

THE
BOY ON
THE WOODEN BOX

THE BOY ON THE WOODEN BOX STUDENT PACKET

Name:

Period:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pg #	Packet Section	Student Responsibility
2	Background information and author information	Read, review and highlight key elements
3	Discussion Questions	Read questions and prepare for group discussions by taking notes either from the text or from internet research
4-5	Foreshadowing and Retrospect	Work with a partner to complete the charts that consist of quotes from Chapter 1 that make use of both foreshadowing and retrospect; then after the book is finished, complete the column on how the actual events and the foreshadowing/retrospect were connected
6	Motifs	Find as much evidence as you can that supports the listed motifs of the book. Use quotes and page numbers
7	Figurative Language	As you read, find as many examples of figurative language as you can.
8	Notice and Note Signposts	As you read, STOP, NOTICE and NOTE any and all signposts and complete the chart following the directions- use your handout on signposts to know what anchor questions to answer for the various signposts
9	Vocabulary	Before each chapter follow the directions for each word
10-11	Quotes from the text	Below each quote write about its significance on the lines provided.

***ATTACHED TO THE BACK OF THIS PACKET SHOULD BE...

1. Your notes from the Discussion Questions used in preparation for your group discussions
2. The continuation of the Motifs evidence, Figurative Language chart and Notice and Note signposts chart.
3. Vocabulary definitions and contextual quotes for each Chapter

BACKGROUND

Read, Review and
Highlight Key Points

THE HOLOCAUST - The Holocaust refers to the systematic extermination of the Jewish people in Europe during the years that Adolf Hitler and the Nazis were in power in Germany (1933-1945). During that period, six million of Europe's nine million Jews were murdered, most of them in the infamous gas chambers and crematoria of the death camps. Hitler, who had a pathological hatred of Jews, came to power in 1933 during a time of high unemployment and economic chaos. Using the Jews as scapegoats for Germany's problems, he roused the people with a virulently anti-Semitic program and a plan to build a pure and superior German "master race." Hitler's craving for power and domination led to his invasion of European countries beginning in 1939. As world war ensued, Hitler put into action his plan for the "Final Solution" - the extermination of all Jews.

The first death camp began operating at the village of Chelmo in December 1941, and soon other camps were built. Some camps existed only for killing entire trainloads of people. Others, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau and Buna, were death and labor camps where a small percentage of people were kept alive as slave labor. Valuables were taken from the prisoners, and gold was smelted down. Camp barbers shaved prisoners' hair, which was then sold to German companies for use in coat linings and as mattress stuffing. It was not until Germany's defeat in 1945 that the world became fully aware of the incredible atrocities of the Holocaust. To this day, it is difficult to comprehend the enormity of this terrible human tragedy.

THE BOY ON THE WOODEN BOX - Leon Leyson was born in 1929 in the small village of Narewka in northeastern Poland. It was a world he described as "a pretty idyllic place to grow up." His life centered around his loving family, friends, and a caring community. In the spring of 1939, Leon, his parents, brothers, and sister moved to Kraków where, for a few months, Leon enjoyed the modern conveniences and the adventures this cosmopolitan city offered. When the German army invaded Poland in 1939, his idyllic life was obliterated.

Immediately, Jews' rights were nullified. Jews could not own businesses, and Jewish children were forbidden from attending public schools. These are just two examples of the pervasive restrictions that followed. Soon, Jews in Kraków and other cities were forced to live in ghettos. Ultimately, the Nazis' goal to annihilate the entire Jewish population was revealed.

With the arrival of the Nazis, nine-year-old Leon Leyson's life was changed forever. His once carefree existence turned into a life of fear and suffering. Food became more and more scarce. Leon was always hungry, always searching for something to eat. He was brutalized and eventually was separated from his family. He firmly believed that he would not survive the war. Incredibly, his father had the good luck to be hired by Oskar Schindler, a Nazi Party member who had come to Kraków to make his fortune. As the Nazi treatment of the Jews grew increasingly harsh, Schindler chose to protect the Jews who worked for him, using his money and influence to save over 1,000 lives, including young Leon's. He did this at great risk to himself.

