Writing Techniques in Night by Eli Wiesel - ANSWERS

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:
The Nazis force them to wear a yellow star, which occurs just before the Jews of Sighet are forced into a ghetto

a) Page Number:
Pg. 11
b) Short Quotation (1-2 sentences)
“The yellow star so what, it’s not lethal” (Poor father, of what then did you die?)
c) Why is this an example of foreshadowing?
This is an example of foreshadowing as it hints that later in Night, Elie’s father will die because he is Jewish and is being made to wear a yellow star.

Example 2:
When the Hungarian police officer and friend of Elie’s father attempts to warn them, that the Jews are to be taken from the Ghetto and sent to a concentration camp.

a) Page Number:
Pg. 14
b) Short Quotation (1-2 sentences)
“Had he been able to speak to us that night, we might still have been able to flee.”
c) Why is this an example of foreshadowing?
By including this detail of the failed warning by the police officer, Elie hints that his family does not escape their fate later in the book in the concentration camps.

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?
Elie Wiesel foreshadows the fate of his family and fellow Jews from Sighet, by giving the reader several clues in the early parts of Night. This contributes to the reader's sense of suspense and desire to keep reading. It also creates a feeling of sadness for the reader as we believe that Elie's family might have survived if only they had heeded the warnings about the Nazis.

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 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?

Elie Wiesel describes in this excerpt the empty ghettos where the Jews once lived, who have now been taken to the concentration camps by the Nazis.

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?

Wiesel uses the metaphor of an “open tomb” to describe the appearance of the abandoned ghetto. He chooses this image, because the word “tomb” implies death and the Jews who once lived in the ghetto are being taken away to the concentration camps where many will die.

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?

“An open tomb” is used as metaphor, because there is no word such as “like” or “as” that is traditionally used in a simile. The “open tomb” metaphor is a good way to describe the abandoned ghetto as it hints that the Jewish people are fated to die, because they have been taken away by the Nazis.

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?
Wiesel by choosing to write a three word sentence of “An open tomb”, is really emphasizing to the reader that the Jews are tragically fated. The short sentence is meant to resonate in the reader’s head as they think about Elie and his family.

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?

Wiesel describes how the Jews in the concentration camps were treated like “cattle or merchandise” through the choice of a simile.

8. What does the choice of imagery say about the way the Nazis and their supporters treated the Jewish prisoners in the concentration camps?

By describing how the Jewish prisoners are treated like “cattle or merchandise”, Wiesel is highlighting to the reader how they are less than human in the eyes of their captors.

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:

When the Jews are being transported in the train carriages to Auschwitz, the Nazi guards threaten to shoot them all if someone goes missing.

   d) Page Number:
   Pg. 24

   e) Short Quotation (1-2 sentences)

"If anyone goes missing, you will all be shot like dogs."

   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?

This quotation is a simile as it uses the word “like” and compares the prisoners to “dogs”, reminding the reader of how inhumane the treatment of the Jews were by the Nazis.

Example 2:
Quotation is from when they arrive at Auschwitz.

a) Page Number:

Pg. 38

b) Short Quotation (1-2 sentences)

"You are in Auschwitz. Auschwitz is not a convalescent home, it's a concentration camp."

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?

This example is a form of literal imagery, that is the author is describing the actual events and places in front of him. Wiesel deliberately compares Auschwitz and its horrors as a concentration camp to that of a convalescent home where people go to recover from illnesses.

**Technique 4 and 5: 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 Gryffidor 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

Silence

Darkness

Sleep

Cold

Lonely

Afraid

Scary

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.)
The word “night” is traditionally associated with negative emotions and feelings.

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?

Elie Wiesel chooses the title Night, because the word “night” symbolises how his experience in the Concentration Camps was one of darkness, depression and fear. The word “night” traditionally is associated with such terrible experiences.

**Repetition**

From pg. 34 of *Night*

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

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

Wiesel deliberately repeats the phrase “Never shall I forget” to describe his initial impressions on arriving at Auschwitz. This allows the reader to understand just how traumatic these events were for him and how they will shape his later life.

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?

Wiesel believes that his life has turned into one long “night” because the horrific events of Auschwitz are like a nightmare that he will never forget. “Night” symbolises for him the loss of so many family members and friends in the camps, his own suffering and also his lack of home towards the end.

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?

By emphasizing the one word “never” through a one sentence, one word paragraph, Wiesel again emphasizes to the reader just how traumatic these events were and how he will never forget them.