

Unit #9: The Dark *Night* of Innocence

LA 10 Mr. Coia

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Tues 5/10

- Six-word Memoir sharing
- Grammar post-test
- Write #7: Six Word Memoirs for *All Quiet*
- Turn in Comp books for grading
- Work on Reaction Paper

HW: Reaction Paper

Thurs 5/12

- **Reaction Paper due**
- Socratic Seminar:
- Essential Question #1: "Why is *All Quiet on the Western Front* an important book for high school students to read?"
- Essential Question #2: "In all the ways that Paul Baumer changes in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which is the most impacting? How does his life reflect the content in the epigraph?"

HW: Reaction paper extension

Mon 5/16

- **Reaction Paper Due**
- Novel turn-in (no book=no test)
- *All Quiet* novel test
- Watch endings of *All Quiet* films

Wed 5/18

- Write #1: Define evil. What makes evil evil? How can we determine what evil is in our lives?
- Clip: [Elie Wiesel and Oprah at Auschwitz](#)
- Read forward and begin book
- Discuss [theodicy](#)

HW: *Night* 1-43; *Night* questions (Due Tues)

Fri 5/20

- Discuss *epiphany*
- Read and mark "Can Buy Me Love"
- Discuss epiphany in this story. Best lines?
- What modern-day stories/films share this theme?
- Writing time on paper

HW: Type a short piece (300-500 words) about unrequited love or an epiphany about love. This can be true, fiction, or a mix of both. Model your writing after "Can Buy Me Love." This should be humorous.

Tues 5/24

- **Paper Due**
- *Night* reading quiz 1-43
- Write #2: Respond to the "Never" passage (page 32). Write whatever comes to mind.
- Small group sharing and discussion on last section. Look at *Night* questions
- Clip: Continue [Elie and Oprah interview](#) (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEbLjv3uSPY>)

HW: *Night* 45-80; *Night* questions

Thurs 5/26

- *Night* reading quiz 45-80
- Write #3: Make a list of things you think about when you read this book or discuss the Holocaust
- Work time on Never Art (see examples for inspiration). This is a one-page artistic piece visually representing the entire "Never" passage on p. 32.

HW: *Night* 81-end; Never Art; *Night* questions

Tues 5/31

- *Night* reading quiz 81-end
- Write #4: Explain the last two lines of the book. Is it a happy ending or not?
- Never Art Museum Walk
- Complete Story Pyramid

HW: *Night* questions; study for test

Thurs 6/2

- Share *Night* questions
- Turn in *Night* book
- *Night* test (50 questions—mult choice, matching)

Mon 6/6

- How are three characters from three different books similar?
- Complete Think in Threes sheet.
- *A Year in a Poem*: A creative writing piece that incorporates characters and titles from all the novels we've read this year. Include experiences from both classes (about 50 lines)

Wed 6/8

- Favorite book of the year activity
- Work time on poems

HW: *A Year in a Poem* work

Fri 6/10

- **A Year in a Poem due**
- Poetry sharing and discussion

Exam Schedule

Tues 6/14: A Lunch (1035-1105)

Tues 6/14: Exam Review (1110-1200)

Thurs 6/16: Final Exam (0900-1030)

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Themes for Observation

Night

Comradeship

Definition: _____

How it is in the Holocaust: _____

How it is present in *Night*: _____

Rebellion

Definition: _____

How it is in the Holocaust: _____

How it is present in *Night*: _____

Dehumanization

Definition: _____

How it is in the Holocaust: _____

How it is present in *Night*: _____

Loss of Faith

Definition: _____

How it is in the Holocaust: _____

How it is present in *Night*: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Why I Teach *Night* by Mike Thompson

“Why do we have to learn this?” I’ve been haunted by this question from students since the day I started teaching. I admit that sometimes I am hard pressed to come up with a worthwhile answer, and I have been known to fall back on that tired teacher response: “Because I said so.” *Night* by Elie Wiesel, however, is a text that I have never had any problem defending, and the more I teach it, the more reasons I find to continue teaching it. *Night* personalizes the Holocaust, reminds students to appreciate life, expands their cultural horizons, helps them become critical thinkers, and teaches personal responsibility. Although it makes for grim reading, *Night* is the book that encapsulates the most important lessons students can learn.

