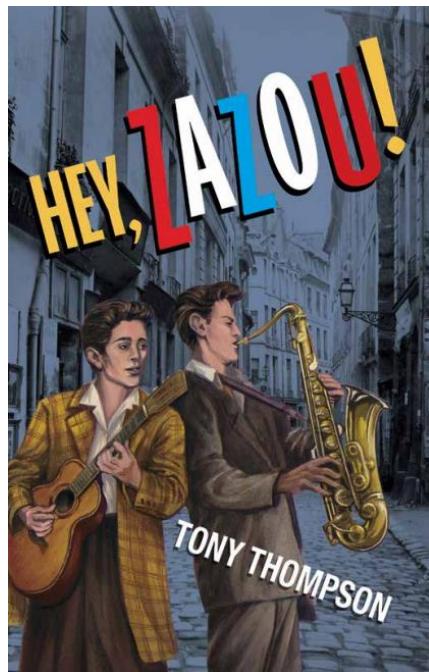


TEACHING NOTES

Hey, Zazou!
Tony Thompson



Summary:

In WW2-Nazi occupied Paris, food is scarce, the curfew is enforced, troops patrol the streets and jazz is banned. The French Resistance operates underground at great risk. Anything American is seen as decadent and degenerate. The Swing Kids, 'Zazous', are their own rebellion: obsessed with jazz, dressing like dandies with quiffed hair and long checked jackets, dancing till dawn. Charlie lives and breathes to play jazz guitar. With his new friend Eddie, who plays saxophone, they busk in the markets at first, and then put together a band. But is it really their own band? Entering the world of Papa Jean, the mysterious Haitian bar owner, is exciting in more ways than one, and it certainly pays well . . . but dangerous too. How will Charlie and his friends fare against all the forces against them?

Genre: Historical fiction, War stories

Age Range: 14 upwards

Curriculum areas: English, History/HASS

BEFORE READING

- Consider the title and front cover art: buildings/architecture, cobblestones, clothing, hairstyles, and the colours used in the word Zazou.
 - ✓ Do readers have some suggestions on setting – both place and time?
 - ✓ Have they seen similar clothing styles, perhaps in movies?
 - ✓ What do they think is meant by Zazou?
 - ✓ Does the red/white/blue of the word Zazou suggest a particular country to students (the tricolour flag of France)?
- Have a quick-fire activity such as Hot Potato or use a digital board to create a word cloud (e.g. [Vevox](#)) to determine students' background knowledge of World War II and Nazi occupied countries.
- Narrow this down to information about life under the Nazi Occupation and those groups persecuted during the war. Record this on the class learning wall.
 - ✓ Have they read other books set in this period?
 - ✓ How many of these described life for occupied countries?
 - ✓ How many related to people in danger or in hiding?
 - ✓ What do they know about Paris during the Occupation e.g. the Vichy government/collaborators?
 - ✓ Use a map to show countries that were Nazi-occupied and add to the focus wall.
- Read the blurb and show the [propaganda poster](#) replicated on the back cover.
 - ✓ What is happening in the poster?
 - ✓ Share some other information on the Zazous and their sub-culture [useful links below].
 - ✓ Do students know of any sub-cultures in contemporary times e.g. Dark Academia, Goths, Emos, Hipsters?
- Introduce or revise relevant literary terms e.g. foreshadowing
- Establish a classroom topic wall (working wall) to record reflections, questions and answers, relevant information, quotes, examples of writing techniques and speculations, and encourage students to add questions or reflections they might have during the reading. Arrange a bulk loan of complementary resources, fiction as well as non-fiction on the relevant themes: WWII, Paris, Jazz, Roma people, biographies and war stories.



DURING READING

Narrative structure, themes and technique

Themes: War, Survival, Resilience, Persecution, Bullying/Cruelty, Betrayal, Ethics, Subterfuge, Kindness, Loyalty, Friendship, Good & Evil/Right & Wrong,

The Setting

The book is set in the Second World War in 1943, in German-occupied Paris. Use Google earth to explore Paris now and find images or film of Paris at the time e.g. [Getty Images](#). Use a map of Paris either hardcopy or a geo- to plot the action and places mentioned.

During Reading

- Have students make sketchnotes at the end of each chapter: **Sketchnotes are rich visual notes created from a mix of handwriting, drawings, hand-lettering, shapes, and visual elements like arrows, boxes, and lines.** [[Rohdesign.com](#)]. For a narrative such as this which is rich in visual clues this is an ideal method.
- Organise topic specific vocabulary groupings on the class learning wall. One section might contain the language pertaining to the period, either specific words or phrases. Others might be around aspects of daily life mentioned, while others might concern references to music, the war, or the Zazous. Here are some of the musical terms used: licks, jam, riff, tempo, groove, progression, percussive[ly], pompe, rhythm, pace, timing, metronome, chords, musette, bottom-end, up-tempo, boogie-woogie. Music students or the music teacher could be utilised to define or explain these.

