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Chicago Public Library
Neighborhood Services
400 South State Street
Chicago, IL 60605



Night

by Elie Wiesel

Resource Guide

Presented by the Chicago Public Library
City of Chicago, Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Dear Friends:

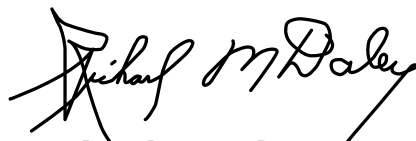
As Mayor and on behalf of the City of Chicago, I invite you to participate in the second One Book, One Chicago program. One Book, One Chicago encourages all Chicagoans to read the same book at the same time to create a kind of citywide book club. This year we have selected *Night* by Nobel Peace Prize Winner Elie Wiesel. We will read *Night* during the month of March and discuss it during National Library Week, April 14–20, 2002.

Night is Elie Wiesel's powerful story of his experiences in Nazi concentration camps during World War II. The book discusses and tries to make sense of the unspeakable evil of the Holocaust and stresses that we must never forget this dark chapter in human history. *Night* also sends a clear message about the importance of understanding and accepting those with backgrounds different from one's own.

One Book, One Chicago cultivates a culture of reading and discussion by bringing our diverse city together around one great book. Reading great literature provokes us to think about ourselves, our environment and our relationships. Talking about great literature with friends, family and neighbors often adds richness and depth to the experience of reading.

You can find a copy of *Night* at the Chicago Public Library, at your local bookstore or perhaps on your bookshelf at home. Whether you share your ideas with your neighbor or plan a book discussion group, I am sure you will find the experience to be enlightening and thought-provoking.

Thank you for your participation in One Book, One Chicago.



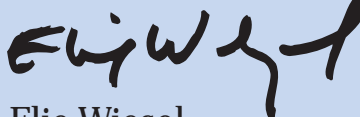
Richard M. Daley, Mayor
City of Chicago

Thank you for choosing *Night* for One Book, One Chicago. I am touched by your kindness. That is my first book. Without it I would not have written those that followed.

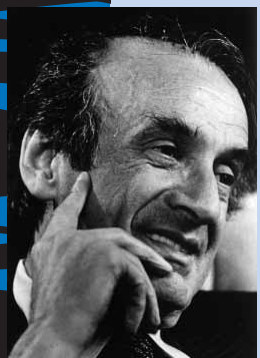
Chicago as a city and community is special to me. I have been there at least once a year since the 60s. I have close friends there in various circles: Jews and non-Jews, teachers and pupils, political personalities, police captains and officers ...

Thanks to your magnificent gesture, I hope their number will increase.

With warmest wishes,



Elie Wiesel



Evaluation

How did you hear about the One Book, One Chicago program?

What caused you to participate in the program?

Where did you get your copy of *Night*?

Home

Library

Bookstore

Other _____

Did you read and discuss the book with friends, in a book discussion group or just by yourself? _____

Were the materials in this booklet helpful in your reading, understanding and discussion of the book? _____

How? _____

How did the book affect you? _____

Do you think that *Night* was a good selection? _____

Why? _____

Will you participate in the One Book, One Chicago program next time?

Please complete and return this evaluation to the Chicago Public Library, attn: Neighborhood Services, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, Illinois 60605.

Your comments will help us to plan future One Book, One Chicago programs.

Thank you.

Sponsors

One Book, One Chicago is presented by the Chicago Public Library with support from these sponsors:



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How Can I Participate In **One Book, One Chicago**?

- Step 1:** **GET THE BOOK!** Check out *Night* at any of the Chicago Public Library's 78 locations or buy your own copy at many Chicago bookstores.
- Step 2:** **READ!** During March, join your family, friends, co-workers, neighbors and fellow Chicagoans in reading the same book—TOGETHER!
- Step 3:** **USE THIS RESOURCE GUIDE!** A team of librarians developed this free resource guide for participants to use when organizing their discussion groups. *Night* resource guides are available at all Chicago Public Library locations, most bookstores and online at www.chicagopubliclibrary.org.
- Step 4:** **DISCUSS!** Join one of the Chicago Public Library book clubs or organize your own book discussion at your home, community center, park district, senior center, coffee house, or place of worship and discuss *Night*.

National Library Week

April 14–20, 2002

First sponsored in 1958, National Library Week is a national observance sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) and libraries across the country each April. It is a time to celebrate the contributions of our nation's libraries and librarians and to promote library use and support. Join us during National Library Week as the One Book, One Chicago program culminates with a series of special events.

Events

For a complete schedule of One Book, One Chicago programs, visit www.chicagopubliclibrary.org.

Except where noted, all programs are free and open to the public.

Chicago Public Library

Book Clubs

Join us for a discussion of *Night* during National Library Week.

