



GUIDED READING *The Holocaust*

Section 3

A. Clarifying As you read about the Holocaust, use the following questions to help summarize information in this section.

1. Who? Who were the victims of the Holocaust? Who were members of the “master race”?	
2. What? What were the Nuremberg Laws? What happened on the night of November 9, 1938? What was Hitler’s “final solution”?	
3. Where? Where did German Jews try to migrate to find safety from Nazi terror? Where were Jews forced to live in German-controlled cities? Where were the concentration camps?	
4. Why? Why did Hitler believe that Jews and other “subhumans” had to be exterminated? Why did the Germans build extermination camps?	
5. When? When did the final stage of the Final Solution begin?	
6. How? How did non-Jewish people try to save Jews from the horrors of Nazism? How many Jews died in the Holocaust?	

B. Summarizing On the back of this paper, define the following terms:

Holocaust

Aryans

ghettos

genocide



Section 3

PRIMARY SOURCE from *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank

Anne Frank was a German Jewish girl who fled with her family to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to escape Nazi persecution during World War II. She and her family hid for two years in a secret place Frank called the Annex. While hiding in the Annex, Frank kept a diary she addressed as Kitty. What does this diary entry reveal about the challenges of everyday life in the Annex?

Monday Evening, November 8, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

If you were to read all my letters in one sitting, you'd be struck by the fact that they were written in a variety of moods. It annoys me to be so dependent on the moods here in the Annex, but I'm not the only one: we're all subject to them. If I'm engrossed in a book, I have to rearrange my thoughts before I can mingle with other people, because otherwise they might think I was strange. As you can see, I'm currently in the middle of a depression. I couldn't really tell you what set it off, but I think it stems from my cowardice, which confronts me at every turn. This evening, when Bep [Bep and Miep are secretaries who work in the building] was still here, the doorbell rang long and loud. I instantly turned white, my stomach churned, and my heart beat wildly—and all because I was afraid.

At night in bed I see myself alone in a dungeon, without Father and Mother. Or I'm roaming the streets, or the Annex is on fire, or they come in the middle of the night to take us away and I crawl under my bed in desperation. I see everything as if it were actually taking place. And to think it might all happen soon!

Miep often says she envies us because we have such peace and quiet here. That may be true, but she's obviously not thinking about our fear.

I simply can't imagine the world will ever be normal again for us. I do talk about "after the war," but it's as if I were talking about a castle in the air, something that can never come true.

I see the eight of us in the Annex as if we were a patch of blue sky surrounded by menacing black clouds. The perfectly round spot on which we're standing is still safe, but the clouds are moving in on us, and the ring between us and the approaching danger is being pulled tighter and tighter. We're surrounded by darkness and danger, and in our desperate search for a way out we keep bumping into each other. We look at the fighting down below and the peace and beauty up above. In the meantime, we've been cut off by the dark mass of clouds, so that we can go neither up nor down. It looms before us like an impenetrable wall, trying to crush us, but not yet able to. I can only cry out and implore, "Oh, ring, ring, open wide and let us out!"

Yours, Anne

*from Anne Frank, Susan Massotty, trans., *The Diary of a Young Girl* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 144–145.*

Research Options

1. Writing Expository Paragraphs Find out more about the life of Anne Frank. What had her life been like before World War II? With whom did she live in the Annex? What happened to her during the war? Write a short magazine article to report your findings.

2. Visual, Audio, and Multimedia Sources Locate and view the movie *Diary of Anne Frank*. Then, with classmates, share your reactions to the film's depiction of Frank's life in the Annex. Do you think it was important that Frank kept a diary to record her experiences?

Excerpt from *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Definitive Edition* by Anne Frank, edited by Otto H. Frank and Mirjam Pressler, translated by Susan Massotty. Copyright © 1986 by Anne Frank-Fonds, Basle/Switzerland, for all texts of Anne Frank. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

**CHAPTER
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Section 3
**LITERATURE SELECTION from *Night*
by Elie Wiesel**

Elie Wiesel was born in the region of Transylvania (now part of Romania) in 1928. During World War II, he and his family were taken by the Nazis and sent first to the Auschwitz concentration camp, and then to Buchenwald. Wiesel was the only member of his family to survive the Nazi camps. Night, written in 1958, is an autobiographical novel that provides an unforgettable description of the horrors of the Holocaust through the eyes of a 14-year-old Jewish boy. As you read this excerpt, think about the boy's reactions to his first night at Auschwitz.

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed.

Never shall I forget that smoke.

Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky.

Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever.

Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live.

Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes.

Never shall I forget those things, even were I condemned to live as long as God Himself.

Never.

The barrack we had been assigned to was very long. On the roof, a few bluish skylights. I thought: This is what the antechamber of hell must look like. So many crazed men, so much shouting, so much brutality.

