



# ***Kindertransport***

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
Study Guide

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# Contents

Product Support from ZigZag Education .....	ii
Terms and Conditions of Use .....	iii
Teacher's Introduction .....	1
Context.....	1
Author Biography .....	2
Performance History .....	2
Critical Reception.....	2
An Interview with the Author .....	3
Plot Summary .....	7
Character List.....	11
Character Relationship Map .....	13
Scene Summaries and Analyses.....	14
Act I, Scene i .....	14
Act I, Scene ii .....	16
Act II, Scene i .....	18
Act II, Scene ii .....	20
Character Analyses.....	23
Eva/Evelyn .....	23
Lil / Mrs Miller .....	24
Faith .....	24
The Ratcatcher .....	25
Language, Structure and Form .....	30
Language.....	30
Structure.....	30
Form.....	31
Ideas, Themes and Settings .....	33
Ideas.....	33
Themes .....	33
Settings .....	36
Historical, Cultural and Social Context .....	37
Historical Background .....	37
Cultural Context .....	37
Social Context .....	38
Essay and Exam Guidance.....	39
General Guidance on the Exam .....	39
PEE - Use of Point/Evidence/Explanation When Writing Essays.....	39
General Guidance on Writing Essays.....	40
Exam-Style Questions .....	42
Indicative Content .....	43

## Teacher's Introduction

### How to Use This Study Guide

This resource has been created to support the teaching of the play *Kindertransport* for International GCSE examination preparation. There will be discussion points and activities throughout the resource. These are designed to encourage group discussion as well as engage students in the exploration of the play, and there are options available to cater for all ability levels.

The guide comprises the following sections:

<b>Author Biography</b>	A background on author Diane Samuels, along with a biography conducted by ZigZag Education.
<b>Performance History</b>	A background on the play's use in theatre and criticism.
<b>Plot Summary</b>	An overview of the major events of the narrative throughout.
<b>Scene-by-Scene Commentary</b>	Detailed commentaries on key themes, literary techniques, contextual influence and important quotations for focus on narrative style and contextual themes.
<b>Character Studies</b>	Analyses of all characters in the play, with detail on their characteristics, characterisation techniques used by the playwright in the play. Particular emphasis placed on Eva/Evelyn.
<b>Language, Structure and Form</b>	How the playwright utilises language, structure and format to tell the story and how these choices affect the audience.
<b>Setting, Themes and Ideas</b>	A detailed exploration of the main themes and ideas, and the significance of the geographical and temporal setting.
<b>Cultural, Historical and Social Context</b>	Commentary on the significance of the context of the play, the era, its impact on families at the time, and the impact of anti-Semitism and struggle/sacrifice.
<b>Revision History</b>	Tasks and exercises to test familiarisation with the text to help students get the most out of revision time.
<b>Exam and Essay Guidance</b>	Sample exam questions and tips on how to approach the exam.
<b>Literary Terms</b>	To help students understand literary terms and how they are used.

### Edition of the Text

All page references refer to the Nick Hern Books (2013, London) edition of *Kindertransport* ISBN 978 1 85459 527 0. This edition also includes several personal memoirs by those whose lives were saved, and transformed, by the Kindertransport.

### Specification Information

This guide applies to the following component:

**Component 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage texts (examined) – Section A: Modern Drama**

Component 2 is worth 40% of the total qualification. In this component candidates will study two texts, one Modern Drama text and one Literary Heritage text.

Questions will test the following assessment objectives:

- AO1:** Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintain an informed personal engagement.
- AO2:** Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meaning.

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## Author Biography

Diane Samuels was born in 1960 in Liverpool and currently resides in North London. She began writing for theatre in 1992, primarily down to the success of *Kindertransport*. Previously Samuels has worked at the Unicorn Theatre for children and previously as a drama teacher in secondary schools.

After the critical praise of the award-winning *Kindertransport*, Diane Samuels went on to write more works for theatre throughout the 1990s, including *Over a Hundred Million Footsteps* and *the Earth*.

In recent years Diane Samuels has begun tutoring young people in the art of play writing at universities across the UK and enjoys writing children's book reviews for *The Guardian*.



## Performance History

- *Kindertransport* was first performed in the UK by the Soho Theatre Company in London on April 13, 1993.
- The play had its US debut at the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York on April 19, 1993.
- *Kindertransport* was adapted by Diane Samuels for a BBC Radio 4 production in 1994.
- Subsequently the play has been translated into many languages.
- It has been performed in the West End and off-Broadway as well as productions in Austria, Canada and South Africa.
- *Kindertransport* was revived in 2007 in a highly-acclaimed production by the Belgrade Theatre Company.

## Critical Reception

- Winner of the 1993 City Sargate Award
- Winner of the 1993 Meyer Whitworth Award
- 'Like all good plays, *Kindertransport* has murky depths that reveal more the more you think about it.' *The Guardian* regarding a performance in Hampstead, London (2007)
- 'If you didn't see it you missed an exceptional piece of theatre.' BBC Suffolk
- 'The bittersweet experience of every parent as they try to teach their child to be a good person.' *The Guardian* regarding a performance at Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, 2013



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## An Interview with the Author

Conducted by Dee Bettaney for ZigZag Education at Diane's home in London

**Dee:** Why are you a playwright and why did you choose to write *Kindertransport* as a play and not as a novel?

**Diane:** One of the reasons I am a playwright is because I am interested in the relationship between the individual and the collective. Now we are both – we are all individuals but we are also part of the collective. Theatre provides a place where you can experience things as a collective, as a group, with other people next to you; unacknowledged parts of ourselves that we certainly don't experience in any way out in the world with other people. At the end of Act Two when Helga comes back on, where Evelyn says 'you made me survive without you', you always hear crying in the theatre and you realise that all these people are bringing something very private, but they are also sharing – something they wouldn't normally share with people close to them, let alone strangers – they are sharing it with each other and they are not alone in those feelings. So, that's why for me, it's plays that I usually end up doing.

Traditionally theatre in England is a very male-dominated space. I also think there is something about a speaking female voice which is very private. Women are generally much more successful in writing novels because of this sense of privacy and I feel it is still pioneering in the twenty-first century for women to have a place in theatre.

**Dee:** I was particularly interested by what you were saying about the collective experience – do you think that ties in with *Kindertransport* historically in that it is also to some extent a collective experience?

**Diane:** Well what's interesting about Primo Levi's work, for instance, was the recognition of individual experiences. I think that's really the only way you can deal with any aspect of human experience – you need to have a sense of what it is no good to simply see it as a collective overwhelm and also you need to put private experience in context and connect with other human beings who have these experiences, and therefore gain a variety and variation on that experience. It's about bringing the pieces together, a historical work referencing the Holocaust and letting individuals tell their testimony and have their story.

Take war memories onto a stage – it is moving – it is for one name, and to a collective matters.

**Dee:** Do you think it's important for students to know about Levi?

**Diane:** Anything but the other one I know, Miller, who is Jewish and the German.

**Dee:** Do you think it's important for students, in particular, to have an awareness of or to know about the theory in particular?

**Diane:** Of course. It occurred to me that I was a source that I influenced the way you really want to read *Ratcatcher* it is Bettelheim's father.

**Dee:** One of the things I want to ask you was about the research conducted before you spend a period of contextual research.

**Diane:** Yes, I read my favourite book by Gershon, called *The Kindred* was on the Kindertransport poet in her own compilation of kinder and that around the subject at newspaper articles contacts was an 'Kindertransport' interviewed some late 80s / early around 50 or 60.

I was also given people writing anniversary of 1989. I interviewed kinder including who came illegally 17 years old, the

The Quakers are very quiet, modest role in the kinder

**Dee:** Do you think students do enough to know about War II to support the play?

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**Diane:** Of course, though looking at primary source material requires a bit of patience. I really spent the majority of my time talking to kinder for research as that was sufficient because it is such a personal story and it really isn't a play about the Kindertransport, it is a play about separation. Parent and child, specifically: mother and daughter separation. I wanted to connect and hear what they had to say. Karen Gershon told the story by talking and using bits of other people's experiences.

**Dee:** Would you mind talking a little about the process of writing the play?

**Diane:** It was quite quick really. It was definitely around the time when I was pregnant with my younger son, and I was completing it not long after he was born. I started to research it in 1989 and I did a certain amount of reading alongside the interviewing and then just started to write it - the first thing that came out was a speech, Helga's in fact. Instead of the dialogue between Helga and Eva it was Helga telling her what was about to happen to her and what she needed to look out for.

A lot of the play came through in powerful images such as the button being stitched to the coat and Helga's refusal to help Eva. The way I write is that I do just find the writing by writing. I always say that you can't think about writing through simply talking about it but by simply writing it, as you write it you discover what it's like like working with clay. You can talk about the clay all day but you need to just start shaping the material.

I think I had written about half of the play and then I went along to a workshop for playwrights at the time in Soho Theatre. He actually hot-seated me as Evelyn and I remember he was asking me questions such as 'where are you' and I said, 'I am sitting in a storeroom'. It started as a storeroom space, not as an attic - that came in fact from a friend who said to me why don't you set it in an attic because I imagined it as a storeroom. When he hot-seated me he asked me about the objects in the room and I said there was a box on the floor next to me. He said 'well what's in it?' and I said 'I'm not going to talk to you about that' - then the character in the box came alive. He kept pressing me to tell him what was in the box and I kept saying 'I'm not going to' and he said 'will you leave me alone?'. The strength of Evelyn's defence, her littleness, emerged and I just became her. And then he got me to pick up the box - there was a real battle over it - and then I burst into tears. It was about Evelyn's relationship with the box and that gave me a lot of material and then it came out...

I completed the around 1991 and a competition in 'oh well that is later, I got a literary manager he said 'congratulations' and I said 'I didn't enter it' and Abigail had liked it.

It was produced and was then performed later - it was a playwright dream.

**Dee:** I remember talked to me about of *Kindertransport* a large number of the audience?

**Diane:** Yes, lots of kinder and ordinary all ages. The thought it was to sit amongst them were kinder. The wherever the play would get someone would have had it's about and what we have all had experience of our parents in it isn't just them.

