Bibliographic Citation:

Intended Audience:

*Night*, by Elie Wiesel is a novel 9th grade students should be exposed to, although 8th grade and up could potentially cover the novel. Mainly the book would be used for mainstream and inclusive classrooms of 9th grade English classrooms. As well, based upon class dynamic, *Night* could be taught delicately to 8th grade mainstream/inclusive students. *Night* covers important topics surrounding genocide and the Holocaust that could easily be read and discussed to follow the theme of a class designed for the Holocaust or Jewish History, perhaps for 10th or 11th grade students.

In the ideal situation of mainstream 9th grade students, *Night* would be used for whole-class study. Students in high school could use the novel for individual study or small-group work; middle school students should have the teacher’s guidance. Topics to be covered/explored with students through discussion: The Holocaust, Anti-Semitism, Euthanasia, The Eugenics Movement, Judaism as a religion/lifestyle, Homosexuals, Acceptance of Cultures, other victims of the Holocaust, etc. All of these topic areas are enriching for each pupil’s individual and social growth. The topics will all cover themes including death/loss, faith, survival, hate, loss of innocence, perseverance, etc. Students will connect with the personal tragedies of the author as well as outside potential discussion using outside literature/resources.
**Brief Summary:**

A young Jewish boy from Sighet, Transylvania gives you his personal experience of being cast to and surviving a Nazi concentration camp. Elie, the narrator tells of the horrific sights he experiences; from the furnaces, torture, selections, hangings, etc. Early on, Elie and his father are separated from his mother and sisters. Although his family was broken, Elie holds on to his father and continues with a strong will to survive the experience of living in a concentration camp. The young teen travels from Auschwitz to Buchenwald and endures the emotional and physical abuse that the Nazi soldiers readily disperse among the Jewish prisoners.

**Relationship of Book to Program:**

Ideally, students would be working with the teacher for a few months before introducing a book with the serious content level of *Night*. Since there is serious subject material to be discussed it is best that the class be respectful of one another and comfortable enough to engage in serious discussions. Perhaps right after winter break; students would have time to get to know one another and return to familiar faces with a fresh start into the second part of the year. *Night* will be introduced with a little background on the history of the Holocaust, lead into a student journal response for students to begin critically thinking and connecting, and then lead into a full class discussion on the day students begin reading the novel. The book would be read in and outside of class by students but students will also have to choose an additional novel relating to one of the discussion topics for a personal book. Concluding the novel students will take a comprehensive test for overall assessment but students will also have to write an essay concluding the unit linking their outside chosen novel to an approved aspect of the novel *Night*. 
Ideally students will have an overall greater respect/understanding for the impact of the Holocaust and a greater sense of acceptance. Students, who could personally relate to the Holocaust or other issues discussed along with the novel, can share insights with the rest of the class that could help unknowing students gain an insight to the Holocaust.

**Teaching Objectives:**

The novel is a well-written, descriptive recollection that allows an introverted look to the truths of how Nazi concentration camps were run. Although the material is descriptive and sometimes hard to handle, it is a truthful recollection of history that students should study and understand.

**Insight to the Holocaust:** Students will gain an overall understanding of the history of the Holocaust and how it impacted many Jewish lives today through the reading of the novel and classroom activities. As well, students will research their individual topic areas further while researching for their individual unit paper. Some assessment on the overall knowledge of the history will be shown through class discussion/engagement, small quizzes/exit slips, or included on the comprehensive test covering the novel *Night*.

**Critical Reading:** Students will gain critical reading experience by engaging in small and large group reading. Worksheets, journaling, discussion topics and hands-on coinciding activities with the novel will help students gain a fuller comprehension for the novel and strengthen individual reading skills.

**Composition Experience/Practice:** Students will compose descriptive and expository writing to show their understanding of the novel and multiple forms of composition. Journaling will allow students to explore their thoughts and understanding of the novel and should not be graded but
rather used for completion/participation based grades. However, when students engage in researching, organizing, and compiling information to form comprehensive expository writing, they should be graded upon a pre-determined rubric. I would advise students have a rough draft due a week or two before the final copy with one or two classes between designed for class editing and teacher conferencing. Student will work individually and collaboratively to gain insights on class topic choices, editing skills, and socialization skills.

**Suggested Student Activities and Assignments:**

**Journal Entries:** Journal entries will be completed at the beginning of class after an initial discussion topic. Depending upon the day of the unit, the journal entries should be used to engage students and have them begin to critically think about the upcoming topic or discussion. As well, by having student complete a journal they have material in front of them to share throughout class activities/discussion and it is a completion based assignment that can earn students participation credit. Potential topics: What does the Holocaust mean to you? Explain. Do you know anyone who has experienced such loss and suffering as Elie? Who? Why should literature like *Night* be taught to American society? If you disagree, why?