The Boy on the Wooden Box, Leon Leyson's story of survival during the Holocaust, is told with simplicity and passion. It is a story that raises significant questions about social responsibility, the human potential for good and evil on many levels, and the ability of even seemingly powerless people to resist injustices. Written in 2012, many decades after Leon Leyson's experiences of the 1930s and 1940s, this memoir teaches readers about the Holocaust and connects them with the powerful story of a boy and his family. Leon Leyson's survival is ultimately an uplifting story of the power of human resilience and love in the face of evil.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Prepare for group discussions by taking notes from the text and/or taking notes from Internet research on the topic.

Attach your notes to the back of this packet for credit.

Topic	Question for Discussion
1	Discuss Oskar Schindler. Who is he? Why is he a well-known historical figure? What did he do? Why does the author consider him a hero?
2	Discuss the treatment of Jews in pre-World War II Poland. How were Jews treated? Were they treated differently than Catholics or other Christians? Were they punished or made to stay segregated? In what way?
3	Discuss the Lejzon (Leyson) family. How were they like all the other families in their tiny village? How were they different? Were they treated differently from other families? Were they rich or poor? Were the siblings unusually close or distant to one another? How did their status in the village impact their lives?
4	Discuss Krakow, Poland in 1938. What kind of city was it? Why did Leon Leyson find it exciting? Was it different from his home village? In what ways?
5	Discuss the invasion of Poland by the Germans in 1939. Why did Germany invade Poland? What did this invasion mean for the citizens of Poland? What did it mean for the Jewish citizens of Poland?
6	Discuss the treatment of Jews in the aftermath of the German invasion in Poland. Why were Jews forced to wear armbands? Why were Jewish children no longer allowed to attend school? Why did Jews have to get off the sidewalk when German officers passed? How did Leon Leyson disobey this rule? What was the consequence?
7	Discuss the ghetto that was built in Krakow for the Jews. Why were they forced to live in these ghettos? Why were the conditions so deplorable? How did the Jews learn to deal with the daily life of overcrowding in these ghettos? How did the Lejzon (Leyson) family survive?
8	Discuss the concentration and work camps for Jews during World War II. What was the purpose of these camps? Why were Jews sent to these camps? Why did Schindler fight to keep his workers out of these camps? How did Schindler save the Lejzons (Leysons) from these camps? What might have happened to Leyson if he had been forced to remain in the work camp? Why?
9	Discuss Oskar Schindler's actions during the war. How did he treat Jews differently from other Nazi businessmen? How did his employees avoid the camps? Why did he build his own camp? Why did he not save more of the Jews? What difference did Schindler make in the lives of the Jews he did save?
10	Leon Leyson mentions the treatment of blacks in 1950s America at the end of his memoir. How does the mistreatment of American blacks compare to the persecution of Jews in Europe during World War II compare?

FORESHADOWING AND RETROSPECT

In Chapter 1, the author makes extensive use of FORESHADOWING (hinting at what will happen in the future) and RETROSPECT (looking back at past events with the knowledge of what actually happened). He uses phrases like "little did I know," "it turned out that," "in retrospect," and "it would never have occurred to me" to contrast what he thought in the past with what he learns in the present. This use of foreshadowing and retrospect makes the narrative dramatic. It raises questions and arouses the reader's desire to know what actually happened.

WORK WITH A PARTNER to complete the charts that consist of quotes from Chapter 1 that make use of both foreshadowing and retrospect. (1) First, read each quote in column 1, focusing on the underlined words. (2) In column 2, write questions that each quote raises. What information do you want to know? (3) Third, after reading the book, write answers to your questions. What is the relationship between the foreshadowing/retrospect in Chapter 1 and the actual events described later in the book?

