
UNIT 1 ANNE FRANK'S *THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL*

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit you will be able to:

- comprehend the diary of a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl who lived in Holland under Nazi rule;
- outline the horrors of the Holocaust, the persecution of the Jews, and the trauma of the Second World War; and
- appreciate the art and craft of writing a diary.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The main intention of this Unit is to acquaint you with the literary form called diary, using the work of one of the greatest diary writers of all times - Anne Frank.

Anne Frank’s diary is a clandestine diary written in secret. Thus it is an example of the diary form used for providing an outlet for ideas, words and thoughts that would have been illegal or would have caused a scandal or even death for the writer had it been seized during the time of its writing.

Anne Frank was a Jewish girl born in Hitler’s Nazi Germany. Her diary reveals the trauma and agony of the Holocaust. Her diary, gifted to her on her thirteenth birthday, was named ‘Kitty’ by her and chronicles the events of her life from June 14, 1942 to August 1, 1944. These two years of her life, spent in hiding with her family in a ‘Secret Annexe’ in Amsterdam to escape Nazi persecution, also coincides with the height of World War II. Anne Frank died in a concentration camp after their hideout was discovered by the Gestapo in 1944. Friends found her diary in the attic of the hideout and it was published by her father Otto Frank under the title *The Diary of a Young Girl*-(1947).

Anne Frank's Diary is a remarkable book, a book that speaks truthfully about one of the most despicable chapters in human history - the Holocaust.

1.1.1 The Holocaust

Holocaust refers to the state-sponsored systematic killing of millions of Jewish people by Nazi Germany and its allies under the rule of Adolf Hitler during World War II (1939 - 45). The Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933 and from the very beginning, their policies were anti-Semitic (founded on hatred of the Jews). Under the Nazi rule the Jewish businesses were boycotted, Jews were dismissed from government services and finally they were also deprived of all citizenship rights. Synagogues were destroyed and Jews began to be hunted down, imprisoned in concentration camps or forced into ghettos. The early years of the World War II saw the victory of Germany and many parts of Europe came under Nazi rule. In all these places the Jews were systematically evacuated and killed or forced into slave labour under inhuman conditions. By the end of the Second World War, when the Allies defeated Germany nearly six million Jews had been killed by the Nazis.

1.2 DIARY WRITING AS A LITERARY FORM

A diary, like an autobiography or a memoir, belongs to the autobiographical genre of writing. It is a literary form in which the writer maintains a regularly kept record of his or her own life and thoughts. As a genre it has been practiced for over five hundred years. The name diary is derived from the Latin word 'dies' meaning 'days' which makes clear the 'day to day' nature of the writing. In a diary, to avoid the monotony of a monologue, the writer often invents a fictional addressee, a recipient of the words that are created. The phrase 'Dear Diary', or as Anne Frank's christening of her diary 'Kitty', helps the writer avoid the pain of writing in a vacuum. The diary as a narrative of events in a day by day chronological order, records truthfully the thoughts, hopes and emotions of the diarist which are often intensely personal and private. At its purest, diary writing is a form of self reflection, a therapeutic mediation of one's life not intended for public eyes. Thus the diaries help individuals, as in the case of Anne Frank, to cope with the stress and trauma in their lives. Yet diaries are also intended for posterity and have future readership in mind. Writers like Jonathan Swift and Samuel Pepys have used the diary form not only to comment upon the lives, but also as a means of describing and critically analyzing the society, culture and politics of their times.

The diary is also a valuable historical document of an individual life and gives the historian written evidence of the historical, social and political circumstances of a particular period. It helps to enhance our understanding of key periods in history. It is an individual's response to a public calamity and, as is typical of the genre, is an interesting mix of the 'literary' and 'non-literary', the public and private.

During times of great social unrest when public records may have been suppressed, altered or destroyed, the diary can be relied upon to provide a truthful account of the events as is the case with Anne Frank's diary. In chronicling the life of a Jewish family in hiding in Nazi-occupied Holland, it gives us a powerful record of social history that would have remained unknown otherwise.

