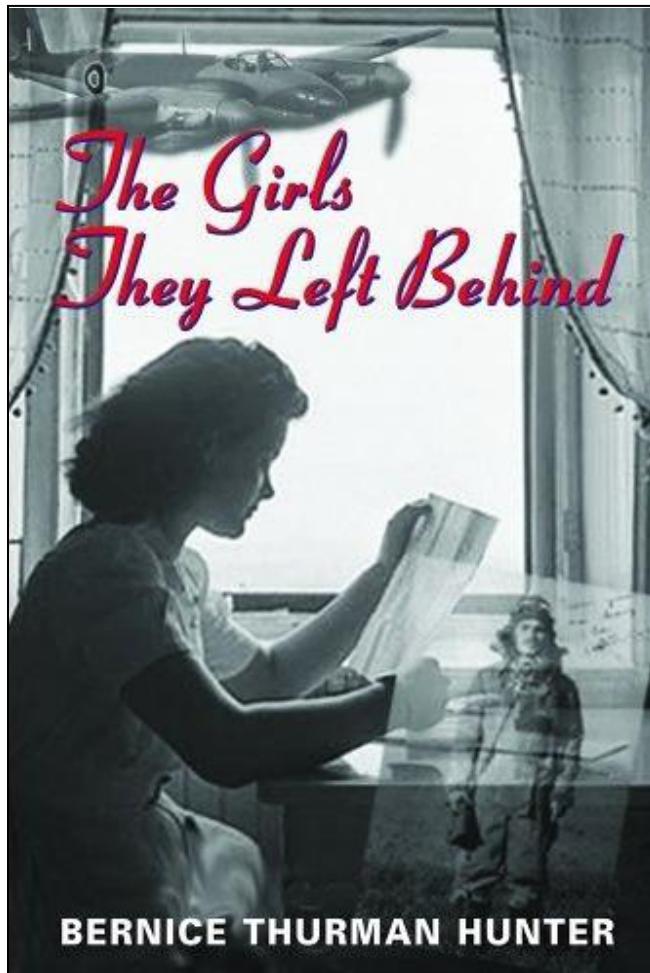


**A Student/Teacher Resource Guide  
for:**

*The Girls They Left Behind*



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## **NOTE TO THE TEACHER:**

The genre of this novel is “historical fiction”. It could be used for cross-curricular study in the core English program and simultaneously as enrichment for the history curriculum. The facts are accurate and the characters, setting and situations are all authentic depictions of the World War II era.

Depending on the purpose, the teacher would emphasize the historical context to varying degrees. The study guide is designed to focus on the English curriculum strands: Reading, Writing, Oral/Group/Drama and Media. Rubrics to assist in evaluation of each strand are included at the end of the guide after the follow-up activities.

The questions and activities should be selected and adapted by the teacher according to the academic and grade level (from grade 7 to 10, academic or applied) of the class. Each individual teacher will decide how many and which chapter questions to use. Some may serve as prompts for oral discussion, while others which require more thought, could be answered in writing.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Bernice Thurman Hunter received much acclaim for her many novels which were written for young readers. Best known for the “Booky” trilogy which is based on her own life growing up in Toronto during the Great Depression (made into the CBC “Booky” television movies, 2006,07), Hunter received many literary and civic awards, as well as The Toronto Historical Society’s commendation (1994), the Order of Canada (2001) and the Queen’s Golden Jubilee Commemorative Medal (2003) for her contribution to Canadian culture. *The Girls They Left Behind* was a finalist for the Ontario Library Association’s Red Cedar Award (2007).

Hunter’s historical-fiction novels are used for study in schools across Canada, as well as read by nostalgic adults. Her lively and often humorous heroines enjoy adventures which are typical of their time periods and youth, but their human appeal rings true for children and adults of any age or era. The universal themes provide rich opportunity for thought and discussion in the classroom while fostering an interest in Canadian heritage.

## **Introductory Group Work (Pre-Reading Activity)**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION (or Historical Context to the novel)**

**In small groups or pairs, students will research historical topics pertaining to World War II. They will do short oral presentations to the class on their topics, defining, explaining and showing the significance of each, using visuals such as charts or photos to enhance or illustrate their narration.**

#### **TOPICS**

1. Dictators in Europe: Adolf Hitler, Mussolini
2. Blitzkrieg, Dunkirk, Battle of Britain
3. The Dieppe Raid
4. Canada's War Plan: weapons, vehicles, RCAF, RCN, rationing, Victory Bonds,
5. Anne Frank, Winston Churchill
6. Japanese Canadians, Internment Camps
7. Espionage, Camp X, William Stephenson
8. Women in War
9. Conscription
10. The Italian Campaign
11. D-Day, Normandy Beach
12. Pearl Harbour
13. The Holocaust
14. Little Boy on Hiroshima
15. V.E. Day

Depending on the academic level of the students, the teacher might decide to supply the historical information as an alternative to library or internet research. She could photocopy pages from a history text and give them to the students to read, summarize and paraphrase in class.

Note: An excellent source to use is *Canada, The Twentieth Century*, McFadden, Quinlan, Life, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1982. Each of the above topics is covered succinctly and clearly in two pages (pages 122-149). If the teacher wishes to do the historical introduction more quickly and in less depth, there is a summary on pages 120 and 121. This "advance organizer" is done in 7 blocks of synopses with sketches, which could be photocopied and given to students for their notes (see appendix).

## *The Girls They Left Behind* by Bernice Thurman Hunter

### INSTRUCTIONS

Answer the questions which are assigned to do in writing in sentence form. Support your statements with specific examples or quotes from the text whenever possible. Explain your answers sufficiently (not with a “yes” or “no” answer). Answer in your notebooks, rather than on the question sheets, which do not provide enough space.

