

EXPLORING AN INNOCENT PERSPECTIVE

The story includes an interesting contrast of an innocent child's perspective in a setting with circumstances far from innocent. This section explores the meaning and value of an innocent perspective and how it helps this story to unfold (*se dérouler*).

- 1- What do "innocent" and "naïve" mean when used to describe children?
- 2- Can adults be naïve? In what ways can they be naïve? What adult in the book seemed naïve?
- 3- CH9. Does Bruno and Gretel's tutor (Herr Litz) take advantage of the children's innocence in what he teaches them? How? What are these ideas?
- 4- Although the story takes place during a tragic time in history, there are moments of humor in the story. One occurs when Bruno tells Pavel that he could not be a very good doctor because he had to "practice" it (CH7). How does this example and others in the book demonstrate Bruno's naïveté? Can you give other examples from the book of misinterpretation as a result of innocence?
- 5- Although Bruno and his family have moved to a desolate place, Bruno continues to be adventurous and creative. What are some examples of this in the book?
- 6- What events and experiences lead Bruno to gradually give up some of his innocence and see things differently?
- 7- Why was it so hard for him to believe that his father could be involved in hurtful acts?
- 8- Neither Bruno nor Shmuel knows what is going on in the concentration camp. Explain.
- 9- Why do you think the book ended the way it did?

THE ESSENCE OF FRIENDSHIP

This section explores the reasons, depths and meaning of friendship in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*.

- 1- Why do you think Bruno and Shmuel become friends and stay friends?
- 2- How do the friendships that Bruno has in Berlin are different from his friendship with Shmuel?
- 3- Does the friendship between Bruno and Shmuel evolve in the story? How?
- 4- CH15. Lieutenant Kotler caught Bruno and Shmuel talking to each other. What is Bruno's reaction? How does he feel about it later and what does he do?
- 5- CH15. Why does Shmuel forgive Bruno? How?
- 6- How is it possible for Bruno and Shmuel to have fun together and maintain their friendship in spite of the circumstances?
- 7- How does Bruno justify continuing his friendship with Shmuel despite what his father, sister, and tutor have said about Jews?
- 8- The barbed wire fence is a physical separation between Bruno and Shmuel. What other types of separation does the fence represent in this story?
- 9- CH19. How do Bruno and Shmuel demonstrate the essence of friendship despite their many differences?