Language and literary techniques

- Show, don't tell: Read the first two pages. How does the author set the scene and create the atmosphere?
 - ✓ Identify words/phrases that do this.
 - ✓ Find other examples of this technique e.g. how do we know Charlie is dyslexic before the word is mentioned?
- Pause & Predict: at the end of Chapter 1 to establish what the reader already knows and how much of the narrative is foreshadowed e.g. the setting, conditions in Paris, the Zazous and opinions on them, the risks from the Gestapo, and especially the significance of the final paragraphs [p. 10].
 - ✓ 'A puzzle has to have pieces,' said Michel [p. 8]

- ✓ ‘Are you any good on guitar?’ asked Michel. ‘I’m all right, I guess. Nothing special.’

Michel and Tremblay exchanged a quick glance but neither said anything.

- Pause & Predict: Why are the Germans and authorities so hostile about the Zazous? What threat do they pose? They are not political, they don’t cause riots, they play music, dance and dress differently so...? ‘I wonder why they’re so scared,’ said Charlie. Everyone at the table looked at him. ‘What do you mean?’ asked Theo. ‘He’s right,’ said Claire. ‘If they are as powerful as they pretend to be with all of their parades and flags, why are they scared of a bunch of kids who want to listen to jazz? [p. 103]
- Pause & Predict: ‘I think Michel is up to something. I don’t know, or even want to know, what it is, but I think there is more to all of this than we think.’ Eddie pushed his hair back from his forehead. ‘That’s crazy, Charlie met Michel by accident. You met Dieter by accident.’ ‘That’s one accident too many, don’t you think?’ ‘And why would Michel let a German soldier get so close if he is using the band to cover himself?’ asked Eddie, sceptically. ‘I don’t know,’ said Charlie, ‘but something isn’t right.’ [P. 184]. What do readers think could be foreshadowed here?
- Have students predict meaning of these, based on context and then find dictionary definitions. Add more of your own choice:

	Predicted Meaning	Actual Definition
Unrequited p 5		
Vibraphonist p 14		
Incendiary p.14		
Philosophers p. 16		
Transfixed p. 17		
Mandated p. 19		
Gadjо p. 56		
Jiving/jitterbugging p. 57		
Dissipate p. 78		
Impoverished p. 92		
Interjections 186		
Consensus 187		
Shellac p 200		

Figurative Speech: Classify these examples and find more.

- ✓ snake weaving its way through the heavy rhythm field p. 93
- ✓ when a band really cooked p. 117
- ✓ firing on all cylinders p 121
- ✓ were still rough around the edges p. 184

Writing

- Choose one of the jazz musicians mentioned to research and create a one-pager bio [useful templates available online] or a (fake) [social media profile](#):
 - ✓ Django Reinhardt
 - ✓ Benny Goodman
 - ✓ Charlie Christian
 - ✓ Glen Miller
 - ✓ Cab Calloway
 - ✓ Eddie Lang
 - ✓ Own choice selected from text
- Choose one of these for a Pair & Share mini-research topic:
 - ✓ Paris under the Occupation
 - ✓ The Roma/Sinti people
 - ✓ Hitler Youth
 - ✓ The Resistance/Underground
 - ✓ Swing Kids – Germany
 - ✓ The Vichy Government
 - ✓ The Black Market
- Descriptive Writing: Write and illustrate a 'Study in Contrasts' piece to compare Tremblay's café and Papa Jean's nightclub, based on evidence/description in the text e.g.
 - ✓ *The tiny café had a low ceiling and was lit by a dusty chandelier and two lamps that sat on side tables. Three tables were in front of a counter with four stools. During the day, another five tables were set up on the footpath. Charlie sat at his regular table to the left of the door, by a window facing out onto the street. [p. 9]*
 - ✓ *Through the windows, he could see two couples seated at rough wooden tables near the bar. A group of five or six German soldiers were drinking by the opposite window. The bar was larger on the inside than it appeared from the street. Down a wide set of stairs was a stage surrounded by tables draped in white tablecloths with roses in the centre. The stage had a bandstand and a dance floor in front. [p. 38]*

Characters

- This narrative has a relatively small number of characters against the bigger backdrop of a busy city. Draw up lists of the most noteworthy and classify e.g.,

