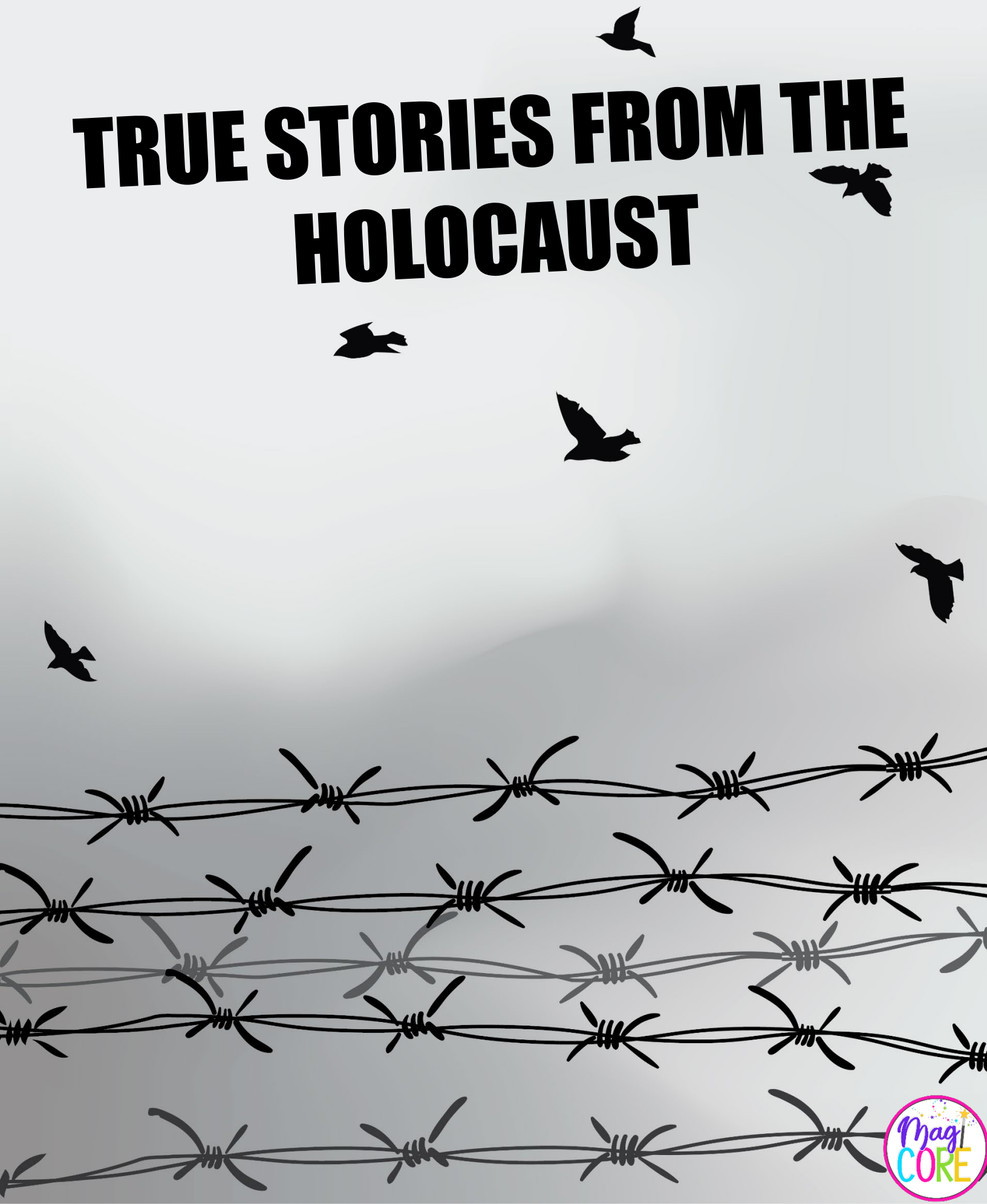


# TRUE STORIES FROM THE HOLOCAUST



# TRUE STORIES FROM THE HOLOCAUST

*middle school*

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\*This product includes 12 leveled passages in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Text Complexity Bands (the range for 6<sup>th</sup> is 855L-1165L, the range for 7<sup>th</sup> is 925L-1235L, and the range for 8<sup>th</sup> is 985L-1385L). Each passage comes with two comprehension worksheets.

