

# CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE®

## SPIES: MATA HARI

### TEACHERS' DISCUSSION GUIDE: GRADE 5–8

#### BEFORE READING

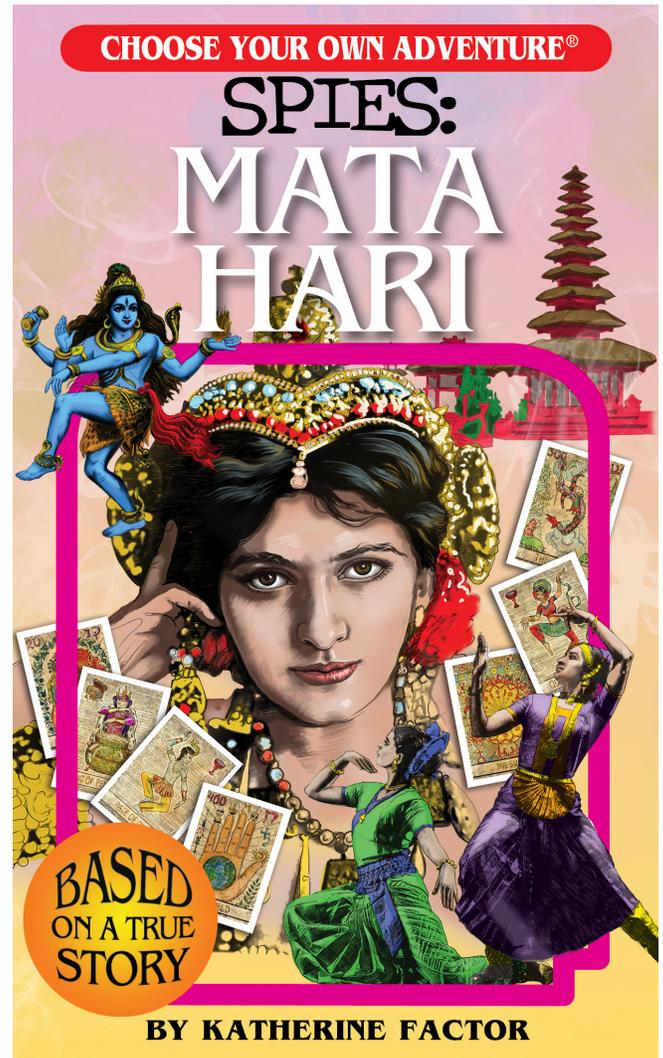
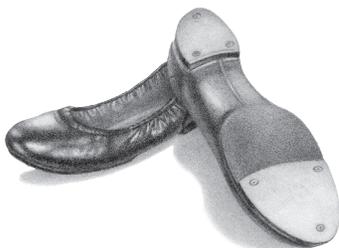
##### Overview on Historical Fiction

- Define “historical fiction” in your own words.
- How does historical fiction combine imagined elements and real historical events?
- When you read historical fiction, do you prefer to learn about things from the past or to think about how things might have ended up if historical events had gone a different way?
- What is the value of learning about history through fiction rather than from a textbook?
- How do writers help us imagine the past?

##### Background on Mata Hari

Margaretha Zelle, best known by her stage name “Mata Hari,” lived during the First World War, which lasted from 1914–1919. Consider the following questions:

- What roles did women have during this time?
- Who were the main historical figures who influenced the outcome of World War I?



ISBN: 978-1-937133-32-0

The life and spy activity of Mata Hari is explored in *Choose Your Own Adventure SPIES: Mata Hari*. Before reading, have students do some quick research (10–15 minutes) and put together a PowerPoint on what they learn about Mata Hari. After reading, have the students go back through and add a slide for each new fact they learned.

# A TIMELINE OF WORLD WAR I AND MATA HARI:

Review the timeline below and discuss in small groups. Assign one of the following events to each group. Have each group research their event and explain why it played an important role in world history.

**1913** The Balkan Wars end, leaving Europe in a state of political unrest as the Ottoman Empire loses the majority of its territory in Europe.

**1914 June 28** – Archduke Franz Ferdinand, prince of Austria-Hungary, is assassinated by a Serbian. This is perceived by Austria-Hungary and Germany as an early act of war.

