

## Teaching News Is Elementary

### October 30, 2015

Each week, this lesson will share some classroom activity ideas that use the newspaper or other NIE resources. You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a class discussion.

*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for all of your students.*

**Materials you will need for this lesson:** The Seattle Times e-Edition, Internet/library for research.

**Article: A Look Inside Rodger & Hammerstein's The Sound of Music: Climb ev'ry mountain: The real story of the von Trapp family**

**Page: Special Section pages 4-5**

**Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2015**

#### **Pre- Reading Discussion Questions:**

Look at the title and the photographs. Where do you think the von Trapp family lived? Who do you think the two people in the photograph are? What do you think their relationship is?

#### **Vocabulary:**

Read the following quotes and determine the meaning of the word based on how it's used in the sentence:

"For many people, the mere mention of Rodgers and Hammerstein's The Sound of Music **conjures** fond memories of hearing the music of the 1959 Tony Award-winning musical, or seeing the 1965 Academy Award-winning movie for the very first time."

(makes you think of something by bringing up an image)

"While the story is based on the historic, real life von Trapp family, both the musical and the movie tell a **fictionalized** and somewhat **romanticized** version. Here we tell the true story of Maria von Trapp and her family."

(fictionalized: changed (a true story) into fiction by changing or adding details)

(romanticized: thought about or described as being better or more attractive or interesting than it really is)

“Maria had four **foster** brothers and sisters, but only one of them lived at home and she was much older.”

(used to describe a situation in which for a period of time a child lives with and is cared for by people who are not the child's biological or adoptive parents)

### **Journal Writing Prompts:**

**“One day during the hike, Maria was overcome by the beauty of the nature around her, she flung her arms in the air and decided in that moment to give up everything and devote her life to God. Impulsive as always, Maria walked down the mountain, caught a train to Salzburg and climbed the 144 steps to the Nonnberg Abbey where she was admitted as postulant, the first stage to becoming a nun.”**

Just as Maria did when she decided to become a nun, think about a time when you were so affected by an experience (with nature or otherwise) that you made a big change. What change did you make? Describe the experience in detail appealing to the five senses.

### **Discussion Questions:**

**Review the excerpt and discuss the following questions:**

**“As their family grew, the political climate of Austria was changing. In 1933 Austrian-born Adolf Hitler became the ruler of Germany. When he closed the Austrian border to Germans, many businesses and banks failed. Austria and the von Trapps were in dire financial straits.”**

How did the political climate of Austria change in 1933? How did the von Trapps respond to these political changes? How were they similar to or different from other Austrians at the time? What was particularly brave about the choices the von Trapps made?

### **Small group discussion and activity:**

**“While the story is based on the historic, real life von Trapp family, both the musical and the movie tell a fictionalized and somewhat romanticized version. Here we tell the true story of Maria von Trapp and her family.”**

In a group, list the similarities and differences between the real von Trapp family and the musical and film, “The Sound of Music.” Which changes are most notable? Why do you think these changes were made to the musical and film?

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