A lot of parent children with the grown-up play to of as well so it and I suppose it 8-9-year-olds a

**Dee:** A number of know about the will often involve interweaving of flashbacks - I discuss the story little for us people.

**Diane:** The play are seeing right the facets of history that we think of construct, we are moment the way something is like as much as the relationship with existing in a way notion of past, are multi-layered time and space Evelyn are about outer lives of

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What we are seeing on stage is what Evelyn is experiencing right now, Eva is alive in Evelyn – it's not like that is who she used to be, it is who she is. So it is all in the present, the whole play is in the present.

Flashbacks, if you are going to be precise about what they are, they are a specific technique to give you back story and to explain something that has happened before in order to explain the action now. I think if we are going to be technical it's more of a film and television technique rather than the theatre. This technique doesn't work in theatre very well as if you have to stop to tell the story of what has happened in the past then perhaps the storytelling isn't good enough – it is a different thing altogether to have parallel stories set at different times running side by side because what you are doing then isn't flashback, it is telling a parallel story. So if you tell a story that starts 20 years before the other story starts, then what you are doing is telling parallel stories. Flashback on the other hand can be a limited technique.

**Dee:** In previous conversations, Diane, you have mentioned that *Kindertransport* fits within the Expressionistic theatre genre – could you possibly outline what expressionism might mean to a student studying the play?

**Diane:** I don't know the formal definition of it, but it is essentially not a naturalistic play. At least the characters do behave in a manner we recognise in the actual world. It is more of a poetic representation of natural life. There is poetry in the imagery and language used and I suppose I would call it poetic theatre. I work with poetry and I would define my writing in that way. I am always looking for the poetry in life. And what is poetry? It is the symbolic essence of things, how you find the detail in existence as metaphor, so everything is metaphorical – I don't just work on the literal, naturalistic level although it might seem like I do because there are recognisable moments and the way the characters talk to each other is quite detailed and specific. Expressionistic theatre then is a type of theatre which is very stylised and is about finding a way of revealing the inner world or the more abstract ideas and I suppose I am drawn to that kind of theatre. It is more symbolic, the ritualistic and the metaphor.

**Dee:** Many students also ask about your personal experiences and the influence of these on the play, particularly your experiences as a mother. How much of yourself did you bring to the play?

**Diane:** I wrote my children were youngest son was the play. When born. So that was influence. I did although the play and daughters. I think my mother so my writing of the final stage my own mother was before *Kindertransport* West End. So this is about my relationship and my experiences with two sons. Because very different I think the mother has a different

Oddly though, that Evelyn is helped written when my toddler. When ten years later and suddenly hit me about to go off literally go home help my son pack the same – 'do you want to see that I had come to see your child goodbye to your mother written it when is interesting tuned into what him off twenty I could have known experiences of I was a child. therefore influenced subtle and intricate your children to is successful play the heartbreak

**Dee:** Earlier in discussing the central to the male characters achieve through how important a

**Diane:** I wasn't anything – there to tell about Eva woman. Everyone aspect of Evelyn of the play. When there are a number don't really feel interesting when the woman is the the question is men?'. In this about men and the story is necessary relationships between

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Interestingly, many of my plays have a strong sexuality and *Kindertransport* is one play that doesn't. It is a sexless play really. That's because I was focusing on a very particular thing and I wanted to do it properly. In the realm of Evelyn's experience the key issue is the daughter she is saying goodbye to and the two mothers in her life. Where the male figure fits in is as a shadowy figure, the shadowy part of Evelyn. The rat-catcher for instance isn't a particular man, but many men in uniform. He is a scary, mythical figure who emerges often and he came from one woman I interviewed. She told me she has panic attacks when she sees men in uniforms as a result of her experiences during Kristallnacht. Although many of the male characters in the play might appear to simply be doing a very ordinary job, to Evelyn they are scary and it is all a part of the prism of her experiences, it is how she is feeling. The rat-catcher then is Evelyn's shadow side, her dark side, the part of her she can't acknowledge.

**Dee:** The play and the format are an integral theme, theme of identity. *Kindertransport* is about shifting or can

**Diane:** I think I don't think it can change enormous danger can be with identify with a they have given on many forms a Going back to Evelyn are a part of her a part of me and If you looked from dream therapy of a dream is a way we experience many respects by consciousness a

**Dee:** Finally, it's up to *Kindertransport* you describe it

**Diane:** I think mothers/daughter survival.

## Active Learning Tasks: Interview-based

### Further Study Tasks

1. Mind map the input of Diane Samuels' own experience into the narrative and
2. While the play is fictional – how important is the influence of the real 'kind' researching?

## Discussion Prompts

1. Discuss in groups the ideas of the individual and collective, and the link in why like this more effective on stage? If so, why? Share your findings with the class
2. An understanding of the author's intentions, especially with regards to the research required at all times in order to achieve a high-end analysis of the text. Read and highlight any areas of Diane Samuels' words that you feel may be useful later

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## Plot Summary

### Act I, Scene i

The play opens in the 1930s. Helga is helping Eva sew a button on to a coat for the appear to be packing up for something. Faith and Evelyn are then introduced, sorting household items in the attic. Faith has arranged to move out, and, despite wanting with a cheque her father has sent, Evelyn is trying to bargain with items for her moving out.

The action cuts back to Eva and Helga, where Eva is talking about an impending trip to her friends Kasia and Paula aren't also departing; it is revealed by Helga that the places for them. Eva is worried about the 'strangers' she is to be sent to live with, but Helga reassures her for the best, and promises she and Eva's father will follow soon and have permits.

Evelyn wants Faith to show maturity and move out; she, however, appears troubled in mind. Eventually Faith objects completely and has Evelyn change the plan; the mess she is staying for the time being.

Meanwhile, Helga encourages Eva to try to meet other Jews in England, reassuring her of discrimination there. Eva tries to take a mouth organ and toy train with her, but Helga is told she can only take clothes; the border guards would send her back if she did.

Faith finds a trunk in the attic and cautiously opens it. She looks in a box, turning out dolls, one of which she picks up and identifies as Lucy and another as Gloria. She then finds another. Lil enters the attic, introduced as Faith's grandmother. She looks at the mess and says it will harm Evelyn.

Helga gives Eva a travelling gift from her jewellery box – a charm bracelet – and tells her to go to bed, who sneaks her mouth organ into the case and then requests to be read to by future Faith. Helga agrees and reads.

At a railway station, Eva is saying goodbye to her mother from the window. The train departs as the children sing 'We're going to England'. A Nazi border official then boards and asks Eva to have 'her number' clear at all times, speaking to her in a derogatory tone before marking a Star of David on the baggage. He then opens and searches her case, throwing everything onto the floor and finding the mouth organ. He forces Eva to prove she is learning to play it – and he then lets her keep it. Searching her pockets, the guard enquires about her money situation before leaving her to sort up the mess.

When the train crosses the border, Eva expresses glee to be out and disdain to Helga and the border guard. In Holland Eva talks of stuffing her pockets with cakes and sweets. The action then cuts to her arriving in England where she finds a penny on the floor. Simultaneously on stage Faith starts to play and Helga the mouth organ.

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## Act I, Scene ii

Faith settles down to read a letter she has found in the box while, Eva with a mug, expresses distaste at conditions in England but appears thankful to be away from home. Intertwined with Faith reading a letter to Eva appearing to be from Helga, in broken English, her delight at going on a double-decker bus in London.

An English organiser enters looking for Eva, with the news that the English family she has been delayed – Eva starts crying and longing for her parents and home. The organiser leaves and orders her to remain in the box.

Lil enters conversing with Faith, who says she'll stop looking through stuff in the box. Before her, Mrs. L. enters approaching Eva and introducing herself as Mrs. L. (Lil removes the Star of David and 'number' marked by the border guard from Germany to Eva's slight distress, before reassuring her she no longer needs it. At this point, Eva only speaks German and the two cannot communicate properly.

Faith finds the 'Rattenfänger' book (the Ratcatcher story), and to her surprise Lil is there before. From looking through a box of letters and photos, Faith comes to believe she is staying during the war, and questions her about it. Lil, shocked, asks how Faith has been before becoming visibly upset and evading Faith's questions about the identity of the woman to mention the subject to Evelyn and asks for the photo to be handed over. Faith, who had been evacuated from Germany and adopted by Lil and begins to get angry and demands the truth.

Eva and Lil go over a letter in bad English requesting passage for Eva's parents out of the dangers of Germany. Eva's spoken English has improved, Lil persuades her to eat kosher food and rules of Jewish faith. They are trying to create an job and ask Eva's parents to come.

Lil reveals to Faith that Evelyn had come on her own on a train full of children and that on her birthday when she was 11. She gives the exact date that she first arrived in England and the effort to make a friend.

Faith and Lil continue to talk, and it is revealed Faith's father and Evelyn's ex-husband. Evelyn comes in and sees the toys scattered about and Faith tells her about the book. Evelyn tries to shrug this off and start tidying up, but her daughter presses her, and she shows the Ratcatcher book. Evelyn appears taken aback at having her privacy intruded upon and shows letters saying they should have been thrown away years ago, though clearly expecting them.

Faith stands her ground, barring the door to stop Evelyn leaving and accusing her of being 'mad and cleans like a maniac' and avoids confrontation. It is revealed that Evelyn suffers from mental health issues. Faith expresses her feelings of inadequacy at being a good daughter for her and a terrible mother. The confrontation turns very nasty, with Lil threatening to kill Evelyn.

The scene ends with a monologue from both Eva and Evelyn, seemingly in dialogue. Evelyn ominously of the coming Ratcatcher, whilst Evelyn tries to allay the fears, ending with a promise to protect her childhood self and she'll never be taken away again.

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## Act II, Scene i

The scene opens to Eva and Helga holding a deep conversation prior to Eva's departure. Her daughter promises not to die in England. Meanwhile, Faith attempts to reconcile with Evelyn, who has locked herself in a room. She ignores her daughter's apology and refuses to let her in.

