

Please follow this format when responding to the following prompts as well as your fellow classmates:

Question

- Name: Answer
 - Name: Response to student

What insights does Friedrich's life in Germany give us about the impact of antisemitism on individuals as well as society as a whole?

- Nick Vichinsky
 - I think Friedrich's life in Germany gives us important insights into German society. For one, it shows us the extremes that the Jewish communities had to endure in this part of Europe. Whether that was everyday commodities like going to the movies, getting dinner, or enjoying the regular emotions of love. Friedrich is constantly restrained due to his personal identity. To this, it shows an animalistic type of treatment toward the Jewish community. They were not seen as a human but a distraction from humanness and everyday life.
 - Cassidy's response: I appreciate the examples you provide when you express how everyday commodities are impacted. I think we sometimes only think of the big picture and how that is impacted, whereas every day smaller and more normal tasks are being impacted as well. The ideas I am expressing in my post connect very well with what you are sharing here. Nice job!
 - Mackenzie - Before this unit, if I were to think about antisemitism, my thoughts would all be directed toward the Holocaust. However, this unit has opened my eyes to the many ways people have suffered because of antisemitism. Your post does a great job highlighting how the everyday life of Jews was affected.
 - **Sarah:** I like how you referred to the treatment as "animalistic" and yet, it makes me wonder if animals would do what we humans are capable of doing. Especially when we think about all the atrocities mankind has committed.
- Allen Webb
 - One thing I really appreciate about the novel is that it shows the way that anti-semitism develops and grows in Germany. It takes years, and becomes increasingly terrible. There are people who are anti-semitic, and become rabidly more so when political leaders give it legitimacy. Others, like Friedrich's teacher, who are opposed to what is happening. There are organizations that influence youth that start making more and more of a difference, like the scouting group. My point is that the novel portrays the rise of anti-semitisms under Hitler as something *normal*. By that I mean that the Germans were not some kind of breed of monsters. They were a society not unlike our own. That makes what happens all the more frightening. And puts the responsibility on all of us, and, yes, on teachers in particular. Part of what is interesting is the somewhat diverse reaction of the Jews themselves, of course especially Frederick's father. You know the idea that you can put a frog in water and if you slowly raise the temperature it

won't jump out, until it is cooked. Whether that is true or not scientifically, I don't know, but the analogy is clear in this case. My brother suggested to me what I thought was a very good sign to carry at a climate change protest: Don't Die Like a Frog! Maybe the coronavirus will make us smarter. Maybe not.

- Cassidys response: You really hit a point that I was focused on during my reading of the novel too. This idea that people have the power to do so much evil. It does indeed make everything much more frightening. If we were able to put horrible titles, such as antisemantic people, on these fictional monster like characters it would seem like a far off thing. However, noting that people are the ones responsible for such terrible impacts really highlights the severity of what the novel is getting at. Thanks for putting what I had been thinking into words!
- Mackenzie - I appreciate your connection to climate change and the coronavirus. It amazes me how timeless the themes in literature are. When teaching whole-class novels, I think bringing up these connections is very important.
- Nick - One point that I really like that you touched on Dr. Webb is that teachers have the responsibility to take the pace care and be the leader for change. It also helps put into perspective, how we can put it into perspective.
- **Sarah:** I believe pointing out the notion that things happened gradually is incredibly important! When I've been in the classroom and we talk about books like Maus, not many teachers touch on the fact that everything doesn't happen in one day. Things built up and eventually got worse.
- Cassidy VanGilder
 - Fredrich's life in Germany really does give us an idea of the impact that antisemitism can have on both individuals and a whole society, being that we see both in the reading. Due to Fredrich being a jew, he is treated very poorly and differently in Germany. The ways we see him be treated highlight that as an individual antisemitism is changing his life. However, we see all Jewish people in his community being treated the way he is... which then ties in the way a whole society is impacted. Not only are the Jewish people in Germany being impacted because they are the targets, but the people targeting them are showing who they are in society too.
 - Allen Webb - And the Jews in Germany were mostly well "assimilated," they lived just like the Germans and thought of themselves as Germans.
 - Nick - I think one point that we need to highlight is that there is a weaponization of german education. In this education they taught bias curriculum that painted hitler as a god and the jewish as evil. I think that is something to be careful about in our own education.
 - **Sarah:** I agree with your points. It's saddening that he was German until he wasn't anymore and that change happened due to people.
 - Stephan: I agree with your points, and I really like Nick's point about the role that education during this time played. These antisemitic beliefs were being instilled in youth, perpetuating the shift in the communities perspectives and treatment of Jews.