### **Chapter 1**

- 1. Describe Eloise’s wedding. How does it compare to a wedding which you have attended? Account for the differences.**
- 2. Explain why Mrs. Wilkinson is so upset and why she can do nothing about it.**
- 3. How does the author inject humour into the book in the first chapter?**

### **Chapter 2**

- 1. Why does Beryl not like her name?  
How do you feel about your own name? What would you call yourself if you could change your name? Why?**
- 2. How does Beryl react to her mother when she gets off the phone? Can you relate to how both she and her mother feel? Explain.**
- 3. How does Will indicate that he wants to go to war? Why would he feel this way?**
- 4. How do Canadian girls feel towards British girls and why?**
- 5. How does the author use “comic relief” in this scene?**
- 6. Look-up the word “inventory” in the dictionary.  
You will be keeping “inventory sheets” on separate pages located at the back of your notes to keep track of references throughout the book to characters, setting, themes and idiom (old expressions).**

**Inventory Sheets: (Look up the word “inventory” in the dictionary.)**

**Begin an inventory sheet entitled “Historical Facts” (or use the one provided) on which you will record all details of the time period which contribute to the historical tone of the book (wartime: 1939-1945). Record page numbers and quotes. You will use this data later in group work.**

**As well, set up two more inventory sheets entitled “Major Characters” and “Minor Characters”. Begin recording descriptions and references to characters who are referred to in each chapter. Record page numbers beside each entry. For example, on page 5 there are physical descriptions of Beryl and Eloise to place on the “Major Characters” sheet.**

***Chapter 3***

- 1. What are Beryl and Myra doing in this chapter?**
- 2. Record a humorous line, and explain why you find it funny.**
- 3. Add facts and descriptions of the time period to your inventory sheet, noting things that are different from today. (ie. food coupons)**
- 4. What does Eloise keep doing that annoys Beryl? Explain why she does it and why it is annoying.**
- 5. What was the T. Eaton Company the first retailer to do?**

***Chapter 4***

- 1. How does the writer hook the reader’s interest right away in this chapter?**
- 2. Describe Carmen using as many details as you can find in this chapter. Collect all references to Carmen( with page numbers) on your “Major Characters” inventory sheet.**
- 3. What is ironic about the legal age of enlistment?**
- 4. How does the writer inject humour into the story which some people might consider to be in bad taste? Do you agree?**
- 5. How does she follow this example of humour with a contrasting mood?**

6. What does the slang term, “Jerry”, mean?
7. Explain the symbolic significance of “the cap”.

### *Chapter 5*

1. What glimpses are we given into the father’s character in this chapter? Add him to the “Major Characters” inventory sheet.
2. Why was Beryl’s (Natalie’s) mother “not too pleased” about her getting a job?
3. What does Beryl do with her first pay?
4. Record descriptive details about the time period from this chapter on the “Historical Facts” inventory sheet.
5. Show two people’s different perspectives on going to war.
6. Why does our present generation of young people have a very different image of war?

### *Chapter 6*

1. Who is Dolores?
2. Why was Carmen’s letter censored? Why were letters censored? (Look up the meaning of “censor” in the dictionary if necessary.)
3. Explain the author’s use of dashes and italics as stylistic devices.
4. What is the “CWAC”, and why is Beryl thinking of joining it? (Add it to your inventory sheet as well as “Manning Pool”.)

## *Chapter 7*

- 1. Add more description of Beryl's father to your "Major Characters" inventory sheet. (Keep characters separate by leaving enough space for each one.)**
- 2. Begin a separate inventory sheet for Beryl (Natalie), the protagonist, and keep it with the "Major Characters" inventory sheet. List her character traits using specific adjectives to describe her. Then beside each, record supporting evidence (quotes and examples with page numbers).**
- 3. Add minor characters such as Will Ashby and Myra Adams to the "Minor Characters" inventory sheet. Record descriptions of them (with page numbers) so that you will be able to remember and differentiate them.**
- 4. Create an inventory sheet on which you list old expressions. Title it: "Idiom of the Era". On the left hand side of the page, record the old saying or expression, and then on the right side, write your translation into modern speech or slang.**
- 5. Create a fifth inventory sheet on which you keep track of examples of these four major themes: Youth Coming of Age, The Effects of War, Gender Bias and other Prejudices of the Era, Family Life in the 1940's. Careful completion of this sheet will assist you when writing an essay on one of these themes.**
- 6. Show that life goes on despite the war, and that Beryl and Myra are still typical teenagers.**

## *Chapter 8*

- 1. Describe the atmosphere in London, England, as told to Beryl in Carmen's letter.**
- 2. How does the use of the letter as a writing technique add to the story?**
- 3. What does the use of the diary as a writing technique add to the book? Refer to an example diary entry to prove your answer.**

## *Chapter 9*

1. What big decision does Beryl make? List and evaluate her reasons. How do her parents react? How would your parents react if you made the same decision? Answer in a good paragraph (with a topic and ending sentence).
2. Why does Beryl's father have only one cigarette per day?
3. Why are women being "hired by the peck"? (Remember to add to your "Idiom" inventory sheet.)
4. Explain the reasoning behind the "Registration Certificate".

## *Chapter 10*

1. Show that the war in Europe has had an impact on the psyche of even young children living in Canada.
2. Why is Eloise crying about her "wonderful news"?

