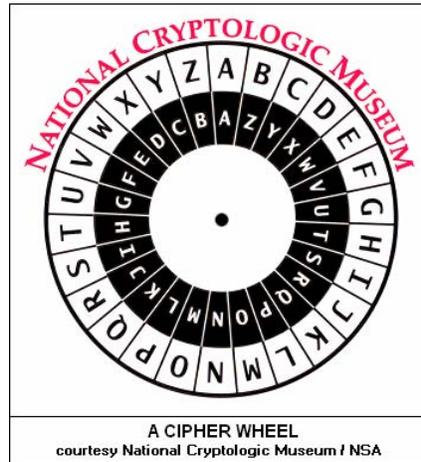
Code makers follow three rules to ensure the most secrecy in their code-making, algorithm, key, and period.

- Algorithm:** the method used to encipher, or create, the original message.
- Key:** the method used to create and to decipher the code, like an answer key.
- Period:** the time during which that algorithm and key will be used. Frequently changing the algorithm and key helps to maintain the secrecy of the code.

The selection of the algorithm, key, and period depends on your needs. If you are in the middle of a war and are receiving current battle information, you would use an algorithm that is quick and easy to decipher in the heat of the battle. However, your opponent may intercept the message, so you also want to have a code that is not easy to break.

Substitution Cipher Wheels:

Make a large circle with the alphabetic letters written clockwise. Make a smaller circle that can fit just inside the larger circle. Put the alphabetic letters on the smaller wheel counter clockwise. You can use the letter "A" as the key letter and line up the dial to begin at the point in the picture below. You can also designate another way to line up the cipher wheel. Just be sure to share that information to the person receiving the cipher.



Available online: http://www.vectorsite.net/ttcode_05_01.png

T W P P M would be H E L L O !

Sliding Cipher Code:

This type of code using the keyboard letters, or "Qwerty," as the code.

Line the alphabet letters above the letters you see on the computer keyboard, starting on the top row and moving downward.

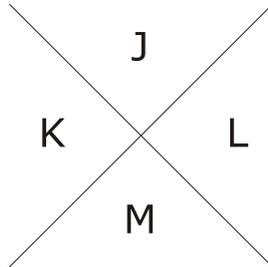
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
Q W E R T Y U I O P A S D F G H J K L Z X C V B N M

I T S S G would be H E L L O !

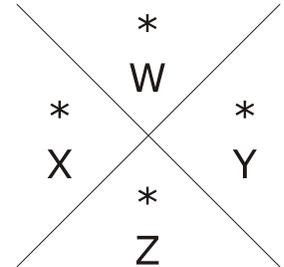
Diagrammatic Cipher:

The diagrammatic cipher substitutes symbols for letters.

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I



N	O	P
Q	R	S
T	U	V



□ □ < < □ Would be HELLO!

Use one of the three codes shared above to create a coded message. Share the coded message and key with a friend.

Character Map

Actions:

Describe some things the character did to show you their personality.

Words:

Share quotes from the story that tell you about the character.