1.3 LIFE OF ANNELIESE MARIE “ANNE” FRANK

Anne Frank (1929-1945) was born in Germany as the second daughter of Otto Heinrich Frank and Edith Hollander. Her sister's name was Margot Frank. In 1933, when Hitler's Nazi party won the election and anti-semitic demonstrations began taking place in Germany, Otto Frank moved with his family to Amsterdam and started business there. In 1940 Germany invaded the Netherlands and Jews began to be persecuted there too. The early references in Anne's diary depict the changes taking place under the German occupation. When a notice summoning Margot to the Nazi office was issued, Otto Frank and his family decided to move into a hiding place behind the company's premises which was called the "Secret Annexe". On July 6, 1942, the family moved into the secret annexe. The hideout consisted of two small rooms with an adjoining toilet on the first level, a large and smaller room at the second level and an attic. The door to the secret rooms was covered with a bookshelf. Another family consisting of Mr and Mrs Van Dam and their sixteen year old son Peter, joined Anne's family of four. Later, a dentist called Albert Dusrl was also given shelter. They were supported and looked after by a group of local friends, Koophuis, Miep, Elli and Menk Van Senten. Thus this group of eight people started their life in the cramped quarters of a secret hideout. In the beginning Anne speaks of her pleasure at having people to talk to, but soon tensions develop within the group. Anne's relationship with her mother is much strained but she remains very close to her father. Soon there is a romance between Peter and Anne.

Anne's time is mostly occupied by reading and studying and writing her diary. She constantly dreams of going back to school. The pages of her diary reveal the feelings and beliefs, ambitions and hopes of a young girl. She continued to write with increasing hope and joy, never disheartened by fear or isolation, until the last entry of August 1, 1944.

On August 4, 1944, Anne and her family and friends were captured and sent off for interrogation at the Gestapo headquarters and later on to the concentration camps. Anne Frank died at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp a few weeks before the British troops liberated it on April 15, 1945. Only Otto Frank survived and when he came across Anne's diary salvaged by his friends, he decided to publish it.

You shall now read a few entries taken from Anne Frank's Diary.

1.4 ENTRIES FROM ANNE FRANK'S *DIARY*

Anne Frank wrote in Dutch, and excerpts have been translated into English.

1.4.1 Text

Saturday, 20 June, 1942.

Dear Kitty,

I haven't written for a few days, because I wanted first of all to think about my diary. It's an odd idea for someone like me to keep a diary; not only because I have never done so before, but because it seems to me that neither I - nor for that matter anyone else- will be interested in the **unbosomings** of a thirteen-year-old

school girl. Still, what does that matter? I want to write, but more than that, I want to bring out all kinds of things that lie buried deep in my heart.

There is a saying that “paper is more patient than man”; it came back to me on one of my slightly melancholy days, while I sat chin in hand, feeling too bored and limp even to make up my mind whether to go out or stay at home. Yes, there is no doubt that paper is patient and as I don’t intend to show this cardboard-covered notebook, bearing the proud name of “diary”, to anyone, unless I find a real friend, boy or girl, probably nobody cares. And now I come to the root of the matter, the reason for my starting a diary: it is that I have no such real friend.

Let me put it more clearly, since no one will believe that a girl of thirteen feels herself quite alone in the world, nor is it so. I have darling parents and a sister of sixteen. I know about thirty people whom one might call friends - I have strings of boy friends, anxious to catch a glimpse of me and who, failing that, peep at me through mirrors in class. I have relations, aunts and uncles, who are darlings too, a good home, no - I don’t seem to lack anything. But it’s the same with all my friends, just fun and joking, nothing more. I can never bring myself to talk of anything outside the common round. We don’t seem to be able to get any closer, that is the root of the trouble. Perhaps I lack confidence, but anyway, there it is, a stubborn fact and I don’t seem to be able to do anything about it.

