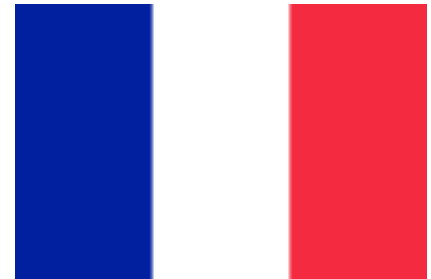


Historical Context and Terminology

■ for Reading *Night* by Elie Wiesel

Allies: the four most important nations
joined in the fight against the Axis nations
during World War II– United States, Great
Britain, Soviet Union, and France.





Axis: the three important enemy nations of World War II—Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Anti-Semitism: Irrational prejudice and discrimination against Jews.

Aryan: The Nazi term for what they considered the German race. It is not a racial term and has no biological validity. “Aryan” was made up by the Nazis to refer to a racial ideal that they claimed was “superior”—that is the “master race.”



Concentration Camps: A prison camp where the Nazis sent people they thought were dangerous; “concentrated” in this way, the prisoners could do no harm. People died of starvation, slave labor and disease.

Death Camps: Six major death camps whose primary purpose was killing.

Death Camps:

1. Chelmo
2. Belzec
3. Sobibor
4. Treblinka
5. Majdanek
6. Auschwitz-Birkenau

Auschwitz-Birkenau

Largest of the Nazi concentration camps, located in Southwestern Poland, with a killing center at Birkenau. Included gas chambers. More than 1,000,000 died.







Deportation: **Forced removal** of Jews in Nazi-occupied countries **from their homes** under the pretense of resettlement in the East. Most were shipped to **death camps**.







Final Solution: The Nazi plan to **murder ALL** the Jews of Europe. The full name is written “The Final Solution of the Jewish Question.”

Fuhrer: The supreme **leader** of Nazi Germany, **Adolf Hitler**.



Genocide: Deliberate systematic murder of an entire political, cultural, racial, or religious group.

Gestapo: The Nazi State Secret Police. They arrested, jailed, and tortured untold thousands during the years of the Third Reich.

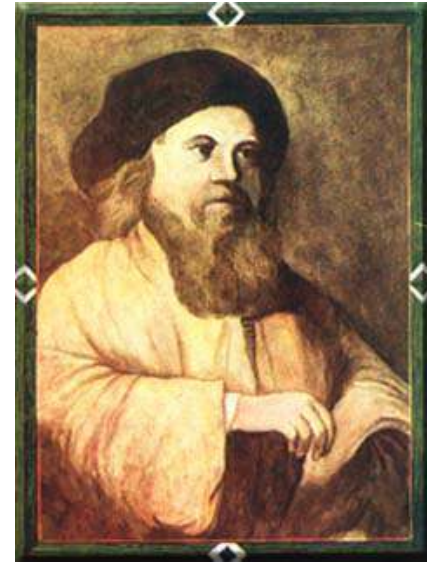
Ghettos: Areas of cities and towns in Eastern Europe in which Jews were forced to live in extreme, overcrowded conditions that included starvation, cold and disease. Eventually, ghettos were “liquidated.”







Hasidism: A Jewish mystic movement that reacted against **Talmudic** learning and maintained that God's presence was in all of one's surroundings and that one should serve God in one's every **deed and word**.



Baal Shem-Tov a Jewish mystical rabbi. He is considered to be the founder of Hasidic Judaism.

Judaism: the monotheistic religion of the **Jews**, having its ethical, ceremonial, and legal foundation in the precepts of the **Old Testament** and in the teachings and commentaries of the rabbis as found chiefly in the Talmud.

Judenrein: “**Jew-free**”

/wEWBwL



Kabbalah: an ancient Jewish mystical tradition based on an mysterious interpretation of the **Old Testament**. Traditionally, Jews would not learn Kabbalah or mysticism until age **40**.

Kapo: The **leader** of a concentration camp work group who was also a **prisoner**.

Mein Kampf (My Struggle): Adolph Hitler's **autobiography** detailing his plan to make Europe *judenrein*.

Night of Broken Glass (Kristallnacht): The name refers to the wave of violent anti-Jewish **pogroms** which took place on November 9 and 10, 1938. The name came from the broken glass that lined the streets from the windows of **synagogues, homes, and Jewish-owned businesses** that were plundered and destroyed during the violence.

Nuremberg Laws: **Laws** passed in the fall of 1935, stripping Jews of their **rights**.

Occupation: Control of a country by a **foreign** military power.

