

## Night by Elie Wiesel

### Literature Set Teaching Guide

*This set includes several supplemental texts that provide context and background information to support students as they read *Night*. The embedded notes and questions in the texts deepen students' understanding of the Holocaust and key events of World War II. Students will also analyze and draw conclusions from a variety of sources, including images and a speech by Wiesel.*

Target Grades & Subject(s): Grades 8-12; English/Language Arts, History

#### Learning Objectives

- Students will summarize sources to understand the causes of World War II and events leading to the Holocaust. (CCSS RI.2, WH.05)
- Students will analyze propaganda from Nazi Germany to understand prominent attitudes and beliefs from the time period. (CCSS RI/RH.1, RI/RH.7)
- Students will synthesize information from different sources to describe the conditions and abuses that prisoners faced in Nazi concentration camps. (CCSS RI.1, RI.2)

Texts in this Set (download texts [here](#))

Text 1: Elie Wiesel dies at 87; Nobel Peace Prize laureate & renowned Holocaust survivor (5 pages)	
<p><b>Passage Summary:</b> Holocaust survivor and author, Elie Wiesel, was a highly-regarded advocate for human rights. This article, written after Wiesel's death on July 2, 2016, provides a brief overview of his life and accomplishments.</p> <p><b>When &amp; How to Use:</b> Assign this text before students begin reading <i>Night</i> to help students learn about the author. Encourage students to note significant events in Wiesel's life and look for further details about these events as they read the book.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on the article, how did Wiesel's experiences during the Holocaust impact the rest of his life?</li> <li>- Why did Wiesel write <i>Night</i>? Do you think he'd be surprised that it's so widely read today?</li> </ul>
Text 2: Causes of World War II (3 pages)	
<p><b>Passage Summary:</b> This text describes some of the key causes of World War II. Students will learn how the economic and political instability following World War I contributed to the rise of Hitler's regime.</p> <p><b>When &amp; How to Use:</b> Introduce this text before students begin reading the book to provide context about the time period. Ask students to think about what the international community could have done to prevent Nazi Germany from gaining power.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How was WWII related to WWI?</li> <li>- Based on the text, do you think World War II could have been prevented? Why or why not?</li> <li>- Why did totalitarian leaders gain so much power?</li> </ul>
Text 3: The Impact of Nazi Propaganda (2 pages)	
<p><b>Passage Summary:</b> This text explains how propaganda was used by the German Nazi Party to acquire and maintain power, and to spread antisemitic beliefs. It includes several examples of Nazi propaganda.</p> <p><b>When &amp; How to Use:</b> Have students read this text and review the examples of propaganda presented after reading chapter 1 of <i>Night</i> -- after the people of Sighet start hearing stories of Jewish persecution in other parts of Europe.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you think propaganda like the examples you analyzed affected Wiesel's family?</li> <li>- What rhetorical strategies did Nazi propaganda use? How is this similar to or different from ads we see today?</li> </ul>

Text 4: Concentration Camps: Tattoos (1 page)	
<p><b>Passage Summary:</b> As students read this brief text they will learn about the procedures that many prisoners had to go through when they first arrived at a concentration camp.</p> <p><b>When &amp; How to Use:</b> Students should read this text after finishing chapter 3. Use this text to introduce the concept of dehumanization in the camps.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How did SS officers view Jews?</li> <li>- Compare and contrast Wiesel's account to the registration process described in this text.</li> <li>- How do you think the registration procedures impacted prisoners?</li> </ul>
Text 5: Survival in Hiding (3 pages)	
<p><b>Passage Summary:</b> This text includes diary entries from a Jewish boy whose family was forced into hiding during World War II.</p> <p><b>When &amp; How to Use:</b> Have students read this text after they have read chapter 4 and understand more about life in concentration camps. Ask students to compare and contrast what hiding Jews experienced to Wiesel's experience in the camp.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Question:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In chapter 1, the Wiesels' former maid offers them a hiding place in her town, but the family refuses. Based on what you've learned about life in hiding and the concentration camps, do you think they made the right decision?</li> </ul>
Text 6: Josef Mengele (3 pages)	
<p><b>Passage Summary:</b> This informational text provides biographical information about Josef Mengele, a Nazi doctor who worked in concentration camps. It also describes the medical experiments that took place at the Auschwitz concentration camp.</p> <p><b>When &amp; How to Use:</b> Have students read this text after they have read chapter 5, and learned about the "selection" process and Dr. Mengele's role in the camp. Use this text to continue the discussion of how Jews were dehumanized in concentration camps.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you think Nazi Germany justified the types of experiments Mendele did on Jewish prisoners?</li> <li>- Can you think of groups of people that are dehumanized in today's society?</li> </ul>
Text 7: Liberation of Concentration Camps (1 page)	
<p><b>Passage Summary:</b> This brief text describes the conclusion of World War II and the conditions of concentration camps and their prisoners as they were liberated by Allied forces.</p> <p><b>When &amp; How to Use:</b> Assign this text before students read chapter 8 to help students learn about the final months of the war. Encourage students to consider what the final days at the camps might have been like for prisoners.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How is Wiesel's account of liberation similar to or different from this historical overview?</li> <li>- Do you think Allied forces were surprised by what they found at concentration camps? Why or why not?</li> </ul>
Text 8: The Perils of Indifference (6 pages)	
<p><b>Passage Summary:</b> In this speech, delivered by Elie Wiesel in 1999, he describes some of his experiences during the Holocaust and the consequences of indifference.</p> <p><b>When &amp; How to Use:</b> Use this text after students have finished reading <i>Night</i> to generate discussions about what lessons we can learn from the Holocaust today.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- According to Wiesel, what are the consequences of acting indifferently toward others?</li> <li>- Compare and contrast Wiesel's views and tone in this speech to his views and tone in <i>Night</i>.</li> <li>- What examples of indifference have you seen in today's society?</li> </ul>