These passages should be used to build background knowledge about Holocaust and World War II through true stories of people.

1. Anne Frank (990L)
2. Elie Wiesel (1080L)
3. The Danish Resistance (1360L)
4. Monica Wichfeld (1250L)
5. Oskar Schindler (1020L)
6. Alice Herz-Sommer (1070L)
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8. Lola: The Hidden Girl (920L)
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11. Edith Eger (1230L)
12. Le Chambon: It Takes A Village (1260L)



# ABOUT LEXILE LEVELS



MagiCore is a certified Lexile® Partner. These texts are officially measured and approved by Lexile and MetaMetrics® to ensure appropriate rigor and differentiation for students.

The Lexile Framework® for Reading measures are scientific, quantitative text levels. When the Lexile of a text is measured, specific, measurable attributes of the text are considered, including, but not limited to, word frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion. These are difficult attributes for humans to evaluate, so a computer measures them.

Common Core State Standards uses Lexile level bands as one measure of text complexity. Text complexity ranges ensure students are college and career ready by the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Lexile measures help educators scaffold and differentiate instruction as well as monitor reading growth.

| Grade Band | Lexile® Bands Aligned to Common Core Expectations |
|------------|---|
| K-1        | N/A   |
| 2-3        | 420L-820L   |
| 4-5        | 740L-1010L  |
| 6-8        | 925L-1385L  |

Keep in mind when using any leveled text that many students will need scaffolding and support to reach text at the high end of their grade band. According to Appendix A of the Common Core Standards, "It is important to recognize that scaffolding often is entirely appropriate. The expectation that scaffolding will occur with particularly challenging texts is built into the Standards' grade-by-grade text complexity expectations, for example. The general movement, however, should be toward decreasing scaffolding and increasing independence both within and across the text complexity bands defined in the Standards."



## Elie Wiesel



**Elie Wiesel**

Elie Wiesel was an acclaimed, Romanian-born, American Holocaust survivor, author, and Nobel laureate. He is most well-known for his memoir, *Night*, which recounts his experience of the Holocaust as a young Jewish boy in Nazi Germany.

Born on September 30th, 1928, in Sighet, Romania to Shlomo and Sarah Wiesel, Elie was the third of four children. His father worked as a storekeeper and was deeply rooted in the local Jewish community, which instilled in Elie a deep appreciation of Jewish culture and faith. Growing up in this environment gave Elie a strong moral compass that would later influence his decisions and writings.

In 1940, when Elie was just 12 years old, Hungary invaded Sighet and began to oppress its Jewish population. In 1944, Hitler's forces took control of Sighet. At the age of 15, Elie and the rest of the Jewish population in his town were confined in ghettos. Soon after, Elie and his family were sent to Auschwitz concentration camp where ninety percent of the people were killed upon arrival. Sadly, Elie's mother and younger sister were murdered. Elie lied about his age, so he and his father were put to work in extreme conditions.

Throughout the next several months, Elie endured extreme deprivation and cruelty at the hands of the Nazis. Both Elie and his father were relocated from Auschwitz to Buchenwald concentration camp, where Elie's father became his motivation to survive. Elie stated, "I knew that if I died, he would die." Unfortunately, his father died before the camp was liberated.



**Elie Wiesel with President George W. Bush and the Dalai Lama**

Buchenwald was liberated in 1945 by Allied forces. After liberation, Elie went to France and Israel. For the next ten years, Elie refused to talk or write about his experience during the Holocaust, until his friend and mentor, François Mauriac, convinced him to write.

