

## Graphic Organizer for Excerpts from *Night* by Elie Wiesel, Literary Analysis

**Essential Question:** How might the circumstances in which this memoir was written affect its content?

Excerpt	What is going on in this excerpt? (Summarize)	Identify the problem. (Conceptualization)	What language (words, phrases, etc.) does Wiesel use to persuade the audience of the reliability of his account? (Close Reading)	How does the author's word choice indicate his perspective/view of these events (tone)? (Close Reading)
<p>1. Spring 1944. Good news from the Russian front. No doubt could remain now of Germany's defeat. It was only a question of time – of months or weeks perhaps. The trees were in blossom. This was a year like any other, with its springtime, its betrothals, its weddings and births. People said: "The Russian army's making gigantic strides forward . . . Hitler won't be able to do us any harm, even if he wants to." Yes, we even doubted that he wanted to exterminate us. Was he going to wipe out a whole people? Could he exterminate a population scattered throughout so many countries? So many millions! What methods could he use? And in the middle of the twentieth century!</p>				

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<p>2. Anquish. German soldiers – with their steel helmets, and their emblem, the death's head. However, our first impressions of the Germans were most reassuring. The officers were billeted in private houses, even in the homes of Jews. Their attitude toward their hosts was distant, but polite. They never demanded the impossible, made no unpleasant comments, and even smiled occasionally at the mistress of the house. One German officer lived in the house opposite ours. He had a room with the Kahn family. They said he was a charming man – calm, likable, polite, and sympathetic. Three days after he moved in he brought Madame Kahn a box of chocolates. The optimists rejoiced. “Well there you are, you see! What did we tell you? You wouldn't believe us. There they are your Germans! What do you think of them? Where is their famous cruelty?” The Germans were already in the town, the Fascists were already in power, the verdict had already been pronounced, yet the Jews of Sighet continued to smile.</p>				

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<p>3. Saturday, the day of rest, was chosen for our expulsion. The night before, we had the traditional Friday evening meal. We said the customary grace for the bread and wine and swallowed our food without a word. We were, we felt, gathered for the last time round the family table. ...</p> <p>At dawn, we were in the street, ready to leave. This time there were no Hungarian police. An agreement had been made with the Jewish Council that they should organize it all themselves. ... The synagogue was like a huge station: luggage and tears. The altar was broken, the hangings torn down, the walls bare. There were so many of us that we could scarcely breathe. We spent a horrible twenty-four hours there. There were men downstairs; women on the first floor. ... Since no one could go out, people were relieving themselves in a corner. The following morning, we marched to the station, where a convoy of cattle wagons was waiting. The Hungarian police made us get in – eighty people in each car. We were left a few loaves of bread and some buckets of water. The bars at the windows were checked, to see that they were not loose. Then the cars were sealed. In each car one person was placed in charge. If anyone escaped, he would be shot.</p>				

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<p>4. We still had a few provisions left. But we never ate enough to satisfy our hunger. To save was our rule: to save up for tomorrow. Tomorrow might be worse. The train stopped at Kaschau, a little town on the Czechoslovak frontier. We realized then that we were not going to stay in Hungary. Our eyes were opened, but too late.</p> <p>The door of the car slid open. A German officer, accompanied by a Hungarian lieutenant-interpreter, came up and introduced himself. "From this moment, you come under the authority of the German army. Those of you who still have gold, silver, or watches in your possession must give them up now. Anyone who is later found to have kept anything will be shot on the spot. Secondly, anyone who feels ill may go to the hospital car. That's all." The Hungarian lieutenant went among us with a basket and collected the last possessions from those who no longer wished to taste the bitterness of terror.</p> <p>"There are eighty of you in this wagon," added the German officer. "If anyone is missing, you'll all be shot, like dogs . . ."</p> <p>They disappeared. The doors were closed. We were caught in a trap, right up to our necks. The doors were nailed up; the way back was finally cut off.</p>				

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<p>5. Struck down with dysentery, my father lay in his bunk, five other invalids with him. I sat by his side, watching him, not daring to believe that he could escape death again. Nevertheless, I did all I could to give him hope. I awoke on January 29 at dawn. In my father's place lay another invalid. They must have taken him away before dawn and carried him to the crematory. He may still have been breathing.</p>				
<p>6. On April tenth, there were still about twenty thousand of us in the camp, including several hundred children. They decided to evacuate us all at once, right on until the evening. Afterward, they were going to blow up the camp. We were tormented with hunger. We had eaten nothing for six days, except a bit of grass or some potato peelings found near the kitchens. At ten o'clock in the morning the SS scattered through the camp, moving the last victims toward the assembly place. Then the resistance movement decided to act. Armed men suddenly rose up everywhere. Bursts of firing. Grenades exploding. We children stayed flat on the ground in the block. The battle did not last long. Toward noon everything was quiet again. The SS had fled and the resistance had taken charge of the running of the camp. At about six o'clock in the evening, the first American tank stood at the gates of Buchenwald.</p>				