**Quizzes/Exit Slips:** Short quizzes or exit slip questions can serve as a quick assessment tool to who is completing the expected reading and who is not; or those who do not comprehend the literature. Quizzes should be short; three to five questions involving short answer and fill in the blank over the expected reading for that class. As well, exit slips at the end of class serve as a good reflective tool for students and can help aide in assessment of class engagement with the material, understanding of discussion topics, and further insight to class questions covering
subject material. Exit slips can be used for students to pose questions/concerns about class material/discussion for further planning.

**Rough Draft:** The rough draft will be used for the teacher’s way of assessing student improvement as well as making sure students have chosen appropriate topic choices. Topic choices should be left up to the students but should be submitted and approved by the teacher prior to handing in rough drafts. Drafts should be assessed upon completion and following a few guidelines; the paper must relate their individual novel to *Night* by Elie Wiesel using citations where necessary to strengthen their argument/position, be 4-6 pages in length, MLA format, and include complete bibliographic citations for any outside materials used. The rough draft should be worth 30 points, the two editing workshops will both count as 10 points each and the final paper will be worth 50 points.

**Final Paper:** The final paper will show what level of insight students gained and understand about the Holocaust and surrounding topics. The final paper will have the requirements of the rough draft as well as more detailed rubric based on the 6+1 trait grading system; conventions, ideas & content, organization, sentence fluency, voice, and word choice.

**Potential Problems with the Work:**

*Night* contains mature language and a description of happenings during the Holocaust and the effects the Holocaust continues to have on Jewish society. There are issues of death and loss that the main character experiences as a young teen that may be troublesome for some students to emotionally handle. However the graphic details of the Holocaust portray a truthful, first-hand experience of the tragic concentration camps. Students should be exposed to and taught to deal
with the emotional feelings and insights behind studying the Holocaust to prevent a society that raises intellects without the knowledge of mistakes.

Collection of Information About Night:

The following journals are all pro-teaching Night, by Elie Wiesel; their citations conclude each article. The first article is from August 3, 2006 and disputing about how Utah schools are not allowed to discuss the Holocaust and how teachers in the community feel that the Holocaust should be studied. The article discusses how education in Utah is pressing to teach the Holocaust for multiple benefits stated in the article. The second article is from April 25, 2006 and discusses how a teacher used Night in addition with other novels covering the Holocaust to teach and see improvement in the at-risk students. The Tulsa article discusses how the students could relate to the “survivors of intense violence” from the Holocaust, connected to the literature, and improved academically in the process. The last article discusses teaching tolerance and how important it is for teachers to diffuse myths of the Holocaust in a pursuit to teach the truths behind the Holocaust. It goes into how a teacher wrote to Elie and collected Holocaust materials from traveling around and collecting videos and books to enhance the teaching of the Holocaust. As well, the article spoke about a “resource pool” for teacher that was being compiled of scholars and Holocaust survivors who engage in school presentations/speeches.
Utah public schools are not required to tell students about the annihilation of European Jews during World War II, or even mention the Holocaust.

Nonetheless, a State Office of Education survey shows all Utah school districts teach about the Holocaust in some manner. But the amount of time spent, means of instruction and age at which students are introduced to Holocaust-related topics varies greatly across the state.

Now, the State Board of Education is contemplating the establishment of requirements and guidelines for Holocaust instruction. Seventeen states have passed legislation regarding Holocaust instruction and many states have recommendations regarding curriculum. The board will discuss the matter Friday.

Robert Austin, USOE’s social studies specialist, said the informal survey he conducted in Utah mirrored findings from a national study: Instruction regarding the Holocaust is widespread in schools, but students spend more time exploring books such as The Diary of Anne Frank than learning about the Holocaust from history teachers.

Kellie Richins, who teaches English to Lehi High School’s junior classes, has her students spend about five weeks each year studying the book Night, by Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. To beef up historical background for the book, Richins teams with assistant principal Mari Braithwaite, who has a degree in history.

Richins won a Holland-Knight Foundation fellowship and just returned from Washington, D.C., where she studied the Holocaust with Wiesel and other Holocaust survivors.

Her experience in Washington, and her years in the classroom, have taught her that helping students learn about the Holocaust does more than inform them about past events.

"The reason I feel so passionate about teaching it is because you can see the seeds of what started the Holocaust all around us," she said. "You see kids intolerant because other kids don't dress the same, don't have as much money or they are not the same religion. [Studying the Holocaust] helps kids to identify their prejudices, and their tendencies to label others and make bad judgments. Then we can prevent something like the Holocaust from ever happening again."