Elie wrote the first version of his story, which was a nine-hundred-page memoir, in Yiddish. Then, he wrote a shortened version in French in 1955, which was translated into English as *Night* in 1960. Recognition and popularity of the book grew.

In 1955, Elie moved to New York City, and he became a permanent U.S. resident in 1963. He married and had a son, whom he named after his father. Wiesel wrote prolifically about his Holocaust experience, authoring over forty books.

Elie Wiesel dedicated the remainder of his life to speaking out against violence, racism, and oppression. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986 for his commitment to justice and human dignity. He was awarded many recognitions for his work, including the Nobel Prize.

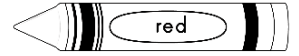
Elie Wiesel died on July 2, 2016, at the age of 87. Elie left behind an incredible legacy of resilience and literary achievement that continues to inspire future generations.



## Elie Wiesel

Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated.

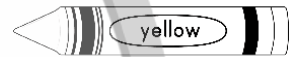
1. In paragraph 2, Elie is described as having a “strong moral compass.” What line from the text proves this statement?



- “Elie Wiesel dedicated the remainder of his life to speaking out against violence, racism, and oppression.” (paragraph 8)
- “Elie lied about his age, so he and his father were put to work in extreme conditions.” (paragraph 3)
- “Wiesel wrote prolifically about his Holocaust experience, authoring over forty books.” (paragraph 7)
- “At the age of 15, Elie and the rest of the Jewish population in his town were confined in ghettos.” (paragraph 3)

2. This question has two parts. First, answer *Part A*. Then, answer *Part B*.

*Part A*: How will Elie Wiesel be remembered?

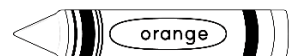


- He will be remembered as a strong member of the Jewish Resistance Groups in Romania.
- He will be remembered as an accomplished author who encouraged peace, justice, and compassion around the world.
- He will be remembered as a WWII and Holocaust historian.
- He will be remembered as a significant donor to many museums.

*Part B*: Which detail from the passage supports the answer in Part A?

- “For the next ten years, Elie refused to talk or write about his experience during the Holocaust...” (paragraph 5)
- “He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986 for his commitment to justice and human dignity. He was awarded many recognitions for his work, including the Nobel Prize.” (paragraph 8)
- “His father worked as a storekeeper and was deeply rooted in the local Jewish community, which instilled in Elie a deep appreciation of Jewish culture and faith.” (paragraph 2)

3. What is the purpose of paragraph 8?



- To illustrate the horrors and difficulties Elie faced at the hands of the Nazis.
- To demonstrate Elie Wiesel’s strong and unwavering moral compass.
- To illustrate Elie Wiesel’s love of writing.
- To help the reader connect to the story better.



## Oskar Schindler

Oskar Schindler was a German industrialist and businessman who is famed for helping save the lives of over twelve hundred Jews during the Holocaust.

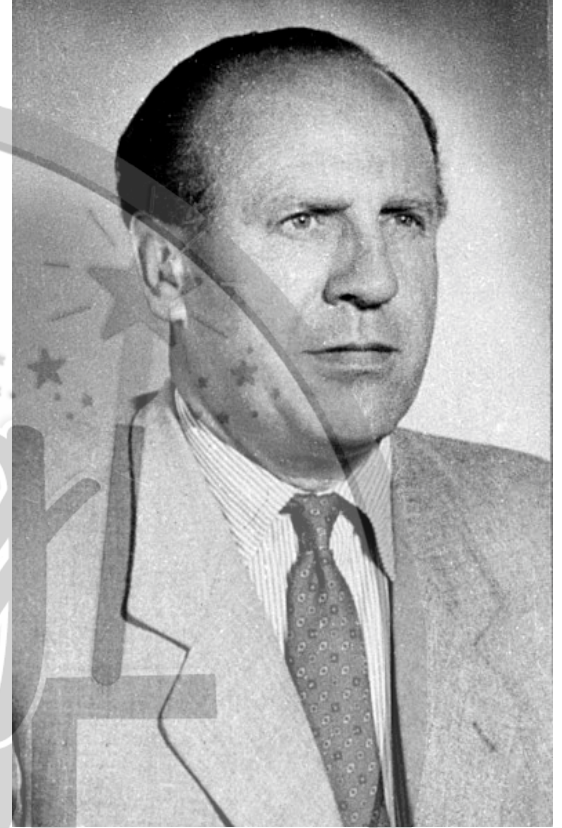
In 1935, Schindler joined the Sudeten German Party, which strongly supported the Nazi party. He became a spy for the Abwehr, the German military intelligence service. He later joined the Nazi party in 1939 and became a member of the SS. While unknown at the time, his actions in support of the Nazi party later put him in the position to save many lives.