When I ask my students if they think *Night* should be taught in schools, many of them respond that it should because it teaches about the Holocaust. They are on the right track, but there’s more to it. There are lots of ways to learn about the Holocaust, but only *Night* personalizes it. Elie Wiesel tells his *own* story, and the death and destruction he describes are therefore not just meaningless statistics; they are painfully real. We understand Elie’s denial when he hears the horrors reported by Moshe the Beadle. We feel his anxiety when his family is moved into a ghetto. We taste the fear when Madame Schacter screams, “Jews, look! A fire!” We see the wreaths of smoke rising from the ditch of burning babies, and we smell the stench of the crematory ovens. By reading *Night*, we realize that the Holocaust actually happened to people, not numbers. It is the only text I know that can give students in this over-privileged community any idea of what the Holocaust was like. And it is important for them to know this so that they can guard against it happening again.

Night, although full of death and despair, helps students appreciate life, their own as well as others’. It is difficult to spend too much time feeling sorry for yourself when you consider that there isn’t much on earth that can compare to the horror of a concentration camp. No matter how bad it gets, the Holocaust was worse. People suffered through worse things than most of the petty concerns we spend so much time fretting over, and when we realize this, we can put those petty concerns aside and do something meaningful, helpful, and productive with our lives.

Night also teaches tolerance and an appreciation for difference. In this community, there are few Jewish people, and many of the beliefs students hold about Judaism are skewed and in some cases dangerously prejudiced. Reading *Night* helps students here understand a couple of important things about religion and culture: There are people of other faiths who believe as strongly in theirs as we do in our own. And even though beliefs differ, all humans are capable of the same feelings (or lack thereof). Simply, *Night* teaches that human life is valuable, and I see students thinking differently about their own lives as a result of studying the book.

Hitler and his henchmen were able to create the Holocaust because people around the world were willing to let it happen. The Germans wanted to believe Hitler’s scheme for re-vitalizing the economy because they had spent so many years in poor economic conditions; Hitler blamed the Jews, and Germany went along with it because it allowed people to escape responsibility for their own circumstances. They finally had someone else to blame. Hitler gave them what they wanted, and they gave him their blind allegiance. As for the rest of the world, to one extent or another, everyone knew what was going on in Hitler’s death camps, but no one intervened. It was convenient to use the excuse that Hitler’s persecution of the Jews did not directly affect most non-European countries, so there was no sense risking soldiers’ lives to put a stop to it. The Holocaust occurred because decent people did nothing. *Night* teaches the dangers of self-denial, blind allegiance, and ignorance. After reading the book, students can see how the methods of Hitler are still in existence today in gangs, cults, and militia groups. They are able to think about the Holocaust as it applies to them and their world. *Night* encourages people to think critically about blindly following orders. It asks them to examine their values and beliefs. It requires them to think critically. Part of the reason I teach *Night* is because I want students to be involved in Life. To do this to

the fullest extent, to really suck the marrow from it, people have to be able to identify, understand, and solve problems. *Night* is an excellent resource for posing those tough questions that help kids develop critical thinking skills.

