

# ELA Unit on the Holocaust and Genocide



What is the importance of  
remembering historical tragedies?

-Carmen Woolgar

Learning about Masada



# About your Presenter:

## Carmen Woolgar

- *English Language Arts and Yoga teacher at Heritage Regional High School*
- *BA and MA in Literature from Concordia University, and a Diploma in Education from McGill University, and YTT certificate from Sun and Moon Yoga*
- *Attended the International Conference for Teachers at Yad Vashem Memorial Centre, Jerusalem through the generosity of a scholarship from Dana and William Bell (MHMC)*

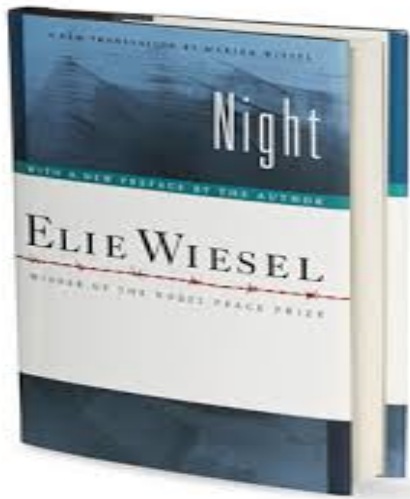
Studying at Yad  
Vashem,  
Jerusalem, 2013





# Why Teach the Holocaust?

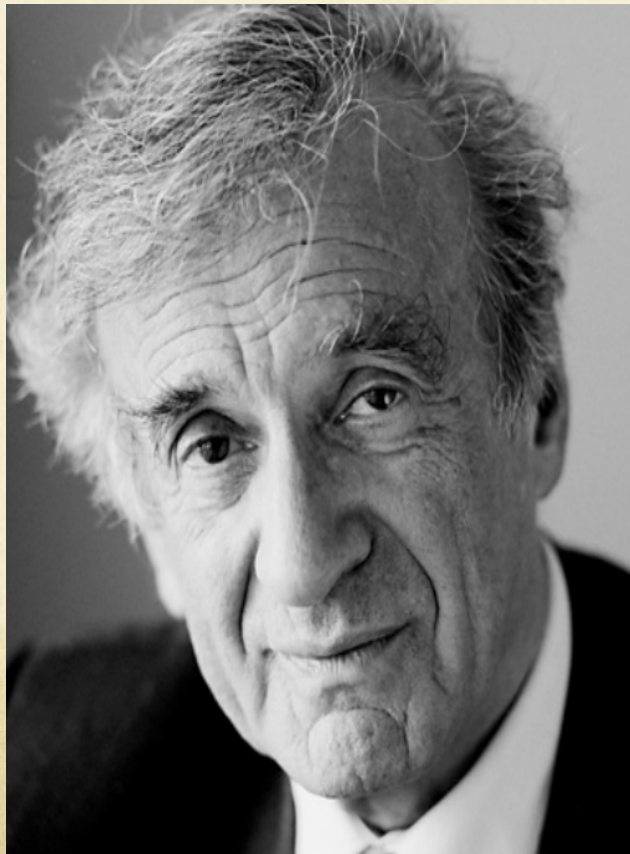
- Paradigmatic genocide and most extreme
- Genesis of Human Rights (1948)
- Watershed event; the term “genocide” was coined
- Turning point in global awareness (institutional discrimination leads to mass murder)
- Understanding the process could lead to prevention (“Never again”?)
- silence and inaction perpetuate the problem



# Reading Holocaust Literature

“Night” by Elie Wiesel -  
A memoir about the  
Holocaust:

- Sets historical context
- Gives rise to empathy through a personal story
- Encourages action
- Strengthens awareness regarding process of discrimination
- Keeps individual and collective memories alive



“I swore never to be silent  
whenever and wherever  
human beings endure  
suffering and humiliation.  
We must always take sides.  
Neutrality helps the oppressor,  
never the victim.  
Silence encourages  
the tormentor,  
never the tormented.”

