

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: K-12 Close Reading Task

Text grade band placement: 9-10	
Text	Text Complexity Analysis
<p>Title: Excerpt from “The Perils of Indifference”</p> <p>Author: Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Citation: Millenium Lecture Series, The White House, 12 April 1999.</p> <p>Link: http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/wiesel.htm</p> <p>Section used for task: The first 14 paragraphs</p>	<p>Quantitative: Lexile: 890L</p> <hr/> <p>Qualitative: <i>Purpose</i> - implied, but easy to identify based on context and source as the reader continues to explore the Holocaust</p> <p><i>Text Structure</i> - the connections between some ideas or events are implicit or subtle; organization is evident and generally sequential.</p> <p><i>Language Features</i> - complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language; somewhat complex vocabulary that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, or subject-specific; many complex sentences with several subordinating phrases or clauses and transition words</p> <p><i>Knowledge Demands</i> – complex: moderate levels of discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical may enhance understanding; range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts; many references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.</p> <p>Reader and Task: <i>Potential Challenges</i> – Because Wiesel uses many references to historic events of the 20th century, students from various backgrounds should be able to derive meaning from some of the events he mentions and find entry into understanding the text. Some background knowledge about the Holocaust would be helpful. Familiarity with Wiesel’s <i>Night</i> or another book about the Holocaust would certainly help. The complexity of the speech’s theme and the vocabulary level would indicate that grade-level reading skills are also helpful. This text lends itself to close reading with scaffolding support.</p>
ELA Common Core Standards addressed by task	
<p><u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1</u> Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p><u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4</u> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).</p> <p><u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.5</u> Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).</p>	

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3 Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

What key insights should students take from this text?

- Indifference is more dangerous than hatred.
- Elie Wiesel keeps telling his story in the hope that he can make a difference
- It is important to learn from one’s mistakes.
- Communication is a weapon against indifference

Text-Dependent Questions

Prior Knowledge:

Who is Elie Wiesel? What do you know about him?

Comprehension:

What is the author’s purpose? Give specific evidence from the text to support your answer.

Significance:

Identify a moment that strikes you as significant to Wiesel’s argument. Explain why you consider this moment to be significant. Give specific evidence from the text to support your answer.

Analysis:

How is the speech organized in order to develop his purpose? Give specific evidence from the text to support your answer.

What methods does Wiesel use to build and support his argument? Give specific evidence from the text to support your answer.

Interpretation:

What does Wiesel mean when he says “Better an unjust God than an indifferent one”? Give specific evidence from the text to support your answer.

Writing Mode

Writing Prompt

Argumentative	The title of Wiesel’s speech is “The Perils of Indifference.” Define “indifference” using Wiesel’s speech as a reference. Build an argument against personal indifference that parallels Wiesel’s claims about the consequences of indifference around the world in the twentieth century. Use details and examples from the text to support your writing. Be sure to adhere to the conventions of Standard English.
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Scaffolding and support for special education students, English language learners, and struggling readers:

There are multiple meanings embedded in the text, but with scaffolding, students should be able to comprehend. This is a good piece for close reading. Attention should be paid to unfamiliar vocabulary, including preview and think-alouds. In addition, sections of the speech could be read aloud to the whole class or students could be paired with stronger readers to partner read. Students could annotate the text during a second reading by summarizing the main ideas contained in a paragraph or two. Copies of notes should be available to students who may need the extra help.