



ANNE FRANK BACKGROUND

Anne Frank wrote one of the most remarkable of all published diaries. Anne was a German Jewish girl, whose family fled the Nazi Persecution of Jews in Germany in the 1930s, settling in what they hoped was the safety of Amsterdam, Holland. When the Nazis invaded Holland in 1940, the terror returned and the Franks went into hiding in a "secret annex"—hidden rooms at the back of Otto Frank's business premises in Amsterdam.

"Little bundle of contradictions": that is how her family described Anne. She herself felt strongly the idea that she had a dual personality: the "pure" being that she wanted to be, and the "frolicsome little goat" that others judged her to be.

Otto Frank, Anne Frank's father was born in 1889. Otto was brought up in a pleasant suburb of Frankfurt. When Otto left school he studied at the University of Heidelberg. However, he left university when he was given a chance to go the United States. There he spent a year in New York before returning to his family in Germany.

During World War I (1914-18) Otto and his two brothers served in the army, as did millions of other German citizens. Otto rose to the rank of lieutenant. When the war ended, he left the army and went to work for his father's banking firm.

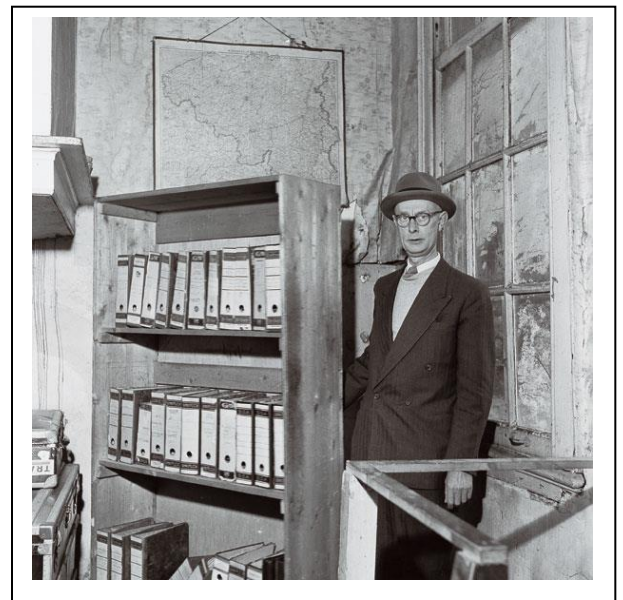
In 1925, Otto married Edith Hollander. The following year Otto and Edith had their first child Margot Betti. Their second daughter Annelies Marie (Anne, for short) was born June 12, 1929.

