***The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* Study Guide**

**Ch. 1-3**

1. Why is Bruno’s family moving?
2. Remember that when Mother is telling Bruno about moving, she says, “In fact if anything it’s going to be a great adventure.” (3) Do you think Mother really believes this? How does she really feel about moving? How do you know?
3. How does Bruno feel about moving? Why does he feel this way?
4. When Bruno and his mother are talking about moving, Mother reminds Bruno that he doesn’t like “how much things have changed here recently.” Bruno says, “Well, I don’t like the way we have to turn all the lights off at night now.” (8) Why do they have to turn the light off at night? What does this tell you about the setting?
5. Describe what you know about the setting so far.
6. Compare how Bruno describes the new house to how he describes the old house in Berlin. What mood is created when Bruno describers the old house? How does that mood change when Bruno describes the new house? What details contribute to this mood?
7. Who might “the Fury” be?
8. What do you think Bruno’s father’s job is? What clues can you find?
9. How does the author make it clear this story is being told mostly from a child’s point of view? How does the author give the book a child’s voice and tone?

**Ch. 4-6**

1. Describe what the setting looks like beyond Bruno’s house. Which details begin to create a darker mood? How?
2. Remember that Bruno says this place is called “Out-With.” Based on the information you have so far, where is this new house? What are Bruno and Gretel seeing when they look out the window?
3. How does the author make it clear that there is a flashback in the beginning of chapter 5? What part is the flashback?
4. During the flashback, Bruno remembers taking a train to get to the new house. While traveling, he notices that he is on a comfortable train with very few people and lots of fresh air. However, there is another train headed in the same direction that is very crowded. Why don’t any of those people ride Bruno’s train? Who are those people and where are they going?
5. Is Bruno’s father a good father? Find evidence to support your opinion.
6. When Bruno is talking to his father in the office, Bruno asks about the people he saw from his window. His father tells him that “Those people…well, they’re not people at all, Bruno.” (53) What are your thoughts on this comment? Why would Bruno’s father say such a thing? What does this tell you about the people in this setting?
7. Why does Maria keep insisting that Bruno’s father is a good man? Do you agree with her?
8. Why won’t Maria tell Bruno how she feels about moving? How do you think she feels?
9. When Gretel orders Maria to draw her a bath, Bruno gets angry with her and tells his sister, “She’s not just here to do things for us all the time, you know. Especially things that we can do for ourselves.” (63) Why does Bruno respond this way to Gretel’s order? Would he have responded this way earlier in the chapter? Why or why not?
10. In this chapter Bruno tells Maria, “I’m only saying what I fell. I’m allowed to do that, aren’t I?” To which Maria responds, “No, you’re not.” (64) Why ***can’t*** Bruno say what he feels?

**Ch. 7-10**

1. Reread the description of Lieutenant Kotler in the middle of page 71. What is the tone of this description? How does the description reveal Bruno’s feelings about Kotler?
2. How does Kotler treat Pavel? Why does he treat him this way?
3. Remember that Pavel, the waiter, comes and bandages a cut Bruno has gotten. He then tells Bruno that he used to be a doctor. What do you make of this? Why is Pavel no longer a doctor? Why is he here acting as a waiter instead?
4. When Mother sees that Pavel has bandaged Bruno, why does she send Bruno to his room and tell Pavel to say she cleaned Bruno up? What is she afraid of?
5. How does the author make it clear that Ch. 8 is a flashback of the Christmas before the family came to “Out-With”?
6. Why choose a young boy to be the narrator?
7. How do Bruno’s Grandparents feel about Bruno’s father being promoted to Commandant? Why do they feel so differently?
8. When the family is talking about Bruno’s father’s promotion, Grandfather starts talking about “Helping your country reclaim her pride after all the great wrongs that were done to her. The punishments went above and beyond” (91). What is he talking about? What was done to Germany? (You may need to research or ask me if you’re stuck on this one.)
9. What kind of teacher is Herr Liszt? How would you describe him? Is he a good teacher? Why or why not?
10. When Bruno is thinking about the people he has seen in the “pajamas,” he wonders how different they really are from him and his family: “What exactly was the difference? He wondered to himself. And who decided which people wore the striped pajamas and which people wore the uniforms?” (100). How is it ironic (the opposite of what you’d think) that Bruno, a child, would ask these questions? Why is this important?
11. What motivates Bruno to walk toward the fence even though he is not supposed to go there?
12. When Bruno meets Shmuel on the other side of the fence, why is it ironic that Bruno would say to him, “I don’t see why I have to be stuck over here on this side of the fence where there’s no one to talk to and no one to play with and you get to have dozens of friends and are probably playing for hours every day.” (111) What is it probably really like on Shmuel’s side of the fence? Why do you think the author would have Bruno say such a thing?
13. Later on in Bruno’s first conversation with Shmuel, he says, “Germany is the greatest of all countries…We’re superior.” (112) What do you think of Bruno saying this?