A postman frog-marches to the door of Eva's English home, teasing her by making her perform one of the Nazi customs. They discuss Hitler and Eva shows him a proper salute, before he briefly discusses his knowledge of the German railways from his Hitler youth. He has brought a parcel for Eva.

The letter promises that the family will be reunited soon and sends well wishes for life in England. Helga reminds Eva of Passover and the Jewish customs followed at that time, mentioning in particular the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of slavery.

Lil threatens to call the fire brigade in an effort to access the room Evelyn has locked herself in, eventually gaining entry. Lil tries to calm Evelyn down and make her realise that Faith didn't mean what she said. Evelyn admits she thinks Faith hates her and shares her uncertainty about being a terrible mother. Lil again repeats that Evelyn should have kept the box of memories.

Eva is carrying a suitcase, saying goodbye to Lil. She is being evacuated, and boards the train. She expresses fear that she saw someone on the platform, Lil calms her down and tells her how important the evacuation is for her safety. They hug and reluctantly part ways. Lil panics and leaps off the train before coming back around in a daze – asking if she is still there. Lil admits she had gripped too hard when they were hugging and didn't want to let go.

Evelyn and Lil are talking about the papers that should have been thrown away. Lil insists on seeing the box's contents but Evelyn is unable to do so due to Lil's insistence from Lil. Evelyn accuses Lil of being much, starting to place blame with Lil for the war situation and appearing to be very angry. Lil has a lot of built up resentment towards Lil, accusing her of being the cause of so much of her past. Lil firmly tells her to stop and Evelyn tears up the letter finally before they leave with the box.



A station guard approaches Eva, enquiring as to her name. She explains that she's waiting, before pulling out a piece of paper. The guard is under the impression they were meant to arrive on this train, but there are to be no more trains from London that day. He enquires suspiciously about where she's from. He returns and claims responsibility. Eva wants to go home and Lil tries to convince her they must give up. The guard is suspicious about Eva being a foreigner and accuses her of being a spy. He instils in Eva the reality that her parents may not be able to get her out.

The guard exits, muttering that Eva should have seen the signs. He starts to get extremely angry at the prospect of her staying again and rids her of the chain with the Star of David. He tells her she doesn't want to be a part of her anymore, and she can't stay with Lil, who clearly wants her to go.

Back in the room, Helga and Lil have moved on to the Ratcatcher book and Jewish customs. Evelyn tearfully holds her back. Lil tries to encourage Evelyn to make up with Faith, but she is reluctant. Evelyn refers to her birth mother, Helga, as 'the German woman', before she forgets her and continuing to tear papers up. Faith tries to talk to Evelyn again but she won't listen. Faith asks her to leave them. Faith, however, remains waiting insistently outside.

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Lil and Eva, who is now aged 15, listen to a newsreel soundtrack about the liberation of the camps. Lil tries to stop her seeing distressing pictures of concentration camp footage. The newsreel promises to track down Eva's real parents but it seems Eva is actually keen to give up. Lil supports Evelyn and look after her no matter how hard it is.

Evelyn finally lets Faith in to talk, who apologises instantly; Evelyn says it's all for nothing as everything is torn up, asking why these 'family documents' haven't passed on to her. She has her need to destroy these memories, insisting she should instead cherish them. Faith is reluctant to tell her what she can remember of her past. She talks of her real parents, her first day of school, a terrifying story about 'The Ratcatcher' and a brief flashback to her life in Germany. She reveals that her real parents had been prisoners in Auschwitz, who were eventually sent to death.

Helga enters, completely transformed: thin, older and wiser looking. She is with a shocked at being addressed in German and then hugged awkwardly. She has changed her English name. Helga reveals Eva was the name of her great grandmother, to which Evelyn shows no disrespect. Helga apologises for such a delay in keeping her promise to come and see her, as she died after the letters stopped. Eva has become 'naturalised' in England, with a new name and Mrs Miller. Helga brings up the topic of them rebuilding their life in New York. Evelyn remains of their family, to which Evelyn replies that she has a family in England now. When the war is over, her daughter must leave her new life in England. The Ratcatcher must be destroyed.

## Act II, Scene ii

Evelyn and Faith have made up and are sorting through kitchenware amicably. It is revealed that Helga had survived, and Evelyn hadn't told her for fear of being shipped back immediately. Helga reveals that having been reunited at 16 with Helga, her real mother, they had been very unhappy at not being allowed to know her real grandmother. Evelyn says she felt she was baptised at 18, then expressed her distaste at being 'spat out' by Germany. Helga had never known the truth. Evelyn replies she had wanted to start anew with the Haggadah and 'The Ratcatcher' book, to Faith's surprise, and offers them to her. Faith accepts, also taking the mouth organ.

Eva and Helga are at the quayside, with a boat about to leave to the USA. Eva has a long hour and seems cold towards Helga and is vague about when she will follow her. Helga is ready to leave 'home' yet and cannot board. She feels distant from Helga due to her past. Helga reveals she saw her husband (Eva's father) put in the line for the showers at the camp. Helga wants to start a new life and wants her daughter with her.

An intense face-off ensues between Faith and Evelyn, as their bitterness and negativity spill out, before they make up and the play ends with a touching moment. Evelyn, wanting to contact the lost Jewish relatives, she wants to make things right, and thinks this is the best way to mother and daughter. The play ends with Evelyn and Faith agreeing 'all done in this life and stage. The shadow of The Ratcatcher comes over once more.

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## Character List

### Evelyn

Evelyn is a middle-class woman in her fifties, she is the adult version of the child who has lived in England for the majority of her life since arriving on the Kindertransport as a child and being taken in by Lil, who is essentially her foster mother. She has married a partner who does not feature in the play, by whom she has her only daughter Faith. Evelyn comes across as uptight and fussy with a nervous disposition, and she has secreted her birth identity into a German Jewish family for the majority of her adult life. It becomes clear a lot of the traumatic events of the upheaval that occurred in her childhood and teenage years have played with her. In essence, the play focuses on Evelyn's confrontation and acceptance of these issues she has always avoided.



### Faith

Faith is Evelyn's only child, a young woman in her early twenties who appears strong-willed and determined. It seems her relationship with her mother has been strained over the years, and she shows major indecisiveness when leaving home and becoming fully independent. On finding out about her past, Faith develops a desire to learn more about her heritage and her mother's failure to treasure this aspect of their lineage.

### Eva

Eva is Evelyn's younger self, a curious and lively little girl who is introduced at the beginning of the play aged nine years old. Her teenage self is later reintroduced at sixteen years old. Initially sad to leave her family and home in Germany, longing for her mother to follow after she has moved to England, Eva becomes increasingly settled in England having formed a strong relationship with Lil. When, as a teenager, she is reunited with her true mother, she is unable to leave her new life behind, having found her identity in England.



### Helga

A German Jewish woman, mother of Eva/Evelyn, who is first introduced in the play. Helga is shown to be a caring mother, doing what she believes is best for her daughter and making sure the young Eva is fully prepared mentally for the separation and her venture into the unknown. She instils hope that her daughter is safe and away from persecution in England, providing for her every need. Years later, when Helga manages to live up to her promise and spend time in concentration camp, she has seen her partner arrested and is now hoping to make a fresh start and new life with her daughter. She departs for her final appointment, without Eva's company.

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## Lil

Initially introduced as Mrs Miller, Lil enters the narrative as the woman who has volunteered to look after the young Eva when she is first evacuated to England. Two sides of the character appear throughout the play: in her youthful wartime years and in her eighties where she is referred to by Faith as 'Gran', having fully taken on the role of foster mother for Eva/Evelyn over the years. Lil is a loving and protective mother figure for the child Eva, forming a close bond with her soon after her arrival, and similarly continues this role throughout her life and extends it to her granddaughter Faith. During the fiery conflict and arguments that arise from the discovery of Evelyn's childhood misdeeds, Lil is a fantastic mediator for both sides, eventually playing a key part in the reconciliation between mother and daughter.



## The Ratcatcher

A mythical character, based on an old German children's story, is referenced throughout in the text and also musically, at the end of the scenes of the play. The Ratcatcher is personified in the various male roles of authority that cause distress for Eva/Evelyn: The Nazi border official, the postman, the station guard. The Ratcatcher represents punishment – the issues that Evelyn still struggles with to confront through the rediscovery of her childhood.

## Discussion Preparation

In a group, discuss the following questions.