## *Chapter 11*

1. Compare how Remembrance Day 1943 was celebrated to how we usually celebrate it.
4. What was so ironic about World War 2?
5. In what ways is Natalie (Beryl) helping to win the war?
6. Describe her war work in detail. How does she feel about it? How would you feel about doing this job?
7. Why do some men in the book not go to war? What is their attitude to the women beside whom they are working? Give their reasons.
8. What is humorous in Bill Sergeant's defence of women in the workforce?



## *Chapter 12*

1. Describe the “ditty bags”.
2. Why are Aunt Marie and Eloise “down in the dumps”? (Add to your “Idiom” Inventory Sheet.)
3. What is the ground crew of the R.C.A.F. doing in Bagotville?
4. Explain the symbolism of the images on the post cards sent from Europe.
5. Explain the odd appearance of Carmen’s letter.

## *Chapter 13*

1. Why does Will Ashby “sign-up”, and what were his parents reactions? How would you feel if he was your brother or friend? Explain his actions.
2. What does he mean when he asks Beryl to “wait for him”?

## *Chapter 14*

1. What is Beryl’s mother’s secret?
2. How does Beryl react to Carmen’s postcard and why?
3. How does the author inject some humour into this chapter (and the book)?
4. Describe the English servicemen.
5. What details from this chapter will you add to your “Historical Facts” inventory sheet?
6. Why is Christmas 1943 “unforgettable”? Describe it in detail. Compare it to your last Christmas or major religious holiday celebration.

## *Chapter 15*

1. What is a source of humour that begins this chapter and runs through the book? Is it overdone? Explain your answer.
2. Make notations on your “Historical Fact” sheet for: Picadilly Circus, King George, HMCS Moosejaw, Union Jack, Canadian Ensign. Choose two to research quickly on the net. (A group will do further investigation on these topics.)
3. Find a reference to the title of the book in this chapter, and explain it.
4. Explain the secret message.
5. Each chapter is very short in this book. Evaluate the effectiveness of this structural technique, giving reasons for and against it.

## *Chapter 16*

1. Add to your “Idioms” inventory, translating the slang of that day into modern vernacular.
2. “I felt like a third wheel.” (66)  
Explain this simile in the context it is used. Does this belong on the “Idiom” sheet?
3. What is the attitude shown towards civilian men? Explain why people feel this way towards them?
4. Record the description of “The Mosquito” airplane made by DeHavilland. Add it to your “Historical Fact” sheet. A group will find more information about it on the internet or in a book on war planes to present to the class.
5. Why were these planes not built to last?
6. Note the attitude towards girls and women demonstrated in this chapter, and compare it to attitudes today.
7. Record and explain this expression on your “Idiom Inventory” sheet: “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”(67) What is the expression which states the opposite? Which axiom do you usually follow?

## *Chapter 17*

1. Why is Carmen's letter addressed in "girlish handwriting"?
2. Enter the terms: **dambuster, nose-gunner, Jerry, and Lancaster bomber** on your "Historical Facts" inventory sheet. Explain meanings or descriptions from the contexts in the book.
3. Explain the double meaning of the pun, "your smashing good news" (74).
4. Explain how Beryl is feeling after she reads Carmen's letter.
5. Why is her mother "always knitting"?
6. What does Beryl's father mean when he says, "She should be told...just in case.(75)"
7. Compare the letters that Carmen writes to Beryl and to his mother. Account for the differences.
8. "The Red Rocket" is "slow as molasses in January" (76). Explain the metaphor and the simile in this quote, and then add them to your "Idiom" sheet.
9. Give two examples of rationing from this chapter, and explain how they help the war effort.
10. What does the term "civvy" mean? Explain the reasons for being one. Do you see any irony in who gets to go to war?
11. Explain how buying war saving stamps and Victory Bonds help the war effort. (Enter them on your "Historical Facts" inventory sheet.)
12. Explain how the word, "missile", works as a pun on page 78.
13. The whole chapter is written in letter and diary forms. Are these techniques more or less effective than if the author had used narration? Explain.

## **Writing Activities:**

**Answer in paragraph form.**

**a) Write a letter to Beryl and one to Carmen expressing how you are feeling about their situations in the book.**

**or**

**b) How do you feel about the wars that are happening in the world today? Compare your reactions to Beryl's during World War 2. Explain the similarities and the differences.**

## ***Chapter 18***

- 1. Add the old expression, “for love nor money”, to your “Idiom Inventory” sheet, and explain or paraphrase it. (Remember to make additions to other inventory sheets as you read the book.)**
- 2. What is a Quebec heater, and how did it save on coal consumption? Give another example of saving energy from this chapter.**
- 3. Describe Eloise's trip to the hospital. What would happen in the situation today? Define the branch of medicine called “obstetrics”.**
- 4. Why is Beryl “thrilled” about taking a cab? Compare your feelings when taking a cab to hers.**
- 5. How have hospital regulations changed since that time?**
- 6. Show how two people can have very different perspectives on the same ‘thing’.**
- 7. Describe the mood at the end of the chapter. How is it created?**
- 8. What is the symbolic meaning of the birth of the baby?**

## ***Chapter 19***

- 1. Explain how the reference to the title of the book in this chapter contributes to one of the major themes. (See “Major Themes” inventory sheet. )**

2. Give the example which shows that prejudice stems from ignorance.
3. Give examples of re-cycling from wartime.
4. Describe Sybil's accident. Could something similar happen today?
5. Record the old expression "right as rain" (89) on your "Idiom Inventory" sheet.
6. What caused a commotion in the plant? How does this incident create a contrasting mood?
7. How do Beryl and Carl feel about one another?
8. Why does Beryl decide to write in her diary even though she is exhausted?