In 1939, Schindler relocated to Krakow, Poland, where he decided to lease a factory with the help of Jewish financiers. His original motivation was money. Schindler employed over one thousand Jews in his factory and paid them wages. Over time, Schindler grew to care about the people who worked for him. He witnessed Hitler and the Nazis persecuting Jews, and he found ways to protect them.

Oskar Schindler convinced the Nazis that his workforce was indispensable, and this saved many lives. He provided food, clothing, and medical care to his workers. As conditions worsened and Jews were sent to concentration camps, Schindler acted quickly. He managed to bribe Nazi officials and obtained permission to move his workers to a safer location.

Oskar Schindler later said, "The persecution of Jews in the General Government in Polish territory gradually worsened in its cruelty. In 1939 and 1940, they were forced to wear the Star of David and were herded together and confined in ghettos. In 1941 and 1942, this unadulterated sadism was fully revealed. And then a thinking man, who had overcome his inner cowardice, simply had to help. There was no other choice."

In 1943, the ghetto that Schindler's workers lived in was liquidated, and the workers were going to be transferred to a concentration camp. Schindler knew of the plans and had his workers stay overnight in his factory to protect them. Schindler was appalled by what he witnessed during the ghetto's liquidation. He was motivated to save as many Jewish people as he could.



**Oskar Schindler**



Once again, Schindler bargained and bribed Nazi leaders to permit him to build a subcamp to house his workers. He housed his own workers, along with over four hundred other Jews from nearby factories.

In 1944, Schindler was informed that the SS was closing factories not involved in war efforts and deporting workers to Auschwitz. Schindler strategized to switch his production from cookware to anti-tank grenades to save the lives of Jewish workers. He was successful in convincing Nazi leaders to permit him to move his factory and workers. His worker, Marcel Goldberg, created a list of twelve hundred Jews who would be allowed to move. This became known as Schindler's List.

Both a train of men and a train of women were mistakenly sent to concentration camps. Oskar Schindler went to great lengths to bribe Nazis to have his people sent to his new factory. Schindler and his workers went through numerous other harrowing experiences until the end of the war.

On May 7, 1945, Oskar and his workers listened intently to British prime minister Winston Churchill's announcement that Germany surrendered and the war was over.

After the war, Schindler was in danger of being arrested as a war criminal due to his affiliation with the Nazi party. He fled in order to avoid being captured by the Soviets. In 1958, he returned to Germany, where he had unsuccessful businesses until he went bankrupt. Oskar Schindler suffered from sickness, and in 1974, he died at the age of sixty-six. Schindler was buried in Jerusalem at the Catholic cemetery on Mount Zion.

In 1993, Steven Spielberg made a movie about Oskar Schindler's heroic actions, further cementing Oskar's legacy as one of history's great heroes. Schindler's actions saved the lives of more than twelve hundred Jews and are remembered to this day.

**Documentation of Schindler's workers**

The image shows a historical document titled "Geburts- und Taufbuch der Stadtgemeinde" (Birth and Baptism Book of the City Community) for the year 1908. It contains several rows of handwritten entries, including names, dates, and locations. The document is written in German and appears to be a church record.

