

In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1

Exploring the Role of Neutrality in the Holocaust

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	105-125 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	2-3 class periods
Course	World Literature		

Essential Question

Why is it important to learn history?

Summary

In this lesson, students will look at the question of neutrality through the lens of the Holocaust. Students will explore articles from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's website, read an excerpt from Elie Wiesel's book, "Night," and read Elie Wiesel's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech while synthesizing and summarizing information throughout. It will be helpful if students have some prior knowledge about the Holocaust, but this lesson can stand alone even if prior knowledge is limited.

Snapshot

Engage

Students view a painting from a Holocaust survivor and examine how it represents a memory/piece/element/connection of the Holocaust.

Explore

Students explore articles from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum website.

Explain

Students read and summarize an excerpt from Elie Wiesel's *Night.*

Extend

Students read and Why-Light Elie Wiesel's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech.

Evaluate

Students write a CER paragraph responding to the question of neutrality during the Holocaust.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

SYN501: Draw logical conclusions using information from two informational texts

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

10.2.R.1: Summarize the main ideas and paraphrase significant parts of increasingly complex texts.
10.3.W.2: Compose informative essays, reports, or technical writing that:
- objectively introduce and develop topics
- include a defensible thesis
- incorporate evidence
- maintain an organized structure
- use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity and concision
- establish and maintain a formal style
- emulate literary devices from mentor texts

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.2.R.1: Summarize the main ideas and paraphrase significant parts of increasingly complex texts.
9.2.W.1: Routinely and recursively prewrite (e.g., develop and organize ideas).
9.3.W.3: Compose argumentative essays, reviews, or op-eds that:
- introduce precise, informed claims
- include a defensible thesis
- acknowledge counterclaims or alternate perspectives
- organize claims, counterclaims, and evidence in a logical sequence
- provide the most relevant evidence to develop balanced arguments, using credible sources
- use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity and concision
- use style and tone that suits the audience and purpose

Attachments

- Acceptance Speech—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1 - Spanish.docx
- Acceptance Speech—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1 - Spanish.pdf
- Acceptance Speech—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1.docx
- Acceptance Speech—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1.pdf
- Excerpt from Night—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1 - Spanish.docx
- Excerpt from Night—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1 - Spanish.pdf
- Excerpt from Night—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1.docx
- Excerpt from Night—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1.pdf
- Lesson Slides—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1.pptx
- Note Catcher—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1 - Spanish.docx
- Note Catcher—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1 - Spanish.pdf
- Note Catcher—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1.docx
- Note Catcher—In the Kingdom of Night, Part 1.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Note Catcher handout (attached)
- Excerpt from *Night* handout (attached; one per student)
- Acceptance Speech handout (attached; one per student)
- Highlighters (one per student)
- Sticky notes (one per student)
- Student devices with internet access
- Notebook paper
- Pens/pencils

- SMART Board/projector/printer access
- Copy paper
- *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman (optional)

10 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, review and annotate the Excerpt from *Night* handout and the Acceptance Speech handout. This will help you anticipate students' questions, and these annotated texts can be used as a guide when helping students.

As the students enter the classroom, display **slide 3** from the attached **Lesson Slides**. To begin the lesson, ask students to answer the Bell Ringer questions on a piece of notebook paper or elsewhere if you have a classroom norm for bell work. Have students review David Olère's painting, "Gassing by Zyklon B." Without sharing the name or author of the painting, ask students to write down everything they notice about the painting and answer the following question: *What is this painting? What does it depict?*

Allow students 4-5 minutes to complete this assignment.

After students finish their lists and answer the question, facilitate a short discussion asking them to share out their responses and to draw inferences as to what this painting depicts.

Transition to **slide 4** and reveal the painting's author and title. Facilitate a short discussion by asking the class:

- *Was your previous answer correct?*
- *What clues show us that this painting is depicting a mass execution in a concentration camp?*

After the discussion, have students draw a horizontal line underneath their previous responses and ask them to write down everything they know about the Holocaust. These do not need to be complete sentences; a bulleted list will suffice. Use student responses to assess what prior knowledge students have about this event and what questions or clarification they may need.

Transition to **slide 5** to review the Lesson Objective. Display **slide 6** and discuss with the class the Essential Question and some of the other major ideas in this lesson by asking the following questions:

- *What lessons can we learn from history?*
- *Is it ever okay to be silent when you see something bad happening?*
- *In what circumstances is it okay to be neutral?*

30 minutes

Explore

Transition to **slide 7** and distribute the **Note Catcher** handout to each student with a small sticky note attached. Instruct students to set the sticky note to the side to use later in the lesson.

Using their devices, instruct students to go to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website where "The Holocaust: A Learning Site for Students" is located.

Ask students to browse the following categories:

- Nazi Rule (9 articles available)
- Jews in Prewar Germany (9 articles available)
- The "Final Solution" (8 articles available)
- Nazi Camp System (8 articles available)
- Rescue and Resistance (7 articles available)

Direct students to choose one article from one of the five categories. Encourage students to explore things they don't know about. Transition to **slide 8**. Give students 20 minutes to select and read the article and, on their Note Catcher, write a 10-sentence summary of their article and three things they learned. Allow extra time as needed.