Draw the Character

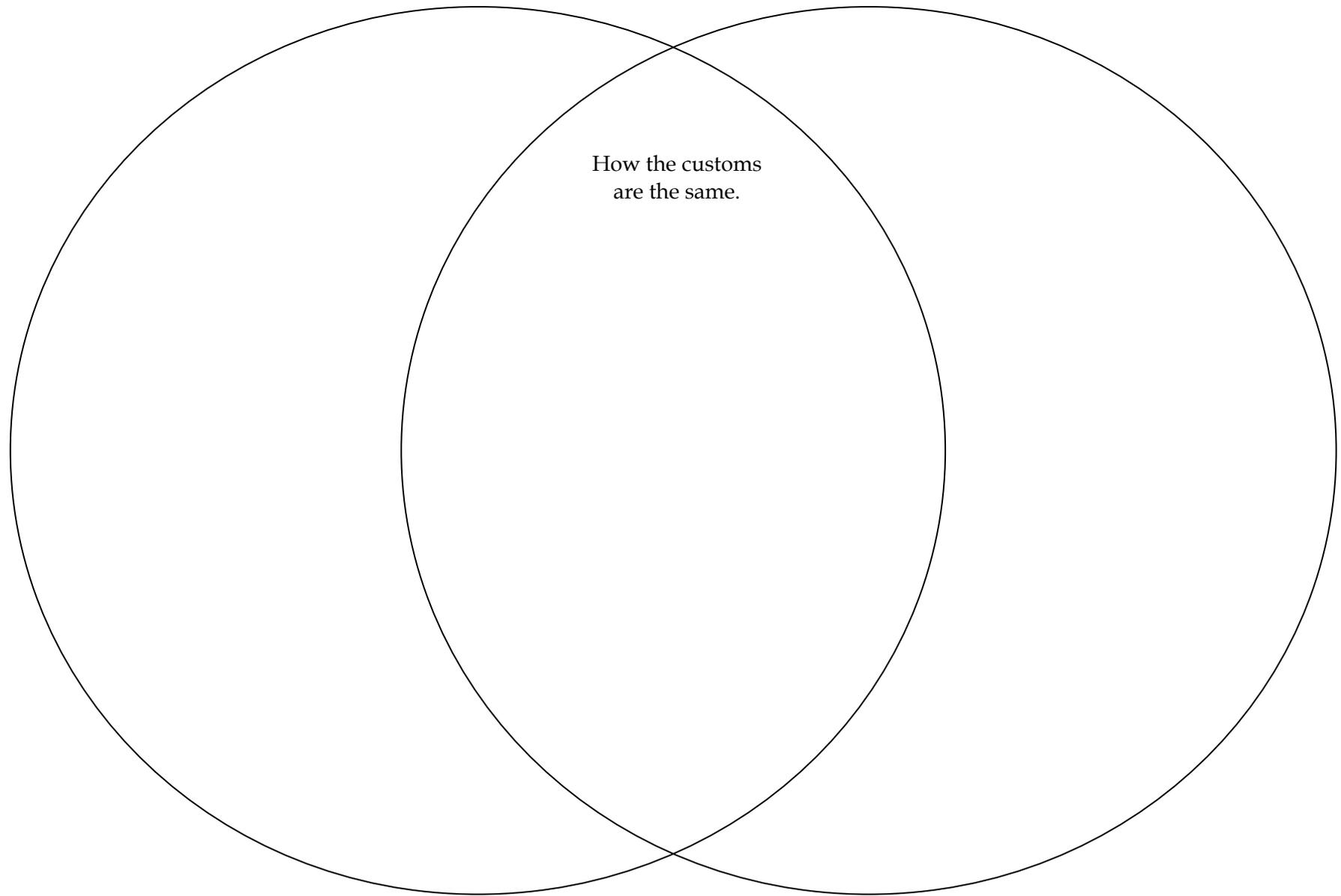
Feelings:

Share your ideas about the characters feelings during two events in the story.

Description:

What do they look like?

Venn Diagram



Timeline of the Nazi Invasions

March 15/16, 1939 - Nazis take Czechoslovakia.

September 1, 1939 – Nazis invade Poland.

Sept 3, 1939 - Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand declare war on Germany.

Sept 10, 1939 - Canada declares war on Germany; Battle of the Atlantic begins.

April 9, 1940 - Nazis occupy Denmark.

April 9, 1940 - Nazis invade Norway.

May 10, 1940 - Nazis invade France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; Winston Churchill becomes British Prime Minister.

June 10, 1940 - Norway surrenders to the Nazis; Italy declares war on Britain and France.

June 14, 1940 - Nazis enter Paris.

Oct 7, 1940 - Nazis enter Romania.

October 6, 1940 - Norway surrenders.

April 6, 1941 - Nazis invade Greece and Yugoslavia.

Sept 19, 1941 - Nazis take Kiev.

Dec 11, 1941 - Germany declares war on the United States.

May 2, 1945 - German troops in Italy surrender.

Rheims. May 7, 1945. Germany's unconditional surrender

