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## Literature Teaching Unit

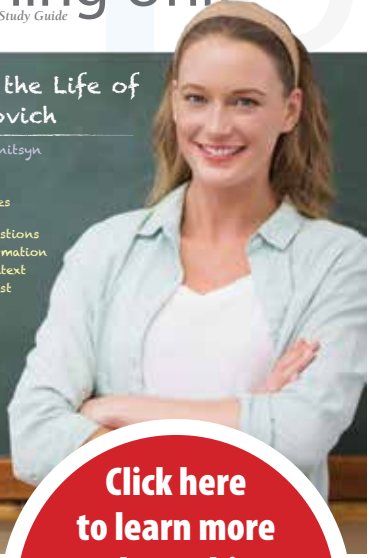
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



### One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

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



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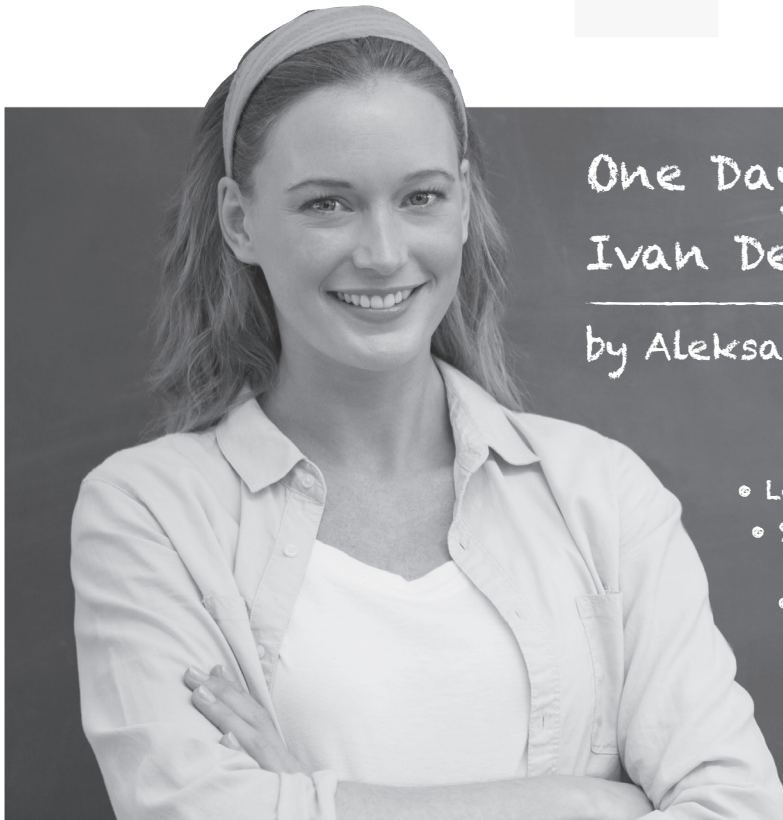
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Item No: 300806

# One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

## Objectives

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

1. recognize the different third person narration and identify when the narrator is
  - third person: Shukhov.
  - third person: omniscient.
2. relate incidents in the narrative that illustrate Shukhov's rules for survival as a prisoner:
  - Prisoners do not lick each other's leftovers.
  - Prisoners do not rely on doctors.
  - Prisoners must maintain their dignity.
  - Prisoners should eat slowly, savoring each mouthful.
  - Prisoners must endure hardships without protest.
  - Work and pride in one's work is necessary.
  - A good squad leader means life.
3. discuss the following: Shukhov, because of his rules to live by, is sometimes described as a "Hemingway code hero," one who believes that while life is absurd and without meaning, man must live with dignity and exhibit grace under pressure.
4. contrast Shukhov's view of religion to Alyosha the Baptist's view.
5. comment on the political atmosphere in Stalinist Russia.
6. discuss the sun as a symbol for freedom.
7. discuss the following use of language:
  - metaphor
  - simile
  - sensory imagery
8. recognize and point out the following literary devices:
  - stereotyping
  - foils
9. discuss the local superstitions found in the story.

# One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

## Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. List some other examples from literature in which the hero endures hardships with dignity because he or she cannot overcome them.
2. Review the use of third-person narrative in this novel. Locate and discuss shifts in narrative perspective.
3. State Shukhov's rules for survival and explain how the most important survival rules relate to the main theme in the story.
4. How do you suppose Shukhov's life compares to the life of ordinary Russian citizens during Stalin's rule? Would Shukhov's rules for survival be necessary for them?
5. Discuss the writer's use of sensory detail to help the reader experience the Siberian cold and the desperate, harsh life of a prisoner.
6. Explain how Alyosha's and Shukhov's views of religion differ; discuss how these two views affect their life in camp and their respective chances for survival.
7. Point out the ways in which life in the camp is a microcosm of Soviet life under Stalin's rule. Consider who the inmates are, where they are from, and the camp rules.
8. Describe the dramatic and symbolic purposes of the sun in this novel.
9. Define and point out examples of metaphors and similes in the novel.
10. By referring to incidents and comments in the text, show that the following are themes in the book:
  - People need hope, even when they have no power to change their situation.
  - To understand another's suffering, it is important to have suffered oneself.
  - It is possible to get a sense of satisfaction from doing quality work, despite bad working conditions.
11. Why do you suppose the author chooses to present just one day in the life of a prisoner, rather than a year or several years in his life?
12. Given that life in the camp represents life for every citizen in Soviet society, what are the faults that the author finds with Communist regimentation?

# One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

## Section One: Morning Activities

### Vocabulary

**allocating** – distributing  
**audibly** – easily heard  
**bedraggled** – shabby-looking  
**begrudge** – to resent sharing  
**conspicuous** – openly visible  
**culprits** – people responsible for wrongdoing  
**dispensary** – a medical room  
**dossier** – a personal file  
**excrement** – feces  
**exempt** – to leave out  
**grits** – cooked cereal grain  
**hodge-podge** – a mess or confused mixture  
**imperiously** – arrogantly; in a manner that shows off power  
**imperturbable** – calm  
**indifferent** – uncaring  
**infirm** – ill, unable to work  
**infringing** – violating  
**ingenuously** – naively  
**intravenous** – through a vein  
**latrine** – a toilet  
**lenient** – not too harsh or strict  
**makeshift** – improvised  
**murky** – unclear  
**perfunctorily** – without much energy or concern  
**plaited** – braided  
**putrid** – foul-smelling, rotting  
**reveille** – a loud song used to wake people in the military or in prison  
**scurvy** – a disease resulting from vitamin deficiency  
**sheepskin** – a long coat  
**shinnied** – climbed  
**totted up** – totaled

1. Who is Shukhov? Why does he never oversleep?

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26. Explain the brief shift in narration that occurs when Buinovsky protests.

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27. Why are the prisoners searched before they can leave camp for their work assignments?

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28. Find a quotation to support the following statement:

Shukhov is trying to survive in the prison camp even though he does not think he will ever be free again.

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29. Why does Buinovsky get ten days in the guardhouse? Could he have avoided the punishment?

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30. Why are the guards so careful when counting the prisoners?

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31. Contrast Shukhov and Buinovsky.

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5. What is "Ustizhma, 1944"?

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6. How does Pavlo decide who gets the two extra bowls of oatmeal Shukhov has helped to steal?

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7. Find a quotation to support the following statement: Shukhov's idea of heaven is a warm room.

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8. What reward does Shukhov get for taking Tsezar's oatmeal to the office? What does he find on his way back to work?

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9. Define "Kulak." Why was Tiurin thrown out of the army?

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10. What convinces Tiurin of God's existence?

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