- Mackenzie McClain
 - Friedrich's life gives great insight into how antisemitist attitudes can negatively impact innocent lives. For example, Friedrich is forced to move schools, his mother is killed by a rioting mob, and his father is fired from his job. It is devastating how just one of Friedrich's many identifying factors, his religion, affected every part of his life. By many, he wasn't seen as a person, but a Jew, as though his religion made him some sort of animal. Of course, Friedrich's story is just one of many stories—the whole society was influenced by anti-semitism. This idea reminds me of a quote from Martin Luther King Jr., "No one is free until we are all free." In other words, when one group's liberties are stripped away, the liberties of the whole society are endangered.
 - Nick- I touched on this in Cassidy's point, but it takes incredible reflection to understand what biases we are being fed. As a teacher we must be aware of these things so we make sure we are preaching freedom of the mind.
 - **Sarah:** You are totally right! It's important to talk about how mob mentality impacted innocent lives based on labels.
- **Sarah Giramia:** To echo what everyone has already mentioned, we readers learn about how antisemitism impacted all the parts of Friedrich's life. It shows us how antisemitism is not something that people are born with but is a learned behavior. Friedrich having to move schools showed us the negative interactions he had with his classmates just for being Jewish. Like Mackenzie wrote he is no longer awarded the human right to enjoy the simple pleasures of his existence. Instead he is ostracized in society for something he cannot change. Something he did not choose. Many people who read the story now recognize how insane and inhumane his treatment and his family's treatment was but I wonder if we put ourselves in the historical context of the story, would still think the same way?
 - Stephan: I really like the question that you raise. It's interesting to think about whether or not we all would fall into the same influence that many people did during that time. I think that this book does a good job demonstrating how power, influence, and fear can move people to believe and act in this way. I like to think that I wouldn't, but it's really hard to put myself in that context.
- Stephan Santiago: One of the most interesting things about this book is how it shows the change in attitudes towards Jews over time. The feelings of hatred towards Friedrich's community were learned over time as Hitler's power and influence spread. People who before the Nazi reign had no feelings of antisemitism were now actively participating in the marginalization of the Jewish community. Friedrich's story highlights many of the horrors of this time period, but I think that it is important to recognize that these feelings are still present today. This unit has done a good job at bringing up the fact that although the Holocaust is often the main event that is associated with antisemitism, this issue isn't new at all.

Notably, the narrator is the one who describes the narrative and Friedrich himself. How could this perspective be used in the English classroom to combat antisemitism?

- Nick Vichinsky
 - I think the perspective is an interesting one to use. I think one of the main standards that I would like to explore is, “**RL.9-10.3** - Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.” I think in analyzing the interaction and decisions of other students become closer to the character. They start picturing themselves within the circumstances and hence, empathy is created. In using the perspective of a non-Jewish narrator we can see how society shapes these biases in individuals. We can also see how connection and humanness can be made through conversation and friendship.
 - Cassidy's response: I appreciate that you added a standard into your analysis of this discussion question and your thought process as to how you'd teach using the narrative's perspective. The part of that standard that stands out to me is looking at the way the narrator interacts with Friedrich. You could do some work comparing their beliefs and stereotypical ways they might have interacted in Germany to how they really do interact!
 - Mackenzie - I also like how you looked to the Common Core standards. It is nice to see how social justice can fit into the standards—a good reminder that we don't need to abandon the standards in order to teach beyond them.
 - Sarah: Thank you for adding a standard. And I agree that closeness will be created.
- Cassidy VanGilder
 - As I was reading this novel, I was thinking of the role the narrator could play in my teaching. The element of the narrator that stands out to me is the fact that he is not Jewish. Being that I share this identity with the narrator, I was able to see the story kind of from that lens rather than truly grapple with what Friedrich himself was going through. I think my students might be able to relate to that with me. The narrator kind of opens a door to these conversations in a way that lets us talk about the perspective we can have when interacting with people that share different identities than ourselves. I would really take this identity and run with it as we read this in my class.
 - Stephan: I agree, I think that the narrator allows students who don't identify within the Jewish community to have conversations regarding the different perspectives and identities and how they influence our own experiences.
 - Allen Webb We get to learn along with the narrator about Jewish life, and the impact of changing ideas, behaviors, rules, and laws. The video we watched about Kristallnacht really showed the extent of devastation, that, in the novel, is portrayed around only a few characters.