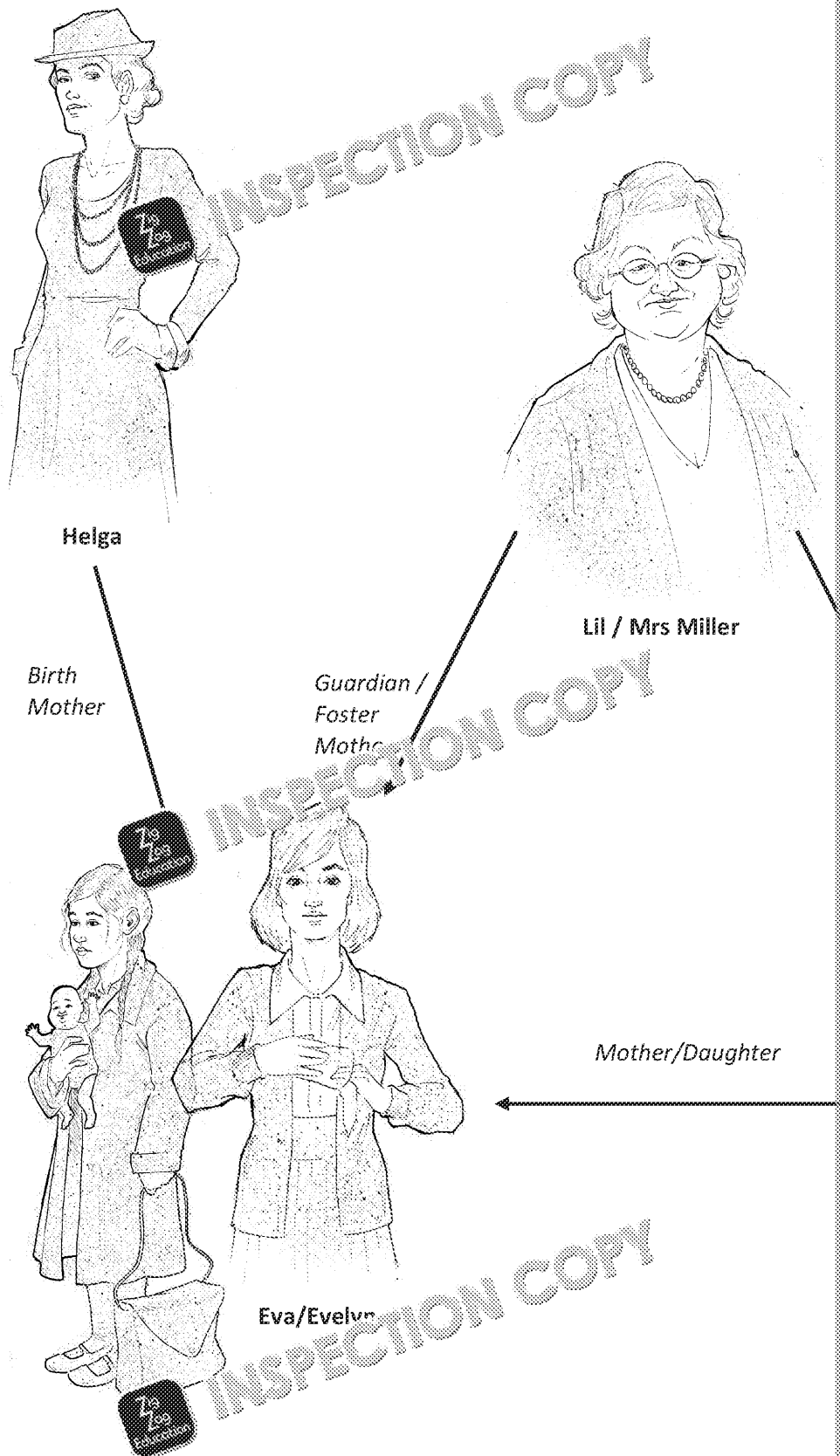
1. Is Lil, in her old age, a sympathetic character?
2. To what extent is Evelyn in control of her life?
3. Do Faith and Evelyn change during the play?

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## Character Relationship Map



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# Scene Summaries and Analyses

## Act I, Scene i

### What is this scene about?

We are introduced to Eva, a young girl and child version of the protagonist of the play. In the context of 1930s Germany, she and her mother Helga are preparing for Eva's immediate departure to England where she is being sent to escape the increasing anti-Semitism and dominance of the Nazi party. Simultaneously we are introduced to Faith and Evelyn, a mother and daughter in the present day, bickering as they sort through old items in their attic.

### Why is this important?



The Nazi Germany context and build-up to WWII is apparent from the beginning, through the hurriedness with which Helga prepares her daughter Eva for departure from their home country. Whilst this historical context provides a backdrop for the major narrative past, which in turn have shaped those with the characters in the physical items that the child Eva encounters or takes with her to later unravelling in the attic.

With the first switch to present-day context, the dynamic within the relationship between Faith and Evelyn, mother and daughter, is immediately shown to be turbulent. Objectively the backbone of the play is a story about mothers and daughters: Helga and Eva, Lil and Eva/Evelyn, Evelyn and Faith. All of these relationships are introduced from the very first scene, where Helga is instantly presented as a caring, motherly figure for Eva, and the scene is set for later development: 'because any parent would want to protect their child' (p.8).

On the last page of the scene a highly important metaphor is presented.



### Key Terms

Change  
Uprooting



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## Key Quotations

Page	Quotation	
4	'There's no "later" left Eva.'	The sense of urgency impending Nazi troops
8	'Of course they would send them away if they had the places. Any good parent would do that.'	Parenthood and social reality that separates them
9	'I want you to make a mature, reliable decision. An adult decision. Annual vacillation is not helpful to any of us.'	Evelyn speaking to have a tough relationship
10	'They don't mind Jews there. It's like it was here when I was younger. It'll be good.'	Helga shows nostalgia
13	'My grandfather used to wear a black hat and coat. "You are my children, you are my jewels" he told me. "We old ones invest our future in you".'	The theme of parenthood providing for one's future justification for Helga's daughter away.
19	'That should tell 'em, wherever it is you're going. Best to keep them informed eh?'	From the German to the social divide and bias made very apparent
20	'Hope the rats come and eat up all your remains until there's nothing left!'	The headstrong young woman the state of her country
21	'They have such big money here. It must be a sign of good luck.'	Eva immediately goes to England, a precursor

## Discussion Points

1. The theme of good parenting; making sacrifices to protect their children and lack of understanding.
2. The introduction of the Ratcatcher book and its possible meanings with the story.

## Active Learning Tasks

1. In pairs analyse Helga's justifications to Eva when her daughter protests. Do you think the 'Kindertransport' is for the best? Share your ideas with other groups.
2. Focus on the language Helga uses when getting Eva ready to be sent away. How does a mother come through? Find suitable quotations to back up your argument. What are the Samuels' intentions here.
3. Link this in to the current day context of Faith and Evelyn bickering, compare the language Samuels uses when presenting the alternative. How is motherhood portrayed in these interactions between all four characters and how is this conveyed through the form of the text?

## Practical Essay Question

How does Diane Samuels use material objects as narrative devices within the text? What significance to the major themes being explored? Consider her presentation of what Faith uncovers in the attic.

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## Act I, Scene ii

### What is this scene about?

In this scene Eva's integration into English society really begins, and is paralleled in modern time with frequent switches between Faith inspecting the letter she has discovered written by her mother as a youngster and the real-time childhood experience and introduction of Lil / Mrs Miller.

### Why is this scene important?

Eva's fear of being left alone with no one to look after is strongly brought across at the start of the scene. A personality trait that is shown to continue throughout the play, and one of the issues for resolution explored through her relationship with Faith. The fact that Lil has kept the truth from Faith over the years, amongst other reasons, reflects her dedication to Evelyn as a mother figure, and how much she cares about her mental security and well-being, genuinely doing what she felt to be for the best.

### Discussion Prompt

Why might Evelyn have gone through life without sharing the 'Kindertransport' period of her childhood?

This scene is where the seeds are sown for a myriad of issues together as mother and daughter. The past along with their own unstable relationship takes form as the centrepiece of the text, and a tough emotional journey for them through confrontation. Evelyn is initially very reluctant to share information, memories and the relics and secrets.

Repressed truth  
Personal exploration

### Key Quotes

Page	Quotation	
31	'These are your mother's private possessions, Faith.'	Lil is shown to make a decision to disclose the past in her upbringing in England.
33	'She just wanted to put the past behind her. It was for the best.'	Lil supports the decision to move forward for the best for Eva.
34	'The Lord said that we needn't keep to the old laws any more. They had their day years ago.'	The way Eva's heritage is an integral part of her development to the exploration of her identity.
40	'He had no reason to know any more than you did.'	There is an emotional barrier behind Eva's relationship with her mother.
42	'There is nothing to tell you.'	Evelyn feels that she can almost be certain of her mother's feelings.
44	'You can't get on a train without hyperventilating. You can't go on the road if you see a policeman or traffic warden.'	A clear link is made between the past and the present, as the resounding effect of the war is felt.

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## Discussion Prompts

1. The symbolic importance of the items and letter. Consider the 'clinging' Evelyn, the way she is not quite able to let go.
2. The argument between Faith and Evelyn and the accusations thrown at her. What does this show about the nature of this mother–daughter relationship?

## Active Learning Tasks

1. Mind-map what you think each of Evelyn's childhood items symbolise.
2. Think about if you were directing the play for a stage performance. How would the act of discovering them be presented on stage?
3. Throughout the text there are often confrontational moments between Faith and Evelyn. Highlight the language Diane Samuels uses during these moments. What do you think may have been her intentions with regards to the effect on Evelyn?

## Practice Essay Question

How does Diane Samuels use metaphor to provide a wider picture of Evelyn's past? Think about her intentions with regard to the themes she is exploring. Consider the language, structure and form within the text.

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## Act II, Scene i

### What is this scene about?

The scene focuses on Evelyn's continued attempts to distance herself from her past, her real Jewish identity and traumatic events that have essentially shaped her personality. This self-denial is to the outrage of her daughter Faith, and the mother-daughter dynamic that is central to the novel is really exposed here, as emotions get the better of both parties and they say things they regret. Eva, Lil, initially a media character, is drawn into the arguments, and really the scene is a setting for all of the characters to get their anger, confusion and, deep down, desire for a stronger relationship with each other, out there before the resolution towards the end of the text.

### Why is this scene important?

Faith is shown to feel a connection to her mother's secret past, a lost identity that she wants to rekindle. The reason for this is essentially, deep down, to become closer to her mother ('part of me is dead because of you') – their relationship is shown from the start of the text to be in a period of instability with overhanging anxieties regarding Faith's potentially imminent departure from the house.

In the sections set during Eva's childhood in England, the context of wartime relations is raised through Eva's interaction with the postman, who asks questions about Hitler and the Nuremberg rallies. The Ratcatcher, the authoritative threat that manifests throughout the text in various characters, emerges again in the form of the station guard. He represents the stout anti-German Brit: 'If they put one foot into this country, they'll be interned straight off'.

When Eva throws away her jewellery it can be observed that a slow acceptance process of the thought that she may never see her real parents again is beginning, in line with the actions of Evelyn's own actions: 'I've put an end to the trouble'.

### Key Terms

Confrontation



### Discussion Prompts

1. Focus on Eva's coldness towards her mother on their reunion, is this coldness justified?
2. Thinking about the form of the text throughout, discuss how a director might stage Helga's reunion on stage.