April 15, 1 p.m.	Vodak/East Side Branch, 10542 S. Ewing Ave.
April 15, 6:30 p.m.	West Town Branch, 1271 N. Milwaukee Ave.
April 16, 6:30 p.m.	Austin-Irving Branch, 6100 W. Irving Park Rd.
April 16, 7 p.m.	Roden Branch, 6083 Northwest Highway
April 17, 7:30 p.m.	Garfield Ridge Branch, 6348 S. Archer Ave.
April 17, 2 p.m.	Northtown Branch, 6435 N. California
April 17, 7 p.m.	Portage-Cragin Branch, 5108 W. Belmont
April 18, 7 p.m.	Edgebrook Branch, 5331 W. Devon Avenue
April 20, 11 a.m.	Bezazian Branch, 1226 W. Ainslie St.
April 20, 1 p.m.	Blackstone Branch, 4904 S. Lake Park Ave.
April 20, 2:30 p.m.	Martin Luther King Jr. Branch, 3436 S. King Drive
April 20, 11 a.m.	Legler Branch, 115 S. Pulaski Rd.
April 20, 3 p.m.	Merlo Branch, 644 W. Belmont Ave.
April 20, 1 p.m.	Uptown Branch, 929 W. Buena Ave

Starbucks Book Clubs

Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m.

Presented by the Chicago Public Library & Starbucks Coffee Company

Visit any Chicago Public Library location to check out a copy of *Night*, then join your neighbors and friends for a discussion of the book, moderated by a Chicago Public Library book club leader, at these Starbucks locations:

Edgewater: 1070 W. Bryn Mawr
 Lincoln and Wilson: 4557 N. Lincoln
 Pipers Alley: 210 W. North Ave.
 Roscoe Village: 2023 W. Roscoe

In My Hands: Memories of a Holocaust Rescuer by Irene Gut Opdyke with Jennifer Armstrong.

Even though she wasn't a Jew, Irene suffered at the hands of the Nazis but schemed to find ways to save herself and to help others escape as well. Knopf, 1999; (Hardcover) Anchor Books, 2001 (Paperback)

Maus, A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History by Art Spiegelman.

Told as graphic novels, with animals wearing the uniforms and doing the un-imaginable deeds, this is a powerful story of a Holocaust survivor. Random House, 1986

Maus, A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began by Art Spiegelman.

The story continued. Pantheon Books, 1991 (Hardcover) Pantheon Books 1992 (Paperback)

Never to Forget: The Jews of the Holocaust by Milton Meltzer.

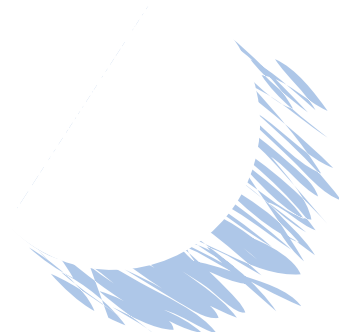
These voices describe survival and resistance movements in the face of genocide. HarperCollins, 1976 (Hardcover), HarperCollins, 1991 (Paperback)

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry (Fiction)

In a fictionalized account of a true story, 10-year-old Annemarie Johanssen and her family help her best friend Ellen by first hiding her and then helping her escape over the Danish border to safety. Houghton Mifflin, 1989 (Hardcover) Laureleaf, 1998 (Paperback) Recorded Books, 2000; (Audiocassette)

Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps by Andrea Warren (Fiction)

Ten-year-old Jack Mandelbaum sees his family torn from their home and separated. He is forced into a horrifying experience that he survives by treating it as a very dangerous game. HarperCollins, 2001 (Hardcover) HarperCollins, 2001 (Paperback)



Selected bibliography of other works by Elie Wiesel (continued):

Nonfiction

- *A Jew today*, translation by Marion Wiesel, Random House, 1978.
- *Evil and Exile* with Philippe-Michael De Saint-Cheron, translation by Jon Rothschild, University of Notre Dame Press, 1990.
- *All Rivers Run to the Sea: Memoirs*, Knopf, 1995.
- *Memoir in Two Voices*, with Francois Mitterrand, Arcade, 1996.
- *From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences*, Summit Books, 1990.
- *And the Sea Is Never Full: Memoirs, 1969–* , translated by Marion Wiesel, Alfred Knopf (New York, NY), 1999.
- *Conversations With Elie Wiesel*, with Richard D. Heffner and Thomas J. Vinciguerra, editor, Schocken Books, 2001.

Books for teens who would like to read more about the Holocaust:

After the Holocaust by Howard Greenfeld.

These eight personal stories show that the tragedies and sorrows of the Holocaust didn't end after the Allied soldiers opened the gates of the camps. Greenwillow, 2001.