- Mackenzie - Cassidy, I agree that the interactions between the narrator and Friedrich are great opportunities for classroom discussions on how to treat people who are different from ourselves. These conversations could be especially insightful in schools that lack diversity. Students who don't have much experience with diversity need to be prepared to interact kindly and intelligently with people who are different because eventually diversity impacts us all.
- Nick- That is kind of what I was talking about in my post, Cassidy. I think it is imperative that students analyze the relationships present in this book. In this students can understand justice through connection and interaction
- **Sarah:** Yes! Constructive dialogue is definitely what would arise from this situation.
- Mackenzie McClain
 - Since the narrator is not a Jew, but Friedrich, the main character, is a Jew, everyone who picks up this novel can see themselves. Students in your class who may identify as Jewish can see their experiences and the experiences of their ancestors depicted in Friedrich's life. For students in your class who do not identify as Jewish, they can step into the narrator's shoes. As students see how the narrator changes throughout the novel, their own ideas may change alongside him. In order to highlight the changes both the narrator and Friedrich make from the beginning of the story to the end, I would have my students keep a characterization chart. Observing characterization kind of gives a "so what?" behind reading a novel. Seeing characters change inspires our own change.
 - I like the specific example of a characterization chart. I was also thinking of having students draw a "road map" that is students draw a road where the character starts and ends and analyzes the other possibilities of their choices.
 - Cassidy: It is always important to find the "so what" behind the books we are providing our students with! I think that without the narrator being characterized the way he is, the "so what" might be harder for students that are not Jewish to discover on their own. Nice work!
 - Sarah: Perspectives are important when talking about difficult topics. I like that you mention that both students who are non-Jewish and Jewish would receive something bigger from the reading based on the simple fact that the narrator themselves aren't Jewish but the story is about someone who is.
- **Sarah Giramia:** As mentioned above, the narrator's role is primarily significant because they are non-Jewish. When using this book to teach about anti-semitism, I believe that it helps the non-Jewish students read through a familiar lens. The reader isn't exposed to Friedrich's deepest feelings and thoughts, instead they are able to come up with what they think. This is a great opportunity to instill the critical inquiry framework. Students use what is provided to them by the narrator to come up with conclusions. This is important because it's no longer what is told to them but it's what they analyze and what they come to terms with. Students are given a responsibility for their thinking and their analysis.
- Stephan Santiago: The narrator identifying outside of the Jewish community allows readers who share this identity to understand the struggles and the harsh treatment that

the Jewish community experienced. Being able to find a commonality between readers and the narrator can make it easier to put yourself in the context of the story. Having students keep track of the changing mindset of the community and how it affects not only the narrator but Friedrich and the Jewish community could be a good way to discuss the significance of having the narrator have a non-Jewish perspective.

How do other elements of the text relate to what we have already discussed in this unit?

