

Novel Study

Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust

By Elly Berkovits Gross

Reading/Writing
Interactive Notebook
Plus: Enrichment Projects

Complete "No-Prep" Literature Guide



Grades 4th-8th

By Gina Kennedy

About the Author...

Elly Berkovits Gross

Elly was born in Romania to Eugene and Irina Berkovits. In 1944, her father was inducted by the invading Hungarian forces into a forced labor camp, where he was murdered.

Elly and her remaining family, her mother and younger brother Adalbert, were taken to a Jewish ghetto 'the day after the Jewish religious Passover in 1944 along with most other Jews in her County. Six weeks later, her family, along with thousands of other Jews were transported via cattle cars to Auschwitz concentration camp. She was separated from her mother and brother, and never saw either again. Elly credits her survival of the camp to 'miracles', noting that few others of her age group survived the ordeal. Elly was transferred to Fallersleben, a part of the Neuengamme concentration camp, where she performed slave labor for Volkswagen until she was liberated at by the Allies on April 14, 1945.

Elly returned to her home town, where she soon married family friend Ernest Gross. They had two children and five grandchildren, who also reside in the United States. Elly graduated from LaGuardia Community College with an associate degree in Fine Arts in 1993 at the age of 64.

She shared her life's story in *Elly, My True Story of the Holocaust*.



Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust

By Elly Berkovits Gross



In *Elly, My True Story of the Holocaust*, readers follow Elly's journey as a young girl whose greatest concern in life was forgetting her umbrella in a rainstorm to being a teenage Jewish prisoner in a Concentration Camp trying to accomplish nothing other than to just stay alive each day.

Directions: Millions of Jewish children went to Concentration Camps where they lived in inhumane conditions, some survived, but many died due to illness or starvation. For those who survived, what three character traits do you think would have been valuable for them to have when they were finally liberated and tried to put their lives back together? Write the character traits below and explain why you chose each one.

1. Trait:
Why?

2. Trait:
Why?

3. Trait:
Why?

1. In the introduction, the author wrote, “**By a chain of miracles my life was spared.**” Why did Elly think that she was treated differently and had special privileges that other Hungarian Jewish people didn’t have?

Introduction, Chapters 1-4



Vocabulary:

devastated- overwhelmed with disaster

frostbite- injury to any part of the body after excessive exposure to extreme cold

gracefully- elegant form and beauty

hysterically- suffering from uncontrollable emotions

perished- to die through torture or mistreatment

sobbing- uncontrollable crying

3. How did Elly and her friends create their own little lake? _____

2. In Chapter One, why do you think it was so important for Elly to go get her umbrella? _____

4. How did Elly describe her hometown in Romania in Chapter Two? Cite evidence from the story. _____

Use **devastated**, **frostbite** and **gracefully** in three sentences referring to the events in Chapters 1-4.

devastated: _____

frostbite: _____

gracefully: _____

5. In Chapter Three, why didn’t Ella’s grandma give her a gift? Why were gifts uncommon in the 1930’s? _____

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

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hysterically: _____

perished: _____

sobbing: _____

Romania Mini-Research Report

Directions: Elly's family lived in Romania. Research the country and write a short description of the country including its history, culture, natural resources and other interesting things about Romania. Then list five interesting facts from your research about the country that others might not know.

Romania Population:

Description: _____



Interesting Facts:

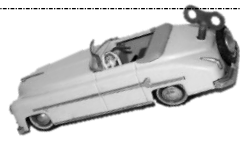
1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



Invent a Toy



Directions: The author mentioned that it was quite common for children to receive homemade toys as gifts in the 1930's. Invent a toy that could be given as a gift in the 1930's. Illustrate a sketch below of a toy that is only made of a **rope, strings, matches, wild chestnuts, beans, wildflowers and stones** as described in Chapter Three. Use as many of the items as needed. Give your toy a title and label the parts of the toy.