Dozens of inmates were there to receive us, sticks in hand, striking anywhere, anyone, without reason. The orders came:

"Strip! Hurry up! *Raus!* Hold on only to your belt and your shoes . . ."

Our clothes were to be thrown on the floor at the back of the barrack. There was a pile there already. New suits, old ones, torn overcoats, rags. For us it meant true equality: nakedness. We trembled in the cold.

A few SS officers wandered through the room, looking for strong men. If vigor was that appreciated, perhaps one should try to appear sturdy? My father thought the opposite. Better not to draw attention. (We later found out that he had been right. Those who were selected that day were

incorporated into the Sonder-Kommando, the Kommando working in the crematoria. Béla Katz, the son of an important merchant of my town, had arrived in Birkenau with the first transport, one week ahead of us. When he found out that we were there, he succeeded in slipping us a note. He told us that having been chosen because of his strength, he had been forced to place his own father's body into the furnace.)

The blows continued to rain on us:
"To the barber!"

Belt and shoes in hand, I let myself be dragged along to the barbers. Their clippers tore out our hair, shaved every hair on our bodies. My head was buzzing; the same thought surfacing over and over: not to be separated from my father.

Freed from the barbers' clutches, we began to wander about the crowd, finding friends, acquaintances. Every encounter filled us with joy—yes, joy: Thank God! You are still alive!

Some were crying. They used whatever strength they had left to cry. Why had they let themselves be brought here? Why didn't they die in their beds? Their words were interspersed with sobs.

Suddenly someone threw his arms around me in a hug: Yehiel, the Sigheter rebbe's brother. He was weeping bitterly. I thought he was crying with joy at still being alive.

"Don't cry, Yehiel," I said. "Don't waste your tears . . ."

"Not cry? We're on the threshold of death. Soon, we shall be inside . . . Do you understand? Inside. How could I not cry?"

I watched darkness fade through the bluish skylights in the roof. I no longer was afraid. I was overcome by fatigue.

The absent no longer entered our thoughts. One spoke of them—who knows what happened to them?—but their fate was not on our minds. We

were incapable of thinking. Our senses were numbed, everything was fading into a fog. We no longer clung to anything. The instincts of self-preservation, of self-defense, of pride, had all deserted us. In one terrifying moment of lucidity, I thought of us as damned souls wandering through the void, souls condemned to wander through space until the end of time, seeking redemption, seeking oblivion, without any hope of finding either.

Around five o'clock in the morning, we were expelled from the barrack. The Kapos were beating us again, but I no longer felt the pain. A glacial wind was enveloping us. We were naked, holding our shoes and belts. An order:

"Run!" And we ran. After a few minutes of running, a new barrack.

A barrel of foul-smelling liquid stood by the door. Disinfection. Everybody soaked in it. Then came a hot shower. All very fast. As we left the showers, we were chased outside. And ordered to run some more. Another barrack: the storeroom. Very long tables. Mountains of prison garb. As we ran, they threw the clothes at us: pants, jackets, shirts . . .

In a few seconds, we had ceased to be men. Had the situation not been so tragic, we might have laughed. We looked pretty strange! Meir Katz, a colossus, wore a child's pants, and Stern, a skinny little fellow, was floundering in a huge jacket. We immediately started to switch.

I glanced over at my father. How changed he looked! His eyes were veiled. I wanted to tell him something, but I didn't know what.

The night had passed completely. The morning star shone in the sky. I too had become a different person. The student of Talmud, the child I was, had been consumed by the flames. All that was left was a shape that resembled me. My soul had been invaded—and devoured—by a black flame.

So many events had taken place in just a few hours that I had completely lost all notion of time. When had we left our homes? And the ghetto? And the train? Only a week ago? One night? *One single night?*

How long had we been standing in the freezing wind? One hour? A single hour? Sixty minutes? Surely it was a dream.

Not far from us, prisoners were at work. Some were digging holes, others were carrying sand. None as much as glanced at us. We were withered trees in the heart of the desert. Behind me, people were talking. I had no desire to listen to what they were saying, or to know who was speaking and what about. Nobody dared raise his voice, even though there was no guard around. We whispered. Perhaps because of the thick smoke that poisoned the air and stung the throat.

We were herded into yet another barrack, inside the Gypsy camp. We fell into ranks of five.

"And now, stop moving!"

There was no floor. A roof and four walls. Our feet sank into the mud.

Again, the waiting. I fell asleep standing up. I dreamed of a bed, of my mother's hand on my face. I woke: I was standing, my feet in the mud. Some people collapsed, sliding into the mud. Others shouted:

"Are you crazy? We were told to stand. Do you want to get us all in trouble?"

As if all the troubles in the world were not already upon us.

Little by little, we all sat down in the mud. But we had to get up whenever a Kapo came in to check if, by chance, somebody had a new pair of shoes. If so, we had to hand them over. No use protesting; the blows multiplied and, in the end, one still had to hand them over.