Bearing Witness: Stories of the Holocaust edited by Hazel Rochman (Fiction)

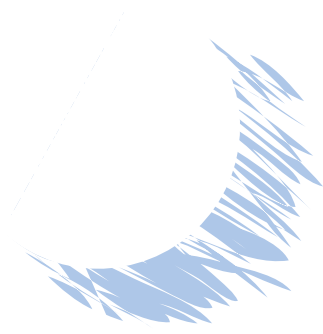
Twenty-four well-known authors share their vision of the horrors of the Holocaust in short stories, a comic strip, a script, poetry and a variety of other formats. Orchard Books, 1995.

Elie Wiesel: Voice from the Holocaust by Michael A. Schuman.

As a small child in Hungary, this future Nobel Laureate had no idea he would be fighting for his life in one of the most feared and hated Nazi concentration camps. Enslow, 1994.

I Have Lived a Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust by Livia Bitton-Jackson

Sent to a death camp at age 13, Livia describes her experience as a teenager. Simon & Schuster, 1997; (Hardcover) Aladdin, 1999; (Paperback)



The Holocaust on Film: A Discussion with Dr. Michael Berenbaum and Screening of HBO Films' *Conspiracy*

Monday, April 15, 5:30 p.m.

Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center
400 S. State St., Auditorium, Lower Level

Presented by the Chicago Public Library, Home Box Office & the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Enjoy this screening of HBO Films' *Conspiracy*, the 2001 Emmy® and Golden Globe award winning HBO movie starring Kenneth Branagh and Stanley Tucci. The film recreates the 1942 Wannsee Conference, in which Nazi and SS leaders gathered in a Berlin suburb to discuss the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." Immediately following the screening will be a discussion by Dr. Michael Berenbaum, author and Holocaust expert, about the treatment of the Holocaust on film. The film debuted on HBO May 19, 2001.

Reservations are required for this program. Seating is on a first come, first served basis. RSVP to (877) 298-9357 or email: hbo.pr_events_nc@hbo.com

"What is Our Universe of Obligation?"

Tuesday, April 16, 6 p.m.

Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center
400 S. State St., Auditorium, Lower Level

Presented by the Chicago Public Library & Facing History and Ourselves, Chicago Regional Office

What is an individual's—or a nation's—Universe of Obligation? To whom are obligations owed? To whom do rules apply? Whose injuries call for amends? Join us for a conversation which challenges us to consider tough concepts within the context of *Night*, the complexities of today and the implications for our future.

Moderated by Ken Bode, the James S. and James L. Knight Professor in broadcast journalism, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University.

Elie Wiesel, Interviewed by Mara Tapp

Wednesday, April 17, 12:30 p.m.

Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center
400 S. State St., Winter Garden, 9th Floor

Presented by the Chicago Public Library & the University of Chicago's Hillel Center

Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize winner and author of *Night*, will discuss his life and works with Chicago journalist Mara Tapp.

General admission tickets for this free public program will be available beginning at 9 a.m. on Friday, April 12, in the main lobby of the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St. There is a limit of 2 tickets per person. No one without a ticket will be admitted into the Winter Garden. Dr. Wiesel will not be signing books or taking audience questions at this event. We regret that due to space limitations, groups cannot be accommodated in the Winter Garden.

This program will be broadcast beginning Thursday, April 18, on MUTV Channel 23. For more information, please call (312) 747-4052.

Elie Wiesel Lecture:

"Religion and Violence in the Context of Judaism"

Wednesday, April 17, 7 p.m.

University of Chicago, Rockefeller Memorial Chapel
5850 S. Woodlawn

Presented by the University of Chicago's Hillel Center & the Chicago Public Library

Free-will offering accepted. For more information, please call (773) 702-7059.

Screening of *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*

Thursday, April 18, 5:30 p.m.

Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center
400 S. State St., Auditorium, Lower Level

Presented by the Chicago Public Library, Home Box Office & the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

The 2001 Academy Award® winning film for Best Documentary, Features, chronicles the Kindertransport which saved 10,000 Jewish children. The film debuted on HBO December 10, 2001.

Web sites related to the Holocaust and Genocide:

About.com: Genocide

<http://uspolitics.about.com/cs/genocide/index.htm?terms=genocide>

Committee on Conscience

<http://www.ushmm.org/conscience>

Holocaust Chronicle

<http://www.holocaustchronicle.org>

Prevent Genocide International (part of Genocide Watch)

<http://www.preventgenocide.org>

Museum of Tolerance Online (Simon Wiesenthal Center)

<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/index.html>

A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust

<http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/default.htm>

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<http://www.ushmm.org>

Further Reading

Selected bibliography of other works by Elie Wiesel:

