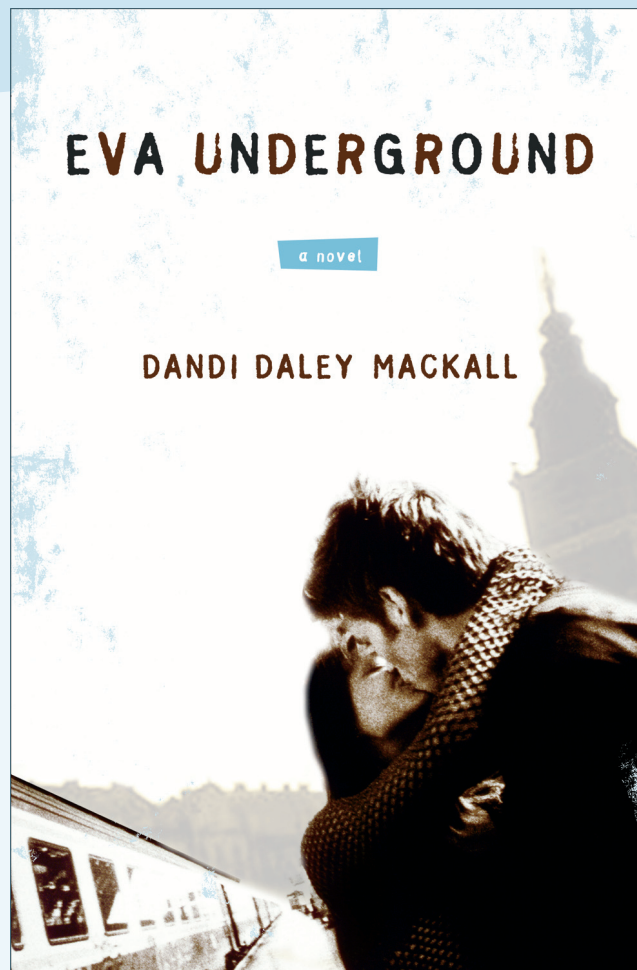


A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

EVA UNDERGROUND

by Dandi Daley Mackall



★ “Modern Communism is rarely depicted in children’s literature, and never before this well.”—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

BEFORE STUDENTS READ THE BOOK

- Discuss the title and allow the students to guess what *underground* will mean in the story.
- Ask the students if they've heard these terms: Iron Curtain, Berlin wall, Cold War, Communism, the Free World, Eastern Europe, Soviet satellite.
- Talk about the most threatening world fears today (for example, terrorism or nuclear war). Compare these fears to the fear of world domination and Communism in 1978.
- Ask the students to start a reading journal. Designate the first few pages as a dictionary of terms. Have the students look up the meanings of the terms included above and add the definitions to their journals.
- Facilitate a class discussion about what it means to live in a "free" country.
- Ask the students if they've ever had to move during a school year. Discuss the pressures and difficulties of moving.
- Ask if any students have had to move from one culture to another, for example, to a different country or from a city to a small town. Discuss potential difficulties and potential advantages in making such a move.
- Ask the students to expand their reading journals with freewriting exercises. They could start with a list of things they would miss if they had to change schools, relocate to another part of the United States, or move to a different country.
- Discuss the differences between life in America now and life in America in 1978 (no e-mail, cell phones, instant messaging, phone cards, iPods, CDs, etc.).
- Point out the glossary in the back of *Eva Underground*. Ask the students to imagine how challenging it might be to learn a language that is so different from English. Discuss whether English would be a difficult language for a Polish-speaking person to learn.

WHILE READING

- Ask the students to make entries in their reading journals describing how life in 1978 differed from life now.
- Eva and Tomek are faced with situations and circumstances

that don't seem fair. Have the students record in their journals the events in the story they consider inequitable.

- As they read about Communist Poland, have the students discuss their impressions of Communism. (Communism is a system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy, the press, and the legal and judicial systems, usually with single authority. State controls are often imposed with force.)

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Social Studies

- Eva and Tomek come from very different backgrounds. Have the students compare the values of the two main characters. What's important to each of them when the story begins? How do Eva and Tomek's values change and why?
- Discuss the meaning of the word *culture*. Which parts of the Polish culture are difficult for Eva to understand? Encourage the students to discuss their own families' cultures.
- Facilitate a discussion about foods the students consider "American." What foods from other cultures (Chinese, Italian, etc.) are popular in the United States?
- Ask the students to record details of their own cultures in their journals.

History

Encourage students to research important events in Polish history:

- Polish independence in 1918
- September 1, 1939: Hitler ordered his troops into Poland.
- September 17, 1939: Soviet troops invaded and occupied eastern Poland.
- July 1944: The Soviet Red Army entered Poland and established a communist-controlled "Polish Committee of National Liberation" in Lublin.
- Uprisings in the Warsaw ghetto during World War II
- During the Second World War, approximately six million

Poles died, including nearly three million Jews who were killed in Nazi death camps such as Auschwitz and Treblinka. Ask the students to research firsthand accounts of Holocaust survivors.