I had new shoes myself. But as they were covered with a thick coat of mud, they had not been noticed. I thanked God, in an

improvised prayer, for having created mud in His infinite and wondrous universe.

Suddenly, the silence became more oppressive. An SS officer had come in and, with him, the smell of the Angel of Death. We stared at his fleshy lips. He harangued us from the center of the barrack:

"You are in a concentration camp. In Auschwitz . . ."

A pause. He was observing the effect his words had produced. His face remains in my memory to this day. A tall man, in his thirties, crime written all

***I too had become a different person. . . .
All that was left was a shape that resembled me. My soul had been invaded—and devoured—by a black flame.***

over his forehead and his gaze. He looked at us as one would a pack of leprous dogs clinging to life.

"Remember," he went on. "Remember it always, let it be graven in your memories. You are in Auschwitz. And Auschwitz is not a convalescent home. It is a concentration camp. Here, you must work. If you don't you will go straight to the chimney. To the crematorium. Work or crematorium—the choice is yours."

We had already lived through a lot that night. We thought that nothing could frighten us anymore. But his harsh words sent shivers through us. The word "chimney" here was not an abstraction; it floated in the air, mingled with the smoke. It was, perhaps, the only word that had a real meaning in this place. He left the barrack. The Kapos arrived, shouting:

"All specialists—locksmiths, carpenters, electricians, watchmakers—one step forward!"

The rest of us were transferred to yet another barrack, this one of stone. We had permission to sit down. A Gypsy inmate was in charge.

My father suddenly had a colic attack. He got up and asked politely, in German, "Excuse me . . . Could you tell me where the toilets are located?"

The Gypsy stared at him for a long time, from head to toe. As if he wished to ascertain that the person addressing him was actually a creature of flesh and bone, a human being with a body and a belly. Then, as if waking from a deep sleep, he slapped my father with such force that he fell down and then crawled back to his place on all fours.

I stood petrified. What had happened to me? My father had just been struck, in front of me, and I had not even blinked. I had watched and kept silent. Only yesterday, I would have dug my nails into this criminal's flesh. Had I changed that much? So fast? Remorse began to gnaw at me. All I could think was: I shall never forgive them for this. My father must have guessed my thoughts, because he whispered in my ear:

"It doesn't hurt." His cheek still bore the red mark of the hand.

"Everybody outside!"

A dozen or so Gypsies had come to join our guard. The clubs and whips were cracking around me. My feet were running on their own. I tried to protect myself from the blows by hiding behind others. It was spring. The sun was shining.

"Fall in, five by five!"

The prisoners I had glimpsed that morning were working nearby. No guard in sight, only the chimney's shadow . . . Lulled by the sunshine and my dreams, I felt someone pulling at my sleeve. It was my father: "Come on, son."

We marched. Gates opened and closed. We continued to march between the barbed wire. At every step, white signs with black skulls looked down on us. The inscription: WARNING! DANGER OF DEATH. What irony. Was there here a single place where one was *not* in danger of death?

The Gypsies had stopped next to a barrack. They were replaced by SS men, who encircled us with machine guns and police dogs.

The march had lasted half an hour. Looking around me, I noticed that the barbed wire was behind us. We had left the camp.

It was a beautiful day in May. The fragrances of spring were in the air. The sun was setting.

But no sooner had we taken a few more steps than we saw the barbed wire of another camp. This one had an iron gate with the overhead inscription: ARBEIT MACHT FREI. Work makes you free.

Auschwitz.

Discussion Questions

Clarifying

- How were prisoners treated when they first arrived at the concentration camp?
- What choice did the SS officer give the newly arrived prisoners?
- Drawing Conclusions** Based on this passage, why do you think Wiesel called his book *Night*?



RETEACHING ACTIVITY *The Holocaust*

Section 3

Determining Main Ideas Choose the word that most accurately completes each sentence below. Write that word in the blank provided.

ghettos	Final Solution	SS
genocide	<i>Kristallnacht</i>	Holocaust
concentration camps	Poland	Communists
Austria	Star of David	Nuremberg Laws
Nazis	Auschwitz	

1. Political party in Germany that proclaimed that Aryans were a “master race”:

2. Term that refers to the systematic mass killing of Jews and other groups judged to be inferior:

3. 1935 laws that deprived Jews of their rights to German citizenship and forbade marriages between Jews and non-Jews:

4. “Night of Broken Glass” in Germany when Nazi stormtroopers attacked Jewish businesses, homes, and synagogues:

5. Segregated areas in certain cities into which Jewish people were herded:

6. Symbol Jews in German-controlled areas were forced to wear for identification:

7. Hitler’s term for his long-term program for the Jews:

8. The systematic killing of an entire people:

9. Acronym for Hitler’s elite security force:

10. Locations where Jews were taken as prisoners:

11. The largest of the extermination camps:

12. Country that had the highest number of Jews killed during the Holocaust: