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NOVEL STUDY - GROUP DISCUSSION

Suggestions for Use.

An oral group discussion provides an opportunity for students to share ideas about a novel that they have read. It enables them to express their ideas orally, which can be an advantage for students who have difficulty in expressing ideas in a written format.

This activity should be done when students have read several novels. Each group should consist of students who have read the same novel. Groups can be organized so that they consist of students of mixed ability or of equal ability. If a group consists of students requiring additional assistance, it is helpful to have a peer tutor or a teacher's aide supervise the group or even act as coordinator.

A guided discussion page has been included to help the students organize the activity.

Set a time limit for the discussion. A shorter time period will make the students stay on task.

Point out that some questions ask for an opinion and therefore there will be no right or wrong answers. Stress that the opinions of all group members are important.

Each group should be provided with a sheet of chart paper and a large magic marker to record the pertinent points of the discussion.

If desired the students can present their conclusions to another group or the whole class.

A Peer Evaluation Sheet has been included. This can be used to evaluate the participation of the group members in the discussion. Each student fills in the information at the top of the sheet. These are collected by the Coordinator, who completes the form as the group decided on the marks to be awarded. Finally the students decide on whether they would like to work with the student again. "Maybe" allows them to suggest ways in which an improvement can be made.

Some groups may be more critical than others, so some adjustments may need to be made if these marks are used for evaluation. However, the comments of their peers can be helpful to students and teachers.

THE SUMMER OF MY GERMAN SOLDIER

by **Bette Greene**

Theme: The friendship between an American Jewish girl and a German prisoner of war during World War II.

Setting: **Place:** Jenkinsville, Arkansas.
Time: Summer, 1943

Synopsis:

The story is told by Patty Bergen, a lonely, twelve year old. She is very intelligent and curious about life. Although she tries hard to please her parents, her efforts meet with little success, and she is constantly berated by her father and nagged by her mother.

When a camp for German prisoners of war was opened in Jenkinsville, the inmates are a source of consternation and curiosity to the townspeople.

Patty meets Anton Reiker while working in her father's store. She is surprised by his friendly attitude and his ability to speak English. When Anton escapes from the camp, Patty shelters him in a room over the family's garage. They become friends, and she discovers that they have many attitudes and characteristics in common.

Anton's leaves the safety of his hiding place when he sees Patty's father hitting her with a belt. He is seen by the Bergen's maid, Ruth, who helps Patty to smuggle food to him.

Eventually Anton leaves Jenkinsville, but is killed when he is recaptured. Patty's part in his escape is discovered, and she is deserted by her parents and sent to a reform school.

While in the reform school she plans what to do when released, and decides to follow her interest in writing. She is encouraged in this by Charlene Madlee, a reporter interested in her case. Ruth continues to visit and comfort her, but her parents do not communicate with her.

(*Ellen's Secret* by Jean Booker tells of a young English girl's discovery of an escaped German airman.)