

# Educator Discussion Guide

## PROJEKT 1065: A NOVEL OF WORLD WAR II

by Alan Gratz

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2018-2019

Grade 6-8

*Submitted by Rebekah Bradshaw and Courtney Stein  
School of Library and Information Science, LSU, Baton Rouge*

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Michael O'Shaunessy, an Irish teen, is a spy serving in the Hitler Youth of 1943, and in order to do his job well he must overcome great physical and emotional hardship. In partnership with his parents, Michael gains the trust of Nazis to infiltrate their order and gain information for the British effort. After obtaining plans for a new Nazi Jet, Michael must smuggle the information to the allies without alerting the authorities of his hidden intentions. Readers will remain on edge wondering if he can pull off this vital task.



*Projekt 1065* is a story of bravery, risk, and selflessness. A spy for the Allies and a Hitler fanatic will both go to great lengths to protect what they believe to be true. This young adult novel is appealing for most, and “while the book is replete with fascinating historic insight, Gratz has also crafted a suspenseful mystery that will keep readers on the edge of their seats. With short, action-packed chapters, it is a great choice for reluctant readers as well” (Nadig). This is an excellent cross-curricular novel for both literacy and social studies teachers to share with their classes. It’s a well-researched and accessible page-turner.

Nadig, Nancy. "Projekt 1065: A Novel of World War II." *School Library Journal*, vol. 62, no. 8, Aug. 2016, p. 101. EBSCOhost, [libezp.lib.lsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=117308685&site=ehost-live&scope=site](http://libezp.lib.lsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=117308685&site=ehost-live&scope=site).

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alan Gratz is an award-winning writer of novels, short stories, magazine articles, plays, radio commercials, and television episodes. He has taught middle schoolers how to build catapults, lectured at a Czech university, and sold other people’s books. Gratz earned his master’s degree in English Education from the University of Tennessee. He currently lives in Asheville, North Carolina with his wife and daughter. He enjoys playing games, eating pizza, and, unsurprisingly, reading books.

Biographical information taken from the author's website at <https://www.alangratz.com/about/>  
Accessed 4 October 2017.

## **BOOK AWARDS**

Kirkus Best Middle-  
2016

Fall 2016 Parents' Choice Gold Award

2017-2018 Vermont Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award nominee

2017-2018 North Carolina Young Adult Book Award Middle School nominee



Grade Books of

## **PREREADING ACTIVITIES**

### **Group Research Presentations**

Pre-reading activity for three class periods:

Break students up into small groups of two or three. Assign one of the following topics to each group:

1. Hitler Youth
2. Phobias
3. Atomic bomb
4. Allied Powers (as it pertains to World War II)
5. Axis Powers (as it pertains to World War II)
6. Funicular
7. Schutzstaffel
8. Kristallnacht
9. Adolf Hitler
10. Battle of Stalingrad

Give students these instructions:

In your small groups, create a slide presentation that provides important information about the topic you are assigned.

- Research the topic using valid sources on the library's database options or find books or other sources online. Remember to use evaluation tools when selecting your resources.
- Decide with your group members what is important to share with the class about this topic. Keep it basic. Pretend you are writing an informative article for the middle school newspaper.
- Each slide must contain some text and images.
- There must be 4 to 8 informational slides in your presentation.
- Font must be at least 18-point.
- There must be a title slide.
- The final slide must include a full MLA citation for all sources used, including pictures.

This project will take three 90-minute class periods. Students will have one full class period to research their topics and organize their ideas. They will have another class period to work on the presentations. One class period will be used for presenting.

Rubrics: These can be used as-is or modified for specifics.

For oral presentation:

[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/30700\\_rubric.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/30700_rubric.pdf)

For slides:

[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson289/ext\\_rubric.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson289/ext_rubric.pdf)

## Hitler Youth 101 and Class Discussion

Pre-reading activity for one class period:

1. Define the term Hitler Youth for the students. This article from *Encyclopedia Britannica* is a good source with which to begin: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hitler-Youth>
2. Pull up this video on Scholastic.com. It's an interview with Susan Campbell Bartoletti, author of *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow*. In the interview, she explains a lot about her writing process, but she also sheds a great deal of light on the how and why of the Hitler Youth organization. Teachers can certainly select clips to view or they can view the entire video. <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/videos/teaching-content/introduction-susan-campbell-bartoletti-and-her-book-hitler-youth-growing-hitlers-shadow/>
3. Discuss with students their reactions to the film. Starter questions could include:
  - a. Have you ever been compelled to do something you didn't feel was right?
  - b. How much power do young people really have? Are teenagers truly capable of making a powerful change?
  - c. What do you know about the American involvement of young people during World War II? Was it similar to or different than the actions of the Hitler Youth?
  - d. What questions do you have about the Hitler Youth, World War II, Germany, etc.?  
(Note, the teacher should record these questions and use them for later lessons.)
  - e. Teachers can use this guide from PBS on conducting meaningful discussions on sensitive topics: [http://bento.cdn.pbs.org/hostedbento-prod/filer\\_public/SBAN/Images/Classrooms/Ten%20Tips%20for%20Facilitating%20Classroom%20Discussions%20on%20Sensitive%20Topics\\_Final.pdf](http://bento.cdn.pbs.org/hostedbento-prod/filer_public/SBAN/Images/Classrooms/Ten%20Tips%20for%20Facilitating%20Classroom%20Discussions%20on%20Sensitive%20Topics_Final.pdf)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Analyze the cover of the book. What clues does it give away about the content of the story? What about the title?
2. Why does Michael come to Fritz's defense after the other Hitler Youth boys begin beating him after he hesitates to participate in the book burning exercise?
3. Compare and contrast the Gestapo, SRD, SS, and Hitler Youth.
4. What is Michael's phobia? How does he work toward overcoming it over the course of the story? Include specific examples from the text.
5. What is the Bund Deutscher Madel and who in the book is a member? How does s/he come to be connected with Michael?
6. Who are the Edelweiss Pirates and what do they have in common with the Nazis?
7. What are some of the ways the Edelweiss Pirates are fighting back against Hitler and his Nazis?
8. List two reasons why Michael and his parents agree to hide Simon after his plane is shot down flying over Berlin, Germany. Where do they hide him?
9. What defense mechanism does Simon teach Michael to use to combat his phobia?
10. Michael recounts his experience during Kristallnacht at the beginning of the book. Simon narrates his experience of the Blitz in England. What does the term "Kristallnacht" mean in English and what was it? What was the Blitz? Compare the two events. How were they different? How were they similar?

