

**Objective: Understand and use vocabulary used in Elie Weisel's Night****A Guide to Jewish/Hebrew Diction in *Night*:**

1. beadle	a caretaker or "man of all work" in a synagogue
2. cabbala	Jewish mysticism—the idea that the Torah has hidden meanings in it that relate the spiritual world to the earthly world and everyday life. Followers study and search for these hidden meanings. The teachings of the cabbala are found in the <i>Zohar</i> .
3. Hasidism	a Jewish reform movement inspired by the cabbala that spread through Eastern Europe in the 1700s. For Hasidic Jews, the divine presence is everywhere, in everything. They therefore try to live a life of total dedication to God.
4. Job	a biblical figure who questioned why the just must suffer while the wicked flourish.
5. Kaddish	a prayer Jews recite in memory of a loved one. The prayer praises and reaffirms a belief in one God.
6. Maimonides	great Jewish scholar who lived in the 12 <sup>th</sup> century.
7. Messiah	the savior and deliverer of the Jewish people. Jews believe the Messiah is yet to come; Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah.
8. Palestine	territory assigned to the British in 1920 by the terms of post-World War I treaty with Turkey, the former ruler of the area. British control ended in 1948 when the territory was divided into the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan.
9. Passover	Jewish holiday celebrated for 8 days; commemorates the Exodus when Moses led the Jews out of Egypt and slavery.
10. Pentecost	the Jewish holiday that commemorates the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Called <i>Shavuot</i> in Hebrew, it is celebrated about 7 weeks after Passover.
11. Phylacteries (tefilin)	two small leather boxes containing four excerpts from the Bible. One box is strapped to an arm and the other to the forehead during weekday morning prayers. Tefilin help religious Jews focus their entire being on God as they recite their prayers.
12. Rosh Hashanah	the Jewish New Year. The holiday, which falls in September or October, marks the beginning of a ten-day period of divine judgment—a time when Jews believe God calls them to account for their actions. These days are marked by repentance, regret, and resolutions to make amends to one another as well as to God. The period ends on Yom Kippur.
13. synagogue	a Jewish house of prayer.
14. Talmud	a collection of rabbinical teachings and commentaries on the Torah, the Five Books of Moses.
15. Temple (the Destruction of the Temple)	a reference to the temple in Jerusalem, which the Romans destroyed in 70 C.E. It was the center of Jewish worship in ancient times. Today Jews recall its destruction in daily prayers.
16. Yom Kippur	Day of Atonement. Day spent in synagogue, praying and fasting, and marks the end of Rosh Hashanah.
17. <i>Zohar</i>	the Book of Splendor; compiled in the 13 <sup>th</sup> century, it is a commentary on the Five Books of Moses.
18. Zionism	the belief that Jews must once more become a nation with a land of their own in Palestine. A commitment to Zionism led a number of European Jews to settle in Palestine in the early 1900s.

**A Guide to Nazi Diction in *Night***

19. **Auschwitz-Birkenau**—established in 1940 as a concentration camp, a killing center was added in 1942 at Birkenau. Also part of the huge camp complex was a slave labor camp known as Buna-Monowitz.
20. **Concentration camp**—a prison camp in which individuals are held without regard for accepted rules of arrest and detention. The Nazis constructed concentration camps to hold Jews, “Gypsies,” communists, and others considered “enemies of the state.”
21. **Death camp**—a camp where the Nazis murdered people in assembly-lines. The largest death camp was Auschwitz-Birkenau. The term was also used for concentration camps such as Bergen-Belsen and Dachau, where thousands died of starvation, disease, and maltreatment.
22. **Kapo**—a prisoner forced to oversee other prisoners.
23. **Mengele, Josef (1911–1979)**—senior SS physician at Auschwitz-Birkenau from 1943–1944. He carried out “selections” of prisoners upon their arrival at the camp and conducted experiments on some of those prisoners.
24. **“Selection”**—the process the Nazis used to separate those prisoners who would be assigned to forced labor from those who were to be killed immediately.
25. **SS**—in German, Schutzstaffel; the elite guard of Nazi Germany. It provided staff for the police, camp guards, and military units within the German army.

## 8 Stages of Genocide

**1. CLASSIFICATION:** All cultures have categories to distinguish people into "us and them" by ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality: German and Jew, Hutu and Tutsi. Bipolar societies that lack mixed categories, such as Rwanda and Burundi, are the most likely to have genocide. The main preventive measure at this early stage is to develop universalistic institutions that transcend ethnic or racial divisions, that actively promote tolerance and understanding, and that promote classifications that transcend the divisions. The Catholic church could have played this role in Rwanda, had it not been riven by the same ethnic cleavages as Rwandan society. Promotion of a common language in countries like Tanzania has also promoted transcendent national identity. This search for common ground is vital to early prevention of genocide.

**2. SYMBOLIZATION:** We give names or other symbols to the classifications. We name people "Jews" or "Gypsies", or distinguish them by colors or dress; and apply the symbols to members of groups. Classification and symbolization are universally human and do not necessarily result in genocide unless they lead to the next stage, dehumanization. When combined with hatred, symbols may be forced upon unwilling members of pariah groups: the yellow star for Jews under Nazi rule, the blue scarf for people from the Eastern Zone in Khmer Rouge Cambodia. To combat symbolization, hate symbols can be legally forbidden (swastikas) as can hate speech. Group marking like gang clothing or tribal scarring can be outlawed, as well. The problem is that legal limitations will fail if unsupported by popular cultural enforcement. Though Hutu and Tutsi were forbidden words in Burundi until the 1980's, code-words replaced them. If widely supported, however, denial of symbolization can be powerful, as it was in Bulgaria, where the government refused to supply enough yellow badges and at least eighty percent of Jews did not wear them, depriving the yellow star of its significance as a Nazi symbol for Jews.

**3. DEHUMANIZATION:** One group denies the humanity of the other group. Members of it are equated with animals, vermin, insects or diseases. Dehumanization overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder. At this stage, hate propaganda in print and on hate radios is used to vilify the victim group. In combating this dehumanization, incitement to genocide should not be confused with protected speech. Genocidal societies lack constitutional protection for countervailing speech, and should be treated differently than democracies. Local and international leaders should condemn the use of hate speech and make it culturally unacceptable. Leaders who incite genocide should be banned from international travel and have their foreign finances frozen. Hate radio stations should be shut down, and hate propaganda banned. Hate crimes and atrocities should be promptly punished.

**4. ORGANIZATION:** Genocide is always organized, usually by the state, often using militias to provide deniability of state responsibility (the Janjaweed in Darfur.) Sometimes organization is informal (Hindu mobs led by local RSS militants) or decentralized (terrorist groups.) Special army units or militias are often trained and armed. Plans are made for genocidal killings. To combat this stage, membership in these militias should be outlawed. Their leaders should be denied visas for foreign travel. The U.N. should impose arms embargoes on governments and citizens of countries involved in genocidal massacres, and create commissions to investigate violations, as was done in post-genocide Rwanda.

**5. POLARIZATION:** Extremists drive the groups apart. Hate groups broadcast polarizing propaganda. Laws may forbid intermarriage or social interaction. Extremist terrorism targets moderates, intimidating and silencing the center. Moderates from the perpetrators' own group are most able to stop genocide, so are the first to be arrested and killed. Prevention may mean security protection for moderate leaders or assistance to human rights groups. Assets of extremists may be seized, and visas for international travel denied to them. Coups d'état by extremists should be opposed by international sanctions.

**6. PREPARATION:** Victims are identified and separated out because of their ethnic or religious identity. Death lists are drawn up. Members of victim groups are forced to wear identifying symbols. Their property is expropriated. They are often segregated into ghettos, deported into concentration camps, or confined to a famine-struck region and starved. At this stage, a Genocide Emergency must be declared. If the political will of the great powers, regional alliances, or the U.N. Security Council can be mobilized, armed international intervention should be prepared, or heavy assistance provided to the victim group to prepare for its self-defense. Otherwise, at least humanitarian assistance should be organized by the U.N. and private relief groups for the inevitable tide of refugees to come.