Foreshadowing/ Retrospect	Questions Raised by the Foreshadowing/Retrospect	How Actual Events & Foreshadowing/Retrospect Are Connected
<p>"My father was a tall, handsome man who always took pride in his appearance. He liked the more formal attire of men in Krakow and gradually purchased several elegant suits... <u>Little did I know those very suits would help to save our lives</u> during the terrible years ahead."</p>		
<p>"Those of us who were Jewish spoke Yiddish at home, Polish in public, and Hebrew in religious school or at the synagogue. I also learned some German from my parents. <u>It turned out that knowing German would prove more useful to us than were ever could have imagined.</u>"</p>		

Foreshadowing/ Retrospect	Questions Raised by the Foreshadowing/Retrospect	How Actual Events & Foreshadowing/Retrospect Are Connected
<p><u><i>In retrospect, my parents and many others made a terrible mistake in thinking the Germans who came to Narewka in the Second World War would be like the Germans who had come in the First World War.</i></u> They thought they would be people like themselves, men doing their military duty, anxious to return to their wives and children, and appreciative of any hospitality and kindness."</p>		
<p>"How many tears like in these letters/and how much lament," "in the evenings, when I sang this song with the Lansman family, those words seemed like ancient history. <u><i>It never would have occurred to me that those words were forecasting my imminent and terrifying future.</i></u>"</p>		

MOTIFS

A motif is a recurring topic or idea in a story (usually one word or short phrase). Motifs can be developed into a theme. The theme of a work is the central idea or underlying meaning in a piece of writing that may be stated directly or indirectly. While reading *Boy on the Wooden Box*, find as much evidence as you can that supports the following motifs of this book. Please include quotes and page numbers! Continue on a separate piece of paper.

Motif	Supporting Evidence (Use quotes and page numbers)
Desperation	
Cruelty	
Heroism	
Resistance	

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

As you read, find as many examples of figurative language as you can. Start by filling in the chart below and then *CONTINUE ON YOUR OWN PIECE OF PAPER*, which you will then attach to this packet.

Pg #	Type of Figurative Language	Quote

You MUST attach pieces of paper to the back of this packet to continue this chart!! Set up your chart on the blank paper as it is here.

STOP! NOTICE AND NOTE...

As you read, you will pay attention and Stop! Notice and Note when you come across any of the six signposts. Once you have identified a signpost, you can flag the passage in the text and write the initials that represent the signpost so you can complete this chart later, or you can document the information immediately on this chart as you read.

Use your pink handout for reference purposes, but here's a brief summary of the signposts as a reminder: Contrasts & Contradictions (CC), Tough Questions (TQ), Aha Moment (Aha or AM), Memory Moment (MM), Words of the Wiser (WW) and Again and Again (AA). Make sure you respond to the anchor question for each signpost.

Start on this chart and then *CONTINUE ON YOUR OWN PIECE OF PAPER*, which you will then attach to this packet.

Page No.	Signpost Initials	Quote, phrase, or short summary of passage that made you STOP, NOTICE AND NOTE	Your Response to the Anchor Question for this Signpost

You MUST attach pieces of paper to the back of this packet to continue this chart!! Set up your chart on the blank paper as it is here.

BOY ON THE WOODEN BOX VOCABULARY

ON A SEPARATE PIECE OF PAPER, please define the following words, list the part of speech and then find it in its context in the text and write the sentence where you find it, including page number. SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR A TEMPLATE AND EXAMPLE FOR THIS VOCABULARY SECTION

