

***Night*, by Elie Wiesel**

Night Response Paper: About 650 Words / 4-6 Paragraphs

For, in the end, it is all about memory, its sources and its magnitude, and of course, its consequences. For the survivor who chooses to testify, it is clear: his duty is to bear witness for the dead and for the living. He has no right to deprive future generations of a past that belongs to our collective memory. To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.”
(Wiesel. Preface xv)

Recently, school boards across the country and state departments of education have moved to ban books and materials from public schools that they believe contain material that is inappropriate for students to see. Much of this material has to do with marginalized groups in America, who have a history of experiencing discrimination in this country. For example:

- The banning by the McGinn County School Board in Athens, Tennessee of the the graphic novel [Maus, by Art Spiegelman](#), which is about his father’s experience in Auschwitz
- The banning of a new [Advanced Placement African American Studies](#) course by Ron DeSantis, the governor of Florida, and the Florida State Board of Education.
- The banning from at least 29 school districts across the country of [George M. Johnson’s young-adult memoir All Boys Aren’t Blue](#) for its LGBTQ+ content and for being sexually explicit.

You can use the sets of questions below to as paragraph topics to organize your essay:

What do you think about government agencies banning texts or courses that portray the harms that people have suffered from hatred and discrimination that is still present in American society?

From Elie Wiesel’s *Night*, discuss at least three examples of inhumane acts that are disturbing to read. Do you think that it is important for you as students to know that these things happened, and that it was possible for humans to perpetrate such horrors on others, even those in their own community? Why is it important to know this in your own life?

Do you think it is important for students in America to learn about the harms America has perpetrated on Native Americans, African Americans, and other minority groups, and gay people, through unjust laws and practices?

What might be the fears of American citizens who want to ban books and curriculum that teach uncomfortable truths? Do you think these truths are divisive or damaging?

What might be the consequences of *not* teaching this history? Why does Elie Wiesel claim in the preface to *Night* that “To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive?” Do you agree?

**How was the Holocaust possible? Why is it important not to forget the Holocaust?
Is hatred innate to humans? Can we overcome hatred and prejudice?**

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Read the following sections and respond to questions for each. If you wish, you may substitute any chapter for the ones listed. Then, answer the paragraph responses on the bottom. Provide a Work Cited page for the book.

Preface (p. xiv - xv):

Write Down a Short Quote or Fact:

What is your reaction to what happened? How does this show a destruction of identity, family, community, or faith? What does it tell you about human behavior?

Chapter 3 (p. 29-46):

Write Down a Short Quote or Fact:

What is your reaction to what happened? How does this show a destruction of identity, family, community, or faith? What does it tell you about human behavior?

Chapter 5 (p. 66-84):

Write Down a Short Quote or Fact:

What is your reaction to what happened? How does this show a destruction of identity, family, community, or faith? What does it tell you about human behavior?

Chapter 8 (p. 104-112):

Write Down a Short Quote or Fact:

What is your reaction to what happened? How does this show a destruction of identity, family, community, or faith? What does it tell you about human behavior?

Paragraph Responses: Write a short paragraph to answer each question.

- 1) Why did Elie Wiesel write this book? Include the book title and author's name.
- 2) Explain how the Nazis tried to destroy the humanity of the Jewish people by eliminating identity, family, faith, and community. Use your above examples in your writing to illustrate your point.
- 3) Explain how trauma brought on by racism, violence, and abuse can affect our society. How can we overcome this injustice and fight to prevent violence in our community?

Include a Work Cited reference in MLA format: You can cite your book in ZoteroBib.com by typing in the ISBN number, often found on the back of a book or right after the title page of a book: The ISBN number for this book is: 978-0-3 74-50001-6

Essay Prompt: How was the Holocaust possible? How did the Nazis systematically try to erase the value of Jewish people in order to commit genocide? Why is it important not to forget the Holocaust? Is hatred innate to humans? Can we overcome hatred and prejudice?

The total length of your response should be between 700 and 1000 words. Use our discussion of events in the novel and your own research to shape your answers to the questions in the prompt.

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Organization: To structure this essay, consider the organization suggested below. Each point might be more than one paragraph. Use supporting examples from *Night*, and from your own experiences and research. Be sure to **cite the book, and all sources in a works cited page** at the end of the essay.