### Active Learning Tasks

1. In groups draw up a list of parallels between the teenage Eva and Faith.
2. In pairs identify a list of possible emotions Eva could be feeling on being reunited with her mother. Discuss the reasons for them.
3. Think about the structure of the text. Can you trace the chronological order of the Samuels' and the Ratcatcher's storylines together? Make any notes on the characters' actions seen throughout.

### Practice Essay Question

In what way are the actions and intentions of Faith a form of retribution for her mother's life and decisions as a child and teenager.

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## Key Quotations

Page	Quotation	
47	'We all die one day, but jewels never fade or perish. Through our children we live. That's how we cheat death.'	Parenthood is a measure of the importance of children.
53	'The whitewash has been stripped away, and underneath there is pure filth.'	This is a metaphor for the past.
56	'he's coming to his father', he's waiting in the	These references to the experience of reading translates to the actual experience.
60	'why are you so keen for me to destroy everything'	Mother-daughter relationship.
61	'i wasn't your child...as good as' 'you made me betray her'	Evelyn, in anger, p
66	'Wars break promises'	The historical context of all of the major events in the text.
66	'Got to protect ourselves'	The selfish mental situations, and the essence of parent
67	'I've made a good life, all I can do is live it and count my blessings'	Evelyn has dealt with the situation of being a
68	'All our children leave us. And in the end they never come back. I can't stop her.'	A reference to Evelyn's and permanent separation she is fearful that her daughter.
68	'...the more I get the less of myself I become'	A character analysis of elderly Evelyn's world.
68	'It can't be kept from me forever' 'I'm not a child. I'm fifteen.'	Faith mirrors Eva's instincts and rejection.
71	'I want to pay my way for myself as much as I can'	Faith expresses a desire for independence.
76	'But how do I know what went before without them? How does anyone know?'	Family history/lineage novel, something that wants to re-embrace.
77	'These people were just a help to you in bad times'	Helga instils the importance of family.

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## Act II, Scene ii

### What is this scene about?

Act II, Scene ii sees a resolution to the ongoing mother/daughter relationship theme throughout the play. The arguments between Faith and Evelyn, and Eva and Helga, reach their 'climax' as such and then calm down, with differing outcomes. After some time apart, Faith and Evelyn are able to agree to work on the issues that have led to disagreements throughout the play, though Faith is still clinging on to the idea that she has a right to know about her family history, with which Evelyn disagrees: 'I have nothing in common with them and neither do you'. This is in parallel with Eva's refusal to go with Helga at the quayside, she simply doesn't want to start a new life yet again, yet this decision can be seen as her reaffirming her new identity in England. The play ends with a full reconciliation between Faith and Evelyn, who are shown to have become a lot closer. Eventually they resolve to look into the family's true past together, no longer to have it as an issue repressed to distant memory, and Faith is shown to be moving toward the next chapter of growing maturity.

### Why is this scene important?

Hidden truths, or more specifically guarded emotions, are a recurring concept throughout the play and the way the characters are shown to interact with each other, especially in the context of mother-daughter relationships. This is explored further through Helga and the teenage Eva, and the present-day revelation that Lil had not known Helga was still alive. Evelyn describes feeling purified of her Jewish past, a feeling that started when she decided not to follow her mother and that is completed with the metaphorical handing over of her childhood items, the Haggadah and mouth organ, to her daughter. For Faith, a generational woman, this is a cue to reconnect with the lost heritage, and in doing so also a means for Evelyn to explore the part of her life she left behind when she decided not to follow her mother Helga at the quayside. At the end of the play the characters leave the attic, symbolically clean: 'all done in here'. They've worked through their issues, the major themes of the play.

#### Discussion Prompt

Your thoughts on Eva's rejection of her birth mother.

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## Key Quotations

Page	Quotation	
81	'it is still a part of our lives'/'it is an abyss'	Faith vs Evelyn
81	'before, all I knew was a blank space. Now it's beginning to fill up. I have a background, a colour'	The use of metaphor to describe the clarity Evelyn has with Faith
81	'You can't let people who hate you tell you what you are'	A justification for the journey to Germany, away from a dark past to a better future.
81	'...we've been together a week and we are still years away'	Helga perhaps had no idea that a reunion would be with her through so much heartache and her journey Eva also has to make
81	'I love the place: the language, the countryside, the buildings, the sense of humour, even the food'	The Jewish identity as a state, as opposed to a place
84	'Home is inside you. Inside me and you. It is not a place'	The idea that home is defined by their upbringing.
86	'coming back from the dead and punishing me for surviving on my own'	The paradox of the parents who are sending their children away
86	'Stay my little girl forever'	The theme of innocence and the need to consider through the eyes of a child

### Practice Essay Question

How far do you feel Diane Samuels ends *Kindertransport* with a sense of resolution in terms of her characters? Discuss Diane Samuels' use of metaphor and symbolism in the final scene, and how this affects the structure and form in the final scene of the text.

### Discussion Prompts

1. Consider the lack of a father figure in the play, how Faith's and Eva's characters reflect this. Why do you think Diane Samuels chose to make it such a female story?
2. In groups brainstorm your ideas regarding the importance of strong female characters. Reference to the historical context of the Kindertransport era.

### Active Learning Tasks

1. Make a list of the childhood items that Evelyn hands down to Faith, and how you feel links to the intended effect on the audience, either symbolically or narratively.
2. What do you feel each one represents? Brainstorm this in groups then explain your thoughts.
3. Analyse the language used by Diane Samuels after Evelyn and Faith are reunited. How is it different to their previous conversation style?
4. In groups jot down any words/ideas about the tone/mood that is created in the final scene of the play. How do you feel this affects the lasting effect on the audience, specifically in the theatre context, and how you feel once the play has finished.
5. Fill in the sheet on the next page to start to build a picture of key themes you can use for revision.

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Scene Summary Table

	Key Themes	Setting
Act 1, Scene 1		
Act 1, Scene 2		
Act 2, Scene 1		
Act 2, Scene 2		

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## Character Analyses

### Eva/Evelyn

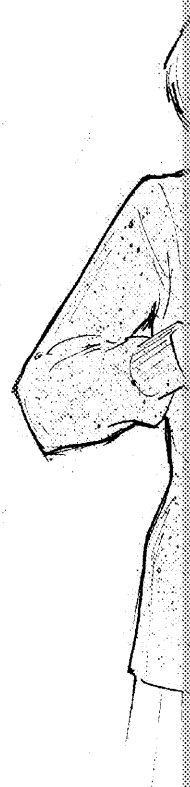
As a child Eva shows a strong-willed spirit, and despite being naturally fearful and upheaval of being sent to England, away from her home and family, she steps up, talkative and inquisitive, and the experience with the border guard, and her subs towards him and the Nazi policies, is evidence that she knows what she wants.

In the interactions with Lil / Mrs Miller, the two are shown to quickly strike up and feed well off each other. Evelyn, grieving for some time, overcomes her initial acceptance of the reality that her parents may well not be joining her in England. She grows to feel a sense of purpose at attending school, learning the language and eventually gaining British citizenship.

The teenage Eva shows a strong sense of purpose: the rejection of her own birth name shows how, despite Helga's protests, Eva feels she has to do what is best for her - her name and British citizenship she most certainly feels that this is life in England. The mentality Helga had when sending Eva away in the first place.

The older Evelyn that occupies the present-day part of the text possesses many of the child self but in a more reserved way. Perhaps the youthful vigour has left after years attempting to bury her German background. The sense of making decisions for herself on her when her daughter, Faith, discovers to her dismay, that she does not know her background. Obstinate Evelyn sticks by her actions and feels that it was for the best.

The fact that Evelyn has chosen to distance herself from her upbringing in Germany and her birth mother, provides the centrepiece of the narrative through which Diane explores themes of separation and strife between mother and daughter.



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## Lil / Mrs Miller

As Mrs Miller, the middle-aged woman who takes care of a young German Jewish 'kinder' such as Eva, her kind character reflects someone who would volunteer for such a responsibility. She is calm and understanding of Eva's predicament throughout, and provides emotional support when needed – despite not being her birth mother. She develops into a foster mother role for Eva, and is central to the idea that this is a feminine-based play – she has a partner (Mr Miller) who is hinted at but never enters the text. It can be seen that in the present day, she is not only a grandmother figure to Faith but a mother figure also to Evelyn, although she is shown to be supportive of Eva/Evelyn's decisions and does not attempt to sway her in any particular direction. She acts as a mediator for Faith and Evelyn during their arguments, perhaps aware of the knowledge that she is not Evelyn's true mother and allowing her to do what she feels is best for her.



### Faith

Faith is shown to be a headstrong teenager who draws always 'knowing best' much to the annoyance of her mother. The relationship between teenage daughter and mother is central to the novel, and essentially the resolution of their issues with each other by the end of the text. On discovering her mother's character, she is filled with a desire to find out exactly what has happened to her mother's past than she thought. She is initially in adolescent rage. She is disappointed at her mother for not being able to calm down and come to a deeper understanding of her past and 'moving on'. Perhaps subconsciously, she comes to terms with her past, and she is able to become an apologetic and supportive daughter figure.

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## The Ratcatcher

The Ratcatcher is not strictly a character but based on a children's fable/fairy tale, a copy of which was owned by Evelyn as a child and is later discovered by Faith. The evil, dark and mysterious figure from the tale manifests itself in the various male figures of authority that are encountered by the child Eva, something that stays with her throughout her entire life – evidenced by the fact that it is explained she still faints on trains and in other situations that remind her of the traumatic upheaval and journey to England away from her loved ones. The Ratcatcher story's magical prominence throughout the play can be seen to symbolise the heart of what the narrative is working toward – a coming to terms with one's past and acceptance of it. When Faith discovers the book, this is a metaphorical representation of these issues being brought out into the open to be dealt with. Eventually, the mother and daughter are able to deal with not only their own issues but also Evelyn's repressed past. The handing of the storybook to Faith by Evelyn at the end of the play can be seen to represent Evelyn finally having come to terms with what she has spent her life trying to forget, and thus escaping the Ratcatcher's presence, which is earlier directly referenced by the child Eva and adult Evelyn in a tone of complete terror: 'he's coming'; 'his eyes as sharp as knives'.