There are pitfalls to be avoided in teaching about the Holocaust, she said. In past years, some of her students have felt frustrated by their perception that Holocaust victims did too little to defend themselves.

"I caution them not to be critical," she said. "They can't completely understand the situation these people were in."

Richins avoids making stereotypical generalizations regarding actions and motivations of either
Germans or Jews, and uses discretion when showing period photographs and films.

"I don't really think it's always necessary to show the most graphic pictures for students to understand the horror that took place," she said.

Austin is not surprised language arts teachers devote more time to Holocaust studies than history teachers do.

"History teachers in Utah are hard-pressed to cover so much historical material that it is difficult to go into depth on topics like this," he said. "Language arts teachers can work on literacy skills, story skills and research skills that are part of the language arts curriculum, and still focus more depth on this topic."

The Holocaust Memorial Museum recommends that students be in at least seventh grade before they learn specific information about the more grisly aspects of state-sponsored genocide, Austin said. Some Utah schools approach the topic in upper elementary grades, often through fictional books such as Lois Lowry's novel Number the Stars.

State school board member Teresa Theurer said a letter that questioned why Utah had no specific requirements sparked the board's interest in Holocaust curriculum. She doesn't know whether the board will determine that more direction is needed, or what that direction might be, but those questions might be answered Friday, she said.

Austin said it won't matter. With or without involvement of the state school board or Legislature, educators "will continue to find more opportunities to provide Holocaust education," he said.

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The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum defines "Holocaust" as "the state sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945."

It says the Holocaust should be studied because it:

* Helps students understand the ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping, and teaches them to value diversity.

* Provides a context for exploring the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic and indifferent to oppression of others.

* Helps students think about the use and abuse of power, and the responsibilities of individuals and nations when confronted with civil rights violations.

* Gives students insight about how a convergence of events can cause disintegration of democratic values.

Guidelines:

* Avoid simple answers to complex history. Do not attempt to reduce Holocaust history to one or two catalysts.

* Strive for precision of language. For instance, avoid categorizing all Germans as "collaborators" or all concentration camps as "killing centers."

* Clarify the difference between primary and fictional sources.

* Avoid stereotypical descriptions of groups and nationalities.

* Be sensitive to appropriateness of written and audiovisual content.
Do not romanticize history. Overemphasis on heroic tales can cause inaccurate understanding; exposing students to the worst aspects of human nature fosters cynicism.

Some students can become intrigued with symbols of Nazi power. Help students understand how such elements can be abused and manipulated by governments to legitimize acts of terror.

Avoid gimmicky exercises, such as simulation activities that oversimplify and trivialize. Instead, use reflective writing assignments and in-class discussions to explore human behaviors such as fear, scapegoating, conflict resolution and decision-making.

Links to USHMM and other social studies resources are available on the Utah State Office of Education's Web site at http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/soc.st/general/links.html

Holocaust national essay contest

Holland-Knight, the foundation that presented the fellowship attended by Lehi High School teacher Kellie Richins, also sponsors a national essay contest that awards scholarships and weeklong trips to Washington, D.C., to high school students each year.

The 2007 essay contest will begin in October of this year with an entry deadline in late April or early May of 2007.

Complete details on the Holocaust Remembrance Project can be found at http://holocaust.hklaw.com.

LOAD-DATE: August 3, 2006

Students in a high school class took bets on how long their new, 23-year-old teacher would stay.
They made it clear they did not care what she had to say. They were labeled "at-risk" and "unteachable" by school administrators. It was 1994 in Long Beach, Calif. Racial tensions were at a boiling point, and students aligned themselves with ethnic gangs ruling their streets.

"I was overwhelmed and experienced what so many brand-new teachers go through -- the disconnect between theory and practice," Erin Gruwell said.

One day Gruwell swiped a note being passed in class and reacted angrily to the caricature of a black student. She compared it to the Nazi propaganda used against Jews during the Holocaust.

The students did not know what she was talking about.

"Here, the culture was one of prolific gangs," Gruwell said. "When you're caught up in that lifestyle, going to school, reading, writing and learning your history lessons are not on the radar."

Gruwell decided to put it on their radar. She gave them books such as "Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl," "Night" by Elie Wiesel and "Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo."

Something clicked.

Students related to these survivors of intense violence. Most had scars from guns, knives and beatings. They found parallels in their lives and of the authors'.

Each began keeping a journal of the struggles with physical and mental abuse, drugs and violence. They stayed after school, showed up on weekends for field trips and raised money to bring the woman who sheltered Anne Frank to their classroom.

The students named themselves "The Freedom Writers" after the 1960s civil rights activists, The Freedom Riders.

"At that serendipitous moment, everything became relevant," Gruwell said. "It became about how to take that moment of intolerance and make them tolerant by using examples of their own lives."