### **Writing Activity:**

**Buy a small notebook to use as your diary, and begin recording your thoughts and feelings. (Are you feeling happy, sad, worried, excited, angry etc. Why?) Put only your initials, not your full name, on it so you can be honest and candid in your remarks. Don't identify anyone you talk about (in case your diary gets lost). It will be evaluated on effort, not writing skills. Put an asterisk in the margin beside something you want the teacher to read and respond to. Give your diary a name (like "Dear Dolores"), and explain your choice.**

### ***Chapter 20***

1. What does the reader learn about Carmen's mission from his letter? How does the letter get past the censors? Give Beryl's reaction to the letter.
2. Examine the cover of the book carefully. Evaluate how appropriate and how effective it is. Suggest changes that you would make giving your reasons, or defend the cover design that the publisher chose. (central image, other graphics, use of colour, text etc.)

## *Chapter 21*

1. **How do the women on the home front contribute to the war effort?**
2. **In what ways does Beryl's mother remind you of your mother?**
3. **Give a quote, which demonstrates Beryl's father's attitude toward civilians. What is ironic about it?**
4. **How do you feel about Beryl's reaction to the effects of the war at home?**
5. **Give details which show how different wartime was from our time.**
6. **Why would Rickey say, "I hope it (the war) lasts till I grow up", and Beryl say, "Don't say that anymore!"**
7. **Why is 18 a "magic age" for Beryl? What is the magic age for you? Why?**
8. **"I think it's worse being one of the girls waving goodbye." (p.104) Agree or disagree with her statement with your reasons.**

## *Chapter 22*

1. **How would you respond to Mildred's and Beryl's complaints?**
2. **Add the name, "Premier Honourable Mitchell Hepburn" to your "Historical Facts" including some basic information.**
3. **"How do you like them apples?" (106) Add this old expression to your "Idiom" inventory with an explanation or a paraphrase.**
4. **Why does Beryl pinch her cheeks? Do you agree with her mother's advice? Would your mother agree?**
5. **How does the author create a tense mood in Mr. Appleby's office?**
6. **Explain his comment: "Morag has decided to add to the burden of the human race."(109)**
7. **Give examples of "sexism" that existed at the time. Compare it to what exists today.**

## *Chapter 23*

1. How is Beryl's news of her promotion overshadowed?
2. How does Carmen's letter contribute to the story?

## *Chapter 24*

1. Enter "D-day, Juno and Gold Beach, Omaha Beach" on your "Historical Facts" sheet with information that you find in books or the internet.
2. Lorne Greene was the radio broadcaster of the news. What else was he famous for?
3. Add "General Eisenhower" to your fact sheet with some important information about him.
4. Whose name was on the casualty list?
5. Have a volunteer research the army and air force system of ranking. Describe the ones mentioned in this chapter.
6. Why is Beryl upset at the end of the chapter?

## *Chapter 25*

1. What causes Aunt Marie's breakdown?
2. Whom do you agree with (Beryl, her mother, her father) in their short debate on page 119? Justify your answer.
3. Compare their reality to the tales on "The Story Hour". Compare your reality to a present day television soap or sitcom.
4. Why does Marie go home?

## *Chapter 26*

1. Record the old saying (on your “Idiom” inventory sheet): “No news is good news”, and explain it.
2. How is Marie coping?
3. How does the author convey the darkening mood in December 1944?
4. Is Beryl’s father too hard on Aunt Marie?
5. How does the next telegram differ from the last one?
6. How does the author end the chapter? Explain the effectiveness of the technique.

## *Chapter 27*

1. Do you agree with Dad’s reasoning? Why?
2. Record and explain these historical references on your “Historical Facts” inventory sheet: “Captains of the Clouds”, “Hold Back The Dawn”, Laurel and Hardy, “Our Gang”.
3. What surprise raises Beryl’s hopes momentarily?

## *Chapter 28*

1. Summarize the contents of Beryl’s and Joan’s letters.
2. What is your opinion of Beryl’s feelings towards Joan?
3. Explain the irony of the “Dear Joan” letter.
4. How does Beryl solve her dilemma?



## *Chapter 29*

1. Why was Dad “pulling the blackout curtains”?
2. Add (and explain) photo “tinting” to your “Historical Fact Sheet”.
3. Was it the right thing to do to show Joan’s letters to Aunt Marie? Explain.
4. How does Marie react to the letters from Joan?
5. What surprise ends the chapter?

## *Chapter 30*

1. Who went to Christie Street Hospital? Why?
2. What is Natalie’s character flaw? How is it exposed in this chapter?

## *Chapter 31*

1. What creates a “void” in Beryl’s life?
2. Describe Aunt Marie’s mental state.
3. What is ironic about the war winding down?

## *Chapter 32*

1. Describe the atmosphere on VE (Victory in Europe) day using quotes from the book. (Enter it on the “Historical Facts” sheet.) A group will do research on it trying to find photos and other facts and anecdotes to present to the class.
2. Explain why Aunt Marie feels as she does about the end of the war.
3. How does Ricky react?

4. Compare the descriptions of London and Toronto at the end of the war.

### *Chapter 33*

1. Why do the “girls” get fired from DeHavilland? How does Beryl react?
2. How do you feel about “company policy”? Explain the two sides of the issue.
3. What cures Beryl of her jealousy of Eloise?
4. How does Beryl’s mother react to Beryl’s unemployment compared to Myra’s mother’s reaction to hers? With whom would your mother agree?

(Remember to continue making entries on your “Historical Facts” sheet.)