My classroom policy is simple: Personal Responsibility. If I can get kids to quit making excuses and start taking responsibility for their actions, then I figure I've at least done one valuable thing for them even if I don't teach them anything about English. The study of *Night* and the Holocaust shows the importance of accepting responsibility for oneself. If the Germans had opened their eyes to what Hitler was doing before they made him chancellor, the Holocaust may never have occurred, but they didn't want to accept responsibility for the state of their country. They needed someone to blame, and Hitler gave them a scapegoat: the Jews. Inside the camps, the SS officers who blindly followed orders, thinking only that they were being good soldiers by carrying out "the final solution to the Jewish question," were refusing the responsibility for the atrocities they committed, never questioning the right or wrong of mass murder. The Europeans who pretended not to know what was going on refused to accept responsibility for what was happening in their countries, under their noses. Even Hitler himself did everything he could to cover up what he was doing, hiding behind euphemisms and propaganda. The Holocaust is an extreme example of what can happen when people refuse to take responsibility for themselves and their surroundings, when people surrender their personal will to that of a corrupt leader or an angry mob. *Night*, with its stark brutality and horrifying images, shocks students into the realization that they must be true to themselves, they must question authority, they must offer no excuses, they must quit worrying so much about what everyone else thinks, and they must recognize within themselves the potential for good and evil so that they may make wise choices and live happy lives.

There are so many lessons to be taught with *Night* that I often think I should spend more time on it, but I realize how depressing that could become. My goal is not to instill guilt or despair, but there is a fine line to walk because sometimes that is the only way to get students thinking about their own lives and their own places in the world. The point is simple: Appreciate Life; use it well; don't waste it. And, for the sake of humanity, don't *ignore* it! Be aware of what is going on!

I hope that when students leave my class and go on to bigger and better things, they remember the little themes and morals of the books we read. Although the books are all very different, one thing is true of all of them: they all deal in some way with Personal Responsibility, none more so than *Night*. The imagery, the graphic descriptions, and the horror of the Holocaust are memories that won't soon fade, but I hope that students will remember as well the reason we did it: not just for the shock value, but to teach important lessons about life. And it just happens to be around the eighth grade when students have to start making personal decisions that will affect the rest of their lives.

So, I offer these deep thoughts in response to that question: "Why do we have to learn this?" And to my students, I offer this: Thanks for trusting me to help you lead better lives...and thanks for asking.

Add a response:

Why do you think that it is important for high school teachers to teach *Night*?

Story Pyramid

For a story pyramid, you will show your understanding and connection to *Night* by writing a structured poem. Here's how it works:

1. Name one character.
2. Give two words describing this character.
3. Give three words that describe the setting.
4. Give four words stating the problem.
5. Give five words that explain the main event.
6. Give six words that explain the character's change.
7. Give seven words that explain how this book affected you.

Elie

Losing Faith

Barren, Lost, Threatening

Has God abandoned him?

Elie clings to his life

He becomes **stronger** than his captors

What if I were in the camps?

***Night* Questions**

The following list is questions that relate to various themes and ideas in the reading. Use these questions to guide your reading and better understanding of the novel. **Choose any 1-4 questions to answer.** Please include the question and **typed responses**. Make these personal and creative. Your entire paper will be about 800-1000 words, whether you choose one or four questions to meet that goal. Follow the class formatting.

1. Why are the warnings of "horrible things to come" from Moshe the Beadle not taken seriously? Are there other warnings? Why do people ignore such warnings? What warnings are there today?
2. Discuss how the Holocaust shows that there is a universal morality, an evil definition that exists outside cultures and time. Or, show that it is merely a relative morality evil.
3. 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?"
4. Discuss how Eliezer's relationship with his father changes throughout the book.
5. How does this book connect to a theme of loss of innocence?
6. 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?
7. 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?
8. 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.
9. From deportation from Sighet to murder at Birkenau, deception was often used to confuse the prisoners. How does deception dehumanize?
10. What is the symbolism of the word "night" in the book?
11. How is Wiesel's moral struggle an important element of *Night*?
12. Why do you think survivors often feel guilty?
13. What hints of hope does Wiesel offer us in this book?
14. 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?
15. Why should high school students study *Night*?
16. Discuss Wiesel's view of the problem of evil and God? How does this correspond with your own beliefs on the subject?
17. What is an example of a modern-day Holocaust? What can we do?
- 18. Create your own question. Which part of the novel do you want to discuss that we missed in class? [I'll be impressed that you are taking responsibility for your learning.]**

EPIPHANY PAPER EXAMPLE

Sarah Walter
May 15, 2015
Honors Lit A1
Mr. Coia

Hello Again

Every day I wake up in this blindingly bright hospital room. It's been happening for as long as I can remember. Yea, I know, I'm a twenty-something year old guy, I had to have been born at some point. Wouldn't that have just been the first time I woke up in a hospital room? I mean, last time I checked, babies are usually born in hospital rooms. Today is going to be good though, I can tell, because the first thing I see is the most beautiful woman in the world.