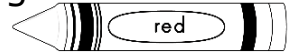
**Stamp for 100 years of birth of Oskar Schindler.**



## Oskar Schindler

Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated.

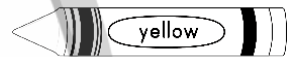
1. In paragraph 2, what is the author foreshadowing when writing:



"While unknown at the time, his actions in support of the Nazi party later put him in the position to save many lives."

- Schindler's later need to flee Poland following WWII.
- Schindler's future role in saving thousands of Jewish people from perishing in Nazi Concentration Camps.
- Schindler's future role in being a key member of a resistance group that worked to fight the Nazis out of Poland.
- Schindler's future role in smuggling Jewish people out of Poland.

2. This question has two parts. First, answer *Part A*. Then, answer *Part B*.



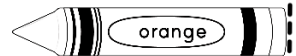
*Part A:* What best describes Oskar Schindler's motivation for saving his many Jewish employees?

- Schindler wanted to continue making a lot of money.
- Schindler wanted to keep his factory running to make war materials for the Nazis.
- Schindler genuinely knew and cared for his employees.
- Schindler was a member of a resistance group.

*Part B:* Which detail from the passage supports the answer in Part A?

- "Over time, Schindler grew to care about the people who worked for him." (paragraph 3)
- "In 1939, Schindler relocated to Krakow, Poland, where he decided to lease a factory with the help of Jewish financiers." (paragraph 3)
- "In 1944, Schindler was informed that the SS was closing factories not involved in war efforts . . ." (paragraph 8)

3. How did Schindler prevent his workers from being liquidated from their ghetto in 1943?



- Schindler bribed the Nazis not to liquidate the ghetto.
- Schindler smuggled them out of Poland before the ghetto was liquidated.
- Schindler hid his workers in different homes around Poland.
- Schindler had his workers stay overnight at his factory.



## Alice Herz-Sommer

Alice Herz-Sommer was a virtuoso pianist, music teacher, and Holocaust survivor.

Born in Prague in 1903 to an affluent Jewish family, she was the daughter of Ferdinand and Maria Herz. Alice's father was a merchant, and her mother had a strong education and was friends with well-known writers, including Franz Kafka. Alice grew up with her twin sister, Mariana, another sister, and two brothers. They grew up surrounded by talented writers, philosophers, and intellectuals.



Alice Herz-Sommer, 1924

From a young age, Alice displayed an impressive aptitude for music. Her older sister taught her to play, and she studied with renowned classical pianists. By age seven, Alice had already composed several pieces of music.

At eleven years old, Alice enrolled at the German Conservatory in Prague to further hone her musical talents. It was there that she met her future husband, Leopold Sommer. The two would wed in 1928 and have a son together the following year.

Alice continued to perform throughout Europe during this time and earned widespread acclaim for her incredible performances of works by Chopin, Beethoven, and Brahms, among other composers. Though she enjoyed great success as a professional musician, her career was unfortunately cut short due to the outbreak of World War II in 1939, when Jews were barred from public performances.

The next few years were incredibly difficult for Alice. After the invasion of Czechoslovakia, many of Alice's friends and family immigrated to Israel, but Alice remained behind to care for her mother. In July 1943, Alice and her son were sent to Theresienstadt, a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia.



In Theresienstadt, Alice was able to use her musical talents to entertain the prisoners with concerts. She also used her gift to bring hope and comfort to the other prisoners by performing in concerts throughout the camp.

Alice later remembered, "We had to play because the Red Cross came three times a year. The Germans wanted to show their representatives that the situation of the Jews in Theresienstadt was good. Whenever I knew that I had a concert, I was happy. Music is magic. We performed in the council hall before an audience of 150 old, hopeless, sick, and hungry people. They lived for the music. It was like food to them. If they hadn't come [to hear us], they would have died long before. As we would have."