11. On page 103, Herr Professor Doktor Major Melcher states that the Fuhrer is not the best example of the Aryan ideal. Define the term “Aryan.” What does Melcher mean by “the Aryan ideal”? Why could speaking against the Fuhrer get him in trouble?
12. More than once, Michael returns to his memory of Kristallnacht described in scene at the beginning of the novel. Describe one such flashback. What is happening in Michael’s present when he thinks back on that night four years previous? What difficult choice does he have to make and how does it affect him?
13. How does Michael join the science team? What are the steps he takes to ensure his participation?
14. How does Michael face his phobia at the climax scene of the book? Does he succeed? Why or why not?
15. On page 296, Michael wonders, “What right did the Swiss, the Irish, the Spanish—anyone—have to sit out the fight for the fate of the world when they too would live or die by the result?” Michael and his parents are Irish, and neutral, which is why there is still an Irish embassy in Berlin, Germany at the height of WWII. Define “neutrality.” Do Michael and his parents—and by extension of them, Ireland—embody the definition of the word? What are some of the choices Michael and his parents make to support their viewpoint?

## **CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**

### **Health and Physical Education:**

Practice meditation in order to manage fear and anxiety. <https://www.mindful.org/a-mindfulness-practice-for-facing-your-fears/>

### **Art:**

Try to draw a scene or image from memory. Practice your photographic memory skills. <http://thevirtualinstructor.com/blog/how-to-draw-from-memory>

### **Language Arts:**

Research the use of foil characters as a literary device and discuss their use in the novel. (The two examples in this novel are Michael and Fritz and Michael and Simon.) <https://www.britannica.com/art/foil-literature>

Construct a Plot Diagram for the entire novel. <http://www.storyboardthat.com/articles/e/plot-diagram>

### **Science:**

Read and discuss these articles on atomic weapons. Focus on the science behind the weapon that changed warfare and world power forever. Then discuss with students how scientific discoveries have changed the world for better and for worse at the same time. <https://www.britannica.com/technology/atomic-bomb>  
<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-history/period-7/apush-us-wwii/a/the-manhattan-project-and-the-atomic-bomb>

### **Social Studies:**

Show and discuss this Dr. Seuss political cartoon against Irish neutrality from March 18, 1942. The cartoon featuring Ireland is slide 30. Discuss how people might have felt

differently about Ireland's neutrality once they knew the truth about their aid to the allied powers. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/31/dr-seuss-world-war-2-cartoons-photos\\_n\\_1559760.html?slideshow=true#gallery/229804/29](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/31/dr-seuss-world-war-2-cartoons-photos_n_1559760.html?slideshow=true#gallery/229804/29)

**Vocabulary:**

Unbounded	Dissent	Synchronize
Loath	Culture	Phobia
Acrid	Annual	Accusation
Riot	Ration	Motto
Mar	Relic	Judder
Silhouette	Giddy	Marionette
Chloroform	Undaunted	

**RELATED WEBSITES**

**CIA Kids' Zone**

<https://www.cia.gov/kids-page/games>

Let students explore and put their spy skills to the test with these fun activities hosted by the Central Intelligence Agency.

**Historypin**

<https://www.historypin.org/en/>

Explore historical collections created by other users or develop your own. Students can discover and gather information and links about their own personal histories all in one location.

**10 Disturbing Pieces of Nazi Education Propaganda**

<http://www.master-of-education.org/10-disturbing-pieces-of-nazi-education-propaganda/>

A collection of Nazi propaganda images from WWII aimed at children and influenced by the Hitler Youth.

**WatchKnowLearn – World War II**

<http://www.watchknowlearn.org/Category.aspx?CategoryID=980>

A collection of educational videos about different aspects of WWII.

**Teacher Vision – The Manhattan Project**

<https://www.teachervision.com/japan/manhattan-project>

A collection of resources for teachers on the Manhattan Project for grades 5-8.

**Fold'N Fly**

<http://www.foldnfly.com/#/1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-2>

A database of paper airplane designs with easy-to-follow instructions varying from easy to expert.