- In October of 1978, the Archbishop of Kraków, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, became Pope John Paul II. Discuss how that event affected Poland.
- When *Eva Underground* takes place, Poland is still under Russian control, but there are underground movements struggling for freedom. Independent trade unions are emerging; they will lead to the realization of Polish “Solidarity” in 1980. Research the Solidarity Movement in Poland, which was led by an electrician named Lech Walesa.
- Poland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1999, and the European Union in 2004. Ask the students to report on either NATO or the EU.

Geography

- Compare a current map of Poland and Eastern Europe with a map of Eastern Europe in 1978. Discuss the differences.
- Eva and her father had to make it through border crossings to get to Poland. Have the students make a list of the countries that border Poland.
- Poland was established as a nation in the tenth century. But in the late eighteenth century, Russia, Prussia, and Austria annexed the country, and Poland was wiped off the map until it regained its independence in 1918. Discuss how the Polish people may have preserved their identity during the time Poland was occupied by other countries. (For example, Polish pride, culture, religions).
- Independence didn’t last long—Poland was overrun by Germany and the Soviet Union during World War II. After the war, Poland was a Soviet satellite, with a communist government directed by Russia. Have the students research other Soviet satellite countries.

The Arts

- Have the students read Adam Mickiewicz’s drama *Dziady* (or *Forefather’s Eve*). How does it relate to the events that took place in Poland during Mickiewicz’s lifetime (1798-

1855) and during the time period *Eva Underground* takes place? Mickiewicz is considered to be the national poet of Poland. He wrote and fought for justice and liberty. During the period when Poland was occupied by other countries, Mickiewicz kept the Polish spirit alive in his writings, which carried patriotic messages to all of Europe. During that time, he was arrested and deported to Russia, where he died. His body was moved and buried in Wawel Cathedral in Kraków (where Eva and Tomek first meet).

- In Chapter 17, Tomek reads poems by Czesław Miłosz to Eva. Have the students research Miłosz and write in their journals about how the poem in Chapter 17 relates to Eva and Tomek’s situation.
- W. H. Auden’s poem “September 1, 1939” has striking parallels to the reaction expressed by many Americans after the events of September 11, 2001. Read the poem to the students and facilitate a discussion about the feelings expressed by Auden. Encourage the students to write in their reading journals about their own feelings after 9/11.
- Discuss censorship. What if the government controlled every news outlet in the United States? Discuss the importance of freedom of the press. Students might journal on why this particular freedom is especially important.
- In Chapter 9, Eva is moved by a young accordion player, and her father makes the comment that the child might have been famous if he’d grown up in the United States, with better opportunities. Ask the students if they agree or disagree with the comment. Have the students write about whether it’s fair that opportunities for success vary throughout the world.

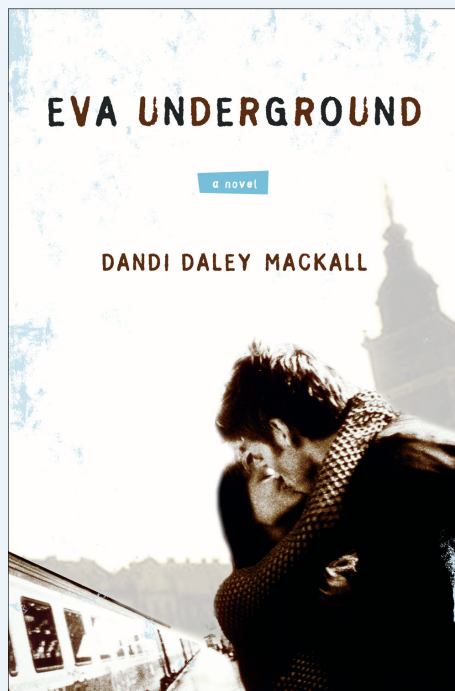
Writing

- This story is told from two points of view: Eva’s and Tomek’s. Ask the students why the author chose this writing technique.
- Eva changes during the course of her stay in Poland. Discuss how and why she changes. In the beginning, what does Eva want? How do her desires change?
- Discuss Tomek’s character development. In the beginning, what does Tomek want? How do his desires change?

About the Author

DANDI DALEY MACKALL is the author of more than three hundred books for adults and children, including the picture book *First Day*, illustrated by Tiphonie Beeke. She lives with her family in Ohio.

**Eva Underground* is a work of fiction, but many of the events are based on the author's experiences in Poland in 1978 and 1979. Encourage the students to discuss which incidents and details may have come from the author's experiences, and which may have been purely imagined. Dandi Daley Mackall invites students who have read and discussed *Eva Underground* to write to her through her website at www.dandibooks.com.



0-15-205462-6 • Ages 12 and up

Visit www.dandibooks.com for more information about the author.

Activities in this guide were written by Dandi Daley Mackall.

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