Hence, this diary, in order to enhance in my mind’s eye the picture of a friend for whom I have waited so long, I don’t want to set down a series of bald facts in a diary like most people do, but I want this diary itself to be my friend, and I shall call my friend Kitty. No one will grasp what I’m talking about if I begin my letters to Kitty just out of the blue, so albeit unwillingly, I will start by sketching in brief the story of my life.

My father was thirty-six when he married my mother, who was then twenty-five. My sister Margot was born in 1926 in Frankfort-on-Main, I followed on June 12, 1929, and, as we are Jewish, we **emigrated** to Holland in 1933, where my father was appointed Managing Director of Travies N.V. This firm is in close relationship with the firm of Kolen & Co, in the same building, of which my father is a Partner.

The rest of our family, however, felt the full impact of Hitler’s anti-Jewish laws, so life was filled with anxiety. In 1938 after the **pogroms**, my two uncles (my mother’s brothers) escaped to the U.S.A. My old grandmother came to us, she was then seventy-three. After May 1940 good times rapidly fled: first the war, then the capitulation, followed by the arrival of the Germans, which is when the sufferings of us Jews really began. Anti-Jewish decrees followed each other in quick succession. Jews must wear a yellow star, Jews must hand in their bicycles, Jews are banned from trams and are forbidden to drive. Jews are only allowed to do their shopping between three and five o’clock and then only in shops which bear the placard “Jewish shop.” Jews must be indoors by eight o’clock and cannot even sit in their own gardens after that hour. Jews are forbidden to visit theatres, cinemas, and other places of entertainment. Jews may not take part in public sports. Swimming baths, tennis courts, hockey fields, and other sports grounds are all prohibited to them. Jews may not visit Christians. Jews must go to Jewish schools, and many more restrictions of a similar kind.

So we could not do this and were forbidden to do that. But life went on in spite of it all. Jopie used to say to me, "You're scared to do anything, because it may be forbidden." Our freedom was strictly limited. Yet things were still bearable.

Granny died in January 1942; no one will ever know how much she is present in my thoughts and how much I love her still.

In 1934 I went to school at the Montessori Kindergarten and continued there. It was at the end of the school year, I was in form 6B, when I had to say good-bye to Mrs. K. We both wept, it was very sad. In 1941 I went, with my sister Margot, to the Jewish Secondary School, she into the fourth form and I into the first.

So far everything is all right with the four of us and here I come to the present day.

Friday, 9 October, 1942

Dear Kitty,

I've only got **dismal** and depressing news for you today. Our many Jewish friends are being taken away by the dozen. These people are treated by the Gestapo without a shred of decency, being loaded into cattle trucks and sent to Westerbork, the big Jewish camp in Drente. Westerbork sounds terrible: only one washing cubicle for a hundred people and not nearly enough lavatories. There is no separate accommodation. Men, women, and children all sleep together. One hears of frightful immorality because of this, and a lot of the women, and even girls, who stay there any length of time are expecting babies.

It is impossible to escape; most of the people in the camp are branded as inmates by their shaven heads and many also by their Jewish appearance.

If it is as bad as this in Holland whatever will it be like in the distant and barbarous regions they are sent to? We assume that most of them are murdered. The English radio speaks of their being gassed.

Perhaps that is the quickest way to die. I feel terribly upset. I couldn't tear myself away while Miep told these dreadful stories, and she herself was equally wound up for that matter. Just recently for instance, a poor old crippled Jewess was sitting on her doorstep; she had been told to wait there by the Gestapo, who had gone to fetch a car to take her away. The poor old thing was terrified by the guns that were shooting at English planes overhead, and by the glaring beams of the searchlights. But Miep did not dare take her in; no one would undergo such a risk. The Germans strike without the slightest mercy. Elli too is very quiet: her boy friend has got to go to Germany. She is afraid that the airmen who fly over our homes will drop their bombs, often weighing a million kilos, on Dirk's head. Jokes such as "he's not likely to get a million" and "it only takes one bomb" are in rather bad taste. Dirk is certainly not the only one who has to go: trainload of boys leave daily. If they stop at a small station en route, sometimes some of them manage to get out unnoticed and escape, perhaps a few manage it. This, however, is not the end of my bad news. Have you ever heard of **hostages**? That's the latest thing in penalties for **sabotage**. Can you imagine anything so dreadful?