### *Chapter 34*

1. What would “fourth form” be equivalent to today?
2. Why does Beryl feel out of place at school?
3. Show how teenaged boys and girls of any era are much the same.
4. A pro-feminist or anti-sexist theme runs through the book. Give an example from this chapter.
5. Describe Miss Whitely.
6. What is her comment on Beryl’s name change?
7. Alison’s brother came back from the war “shell shocked”. Describe him and do research to find out more information on this condition to record on your fact “Historical Fact” sheet.
8. How does Beryl commiserate with her new friend?
9. Describe Eloise’s husband, Jim, after he comes home.
10. Note the changes in the lives of Eloise and Beryl since the beginning of the book. Whose life would you rather have and why?

### *Chapter 35*

1. How does Beryl feel about the idea of Joan coming to Canada?
2. Show that Beryl has grown up more than the other school girls?
3. Why were there more single girls than men at the D'Havilland, Hallowe'en dance?
4. Explain why Eloise is worried and disappointed.

### *Chapter 36*

1. Outline the contents of the registered letter.
2. Do research to find information on prisoners of war (P.O.W.'s) of WW2. On your "Historical Fact" sheet, enter "Stalag Luft 1" which appears in the next chapter which will be researched later by the group doing this topic.

### *Chapter 37*

1. What do we find out about Carmen's condition?
2. How do his loved ones react to the news? How would you react?
3. How does this chapter end?

### *Chapter 38*

1. What role does Beryl assume, and how does she feel at the start of the trip?
2. What does she begin to worry about?
3. Describe Beryl's first impressions of Halifax compared to her pre-conceived notion.

4. How does Beryl feel in this new setting?
5. Compare their arrival at the hotel to your reaction the last time you stayed at a hotel. Account for the differences.

### **Writing Assignment:**

**Have you visited Halifax or a Maritime city?**

**What was your first impression of Toronto or any new city you have visited?**

**How was it different from what you expected?**

### *Chapter 39*

1. Describe how Beryl and Aunt Marie are feeling the next morning and when they arrive at the hospital.
2. Compare the rules and atmosphere of “visiting hours” at a hospital then and now.
3. Describe the scene in the ward and Carmen’s appearance.
4. Explain the nurse’s reaction to the reunion of Carmen with Beryl and Aunt Marie.
5. What is in store for Carmen now?

### *Chapter 40*

1. Explain the title of this chapter.
2. Do you think having titles for the chapters adds to or detracts from the book?
3. The book’s title appears again in this chapter. At first the publisher thought that the title was too long. Do you agree? Why do you like or dislike the title? Make up an alternative title, and explain your reasons for it.

## *Chapter 41*

1. Describe Carmen's injuries and his ordeal overseas.
2. What important decision has Carmen made? What is his mother's reaction to it? Who has the best argument? Whom would you support?
3. What two favours does Carmen ask of Beryl?

## *Chapter 42*

1. What other favour does Carmen request, and why does Beryl refuse?
2. Give evidence that shows that Beryl is maturing.
3. What phenomenon was occurring after the war brides were brought to Canada?
4. Explain Beryl's feelings on the subject.
5. Comment on the use of the title in this chapter.
6. Can you identify with Joan's position as an immigrant? (You don't have to be an immigrant to relate to her.) Explain.
7. Is the reconciliation between Carmen and his mother over their difference of opinion believable? Explain.
8. Evaluate the concluding paragraph of the book (style as well as content).

## **End Discussion:**

**How are you feeling at the end of the novel? Have an open class discussion about any aspect of the book or related issues that the book has brought to mind.**

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES**  
with evaluation rubrics

## **GROUP WORK**

### **1. Group Oral Seminars on Inventory Topics # 1-4**

**METHOD:** The class will be divided by the teacher into four groups. Group members will work collaboratively skimming the whole text and sharing the information on their individual inventory sheets. They will collate their information before doing further discussion or research. Then, they will organize their information and write up a coherent report to present to the class. Groups should endeavour to use visual techniques such as charts, photos, collages, sketches, film clips, dramatizations etc. to enhance their talks. Group members should share all responsibility equally for the research, organization, write-up, making of visuals and the oral presentation. The contribution of the topic to the overall success of the book should be the underlying thesis or each group's presentation.

#### **TOPICS:**

**Historical Facts:** Using your inventory sheets (#1), compile facts from the text and do further research on some of the historical references. Discuss their contributions to the book's setting and atmosphere. Try to find real film footage, "then and now" photos of places and events and other visuals (charts, graphs) which illustrate the facts to enhance the presentation.

**Major Characters:** Use your inventory sheets (#3) on Beryl and the other major characters to do comprehensive character sketches of the principal characters. You could draw sketches or do a collage using magazine images as a visual element. As well, each group member could compose and present a monologue for each character given at key points in the plot, or write behind the scenes dialogue between two major characters to present dramatically.

**Minor Characters:** Using your inventory sheets (#4), do character sketches of secondary and minor characters illustrated by drawings of them. Research fashion of the time period to show how the characters could have dressed. Then, write dialogues in pairs showing these characters interacting with each other or major characters at poignant times in the story (behind the scenes).

**Style and Structure:** Using your inventory sheets (#2) on idiom of the time period, compile a list of old expressions with paraphrases. Using some of them, write original sentences or compose short dialogues to present dramatically. Then, evaluate the effectiveness of the diction and sentence structure. As well, comment on structural aspects of the book (chapter length, diary and letter format, narrative form etc.). Make a poster, which would be a blow-up of a new book cover. Also, write the text for the back of the book and the notes which would appear on the inside cover flaps (about the author, text excerpts, original (your) reviewer's comments).

Presentations will be evaluated individually using the "Oral/Media Presentation Rubric".

