Writing Techniques in Night by Eli Wiesel

Technique 1 - Foreshadowing

What is foreshadowing?
When you want to let people know about an event that is yet to occur, you can use foreshadowing. Foreshadowing is used as a literary technique by authors to tease readers about plot turns that will occur later in the story. It often has the effect of increasing a reader’s feelings of suspense.

<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/foreshadowing> accessed on 06/09/2013

In the first three chapters of Night, Elie Wiesel foreshadows the horrors ahead for the Jews of Sighet, by giving the reader a range of clues.

1. Find two examples of foreshadowing in Chapters 1 to 3. For each example, write down the page number, a short quotation and explain why it is an example of foreshadowing.

Example 1:
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a) Page Number:
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b) Short Quotation (1-2 sentences)
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Why is this an example of foreshadowing?
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Example 2:
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a) Page Number:
c) Why is this an example of foreshadowing?

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2. Why do you think an author like Elie Wiesel would choose to use a technique like foreshadowing in *Night*? How does he want you as a reader to feel?

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Techniques 2 and 3: Imagery and Sentence Structure

**What is Imagery?**

Writers use imagery to help readers form mental images of things or events. This imagery can be literal, as in the writer describing exactly what is in front of them such as, “The dinner table was rectangular and made of polished brown pine”, but it can also be figurative. This is when a writer compares something to another thing for emphasis like in a metaphor or simile, as in “The clouds hung limply like a set of dank, dirty curtains in the sky”.

**Using Sentence Structure for Effect**

Sometimes creative writers will deliberately shorten or lengthen a sentence to influence the reader. When sentences are shortened they often serve to emphasise a particular word or phrase to the reader. For instance, in the quotation, “Forgotten, she thought. Rejected.” (*Secrets in the Fire*, pg. 84), the author, Henning Mankell, emphasizes the word “Rejected” by making it a one word sentence.

From page 17 of *Night*:

> Open rooms everywhere. Gaping doors and windows looked out into the void.  
> It all belonged to everyone since it no longer belonged to anyone. It was there for the taking. An open tomb.

3. What is Elie Wiesel describing at this point in the story? Where have all the Jewish people gone? Why do they leave their belongings behind?
4. Why does he describe it as being like “An open tomb”? Why is this apt considering what is going to happen later in Night to the Jewish people?

5. What type of imagery is the phrase “An open tomb” – a simile or metaphor? Do you think this is a good way to describe the abandoned ghetto? Why or why not?

6. How many words is in the sentence “An open tomb”? Why make a sentence so short? What effect does it have on you, the reader?

Here is another example of imagery from the text.

from page 49 of Night:

…On the fourth day, as we stood in front of our tent, the Kapos appeared. Each one began to choose the men he liked:

“You...you...you” They pointed their fingers, the way one might choose cattle, or merchandise.

7. What is the image in this excerpt from the text? Is it a simile or a metaphor?

8. What does the choice of imagery say about the way the Nazis and their supporters treated the Jewish prisoners in the concentration camps?
9. Now can you find two more examples of imagery from Night. Make sure to write down the quotation and page number, as well as explain whether it is a metaphor or a simile.

**Example 1:**

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**d) Page Number:**
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**e) Short Quotation (1-2 sentences)**
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**f) What type of imagery is this – a simile or metaphor? Why do you think Elie Wiesel choose this particular image? How does it affect you as a reader?**
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**Example 2:**

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**a) Page Number:**
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**b) Short Quotation (1-2 sentences)**
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10. What type of imagery is this – a simile or metaphor? Why do you think Elie Wiesel choose this particular image? How does it affect you as a reader?
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Technique 3: Repetition and Symbolism

What is Repetition?
Repetition is when a writer deliberately repeats a word or a phrase to emphasize it.

What is Symbolism?
Symbolism is a form of imagery. It is used to represent an idea or quality. For instance, the Australian Flag is a symbol of what it means to be Australian and patriotic. Writers use symbols for a similar purpose. In the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling, the Gryffindor house shield features a lion:

The figure of a lion traditionally symbolizes bravery and courage which are qualities that J.K Rowling wishes to associate with the characters of Harry, Ron and Hermione.

11. Brainstorm a short list of words that are associated with the word “night” eg. darkness, the moon etc

12. Do these words mostly have negative or positive connotations? ("Connotation" is what happens when a deliberately chosen word implies or suggests a particular quality.)

13. Now, that you have finished reading Night, why do you think Elie Wiesel choose this word as his title of his memoir? What does it symbolize about his experiences in the Concentration Camps?
Repetition

From pg. 34 of *Night*

| Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed. |
| Never shall I forget that smoke. |
| Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky. |
| Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever. |
| Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live. |
| Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul turned my dreams to ashes. |
| Never shall I forget those things, even were I condemned to live as long as God Himself. |
| Never. |

14. What phrase does Elie Wiesel constantly repeat in the above passage? What effect does the repetition have on you as a reader?

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15. Wiesel also repeats the word “night” in the first sentence. Why does he believe that his life turned into “one long night seven times sealed.” What does “night” symbolise to him?

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16. Why is the last sentence only one word long? Why choose to emphasize this word to the readers? What does it say about Elie Wiesel’s experiences at Auschwitz?

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