Prominent citizens, innocent people – are thrown into prison to await their fate. If the saboteur can't be traced, the Gestapo simply put about five hostages against

the wall. Announcements of their deaths appear in the paper frequently. These outrages are described as “fatal accidents”. Nice people, the Germans! To think that I was once one of them too! No, Hitler took away our nationality long ago. In fact, Germans and Jews are the greatest enemies in the world.

Yours, Anne

Wednesday, 10 March, 1943

Dear Kitty,

We had a short circuit last evening, and on top of that the guns kept banging away all the time. I still haven't got over my fear of everything connected with shooting and planes, and I creep into Daddy's bed nearly every night for comfort. I know it's very childish but you don't know what it is like. The A. A. Guns roar so loudly that you can't hear yourself speak. Mrs. Van Daan, the **fatalist**, was nearly crying, and said in a very timid little voice, “Oh, it is so unpleasant! Oh, they are shooting so hard”, by which she really means “I'm so frightened.”

It didn't seem nearly so bad by candlelight as in the dark. I was shivering, just as if I had a temperature, and begged Daddy to light the candle again. He was relentless, the light remained off. Suddenly there was a burst of machine-gun fire, and that is ten times worse than guns. Mummy jumped out of bed and, to Pim's annoyance, lit the candle. When he complained her answer was firm: “After all, Anne's not exactly a **veteran** soldier,” and that was the end of it.

Have I already told you about Mrs. Van Daan's other fears? I don't think so. If I am to keep you informed of all that happens in the “Secret Annexe”, you must know about this too. One night Mrs. Van Daan thought she heard burglars in the attic, she heard loud footsteps and was so frightened that she woke her husband. Just at that moment the burglars disappeared and the only sounds that Mr. Van Dam could hear were the heartbeats of the frightened fatalist herself. “Oh, Putti [Mr. Van Daan's nickname], they are sure to have taken the sausages and all our peas and beans. And Peter, I wonder if he is still safely in bed?” “They certainly won't have stolen Peter. Listen, don't worry and let me go to sleep.” But nothing came of that. Mrs. van Daan was far too nervous to sleep another wink. A few nights after that the whole Van Daan family was woken by ghostly sounds. Peter went up to the attic with a torch- and scamper-scamper! What do you think it was running away? A swarm of enormous rats! When we knew who the thieves were, we let Mouschi sleep in the attic and the uninvited guests didn't come back again; at least not during the night.

Peter went up to the loft a couple of evenings ago to fetch some old newspapers. He had to hold the trap door firmly to get down the steps. He put his hand down without looking.. . and went tumbling down the ladder from the sudden shock and pain. Without knowing it he had put his hand on a large rat, and it had bitten him hard. By the time he reached us, as white as a sheet and with his knees knocking, the blood had soaked through his pajamas. And no wonder; it's not very pleasant to stroke a large rat; and to get bitten into the bargain is really dreadful.

Yours, Anne

Sunday, 2 May, 1943

Anne Frank's: *The Diary of a Young Girl*

Dear Kitty,

If I just think of how we live here, I usually come to the conclusion that it is a paradise compared with how other Jews who are not in hiding must be living. Even so, later on, when everything is normal again, I shall be amazed to think that we, who were so **spick and span** at home, should have sunk to such a low level. By this I mean that our manners have declined. For instance, ever since we have been here, we have had one oilcloth on our table which, owing to so much use, is not one of the cleanest. Admittedly I often try to clean it with a dirty dishcloth, which is more hole than cloth. The table doesn't do us much credit either, in spite of hard scrubbing. The Van Daans have been sleeping on the same flannelette sheet the whole winter, one can't wash it here because the soap powder we get on the ration isn't sufficient, and besides it's not good enough. Daddy goes about in frayed trousers and his tie is beginning to show signs of wear too. Mummy's **corsets** have split today and are too old to be repaired, while Margot goes about in a brassiere two sizes too small for her.

