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Sample

Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Night

by Elie Wiesel

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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Night

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. provide support from the text that will demonstrate that a major theme in this book is that man's inhumanity to man has no limit.
2. state the significance of the title and point out what the word symbolizes.
3. write an essay in which comments and incidents from the book are used to support this generalization:
"A major theme in this novel is a boy's loss of innocence in a world he thought good and a loss of faith in a God he thought just."
4. recognize the cunning of the SS methods that, coupled with the human need to feel optimistic in the face of danger, led the Jews of Sighet to cooperate in their own destruction.
5. point out how the writer's style and use of irony in this narrative is unlike the style found in most first-person memoirs.
6. identify the following literary devices and point out how the author uses them:
 - simile
 - metaphor
 - personification
 - paradox
 - irony
 - foreshadowing
7. point out how the author uses symbols and imagery to convey ideas and images to the reader.
8. relate those aspects of the Holocaust that you have not known about previously.
9. recognize how a survivor of the Holocaust can be irrevocably changed by witnessing such horrific events.
10. infer from the text where the author believes that the guilt and responsibility for the Holocaust lies.
11. analyze the characters of Eliezer, Moishe the Beadle, Juliek, and Eliezer's father and their relationships to each other.
12. analyze character dialogue to guide interpretations of a character's thought process.

Night

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Why do you think no one would listen to Moishe the Beadle's story?
2. There were several opportunities for Wiesel and his family to escape before they were sent to Auschwitz. What were these opportunities, and why did the family not take advantage of them?
3. Define irony, and discuss Wiesel's use of it in the first chapter of *Night*. What message is he trying to convey about the Jews' attitude, and how does his use of irony help him get his message across?
4. Define foreshadowing. Discuss Wiesel's use of foreshadowing in Chapter Two regarding Mrs. Schächter.
5. In Chapter Three, Wiesel says, "For the first time, I felt anger rising within me. Why should I sanctify His name?...What was there to thank Him for?" What is beginning to happen to the young religious scholar?
6. How would you describe Wiesel's style of writing? How does it affect the pace of the book?
7. Wiesel witnessed two hangings. After the first, he says, "I remember that on that evening, the soup tasted better than ever..." After the second execution, that of the young boy, "the sad-eyed angel," he writes, "That night, the soup tasted of corpses." It is unlikely that the soup's flavor differed greatly from day to day. What point is Wiesel making by comparing the two executions with the flavor of the soup?
8. On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, Wiesel says that he "felt very strong...stronger than this Almighty." Why does he say this? How is this a paradox? How have his experiences in the camps changed his views about his faith?
9. What do many of Wiesel's stories about camp life reveal about man's nature in the face of such overwhelming horror?
10. Discuss the symbolism and significance of the title, *Night*.
11. On one level this is a story of a young man's loss of faith. How does Wiesel illustrate that loss of faith throughout the book?

Night

Chapter 1

VOCABULARY

antechamber – a smaller room serving as an entrance into a larger room

billeted – to be quartered or lodged, especially in reference to troops

ghetto – an area of a city which contains and restricts a certain portion of the population; the Jews of various Eastern European cities were forcibly relocated into cordoned-off areas of the city where overcrowding, starvation, and forced labor were the norm. The ghettos were eventually destroyed, as Jews were deported to the death camps.

Hasidism – the ultra-orthodox branch of Judaism that teaches the individual to raise every action in life to the level of prayer

Kabbalah – the body of mystical teachings based on esoteric interpretations of ancient Hebrew scriptures

Miklós Horthy (1868-1957) – ruler of Hungary from 1920-1944; he initially enacted harsh laws against the Jews of Hungary but later rejected German pressure to deport Jews. Horthy was exiled after Germany took over Hungary.

[Moses] **Maimonides** (1135-1204) – a Spanish-born physician, philosopher, and religious scholar who fled to Egypt to escape anti-Semitism in Spain

Passover – a holiday celebrating the Jews' freedom from slavery in Egypt

phylacteries – small leather boxes containing strips of parchment inscribed with quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures used by Orthodox and Conservative Jewish men during worship

Red Army – the Soviet Russian army; Russia was one of the Allied powers (Britain, Free France, and the U.S.) during World War II.

Talmud – the codified body of Jewish civil and religious law including commentaries on the Torah

Torah – the first five books of the Old Testament of the Bible

waiflike – like a forsaken or homeless child

1. Who is Moishe the Beadle?

3. What has happened to Mrs. Schächter, and what does she do?

4. Mrs. Schächter’s hysterical screaming of “Fire! I see a fire!” is an example of what literary device?

5. How does this affect those in the cattle car with her?

6. When the prisoners are finally unloaded from the train, where are they?

5. What “gift” do the Germans have for the prisoners for the New Year?

6. The head of Eliezer’s block gives some words of advice to the prisoners. What does he say?

7. When Wiesel’s number is not written down for selection what joke does his friend make?

8. What does the head of the block, called a Blockälteste, tell everyone after the selection process is over? Why does he say this?

9. Several days later, some of the prisoners are told that they are not to report to work, but must stay in camp. Who are these prisoners? What is to become of these men?

10. What does Eliezer’s father give to Eliezer, and what does Eliezer call it?