Alice was permitted to live with her son at the camp, and he was one of only a few children who survived Theresienstadt. Alice's husband died shortly before they were liberated.

After relocating back to Prague following the war's end, Alice returned to teaching piano lessons out of her home until 1948, when she immigrated with her son first to Israel and then later to England, where she settled down for good. Her son, who became a cellist and conductor, passed away at the age of sixty-four.



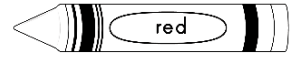
**Alice Herz-Sommer**

Alice lived to be 110 years old, making it into the Guinness Book of Records as the oldest known Holocaust survivor before passing away peacefully in London on February 23rd, 2014. In addition to living a long life full of music, Alice left behind an inspiring legacy that included multiple books. She also gave countless lectures across Europe about Holocaust survival and resilience throughout her later years. Alice's story has been immortalized in several films, including *The Lady in Number 6: Music Saved My Life* (2013), which won an Academy Award for Best Short Documentary Film.

## Alice Hertz-Sommer

Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated.

1. Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

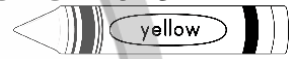


"At eleven years old, Alice enrolled at the German Conservatory in Prague to further hone her musical talents."

What does the word *hone* mean in the context of this sentence?

- a. age
- b. lose
- c. perfect
- d. find

2. This question has two parts. First, answer *Part A*. Then, answer *Part B*.



*Part A:* Alice said this about her fellow prisoners, "They lived for the music. It was like food to them." (paragraph 8) What did she mean by this?

- a. Alice bargained with her music to escape.
- b. The prisoners were fed when Alice played the piano.
- c. Many of Alice's fellow prisoners were also professional musicians.
- d. Alice meant that the music brought hope and joy to the prisoners, which provided nourishment and the strength to live.

*Part B:* Which detail from the passage supports the answer in Part A?

- a. "She also used her gift to bring hope and comfort to the other prisoners by performing in concerts throughout the camp." (paragraph 7)
- b. "Whenever I knew that I had a concert, I was happy." (paragraph 8)
- c. "Alice continued to perform throughout Europe during this time and earned widespread acclaim for her incredible performances..." (paragraph 5)

3. Why did Alice have to stop performing as a professional musician?



- a. Alice lost her ability to play piano.
- b. In 1939, Jews were not allowed to play public performances anymore.
- c. Alice grew to dislike piano after spending so much time working on it in her youth.
- d. Alice lost access to her piano.



## Lola: The Hidden Girl

Lola Rein was born in southeast Poland in 1934. In 1941, she saw her hometown of Czortkow, Poland taken over by the German army. As a Jewish girl, Lola's life changed as anti-Semitism spread. Lola's father died before she, along with her mother, grandparents, and the rest of the Jews in her town, were forced into a ghetto. Life in the ghetto was difficult, and her family was often without food or proper clothing. Her mother was killed, and Lola's grandmother made the difficult choice to try to hide her granddaughter from persecution. Her grandmother hoped to protect Lola and keep her alive during the war.

At the age of 9, Lola said goodbye to her grandmother, the only living relative she had left. A Ukrainian woman named Tekla agreed to hide Lola in her house. This didn't last long because Tekla's son found out and threatened to turn Lola in to the Gestapo.



**Lola's Dress her mother made that she wore in hiding.**

In fear for her own life, Tekla snuck Lola to her sister Anna's house. Anna was already hiding three other Jews under her barn floor. Anna took Lola in. She lived in a dark hole in the barn and was given very little food for nine months. She had to remain quiet so no one would know she was there. Lola wore the same dress her mother had given her the whole time she was in hiding. Lola later recalled, "It's dark all the time, except when food is brought at night and a candle is lit. I can smell the dirt, a dark wet smell that gets caught at the back of my throat."