Toy Title

[illegible]

collaborators- to cooperate, willingly or unwillingly, with an enemy nation, especially with an enemy occupying one's country.

looters- stealing other's belongings

seized- to take possession of or begin to control

[illegible][illegible]

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collaborators: _____

5. Describe why the Jewish people were unfairly picked on by the Nazi's and blamed for causing the Depression after WWI? (Chapter Seven) _____

6. What did the author mean in Chapter Eight when she wrote, "**depression is like a locust that eats everything in its path**"? _____

7. How has the author's tone changed in the novel from the beginning of the story? _____

8. What life changing event took place on September 10, 1940? _____

9. How did Romania become Hungary? _____

Use **prey**, **seized** and **treacherous** in three sentences referring to events in Chapters 5-8.

prey: _____

seized: _____

treacherous: _____

10. Cite evidence from the story that shows how Hungarians cooperated with the Nazis. _____

Dark and Cloudy...

Directions: At the end of the Chapter Eight, the author stated, “**The sun was shining. Meadows were green. Trees and flowers were blooming, but it was dark and cloudy for the Jews.**” Write a fictitious journal entry or personal narrative about a time in your life when things seems good for everyone else around you; but yet you were going through a difficult time.



Dear Journal,

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Sincerely,

Compare and Contrast

Directions: Think about how the Elly and the rest of the Berkovits' lives in Romania were different after the Hungarians took over control of Romania from when they lived a normal care-free life before the invasion. Compare their lives before and after the invasion on the chart below.

Before the Hungarian invasion:

After the Hungarian invasion:

Ways their lives were similar:

(At least three ideas.)

How their lives were before the invasion:

DIFFERENT

How their lives were different after the invasion:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

deprived- lacking the necessities of life
desperate- extreme need of something
elders- someone who is of greater age
encounter- to meet up with, usually unexpectedly
indispensable- absolutely necessary
scold- to find fault with in an angry manner

[illegible][illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

deprived:_____

desperate:_____

elders:_____

5. Why did Elly's father have a difficult childhood? Cite evidence from the story. _____

6. Describe two examples from Chapter Eleven of how Elly's relationships with her non-Jewish friend's had changed. Cite evidence from the text. _____

7. What gift did Elly receive at her uncle's wedding? Why did it come in so handy? _____

8. How did Elly's life change in the spring of 1944? _____

Use **encounter**, **indispensable** and **scold** in three sentences referring to events in Chapters 9-12.

encounter: _____

indispensable: _____


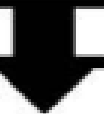

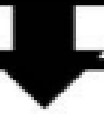



scold: _____

9. Why will the smiles of the Hungarian people when they were locked in the cattle cars be imprinted in Elly's mind forever? _____

10. How did Elly use her pocketknife to bring a little relief to her mother and brother in Chapter Twelve? _____

Sequential Order

Directions: Brainstorm the four most important events that took place in Chapters 9-12. Describe and illustrate the events on the chart below in sequential order from beginning to last.

	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

My Dearest Father...

Directions: Based on details in this section of the novel if Elly had written a letter to her father letting him know about things that have taken place since he's been gone, what might the letter look like? Write the letter below.



My Dearest Father,

Yours truly, Elly

4. In Chapter Fifteen, why did prisoners play music when new prisoners entered Auschwitz? _____

5. What do you think was going on in the musician's minds when the new prisoners entered the death camp? _____

6. What did the author mean when she wrote, "It rained as if the sky was crying for all of us." _____

7. From Chapter Sixteen, how did they divide prisoners as they arrived at Auschwitz Birkenau? _____

8. What did Elly do when she entered the hall in Chapter Sixteen? _____

Use **nourishment**, **rejuvenate** and **turmoil** in three sentences referring to events in Chapters 13-17.

nourishment: _____

rejuvenate: _____

turmoil: _____

Block 20

Directions: How did you visualize life in Block 20 based on Elly's descriptions? Illustrate a detailed sketch of what life might have been like in Block 20 based your visualization and Elly's words in Chapter Seventeen.