"It was not uncommon for a student to have lost one to two dozen friends and family to gang violence. One student felt like he had been living in an undeclared war zone."

The teacher chronicled her experience in "The Freedom Writers Diary -- How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them," which is being made into a movie starring Hilary Swank, Patrick Dempsey and Imelda Staunton set for release in January.

Gruwell will be the keynote speaker at the Business and Education Forum hosted by the Tulsa chapter of Executive Women International. The forum will be at 5:30 p.m. Thursday at the Reynolds Center at the University of Tulsa, 11th Street and Harvard Avenue.

"There are kids who feel different or on the outside everywhere," Gruwell said. "This is about giving them a voice, letting them be heard and having someone to listen. The stories are universal."

Her teaching style went outside any packaged curriculum and testing standards. She found books the students wanted to read and would find relevant. She let them lead the way.

"The standards of education have politicized education," Gruwell said. "I feel strongly that education is the best way to equalize the playing field. Through education, we can right wrongs.

"For me, it's more important to teach to the student and not teach to a test. By teaching students in a way that engages and empowers them, they can take any test and fly. There was accountability built into the teaching."

The 150 students in that class graduated from high school, and many pursued college degrees. Some have entered into professions of law, medicine, education and social work.
The class continues to regroup for projects such as a fundraiser in 1997 for the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., and a European trip in 1999 to visit concentration camps and Anne Frank's house in Amsterdam.

Gruwell founded the Erin Gruwell Education Project, which provides scholarships for disadvantaged students and promotes innovative teaching methods. Proceeds from the book sales go to the scholarship fund.

The Freedom Writers students often speak to community groups for the foundation, and some work for it.

Executive Women International's forum is a fundraiser for two Tulsa scholarship programs -- Adult Students in Scholastic Transition and one benefiting high school students. Last year, the group gave nearly $25,000 in scholarships in the programs.

Ginnie Graham 581-8376
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Forum at TU What: Business and education forum featuring Erin Gruwell, author of "The Freedom Writers Diary"

When: 5:30 p.m. Thursday

Where: Reynolds Center at the University of Tulsa, 11th Street and Harvard Avenue

Cost: Tickets are $10 each. For tickets, contact Marnie Knight at 249-4033 or e-mail at marnie@admiralexpress.com, or contact Jody Davis-Bergman at 251-5594 or e-mail at jodybergman@accentmoving.com.

For more: Go to www.ewitulsa.org.
KACZUR 12

BODY:

LEHI -- Kellie Richins saves letters from Elie Wiesel in the same box in which she keeps cards from her husband. The letters from the Nobel Peace Prize recipient and author, she says, are as precious to her as notes from her spouse.

Last fall, after her junior-class students at Lehi High School finished Wiesel's book, "Night," the English teacher was inspired to learn more about the Holocaust and why 11 million people -- including Jews, mentally ill, physically handicapped, those considered gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexuals -- were put to death.

"I wanted more knowledge for myself," she said, "so I could share it with my students."

Richins wrote a letter to Wiesel and invited students to do the same. He responded with two letters: one for the students, one for Richins. She now has both letters at home.

The Alpine educator also applied -- and was accepted -- to the Holocaust Remembrance Project. Richins, who had to write an essay as part of her application, attended with six other teachers and a handful of students from across the United States.

Richins was able to meet Wiesel during the July 16-22 project. She said she felt intimidated while penning her letter to him. After all, she said, his writing in "Night," which describes his experiences as a teen in the Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps during World War II, was so strong and clear.

"And then I promised him, I made a pledge for me personally, that I would never forget what the Jews had to suffer because of their religious convictions," she said. "I would do my part not to permit intolerance and not blame my problems on another race."

Wiesel responded graciously. "Your students are privileged to learn from a person with such commitment to education and memory," he wrote. "I am honored to share the teaching profession with someone like yourself."

Wiesel's letter to the six Lehi students contained comments for each of them.

One student asked Wiesel how the experience changed his Jewish faith.

"Even during those dark times, I never lost my faith in God," Wiesel wrote. "Rather, I protested against and questioned God's silence. I still believe in God but my faith is a wounded faith."

Richins went to Washington, D.C., to tour the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and visit with nine Holocaust survivors.

"(The survivors) traveled with us everywhere we went," she said. "They ate every meal with us. They each shared their own story with us. They were a wealth of information. They were right there. We could ask them anything we wanted, any time of day."

She returned to Utah with $1,500 in educational materials such as videos and books she believes will enhance teaching of Holocaust-era literature. Richins will donate some of the materials to the Alpine School District, she says, to assist other teachers.