**July 28** – Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia.

**July 29** – Russia begins mobilizing its troops, supporting Serbia.

**August 1** – Germany declares war on Russia.

**August 3** – Germany declares war on France and invades Belgium.

**August 4** – Because of the invasion of Belgium, Great Britain is prompted to declare war on Germany. US President Woodrow Wilson declares that the United States will stay out of the war.

**September 5–12** – The Battle of the Marne: The advancing German army is stopped by the British and French before they reach Paris. Four years of trench warfare begins.

**October 19–November 22** – The Allies (the coalition of nations that oppose Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire) defeat the Germans at the First Battle of Ypres.

**November 2** – The British begin a naval blockade against Germany.

**November 11** – The Ottoman Empire declares war on the Allies.

**1915 February 4** – The Germans begin to use submarines against Allied merchant ships surrounding Great Britain.

**May 7** – The *Lusitania*, a luxury British passenger ship, is sunk by a German submarine. 1,198 civilians are killed. The international outrage at this event contributes to the United States joining the war against Germany.

**October 14** – Bulgaria declares war on Serbia.

**1916 February 21** – The Battle of Verdun begins between France and Germany.

**1916 May 31** – The Battle of Jutland is fought between Britain and Germany in the North Sea. This is the largest naval battle of the entire war.

**Summer** – Mata Hari agrees to spy for France.

**July 1** – The Battle of the Somme begins. By the end, one million soldiers have been wounded or killed.

**December** – The Battle of Verdun concludes with a French victory.

**1917 January 19** – The British intercept the Zimmerman Telegram in which Germany attempts to convince Mexico to join the war. As a result, the United States finally declares war on Germany.

**February 13** – Mata Hari is arrested in Paris.

**March 8** – The Russian Revolution begins.

**March 15** – Tsar Nicholas II of Russia is removed from power.

**April 6** – The US enters the war against Germany.

**July 24** – Mata Hari is put on trial and accused of spying for Germany.

**October 15** – Mata Hari is executed.

**November 7** – The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, overthrow the Russian government.

**December 17** – The Russians leave the war with a peace agreement.

**1918 January 8** – President Woodrow Wilson issues his Fourteen Points, a statement of principles to be used for peace negotiations in order to end the war.

**March 21** – Germany launches the Spring Offensive in an attempt to defeat the Allies before reinforcements from the United States can be deployed.

**July 15** – The Second Battle of the Marne begins.

**August 6** – The Second Battle of the Marne ends with a victory for the Allies.

**November 11** – Germany agrees to an armistice and the fighting stops.

**1919 June 28** – The Treaty of Versailles is signed by Germany and World War I officially comes to an end.



## BEFORE READING: THEMES AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

After reviewing the timeline of World War I, discuss the following questions.

- What were the causes of World War I and what was the lasting impact (human, economic, and geographic) on the United States, Europe, and the rest of the world?
- Why did the United States enter World War I? Do you think this was the right decision?
- What was life like for civilians, and how was that different from the lives of those fighting in the war?
- What is the definition of equality? How has that definition changed over time? How does gender play a role in equality and/or inequality?