## **2. Drama/Media Activity - WAR ADVERTISEMENT**

The novel will be divided evenly into 6 segments allotted to six groups (7 chapters). Group members will first review the chapters. Each group will make a war poster and a television commercial or government “info-mercial” using the contents of the assigned text as a basis. The group must decide if they will be promoting or protesting the war. Each group will explain its poster (slogan, graphic design, colour, etc.), which will serve as a backdrop for the commercial.

Group members will write a script cooperatively which will then be rehearsed. Direct each other as you rehearse and block the action. Presentations may be video-taped by the teacher or a fellow student during the final rehearsal. Viewing the tape will enable you to make adjustments to improve your final performance for teacher evaluation. You will be evaluated individually according to the criteria of the oral/media and drama presentation rubric.

## **3. Drama/Media Activity – MOVIE ADVERTISEMENT**

Imagine that the book has been made into a movie.

Each group (as above or new groups) will act as a team of writers whose job is to create a playbill (“Coming Soon” or “Now Playing” poster) and a trailer based on the contents of their segment of the novel.

The poster should contain a slogan and a central image to hook movie-goers, as well as a list of actors playing the main characters. (Who should play Beryl or Carmen, for instance? Have good reasons for your choices.) The trailer is a series of short clips containing sparse dialogue or it may be done in pantomime. Choose exciting or meaningful scenes or moments to splice together in a fast-paced series. In your trailer you can reveal the climax and ending which wouldn’t normally be done (for obvious reasons.) Begin and end in tableaux (frozen picture).

**Presentations:** Scripts will be rehearsed, but not necessarily memorized, with token props and costumes. Coach each other; block action, plan timing, correct pronunciation and suggest gestures, expression and movement. Cue cards may be used. Presentations may be video-taped by a fellow student or the teacher during the final rehearsal. Viewing the tape will enable you to make adjustments to improve your final performance for teacher evaluation. Each group member will be evaluated individually using the oral/media and drama presentation rubric.



#### **4. Reader's Theatre Presentation**

The novel is divided into 6 segments (as in #1, 2) of 7 chapters and assigned to the 6 groups who are familiar with the text (or create 6 new groups for a fresh start ). The groups review the chapters and decide which sections of the text contain important plot, character and theme revelation or development. Blocks of significant text are selected to be used as the “script” for dramatization. “Readers’ Theatre” uses the original text and does not convert it to script format with dialogue and narration separated as does conventional theatre script.

The story characters give a dramatic reading with each character reading all parts (dialogue and narration) pertaining to him or her. General references should be read chorally by all. (See sample script below.) This style may seem odd or stilted at first, but the audience will soon catch on and be intrigued by the originality of the form.

Players stand in a wide semi-circle facing the audience holding the books or scripts with their own parts highlighted. They begin and remain in tableau (freeze frame) until their own lines are to be read. They move on the spot with very expressive faces, voices and gestures, or they may step forward when addressing the audience. The rest of the characters may remain in tableau, or they may react to the character who is speaking. Lines are read, not memorized as if the book itself is coming to life (which is very different from dramatizing scenes from the book which has been made into a play!). The players should have token props and costumes to enhance their roles. For example: Beryl : a diary, Eloise: a doll, Carmen: an air force cap etc.

#### **EVALUATION**

The groups present in chronological order. This drama presentation serves as a good review before the essay writing activity. It could be used as the oral/drama culminating activity. (See attached “Drama Presentation” rubric.)

**SAMPLE SCRIPT: P.5**

**Beryl:** This is my first diary. I have never kept a diary before, but since—

**Eloise:** Eloise Wilkinson gave it to me for a bridesmaid's gift—

**Beryl:** I thought I should start it with—

**Eloise:** her wedding. Eloise is my best friend and she got married to—

**James:** her boyfriend, Private James Foster, today. Jim had come home on embarkation leave and asked—

**Eloise:** Eloise to marry—

**Jim:** him before he went overseas.

**All:** Well—

**Eloise:** Eloise is only eighteen years old—

**Beryl:** one year older than I am—

**All:** almost to the day.

**Eloise:** so she had to have—

**Mr. Wilkinson:** her father's signature on a permission to marry form.

**Mrs. Wilkinson:** Her mother said she wouldn't sign such a thing,—

**All:** but mothers can't sign anyway unless—

**Mr. Wilkinson:** the father is dead—

**Mrs. Wilkinson:** So all Mrs. Wilkinson could do was cry her eyes out—

**All:** through the whole ceremony.

**Beryl:** I don't know why—

**Mrs. Wilkinson:** she was crying because—

**Jim:** Jim is nice (homely, but nice) and—

**Eloise:** Eloise looked lovely in her white chiffon wedding dress and pillbox hat—

## **WRITING ACTIVITIES**

### **Diary Writing**

**Make one last entry, and then hand in your diaries to the teacher for evaluation, which will be based on effort and interest value of the content (expression of thoughts and feelings) rather than on grammar and spelling.**

### **Letter Writing**

**Make a list of questions you would like to ask the author. Your questions can be about her writing career, her life during the war or anything to do with the novel. Also offer your personal comments or feedback about any aspect of the book (plot, characters, setting, style & structure).**

**This may be done individually, in pairs or in small groups. Collate your questions and comments. Collaboratively, compose a letter to the author which your teacher will send to the publisher, Fitzhenry and Whiteside. They forward letters to authors, so you may get a reply. (What is unusual about the authorship of this book?)**