- Elie Wiesel

Photo Credit: Sergey Bermeniev/npr  
HistoryByZim.com



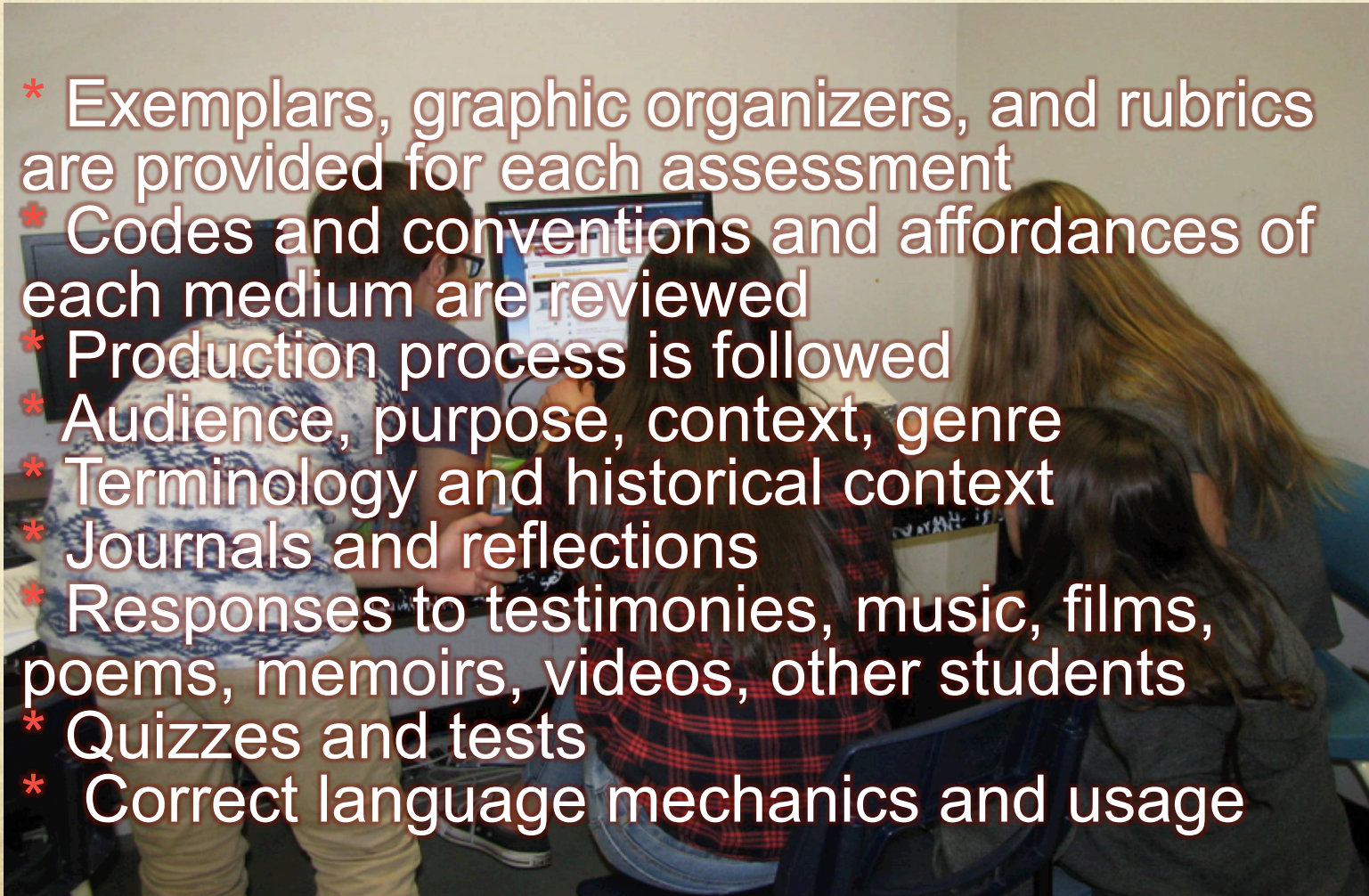
# Projects and Summative Assessments all three ELA Competencies

1. Group led Power Point presentations to introduce topics pertinent to the Holocaust (C1, C2, C3):  
(i) Nazi Rule (ii) Prewar Jews (iii) Final Solution ((iv) Nazi Camp Systems  
(v) Rescue and Resistance
2. Independent research of another historical genocide (Cambodia, Sudan, Tibet, Rwanda, etc) leading to the production of a fictional memoir with a bibliography (C2,C3) – *student excerpt*
3. Independent production and presentation of memoir trailers (C1, C3) – *student example*
4. Literary essay on “Night” addressing the unit question (C2, C3)



# Formative Learning and Assessment

- \* Exemplars, graphic organizers, and rubrics are provided for each assessment
- \* Codes and conventions and affordances of each medium are reviewed
- \* Production process is followed
- \* Audience, purpose, context, genre
- \* Terminology and historical context
- \* Journals and reflections
- \* Responses to testimonies, music, films, poems, memoirs, videos, other students
- \* Quizzes and tests
- \* Correct language mechanics and usage





# Tips on Teaching the Holocaust

- Clearly define all terms
- Create a comfortable environment: share feelings and allow for debriefing
- Individualize the Holocaust by using testimonies
- Provide multiple perspectives: bystander, victims and perpetrators
- Use cross-curricular approach: music, art, literature, science, math, ethics...
- Use age-appropriate content: alert students to graphic images
- Allow students to make links to contemporary events



**Nachum Manor:**  
one of the  
survivors  
from Schindler's  
List

# Resources

## Poems:

- "Letter to a Survivor" by Haim Ginott
- "Statement" by Martin Niemoeller
- "All there is to Know about Adolph Eichmann" by Leonard Cohen

**Documentary film:** *The Last Days* produced by Steven Spielberg

## Online information and recorded testimonies:

- "The Holocaust: a Learning Site for Students"  
<http://www.ushmm.org/learn/students/the-holocaust-a-learning-site-for-students>
- "iWitness: University of Southern California Shoah Foundation"  
<http://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/>
- Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre (Guided tour and testimony)  
<http://www.mhmc.ca/en/pages/high-school>
- <http://www.yadvashem.org>:
- *Echoes and Reflections: A Multimedia Curriculum on the Holocaust*

[www.echoesandreflections.org](http://www.echoesandreflections.org)

**Memoirs:** *Night* by Elie Wiesel, excerpts from *Danusia: The Story of a Child Survivor* by Dana Szeflan Bell



# Professional Development and Questions

- Apply for grants and scholarships
- Take advantage of every learning opportunity available (lectures, webinars, conferences...)
- Read, watch documentaries and films, and visit Holocaust museum, listen to testimonies (living or online)
- Contact info: [Carmen.woolgar@rsb.qc.ca](mailto:Carmen.woolgar@rsb.qc.ca)



Genya Manor with me: (Schindler's List)