The value of teachers traveling to receive Holocaust education is that they will obtain correct materials to diffuse myths, said Pat Drussel, a teacher at Provo's Dixon Middle School who is working with the Utah State Office of Education on Holocaust education.

They also learn about the importance of teaching tolerance, she said.
Last year, Drussel was a U.S. Holocaust Museum teacher fellow. Before that, she toured concentration camps and ghettos in Europe.

"My big push to my students is for them to have tolerance and to accept diversity," Drussel said. "And to accept all of the differences only makes us a better group of people."

Utah's core curriculum, which specifies what teachers should convey to students for each subject and grade level, does not require teachers to teach lessons about the Holocaust.

However, a survey by the State Office of Education showed that students are learning about it in social studies and literature classes.

Drussel said that she offers classes for teachers on how to present the Holocaust. Last month, for instance, she visited teachers in Cedar City.

Drussel also is compiling for teachers a "resource pool" of scholars and local Holocaust survivors who are willing to visit schools. E-mail: lhancock@desnews.com

LOAD-DATE: August 28, 2006

Collection of Supplementary Information:

**A Biographical Overview**

Elie Wiesel, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, was born in the provincial town of Sighet, Romania on September 30, 1928. A Jewish community had existed there since 1640, when it sought refuge from an outbreak of pogroms and persecution in Ukraine.

His maternal grandfather, Reb Dodye Feig, was a devout Hasidic Jew, whose influence on Wiesel was deep, and inspired him to pursue Talmudic studies in the town's Yeshiva. However his father Shlomo, who ran a grocery store, although also religious, was regarded as an emancipated Jew, open to events of the world. He insisted that his son study modern Hebrew as well, so that he could read the works of contemporary writers. And at home in Sighet, which was close to the Hungarian border, Wiesel's family spoke mostly Yiddish, but also German, Hungarian and Romanian. Today, Wiesel thinks in Yiddish, writes in French, and, with his wife Marion and his son Elisha, lives his life in English.
Life for Wiesel and his extended family changed tragically in 1943 and 1944, when Nazi Germany decided that the Jews living in the Axis nations of Eastern Europe — Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria — should share the fate of the rest of European Jewry and be transported to the death camps of Poland. Grandfather Dodye went first, when he and his three sons and their children where taken away in 1943. The following year, Wiesel's entire family, his mother, father and his three sisters, were transported with him to Poland. Only Wiesel and his two older sisters survived.

Liberated from Auschwitz - Buchenwald by the American Third Army in 1945, he was sent to France to study as part of a group of Jewish children orphaned by the Holocaust. There he was given a choice — secular studies, or religious studies. Wiesel's faith had been severely wounded by his experiences in Auschwitz and three other concentration camps. He felt God had turned his back on the Jews. But, despite his bitterness, he chose to return to religious studies:

"My only experience in the secular world," he explains, "was Auschwitz."

Sent to Paris to study at the Sorbonne after several years of preparatory schools, he became a journalist for a small French newspaper, and supplemented his meager income as a translator and Hebrew teacher. Persuaded by the distinguished French Catholic writer Francois Mauriac, he finally put down on paper the experiences he had vowed to recount only after ten years of silence. The result was "Night", an internationally acclaimed memoir that has been translated into 30 languages and has sold more than seven million copies, the income from which goes to support a yeshiva in Israel established by Wiesel in memory of his father.

Wiesel has, since then, dedicated his life to ensuring that the murder of six million Jews would never be forgotten, and that other human beings would never be subjected to genocidal homicide.

Most of the 40 books he has written since — novels, collections of essay, plays — explore the subject that haunts him, the events that he describes as "history's worst crime." Speaking, writing, traveling incessantly, he has become a spokesman for human rights wherever they are threatened — in the former Soviet Union, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo — and with the Nobel Peace Prize award established the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

Assigned to New York in 1956 as a correspondent for an Israeli newspaper, Wiesel was struck by a taxi while crossing the street and was hospitalized for months. Still a stateless person at the time, unable to travel to France to renew his identity card and unable to receive a US visa without it, he found that he was eligible to become a legal resident. Five years later, he received an American passport, the first passport he had ever had. Years later, when his then close friend Francois Mitterand became President of France, he was offered French nationality.

"Though I thanked him," he writes in his memoirs, "and not without some emotion, I declined the offer. When I had needed a passport, it was America that had given me one."

In 1978 President Carter named Wiesel to chair the President's Commission on the Holocaust, which recommended the creation of a national day of remembrance and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, both subsequently created by acts of Congress.

He has been Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at the City University of New York (1972-76), Henry Luce Visiting Scholar in Humanities and Social Thought at Yale University (1982-83), and since 1976 has occupied the Mellon Chair in the Humanities at Boston University.

Along with the Nobel Peace Prize, he has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States Congressional Gold Medal, and the Grand Croix of the French Legion of Honor.