### **Essay Writing**

## **Unit End Essay Test or Culminating Writing Activity**

**Several themes run through the novel. Choose one and trace its development in an essay. Begin with an essay outline. Have a clear thesis which evaluates the significance of the topic. How much does it contribute to the overall appeal of the book?**

- 1. Youth Coming-of-Age**
- 2. Gender Bias and other Prejudices of the Era**
- 3. Effects of War on Families**
- 4. Family Life and Issues of the 1940's**

**Your essay will be evaluated according to the criteria and levels of the “Essay Writing Rubric”.**

## **Preparation for Writing a Book Review**

### **Your Reaction to Reviewers' Comments**

**Read the following excerpts from reviews which were written in various, critical publications when the novel came out in 2005. Choose two or three points which you strongly agree with and one that you disagree with. Write a response to the reviewers. Explain your feelings and opinions, giving specific references from the text to support your viewpoint.**

“Hunter’s book paints a vivid picture of what it was like for the girls they left behind...For readers who like historical realism or those who just like a good story, this novel is recommended.” (Winnipeg Free Press, BurrellesLuce WebClips)

“With its inclusion of brand names, wartime prices and details about rationing and blackouts, this book will have particular appeal to nostalgic adults...This attention to detail is the book’s strongest point; unfortunately, the characters lack depth and young readers will not find the plot compelling.” (Ginny Gustin, Sonoma County Library System, Santa Rosa,CA – School Library Journal, NY, August 2005)

“In her final novel, Hunter portrays the realities of life in Toronto during World War Two through a moving, accessible, and inspiring story about coming of age in a world of danger, grief, love and hope.” (Minaki, Canadian Children’s Book News, summer 2005)

“*The Girls They Left Behind*, for all its lack of literary sophistication, contains an original portrait of a very particular situation at a pivotal time in history. Hunter’s fictional interpretation of shifting gender and power dynamics on the homefront during wartime, as well as girls’ roles in this societal milieu, is both interesting and informative—an important contribution to Canadian children’s literature.” (CM Magazine, The Manitoba Library Association)

“This novel by a prizewinning Canadian writer draws on personal memories, and the fast, plain, first-person narrative, irreverent and fiercely patriotic, romantic and anguished, evokes a strong sense of World War 2 on the homefront... It’s such authentic, daily detail and the realistic characters caught up in momentous events that make this historical fiction so compelling.” (Hazel Rochman, Booklist, Burrelles Luce, Chicago, Il, May 15, 2005)

“Natalie is a courageous, determined young girl...At times funny and at other times quite serious, this book will be of interest to young girls at the junior and senior high levels. It is a good portrayal of life on the home front and will prove useful in studies of World War II and women’s rights.” (p.31, Victoria Pennell, Volume 10, number 5, Resource Links)

“But the book isn’t just a period piece. The story it tells of love and sacrifice and family is one just as important as any war novel about the heroism of soldiers in battle. While it may be directed to an audience primarily of girls rather than boys, it doesn’t mean that anyone couldn’t enjoy this easy-to-read, difficult-to-put-down story... easy to read but difficult to forget.” (Flamingnet New book Review, Book Reviewer BS)

“It is based on her own experiences during World War II... The result is a lively portrait of a determined young woman and a very realistic portrait of the life at home. Ms. Hunter has captured the spirit and feeling of the times so well, an engaging novel that is also an important piece of social history for young teen readers.” (p. 8, Deakin Newsletter Summer 2005)

## **Writing a Book Review**

**A review is a report or essay appraising the worth of a work or performance. A review is based on the personal opinion and taste of the reviewer; reviews vary and reviewers often contradict one another. The tone is usually personal and informal. It must be concise, so the author only comments on his or her strongest impressions of the book’s strengths and weaknesses.**

**Write a 250- 300 word review of *The Girls They Left Behind* for your school newspaper. Have an introduction, which states your general reaction, a brief plot summary in one paragraph (do not reveal the climax, ending or anything which will spoil the suspense for the reader), and two or three paragraphs, which comment on the book’s most noteworthy aspects or most effective or ineffective elements. End with a strong conclusion or summation.**