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## Active Learning Tasks

### 1. Describing Personality

In pairs create a role play concerning the following:

- Imagine Lil is telling someone about her experience with Eva and act as a mother figure for her.
- Think about her impression and opinion of Eva when they first met.
- Mention her thoughts on what she thinks the future may hold for her, and how she has rejected the opportunity to be reconnected with her real mother.

### 2. Writing exercises are intended to help you to think about how the characters feel in the novel.

Write a piece of dialogue between **Evelyn and Lil** where they discover that Evelyn never revealed her true past to her daughter. This could include how Evelyn felt as a child in England away from the hardships of her close foster mother-daughter relationship and her feelings about how this may have affected her daughter's own upbringing.

Write a piece of prose from the **perspective of Helga**, written in the form of a letter by Eva at the ferry landing. This could include her feelings about starting her new life, unexpectedly without her only daughter, and whether she can understand or not with or understand Eva's decision.

Write a piece of prose from **Eva's point of view** at the point in the novel when she meets Mrs Miller. You could include her feelings on being so abruptly taken and thrust into a new life, opinions of British society as opposed to her own with regards to the future.

### 3. These tasks are designed to help you think about the characters' experiences.

Choose one or more of the following exercises and transform an element of the story into a different genre or inventing a new major plot line. Consider the audience and purpose.

- ⇒ A late 1940s **news article** reporting on the German Kindertransportees in England after WWII. This could include a commentary on the political regime and war and/or could focus on positive aspects of the lives of the children given in England.
- ⇒ An entry from Lil's **diary**, from a point in the play of your choice.
- ⇒ Faith's **Facebook profile page**. You could include statuses, comments, the 'About Me' section and groups and events.
- ⇒ Faith's **school report**, which could feature a comment on her academic performance, argumentative, and the teacher's opinion on her pursuing higher education.
- ⇒ A **letter** from Helga to Eva, after she discovers that her daughter is not going to be with the rest of their German and Jewish family.
- ⇒ In pairs create a dramatic script whereby Eva boards the Kindertransport.
- ⇒ Think about how settled Eva feels in England but how a sense of her Jewish ancestry pulls her to go with her mother.

Also consider how Eva would explain it to Mrs Miller via a letter or a face-to-face route.

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#### 4. Building Character Profiles

As you progress through this study pack you will encounter important characters. Print several copies of the next page. Put a different character on each sheet. Take time at the end of each scene to record the important points about each character.

If this is completed, by the time you have finished this study guide you will have a record of each character in one place. This will be very useful for your revision.


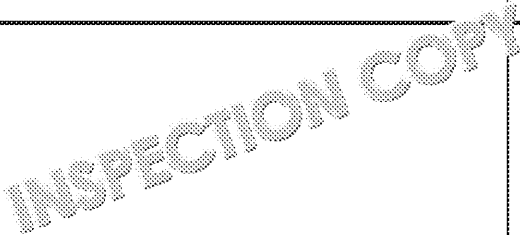

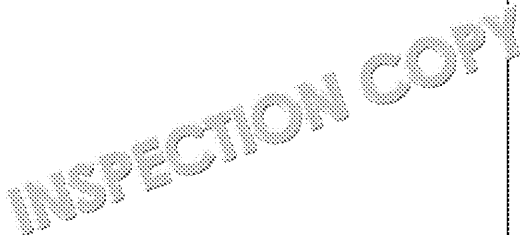

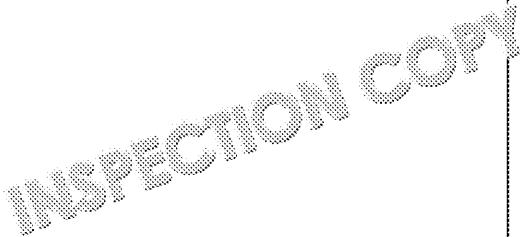
An example of how to fill in a character sheet is included here.

 Character Name: Eva		
Page	Character Comment	
20	Dislikes the establishment that has forced her out of Germany and is fearful of	'Stuff you stupid toff'
34	Has a close connection to her real parents, desperately wanting to see them again	'I am much in danger in Hamburg'
66	Eventually adapts well to her new environment, finding a 'home away from home' in England	'How long ask stupid'

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Character Name:		
Page/Chapter	Character Comment	
		
		
		

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2. Fill in the sheet below to gather notes on key characters that you can use for

	Key Quotation	Description
Eva	'I can't un-know it'	
Evelyn		
Faith		
Lil		
Helga		

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# Language, Structure and Form

## Language

Throughout the play the linguistic style remains largely the same, very much dialogue based, which remains a fluid interchange between maximum three characters at any one time irrespective of the switching time perspectives within scenes. On the whole it is colloquial and casual, but also veers towards poetry and metaphor – most seen in the scenes in which Evelyn recalls vividly the events of her childhood with reference to the dream of a scatcher.



On the whole, German is used, though interestingly not at all in the early scenes between Helga and Eva (despite the fact they would have been speaking in their native language of German). Subsequently there are passages of the text entirely in German (for example the song as Eva leaves p.10) which has an impact on the text. As a narrative device the English–German language barrier is used, for example when Eva encounters the English organiser and they are unable to communicate effectively.

The language Diane Samuels uses does vary at times, for example in an attempt to represent the modes of speech used within 'working class' Britain at the time. One can analyse the language used by the Station Guard character Eva encounters in Act II and the derogatory tone with which he speaks to an 'outsider'.

The major themes of the text can be explored through the language Diane Samuels uses, for example the parenthood and mother-daughter relationship hardships explored, especially through the argumentative, and at times offensive, style with Evelyn and Faith converse.

## Structure

Kindertransport is divided into two acts, each comprising two scenes. Within each scene the play fluctuates between past and present time settings. In each timeframe, the play is structured in a linear, episodic fashion. It should be noted the 'past' sections centred around the child Eva often contain increasingly large gaps between scenes – from her departure in Germany, arrival in England to becoming a teenager with a new name and citizenship. The present-day part is structured all around the same afternoon/evening, over one weekend. The conversations and events that occur directly follow each other, even when broken up in the narrative with a flashback. The flashbacks tend to bear relevance to the modern-day context, either in what has been discovered in the attic (the letter) or with thematic relevance to the issues being raised within the modern day dialogue between Evelyn, Faith and Lil.

Each scene and act has a settled final feel, with a satisfying twist development of dialogue and setting up the next.

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## Form

Kindertransport can be broadly categorised within the drama genre. It is a play that explores the historical and cultural issues of Jewish heritage, the Holocaust and the Kindertransport phenomenon, and the subsequent incorporation into life in Britain for these young evacuees.

On stage, music plays a subtle but enhancing role – the Ratcatcher theme reoccurs, creating an impending sense of mystery and what is to come: the hope of escaping with one's fears and

Another notable aspect of the form of the play is that, despite shifting time frames, the action takes place on stage at the same time, as the parallel narratives develop simultaneously. Students can be staged, in particular, to show how the characters from the past and present can co-exist. The play should show a recognition of the 'other' characters.



## Active Learning Tasks

1. Pick a section of the play that features strong emotion. Write a list of literary terms that you think the language to convey/enhance this. Discuss your findings in pairs.
2. Using the list of literary terms on the following page, in pairs come up with a definition for each one. Present your findings to the class and agree on a definition.
3. Find two examples within the text to summarise each literary term listed. Include quotations and present and justify your findings to the class. One mark for each example.



## Practice Essay Question

How does the way Faith and Evelyn speak to each other create a picture of their relationship that has issues that need resolving? Consider the type of



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Term	Description	
Metaphor		The 'cleaning out' as a metaphor for repressed personal family history.
Symbolism		
Imagery		
Simile		
Character Focus		

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# Ideas, Themes and Setting

## Ideas

The major ideas of the text centre around the inner and outer lives of the character Evelyn. This is explored through a shifting in time context, whereby roughly half of childhood and teenage years, and the other half as a middle-aged mother suddenly those younger years. The time perspective does, however, alternate in a non-linear linked more by an emotional theme of gaining personal experience, as in both times in unison: as the text progresses through Eva begins to find her footing in the UK overcomes emotional barriers with her daughter Faith and reconnects with her real

Bearing this in mind, all the characters can in fact be seen as a part of Evelyn, and the same person. Diane Samuel focuses on the idea that the entire play should be interpreted. The headstrong child Eva is directly contrasted with her timid older self, and through present the events unfold and the themes are explored, with the help of the setting connotations. Behind this also is the idea that this kind of text can be appreciated in collective, hence it is written as a play intended for an audience. In contrast it is the being presented to this collective, and this was an idea that inspired Diane Samuel

The play is certainly very metaphorical, and it could be argued to fit within the *Evelyn Ratcatcher* for example is not a character, but a dark part of an inner identity possible as such, a past she can't acknowledge, and this idea is explored through the figure in a childhood story context then linked to real characters – presented as if female experience is essential, though not at any point in a 'sexual' context.

## Themes

All of the play's major themes link together with one another and are explored through the relationships between all of the characters.

**Separation:** Separation is a central metatypal theme of the text, explored primarily through which Diane Samuel chose to set the play: that of the run-up to WWII, the increasing Nazi German introduction of the Kindertransport phenomenon. The focus is on with sudden separation and of refugees separated from the source of their heritage.

**Parenthood:** The relationship between mother and daughter, explored in the way relationship to each other in one way or another: Helga as birth mother to Eva, M to Eva, Evelyn as birth mother to Faith, Lil as grandmother to Faith, is pivotal. The different result perhaps of acting in a way which the parent feels is for the best, are also explored between mother figures, initial issues being raised and resolution in whatever form.

