

Happy Summer Rising Sixth Graders!

I am Ms. Kowalski, the Sixth-Grade English Teacher. Welcome to your summer reading assignment! I have carefully selected a novel that I sincerely hope you enjoy, it is a historical fiction novel by Jennifer Nielsen called [A Night Divided](#).

Common Sense Media recommends this book for ages 9+.

Here is the book summary

With the rise of the Berlin Wall, twelve-year-old Gerta finds her family divided overnight. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. Gerta knows it is dangerous to watch the wall, to think forbidden thoughts of freedom, yet she can't help herself. She sees the East German soldiers with their guns trained on their own citizens; she, her family, her neighbors and friends are prisoners in their own city.

But one day, while on her way to school, Gerta spots her father on a viewing platform on the western side, pantomiming a peculiar dance. Then, when she receives a mysterious drawing, Gerta puts two and two together and concludes that her father wants Gerta and Fritz to tunnel beneath the wall, out of East Berlin. However, if they are caught, the consequences will be deadly. No one can be trusted. Will Gerta and her family find their way to freedom?

In this novel, each chapter starts with a quote, some are from people, others from proverbs. Authors do this intentionally, the idea is to have students connect the chapter back to the quote. The book touches on the themes of family relationships, conformity, rebellion, resilience, and strength. The suspense will keep you turning the pages!

Before Reading (DO NOT SKIP)

- Review this [archive](#) from the author's website with important historical information referenced in the novel.
- Please watch [this video](#) (4m 35s) [for context](#) (The Berlin Wall)
- Please watch [this video](#) (7m 46s) [for context](#) (The Cold War)
- There is also a term you need to be familiar with that it referenced on page 84, ““She [Anna] was practically quoting from the state's propaganda, no better than a puppet on a string.” **Propaganda can be defined as** ideas or statements that

are often false or exaggerated and that are spread in order to help advance a cause, a political leader, a government, etc.

Reading and/or Listening



You can find audio of the book here:
[“A Night Divided”](#) by Jennifer Nielsen

It is also available on YouTube - [A Night Divided](#)

After Reading

Please choose **ONE** of the following options:

- **Create a timeline** that includes **both** the events in the novel **and** historical information of the time. May be done electronically or manually.
- **Draw an empty head.** Inside the empty head, draw any symbols or images that are bouncing around in the mind of a main character in the story.

- Please write an explanation (1-2 sentences) explaining what/why you have drawn.
- **Make your own test** about the book. Please complete it electronically; do not make copies for each student.
 - Include four multiple-choice questions (with four answer choices),
 - two true/false questions,
 - three matching questions, and
 - one short answer question (in other words, a question that requires explanation)
- **That was then, this is now.** Create a Before/After List (can be done on poster board, Canva, Slides, etc.) to compare the ways Berlin, Germany has changed since the setting of the book.
 - Please include an explanation (1-2 sentences) for each point on the list.

Be prepared to present your project of choice when school returns in August.

Questions? Don't hesitate to email kkowalski@fwacademy.org, text 845-549-4756, or request a Zoom meeting.

Enjoy the book! Wishing you a safe and terrific summer!

All my best,

Kimberly Kowalski