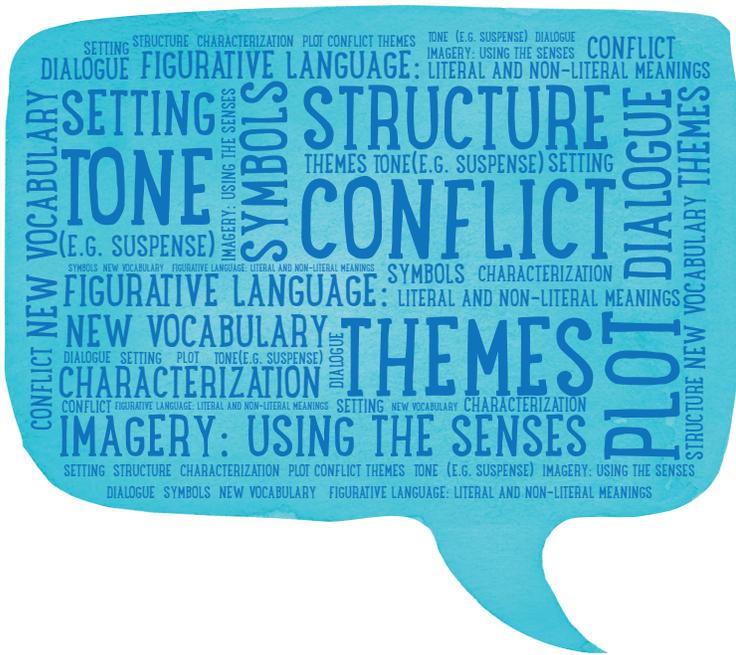


## WHILE READING: KEEP A READING JOURNAL

In this *Choose Your Own Adventure SPIES* book, you will have the opportunity to “step into the shoes” of people from the past and learn about their personal barriers and accomplishments during World War I. As you read the adventures you will have the opportunity to alter your life’s path and change your fate by following different parts of the book. As you make personal choices on where to go, keep a Reading Journal. Write down the choices you make and how this affects the outcome of your journey. As in real-life situations, you can always learn from your mistakes. If you decide to change your trajectory by reading a different passage, go ahead and turn back time! This is your story... YOU are Mata Hari!



# AFTER READING: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



7. Could you relate to Mata Hari? What did you have in common? How do you differ?
8. Track a few of the main characters in the story. Where did these characters end up as the plot unfolded? Did any characters appear in only one story line? Which character(s) appeared in more than one story line?
9. Discuss the main themes from the book, as listed below; then choose three other themes that the author draws on in the story.
  - Courage
  - Magic
  - Friendship
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

1. Discuss the text structure and how it influences the story.
2. Explain the unexpected events or “twists” in the plot as you chose to change direction in the story.
3. How does author Katherine Factor use real details from the past to show us what life was like during the First World War?
4. What visual elements does illustrator Chloe Niclas use in the book? How do specific illustrations and images contribute to the meaning and tone of the story?
5. Who are the main characters in the story? What were their roles in World War I? Which characters are fictional and which characters are real historical figures?
6. How was your (Mata’s) first choice meaningful to the story? Think about how the story might have been different if written as a linear (noninteractive) narrative.



10. Which events were less realistic than others? How does magic play a role in the book?
11. How does Katherine Factor create suspense? Humor? Action?
12. Which parts of the book were fictional, and which were real historical events? How can you tell which is which?
13. How can we understand moments in history by “stepping into the shoes” of people from the past? What new things did you learn about history from this book that you didn’t know about before?
14. Track all of the places that YOU travel to in the book. Which countries does each story line take you to? What was life like for women during this time in these different parts of the world?
15. What does Mata Hari learn in the spy training camp?

## AFTER READING: FURTHER DISCUSSION

- Create a list of historical characters from the story who were involved in World War I. How did the fictional characters differ from the historical figures?
- Compare and contrast the 1900s to present day. What has changed? What has remained the same? What role might you have played during this time period? What role would have been outside of your reach?
- How does Mata Hari change throughout the book? Describe the changes from the beginning of the story to your ending. What did YOU, as Mata, learn?
- What made Mata Hari a good spy? What, if anything, made her a bad spy?
- Mata Hari was able to speak many different languages. Which language do you think would have been most helpful to know if you were going to be a spy during World War I?
- What is a “double agent”? How was Mata Hari a double agent? Are all spies double agents?
- What roles did women play on the front lines? Create a list of ways in which women influenced the war.
- Research the dances mentioned in the book. In what ways did Mata Hari use dance as a means of survival?
- How did Mata Hari influence the outcome of World War I?
- What was the role of mysticism in this book?
- Explore the use of explosives in World War I. Were explosives used in wars previously? How did new technology transform combat?
- Research the equipment that is used in the book. How did submarines, zeppelins, and ocean vessels play a role in the war?



- Research a character from *Choose Your Own Adventure SPIES: Mata Hari*. Find a partner who researched a different character and describe to one another what you each learned from your character’s struggles and accomplishments.
- When you got to “The End” for the first time, what happened from start to finish? Compare and contrast with a partner who ended up at a different ending than you did.
- Go back and read through different story lines. After you get to “The End” again, think about what your favorite outcome was.
- Compare and contrast two books from the *CYOA SPIES* series on their approaches to historical perspectives, personal obstacles, and historical events. Consider: *Choose Your Own Adventure SPIES: James Armistead Lafayette*.

## CONDUCT FURTHER RESEARCH ON WORLD WAR I & THE KEY CHARACTERS FROM THE BOOK

- Who was Margaretha Zelle (or “Mata Hari”)? How was she limited by her gender? How did she test the boundaries of gender?
- What did Mata Hari accomplish as a spy? Think about how spies operate outside of the rest of society. How was she able to do this?
- What impact did World War I have on Asian countries? What was life on Bali like before and after World War I?
- How did World War I affect the lives of women and people of color back at home? How did it affect the government and various industries?



