

BY THE END OF YEAR 7

ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

“The Gestapo’s Most Wanted” (*School Journal*, Part 4 Number 2, 2009)

Noun frequency level: 12–14

By the end of year 7, students are required to use a range of fiction and non-fiction texts to locate, evaluate, and synthesise information and ideas in order to meet the reading demands of the curriculum, drawing on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes described for the end of year 7 in the Literacy Learning Progressions. The curriculum tasks will also involve the students in generating their own questions as well as answering questions from the teacher.

As part of their learning in social studies, the students in a year 7 and 8 class are inquiring into how individuals respond to community challenges. The students are reading a wide variety of non-fiction texts in order to explore the personal qualities that drive people to courageously put their lives at risk to change the course of events when faced with oppression and injustice.

“The Gestapo’s Most Wanted” is a biography that recounts the dangerous role played by Nancy Wake, a young New

Zealand-born woman who served with the French Resistance in the Second World War and became a secret agent for the Allied forces. This is a longer text that deals with some complex themes, such as resistance, endurance, and courage.

The teacher chose “The Gestapo’s Most Wanted” because of its complex themes and historical setting.

Students need to evaluate and synthesise information to understand the importance of the personal qualities of Nancy Wake and of those who have acted with similar courage. The subheadings and the italicised introduction help the students to set up an expectation for the reading.

The following example illustrates aspects of the task and text and demonstrates how a student engages with both task and text to meet the reading demands of the curriculum. A number of such examples would be used to inform the overall teacher judgment for this student.

The student by the end of year 7 evaluates and synthesises information across the text, with some teacher prompting, to identify the personal qualities of individuals who act courageously.

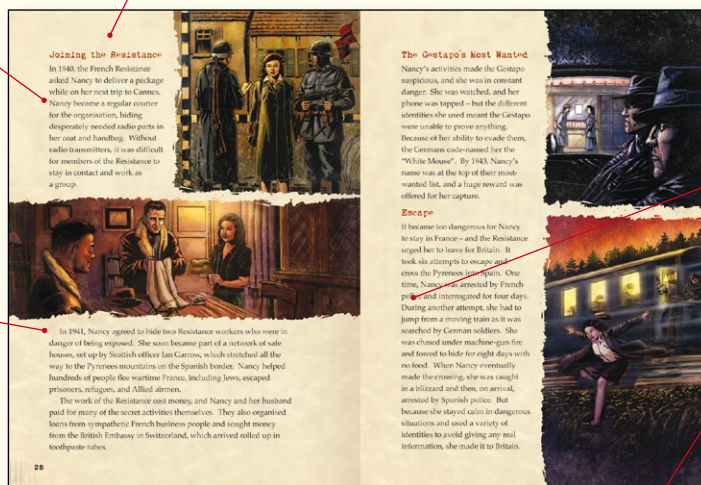
The student by the end of year 8 does this with greater independence and confidence as well as describing the impact of these actions.

She could have chosen to wait out the war in relative comfort ... She was determined to resist the German occupation.

Nancy became a regular courier for the organisation, hiding desperately needed radio parts in her coat and handbag.

In 1941, Nancy agreed to hide two Resistance workers who were in danger of being exposed ... Nancy helped hundreds of people flee wartime France, including Jews, escaped prisoners, refugees, and Allied airmen.

The student uses her prior knowledge of the setting and context, along with the information in the illustrations, to understand the abstract concepts of resistance and the French Resistance. The student asks and answers questions to infer Nancy’s reasons for supporting the Resistance. She evaluates Nancy’s actions in terms of the risks to her own safety and to that of those around her and in terms of the wider implications for the struggle against the Nazis. With prompting, the student makes connections to other texts about people resisting Nazi oppression, such as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, synthesising information to make inferences about what drives people like Nancy Wake to act with courage in high-risk situations.



During another attempt, she had to jump from a moving train as it was searched by German soldiers. She was chased under machine-gun fire and forced to hide for eight days with no food.

Nancy and her comrades lived rough in the forest and were constantly on the move.

Nancy volunteered to fetch the codes – on a bike ... Nancy set out with no identity papers and no weapon. She cycled through countryside and mountains, finally arriving back with the codes seventy-one hours later.

The student finds information across the text that enables her to infer and evaluate Nancy’s personal qualities, such as courage and endurance. With prompting, the student makes connections to the personal qualities of other people who have faced similar situations, for example, Mahatma Gandhi or Nelson Mandela. She synthesises information and ideas to understand the strength and commitment required by people who resist oppression and injustice.