Novels

- *Dawn*, translation by Frances Frenaye, Hill & Wang, 1961.
- *The Accident*, translation by Anne Borchardt, Hill & Wang, 1962.
- *The Town Beyond the Wall*, translation by Stephen Becker, Atheneum, 1964.
- *The Gates of the Forest*, translation by Frances Frenaye, Holt, 1966.
- *Legends of Our Time*, Holt, 1968.
- *A Beggar in Jerusalem*, Random House, 1970, translation by the author and L. Edelman.
- *The Oath*, translation by Marion Wiesel, Random House, 1973.
- *The Testament*, translation by Marion Wiesel, Simon & Schuster, 1981.
- *The Golem: The Story of a Legend*, illustrated by Mark Podwal, Summit Books, 1983.
- *The Fifth Son*, translation by M. Wiesel, Summit Books, 1985.
- *Twilight*, translation by Marion Wiesel, Summit Books, 1988.
- *The Forgotten*, translated by Stephen Becker, Summit, 1992.

Resources

If you would like to learn more about *Night*, Elie Wiesel or the historical context of the novel, the Chicago Public Library recommends the following list of Web and print resources:

Web Resources

Web sites related to Elie Wiesel:

The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity

<http://www.eliewieselfoundation.org>

This is the Web site for the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity. The Foundation's mission, rooted in the memory of the Holocaust, is to advance the cause of human rights by creating forums for the discussion and resolution of urgent ethical issues.

Elie Wiesel Nobel Prize for Peace—American Academy of Achievement

<http://www.achievement.org/frames.html>

This Web site includes a biography and interview of Elie Wiesel. It is a part of the Gallery of Achievers, which is a section that focuses on individuals who have shaped our times by their accomplishments.

Facing History and Ourselves

<http://www.facing.org>

The organization Facing History and Ourselves has produced a study guide for *Night* which can be used to teach lessons of identity and the legacies of history and prejudice. The study guide is available as an Adobe Acrobat (PDF) file. From the home page, click on "Resources," then on "Study Guides." For Chicago information, click on "Regions."

Teacher's Guide—*Night*

<http://www.randomhouse.com/highschool/guides/night.html>

Produced by Random House, this Web site includes an introduction; plot summary; activities; composition; discussion questions; and additional resources.

Don't miss these additional book discussions and activities taking place before and after National Library Week.

Additional Chicago Public Library Book Clubs: *Night*

April 1, 6:30 p.m.	Albany Park Branch, 5150 N. Kimball Ave.
April 1, 6:30 p.m.	Douglass Branch, 3353 W. 13th Street
April 1, 7 p.m.	McKinley Park Branch, 1915 W. 35th St.
April 2, 5 p.m.	Sherman Park Branch, 5440 S. Racine Ave.
April 2, 6 p.m.	South Chicago Branch, 9055 S. Houston Ave.
April 4, 7:30 p.m.	Walker Branch, 11071 S. Hoyne Ave.
April 6, 11 a.m.	Chicago Lawn Branch, 6120 S. Kedzie Ave.
April 6, 3 p.m.	Edgewater Branch, 1210 W. Elmdale Ave.
April 6, 1 p.m.	Hall Branch, 4801 S. Michigan Ave.
April 6, 1:30 p.m.	Rogers Park Branch, 6907 N. Clark St.
April 8, 7 p.m.	Independence Branch, 3548 W. Irving Park Rd.
April 8, 6:15 p.m.	Mayfair Branch, 4400 W. Lawrence Ave.
April 8, 11 a.m.	Near North Branch, 310 W. Division St.
April 8, 7 p.m.	Oriole Park, 5201 N. Oketo Ave.
April 9, 7 p.m.	Beverly Branch, 2121 W. 95th St.
April 9, 5:30 p.m.	Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St.
April 9, 6:30 p.m.	Roosevelt Branch, 1101 W. Taylor St.
April 10, 7 p.m.	Sulzer Regional Library, 4455 N. Lincoln Ave.
April 10, 7 p.m.	West Lawn Branch, 4020 W. 63rd St.
April 11, 7 p.m.	Canaryville Branch, 642 W. 43rd St.
April 11, 6 p.m.	Damen Avenue Branch, 2056 N. Damen Ave.
April 11, 7 p.m.	Lincoln Park Branch, 1150 W. Fullerton Ave.
April 13, 1 p.m.	Galewood–Mont Clare Branch, 6969 W. Grand Ave.
April 13, 11 a.m.	Mabel Manning Branch, 6 S. Hoyne Ave.
April 13, 11 a.m.	Near North Branch, 310 W. Division St.
April 13, 1 p.m.	South Shore Branch, 2505 E. 73rd St.
April 22, 6:30 p.m.	Lincoln Belmont Branch, 1659 W. Melrose St.
April 23, 7 p.m.	West Belmont Branch, 3104 N. Narragansett Ave.
April 24, 7 p.m.	Archer Heights Branch, 5055 S. Archer Ave
April 24, 10 a.m.	Brighton Park Branch, 4314 S. Archer Ave.
April 24, 7 p.m.	Jefferson Park Branch, 5363 W. Lawrence Ave.
April 25, 12 p.m.	Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago Talking Book Center, 400 S. State St.
April 25, 6:30 p.m.	Humboldt Park Branch, 1605 N. Troy
April 25, 7 p.m.	Scottsdale Branch, 4101 W. 79th St.
April 27, 3 p.m.	Austin Branch, 5615 W. Race Ave.
April 27, 10 a.m.	Thurgood Marshall Branch, 7506 S. Racine Ave.