### **EVALUATION:**

**Your writing will be evaluated using the “Essay Writing Rubric”.**

**Inventory Sheet #1**

**Historical Facts**

**Inventory Sheet #2**

**Idiom of the Era**

**Inventory Sheet #3**

**Major Characters**



**Inventory Sheet #4**

**Minor Characters**

## **Inventory Sheet #5**

## **Major Themes**

**1. Youth Coming-of-Age**

**2. The Effects of War**

**3. Gender Bias and Prejudices of the Period**

**4. Family Life in the Forties**

**Essay Evaluation Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mark:** /20

Criteria	Limited: 1	Developing: 2	Achieving: 3	Exemplary: 4
<b>Critical Thinking:</b> (main ideas) thesis, sub-theses, analysis /4	Weak introduction, poor understanding or knowledge, lapses in logic, summarization without analysis, repetition, obvious ideas	Slow introduction, limited understanding or knowledge, flawed logic, too much summarization, limited analysis, simplistic	Good introduction, good understanding or knowledge, good analytical skills, interesting ideas	Strong introduction, excellent understanding or knowledge, insightful main ideas, strong analytical skills, thought-provoking, original ideas
<b>Development:</b> (proofs) supporting evidence, rhetorical devices /4	Insufficient personal or textual support, vague, irrelevant or unexplained statements	Some appropriate support, but some vague or irrelevant statements, unvaried devices	Well-supported, adequately examined, relevant, specific proofs, some variety of rhetorical devices	Excellent, well-integrated, interesting, specific, relevant proofs, variety of rhetorical devices
<b>Organization:</b> (unity & coherence) transitions, essay and paragraph structure /4	Haphazard arrangement of ideas, lacking unity and transitional devices, confusing paragraphing lack of closure	Some logic in arrangement of ideas, few transitions, confusing spots, poor paragraphing, unsatisfying conclusion	Well-organized, coherent argument, good use of transitional devices, good paragraphing, effective conclusion	Effective, well-organized arrangement of ideas, smooth transitions between & within paragraphs, strong finale
<b>Style:</b> tone, diction, literary devices, sentence structure /4	Poor diction, rambling, awkward expression of ideas, same devices used, monotonous tone,	Uninteresting, imprecise diction, awkward spots, lacking variety of devices, satisfactory tone	Well-expressed ideas in precise, diction, varied literary devices, smooth writing, interesting tone	Concise expression of ideas, elevated diction, interesting & varied stylistic devices, engaging tone
<b>Mechanics:</b> grammar, spelling, presentation /4	Many major and minor errors in spelling & grammar, barely readable	Some major and minor errors in spelling & grammar, readable	Few grammar & spelling errors, clear, neat presentation, easy to read	Excellent grammar & spelling, attractive presentation, enjoyable to read

**Oral/Media Presentation: Name:**

**Mark /20**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Limited 1</b>	<b>Developing 2</b>	<b>Achieving 3</b>	<b>Exemplary 4</b>
<b>SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE:</b> theme, research and personal reaction  /4	Limited comprehension; vague, brief repetitive, inaccurate, off-topic, summarizing; lacks personal analysis or research	Some comprehension; vague, rambling, irrelevant, insufficient development; little personal analysis or research	Good comprehension; sufficient development; relevant, interesting, personal analysis and/or research	Excellent comprehension; concise, ample development intriguing, relevant, personal analysis and research
<b>ORGANIZATION &amp; METHODS:</b> unity and coherence, technique  /4	No logical arrangement; lacks introduction, conclusion, transitions; ineffective presentational techniques; little class interest or involvement	Disorganized arrangement; with introduction, conclusion transitions; unoriginal presentational techniques; some class interest or involvement	Good arrangement with introduction, conclusion, transitions; interesting techniques; good class interest and involvement	Effective arrangement & techniques; with compelling introduction, conclusion; smooth transitions; strong class interest and involvement
<b>PRESENCE:</b> rapport, tone, expression, gestures  /4	Reading with little or no expression, gestures or eye contact; no rapport, monotonous tone	Some gestures, expression and eye contact but dependence on notes reduced rapport; bland tone	Expressive reading and speaking; good eye contact and gestures; good rapport; interesting tone	Animated dramatic or natural tone; excellent eye contact, gestures, expression; great rapport
<b>ARTICULATION:</b> diction, pronunciation, projection  /4	Imprecise or inaccurate, simple diction; poor pace, projection, pronunciation & enunciation	Unclear or uninteresting diction; too fast or slow pace; poor projection, pronunciation & enunciation	Well-expressed and projected; good pace, pronunciation & enunciation; interesting and easy to understand	Sophisticated diction; fluent, clear, engaging speech; well-paced and forcefully projected
<b>MEDIA COMPONENT:</b> audio or visual elements  /4	Lacking effort, sophistication, creativity, relevance; disconnected	Some effort, creativity, and relevance; somewhat disconnected	Quite creative and attractive, functional, relevant; well-integrated	Very creative, original, relevant; seamlessly integrated

**Dramatic Presentation Evaluation Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Level 1 Limited</b>	<b>Level 2 Satisfactory</b>	<b>Level 3 Achieving</b>	<b>Level 4 Exemplary</b>
<b>Effort and Enthusiasm</b>	Little or no effort, distracted or disinterested, little or no input, poor group member	Inconsistent effort and interest, some input, satisfactory group member	Consistent effort, interest & enthusiasm, considerable input, good group member	Excellent effort, interest & enthusiasm, excellent input, a motivator and group leader
<b>Expression &amp; Gestures, Tone</b>	Too dependent on script, expressionless, little or no eye contact, gestures or movement, monotonous tone	Some dependence on script reduced eye contact, some gestures, expression and movement, satisfactory tone	Good knowledge of script, good eye contact, expression, gestures with movement, good tone	Excellent knowledge of script, excellent expression, gestures, eye contact, movement, interesting tone
<b>Articulation, Projection and Pronunciation,</b>	Inaudible, poor pronunciation & projection, unclear, imprecise or inaccurate diction	Low voice, some unclear speech due to poor pronunciation, projection, diction	Clear, audible speech, good projection and enunciation, good diction	Excellent clarity of speech, excellent projection & enunciation, descriptive, precise diction
<b>Knowledge and Interpretation of Text</b>	Poor comprehension, little textual basis and little or no interpretation	Some comprehension of text, some interpretation of text	Good comprehension and good interpretation of text	Excellent comprehension and interesting interpretation of text
<b>Marks:</b>				

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

TOTAL MARKS: \_\_\_\_\_

## **BOOKS BY BERNICE THURMAN HUNTER**

(See synopses under "On Bernice Thurman Hunter".)

*That Scatterbrain Booky*

*With Love From Booky*

*As Ever Booky*

*or*

*Booky, A Trilogy*

*A Place For Margaret*

*Margaret In The Middle*

*Margaret On Her Way*

*or*

*The Margaret Trilogy*

*The Lamplighter*

*The Railroader*

*The Firefighter*

*Hawk and Stretch*

*Amy's Promise*

*Janey's Choice*

*Too Much Alike*

*It Takes Two*

*The Runaway*

*The Girls They Left Behind*

*Kimberley of Millpond*