Summary

Directions: Recall the five most important events that took place in Chapters 13-17 of *Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust*. Record the events below using the transitions provided. Then write a brief summary of what happened in the five chapters.

First

Then

Next

Next

Last

[illegible]

1. Describe the sleeping conditions in Block 18? _____

Chapters 18-23



Vocabulary:

barracks- a group of buildings used to lodge prisoners

infested- to be overrun by unwanted animals

lukewarm- somewhere in the middle, having little enthusiasm or excitement

metallic- made of metal

sardines- tiny fish that tightly packed together

tortured- a method of inflicting horrific pain

2. How did Miri save Elly's life? _____

3. What did Elly eat to help her survive? Would you do the same? _____

Use **barracks**, **infested** and **lukewarm** in three sentences referring to the events in Chapters 18-23.

barracks: _____

infested: _____

lukewarm: _____

4. Record two examples of misery that Elly endured while trying to sleep. _____

5. Why do you think some Jewish prisoners decided to help the Nazi's? _____

6. What happened to the sick girls in Chapter Twenty? Why do you suppose the Czech girl hit any woman within her reach? _____

7. Describe how the daily hunger caused jealousy in Chapter Twenty-One. _____

9. The author stated, "**yet I had not realized in what kind of place I was.**" What kind of place do you think she thought it was at the time?

8. What do you think the adult meant when she said, "don't worry child. They were transferred to a warmer climate"? _____

Think About It: Humiliation was a huge part of the Nazi's torture, provide an example from the text of how the Nazi's tried to humiliate the prisoners in these chapters. _____

Use **metallic**, **sardines** and **tortured** in three sentences referring to the events in Chapters 18-23.

metallic: _____

stammering: _____

tortured: _____

What's the Cause?

Directions: Choose what you think are the four most important events from Chapters 18-23. Then create four sets of cause and effect statements to describe each event.

For example:

Cause: Fourteen women were forced to sleep on each level.

Effect: When one had to turn, they all had to turn; and splinters stuck their bodies.

Cause: _____

Effect: _____



Cause: _____

Effect: _____



Cause: _____

Effect: _____



Cause: _____

Effect: _____

Guide to Survival...

Directions: Based on what you've read, what might a guide written by current prisoners look like that they could give to new prisoners with tips on what to expect at Auschwitz and tips on how to survive? Write the fictitious guide below of things they learned to do and what not to do to survive Auschwitz. Base the knowledge in the guide on what you've read in the text. Fill in each section, be thorough.

Create a Guide Title

Absolutely Never Do This

[illegible]

The "Do's and Don'ts" of Living in the Barracks

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Tips on Finding Food to Eat

[illegible]

How to Survive Roll Call

[illegible]

1. Who was Dr. Mengele? What was he trying to do with the prisoners? ____

Chapters 24-27



Vocabulary:

detainees- a person being questioned for a political offense, usually during war

disinfection- to cleanse and destroy germs

incarcerated- to confine or put in prison

inedible- something that is unfit to be ate

intense- something that is extremely serious or strong

notorious- widely and unfavorably known

2. Explain why the Kapo hit Elly. ____

3. Why did Elly come close to her last day? Why was she lucky to go to the line on the right? ____

Use **detainees**, **disinfection** and **incarcerated** in three sentences referring to the events in Chapters 24-27.

detainees: _____

disinfection: _____

incarcerated: _____

4. What did the author mean in Chapter Twenty-Four when she wrote, "my heart was so bitter that I did not feel the pain"? _____

5. What did the author mean by a "**prisoner of war**" in Chapter Twenty-Five? Why do you suppose life was a little better for them? _____

[illegible][illegible]

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7. Summarize what Elly's job at the factory was in Chapter Twenty-Six. _____

[illegible]