**7. EXTERMINATION** begins, and quickly becomes the mass killing legally called "genocide." It is "extermination" to the killers because they do not believe their victims to be fully human. When it is sponsored by the state, the armed forces often work with militias to do the killing. Sometimes the genocide results in revenge killings by groups against each other, creating the downward whirlpool-like cycle of bilateral genocide (as in Burundi). At this stage, only rapid and overwhelming armed intervention can stop genocide. Real safe areas or refugee escape corridors should be established with heavily armed international protection. (An unsafe "safe" area is worse than none at all.) The U.N. Standing High Readiness Brigade, EU Rapid Response Force, or regional forces -- should be authorized to act by the U.N. Security Council if the genocide is small. For larger interventions, a multilateral force authorized by the U.N. should intervene. If the U.N. is paralyzed, regional alliances must act. It is time to recognize that the international responsibility to protect transcends the narrow interests of individual nation states. If strong nations will not provide troops to intervene directly, they should provide the airlift, equipment, and financial means necessary for regional states to intervene.

**8. DENIAL** is the eighth stage that always follows a genocide. It is among the surest indicators of further genocidal massacres. The perpetrators of genocide dig up the mass graves, burn the bodies, try to cover up the evidence and intimidate the witnesses. They deny that they committed any crimes, and often blame what happened on the victims. They block investigations of the crimes, and continue to govern until driven from power by force, when they flee into exile. There they remain with impunity, like Pol Pot or Idi Amin, unless they are captured and a tribunal is established to try them. The response to denial is punishment by an international tribunal or national courts. There the evidence can be heard, and the perpetrators punished. Tribunals like the Yugoslav or Rwanda Tribunals, or an international tribunal to try the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, or an International Criminal Court may not deter the worst genocidal killers. But with the political will to arrest and prosecute them, some may be brought to justice.

*Mobile Killing*

Kiev, 16 May 1942

Field Post Office  
No 32704  
B Nr 40/42

TOP SECRET

To: SS-Obersturmbannführer Rauff

Berlin, Prinz-Albrecht-Str. 8

pers.  
R/295 Pradel n.R.  
b/R

Sinkel [?] b.R., p 16/6

The overhauling of vans by groups D and C is finished....

I ordered the vans of group D to be camouflaged as house trailers by putting one set of window shutters on each side of the small van and two on each side of the larger vans, such as one often sees on farmhouses in the country. The vans became so well-known, that not only the authorities, but also the civilian population called the van "death van," as soon as one of these vehicles appeared. It is my opinion, the van cannot be kept secret for any length of time, not even camouflaged....

I ordered that during application of gas all the men were to be kept as far away from the vans as possible, so they should not suffer damage to their health by the gas which eventually

performed by students and doctors with only two years training, although they were very dangerous and difficult.... Many prisoners died on the operating table and many others from later complications. I performed the autopsies....

During my time at Dachau, I was familiar with many kinds of experiments carried on there. The victims never volunteered but were forced to submit to these operations. Dr. Klaus Schilling conducted malaria experiments on about 1200 people between 1941 and 1945. Himmler personally ordered him to conduct these experiments. The victims were either bitten by mosquitoes or given injections of malaria sporozoites; treatments included quinine, pyrifin, neosalvarsam, anipyrim, pyramidon, and a drug called 2516 Behring. I performed autopsies on those who died from these experiments. About 30-40 died from the malaria itself, and 300-400 from later diseases that were fatal because of the physical condition resulting from the malaria attack. There were also deaths from overdoses of neosalvarsam and pyramidon....

In 1942 and 1943, experiments were conducted by Dr. Sigmund Rascher to determine the effects of changes in air pressure. As many as 25 persons at a time were put into a specially constructed van where pressure could be increased or decreased at will, in order to see the effects of high altitude and rapid descent by parachute.... Most of the victims in these experiments died from internal hemorrhaging of the lungs or brain. Survivors coughed blood when taken out of the van. It was my job to remove the bodies as soon as they were dead and send the internal organs to Munich for study. About 400-500 prisoners were experimented on....

Dr. Rascher also conducted cold-water experiments to find ways of reviving airmen who fall in the ocean. The subject was placed in ice water and kept there until unconscious.

Blood was taken from his neck and tested with each degree change in his body temperature.... The lowest body temperature obtained was 19% C, but most of the men died at 25% or 26%. When they were removed from the water, attempts were made to revive them by artificial sunlight, hot water, electro therapy, or animal warmth. For the latter, prostitutes were used, the body of the unconscious man being placed between two of the women. Himmler was present at one such experiment.... About 300 prisoners were used. The majority died. Of those who survived, many became mentally deranged....