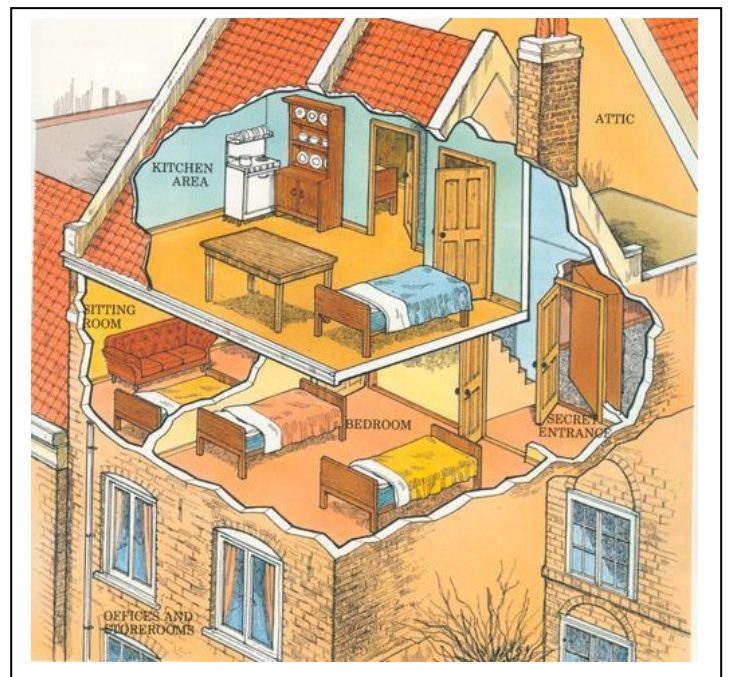
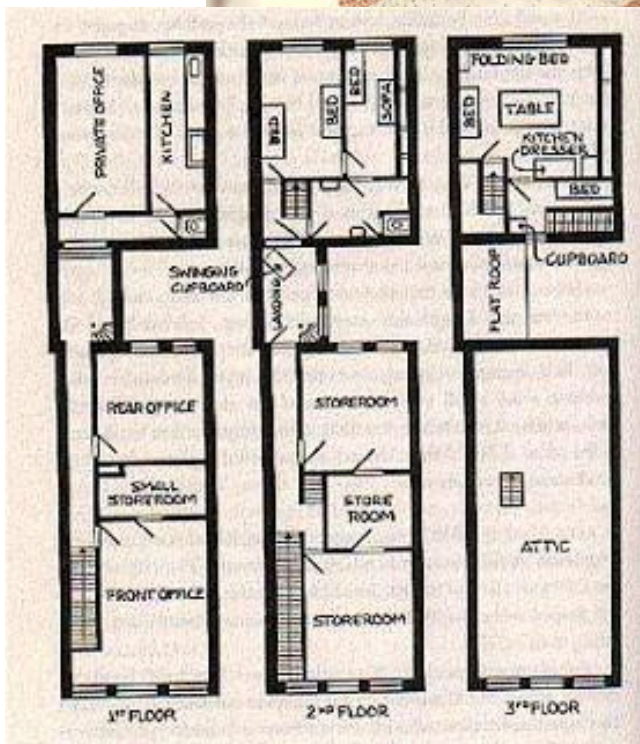
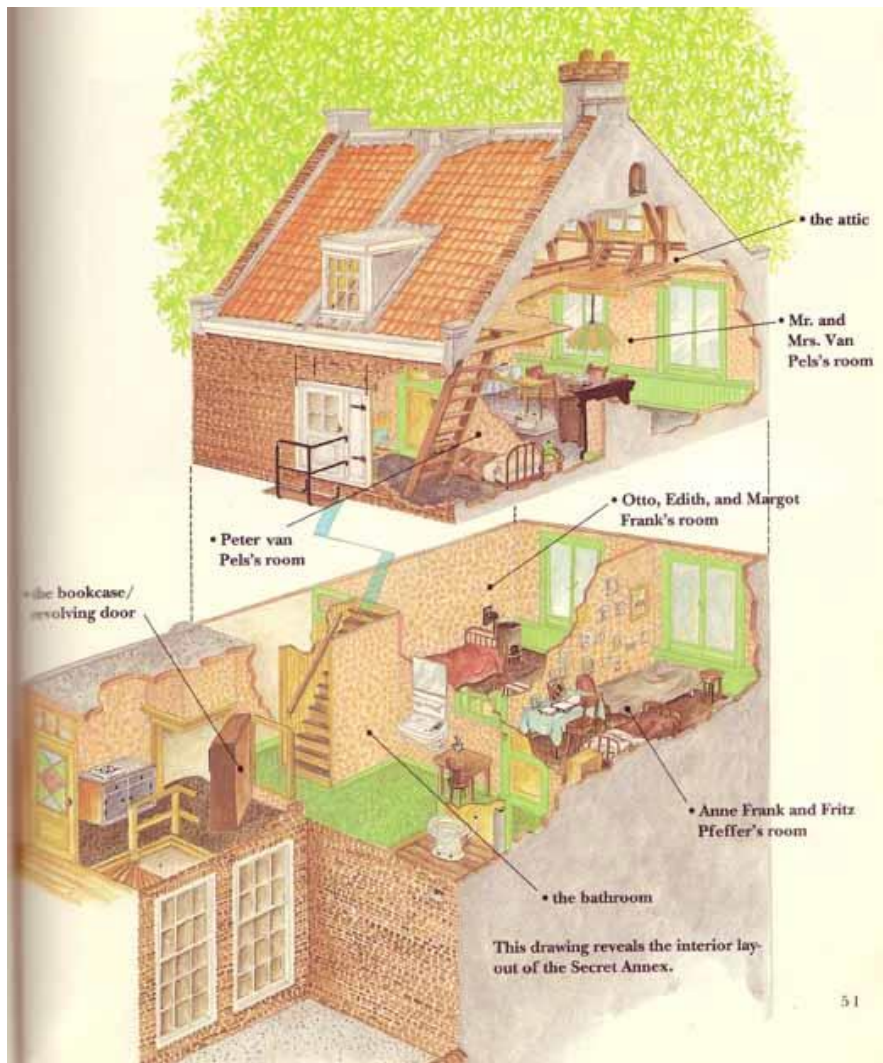
In 1933, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party came into power in Germany. As soon as the Nazis were in power they began persecute the nation's Jews. Many Jews decided to leave Germany before they lost more than their jobs. Otto Frank was fortunate to still have a job and a nice house in a bright, modern suburb. Even so, he decided to leave his job, his home and his country, to take Edith and the two girls to live in Holland.