She asks me how I'm feeling and I tell her my head is killing me. She explains to me that I was in a bad accident and my head was pretty banged up, but that I should fully heal. She says she's told me this every day for 5 months, but I think she's joking. All I know is that I wake up in this hospital every morning, like God has stuck my life on repeat.

The next morning I wake up again as usual. It's always so bright in here, would it kill someone to shut the blinds? A woman walks into my room. Man, she's beautiful. I'm just wondering how it's physically possible to have eyes that blue. She asks me how my head is doing and I tell her it's having trouble comprehending how a girl that looks like her could be working in a hospital. She tells me I did a great job of remembering my sense of humor. What does that even mean? How would she know I have a good sense of humor if I have never met her before? Of course I shouldn't really complain, she thinks I'm funny so I just go with it.

Bright lights, hospital room, I think you've got the gist of it. The first thing I see is this gorgeous woman with the most amazing blue eyes. She calls me by my name; I'm guessing she saw it on a paper somewhere because I've never met her before. She tells me I'm going into surgery and I ask her why. She says there is a good reason and to just trust her. Of course I trust her, if she told me I had

a giant poisonous spider on my head I would just stare at her and nod dreamily. They take me to a room where a bunch of blue-clad doctors are rushing around with antiseptic and sharp metal objects. The last thing I remember before everything going black was a pair of blue eyes watching me through the door.

When I wake up my first thought is my friend John and the fact that I totally forgot to give him his sweater back. I start to stand up but a nurse runs in and tells me I need to take it easy for a little while. Then I realize something weird; her eyes. Those are the eyes, the ones I swear I've seen every day. I ask what her name is and she tells me it's Amanda. I know that name so well. I should, considering I have asked her that question every day for five months. Suddenly all these memories rush to me that I never knew I had. She was the one who talked to me every day, played games with me, even snuck me ice cream late at night when I was supposed to be sleeping. She was the reason my favorite color was blue. She had been there for me all this time knowing that I wouldn't remember her the next day.

But now I did remember her. I asked her if maybe she wanted to do something together that didn't involve traumatic brain injuries, since we had both had enough of those. She agreed and we actually went out together and had a great time. The best part is, I've remembered every second of it.

Socratic Seminar Grading Criteria

Total _____/20 discussion _____/5 evaluation notes

Name of Speaker (who is the student you are grading?): _____

Name of Evaluator (that's you!): _____

Text: *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Essential Question #1 : “Why is *All Quiet on the Western Front* an important book for high school students to read?”

Essential Question #2 : “In all the ways that Paul Baumer changes in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which is the most impacting? How does his life reflect the content in the epigraph?”

A. Number of comments

0	1	2	3	4	5
Doesn't speak	1 comment	2 comments	3 comments	4 comments	5 comments

B. Quality of comments (earning a 0 -2 on above rubric limits this category to a 0-3)

0	1	2	3	4	5
Doesn't speak	repeats other comments		original ideas		original, deep comments