Mummy and Margot have managed the whole winter with three vests between them, and mine are so small that they don't even reach my tummy.

Certainly, these are all things which can be overcome. Still, I sometimes realize with a shock: "How are we, now going about in worn-out things, from my pants down to Daddy's shaving brush, ever going to get back to our pre-war standards?"

They were banging away so much last night that four times I gathered all my belongings together. Today I have packed a suitcase with the most necessary things for an escape. But Mummy quite rightly says: "Where will you escape to?" The whole of Holland is being punished for the strikes which have been going on in many parts of the country. Therefore, a state of **siege** has been declared and everyone gets one butter coupon less. What naughty little children!

Yours, Anne

Tuesday, 4 April, 1944

Dear Kitty,

For a long time I haven't had any idea of what I was working for any more, the end of the war is so terribly far away. So unreal, like a fairy tale. If the war isn't over by September I shan't go to school any more, because I don't want to be two years behind. Peter filled my days, nothing but Peter dreams and thoughts until Saturday, when I felt so utterly miserable, oh, it was terrible. I was holding back my tears all the while I was with Peter, then laughed with Van Daan over a lemon punch, was cheerful and excited, but the moment I was alone I knew that I would have to cry my heart out. So, clad in my nightdress, I let myself go and slipped down onto the floor. First I said my long prayer very earnestly, then I cried with my head on my arms, my knees bent up, on the bare floor, completely folded up. One large sob brought me back to earth again, and I quelled my tears because I didn't want them to hear anything in the next room. Then I began trying to talk some courage into myself. I could only say: "I must, I must, I must . . ." Completely stiff from the unnatural position, I fell against the side of the bed and fought on, until I climbed into bed again just before half past ten. It was over!

And now it's all over. I must work, so as not to be a fool, to get on, to become a journalist, because that's what I want! I know that I can write, a couple of my stories are good, my descriptions of the "Secret Annexe" are humorous, there's a lot in my diary that speaks, but - whether I have real talent remains to be seen.

"Eva's Dream" is my best fairy tale, and the queer thing about it is that I don't know where it comes from. Quite a lot of "Cady's Life" is good too, but, on the whole, it's nothing.

I am the best and sharpest critic of my own work. I know myself what is and what is not well written. Anyone who doesn't write doesn't know how wonderful it is; I used to bemoan the fact that I couldn't draw at all, but now I am more than happy that I can at least write. And if I haven't any talent for writing books or newspaper articles, well, then I can always write for myself.

I want to get on; I can't imagine that I would have to lead the same sort of life as Mummy and Mrs. Van Daan and all the women who do their work and are then forgotten. I must have something besides a husband and children, something that I can devote myself to!

I want to go on living even after my death! And therefore I am grateful to God for giving me this gift, this possibility of developing myself and of writing, of expressing all that is in me.

I can shake off everything if I write, my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn. But, and that is the great question, will I ever be able to write anything great, will I ever become a journalist or a writer? I hope so, oh, I hope so very much, for I can recapture everything when I write, my thoughts, my ideals and my fantasies.

I haven't done anything more to "Cady's Life" for ages, in my mind I know exactly how to go on, but somehow it doesn't flow from my pen. Perhaps I never shall finish it, it may land up in the wastepaper basket, or the fire ... That's a horrible idea, but then I think to myself, "At the age of fourteen and with so little experience, how can you write about philosophy?"

So I go on again with fresh courage, I think I shall succeed, because I want to write!

Yours, Anne

Friday, 26 May, 1944

Dear Kitty,

At last, at last I can sit quietly at my table in front of a crack of window and write you everything.