- How did women’s rights change during World War I? How did this differ from country to country?
- What were some of the problems that arose due to millions of men leaving home? How did women’s roles change during this time? What aspects of their lives stayed the same after wartime?
- What was life like for women who were close to the front lines?
- What types of struggles have women faced throughout history? What issues do women still struggle with today? Do women face different issues in different countries?

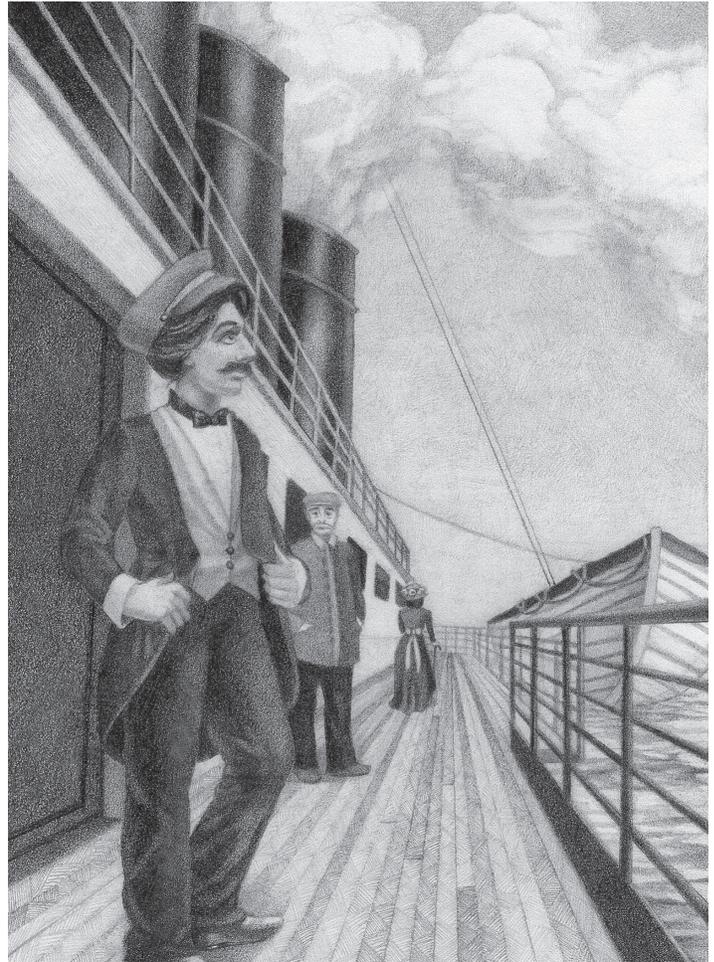
## AFTER READING: ACTIVITIES

1. Create a PowerPoint presentation on one of the following topics:

World War I marked the end of the Belle Époque. What was the Belle Époque? Why did it end? What was the role of women during this period? Explore the change in art, fashion, and literature during and after the Belle Époque.

Trace the role of women during the war in Europe and other countries around the globe from 1914 to 1918. Discuss what women were allowed to do before, during, and after the war.

Research one of the famous historical figures mentioned in *Choose Your Own Adventure SPIES: Mata Hari*. Research their life in detail, paying attention to the role they played in World War I.



2. Mata Hari was able to transmit secret messages during the war using a code. With a partner, create a secret code and then present it to the class, explaining how it works.
3. Dance is important to Balinese culture. Research a traditional dance from a different country with a partner and present the dance to the class, with an explanation of its cultural significance.
4. Write a short story about one of the ways in which the outcome of World War I would have been different had Mata Hari not been a spy.
5. Research one of the ships mentioned in *Choose Your Own Adventure SPIES: Mata Hari*. Draw or create a three-dimensional diagram of this ship, labeling the different parts. Pay special attention to where people from different social classes would have traveled on this ship.

# CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE®

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Katherine Factor** grew up in Galesburg, Illinois. Raised by a professor and a textile artist, reading and creativity were encouraged. Libraries and teachers and a children's theater also fostered her early love of research, the imagination, and storytelling. She is a graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy, Grinnell College, and the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

To learn more, visit [kfactorwrites.com](http://kfactorwrites.com)

Twitter: @katherinefactor

Instagram: katherine\_factor