C. Addresses essential question and stays to the text

0	1	2	3	4	5
Never		once or twice	Often		Insightful and thought-provoking

D. Discussion Etiquette (listens to others, allows others to speak, avoids dominating and cutting others off)

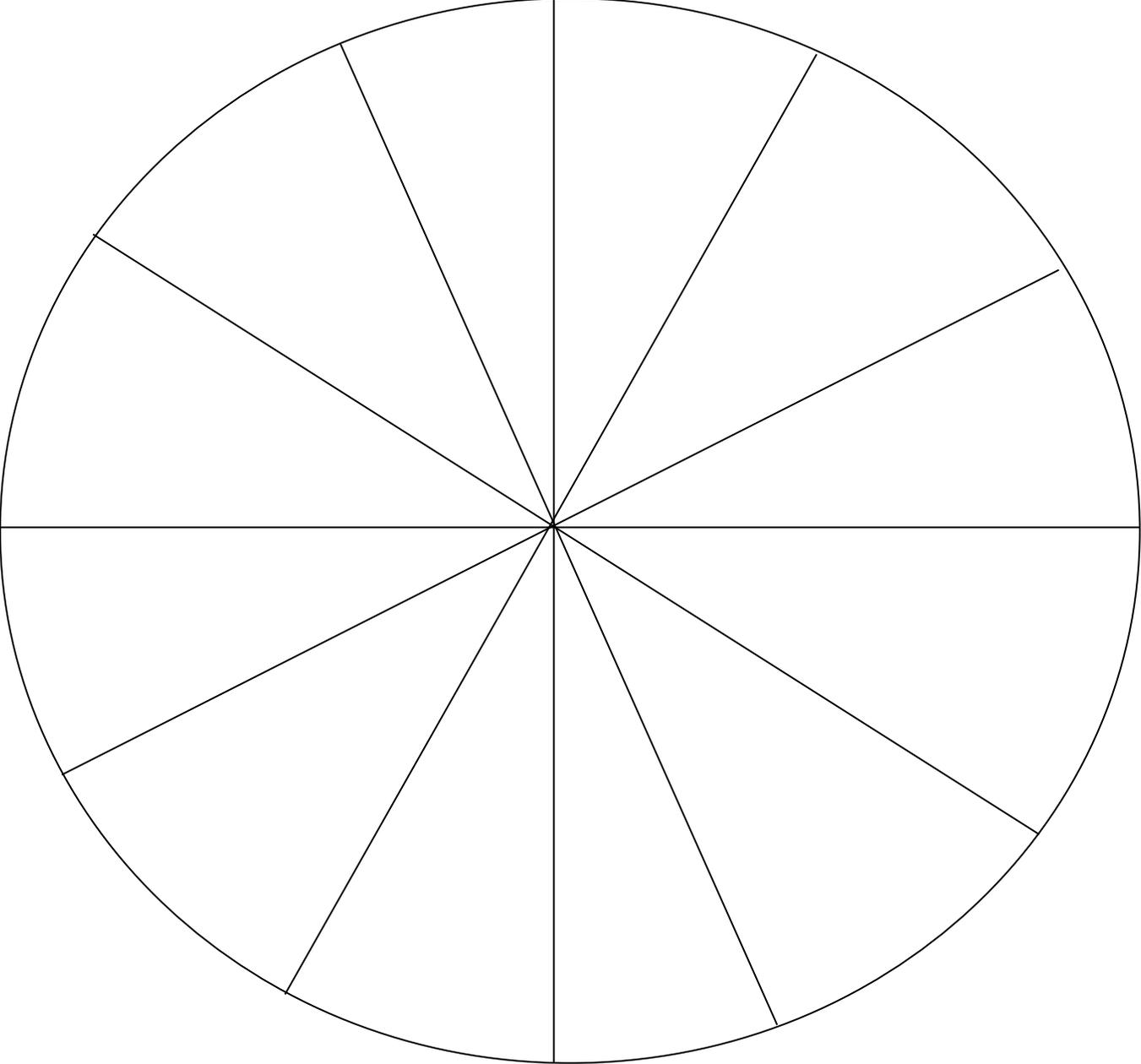
0	1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged/slouching	Listening only	Appears only mildly interested in discussion		actively engaged and good part	

How would you describe and explain what you saw from the Speaker's performance in this activity? What impressed you? What needed more work?

Socratic Seminar Circle

Evaluator's Name: _____

Put student names on the outside of each wedge to represent the circle. Tick off each time a person speaks, and jot down important comments. While you will take notes on all students, your focus will be on your partner.



Additional Comments