Holocaust Remembrance Day

Tuesday, April 30, 12 p.m.

Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center
400 S. State St., Winter Garden

Hear the voices of Holocaust survivors and commemorate the spirit of those who did not survive at the City of Chicago's annual Holocaust Remembrance Day, hosted by Mayor Richard M. Daley. Join this year's keynote speaker, Elaine Welbel, as she tells her personal account of surviving 33 months in Nazi labor camps, Auschwitz and Birkenau.

Elie Wiesel, A Brief Biography

Elie Wiesel was born in 1928 in Sighet, a small village in northern Transylvania, Romania, an area that was part of Hungary from 1941 to 1945. Wiesel was the only son of four children of Shlomo, a grocer and his wife, Sarah (Feig) Wiesel. He was devoted to the study of the Torah, the Talmud and the mystical teachings of Hasidism and the Cabala.

The Nazis, led by Adolf Eichmann, entered Hungary in the spring of 1944 with orders to exterminate an estimated 600,000 Jews in under six weeks. Wiesel was 15 years old when the Nazis deported him and his family to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

His mother and younger sister died in the gas chambers on the night of their arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau. He and his father were deported to Buchenwald where his father died before the camp was liberated on April 11, 1945. Wiesel did not learn until after the war that his two older sisters, Hilda and Bea, also survived.

After receiving medical treatment, Wiesel went to France with other orphans but he remained stateless. He stayed in France, living first in Normandy and later in Paris working as a tutor and translator. He eventually began writing for various French and Jewish publications. But Wiesel vowed not to write about his experiences at Auschwitz-Birkenau and Buchenwald because he doubted his ability to accurately convey the horror.



Elie Wiesel, age 15, shortly before deportation

Wiesel's self-imposed silence came to an end in the mid-1950s after he interviewed the Nobel Prize-winning French novelist François Mauriac. Deeply moved by Wiesel's story, Mauriac urged him to tell the world of his experiences and to "bear witness" for the millions of people who had been silenced. The result was *Night*, the story of a teenage boy who survived the camps and was devastated by the realization that the God he once worshiped had allowed his people to be destroyed. The *Nation's* Daniel Stern has described *Night* as "undoubtedly the single most powerful literary relic of the Holocaust."

Night was originally written in Yiddish as an 862-page work called *Un die Welt Hot Geshvign (And the World Kept Silent)*. He pared this manuscript down to an intense first-person account of his experiences. Wiesel translated the manuscript from Yiddish into French and retitled it *La Nuit (Night)*. It was published in 1958 and the English edition was published in 1960. *Night* is written in a taut, spare style. Wiesel's controlled language allows the events to speak for themselves and is in sharp contrast to the reality about which it speaks.

Questions

Discussion Questions

1. Why are the warnings of “horrible things to come” from Moshe the Beadle not taken seriously? Are there other warnings?
2. What would be the considerations for your decision to warn others, keep quiet or take action in a similar situation?
3. Why does Madame Schachter scream? Is she a madwoman or a prophet?
4. Why are the prisoners so angry with the newly arrived Jews?
5. After prisoners are shaven, given tattoos and uniforms, what are they left with?
6. Why do Eliezer and the other prisoners respond so emotionally to the hanging of the child? Why were the SS “more preoccupied, more disturbed than usual?”
7. Discuss how Eliezer’s relationship with his father changes throughout the book.
8. The Kaddish, the traditional Jewish prayer of mourning, does not mention the dead and instead praises God. In *Night*, what did it mean that living people recited it for themselves and why did this anger Eliezer?
9. What advice does the head of the block give to Eliezer on page 105? How does it compare to the advice given by the young Pole on page 38?
10. Wiesel concludes his work by writing, “a corpse gazed back at me, the look in his eye, as they stared at mine, has never left me.” Discuss this statement.
11. From deportation from Sighet to murder at Birkenau, deception was often used to confuse the prisoners. How does deception dehumanize?
12. What is the symbolism of the word “night” in the book?
13. How is Wiesel’s moral struggle an important element of *Night*?
14. Why do you think survivors often feel guilty?
15. What hints of hope does Wiesel offer us?
16. Why do you think Wiesel tells his story in the first person? If *Night* were written in the third person, would it be more or less believable?
17. Why is this book relevant today?