Options to Consider:

There are dozens of other articles on this website; if students want to read something outside of those categories, be open to it. For example, a student may way to learn more about African American Soldiers during World War II. Encourage exploration of the website. Alternatively, you could assign each student a different article to read and summarize.

Transition to **slide 9**. Ask students to share out some of the things they learned from their article and explore questions they still have. Allow students to ask each other questions about their topic.

30 minutes

Explain

Transition to **slide 10**. Invite students to consider the quote on the slide:

"We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented." - Elie Wiesel

Ask the class whether they agree or disagree with this quote. Give students some time to think before asking volunteers to share.

Transition to **slide 11** and show the video on the slide, "Elie Wiesel as Survivor and Founder." After the video, have students answer the question: *Who is Elie Wiesel?* on their Note Catcher handout. Ask students to explain why we would learn about him.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=ABJzkHEEmdI

Preview the excerpt from "Night" by Elie Wiesel by displaying and sharing the information on **slide 12** about his three-book series: "Night," "Day," and "Dawn."

Distribute copies of the **Excerpt from Night** and transition to **slide 13**. You can opt to read the excerpt to students or ask them to read it together or individually. Have students complete a Stop and Jot on their handout at the end of each page.

Allow 20-25 minutes for this activity.

Transition to **slide 14**. Use this as an opportunity to acknowledge the seriousness and emotional heaviness of this lesson. Emphasize the importance of learning history and the experiences of those who have witnessed it.

Teacher's Note: Discussing difficult topics

It can be difficult or uncomfortable when discussing difficult topics. Allow students a safe space to express their feelings about what they have learned. Remind them that it is okay to be upset by history and by the tragedies experienced by others, but it does not mean we should not learn about them. Being upset by tragedies is what makes us human, and it shows that there is hope for a better future.

On the sticky note, invite students to complete the How Am I Feeling? What Am I Thinking? strategy.

Direct students to draw a line to divide the sticky note in half.

On the left side, instruct students to draw or write a short response regarding how they feel about the content they have explored.

On the right side, instruct students to write a sentence that explains what they understand or think now about the topic. This could be a question or comment regarding their learning or a description of the experience itself.

25 minutes

Extend

Transition to **slide 15**. Distribute a highlighter and the **Acceptance Speech** handout to each student.

Have students read the speech individually using the Why-Lighting strategy as they read. Direct students to highlight anything they find important or profound or they may have questions about. After they finish reading and highlighting the speech, have them write in the margins of their handout why they highlighted those words or lines of text. Allow 10-15 minutes to complete this activity. Adjust time as needed.

Alternative Approach

Consider reading the speech aloud to your students, so they highlight as you read. This option could help improve the clarity and understanding of the speech by showing when to pause or use a different inflection in tone.

Teacher's Note

There are allusions to other historical figures and events throughout the speech. Some questions may arise as to who these historical figures are. Use the hidden **slides 16–17** for some quick explanations that may offer some clarity.

Another option could be to have students look up these historical figures and events themselves and write quick explanations in the margins of their handouts.

After students finish their Why-Lighting activity, transition to **slide 18**. With a partner, have students compare their annotations and answering the following questions from the slide.

- *What did you highlight that was the same? Different?*
- *Discuss your "why" for highlights that differ.*
- *Can you answer each other's questions?*

If students still have outstanding questions, allow students time to research their questions to determine the answer and add to their annotations.

Allow at least 10-15 minutes to complete this, but adjust time as needed.

Have students keep their annotated Acceptance Speech handout. They will use it in the next lesson, "In the Kingdom of the Night, Part 2."

10 minutes

Evaluate

Transition to **slide 19**. Review the Elie Wiesel quote that was discussed earlier, again asking the class if they agree or disagree with this quote. Ask students to consider whether their understanding of this quote has changed or deepened. Instruct students to write a Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER) paragraph explaining their answer.

If students are in need of additional supports for writing a paragraph in the CER format, transition to **slide 21** for sentence starters to scaffold the CER paragraph. On **slide 22**, there is a video that explains CER in-depth.

Optional Scaffolding

You may want to provide scaffolding if students who need additional support for writing a paragraph in a CER format. Consider sharing the sentence starters on **slide 20**:

- **Claim**: I agree/disagree with this quote because _____.
- **Evidence**: For example, in the [speech or book] it says _____.
- **Reasoning**: This shows _____. This is important because _____.

Or display **slide 21** and show the Claims, Evidence, and Reasoning video which explains how to write a CER response in more depth.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=JGOxVIgmGWE

Supplemental Resources

Teacher's Note

To enrich this lesson, consider pairing this lesson with the graphic novel *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bell ringers and exit tickets. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Claim, evidence, reasoning (CER). Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/156
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- K20 Center. (n.d.). How am I feeling? What am I thinking?. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/187
- K20 Center. (n.d.). In the Kingdom of the Night, Part 2. 5E Lessons. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/lesson/2225?rev=15068
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Stop and jot. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/168
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- Parrott-Sheffer, C. (2019, March 20). *Holocaust museum*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Holocaust-museum
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- Wiesel, E. (1986, December 10). Nobel peace prize acceptance speech. https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1986/wiesel/26054-elie-wiesel-acceptance-speech-1986/