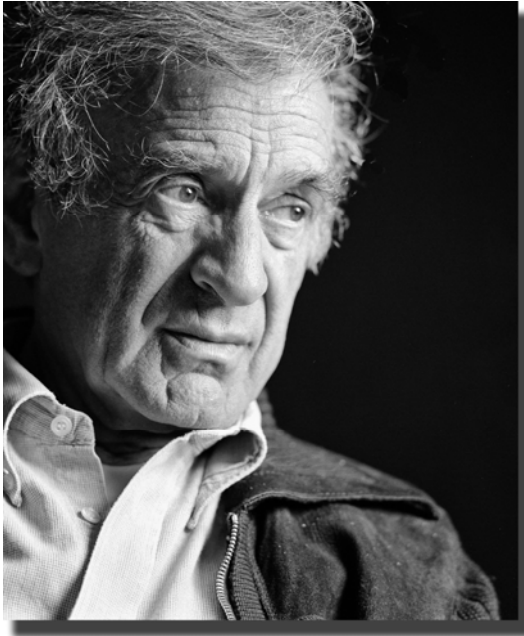


Pre-Reading Preparation

Author Biography: Elie Wiesel



Eliezer Wiesel (We-**ZELL**) was born on September 30, 1928 in Sighet, Transylvania, which is now part of Romania in Eastern Europe. He was the only son in a family of four children, with two older sisters, Hilda and Béa, and a younger sister, Tzipora. Having begun his study of Hebrew at the age of three, his world revolved around family, religious study, community, and God. He was a profoundly religious young man, who spent most of his time studying the Talmud and cabbala, with his mother's encouragement, and learning literature and Hebrew in deference to his father.

All Jewish inhabitants of his village were deported when Elie was just 15. Wiesel and his family were taken to Auschwitz concentration camp, where he became known simply as A-7713, the number tattooed on his arm. Elie was separated from his mother and sisters immediately on arrival at

Auschwitz, but he was able to stay with his father for a year until his father died of dysentery, starvation, and exhaustion at Buchenwald—just months before liberation. During his years in Nazi confinement, Wiesel spent time in the Auschwitz, Buna, Gleiwitz, and Buchenwald concentration camps.

After the war, Wiesel moved to Paris, France, where he mastered the French language and attended Sorbonne University, studying literature, psychology, and philosophy. He later became a reporter for the French newspaper, *L'Arche*, and spent the 1950's traveling the world as a reporter.

In 1955, Wiesel broke his self-imposed vow of silence, finally putting into words his experiences from the Holocaust. His 900-page book, *And the World Kept Silent*, published in Argentina, was later compressed into a 127-page book, *La Nuit* (Night) and published in both French and English in 1958. He has since published over forty books, among them, *Dawn* (1961), *The Accident* (1961), *The Town Beyond the Wall* (1962), *The Jews of Silence* (1966), *A Beggar in Jerusalem* (1970), and *All Rivers Run to the Sea: Memoirs, Vol. 1, 1928-1969* (1995).

Wiesel has held numerous teaching positions, and since 1976, he has been Andrew Mellon Professor of Humanities at Boston University. He has received numerous awards for his literary and human rights activities, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal, and the Medal of Liberty Award. Wiesel also won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, and soon afterward, he and his wife established the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, whose mission is to counter intolerance and promote equality and acceptance through international dialogue.

Wiesel became an American citizen in 1963, and in 1969, married Marion Erster Rose from Austria, who has translated most of Wiesel's books into English. They have one son together, Elisha (Shlomo Elisha Wiesel), whom they named after Elie's father. Marion has a daughter, Jennifer, from a previous marriage. They make their home in New York City.

Standards Focus: Exploring Expository Writing

Directions: Using the biographical information about Elie Wiesel on page 9, answer the following questions. Write the letter of the correct answer on the line.

- 1. _____ What is the author’s purpose in writing this biography of Elie Wiesel?
 - a. To persuade the reader to read Wiesel’s books
 - b. To inform the reader about Wiesel’s life and works
 - c. To describe Wiesel’s life experiences
 - d. To entertain the reader before reading Wiesel’s novel

- 2. _____ Based on the information given in the biography, the reader can assume that:
 - a. Wiesel is very well-educated
 - b. Wiesel learned a lot from his experiences in the Holocaust
 - c. Wiesel really enjoys writing
 - d. All of the above

- 3. _____ Not much information was given in this biography about Wiesel’s childhood. What would be your best guess as to why? (Be prepared to explain your answer.)
 - a. Not much is known about his childhood
 - b. He feels that kind of information is unimportant
 - c. He is ashamed of who he was
 - d. He wants his public to use their imaginations

- 4. _____ In which paragraph would it be most appropriate to insert information about Wiesel’s experiences during the Holocaust?
 - a. In paragraph two
 - b. Between paragraphs one and two
 - c. Before paragraph one
 - d. After paragraph two

Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

5. The phrase *literary and human rights activities* is used in this biography. Using context clues from the information given, what do you believe is the meaning of the phrase?

6. If you were given the opportunity to interview Elie Wiesel for an article to be published in your school newspaper, what three or four questions would you ask him?

Night

Anticipation/Reaction Guide—Before Reading

Directions: For each of the following statements, compose **one** well-written sentence giving your reaction to the statement in your response. An example has been done for you. (Be prepared to read some of your responses aloud in a class discussion.)

Ex. Everyone in every situation should always be treated equally.

Sometimes people have different needs and treating everyone the same in every situation might even be unfair in certain situations.

1. It is always best to speak the truth, no matter what the consequences may be.

2. People tend to reveal their true selves in difficult situations. People don't change.

3. Mankind is basically good.

4. Our basic human instincts dictate to us that we must protect ourselves first in times of trouble.

5. People of one race *can be* less important than or inferior to people of other races.

6. When someone is influenced by others to do something against their natural tendencies, it is really their choice, *not* peer pressure.

7. When faced with something we disagree with, it is almost always best to stay quiet and accept it.