Genocide

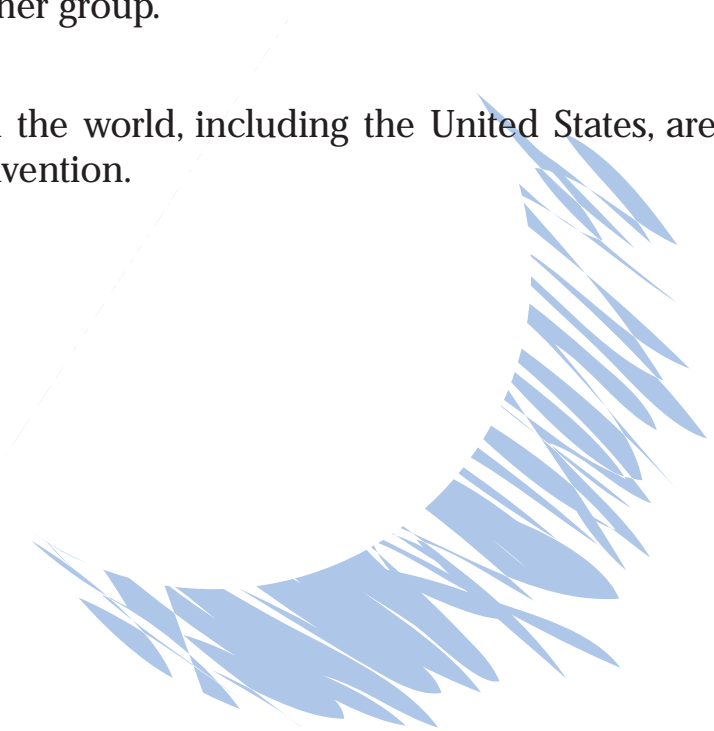
What is Genocide?

The Legal Definition:

The United Nations Genocide Convention “confirms” that genocide is an international crime, which countries “undertake to prevent and to punish.” By the terms of the Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Most countries in the world, including the United States, are parties to the Convention.



Since the publication of *Night*, Wiesel has written more than 40 books. He became an American citizen in 1963. In 1969, Wiesel married Austrian-born writer and editor Marion Erster Rose, also a survivor of the Holocaust. His wife has edited and translated many of his works. They have a son, Shlomo Elisha, born in 1972. They live in New York.

Since 1976, Wiesel has been the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, where he also holds the title of University Professor. Previously, he served as Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at the City University of New York (1972–76) and the first Henry Luce Visiting Scholar in Humanities and Social Thought at Yale University (1982–83).

Wiesel has received numerous awards for his literary and human rights activities. These include the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal and the Medal of Liberty Award and the rank of Grand Officer in the French Legion of Honor. President Jimmy Carter appointed Wiesel Chairman of the United State Holocaust Memorial Council in 1978. In 1986, Elie Wiesel won the Nobel Prize for Peace. Shortly thereafter, Elie Wiesel and his wife established The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

Wiesel has defended the cause of Soviet Jews, Nicaragua's Miskito Indians, Argentina's "disappeared," Cambodian refugees, the Kurds, South African apartheid victims, famine victims in Africa and more recently the victims and prisoners in the former Yugoslavia.

In presenting the Nobel Peace Prize, Egil Aarvik, chair of the Nobel Committee, said this about Wiesel:

"His mission is not to gain the world's sympathy for victims or the survivors. His aim is to awaken our conscience. Our indifference to evil makes us partners in the crime. This is the reason for his attack on indifference and his insistence on measures aimed at preventing a new Holocaust. We know that the unimaginable has happened. What are we doing now to prevent its happening again?"

Sources:

A Teacher's Resource for Night by Elie Wiesel. Boston:Voices of Love and Freedom, Inc. and Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, 1999.

Current Biography Yearbook 1986. New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1986.

Wilson, Kathleen, ed. *Major 20th-Century Writers: A Selection of Sketches from Contemporary Authors*. Detroit: Gale, 1999.

Setting the Historical Context for the Novel

Timeline of the Holocaust

Entries in *italics* refer to events described or alluded to in *Night*.

1933

- The Nazi party takes power in Germany. Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor, or prime minister, of Germany.
- The Nazis “temporarily” suspend civil liberties for all citizens. They are never restored.
- The Nazis set up the first concentration camp at Dachau. The first inmates are 200 Communists.
- Books contrary to Nazi beliefs are burned in public.

1934

- Upon President Hindenburg’s death, Hitler combines the positions of chancellor and president to become “Führer,” or leader, of Germany.

