

## Year 7 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' Knowledge Organiser

### Assessments:

1. An internal monologue in the role of Maria.
2. The opening to an adventure story.
3. An individual formal presentation. Presentations will be one minute in length and will need to be prepared and rehearsed.

### Brief Summary:

- Bruno's father is given a position of power at Auschwitz. The family moves to a house outside of the camp. The camp is visible from the family's house and Bruno spends time walking along its fence.
- Bruno encounters a boy on the other side of the fence called Shmuel and they become friends. Shmuel is wearing striped pyjamas with a golden armband.
- Bruno's family hosts a dinner for Adolf Hitler and his companion Eva.
- Shmuel asks for Bruno's help in finding his father. Bruno disguises himself as one of the prisoners and enters the death camp.
- The two boys are killed in the gas chambers.



### Key Vocabulary and Context:

**Genocide:** the deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular nation or ethnic group.

**The Holocaust:** a genocide during World War Two organised by Germany's Nazi Party. The Nazis targeted Jews, Roma, homosexuals and people with disabilities. Over 6 million Jews were killed between 1941 and 1945.

**The Nazi Party:** a German political party led by Adolf Hitler. They believed in the purity of the Aryan Race and persecuted those who threatened this.

**Adolf Hitler:** Führer (leader) of the Nazi Party from 1934-1945.

**The Aryan Race:** Hitler believed in creating a 'master race' of people. The Nazis tried to create this Aryan race and created posters showing the 'perfect family'. From a leaflet 'The Nazi Race' in 1929, "The Aryan race is tall, long-legged, slim. The race is narrow-faced, with a narrow forehead, a narrow high-built nose and a lower jaw and prominent chin. The skin is rosy bright and the blood shines through...the hair is smooth, straight or wavy - possibly curly in childhood. The colour is blond."

**Anti-Semitism:** the hatred and persecution of Jews.

**Concentration Camp:** large camps where Jews and others persecuted by the Nazis were sent. There were three types of concentration camp: prison camps, slave-labour camps and extermination camps. The camps were extremely harsh environments and many died from disease, starvation, exhaustion and execution in the gas chambers.

**Auschwitz:** the largest and most notorious concentration camp. Between 1.1 and 1.5 million people died in Auschwitz (90% of those were Jews).

**Hitler Youth:** a youth organisation created by the Nazi Party which indoctrinated children and young people with Nazi ideas.

### Key Characters:

**Bruno:** the protagonist and narrator. Bruno is nine-years-old when he moves from Berlin to Auschwitz, Poland, where he develops a friendship with Shmuel. Bruno is very sheltered, naïve and innocent.

**Shmuel:** a Jewish prisoner in Auschwitz. Shmuel is born on the same day as Bruno and the two become friends.

**Gretel:** Bruno's twelve-year-old sister. Bruno refers to her as a 'Hopeless Case'. She thinks that she is wiser than Bruno and often taunts him.

**Father:** Bruno's father, Ralf, is promoted to Commandant in the German Army by Hitler during World War II. He moves the family to Auschwitz, where he is in charge of the camp. Father is strict and intimidating, but expresses tenderness towards his family.

**Mother:** Bruno's mother is very loving towards Gretel and Bruno, but becomes stern whenever they ask too many questions or complain about moving to Auschwitz. She refuses to speak with Bruno about the war, and says it is no topic for proper conversation.

**Grandmother:** Bruno's paternal grandmother, Nathalie, devises a play for herself and her grandchildren every year to be performed at their holiday party. She opposes the Nazi Party.

**Grandfather:** Bruno's paternal grandfather, Matthias, supports his son and is proud of Father's role in the Nazi party.

**Kurt Kotler:** a nineteen-year-old German soldier at Auschwitz. He is cruel to the prisoners, and taunts Bruno by calling him 'little man'.

**Pavel:** the old Jewish man who works in the family's house in Auschwitz. He was a doctor before he was sent to the concentration camp.

**Maria:** the family's maid.

**Lars:** the family's butler.

**Herr Liszt:** Bruno and Gretel's tutor. He is a supporter of the Nazi party.



### Literary Techniques:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Allegory                | A story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one.  |
| Alliteration            | The occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.  |
| Assonance               | A repetition of vowel sounds.  |
| Connotation             | Associated meaning of the word.  |
| Context                 | The circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood.  |
| Emotive language        | Language used to create a particular emotion in the reader.  |
| Foreshadowing           | When the writer hints at a future event.   |
| Hyperbole               | Exaggerated statements.  |
| Juxtaposition           | When two contrasting ideas are placed together to highlight their differences.   |
| Metaphor                | A comparison – made directly or indirectly – without using "like" or "as."   |
| Mondegreen              | A misunderstood or misinterpreted word or phrase resulting from a mishearing of the a phrase or lyrics of a song.  |
| Narrative voice/persona | The voice / speaker who is different from the writer.  |
| Pathetic fallacy        | When a character's feelings, thoughts or emotions are displayed through the environment around them. For example, when a character is depressed and it is raining. |
| Personification         | Giving human characteristics to something which is not human.  |
| Plosive                 | "b," "p," "t" and "d" sounds – which can be harsh, aggressive or shocking.   |
| Protagonist             | The main character.  |
| Sibilance               | Repeated "s" sounds – most often caused by "s" "ss" and "c." These can be harsh, smooth or sickly.   |
| Simile                  | A comparison made using the words "like" or "as."  |
| Theme                   | The central idea of a literary work.   |



### Themes:

**Innocence and Ignorance:** Bruno has lived a sheltered life and is mostly ignorant of the political situation at the time. He mispronounces key words that he has misheard and does not fully understand. He has little to no idea as to what is going on in Auschwitz and he never understands exactly why Shmuel is there, or why he is so thin.

**Boundaries:** Bruno's world is filled with places he is not allowed to go, and the reasons for these boundaries are rarely explained to him. The boundaries—whether they are social boundaries, such as the inability to ask certain questions, or physical ones, such as a closed door or a fence—all lead to dire consequences.

**Family and Friendship:** Bruno feels a tension between what his family has told him about staying away from the fence, and the bond he feels with Shmuel. Though Bruno knows very little about why Shmuel is in the camp or why he is not supposed to talk to him, Bruno ultimately allows his friendship to supersede his obedience to his parents and Gretel.

**Nationalism:** the Nazi Party operated on the idea that ethnic Germans were superior to the rest of the world, particularly the Jewish population. Though Bruno understands very little about the political situation of Germany, his tutor and his Father have still indoctrinated him to an extent to believe in the superiority of Germany and its right to rule.

**Gender Roles:** Father is the patriarch of the family (he is in charge of what the entire family does and where they go). The adult women in the novel, bound by their traditional gender roles, each have their own negative opinions regarding Father's role at Auschwitz, but they are disregarded due to their secondary status to men.

**Complicity:** though most of the characters in the novel are not explicit members or supporters of the Nazi party, many of them end up complying with the regime's ideals and goals out of a sense of duty, fear, or apathy.

