



***Number the Stars* (1989), by Lois Lowry** **Argument-Based Reflection Questions**

These argument-based reflection questions can be answered by students individually or in pairs in writing, or they can be used to guide classroom-wide or small-group discussions. Students should refer to a specific passage in the text for support for each of their answers.

Chapters 1 – 3

1. In the girls' encounter with the German soldiers who stop them for running in the street, is Kirsti as scared as Annemarie and Ellen are? Does Kirsti act with what you would consider bravery in this encounter? Do Annemarie and Ellen?
2. What do Peter's Resistance fighters do? How do the Johansens learn about their actions and activities? How are they described by the narrator?
3. Paraphrase (put in your own words) the story that Mr. Johansen tells Annemarie about a German soldier's asking about the Danish king, Christian X. Why does Annemarie call it a "brave" story? How does she connect this story to the condition of the Jews in Denmark?
4. How has Peter changed since Lise's death? Why do you think he has changed that way? Does the visit he makes to the Johansens toward the end of chapter 3 seem to support this description of Peter's changes? Why or why not?
5. What has happened to the Hirsches' thread and button shop? Why?

6. What does Annemarie think about her own bravery, when she asks herself whether she would be willing to risk her own safety to protect Jewish people in Denmark?

Chapters 4 – 6

1. Why doesn't Kirsti want to wear the new shoes that her mother buys for her? What does Ellen offer to do to make them more appealing? Does Kirsti end up wearing them? What do we learn about the characters of Ellen and Kirsti in this episode?
2. Why do the Rosens need to go into hiding? How do they learn that they have to go into hiding? Why are the Johansens only able to hide Ellen, and not Ellen's parents too?
3. What does Annemarie do for Ellen just seconds before the German soldiers enter their bedroom to begin to question them? Do you think this can be called an act of bravery? Why or why not?
4. How does Mr. Johansen finally get the German soldiers to leave their apartment? Can this be called an act of bravery on his part? Why or why not?
5. When Mr. Johansen calls Uncle Henrik they have a conversation in code. What does Mr. Johansen literally say to Henrik? What does he actually mean? Can you guess, if you don't know for certain? Why are they speaking in code?
6. What do you think Uncle Henrik's home in the countryside represents for Annemarie? What leads you to that conclusion?

Chapters 7 – 9

1. How do Annemarie and Ellen enjoy themselves at Uncle Henrik's home? What comment does Ellen make that seems to puncture the happy mood?
2. Annemarie and Ellen lose their fear for awhile while staying at Uncle Henrik's home. Why is this? What relevance might this have for our first debatable question?
3. Why is Annemarie certain from the start that the story that there is going to be a funeral-like event at Uncle Henrik's home for a deceased "Great-aunt Birte" isn't true?

4. When Uncle Henrik and Annemarie have a conversation about whether Annemarie is brave, they disagree. What is his view and what is her view?
5. Paraphrase Uncle Henrik’s viewpoint that “it is much *easier* to be brave if you don not know everything.”
6. How does Annemarie react to this viewpoint of her uncle’s, initially?
7. Why doesn’t Annemarie reveal to Ellen that she knows that Birte doesn’t really exist?

Chapters 10 – 12

1. The German soldier asks Annemarie who is in the casket. How does Annemarie answer? Does she demonstrate real bravery here?
2. Where does the phrase “number the stars” come from? How does Annemarie react when she hears this phrase spoken? Why do you think the novel has the title “Number the Stars”?
3. What was actually in the casket?
4. How does Peter prepare the Rosen family for their trip, being smuggle across the lake into Sweden?
5. How are the Rosens described as they face their trip on the boat, to Sweden?
6. What does Annemarie discover early the next morning, and why does that frighten her so much?

Chapters 13 – 15

1. As Annemarie is trying to comfort her mother, what does she discover on the ground next to her? What was supposed to happen with this package? Why does Mrs. Johansen tell Annemarie to do with it?
2. As Annemarie is racing through the woods, she thinks of Kirst and the stories she used to tell her sister. Why do you think Annemarie’s mind pulls up these memories at this time?

3. When she is stopped by the soldiers, just before reaching her uncle's boat, why does Annemarie "will herself, with all her being, to behave as Kirsti would"? Relatedly, why did her mother warn her prior to leaving on this trip, "If anyone stops you, you must pretend to be nothing more than a silly little girl"?
4. Name three things that Annemarie does to get through her encounter with the German soldiers and escape from them with the package that she must take to Uncle Henrik. Are these acts of bravery, in your opinion? Why or why not?

Chapters 16 – Afterword

1. How does Uncle Henrik judge Annemarie's actions in helping the Rosens escape? Does he think she was brave?
2. What was actually in the packet, and how did it help the Rosens escape the Germans?
3. What does Annemarie mean when she thinks, "Wall of the ifs, whirled in Annemarie's head" (126)?
4. What is the truth of Lise's death? Was Lise a brave person, during her lifetime?
5. What does Annemarie do with Ellen's Star of David? What do you think that signifies?
6. How many Jews in Copenhagen escaped to Sweden during World War II, to flee the Germans? What percentage of the total Jewish population in Denmark's capitol city does this figure represent?