Primary	Secondary	Incidental
Charlie	Tremblay	René

- ✓ Construct a character web to show the connections between primary, secondary and incidental characters.
- ✓ Discuss the concept of character traits using the four categories: feelings, actions, dialogue, and thoughts. Use higher order questioning to elicit character appraisals (more suggestions freely available online):
- ✓ Explore the conflicts faced, their overall role in the narrative as well as their traits. Use quotes or examples e.g., A graphic organiser can be helpful here.
- ✓ Create a list of the *sympathetic characters*. What is meant by this term? Construct a definition for the learning wall. Which characters would be considered *unsympathetic*?
- ✓ Choose two diametrically opposed characters and create a Venn diagram to identify similarities/differences.
- ✓ Use an AI Image creator and information from the text and research to create an image of a typical Zazou teen.

AFTER READING

Discussion questions

- Monster or Angel? Introduce or review the word dichotomy. Pose the question: are people wholly or inherently **good** or **bad**? This concept is a thread throughout the narrative.
 - ✓ Consider any of these: Monique, Michel, Maman, Papa Jean, Tremblay, Dieter or Charlie's father
 - ✓ A [Socratic seminar](#) would be a fitting activity to discuss this concept.
- Truth telling: There are various incidents when characters do not speak the truth or omit to tell all the details. Throughout the narrative, Charlie knows he is surrounded by secrecy and lies. 'Do you ever feel like there is a movie playing but you keep missing parts of it? You know there are things going on

that would make it all clear, but you never see those parts?' asked Charlie.

[p. 226]

- ✓ When is lying, even by omission, justified?
- ✓ Can students think of other circumstances when this is so?
- ✓ Formulate this as a topic for a class debate
- What would you do? Choose one of these and write a response, justifying your answer: *'Don't be silly,' said Charlie, shivering slightly. 'It's not like school. You don't get shouted at – you get shot. 'But shouldn't we be doing our part?'* 'We are,' said Charlie. 'We're playing jazz and reminding people how to have fun. The dancers today, we gave them a moment or two of fun. They can't afford to go to a club.'
- 'I wonder if that's enough, though,' said Eddie.* [P. 102];
 - ✓ Continue to wear your Zazou clothes and play/listen to jazz despite the hostility and bullies
 - ✓ Work for the Resistance like Charlie's maman?
 - ✓ Accept Papa Jean's offer of work knowing he's involved in illegal activities?
 - ✓ Be romantic with Charlie, but be quite prepared to shoot him
- To what did these Nazi terms refer and how do they inform this narrative?
 - ✓ The Aryan ideal/The Master Race
 - ✓ The Nazi Ideology of Race
 - ✓ The Final Solution
- The Colonel is meant to be the feared overseer who will quell the activities of the Resistance and is the representative of Hitler and the Nazi ideals. But his obvious enjoyment of the music played at Papa Jean's is at complete odds with the official stance on several issues. The Nazi officials were notorious for their hypocrisy. Certainly, their attitude towards their French Allies is dubious at best.
 - ✓ Find examples of this in the text or via research.
 - ✓ Discuss the implications of this and how it would be interpreted by the general populace.

Activities

Summarise:

- Have each student create a summary of the novel in both words/quotes and images on a blank jigsaw so that each piece creates a whole (available from craft suppliers) OR give each student a jigsaw piece (A4 size template) and

have them write/draw quotes and vignettes to connect for a classroom display.

- Make [novel Bloom balls](#) to create a summary of the narrative using words and illustrations.
- Create a 'one-pager' to summarise the narrative, in a chosen medium e.g., paper, chalk (pavement) or digital. Include all the relevant details needed for this type of takeaway activity. [numerous examples/information available online]
 - ✓ Basic guidelines for the one-page summary: the summary is limited to one page (usually A4 but could be larger) with little to no white space. Students are encouraged to fill their spaces with their knowledge and reflections, use colour and creativity. Title and author are always included.

Visualise:

Visualization requires students to weave together their own background knowledge, text evidence, and creativity to make an image in their mind's eye to match the story or informational article that they are reading. The images that they make help them to understand what they are reading at a deeper level. [thinkgrowgiggle.com].

- ✓ Find or create a template and have students practise visualisation skills. This could be visualising a setting, a character or a scene. This could be a film strip graphic or comic book style.

Analyse – Visual Literacy:

Choose an image or cartoon and analyse using such questions as:

- ✓ Does the image have a title or caption? What information does it provide?
- ✓ Does it have a credited creator or photographer?
- ✓ Can you determine a date?
- ✓ Where is it from?
- ✓ What was happening at the time in history this photo was taken/cartoon published?
- ✓ What feelings does it evoke?
- ✓ Why was it taken or created? List evidence or your knowledge about the photographer that led you to your conclusion.