**Sacrifice:** In the minds of many parents during the run-up to WWII, the only safe children, to avoid the danger of deportation to the concentration camps. This sacrifice of good or bad parenthood is central to the character development in the text. The child wanting to remain with parent, and parents needing to send the child, is a hidden contradiction.

**Survival:** Personal growth/development and survival is explored primarily through acceptance of life in England and Faith's desire to be independent of her mother through a series of steps in their personal relationship and a fuller understanding from her separation from her homeland and real parents.

**Innocence vs Experience:** The play explores the child in all of us, enhanced by the switches between child, teenage and adult characters with a constant overlapping represent different levels of maturity, experience and understanding.

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**Identity:** The play is about Evelyn coming to terms with her past; a formation of self formed with her integration into English culture and acceptance of a new family life from the early part of her life at the end of the text – giving her a full sense of personhood.

**Feminism:** *Kindertransport* is a female-dominated play, exploring many women's experiences of motherhood. Diane Samuels did this intentionally to reflect her own experiences of motherhood. Evelyn plays a small role, while other characters (such as Faith) play a major role in the characters' lives.

## Activity 1: Tasks

1. Prepare the following exercises and present them to the class. Be prepared to discuss afterwards from your classmates and teachers.
  - Deliver a speech on the problems mothers and daughters experience in the relationship. You could link it to the theme of independence. Evelyn and Faith as teenagers.
  - Research and deliver a presentation on the major theme within the play.

## 2. Theme Development

As you progress through this Study Guide you will encounter important themes. Print several copies of the next page. Put a different theme on each sheet, for example 'Separation'. Take time at the end of each chapter to think about how the theme is presented and develops.


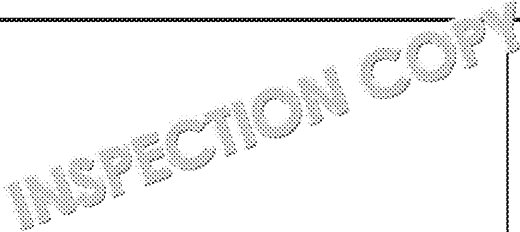

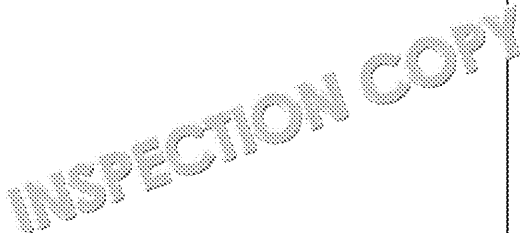

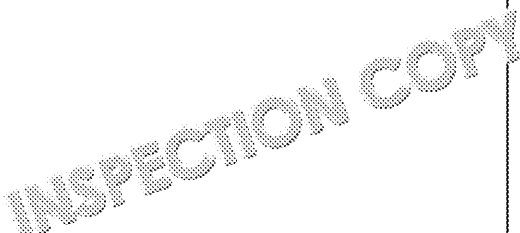
If this is completed, by the time you have finished this study guide you will have all the themes about each theme in one place. This will be very useful for your revision.

An example of how to fill in a theme sheet is included here.

Theme: Identity (Rejecting and accepting the past)		
Page	Theme Comment	
42	Evelyn emphasises her insistence on distancing herself from her childhood through the way she explains herself to her daughter.	'Whatever is discovered,
54	Evelyn begins to question herself, the identity she has forged for the majority of her adult life.	(To Lil) 'You you?'
86	Evelyn accepts her early part of her life as an important and formative stage, and can be beneficial to Faith as part of the family heritage.	'We can do us closer to

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Theme:		
Page/Chapter	Theme Comment	
		
		
		

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## Settings

The majority of the 'modern' part of the play takes place in an attic storage room in Evelyn's house in an outer-London suburb. This can be seen to be directly based on Diane Samuels' own experiences as a middle-aged woman and mother living in this area. The spare room setting, and metaphorical act of cleaning it out, provides the perfect base for two major themes of the novel to be explored: parenthood and self-discovery.

Diane Samuels interviewed many of the original 'Kinder' who were still living in the UK, as part of her research, and the settings in WWII and the first half of the twentieth century can be seen to be based on these insights provided by people who had lived through the Kindertransport journey. Many of the locations are very travel orientated, such as train stations and border crossings. In general the use of transport emphasises the disruption and lack of stability that the Kinder had.

## Active Learning Tasks

1. Students write two-one page letters in the hand of Eva's true mother, Helene. Set either immediately after departure or years later when she has settled in the UK without Eva. Think about the major ideas, themes and settings of the novel in your letter. The content can be left up to the imagination, but for example one could explore guilt for not having joined Eva in England as promised.
2. Analyse, in detail, what is symbolised in the act of Faith discovering and sorting through her childhood items, and subsequently uncovering a new aspect of her past. Consider how this relates to the ideas, themes and settings of the novel.
3. Conduct your own research using books / the Internet and other tools you have available to find out the conditions of Kindertransport from Germany over to the UK. Did it always work out well for the children? Compare this with the ideas, themes and settings portrayed in the novel.

## Practice Essay Question

How far are the ideas, themes and settings of the novel focused on the events of the Kindertransport? Think about whether the Kindertransport setting renders this an extraordinary story. Ideas and themes being explored bear relevance for many. Reference your own knowledge of the novel.

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# Historical, Cultural and Social Context

## Historical Background

Throughout the 1930s there was a rise in anti-Semitic activity across Germany, coinciding with the increasing power of the Nazi Party. By 1938 violence against Jews had escalated. When a German diplomat was killed by a young Jew in Paris, Hitler and his followers exploited the event to engineer a huge increase in momentum for their anti-semitic campaign. The situation culminated in what is now commonly referred to as 'Kristallnacht' (The Night of Broken Glass) - a series of Jewish businesses and institutions were destroyed, Jews were assaulted and killed in public areas, their homes were attacked and roughly 30,000 people were herded into concentration camps.

In the aftermath of this event, having witnessed the goings-on in Germany with increasing concern, the British Government introduced a programme called the Kindertransport (which translates 'children's transport'), which gave Jewish children safe passage to the UK. Up to 10,000 children were sent away from Nazi-controlled Europe by their families.

## Cultural Context

The Jewish 'Kinder', whilst essentially having been spared the fate of the concentration camps as more Jews began to be rounded up, found themselves separated from their parents, families and to a large extent the daily lives they were used to in Germany. Whilst many report that the transportation to a different culture was in itself a very unnerving prospect, the Kinder, on the whole, not the racial injustice and the sheer horror of the death camps, but the mixture of human kindness, tolerance, and the exploitation and derogatory remarks, and the selflessness of ordinary people faced with children in need of care.

### Discussion

- The pros and cons of the Kindertransport. Was it absolutely necessary? What answers will you come up with? What made it possible?
- Why do you think the Kindertransport is a key part of the play? Consider the historical context and explore the themes throughout.
- The problems the Kinder have faced. What kind of language is used in the text, bearing in mind the English setting and the children's own language?

### Teacher's Tip

An understanding of the historical, cultural and social context of the novel is very important to achieving the highest analysis of it. Similarly important is displaying in your writing how this links in to Diane Samuels' intentions and the language she uses in the novel. The context allows you to explore the ideas and themes of the novel.

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## Social Context

In German society focus on the survival of the German race had become far stronger plans for the inclusion of Jews in this. Jewish Germans were banned from places of cultural institutions, had their driving licenses revoked, property confiscated and were often housed together in poor quality, shared accommodation. Boycotts of Jewish businesses were then on a series of laws increasingly excluded Jews from public life.

In contrast, society in the UK held no such disregard for the Jews, and despite anti-Semitism in Germany in the aftermath of WWI, in the 1930s and perhaps as a pacifying move after the conflict, the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany (or 'Kindertransport') was set up in 1938, rescuing almost 10,000 unaccompanied children before the outbreak of war nine months later.

Discrimination  
Escape

## Active Learning Task

- Students work in groups to imagine they are producing *Kindertransport*. They make their own interpretations, as directors, on how the characters are presented throughout, students should specifically focus on how much thought is given to the cultural and social context throughout and the ways in which this can be communicated to the audience.

## Practice Essay Question

Bearing in mind the historical, cultural and social context of the play, how is the 'journey' presented? Think about the presentation of the characters and the personal and social support your answer will be based on from the text.

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# Essay and Exam Guidance

## General Guidance on the Exam

Before your exam you need to make sure you are well prepared and have practised exam papers as you can. It can be a stressful and intimidating process but remain calm. One of the biggest mistakes students make is reading the question incorrectly. Always carefully read what is being asked of you until you are completely comfortable with how to approach it.

Once you have made sure you completely understand the question the next most important thing is to plan your answer. Before you start to write, think about what it is you intend to write so that you can cover all the points of any parts of the text that might be important or relevant. There are many different ways to plan your answer; some like spider diagrams, others bullet points. It is important that you choose the one that works best for you. The basic points of your argument will help lead to the development of your essay.

Once you have begun writing try and back up each point you make with evidence from the text. This is the PEEL process: Point, Evidence, Explanation (see below). First make a statement. Then provide evidence, for example a quote from the text or a description of an event in the novel that links to your point. Finally, explain the evidence you have presented. Analyse it and interpret it before moving on. How does this evidence support your point?

## PEE - Use of Point/Evidence/Explanation When Writing

It is important to be concise and present your points carefully, and not spend too long on one point, in order to develop a good argument. A technique which can help achieve this is PEE.

Here's a reminder of PEE:

**P:** Point

**E:** Evidence

**E:** Explanation

It is important to use PEE when you are writing about texts. For example, if you were asked to write about how Evelyn is portrayed in the play then you should use the structure of PEE to help you to write an answer.

Here's a more detailed explanation with an example:

**P: Point**

Initially, Evelyn is portrayed as having distanced herself from her Jewish/Kindertransport past.

**E: Evidence**

When Faith first finds the letters and realises the truth, Evelyn is not keen to disclose the truth about her past over a very long time ago' (p. 71).