Liver-puncture experiments were performed on healthy people and on others who had diseases of the stomach and gall bladder. A needle was jabbed into the person's liver and a small piece extracted. No anaesthetic was used. The experiment was very painful and often had serious results when the stomach or a large blood vessel was punctured. Many persons died from these tests, involving Polish, Russian, Czech and German prisoners....

It was a common practice to remove the skin from dead prisoners, which I was ordered to do on many occasions. Drs. Rascher and Wolter in particular asked for the skin from backs and chests. It was chemically treated, placed in the sun to dry, and then cut into various sizes for use as saddles, riding breeches, gloves, slippers, and ladies' handbags. Tattooed skin was especially valued by SS men. Russians, Poles, and other inmates were used in this way, but it was forbidden to cut the skin of a German prisoner.... Sometimes we did not have enough bodies with good skin and Rascher would say, "All right, you will get the bodies." The next day we would receive 20 or 30 bodies of young people, [who] had been shot in the neck or struck on the head so the skin would not be injured....

children, while a network of homes was provided for children and babies of foreigners who did not pass the "racial test." A few establishments of this kind were already functioning in 1944. An inspector's report sent to Hummler gives a few details on their functioning:

"During my visit, I noticed that all the babies in that home were undernourished. As the director of the home, SS Oberführer Langoth, told me, the home receives only a pint of milk and a piece and a half of sugar per day per baby. With these rations the babies are sure to die of malnutrition in a few months.

I asked SS Oberführer Langoth to inform Gauleiter Eigruher of this state of affairs, and to ask him to assure sufficient supplies for these babies while waiting for your opinion on the subject. I consider the manner in which this business is now being managed to be impossible. There are only two solutions. Either we do not want these children alive, in which case we should not let them die slowly of hunger while they use up so much milk from the general supply; there are ways to achieve this without torture or pain. Or, on the other hand, we intend to bring up these children for later use as labor. In this case they must be nourished in such a way that it will be possible to make full use of them as workers."

Kidnappings of children from the occupied territories were particularly frequent during the time of the German retreat in the East. The Wehrmacht services were the principal perpetrators. A memorandum from the Political Section at headquarters in June 1944 envisaged the following huge operation under the characteristic code name of "Operation Hay" (Heuaktion):

"1. The Center Army group intends to assemble and send to the Reich 40,000 to 50,000 children between ten and fourteen from the territories now under its control. This measure is taken at the suggestion of the 9th Army. It will have to be strongly backed up by propaganda and have as its slogan: Reich Aid to White Russian Children, Protection Against the Partisans. This operation has already been commenced in a five-kilometer zone. . . . The operation is planned not only to reduce the direct growth of enemy strength, but also to impair its biological strength in the distant future. This point of view has been expressed by both the SS Reichführer and the Führer. Appropriate orders to this effect were consequently given in the Southern Sector at the time of last year's retreat.

"2. A similar action is now under way in the region controlled by the North Ukraine Army group (General Field Marshal Model). In the Galician sector, which enjoys special privileges from the political point of view, measures have been taken to collect 135,000 workers in labor battalions, while young men over seventeen will be incorporated into SS divisions and youngsters under seventeen will be placed in charge of the SS Aid. This operation, which was begun a few weeks ago, has led to no political unrest up to now."

### Slaves as Guinea Pigs

*The treatment of human beings as objects was not confined to the prison camps. When workers and materials began to fall short, German industry learned to dip into the pool*

*of human resources represented by the régime's slaves. In some cases this provided useful—and expendable—slave labor; in other instances, such as the brief glimpse that follows, they served as guinea pigs.*

### The Herald Tribune: Nuremberg Trials

*Nuremberg, November 14, 1947 (A.P.)* A French witness testified today that the I.G. Farben combine purchased 150 women from the Oswiecim concentration camp, after complaining about a price of 200 marks (then \$80.00) each, and killed all of them in experiments with a soporific drug.