Introduction: Why did Elie Wiesel write *Night*? Why did he write a memoir about an experience most people wanted to forget? Why is it so important never to forget? How does the memoir illustrate how quickly civilization can fall to inhumane genocide? What was taken away from the Jewish people in the Holocaust? What did the Nazis strive to annihilate, more than human beings? By remembering the dead, how does this memoir also serve the living? How does it reveal the power of the human spirit to survive?

Write Separate Paragraphs: Discuss the things the Nazis tried to destroy, as related by Wiesel in the memoir: humanity, family, religion, community, self-identity. Describe **separate** specific events or people in the book in each paragraph, and explain how the author uses these to support the main points of his book. Cite page numbers with just the number in parentheses after your **description** of the event in the book. (Avoid using quotes more than one sentence in length. Paraphrase events instead.)

Conclusion: Explain why this memoir continues to be an important document for our world. From articles you have read, or from your own research or experience, how does racism, violence, and hate hurt all of society? What can we do to stop racism, violence, and hate in our own communities?

Works Cited page in MLA format. (Use Zotero Bib). Cite all your sources and the book. You can cite your book by typing in the ISBN.

Terms in *Night*

Holocaust: Complete annihilation; in the Bible it means a burnt offering of an animal as sacrifice, and was initially translated into Middle English from the Hebrew as holocaust. Note capitalization for reference to the genocide of Jews and other minorities during World War II.

shoah: In the Bible, this Hebrew word is used to mean ruin, wasteland and catastrophe.

Kapo: Usually fellow Jewish prisoners put in charge of discipline in the camps, turning inmates against each other.

Blockälteste: The Block leaders, these could also be prisoners.

Appelplatz: Roll Call, where sometimes selections for the gas chambers took place.

Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Passover: Important Jewish holidays. Look these up if you don't know what they are.

Pipel: In concentration camps, an attractive male child who was controlled and favored by the Kapos.

Night Suggested Readings:

Preface vii-xv

Chapter 1: Page 1

Page 3: Signet

Moishe the Beadle: No one believes him

Evacuation

Father cries, Tzipora's red coat, the Ghetto

Chapter 2: Page 23

Page 23 Transport to Auschwitz

Mrs. Schachter's fire / Beating

Chapter 3: Page 29

Page 29: Auschwitz and separation from mother / Birkenau

Lie about their ages

Page 32: Babies in the fire

Page 34: Main quote

Naked and running. Work Makes You Free. Tattoos

Chapter 4: Page 47

Page 47: Buna

Musicians, Bible teeth

Jews beating each other and father

Eli whipped

Page 63: Boy hanged, "pipel" hanged

"God"?

Chapter 5: Page 66

Page 66: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Why Bless God?

Page 69: Yom Kippur. What is God to you? What are we without spiritual life?

Page 77: Only faith in God saves the rabbi

Chapter 6: Page 85

Page 85: Evacuations to Gleiwitz

Trampled while running, Rabbi's son abandons his father, Julie and the violin

Tossing the dead from the train, father and son fighting for bread, death

Chapter 7: page 98

Father and sons fighting over bread

Chapter 8: Page 104

Page 104: Buchenwald

Page 110: Father beaten by prisoners. No such thing as a father.

Evacuation and Liberation by resistance. Death of father

Chapter 9: Page 113

Page 115: Liberation. A corpse in the mirror.

Read Elie Wiesel's Nobel Acceptance Speech 1986: Page 117

References to Martin Luther King Jr.

Page 120: "There is so much to be done"

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Vocabulary Night: Write part of speech, definition and a sentence for each word.

1. annihilate (v)
2. austere ()
3. automaton ()
4. cauldron ()
5. conflagration ()
6. convalescent ()
7. crematorium ()
8. demented ()
9. deportee ()
10. depot ()
11. deprivation ()
12. dissipate ()
13. elusive ()
14. emaciated ()
15. excruciating ()
16. harangue ()
17. immense ()
18. imprudent ()
19. inflection ()
20. innate ()
21. legacy ()
22. liquidate ()
23. meager ()
24. meditate ()

- 25. plod ()
- 26. profane ()
- 28. ration ()
- 27. radiant ()
- 29. reminisce ()
- 30. retrospect ()
- 31. shroud ()
- 32. transcend ()
- 33. usurp ()