I feel so miserable, I haven't felt like this for months; even after the burglary I didn't feel so utterly broken. On the one hand, the vegetable man, the Jewish question, which is being discussed minutely over the whole house, the invasion delay, the bad food, the strain, the miserable atmosphere, my disappointment in Peter; and on the other hand, Elli's engagement, Whitsun reception, flowers, Kraler's birthday, fancy cakes, and stories about cabarets, films and concerts. That difference, that huge difference, it's always there, one day we laugh and see the funny side of the situation, but the next we are afraid, fear, suspense, and

despair staring from our faces. Miep and Kraler carry the heaviest burden of the eight in hiding. Miep in all she does, and Kraler through the enormous responsibility, which is sometimes so much for him that he can hardly talk from pent-up nerves and strain. Koophuis and Elli look after us well too, but they can forget us at times, even if it's only for a few hours, or a day, or even two days. They have their own worries, Koophuis over his health, Elli over her engagement, which is not altogether rosy, but they also have their little outings, visits to friends, and the whole life of ordinary people. For them the suspense is sometimes lifted, even if it is only for a short time, but for us it never lifts for a moment. We've been here for two years now; how long have we still to put up with this almost unbearable, ever increasing pressure?

The sewer is blocked, so we mustn't run water, or rather only a trickle, when we go to the W.C. we have to take a lavatory brush with us, and we keep dirty water in a large Cologne pot. We can manage for today, but what do we do if the plumber can't do the job alone? The municipal scavenging service doesn't come until Tuesday.

Miep sent us a currant cake, made up in the shape of a doll with the words "Happy Whitsun" on the note attached to it. It's almost as if she's ridiculing us, our present frame of mind and our uneasiness could hardly be called "happy". The affair of the vegetable man has made us more nervous, you hear "shh, shh" from all sides again, and we're being quieter over everything. The police forced the door there, so they could do it to us too! If one day we too should . . . No, I mustn't write it, but I can't put the question out of my mind today. On the contrary, all the fear I've already been through seems to face me again in all its frightfulness.

This evening at eight o'clock I had to go to the downstairs lavatory all alone, there was no one down there, as everyone was listening to the radio, I wanted to be brave, but it was difficult. I always feel much safer here upstairs than alone downstairs in that large, silent house, alone with the mysterious muffled noises from upstairs and the tooting of motor horns in the street. I have to hurry for I start to quiver if I begin thinking about the situation.

Again and again I ask myself, would it not have been better for us all if we had not gone into hiding, and if we were dead now and not going through all this misery, especially as we shouldn't be running our protectors into danger any more. But we all **recoil** from these thoughts too, for we still love life, we haven't yet forgotten the voice of nature, we still hope, hope about everything. I hope something will happen soon now, shooting if need be – nothing can crush us more than this restlessness. Let the end come, even if it is hard, then at least we shall know whether we are finally going to win through or go under.

Yours, Anne

Tuesday, 6 June, t 944

Dear Kitty,

"This is **D-day**," came the announcement over the English news and quite rightly, "this is the day". The invasion has begun!

The British gave the news at eight o'clock this morning: Calais, Boulogne, Le Havre, and Cherbourg, also the Pas de Calais (as usual), were heavily bombarded. Moreover, as a safety measure for all occupied territories, all people who live

within a radius of thirty-five kilometers from the coast are warned to be prepared for bombardments. If possible, the English will drop pamphlets one hour beforehand.

According to the German news, British parachute troops have landed on the French coast, "English landing craft are in battle with the German Navy," says the B. B. C.

We discussed it over the "Annexe" breakfast at nine o'clock: Is this just a trial landing like Dieppe two years ago?

British broadcast in German, Dutch, French, and other languages at ten o'clock: "The invasion has begun!" - that means the "real" invasion. English broadcast in German at eleven o'clock: speech by the Supreme Commander, **General Dwight Eisenhower**.

The English news at twelve o'clock in English: "This is D-day". General Eisenhower said to the French people: "Stiff fighting will come now, but after this the victory. The year 1944 is the year of complete victory, good luck."