Chapter 1	1. Wafted 9 2. Initiate 8 3. Remnant 6	4. Escapades 6 5. Rambunctious 13 6. Apparatus 15	7. Patriarchal 25 8. Pogroms 27 9. Ominous 29
Chapter 2	1. Pedestrians 32 2. Meanders 33	3. Lavish 35 4. Naive 36	5. Gullible 40 6. Precarious 41
Chapter 3	1. Grotesque 52 2. Ransacked 54	3. Pillaged 55 4. Precursor 57	5. Brazenly 58 6. Obliterate 64
Chapter 4	1. Exploit 68 2. Intrigued 70 3. Encounter 67 4. Whims 69	5. Monotony 71 6. Inquisitive 71 7. Advantageous 73 8. Bombarding 75	9. Ingenious 77 10. Scrounged 77 11. Retaliation 78
Chapter 5	1. Replicated 81 2. Loathed 82 3. Spontaneous 85 4. Mimicked 85	5. Inevitable 86 6. Concocted 86 7. Obsession 90 8. Speculate 91	9. Contradictory 91 10. Squalid 91 11. Vacate 92 12. Chaos 94
Chapter 6	1. Alcove 98 2. Hysterically 100 3. Devised 101 4. Outmaneuver 101	5. Reverberated 102 6. Ferret 102 7. Ferociously 102 8. Depleted 104	9. Sanctuary 105 10. Persevere 108 11. Oblivious 111
Chapter 7	1. Alien 113 2. Desecrated 113 3. Plummeted 114 4. Legacy 114 5. Miraculous 116 6. Emaciated 116	7. Pandemonium 117 8. Provocation 120 9. Desolation 122 10. Despondently 122 11. Exuberant 124	12. Meticulous 125 13. Expendable 126 14. Cajoled 127 15. Cowering 129 16. Audacity 130
Chapter 8	1. Petrified 133 2. Nondescript 134 3. Façade 134	4. Placate 134 5. Meander 137 6. Intricacy 140	7. Ideology 142 8. Omen 151
Chapter 9	1. Spewing 153 2. Periphery 154 3. Resistance 159	4. Bounty 160 5. Liberated 161	6. Tumult 163 7. Affirmation 165
Chapter 10	1. Vanquished 166 2. Decimated 168	3. Backlash 171 4. Impetuous 175	5. Whitewash 180 6. Incomprehensible 183
Epilogue	1. Serendipitous 197	2. Liquidation 202	3. Unorthodox 202

Use this template for your vocabulary definitions and sentences from the text –
each chapter must have its own piece of paper!

CHAPTER # _____		
Word	Definition (including part of speech)	Sentence with page number
<i>Example: scrawny</i>	<i>(adj) unattractively thin and bony.</i>	<i>"I had been a scrawny, starving boy of fifteen who was the size of a ten-year old." (p.1)</i>

QUOTES FROM THE TEXT

Instructions: Below each quote write about its significance. Why is the quote an important part of the book?

"After all, I was the youngest of our group, and it was only right that those who were older should go ahead of me. To be honest, I wanted to postpone as long as I could my disappointment if the man to whom I owed so much didn't remember me." -- Leon Leyson (Prologue)

Importance: _____

"What made the escapades even more exciting was that my mother had forbidden my going to the river." -- Leon Leyson (chapter 1)

Importance: _____

"What excited me most was the indoor plumbing." -- Leon Leyson (chapter 2)

Importance: _____

"As the Nazis tightened their grip on Krakow, Jews were barraged with all kinds of insulting caricatures." -- Leon Leyson (chapter 3)

Importance: _____

"Then one night, I experienced the soldiers' wrath firsthand." -- Leon Leyson (chapter 4)

Importance: _____

"Without valuables of our own, my family's only hope to fend off starvation was work, since work meant food, maybe soup at lunchtime and sometimes a small chunk of bread to take home." -- Leon Leyson (chapter 5)

Importance: _____

"My father delivered the latest news. He, David, and Pesza had been ordered to report immediately to the Plaszow labor camp, about two and a half miles from the ghetto. For the first time since our family had been forced into the ghetto some eighteen months before, the five of us still together were to be separated." -- Leon Leyson (chapter 6)

Importance: _____

"My first impression of Plaszow as hell on earth never changed." -- Leon Leyson (chapter 7)

Importance: _____

"Sometimes, the morning after one of his late night visits, I would go to get my rations only to discover that Schindler had left word I should receive two portions. He had to make a special effort to do this, and I was overwhelmed by his kindness." -- Leon Leyson (chapter 8)

Importance: _____

"Sadly, in Krakow, I soon realized the suffering wasn't over." -- Leon Leyson (chapter 10)

Importance: _____

"In the United States, I rarely spoke about my experiences during the war. It was too hard to explain to people. There didn't even seem to be a vocabulary to communicate what I had gone through." -- Leon Leyson (Epilogue)

Importance: _____