In November of 1943, the Russians liberated Ukraine, and it was safe for Lola to come out of hiding. Lola had no home for some time until she eventually reconnected with an uncle who survived the war. Her uncle took Lola in and raised her with his daughter. The family later received visas to immigrate to the United States, where Lola met her future husband. Lola married and had three children.

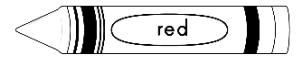
Lola survived the unimaginable. She authored a book about her story that is geared toward young adults. Her story is an important reminder of the horrors of anti-Semitism and the resilience of those who have faced it.



## Lola: The Hidden Girl

Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated.

1. Read this sentence from paragraph 5.



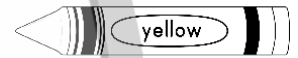
"Her story is an important reminder of the horrors of anti-Semitism and the resilience of those who have faced it."

How is Lola's story an example of the horrors of anti-Semitism and resilience?

- Lola lasted all of WWII in a ghetto.
- Lola went through a lot as a member of the Polish Resistance.
- Lola and her family were all forced into a horrific concentration camp.
- Lola lost her entire family to the Nazis and survived by bravely living quietly under floorboards.

2. This question has two parts. First, answer *Part A*. Then, answer *Part B*.

*Part A*: How would Lola's journey be characterized?



- Pleasant
- Resilient
- Uneventful
- Unimportant

*Part B*: Which detail from the passage supports the answer in Part A?

- "She authored a book about her story that is geared toward young adults." (paragraph 5)
- "She lived in a dark hole in the barn and was given very little food for nine months. She had to remain quiet so no one would know she was there." (paragraph 3)
- "Lola married and had three children." (paragraph 5)

3. How did Lola's grandmother hide Lola from Nazi persecution?



- Lola's grandmother hid Lola in the closet of her own house.
- Lola's grandmother had to give Lola up and asked a Ukrainian woman to hide Lola in her house.
- Lola's grandmother arranged to have Lola smuggled out of Poland and into Sweden.
- Lola's grandmother was able to bribe members of the Gestapo to keep Lola safe.



## Edith Eger

Edith Eger was born on April 19, 1927, in Hungary, a few years before the Nazi occupation of the country. As a young girl, she was an excellent student and enjoyed family life with her parents, four siblings, and extended family in the nearby small town of Kassa. Edith loved taking ballet lessons and was even a member of the Hungarian Olympic gymnastics team.



**Edith on her mother's lap in 1928.**



**Edith (middle) with her sisters before the war.**

In 1944, Edith's life changed forever when Nazi troops occupied Hungary. Her family's rights were stripped away because they were Jewish. Edith's sister, Clara, was accepted into the Conservatory of Budapest for violin, where her music teacher agreed to hide her during the war. In 1944, the rest of the Eger family was forced to live in a ghetto until they were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp that March. Edith and her sister Magda were separated from their mother, who was sent to death.

At Auschwitz-Birkenau, Edith survived harrowing conditions—cold cells without food or water and constant physical threats from guards. She watched as other prisoners were executed for minor offenses like stealing an extra ration of bread or trying to escape.



One night, Edith encountered SS officer Josef Mengele who pointed his gun at her head demanding she dance for him—if she failed, he would shoot her dead on the spot. Miraculously, she danced long enough to satisfy him, and he let her live that day.

|                        |                   |                                |         |                |              |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------|----------------|--------------|
| 9126                   |                   | ... PRAGUE                     |         | FILE-137       |              |
| INDEX CARD             |                   | A. J. D. C. EMIGRATION SERVICE |         | PARIS          |              |
| Last Name              | EGER              | File No.                       | AU.PRO. |                |              |
| First Name             | Edita Eva         | Sex                            | F       | Opening Date   | 18,3,1949    |
| Address                | Presov, Markova 2 | In transit from :              |         |                |              |
| Birthdate              | 29,9,1927         | Birthplace                     | Kosice  | Accompanied by | Eger Vojtech |
| Nationality :          | Present Czech     | Former                         |         | Closing Date   |              |
| Occupation :           | Present           | Former                         |         |                |              |
| Country of destination | Australie         |                                |         |                |              |

**Edith Eger's Registration Card**

Edith was later transferred between work camps. One of the camps was evacuated, and Eger was sent on a death march with her sister Magda to another concentration camp. Edith could not walk any farther, and one of the girls carried her with her sister.