- Create a playlist: There are numerous pieces of music mentioned throughout the text. Using these examples as a starting point, create your own playlist and share with another student or the class. Justify your selections:
 - ✓ [Stardust](#)
 - ✓ [Seven Come Eleven](#)
 - ✓ [One O'Clock Jump](#)
 - ✓ [Flying Home](#)
 - ✓ [LimeHouse Blues](#)
- During the war, particularly in occupied countries, food was rationed and very often in short supply. The estimated necessary food rations are 2000 to 2500 calories per day. During the war, food rations were:

• In Germany	• Poland	• Warsaw Ghetto	• The Netherlands	• France
• 3295 calories	• 600 calories	• 300 calories	• 1600 calories	• 1300 calories

- ✓ Supply problems quickly affected French stores, which were short of everything. Faced with these difficulties in daily life, the government responded by introducing ration cards and other food stamps with which one could obtain basic food necessities (bread, meat, fish, sugar, fats , etc.) or non-food items (household products, clothing , etc.). Even tobacco and wine were rationed. Each French person was classified by category according to their energy needs, age, sex and professional activity of the person. Each person then received the ration according to the category to which they belonged. Hunger was especially prevalent in the cities and affected the youngest. Queues grew longer in front of shops, which sometimes had to close by administrative order a few days a week. In the absence of meat and other foods, people ate vegetables that were not very popular at the time, such as rutabaga and Jerusalem artichoke . Products such as sugar and coffee were replaced by substitutes : ersatz (such as chicory which replaced coffee, saccharin replaced sugar). However, some French people (often merchants) took advantage of the black market to sell food without tickets but at very high prices. Theft and bartering were also frequent practices during this period of deprivation and abstinence [\[Memoir de Geurre\]](#)

Charlie was thrilled to have Coke, which was available in France before the war but not widely drunk. It would have been an exciting taste of sweetness for him after four years of rationing with very little sugar or sweet foods, plus he very likely knew about it via his interest in American music and culture.

- ✓ Create a class challenge to undertake a week of 'rations' as per the general guidelines (with respect to any health or medical conditions) or a challenge to do without a favourite daily food.
- ✓ What foods would students miss most?
- ✓ What did people do to replace foods or ingredients they couldn't obtain?
- ✓ How would this deprivation affect people's physical and mental health?
- ✓ What is the poster above about? Create a propaganda poster such as this one shown to encourage people to be mindful of best use, rationing or substituting certain foodstuffs.
- Since the 1940s and the concept of teenagers in particular, music and fashions have often gone hand-in-hand just as they did for the zazous and swing kids. Choose a trend or time period e.g. the 80s and create a multi-



media presentation of music and fashions to share, with information and visuals.

Related resources

Flamingo Boy – Michael Morpurgo

Beyond Belief – Dee White

True Life stories:

[Remembering the Genocide of the Roma: A Booklist from the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh](#)

Useful Links

[Memoir de Geurre](#) [a wealth of information]

[France And The German Occupation Period](#)

[1940-1944, Paris During the Occupation: The Untold Story of the German Soldiers](#)

['Vive Paris' - the Liberation of Paris in 1944 \(original news report\)](#)

[Child Memories from the Occupation and Liberation of Paris](#)

[How the Hitler Youth Turned a Generation of Kids Into Nazis](#)

[Les Zazous – Je Suis Swing \(various artists\)](#)

[The Zazous- 1940-45](#)

[Zazous And The Collaborationist Press In Occupied Paris, 1942](#)

[Le phénomène zazou](#)

[In Nazi-Occupied Paris, Swing Kids had their own Resistance Movement](#)

[The Gestapo](#) [Brittanica]

[A Guide to Modern Youth Subcultures](#)

[Blending Words & Images for Sketchnotes](#)

Film:

[Swing Kids](#) [1993]

[And the Violins Stopped Playing](#) [1988] {2:03.42 mins YouTube}

ABOUT THE BOOK

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Tony Thompson grew up in Toronto, Canada. He attended Trent University where he hosted his own radio show, wrote short stories and drove a 1969 Buick Skylark. After he collected his degree, he headed overseas for a short trip that has now lasted more than 25 years. His CV includes stints as a gravedigger, a music journalist and an English teacher at a water village in Brunei Darussalam. These days, he lives in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales. He plays tenor saxophone with great enthusiasm.

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