Pogrom: Organized violence against Jews often with the **support of the government**.

Kristallnacht

Night of Broken Glass







Selection: All Jews arriving at the camp were exposed to a “selection” in which those fit for work were **separated** from those unfit for work. Those able for work were transferred to the main camp, where they normally worked or starved to death. Those unfit for work were **killed** immediately. Selection also happened periodically during a prisoner’s time at a camp.

Sonderkommando: Jews temporarily spared to **work** in the death camps’ killing centers. They were mostly responsible for removing corpses. Eventually they were **killed**, too.

Selection



Selection

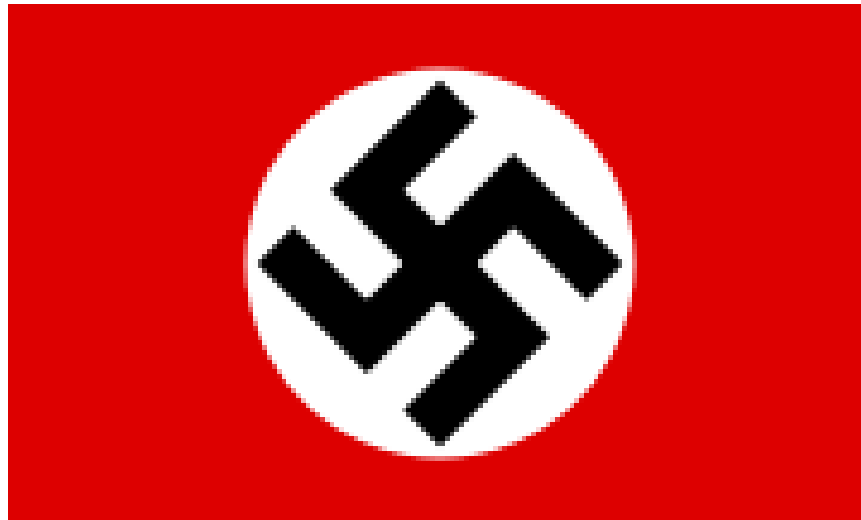


SS: Abbreviation for the German words meaning “**protection squad**.” The SS began as Hitler’s bodyguard, became a **private Nazi army** separate from the regular German army and grew into the most powerful organization in the Third Reich. Its members were given special training and were considered among the best in the nation. They were called “**blackshirts**” because of the color of their uniforms. They also ran the concentration camps.

SS



Swastika: An ancient symbol, dating back about 6,000 years; it often meant good luck. Turned slightly on its side and with some other changes, the swastika was the symbol for Nazism and became part of the German flag.



Talmud: The most significant collection of the Jewish oral tradition interpreting the Torah.

























Torah: In its narrowest sense, Torah, the first **five** books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, sometimes called the Pentateuch or the Five Books of Moses. In its broadest sense, Torah is the entire body of **Jewish teachings**.










Third Reich: The German word Reich means **empire**. According to the Nazis, the First Reich was the period of Germany's greatest power, the Holy Roman Empire, from 962 to 1806. The Second Reich was its next period of great power, under the leadership of Otto von Bismarck, from 1871 to 1890. Hitler's Third Reich, which was supposed to last "a thousand years," lasted for twelve: **1933-1945**.

Underground: A group acting in **secrecy** to **oppose** the government and **resist** the occupying enemy forces.

Yellow Star: The six-pointed **Star of David** was a Jewish **symbol** that the Nazis **forced** Jews above the age of six to wear as a mark of shame and to **make Jews visible**.



	Political Enemies	Habitual Criminals	Emigrants (Foreign Forced Laborers)	Jehovah's Witnesses	Gay males	Asocials	Roma and Sinti
Basic colors							
Markings for Repeaters							
Inmates of Penal Battalions							
Markings for Jews							

Special Markings	 Male Race Defiler	 Female Race Defiler	 Escape Suspect	 Inmate Number	 Applicable marks were worn in descending order as follows: Inmate Number, Repeater Bar, Triangle or Star, Member of <u>Penal Battalion</u> , Escape Suspect
	 Pole: "P" on a red triangle	 Czech: "T" (the German word for Czech is <i>Tscheche</i>) on a red triangle	 Member of the <u>Armed forces</u> : Uninverted red triangle	 Special Inmate: Brown arm band	

Holocaust

The period during which approximately 6 million European Jews, 200,000 Roma (Gypsies), and at least 200,000 mentally or physically disabled patients were slaughtered by Nazi Germany and its friends, from 1933-1945.

When writing about the Holocaust, you MUST always capitalize the “H.”