Setting: Concentration camps throughout Germany, during World War II. Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Buna.

Background Information:

During World War II, Hitler formed many concentration camps throughout Germany and Poland. In these camps the people imprisoned, mainly of Jewish or Gypsy descent, were tortured, starved, put through horrific conditions, killed, and worked to death.

Major Characters:

Elie Wiesel- He tells his heart wrenching story of his imprisonment in Nazi Germany. He overcame the odds with his strength and will to live.

Elie's Father- He gave Elie the strength to go on without him and to save himself. He died in the 40 mile march between concentration camps in the dead of winter.

Plot Summary:

The autobiography began in 1941 with Elie and his family living in Sighet, an area in Germany. In 1944 German and Hungarian police set up ghettos where all the Jews and other religious and ethnic people were kept, and Elie and his family were basically kept captive in this area by the Gestapo. This was just until they were to be taken away to the concentration camps. When Elie and his family arrived at the concentration camp in Birkenau, he was separated from his mother and sister, whom he later found out had been killed. It was hard for him to deal with the fact that he would never see them again, and he wanted to give up. Elie almost killed himself while he was on the line waiting to get into the camp, facing the fire pits. A line straying to the left and one to the right decided his fate. If he was pointed on the right line, he would be immediately sent to the fire pit. He lied saying that he was 18, but was actually 14. When he was almost at the front of the line, he decided to throw himself at the barbed wire fence, rather than dying by fire. He changed his mind when the line suddenly shifted and he didn't have to go in the fire after all. He was relieved, but also dispirited by knowing that he would never see his mother and sister again.

Elie's father kept him going, constantly saying that they would make it, and that he should never lose his faith. Upon arriving, all the men had to give in their clothes and personal articles, and get checked physically by the SS troops to see their physical condition, and to deplete them of any confidence and privacy they had left.

They were sent off to Auschwitz where they were put to work. They couldn't say they were skilled workers, because as a result they would be separated. Elie worked in a factory, where he
met a lot of people, including a girl from France. He was separated from his father at that time. He liked Auschwitz better because it was cleaner and set up nicer than Birkenau. He had become numb to beatings by now, and had witnessed numerous hangings of his friends at the camp.

He was then sent from Auschwitz to Buna with his father. He had become accustomed to the stench of burning bodies. He injured his foot, which caused him to have an operation. After the operation, the camp was sent out to march because the Russians were coming to bomb the camps. Elie was told not to stay in the hospital because he would be killed. So, he went out with his weak father and barely healed foot to march. It was the middle of the winter, and none of the prisoners were dressed well enough. They were headed for Buchenwald, which was a forty-two mile march. They had to run for most of the time. Once they reached Buchenwald, they rested for awhile. Elie's father passed away at the camp from dysentery. Elie had to continue going on without his father. They were later liberated at Buchenwald, and Elie was one of the very few to survive.

**Themes:**

- Death
- Faith
- Hatred
- Survival
- Perseverance
- Loss of Innocence

**Key Issues:**

**Death**-- A theme which was used throughout the book. It was shown through the loss of loved ones, especially when Elie lost his entire family to the concentration camps. It was also shown through the constant torture that went on, and the putrid smell of dead bodies penetrating in the prisoner's nostrils.

**Faith** - Elie was told by his father to never lose his faith of his religion it would help him through everything, and keep him strong. At first Elie wasn't sure of his faith because if there was a God, then why did he create the situation that they were in.

**Hatred** - The Nazi's acted through hatred against the Jews, Gypsies, and many others who stood in their way. They killed and tortured for no other reason than hate. The hate prevailed over all and it took over the minds of everyone.

**Loss of Innocence** - Elie was a young boy when he was taken to the concentration camps, and he led a sheltered life. He did not realize how cruel people could be, and what far measures they would take when faced with power and death. He saw the torture, and the death of his family, which brought him great pain, but also made him grow up and face reality.

**Morals and Life Applications:**
The autobiography, *Night*, by Elie Wiesel is written proof of the real life horror that existed during the Holocaust. It is not fiction, therefore its life applications are evident. One should never lose faith or whatever guiding force that may keep them going. This faith was the only force that helped Elie to survive, and without this faith Elie would have surely succumbed to dying. Some morals of this autobiography are that life is not always fair, and people are not either. People give in to power to save themselves and protect their own lives. People will sometimes hurt others, even those close to them, if put in a life or death situation. The major purpose of this autobiography is to recount the events that took place during the Holocaust. One may think that Elie wrote his story to tell people of the great tragedy that took the lives of his family and of millions of others that were taken for no reason at all.

http://www.bellmore-merrick.k12.ny.us/night.html

Approximately 11 million people were killed because of Nazi genocidal policy. It was the explicit aim of Hitler's regime to create a European world both dominated and populated by the "Aryan" race. The Nazi machinery was dedicated to eradicating millions of people it deemed undesirable. Some people were undesirable by Nazi standards because of who they were, their genetic or cultural origins, or health conditions. These included Jews, Gypsies, Poles and other Slavs, and people with physical or mental disabilities. Others were Nazi victims because of what they did. These victims of the Nazi regime included Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, the dissenting clergy, Communists, Socialists, a-socials, and other political enemies.

