Night by Elie Wiesel
Essential Vocabulary

In addition to building your personal vocabulary for writing and speaking, the following terms are included on this page to help you build background knowledge and to understand the memoir better as you read.

1. **Beadle** - a religious clerk
2. **Kabbalah** - the ancient Jewish tradition of mystical interpretation of the Bible
3. **Talmud** - a collection of Jewish law and tradition
4. **Zohar** - the chief text of the Kabbalah
5. **Gestapo** - the German secret police under Nazi rule
6. **Zionism** - a movement (originally) for the reestablishment of a Jewish nation in Israel
7. **Anti-Semitism** - prejudice against and dislike for Jewish people
8. **Ghettos** - a part of a city, usually rundown, occupied by a minority group or groups.
9. **Phylacteries** - small boxes containing scripture; worn by some Jewish men for daily prayer
10. **Kapo** - a Nazi concentration camp prisoner who was given privileges in return for supervising prisoner work gangs
11. **Appelplatz** *"the place for roll call"; the square where roll call took place*
Night Vocabulary: Section 1, pages 1-20

Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Context Clues
Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean on the lines provided.

1. They called him Moshe the Beadle, as though he had never had a surname in his life.


3. He was a past master in the art of making himself insignificant, of seeming invisible.

4. I was twelve. I believed profoundly. During the day I studied the Talmud, and at night I ran to the synagogue to weep over the destruction of the Temple.

5. The train full of deportees had crossed the Hungarian frontier and on Polish territory had been taken in charge by the Gestapo.

6. At that time, it was still possible to obtain emigration permits for Palestine.

7. With some of my schoolmates, I sat in the Ezra Malik gardens, studying a treatise on the Talmud.

8. My father was telling them anecdotes and expounding his own views on the situation.

9. At dawn, there was nothing left of this melancholy.

Part II: Determining the Meaning
Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

1. surname
2. encumbered
3. insignificant
4. profoundly
5. deportees
6. emigration
7. treatise
8. anecdotes
9. melancholy

A. hindered; restricted
B. absolutely; in an unqualified way
C. short, humorous stories
D. leaving one area to settle in another
E. sadness; depression
F. written discussion of a topic
G. a family name
H. people who are expelled from a country
I. trivial; not important
**Vocabulary: Sections 2, 3, pages 21-43**

**Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Context Clues**

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean on the lines provided.

1. Free from all social **constraint**, young people gave way openly to instinct, taking advantage of the darkness to flirt in our midst. . .

2. We still had a few **provisions** left. But we never ate enough to satisfy our hunger.

3. The world was a cattle wagon **hermetically** sealed.

4. The heat, the thirst, the **pestilential** stench, the suffocating lack of air-- these were nothing as compared with these screams which tore us to shreds.

5. In the middle stood the **notorious** Dr. Mengele. . .

6. . . . a typical SS officer: a cruel face, but not **devoid** of intelligence, and wearing a monocle.

7. . . . a typical SS officer: a cruel face, but not devoid of intelligence, and wearing a **monocle**.

8. In one ultimate moment of **lucidity** it seemed to me that we were damned souls . . .

9. "You are at Auschwitz. And Auschwitz is not a **convalescent** home."

10. They were all laughing and joking and shouting **blandishments** at one another for a good part of the way.

**Part II: Determining the Meaning**

Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

1. constraint
2. provisions
3. hermetically
4. pestilential
5. notorious
6. devoid
7. monocle
8. lucidity
9. convalescent
10. blandishments

A. necessary supplies, such as food
B. coaxing by flattery
C. clear understanding
D. known widely and unfavorably; infamous
E. restrictions
F. an eyeglass for one eye
G. likely to cause an epidemic disease
H. completely lacking or empty
I. returning to health after an illness
J. sealed against the entry or escape of air
Vocabulary: Section 4, pages 45-62
Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Context Clues
Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean on the lines provided.

1. Our **convoy** included a few children ten and twelve years old.

2. One day when Idek was seized with one of his fits of **frenzy**, I got in his way.

3. This was Franek’s chance to **torment** my father and to thrash him savagely every day.

4. This was Franek’s chance to torment my father and to **thrash** him savagely every day.

5. I once saw one of thirteen beating his father because the **latter** had not made his bed properly.

6. “Bare your heads!” yelled the head of the camp. His voice was **raucous**.

7. The Gestapo, summoned to the spot, suspected **sabotage**. They found a trail.

Part II: Determining the Meaning
Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

1. convoy A. boisterous and disorderly
2. frenzy B. a group of vehicles traveling together
3. torment C. treacherous action to defeat a cause
4. thrash D. to cause physical pain or mental anguish
5. latter E. second of two
6. rauous F. violent mental agitation or wild excitement
7. sabotage G. beat; hit
**Vocabulary: Section 5, pages 63-80**

**Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Context Clues**

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean on the lines provided.

1. This day I had ceased to plead. I was no longer capable of *lamentation*.

2. In the depths of my heart, I felt a great *void*.


4. Several days had *elapsed*.

5. It was a somewhat *feeble* argument.

6. They were quite simply liberated by the Russians two days after the *evacuation*.

7. It snowed *relentlessly*.

**Part II: Determining the Meaning**

Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

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Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Context Clues

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean on the lines provided.

1. Their fingers on the triggers, they did not deprive themselves of this pleasure.

2. He sat up and looked round him, bewildered, stupefied—a bereaved stare.

3. From time to time, the SS officers on motorcycles would go down the length of the column to try and shake us out of our growing apathy.

4. His livid face was covered with a layer of frost.

5. The days were like nights, and the nights left the dregs of their darkness in our souls.

6. Wild beasts of prey, with animal hatred in their eyes; an extraordinary vitality had seized them, sharpening their teeth and nails.

7. He was finished, at the end of his tether.

8. The contagion spread to the other carriages.

9. A plaintive, beseeching voice caught me in the spine.

10. And, in the depths of my being, in the recesses of my weakened conscience, could I have searched it, I might perhaps have found something like—free at last!

Part II: Determining the Meaning

Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

1. deprive A. lack of emotion or feeling
2. bereaved B. ashen; pallid
3. apathy C. harmful influence
4. livid D. expressing sorrow
5. dregs E. the least desirable portions
6. vitality F. the limit of one’s resources or endurance
7. tether G. remote, secret places
8. contagion H. vigor; energy
9. plaintive I. left alone by death
10. recesses J. to take something away from