Otto believed his family would be safe in Holland, as Holland took no part in fighting during World War I. In April 1940 Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. A month later Germany attacked France, Belgium, Luxemburg — and Holland.

With the Nazis making life unbearable for Jewish people in Holland, Otto Frank decided to go into hiding with his family. He prepared a hiding place in the upstairs rooms of the Prinsengracht building. Margot's order to report to a labor camp hastened their move to the "secret annex" in July 1942.

The Frank's "secret annex" consisted of six rooms. For two years this was not just their home, but the whole world for no less than eight people: Mr. and Mrs. Frank, Margot and Anne, Mr. and Mrs. van Pels and their son Peter, and Mr. Pfeffer, a dentist who joined them in November 1942. It was here that Anne started writing in her diary about her life in the annex.





Although Anne was hidden away from the daily world, the radio kept her in contact with events, and her own powerful sympathetic imagination allowed her to understand the sufferings of her fellow Jews in Europe. "In the evening when it is dark, I often see rows of good, innocent people accompanied by crying children, walking on and on, bullied and knocked about until they almost drop. No one is spared - each and all join in the march of death."

Life in the annex settled down to a monotonous routine. They woke at 6:45 am and all used the bathroom. By 8:30 they had to be quiet, as work began in the warehouse beneath them. Breakfast was served at 9:00, and this was normally eaten in the van Pels's room, on the top floor, where they were least likely to be heard. After breakfast all movement was kept to an absolute minimum until 12:30, when the warehouse closed for lunch. At this time, the inhabitants of the annex had lunch and listened to the BBC. At 2 p.m. the warehouse reopened and there was silence once again. Between 2:00 and 5:30 p.m. time was spent resting or reading. After 5:30 p.m., everyone could move around again and the evening meal was prepared and served. At 9:00 p.m., everyone prepared for bed. At weekends the routine varied, but with even more need to keep quiet to avoid attracting the slightest attention to what supposed to be an empty building. This routine went on for two years until they were captured in 1944.

The Nazis somehow found out about the people living in the secret annex and arrested them. The Franks, the van Pels, and Mr Pfeffer were taken to Westerbork labor camp. From there, Mr. Pfeffer was taken to Neuengamme concentration camp where he died. The Franks and van Pels were loaded onto the last train to Auschwitz, the most well known and feared of the German concentration camps.

At Auschwitz Mr. van Pels was gassed to death. Mrs. Frank, weak and ill, died shortly before the Russians liberated the camp. Peter van Pels died in Mauthausen concentration camp on the day it was liberated by the Americans. Mr. Frank survived Auschwitz, and went to the women's section to find out what had happened to his wife and daughters.

Here he learned that his wife had just died and that Margot and Anne, together with Mrs. van Pels, had been taken to Bergen-Belsen, a work camp. There was cruelty, hunger and disease; but there were no gas chambers, and this gave Mr. Frank some hope that his daughters might still be alive. Mrs. van Pels died in Bergen-Belsen. Between February and March, 1945, Margot caught typhus and died. Anne was now completely alone. Shortly afterwards, she too died of typhus.

In March 1944, Anne Frank had listened to the Dutch program from London and had heard the broadcaster say that, after the war, the Dutch people ought to make a national collection of diaries and letters to record what they had been through. Anne put her own immediate thoughts in her diary.

In 1947, Mr. Frank managed to publish Anne's diary, titled *Het Achterhuis* (The Annex), a title Anne herself had chosen. Anne wanted to grow up to be a writer. She never had the chance.

Anne wanted to live after her death through her writing. She has.

1. What is Anne's father's name? _____
2. What is Anne's mother's name? _____
3. What is Anne's sister's name? _____
4. Where was Anne born? _____
5. What does Anne want to be when she grows up? _____
6. How old was Anne when the Second World War began? _____