- Nick Vichinsky
 - I think one of the main themes we have considered throughout this course is the idea of inclusion through empathy. We are supposed to be brought closer to a community by getting to know its characters. Through these stories, we can assess our own biases and look for further research into our shortcomings. Developing empathy toward a situation is a way of inclusion. Thinking about how an experience of a young Jewish boy in Germany can have similarities to the treatment of different races, genders, ideas, etc in America can become a powerful connection.
 - Stephan: I think one of the most important goals that we as teachers need to aim for is teaching empathy to our students, no matter what perspectives or experiences we are teaching. Without empathy, learning about the differences in people isn't as meaningful.
 - Cassidys response: This makes me think of what Dr. Webb talked about last Monday when we were going over the introductions to this course. The idea of people being treated like they do not belong in a place that they clearly do is something we see in the world today. Therefore, I really like your idea of thinking how the experiences of Fredrich can correlate to the history happening around students today!
 - Mackenzie - Yes, it's so important that we examine our own biases! It is truly scary how much we subconsciously judge people. I appreciate how you've tied this idea into a potential unit on this book.
 - Sarah: I was thinking the same thing! It gives us insight on how things evolve where we are and how all the isms in society impact all of us.
- Cassidy VanGilder
 - This novel contains some emotionally heavy stuff, honestly. A good way to tie in what we have discussed in this unit and to prepare our students for the content of this text would be to do a pre-reading station activity, much like we did last week! This would frame the students mindset that the boy they are reading the story about shares the Jewish identity with singers or actors or artists that they know and love. It is not some fictional identity and some made up story, rather we are drawing the connections to real life for our students.
 - Nice idea about stations. I wonder what would be good stations to have? One that occurs to me would include learning more about Germany during the period. One clip I used when I taught *Night* in high school was from the film version of *Inside the Third Reich* where Derek Jacoby (famous British actor) playing Adolf

Hitler giving a speech. We usually see Hitler speaking in German waving his arms around, and he looks crazy. How could German people follow him? Take a look at this [6 minute video clip](#) of a master actor playing Hitler, and speaking in English. What might students get out of that?

- Mackenzie - I also wrote about the exposure stations we did in class. I loved that activity and think it would be really valuable to include in my own classroom. The idea to use it as an introduction is great!
- Nick - I thought this was an insightful post thinking about students. Anything around this topic is heavy. I think the exposure stations are important to include. I think we could also have more enjoyable interactive activities too. Characterization sheet as Mackenzie said, or a road map.
- **Sarah:** To piggyback off what all have said, the exposure stations really bring things close to home. I think that they helped us as learners recognize the people in our society that are often overlooked or not thought too deep about. It also shows us how even though the writers, artists, musicians were Jewish they were seen as American first. This goes back to the idea of separation between what it meant to be German and what it meant to be Jewish.
- Mackenzie
 - The way Friedrich's life is turned totally upside down because of his Jewish identity is a stark contrast to many of the artists, especially modern day musicians, I learned about in the exposure stations last Wednesday. For many musicians, such as Adam Levine, Jack Black, and P!nk, their religion has not prevented them from achieving great success. It is encouraging to see how Jews today, generally, are way less hindered than those who came before them. It is heart-wrenching to see how so many Jews like Friedrich suffered greatly, but encouraging to see how they paved the way for Jews today to reach great success. I wonder how much better our world would be today if society from the beginning of time would have realized how much every human being, despite religion, race, gender, sexual identity etc., had to offer.
 - Nick- I think despite coming a long way, we still have a long way to go. However, understanding how different identities have affected others in history is an imperative part of becoming more sympathetic to these issues.
 - Cassidy: I see we both wrote about the exposure stations! The idea of understanding how the past directly impacts what they know about Jewish people currently is a great point to emphasize with your students comprehension of the topic!
 - **Sarah:** You are so right. I didn't really think about it that way but Adam Levine being a Jew never really crossed my mind and personally, it doesn't change how I see him. It's interesting how that works!
- **Sarah Giramia:** Friedrich's life teaches us about empathy, like Nick mentioned, and shows us the evilness we as human beings all possess. The fact that not everyone was overtly antisemitic but became that way gradually, shows us what we are all capable of. As teachers, we have to recognize our biases and like we talked about in discussions,

when it comes to hard topics like these, we need to be well equipped to make sure that we provide our students with the best accurate information. The fact of the matter is, we might come in contact with students who share negative and racist ideals. We have to know how to approach that situation and how to make sure we do not demonize our students to the point where learning no longer happens. We have to expose our students to different things, like the exposure stations, we have to make it hit close to home. Friedrich's life is something that has to be taught with intent. All the topics that are tough to talk about have to be taught with the intent of educating our students and showing them how those things impact their daily lives. This helps create a foundation of awareness that they can cultivate themselves through the tools that they are given.