**Ch. 11-13**

1. How does the author make it clear that this chapter will be a flashback?
2. How do Bruno’s parents act when they find out the Fury will be coming to dinner? What does this tell you about how they see the Fury?
3. How does the Fury behave at dinner? What does this tell you about his character traits?
4. Why do you think the author chose to include this flashback about the Fury coming to dinner?
5. Remember that in Chapter 12, Bruno and Shmuel compare what their lives have been like. Bruno keeps trying to find ways in which his life is similar to Shmuel’s. How have their lives actually been very different? Why does Bruno keep trying to relate his life to Shmuel’s?
6. What motivates Bruno to keep his visit with Shmuel a secret from his family?
7. How do Bruno and Shmuel view soldiers differently? Why do they view them differently?
8. When Bruno complains at dinner that he finds history boring, Bruno’s father says, “If it wasn’t for history, none of us would be sitting around this table now. We’d be safely back at our table in our house in Berlin. We are correcting history here.” (144) What is he talking about? How are they correcting history?
9. Why does Lieutenant Kotler become so uncomfortable when Bruno’s father starts asking about Kotler’s father?
10. What happens when Pavel spills the wine on Kotler? How do you know? Why do you think the author didn’t tell us exactly what happened?

**Ch. 14-16**

1. Find evidence that Bruno really doesn’t understand Shmuel’s situation (even in earlier chapters if you need to). How is it that Bruno doesn’t understand what’s going on? Considering that he’s nine years old, do you think it’s realistic that Bruno would be so oblivious?
2. Why doesn’t Bruno tell Gretel the truth about Shmuel?
3. Why do you think Lieutenant Kotler hangns “around the house as if he were in charge” when Father is gone? Why is he always beside Mother helping her to plan the party, and why does he always make jokes with Mother? What is going on?
4. When Kotler accuses Shmuel of stealing food, why doesn’t Bruno stick up for him? When Kotler asks Bruno if he knows Shmuel, what motivates Bruno to lie? What do you think of Bruno’s decision? What does this say about human nature?
5. Why do you think Bruno’s apology was enough to motivate Shmuel to forgive him? What does this suggest about human nature?
6. Why do you think Kotler was transferred away?
7. Remember that Bruno goes to Gretel to ask her to explain the fence and why he can’t go over there to play. How does Gretel explain the fence and its purpose to Bruno? Why do you think she has such trouble explaining?

**Ch. 17 to end**

1. Why is Mother so unhappy at Out-With? Is it for the reasons Bruno thinks or something else? (Why does she need “medicinal sherry”?)
2. How does Bruno feel when his father says that Bruno, Gretel and Mother will be returning to Berlin? Why does he feel this way?
3. When Bruno meets up with Shmuel, Shmuel asks if Bruno is still willing to help search for his papa. Bruno says, “I wouldn’t let you down.” (203) Why is it ironic that Bruno said this?
4. In what ways does the other side of the fence not live up to Bruno’s expectations?
5. What mood does the setting in Ch. 19 create? What details and imagery create this mood?
6. What happens to Bruno?
7. Is what happens to Bruno’s father at the end of the story justice? Why or why not?
8. Why do you think Boyne chose to end the book with these words: “And that’s the end of the story about Bruno and his family. Of course all this happened a long time ago and nothing like that could ever happen again. Not in this day and age.” (216) Why is “Not in this day and age” its own paragraph?
9. What is the significance of Bruno mispronouncing names like the Fury and Out With?