1935

- Jews in Germany are deprived of citizenship and other fundamental rights. The Nazis intensify persecution of political dissidents and others considered “racially inferior” including “Gypsies,” Jehovah’s Witnesses and homosexuals. Many are sent to concentration camps.

1936

- The Olympic games are held in Germany; signs barring Jews from public places are removed until the event is over.

1938

- German troops annex Austria. Nazi gangs physically attack Jews throughout Germany and Austria, on Kristallnacht (the “Night of Broken Glass”).

1939

- In March, Germany takes over a neighboring nation, Czechoslovakia.
- On September 1, Germany invades Poland.
- World War II begins in Europe.
- Hitler orders the systematic murder of the mentally and physically disabled in Germany and Austria.
- Polish Jews are ordered to register and relocate. They also are required to wear armbands or yellow stars.

1940

- Nazis begin deporting German Jews to Poland.
- Jews are forced into ghettos.
- Germany conquers one nation after another in Western Europe including the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg and France.
- With Germany’s backing, Hungary annexes parts of Romania, including Sighet and other towns in northern Transylvania.

Kaddish—A prayer in Aramaic praising God. The mourner's Kaddish is said for the dead.

kapo—Camp prisoner forced to oversee other prisoners.

Lazarus—A man described in the Books of John and Luke as having been raised from the dead by Jesus.

los—German for "Go on!"

Maimonides (1135–1204)—Jewish rabbi, physician and philosopher.

Mengele, Dr. Josef (1911–1978)—Auschwitz physician notorious for so-called medical experiments performed on inmates, especially twins and dwarves.

Messiah—Greek translation of Hebrew *Mashiach*, the anointed one.

Musulman—German for Muslim. Camp slang for a prisoner who is too weak to walk, work, or stand, and therefore marked for death. Believed to derive from prisoner's resemblance to a Muslim in prayer.

Nyilas party—Hungarian for Arrow Cross, a fascist anti-semitic party which assumed power in late 1944 and assisted the SS in deportations of Jews.

Passover—In Hebrew, *Pesach*. Greek word for the celebration of the exodus of Jewish people from slavery in Egypt.

Pentecost—In Hebrew, *Shavuot*, the celebration the giving of the Torah.

phylacteries—In Hebrew, *tefillin*. Greek word for two black leather cubes, worn during daily morning prayer which contain verses from the Torah.

Rosh Hashana—Jewish New Year.

SS—Abbreviation of Schutzstaffel (Defense Protective Units). Notorious for implementing European Jews' extermination.

Spanish Inquisition—Brutal campaign by Roman Catholic church to punish nonbelievers including Jews and Muslims.

Synagogue—A Jewish house of worship and study.

Talmud—The most important compilation of Jewish oral tradition.

Temple—Holiest place in Judaism, located in Jerusalem. Biblically ordained sacrifices were performed here. Built and destroyed twice.

yellow star—Nazis forced Jews to wear a cloth badge with Jew written in the center of a yellow 5 pointed star.

Yom Kippur—Day of Atonement. Holiest day of Jewish year when Jews fast and pray for forgiveness of their sins.

Zionism—Political movement advocating the establishment of a Jewish state.

Zohar—From the Hebrew meaning light or splendor. One of the major works of the Cabbala.

The following are excerpts from the prepared text of Elie Wiesel's acceptance speech for the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize:

It is with a profound sense of humility that I accept the honor you have chosen to bestow upon me. I know: your choice transcends me. This both frightens and pleases me.

It frightens me because I wonder: do I have the right to represent the multitudes who have perished? Do I have the right to accept this great honor on their behalf? I do not. That would be presumptuous. No one may speak for the dead, no one may interpret their mutilated dreams and visions.

It pleases me because I may say that this honor belongs to all the survivors and their children, and through us, to the Jewish people with whose destiny I have always identified.

I remember: it happened yesterday or eternities ago. A young Jewish boy discovered the kingdom of night. I remember his bewilderment. I remember his anguish. It all happened so fast. The ghetto. The deportation. The sealed cattle car. The fiery altar upon which the history of our people and the future of mankind were meant to be sacrificed.

I remember: he asked his father: "Can this be true? This is the 20th century, not the Middle Ages. Who would allow such crimes to be committed? How could the world remain silent?"

And now the boy is turning to me: "Tell me," he asks. "What have you done with my future? What have you done with your life?"

And I tell him that I have tried. That I have tried to keep memory alive, that I have tried to fight those who would forget. Because if we forget, we are guilty, we are accomplices.

And then I explain to him how naive we were, that the world did know and remained silent. And that is why I swore never to be silent when and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.

Speech

Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Whenever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion or political views, that must—at that moment—become the center of the universe . . .

