

Socratic Seminar Questions

1. Elie Wiesel narrates his own story in his memoir. If you could read the memoir of one of the other characters in *Night*, whose story would you want to hear? Why? (All participants must be prepared to answer this question)
2. There are people today who insist that the Holocaust never occurred or that it was really only a minor event which has been greatly overexaggerated. How would Elie Wiesel respond to those people?
3. *Night* focuses on Elie at the ages of fifteen and sixteen. In what ways did he change during the course of the events he describes?
4. *Night* is not a fun book to read; some parents protest that they do not want their children to read it because the story is so grim. How would you answer critics who say the book should not be required reading in school?
5. Could an event like the Holocaust happen today? Could it happen in the United States? Who would be the potential victims?
6. Why did the people in Elie's village refuse to believe the warnings they had heard about Jews expelled from villages in other countries?
7. In what ways did Elie's experiences affect his beliefs?
8. In what way is Elie's reflection in the mirror at the end of the story a symbol of his internal self? Why can he never forget the look he saw in the eyes of his reflection?
9. Is there such thing as morality in "survival" mode? Is a human truly capable of discerning and acting upon "right & wrong" when enduring great suffering?
10. What is the primary lesson that Wiesel teaches us in *Night*? Choose specific characters and scenes which convey this lesson.
11. Is it possible to stop being "human," and if so, what determines this humanity? When does it start/stop? What is the essential factor in being "human"? (Simply: What makes us human vs. animal?)
12. Many characters in *Night* are transformed into brutal savages due to the inhumane treatment they experience. Does Elie himself escape this fate? Does he remain morally and spiritually intact or does he become a bestial creature? Explain and support your views with specific quotes/actions.
13. Given the nature of the events in *Night* and the time period, in what ways can a reader relate these experiences to their own life?
14. There is an old cliché: "Ignorance is bliss." Why might ignorance be bliss and knowledge tragic?
15. Imagine you and two of your best friends are in a Nazi Concentration Camp. A guard tells you that you must choose one of those friends to be shot dead or he will kill both of your friends. What do you do? And how would this make you feel both at the time it occurs and years later, after you have survived?