BBC news in English at one o'clock (translated): 11,000 planes stand ready, and are flying to and fro nonstop landing troops and attacking behind the lines, 4000 landing boats, plus small craft, are landing troops and material between Cherbourg and Le Havre incessantly. English and American troops are already engaged in hard fighting. Speeches by Gerbrandy, by the Prime Minister of Belgium, King Haakon of Norway, De Gaulle of France, the King of England, and last, but not least, **Churchill**.

Great commotion in the "Secret Annexe"! Would the long-awaited liberation that has been talked of so much, but which still seems too wonderful, too much like a fairy tale, ever come true? Could we be granted victory this year, 1944? We don't know yet, but hope is revived within us, it gives us fresh courage, and makes us strong again. Since we must put up bravely with all the fears, privations, and sufferings, the great thing now is to remain calm and steadfast. Now more than ever we must clench our teeth and not cry out.

France, Russia, Italy, and Germany, too, can all cry out and give vent to their misery, but we haven't the right to do that yet!

Oh, Kitty, the best part of the invasion is that I have the feeling that friends are approaching. We have been oppressed by those terrible Germans for so long, they have had their knives so at our throats, that the thought of friends and delivery fills us with confidence!

Now it doesn't concern the Jews any more, no, it concerns Holland and all occupied Europe. Perhaps, Margot says, I may yet be able to go back to school in September or October.

Yours, Anne

P.S. I'll keep you up to date with all the latest news!

1.4.2 Glossary

unbosomings	:	to reveal the innermost thoughts and desires.
emigrated	:	to leave one country to settle in another.
pogrom	:	organized massacre, originally of Jews in Russia.
dismal	:	causing or showing gloom
hostage	:	a person given or seized by another as pledge or security.
sabotage	:	wilfully destroy.
fatalist	:	a person who submits to all that happens as inevitable, who believes that everything is predetermined.
veteran	:	a person who has a long experience of military service and war
spick and span	:	very neat.
corsets	:	a woman's close fitting supporting undergarment
siege	:	persistent attack
mummed	:	to reduce sound for secrecy.
recoil	:	to move back suddenly.
D-day	:	day on which any important operation is scheduled to begin; the Allied forces invaded northern France on 6 June 1944.
General Eisenhower	:	Commander of the Allied forces and later President of the U.S
Churchill	:	British Prime Minister during World War II and eminent statesman and writer.

1.5 DISCUSSION

You have just read a few entries in Anne Frank's *Diary*. It describes the incidents in her life from her thirteenth birthday in June 1942 till she was captured by the Gestapo in August, 1944. The entries are full of interesting anecdotes, thoughts and dreams that are part of the life of a young girl. She truthfully describes the fear and hopes of a group of people comprising immediate family and friends who took refuge in a secret hideout to escape the persecution of the Nazis. Let us look at some of the important incidents and people in Anne's Diary.

Anne's early recollections of Jewish persecution

Anne was born of Jewish parents in Germany who emigrated to Holland in 1933, due to Jewish persecution, when Anne was four years old. Even there, the family felt the impact of Hitler's anti-Jewish laws. Once the Second World War started and the Germans captured Holland, life became really hard. Many Anti-Jewish laws were passed. Jews had to wear a yellow star to distinguish them, they had to hand in their bicycles, and they were banned from trams and forbidden to drive. They could shop only between three and five and only in Jewish shops. Cinemas

and theatres were forbidden to Jews and they could not take part in public sports. Jewish children could study only in Jewish schools. So Anne had to discontinue her regular school and attend the Jewish Secondary School.

The family’s escape to the ‘secret annexe’

Anne’s father had decided that they would escape the Germans before they came to arrest them. When the Nazis summoned Anne’s sister Margot, the family decided that the time had come to go into hiding. Anne and Margot packed their essentials into school bags. Their friends Miep and Henk took some bags filled with clothes. Early in the morning each family member put on a number of clothes and giving the impression that they were going to school, they walked to the secret annexe in the building of Anne’s father’s office. The annexe was hidden behind the office and contained a few rooms with minimum facilities. They were soon joined by the Van Daans and later on by a dentist called Albert Dussel. Thus this group of eight people lived in the confines of the secret annexe for two years.

