

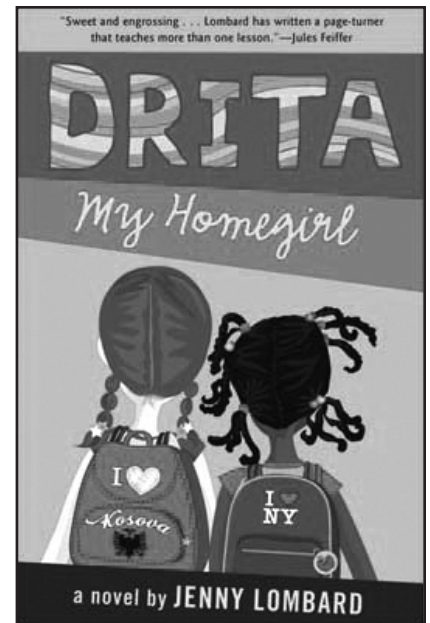
Based on

Drita My Homegirl

By Jenny Lombard

About the Book:

Drita and Maxie are two very different girls from two very different worlds. Drita and her family are refugees from Kosovo. They came to America to escape their war-torn country. They left their home with only the clothes on their backs and moved into an apartment in New York City. Drita's family faces many challenges in their new life. Her mother is having a difficult time adjusting, and Drita desperately wants to make friends in her new school. Her first new friend is Maxie, an African-American girl born and raised in New York City. She lives with her grandmother and her father. Her mother died three years ago, yet she has told none of her friends at school. The two girls appear to have little in common on the surface, but as Maxie prepares a report on Drita's experiences, they both learn about each other. They learn that although they are different on the outside, they have a lot in common on the inside. They become homegirls.



Set the Stage:

Use the following to get the students ready to read:

- Use a world map to show students the location of Kosovo and New York City.
- Discuss with students the difficulties facing Kosovo. Discuss the conflict between the Serbians and the Muslims in that nation.
- Ask students about first impressions. How do they form first impressions when they meet new people?

Review:

After reading the book, discuss the following:

- Why do the chapters alternate between Drita's point of view and Maxie's point of view?
- How does Drita's family feel about being reunited?
- How does Drita's family feel about the apartment that her father rented? How does their new home compare to their house in Kosovo? Which family member is affected the most by these changes in living conditions? How do you know?
- What is the biggest worry that Drita has as she enters her new school?
- What does Maxie think about Drita when she first arrives in class?
- How is Drita's new school different from the one she attended in Kosovo? Which would you prefer to attend? Why?
- Why do you think Drita's mother stays in her room and sleeps all the time?
- Have you ever moved? If so, explain how you felt. If not, explain how you think you would feel.
- What was Maxie afraid to share with her friends? What does Maxie do so that she will not have to share her feelings with others? What do you do if you do not want to share something?
- Why did Maxie and Drita's teacher pair them for a project? What does each girl gain from working on the project together?
- How are Maxie and Drita alike on the inside?
- What lessons can you take away from the book about relating to people who are different from you?

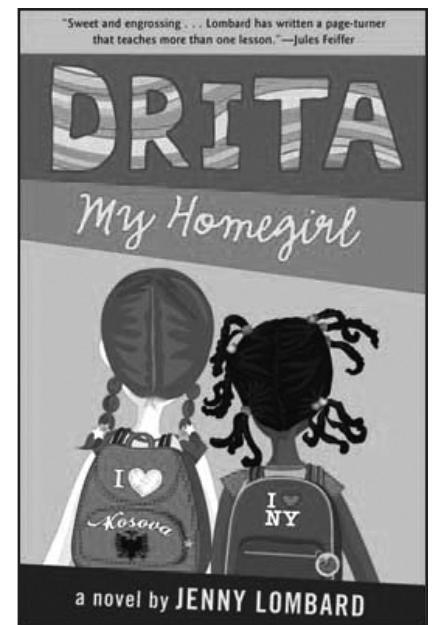
Student Activity (found on the last page of this PDF):

In this activity, the students will use a graphic organizer to compare/contrast Drita and Maxie. The graphic organizer will then guide the students in completing an essay about Drita and Maxie.

Related Activities:

To extend students' enjoyment of the book, try these:

- **A Diary of a Young Girl:** Have students prepare five diary entries that Drita might have made when she lived in Kosovo. Have the students describe what her life at home and school might have been like. Also have them include her feelings about her life.
- **Comfort Food:** Drita's grandmother prepared *byrek me mish*, a traditional dish from their country. This seems to rouse Drita's mother from the couch. Her mother said, "I remember the smell from my childhood." Have students prepare and bring to class food that is traditional or important to their family. Have them prepare a recipe card to accompany the food. Invite the parents to attend and share a feast together.
- **Invite an Immigrant:** Ask students if anyone in their circle of family and friends has immigrated to the United States. Invite several of these people to the class to share their experiences. Have students prepare questions ahead of time.
- **Where Did You Come From?:** Have students ask their parents about their family's country of origin. Then have students prepare a project about that country. The project should include a short report and a poster about the country's important geographic and cultural characteristics. Display the poster in the classroom as a way of celebrating and highlighting multicultural appreciation.

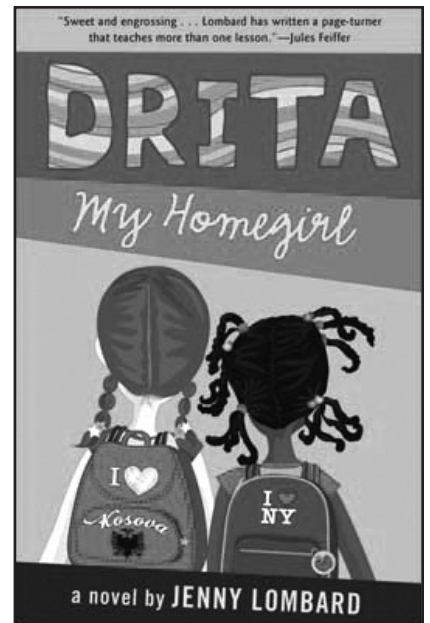


Name _____

Different Worlds

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Directions: Fill in the chart below with information about Drita and Maxie. Use the chart to complete an essay comparing / contrasting Drita and Maxie.



	Drita	Maxie
Birthplace		
Father		
Mother		
Grandmother		
Siblings		
Religion		
Home		