Those believed by Hitler and the Nazis to be enemies of the state were banished to camps. Inside the concentration camps, prisoners were forced to wear various colored triangles, each color denoting a different group. The letters on the triangular badges below designate the prisoners' countries of origin.

Photos This photo shows a chart of the prison badges used in concentration camps.

Jews
Antisemitism was a familiar part of European political life in the 1800s. Political antisemitism was preceded by centuries of religious persecution of Europe's Jews. There is evidence as early as 1919 that Hitler had a strong hatred of Jews. As Chancellor and later Reichsführer, Hitler translated these intense feelings into a series of policies and statutes which progressively eroded the rights of German Jews from 1933-1939.

At first, the Nazis boycotted Jewish businesses for one day in April 1933. Then legislation excluded Jews from certain professions. The Nuremberg Laws created very detailed Nazi definitions of who was Jewish. Many people who never considered themselves Jewish suddenly became targets of Nazi persecution.

The world accessible to German Jews narrowed. Jews were no longer allowed to enter cinemas, theaters, swimming pools, and resorts. The publishing of Jewish newspapers was suspended. Jews were required to carry identification cards and to wear Star of David badges. On one night, Nazis burned synagogues and vandalized Jewish businesses. The arrests and murders that followed intensified the fear Jews felt. Next, Jewish children were barred from schools. Curfews restricted Jews' time of travel and Jews were banned from public places. Germany began to expel Jews from within its borders.

Germany's invasion of Poland in late 1939 radicalized the Nazi regime's policy toward Jews. Hitler turned to wholesale death of the European Jewish population. He swept Jewish populations into ghettos in eastern Europe. Simultaneously, mobile squads killed millions. The next step was to send Jews to squalid concentration and death camps. Approximately six million died for one reason: they were Jewish.

More information about Jewish victims of the Holocaust, with links to other Web sites and documentary materials.

**Roma (Gypsies)**

The Roma, a nomadic people believed to have come originally from northwest India, consisted of several tribes or nations. Most of the Roma who had settled in Germany belonged to the Sinti nation. The Sinti and Roma had been persecuted for centuries. The Nazi regime continued the persecution, viewing the Roma both as asocial and as racially inferior to Germans.

Although the Nuremberg Laws did not specifically mention them, Roma were included in the implementation of the statutes. Like Jews, they were deprived of their civil rights. In June 1936, a Central Office to "Combat the Gypsy Nuisance" opened in Munich. By 1938, Sinti and Roma were being deported to concentration camps.

The fate of the Romani peoples paralleled that of the Jews after the beginning of World War II: systematic deportation and murder. First, western European Roma were resettled in ghettos. Then they were sent to concentration and extermination camps. Many Roma in the east--Russia,
Poland, and the Balkans--were shot by the Einsatzgruppen. In total, hundreds of thousands of Sinti and Roma were killed during the Holocaust.

Further information about the Sinti and Roma, a photo, and links to other Web sites.

**Poles and Other Slavs**

It is often forgotten that Christian Poles and other Slavs, notably Ukrainians and Byelorussians, were also primary targets of Nazi Germany hatred during World War II. To the Nazis, the Slavs were considered *Untermenschen,* or subhumans, and nothing more than obstacles to gaining territory necessary for the superior German race. This philosophy is apparent in Hitler's statement, "The destruction of Poland is our primary task. The aim is not the arrival at a certain line but the annihilation of living forces...."

The combination of a Nazi genocidal policy and the Nazis' thirst for more living space resulted in disaster for Polish, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian populations. Millions of Slavs were deported to Germany for forced labor. Intelligentsia, consisting of teachers, physicians, clergy, business owners, attorneys, engineers, landowners, and writers, were imprisoned in concentration camps or publicly executed. Tens of thousands of Ukrainians were executed by mobile killing squads, or Einsatzgruppen.

Those who were sent to camps had to wear badges, of course. There was not one badge designation for Poles and other Slavs. Rather, a Polish or Slavic person was categorized as a criminal, asocial, political prisoner, and so on.

Millions upon millions of non-Jews were slaughtered in the Slavic countries.

Further information about the Nazi treatment of the Polish people.