The witness was Gregoire M. Afrine. He told the American military tribunal trying 23 Farben directors on war crimes charges that he was employed as an interpreter by the Russians after they overran the Oswiecim camp in January 1945 and found a number of letters there. Among the letters, he said, were some addressed from Farben's "Bayer" plant to the Nazi commandant of the camp.

These excerpts were offered in evidence:

1. In contemplation of experiments with a new soporific drug, we would appreciate your procuring for us a number of women.
2. We received your answer but consider the price of 200 marks a woman excessive. We propose to pay not more than 170 marks a head. If agreeable, we will take possession of the women. We need approximately 150.
3. We acknowledge your accord. Prepare for us 150 women in the best possible condition, and as soon as you advise us you are ready we will take charge of them.
4. Received the order of 150 women. Despite their emaciated condition, they were found satisfactory. We shall keep you posted on developments concerning the experiment.
5. The tests were made. All subjects died. We shall contact you shortly on the subject of a new load.

### Forgive? Perhaps. Forget? Never.

*The essay that follows is not included as a rehash of European suffering in the last German war but as a reminder that forgiveness and forgetfulness are not one and the same. Forgiveness is a positive and generous attitude that helps people—frequently clumsy, brutal, or thoughtless—to live together in a difficult world. Forgetfulness is an attempt to escape reality and responsibility, and it is generally prompted by motives that are foolish or cowardly or both. When one insists on forgetting the past, there can be no historical perspective.*

From New York Herald Tribune, 15 November 1947.

PERSECUTION ACCOUNT OF LEON HAMMER

1. My name is Leon Hammer and I live at 4176 Oak Street. I was born on March 14, 1908, in Lodz, POLAND. My father's name was Chaskel. My mother's maiden name was Faige Ester Karzas.
2. On April 30, 1940, the German Authorities set up a ghetto in Lodz. I remained in this ghetto until September 15th, 1941. I was taken by two policemen to the headquarters at 56 Alexanderhof Str. Here approximately 300 people were assembled. We were moved under police guard to the central prison, Czarnieckiego in Lodz. Here I was examined by a doctor and pronounced fit for labour.
3. On September 22nd, 1941, I was sent by railway in a freight car to Breslau, where I was put to work in a sugar factory by the name of Seidel. My job consisted of unloading sugar beets from a freight car. Two of us had to unload three of these cars a day, a job which required a minimum of 12 hours labour. Our food for the day consisted of watery beet soup and three ounces of bread.
4. At the end of January, 1942, we were moved by train cars under civilian guard to Rawicz, Kreis Posen, and from there to Wiesenfurt, which is a little farming town next to the river. Our job was to build dams to control river elevation as a protection from floods. There were about 75 of us, living in a school under civilian guard. My job consisted of pushing a wheelbarrow full of sand. The diet consisted of 1 1/2 pints of soup and 3 ounces of bread. The work was very hard and the hours very long.
5. In January, 1943, a typhoid epidemic broke out in the camp and I took sick with it. I was one of the small group of survivors. In September, 1943, we were shipped in coal freight cars under S. S. guard over Kalisz, Posen, Kattowitz to Auschwitz. Here the car doors were opened and we were marched to the concentration camp in Birkenau. This camp was enclosed by an electric barb wire fence. We lived in barracks with about 500 men in each building. Our beds were wide planks accommodating about five men each. We were examined by a doctor and were sorted. Those considered not fit for labour were sent to the crematorium. I was given a uniform with gray and blue stripes and had the number 142978 tattooed on my left forearm. My work consisted of carrying rocks and breaking them. This was part of the job of building a road from the railway station to Birkenau.
6. In January, 1944, I was selected with 300 other men to work in a coal mine in Furstengrube (near Kattowitz). This camp was surrounded by a barb wire enclosure and was under S. S. guard. The head was Oberscherfuhrer Schmidt from Arensbeck. Our work consisted of shovelling coal after it had been dynamited. We had to reach our quota of 25 tons of coal a day in order to get our food rations. This consisted of a quart of soup and eight ounces of bread.
7. In February, 1945, with the Russian troops approaching we were evacuated from the camp and began walking. After two days we reached Glavitz. Here we boarded open coal cars with 50 or 60 people to a car. We travelled for some ten days without food or water. When we reached our destination the majority in the car were dead.