In May of 1945, Edith and her sister were liberated by the U.S. Military. Edith was left for dead until a soldier saw her hand move. She was only 70 pounds. After liberation, Edith moved to a displaced persons camp near Salzburg where she met George Eger, whom she eventually married and had two children with.

After immigrating to America in 1949, Edith got a master's degree in psychology and returned regularly to speak about Holocaust survival for generations of students who were taught about it but never experienced it first-hand themselves. She wrote books about surviving trauma, including *The Choice*, which describes how, by accepting responsibility for our lives, we can become survivors rather than victims.

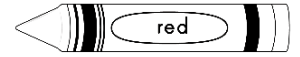
Despite suffering great tragedies early on in life, Edith dedicated herself to becoming an agent of healing through art therapy sessions with veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In 2018, she received an honorary doctorate from University College Dublin (UCD), which recognizes her commitment over many decades toward helping people around the world heal their wounds through love rather than hatred and destruction.



## Edith Eger

Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated.

1. Read this sentence from paragraph 5.

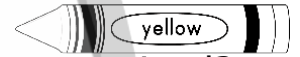


"After liberation, Edith moved to a displaced persons camp near Salzburg . . ."

Based on context clues, what is a "displaced persons camp"?

- a. A place for individuals who were forced to leave their homes to find resources and aid.
- b. A new permanent housing project for individuals without a house.
- c. An army camp for soldiers coming from overseas.
- d. A relocation camp for talented individuals, like dancers, musicians, etc.

2. This question has two parts. First, answer *Part A*. Then, answer *Part B*.



*Part A*: How would Edith's life after surviving the Holocaust be characterized?

- a. Simple and Damaged
- b. Strained and Uncertain
- c. Sorrowful and Unpleasant
- d. Accomplished and Transformative

*Part B*: Which detail from the passage supports the answer in Part A?

- a. "She wrote books about surviving trauma, including *The Choice*, which describes how, by accepting responsibility for our lives, we can become survivors rather than victims." (paragraph 6)
- b. "Miraculously, she danced long enough to satisfy him, and he let her live that day." (paragraph 3)
- c. "In May of 1945, Edith and her sister were liberated by the U.S. Military. Edith was left for dead until a soldier saw her hand move. She was only 70 pounds." (paragraph 5)

3. How would you describe the situation between Edith, Magda, and their friend that is described in paragraph 4?



- a. Selfish
- b. Courageous
- c. Unimportant
- d. Easy



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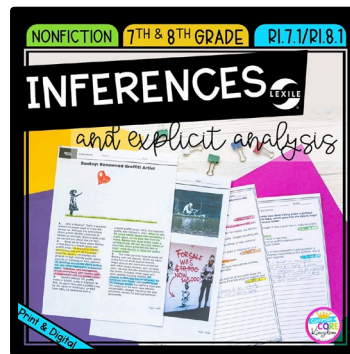
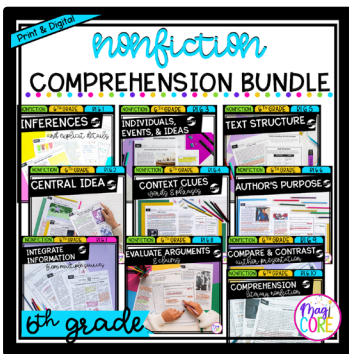


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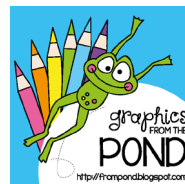


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