**Political Dissidents and Dissenting Clergy**

The remnants of the Communist and Socialist parties and members of the trade unions resisted the Nazi regime. Especially in the early years of the Third Reich, political prisoners were a significant portion of the concentration camp inmates. At the end of July 1933, about 27,000 political prisoners were being held in concentration camps in "protective custody." During its twelve year existence, Dachau was always a camp for political prisoners.

In 1933, the Roman Catholic Church signed a concordat or agreement with the new Nazi government, recognizing the legitimacy of the Third Reich. The Protestant Church was united into a single Reich Church under one bishop. In September 1933, Martin Niemöller, a pastor of a fashionable church in Berlin, set up a Pastors' Emergency League which led to the formation of the anti-Nazi Confessional Church. This church wrote a memorandum to Hitler attacking the government's anti-Christian campaign, policies of antisemitism, and terrorizing tactics. Hitler
responded with a crackdown on members of the Confessional Church. Hundreds of dissenting clergy were arrested, many were imprisoned, and also executed.

**Persons with Physical or Mental Disabilities**

These people never were assigned a badge because they were rarely sent to concentration camps. Persons with physical or mental disabilities threatened the Nazi plan for human "perfection."

In 1934, forced sterilization programs sterilized 300,000 - 400,000 people, mainly those in mental hospitals and other institutions. Propaganda was distributed which helped build public support for these government policies. Persons who were mentally ill or physically disabled were stigmatized, while the costs of care were emphasized in propaganda campaigns.

In 1939, a Nazi "euthanasia" program began. This term is used as a euphemism for the Nazi plan to murder those with physical or mental defects. Unlike the sterilization program, the "euthanasia" program was conducted in secrecy. "Operation T4" was the code term used to designate this killing project.

As word leaked out about the "euthanasia" program, some church leaders, parents of victims, physicians, and judges protested the killings. Hitler ordered the end of Operation T4 in August 1941. However, the murders continued in a decentralized manner. Doctors were encouraged to kill patients with disabilities by starvation, poisoning, or injection.

**Jehovah's Witnesses**

In 1933, the Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany totaled about twenty thousand. Although their religious meetings were outlawed after the Nazi rise to power, many continued to practice their religion. In 1934, Jehovah's Witnesses attempted to fend off Nazi attacks by having congregations send letters to the government explaining their beliefs and political neutrality.

The Nazis did not tolerate the Jehovah's Witnesses' refusal, which was based on religious principles, to salute flags, to raise their arms to "Heil Hitler," or to serve in the German army. The group was banned by national law in April 1935. Those Witnesses who defied the ban on their activities were arrested and sent to prisons and concentration camps.

Marked with purple triangular badges, the Witnesses were a relatively small group of prisoners in the concentration camps, numbering several hundred per camp. If Jehovah's Witnesses within the camps signed documents renouncing their religious beliefs, they would be freed. Very few, even in the face of torture, signed the declarations. In all, about 10,000 Jehovah's Witnesses were
imprisoned in concentration camps. Of these, approximately 2,500 to 5,000 died in Dachau, Belsen, Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and other camps.

Further information about the Nazi treatment of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

**Homosexuals**

A state policy of persecution of homosexuals began in Germany in 1933. Publications by and about homosexuals were prohibited and burned. In 1934, a special Gestapo division on homosexuals was set up. A criminal code relating to homosexuality was amended and made harsher. German police raided gay clubs and bars and made arrests.

Some homosexuals spent time in regular prisons, and an estimated 5,000-15,000 were sent to concentration camps. Even within the confines of the camps, homosexuals were mistreated and tormented by other inmates.

The Nazi regime claimed its concern about homosexuality related to keeping the Aryan birthrate high. German and Austrian gays were subject to arrest and imprisonment, but in German-occupied countries, Nazis did not deport homosexuals and send them to camps.

Memorial photographs, Web links, and a bibliography related to homosexual victims of the Third Reich.

**Other Victims**

When the Nazis came to power there were hundreds of African-German children living in the Rhineland. They were the offspring of German mothers and African soldiers brought in during the French occupation. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler claimed these children were part of a Jewish plot to begin "bastardizing the European continent at its core." Under the Nazi regime, African-German children were labeled "Rhineland Bastards" and forcibly sterilized.

Asocials were another category of people that Nazis deemed undesirable, and necessary for eradication. Nazis targeted numerous vagrants, prostitutes, alcoholics, and others who were considered unfit for society.

Interactive quiz on victims.

Lesson plans, discussion questions, term paper topics, reproducible handouts, and other resources for teaching about victims are available here.

[HTTP://FCIT.COEDU.USF.EDU/HOLOCAUST/PEOPLE/VICTIMS.HTM](http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/people/victims.htm)