Yes, I have faith. Faith in God and even in His creation. Without it no action would be possible. And action is the only remedy to indifference: the most insidious danger of all. Isn't this the meaning of Alfred Nobel's legacy? Wasn't his fear of war a shield against war?

There is much to be done, there is much that can be done. One person . . . of integrity can make a difference, a difference between life and death. As long as one dissident is in prison, our freedom will not be true. As long as one child is hungry, our lives will be filled with anguish and shame.

What all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stilled we shall lend them ours, that while their freedom depends on ours, the quality of our freedom depends on theirs.

This is what I say to the young Jewish boy wondering what I have done with his years. It is in his name that I speak to you and I express to you my deepest gratitude. No one is as capable of gratitude as one who has emerged from the kingdom of night.

We know that every moment is a moment of grace, every hour an offering; not to share them would mean to betray them. Our lives no longer belong to us alone; they belong to all those who need us desperately.

Thank you Chairman Aarvik. Thank you, members of the Nobel Committee. Thank you, people of Norway, for declaring on this singular occasion that our survival has meaning for mankind.

Glossary of Terms in *Night*

Aden—Former Middle Eastern British colony, now part of Yemen.

Aryan—In Nazi ideology, the pure, superior Germanic race.

Austerlitz—Parisian railroad station for eastbound trains. Austerlitz was the name of a Czech city.

Babylonian captivity—Babylonians destroyed the first temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. and exiled the Jews to Babylonia.

boche or bosche—WWI derogatory French slang for a German, usually a soldier.

Cabbala—Jewish mysticism, including numerology.

charnel house—A building used to house corpses and bones.

concentration camp—Camps that were primarily used for slave labor, holding camps or transit camps.

death camp—Camps dedicated to the efficient murder of Jews and other victims; e.g. Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmo, Madjanek, Sobibor, Treblinka. The term was also used for concentration camps where thousands died of starvation and disease.

death's head—Skull insignia for S.S. brigades working in concentration camps.

fascism—A system of government with centralized authority under a dictator, stringent socioeconomic controls, suppression of the opposition through terror and censorship and usually a policy of belligerent nationalism and racism.

Gestapo—German acronym for the German Secret State Police, part of the SS notorious for terrorism against enemies of the state.

ghetto—The confinement of Jews in a set-apart area of a city. The first exclusively Jewish ghetto was in Venice in 1516.

gypsy—Pejorative term for Roma or Romany, an ethnic group with roots in India which suffered large losses in the Holocaust.

Hasidism—Movement of Orthodox Judaism with strong mystical and emotional elements.

Himmler, Heinrich (1900–1945)—Head of SS and principal planner of Jews' total extermination.

Hitler, Adolf (1889–1945)—Dictator of Germany, 1933–1945.

Horthy, Admiral Miklos (1868–1957)—Regent of Hungary, 1920–1944, who was forced by the Nazis to relinquish power to the Nyilas Hungarian Fascist party after Nazi invasion.

Job—Biblical figure who has come to symbolize suffering.

1941

- Germany attacks the Soviet Union.
- Jews throughout Europe are forced into ghettos and internment camps.
- Mobile killing units begin the systematic slaughter of Jews. In two days, units murder 33,771 Ukrainian Jews at Babi Yar—the largest single massacre of the Holocaust.
- *Hungary deports 17,000 foreign and “stateless” Jews. Several thousand are used as slave laborers. The Nazis massacre the rest.*
- The first death camp at Chelmno in Poland begins operations.
- Germany, as an ally of Japan, declares war on the United States immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

1942

- At the Wannsee Conference, Nazi officials present the “Final Solution”—their plan to kill all European Jews—to the bureaucracy.
- Five more death camps begin operation in Poland: Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka, Belzec, and Auschwitz-Birkenau.
- March: About 20 to 25 percent of the Jews who would die in the Holocaust have already perished. The ghettos of Eastern Europe are emptied as thousands of Jews are shipped to death camps.
- The United States, Britain and the Soviet Union acknowledge that Germans were systematically murdering the Jews of Europe.

1943

- February: About 80 to 85 percent of the Jews who would die in the Holocaust have already perished.
- *April: Jews in Poland’s Warsaw Ghetto strike back as the Nazis begin new rounds of deportations. It takes nearly a month for the Nazis to put down the Uprising.*

1944

- *March: Hitler occupies Hungary; by June, the Germans are deporting 12,000 Hungarian Jews a day to Auschwitz.*

1945

- *January: As the Russian army pushes west, the Nazis begin to evacuate death camps, including Auschwitz.*
- *April: American forces liberate the prisoners in Buchenwald.*
- *May: World War II ends in Europe with Hitler’s defeat.*
- About one-third of all the Jews in the world have been murdered and the survivors are homeless.

1946

- An International Military Tribunal created by Britain, France, the United States and the Soviet Union tries Nazi leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Nuremberg.

