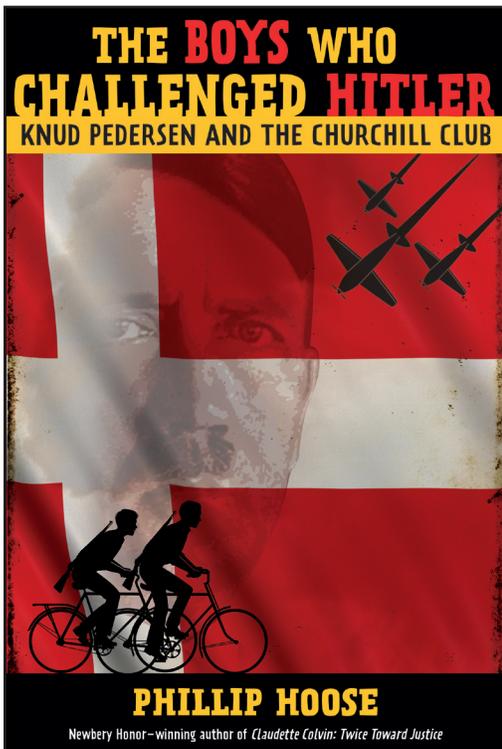


# A Teacher's Guide for

# THE BOYS WHO CHALLENGED HITLER

## KNUD PEDERSEN AND THE CHURCHILL CLUB



9780374300227 • Ages 12–18 • Grades 7–12

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Phillip Hoose** is the author of *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*, a National Book Award winner, a Newbery Honor Book, a Robert F. Sibert Honor Book, a YALSA Finalist for Excellence in Young Adult Nonfiction, and an ALA Best Book for Young Adults. His other books include *Moonbird: A Year on the Wind with the Great Survivor B95*, also a Robert F. Sibert Honor Book; and *We Were There, Too!: Young People in U.S. History*, a National Book Award finalist. Mr. Hoose lives in Portland, Maine. [philliphoose.com](http://philliphoose.com)



## ABOUT THE BOOK

At the outset of World War II, Denmark did not resist German occupation. Deeply ashamed of his nation's leaders, fifteen-year-old Knud Pedersen resolved with his brother and a handful of schoolmates to take action against the Nazis if the adults would not. Naming their secret club after the fiery British leader, the young patriots in the Churchill Club committed countless acts of sabotage, infuriating the Germans, who eventually had the boys tracked down and arrested. But their efforts were not in vain: the boys' exploits and eventual imprisonment helped spark a full-blown Danish resistance in the latter years of the war. Interweaving his own narrative with the recollections of Knud himself, Phillip Hoose captures the astounding story of these young war heroes who refused to give in without a fight.

FOR  
USE WITH  
COMMON CORE  
STATE  
STANDARDS

To attain specific Common Core grade-level standards for their classrooms and students, teachers are encouraged to adapt the activities listed in this guide to their classes' needs. You know your kids best!



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Phillip Hoose dedicates his book to “young people everywhere who find the courage to make up their own minds.” Keeping in mind this quotation and the cover of the book, imagine how the members of the Churchill Club may have used courage in their struggles.
2. Hoose plays his themes against one another—almost mirroring a war. How does he create a “battle” between innocence and loss of innocence? What specific examples convey this conflict? Why might Hoose use this technique in his writing? How does it make you feel?
3. Why was Denmark so important to the Nazis? Refer to the maps on pages 16 and 24 to support your discussion.
4. On page 19, Hoose refers to Hitler’s words, “He alone who gains the youth, owns the future.” Why were young people so important to Hitler? Do you agree with this statement? Debate. Where else have you seen young people play such an important role?
5. Why was it critical to the club that Danish citizens see that “someone was not giving in” to the Nazis (p. 40)?
6. Do you agree with the members of the club that keeping secrets from their parents about their actions was necessary and acceptable? Are secrets ever okay?
7. Define empathy with your class. Where do we see examples of empathy in the book? Should empathy be a part of war? Why or why not?
8. Discuss the differences between fiction and nonfiction. Can nonfiction be biased? How? What are some examples of facts from the story? What are some examples of opinions? How might someone else remember the same story? What could affect his/her memory? How does Hoose’s choice to intersperse Knud’s own words into the story affect the story? Why might Hoose have chosen this structure?
9. What were Danish citizens’ differing views about the Churchill Club? Imagine you were a Danish citizen during World War II. What might your opinion have been? Defend your position. Why do you think there were multiple views about the Club’s actions?
10. How do Knud and other members of the club lose a part of themselves in prison? How does it seem to affect them later in life? How can we compare their struggles with soldiers returning home from war?
11. On the night of Winston Churchill’s award ceremony, Knud reads his invitation. The title on the card states “Knud Pedersen, Member of the Churchill Club” (p.166). Knud was very proud. In your own life, if you were given a card like this, what title would be listed on it that would make you proud? Why?



## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING

**CCRA.R.1** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**CCRA.R.2** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

**CCRA.R.4** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

**CCRA.R.5** Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

**CCRA.R.6** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

**CCRA.R.8** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING

**CCRA.SL.6** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS: HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

**RH.6-8.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

## POINT OF VIEW THROUGH PERSONIFICATION

Throughout the book, we hear Knud's and others' points of view about the Churchill Club's actions and the struggles of those living in Denmark during the Nazi occupation. Now let's take a look at another view—an inanimate object's! Students write a narrative in first person perspective about what this object is witnessing and why what it is seeing is so important. Students might consider choosing one of the following objects or one of their own: Knud's bicycle, the window of Knud's room overlooking the line of Nazi vehicles, the desk in the prison cell, a pew in Edvard Pedersen's church. Give the object human characteristics and describe how its views, fears, expectations, and motivations compare and contrast with those we've already heard. Encourage students to write in the present tense and to use descriptive and engaging details to trigger their readers' five senses. Share these creative pieces!

## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING

**CCRA.W.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.



## MAKING CHANGE!

Young people's passions can lead them to be architects of change! The Churchill Club members, although young, worked to be organized and effective. Learn from the Churchill Club. Analyze Knud's and Hoose's descriptions of how the club operated. What elements led to success and what challenges did it face? Students will create their own club to solve a problem they see within their school or local community. Each club brainstorms together to identify issues that are important to them. They may also generate a name for their club, explain the club's philosophy or reason for existing, list its rules (what they are allowed to do and not allowed to do), and write a persuasive piece that targets its audience and purpose. Encourage students to create committees and to think outside the box, like the Churchill Club did, to enact change. Check out <https://www.dosomething.org> for brainstorming ideas!

### COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING

**CCRA.SL.1** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING

**CCRA.W.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

## PAPER CLIP DEFIANCE

Hoose fascinates his readers with example after example of everyday citizens who both blatantly and discreetly defied the Nazis. During World War II, the paper clip became a symbol of defiance in Norway. A paper clip?! What characteristics does a paper clip possess that it could become such an important way to convey opposition? Research the history of how the paper clip came to stand for something other than itself. Then hang a string across the classroom. Throughout the entire reading of *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler*, have students hang paperclips on this string when they identify an act of defiance in the text—blatant or discreet defiance. The class discusses how each particular act is an example of defiance. What were the rippling effects of the act?

### COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING

**CCRA.R.2** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

### COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING

**CCRA.W.7** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.



# THE POWER OF WORDS

Words played an important role in the lives of the Danish during World War II. Whether through leaflets dropped by the Germans, details in the underground newspapers, or speeches given by Nazis, words were and are powerful. They affect how we, as humans, feel and sometimes act. Propaganda is one example of how words held power during the war. Identify and analyze other examples in Hoose's book of how words played a role in affecting people—whether positively or negatively. Who was the source of the words? What was their objective?

How do words play a role today? Observe how advertisers, poets, journalists, songwriters, politicians, etc. use words to make people feel what they feel, believe what they believe, or take action. Find specific examples in magazines, on websites, in newspapers, etc., and create digital or paper collages that convey this power of words. In addition to making the collage, write an analysis that identifies the strategies used in your highlighted examples. Are these strategies effective? Why or why not?

## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING

**CCRA.R.7** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

**CCRA.R.8** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING

**CCRA.W.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**CCRA.W.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

