

**Holocaust  
Summer Reading Guide  
*Night***

**Please note:** I picked this book for your summer reading because I want you to first encounter the study of the Holocaust through the eyes of Elie Wiesel. His survivor's account, *Night*, is a powerful and gripping story of injustice, survival and faith. This and *The Diary of Anne Frank* were the two books that I read as a young person that shaped my interest and study of the Holocaust. My hope is that Wiesel's words will deepen your own interest in this study of the Holocaust and encourage you to be a voice against genocide.

*"The obligation Elie Wiesel feels to justify his survival of a Nazi concentration camp has shaped his destiny. It has guided his work as a writer, teacher, and humanitarian activist; influenced his interaction with his Jewish faith; and affected his family and personal choices. Since World War II, Wiesel has borne witness to persecution past and present. He has sought to understand humankind's capacity for evil, halt its progress, and heal the wounds it has caused."*

**This is a guide to assist you in your reading of this book. You are not required to turn in responses to the study guide. Extra credit will be given if you submit typed written answers to the questions below. There are three parts to the study guide, quotes & art, review questions & discussion questions.**

**Ms. Jenny McConnell**

**Quotes and Holocaust Art**

- I. **Highlight six quotes in the text and match these quotes to artwork done by David Olere <http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/holocaust/art.htm> You can work on this as you read through the book and answer the questions below.**

**Review Questions**

- II. **ANSWER THE FOLLOWING READING QUESTIONS.**
  1. Describe Wiesel's community at the beginning of the story. How does young Elie view the world and his place in it?
  2. What are some incidents that suggest or foreshadow the coming danger to the Sighet Jews? Why doesn't the community believe it is in danger?

3. What is your reaction to Moché the Beadle? What do you think about his treatment by the villagers after his return from Poland?
4. What are the conditions on the Jews' train journey? How do the Jews react to Madame Schächter's behavior? What does this reveal about human nature?
5. Even though it was 1944, and Nazi extermination of Jews had begun years earlier, the Sighet Jews had very few facts about it. Do you think it is possible in today's world for a community to know so little, to be so unprepared?
6. When he arrives at Auschwitz and then at Buna, Wiesel describes scenes he will never forget. Choose one and explain its significance.
7. Describe the conditions first at the Birkenau reception center, then at Auschwitz, and later at Buna. How does Wiesel's relationship with his father change during this time?
8. What events lead to the two hangings Wiesel describes? How does Wiesel feel about his evening meal after each hanging? What do his reactions suggest about how he is changing?
9. What are some ways that Wiesel and the other Jews at the camps try to observe their religion? How Wiesel's feelings about God changed since his captivity have begun?
10. In the camps, Wiesel must struggle to stay alive and to remain human. In your opinion, how well does he succeed with his struggles?
11. There are several discussions about resistance by the prisoners. Why do you think there was no large scale effort to resist?
12. Why do Wiesel and his father leave Buna? How do they respond to the circumstances of the forced march?
13. What happens between Rabbi Eliahou and his son? What does Wiesel's reaction to this incident reveal about his relationship with God?
14. How does Wiesel treat his father during the journey to Buchenwald and later during Chlomo's illness? How does Wiesel's link to his father affect his will to survive? Given their life or death situation, do you believe Wiesel's attitude toward his father was understandable? Explain your reactions.

### Discussion questions

**III. Write a response to the following prompt, or be prepared to discuss this in class. (written response required for extra credit)**

1. Wiesel believes that remembering the Holocaust will help to ensure that this type of atrocity does not occur in the future. Do you think learning about historical events can guide people to behave differently? Explain.
2. What would you say if you could talk to him about this time in his life? What would you want him to explain to you?
3. Select one portion of narration in *Night* and comment on how it “paints a dark and angry picture of human nature.” What circumstances in the memoir allow for this darker side of human nature to emerge?