Anne’s relationship with her parents

Anne’s relationship with her mother was strained. But she was deeply attached to her father Otto Frank. She had little in common with her mother. She felt that her mother loved her sister Margot more than her. Anne adored her father to whom she was emotionally the closest.

Anne’s relationship with others in the secret annexe

Initially Anne looked forward to the arrival of the Van Daans at the secret annexe since there would be more company. She describes their son, Peter as not yet sixteen and rather ‘soft, shy and gawky’. At first she does not like his company but later on they fall in love. Anne does not like the quarrels between Mrs. and Mr. Van Daan who shout at each other. She constantly makes fun of Mrs. Van Daan who is often described as ‘unbearable’.

Check Your Progress 1

Read the questions given below and answer them in your own words in the space provided before you turn to the answers given at the end of the Unit:

- i) What does Anne call her diary and what are her reasons for writing a diary?

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- ii) Why does Anne think she is living in a paradise?

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iii) Why Is Anne thankful to God?

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(Check your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.)

1.6 ANNE FRANK'S DIARY AS A LITERARY WORK

Anne Frank's *Diary* is a touching and beautifully written commentary on war and its terrible impact on human life. Though a first person narrative which describes individual and personal experiences, one can hear in it the voice of over six million people affected by the Holocaust. As a writer and humanist, she is the spokesperson of an age, while at the same time speaking to future generations about the folly of indifference. Thus, her diary is a social, historical and literary document. Even though it is a diary, one can read it like a good novel because it is able to sustain tension in the reader. Anne portrays the curious mental state of transformation from a child to an adult which is both a universal and personal experience. Her prose style is characterized by precision, confidence and tenseness. But what is most striking is her stunning honesty which makes her diary a valid historical document. Anne is a master in characterization and is able to portray the people around her with great psychological realism. Occasionally, she becomes shrewd and cruel in her character analyses but these can be seen as part of the mood swings of adolescence. But she is most critical and uncompromising in her analysis of herself. The most endearing quality of the diary is Anne's self-introspection. The reader is able to peep into the depths of the mind of a young girl living under great stress in extraordinary conditions. Yet her cheerfulness and optimism, her perseverance and will power, her courage in speaking the truth, make her writing unique in itself.

Her prose style is also characterized by warmth and wit, sensitivity and humanity, all combining with vivid picturization and psychological insight. She wrote under the threat of death but her writing has immortalized her. Anne Frank's *Diary* is a fitting memorial to her fine spirit and offers a rich and rewarding experience in reading. Today Anne Frank's *Diary* is considered a classic and has been translated into more than thirty-one languages, including Bengali and Malayalam. It has been published in thirty countries and has sold more than one million copies in hard cover alone. It has been adopted into numerous plays and films. Anne Frank's wish "I want to go on living even after my death", has thus come literally true. She lives on through her diary.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have

- acquainted you with the life and times of Anne Frank;

- analyzed the prose form of diary writing;
- discussed the Holocaust and its significance; and
- read a few entries from Anne Frank's diary

1.8 SUGGESTED READING

It is recommended that you read the whole diary of Anne Frank.

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl, Introduction by Eleanor Roosevelt.
New York: Bantam Books.

1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) Anne names her diary Kitty. Her reason for starting a diary is that she has no real friend and she feels Kitty is the friend she had been wanting for so long.
- ii) When Anne compares her life with the fate of millions of Jews who are not in hiding and are suffering great persecution at the hands of the Nazi regime, she feels that she is living in paradise.
- iii) Anne wants to be remembered even after her death and so she thanks God for giving her the gift of writing which helps her to develop herself and express all her thoughts. When she writes, her sorrows disappear and she feels courageous enough to face the world again.