**E: Explanation**

Evelyn's words show that, in her mind, it is something she has dealt with and an attempt to move on. This shows a lack of relevance to her current existence.

Now, imagine that you take away the PEE structure. For example:

*Evelyn is portrayed as being detached from her German and Jewish ancestry. This is shown in the text in the aftermath of her being transported to Germany by her daughter. She tells Faith: 'It was a long time ago' (p. 71). This suggests that she views her past and part in the Kindertransport to distance herself from and indicates a lack of acceptance. It is also at odds with her desire to learn about her family lineage.*

This is only one small piece of an argument; however, by following this pattern you can make more succinct points with analysis using PEE. For example you could continue with 'How is Evelyn presented in the play?' using the same approach.

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## General Guidance on Writing Essays

This section is for **any essay** so it is important to read before you focus on specific reminders to help you with your essay-writing skills – you should already have had

This section is divided up into five sections:

- Planning
- Writing an introduction
- Writing the main part of your essay
- Writing a conclusion
- Tips for writing better essays

### a) Planning

- Before you plan, you should **underline and examine the keywords** in the question to focus on what the examiner is looking for and it will help you to prepare your answer.
- Jot down any **immediate ideas** and read through the passage related to the question.
- Create an **essay plan** – if it helps, put the question (or the keywords) in the middle. If you have time, number your points in the order which you think is best for your answer. Some pupils prefer to use bullet points.
- Note down any **quotations** which you think support your points – you will need them for your essay (four or five).
- Remember to include page numbers for any quotations you use as they will be asked for your points.

### b) Writing an introduction

An introduction is usually **short and to the point** – **addressing the question**. It should introduce your ideas or arguments. With reference to *Kindertransport*, you should address the social context aspect, depending on the nature of the question. If you have knowledge of the historical context, such as the role of the Kindertransport, it would be good to use this. Similar to the question on Evelyn and therefore it would be good to include some details about how the historical context becomes important. Remember to address the question as a whole.

### c) Writing the main part of your essay

After writing your introduction you may be feeling more confident. It's important to be confident at this stage. You should now work through your plan creating a **structured paragraph** for each point. If you have numbered your points, this may help you – or you could write your introduction. You may prefer to work through your plan naturally, adding points as you go.

Be aware of **timing**, however; you don't want to still be working on the main part of your essay at the end of the time. Timing is essential – don't dwell on one part for too long.

The structure of each paragraph could follow **PEE** and if you have practised this, your writing flows naturally while following this format. Remember that the examiner's mark for your analysis will be assessed.

Remember to **keep quotations** and **comment on the effects of words** used in the text. Look at the **context** and be aware of what grade they received in past essays and how they could be improved.

### d) Writing a conclusion

After working through your main points your conclusion should be **short and to the point**. The conclusion should **sum up your main points** and refer back to the question.

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### e) Tips for writing better essays

Read essays which have gained the **grade** that you are aiming for – look at what is effective and consider how your own writing can improve to meet that target in particular:

- how the introduction is approached and how the points are developed
- how the essay maintains its focus on the question throughout
- how quotations are used and to what effect: for example, does the writer support their points at all?
- how effectively the essay is concluded

### Information about the question

With a passage-based question, some pupils may find it easier to actually read the passage first to know what they are focusing on when they read the question. This saves time so they don't have to read it twice. Also underlining the focus of the question helps.

### Using bullet points and spider diagrams

Spider diagrams are helpful for getting ideas down and maintaining focus when writing. It is also something to refer back to and you don't have to use all of your ideas in it. You may even change your mind about some.

They may just be a starting point and may progress as you start writing. You may choose to add to your diagram as you're writing.

#### Answer these questions

1. What should you write about?
2. What is the passage about?
3. What is a text's 'focus'?
4. How many points should you make in your essay?
5. How should you conclude?

After studying the question, it's helpful to **write down as many ideas as you can**. You can also jot down any particular quotations or sections that you're planning to use. **making notes** but remember to keep your focus on the question's keywords and

### When to use bullet points and spider diagrams

If your essay title requires you to write about a character, theme or any aspect of

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## Exam-Style Questions

1. How does Samuels present different types of journey in *Kindertransport*?  
In your answer you should consider language, form and structure.
2. How does Samuels present the relationship between Lil and Eva in *Kindertransport*?  
In your answer you should consider language, form and structure.
3. How does Samuels present feelings of unhappiness in *Kindertransport*?  
In your answer you should consider language, form and structure.
4. Explore the presentation of the Ratcatcher in *Kindertransport*.  
In your answer you should consider language, form and structure.
5. Explore the differences between Eva's and Helga's feelings in *Kindertransport*.  
In your answer you should consider language, form and structure.
6. 'Both Helga and Lil are inadequate as "mothers" to Eva.'  
How does Samuels present the importance of motherhood in *Kindertransport*?  
In your answer you should consider language, form and structure.
7. Explore the presentation of male characters in *Kindertransport*.  
In your answer you should consider language, form and structure.
8. 'Eva's experiences as a child help us understand the adult Evelyn.'  
How does Samuels present the ways that Eva's experiences as a child affect her?  
In your answer you should consider language, form and structure.

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## Indicative Content

This indicative content is intended to show students a good way in which to respond to the question. The accompanying comments give feedback on the quality of the answers, with positive and negative aspects.

The first paragraph is an example of an essay introduction and the second is an example of a detailed analysis in response to the question.

### Sample Question:

1. How does Samuels present different types of journey in *Kindertransport*?  
In your answer you should consider language, form and structure.

### Introductory Paragraph

*Kindertransport*, by Diane Samuels, is a text that focuses on many different types of journey. *Kindertransport*, and the historical background this evokes is a reference to a journey of young German Jewish children made to England in the 1930s just before the outbreak of the Second World War. The persecution is the focus for the exploration of the main character Eva/Evelyn and her journey. Through the backdrop of this journey made by Evelyn as a child, Diane Samuels is able to explore the journey through all the characters – physically and metaphorically. The most important journey presented in the text are those of personal growth and adjusting to a new life with a new parent figure, growing up within the wartime context, the difficulties of life, and importantly perhaps the journey back into Evelyn's past from her perspective as an adult, revealing it to her daughter for the first time.

### Feedback

- Positive: The introductory paragraph lays out a solid structure for the rest of the essay. Each type of 'journey' presented should have its own paragraph to explore it effectively.
- Positive: A circular feel to the essay is introduced with the marker already used in the introduction. The essay might conclude after all areas have been analysed.
- Positive: It is evident that different arguments will be presented rather than just one. This opens up the possibilities for the highest level of analysis as long as it is backed up with evidence from the text.
- Negative: There is a lack of quotations or direct references which, whilst helpful towards a strong start.
- Negative: The list of types of journey in the text could do with further descriptive or explanatory reference for each one, rather than just a list.
- Negative: The historical, social and cultural background of the text is pertinent to the context but is not awarded marks in this part of the exam.
- Negative: In terms of structure, the introduction might read better in short paragraphs.

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## Paragraphs of Analysis

### Paragraph One

One way in which a type of journey is presented in *Kindertransport* is through the relationship between the young Eva and the woman that becomes her foster mother, Mrs Lil Miller. This is present through the developing relationship between the two characters. Mrs Miller is a temporary figure in Eva's life, volunteering to care for her as part of the Kindertransport scheme. Her birth parents would follow soon after. The relationship between the two of them becomes close; this can be seen at the end of the text when Eva jumps off the motor car, and Mrs Miller also admits that she did not want to see her go. As the text progresses, the theme of adopting Eva and supporting her bid for British citizenship and change of name to Faith is explored. Diane Samuels and Mrs Miller plays a pivotal role in Eva's growth and journey away from her German/Jewish background, for example she first encourages Eva to contrast with the rules of the Jewish faith. The journey their relationship has undergone, from eventual loyalty to Lil over her actual birth mother when she reappears in the text, to Faith telling Lil about what has happened for fear of losing her. Subsequently over the following years, the mother/daughter family unit continues as Lil becomes a grandmother figure to Faith.

#### Feedback

- **Positive:** Every point should have its own paragraph throughout the essay, clearly on one of the areas summarised in the introduction.
- **Positive:** Some reference to Diane Samuels' intentions as an author.
- **Negative:** Too descriptive, simply relaying the events of the narrative and not making reference using the P.E.E. structure.

### Paragraph Two

Another type of journey that is explored in *Kindertransport* is the physical journey from Germany to England. The reason for this is based on the historical context of the play – the increasing persecution of Jews in Germany in the 1930s and Hitler's rise to power. For many Jewish families it seemed like the only way to survive was to send their children away to safety; separation and survival are two of the main themes throughout the text. Eva's separation from home and sudden need to fend for herself, which is then later returned to as a main issue in the arguments between Faith and Evelyn, is a key theme. 'Choosing a place to live without my help.' (p. 6) Evelyn shows that she wants Faith to stay in Germany. Eva's journey is the first narrative device through which Samuels explores these themes of parenthood and separation. 'Why will I be safer with strangers?' (p. 8), Eva questions, to her mother. 'I don't know, but it's the best.' (p. 8) The journey is shown to be essential for Eva's survival, and a sacrifice that she must make as a good parent, despite her unwillingness and fear of the unknown. As the journey progresses, it becomes a metaphor for her finding a new home and cultural journey – Eva is fascinated by the different aspects of British culture: 'How different it is, even if it does taste like dishwater.' (p. 22) Eventually, the journey away from Eva's home becomes a tool for the re-exploration of the themes of parenthood and separation.

#### Feedback

- **Positive:** There is a clear reference to major themes and Samuels' intentions.
- **Positive:** The paragraph flows well, with points and quotations linking together and leading well on to the paragraph and point of analysis.
- **Positive:** There is effective use of the P.E.E. technique, with relevant text points made and explanations and development of the point following.
- **Positive:** The overall essay question is frequently linked back to.
- **Negative:** A bit long – could be restructured and split into two paragraphs.
- **Negative:** More emphasis on the 'explanation' part of P.E.E. would increase the mark.

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