

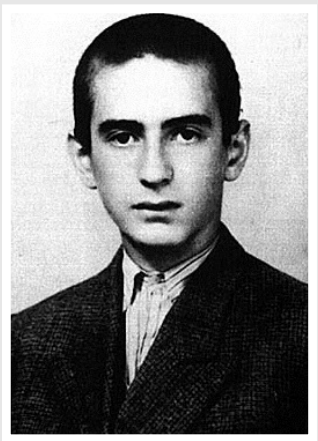
ELIE WIESEL

- EASY TO READ LIFE STORY



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

Key terms:



Jewish: People who believe in a religion called Judaism. Jewish people are also called Jews.

Nazi Party: The political party which ruled Germany at the time of the World War Two. They thought people who were 'Aryan' (white skin, blond hair, blue eyes) were better than all others. They wanted to kill people from other groups who were different from them, such as Jewish people and Sinti and Roma gypsies.

Ghetto: A small area in a town or city where Jews were forced to live all together. They were not allowed to leave. The ghettos became very crowded with lots of families forced to live in the same flat or the same room.

Concentration camp: Places where the Nazis kept many people as prisoners, such as Jews and gypsies. They were put there because the Nazis did not like them. In the camps people were forced to work as slaves or they were killed. There were many camps like this in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s.

Genocide: Genocide is a word used to describe killing people just because they belong to a particular group. This has happened in many countries around the world.

Elie Wiesel was born in a small town in Romania, a country in Eastern Europe. He had three sisters. His family were **Jewish**.

Elie was a teenager during the World War Two. The **Nazi party**, who were running the country in Germany, were fighting against many other countries in Europe and other parts of the world. The Nazis believed that the Jews were not as good as other people, even though they had done nothing wrong.

When Elie was 15, the German army invaded Romania and took control of his town. He had to leave his home and live in a **ghetto**. After this, he was put on a train and travelled for two days in a hot, smelly, crowded carriage with no water. He was being sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, a Nazi **concentration camp**.

When Elie arrived, he was separated from his mother and sisters as men and women were sent to different places. He never saw his mother and little sister, Tzipora, again. Elie and his father were made to do hard work, like slaves. He found himself in a scary, lonely and sad place and it made him feel there was no love and kindness in the world. He only kept going because he knew his father was alive too.

Towards the end of the war, Elie and his father, with many other workers, were forced out of the camp and made to walk for many miles. For these weak and sick people, the journey was too hard. Many of them died along the way. They went to another concentration camp, called Buchenwald. Elie's father died there, so Elie was left alone.

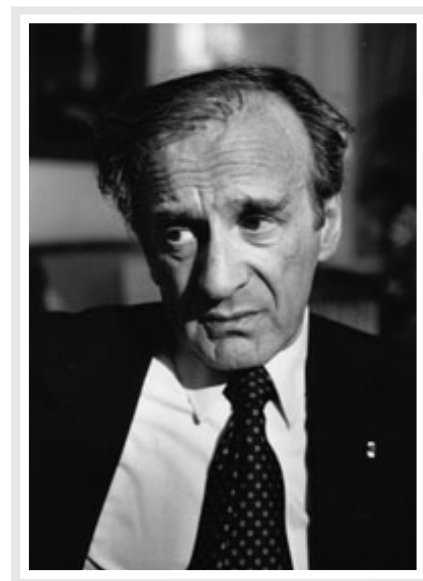
Elie did survive. American soldiers, who were fighting the Nazis, came to Buchenwald and freed all the prisoners who were still alive. Six million Jewish people did not survive and were murdered by the Nazis. Millions of other people were murdered too.

Elie's two older sisters, Beatrice and Hilda, also survived. After the war they all found each other again. More than ten years later, Elie wrote a book about what the Nazis did to him and his family. His book, called *Night*, is now sold in many countries all over the world.

Elie moved to live in the United States of America, got married and had a son. He gave his son the name Shlomo, the same name as his father.

He wrote many books and did a lot of work to tell people about what the Nazis did to Jews.

He wanted people to learn to live in peace and treat each other with kindness, not with hatred and violence. He was given a very important prize called the Nobel peace prize for his work in trying to make our world a better place and stop these terrible things from happening again.



Elie Wiesel in 1987
Photo © Erling Mandelmann

Elie said:

'The survivors had every reason to despair of society; they did not. They opted to work for humankind, not against it.'

Find out more...




The Holocaust: hmd.org.uk/holocaust

The Elie Wiesel Foundation: eliewieselfoundation.org

Visit hmd.org.uk for Elie Wiesel poems and book reviews

Other resources for educators: hmd.org.uk/educators

hmd.org.uk
enquiries@hmd.org.uk
020 7785 7029

 [@hmd_uk](https://twitter.com/hmd_uk)
 [hmd.uk](https://www.facebook.com/hmd.uk)
 [@holocaustmemorialdaytrust](https://www.instagram.com/holocaustmemorialdaytrust)

Learning lessons from the past to create a safer, better future