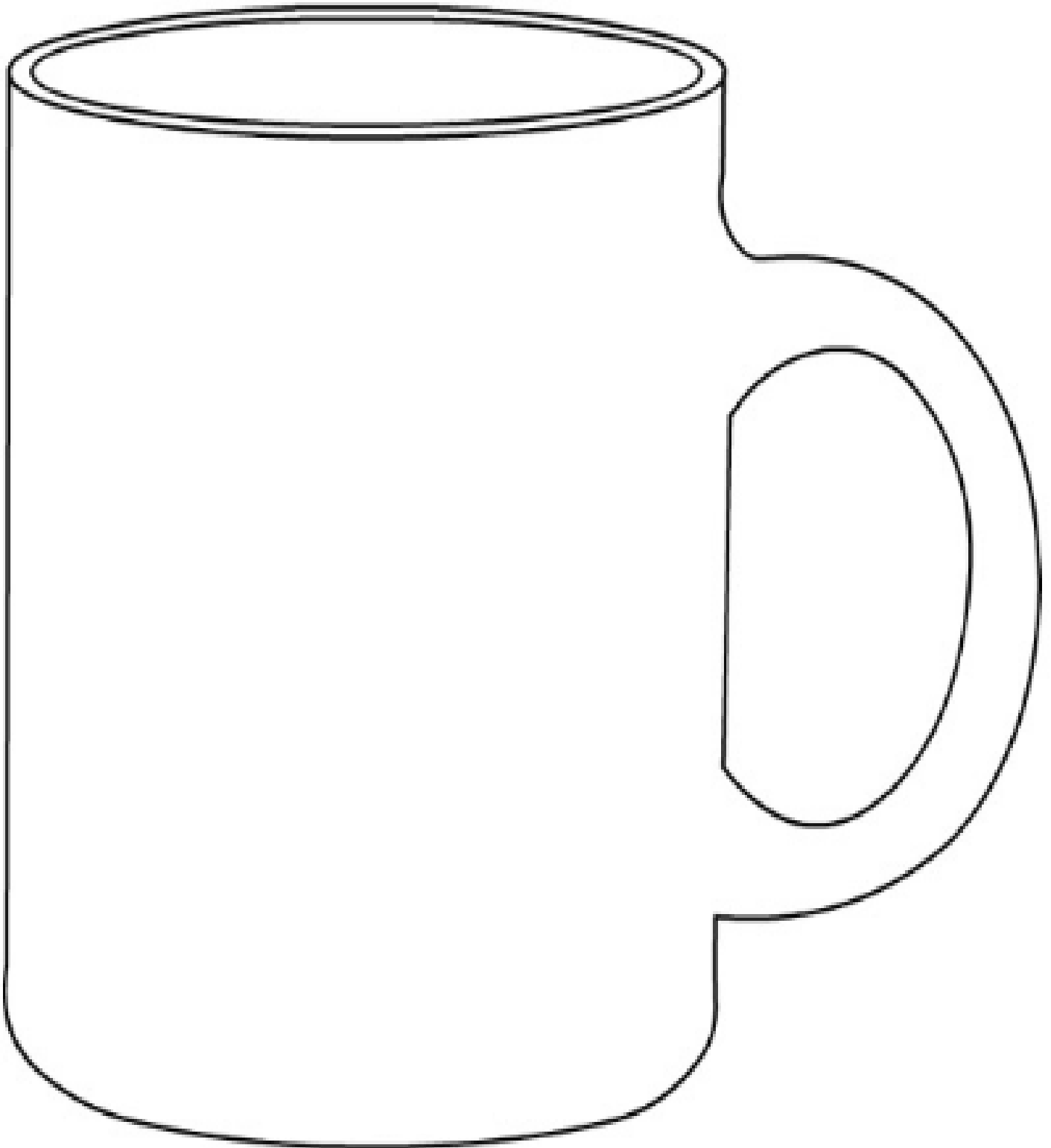
inedible: _____

intense: _____

notorious: _____

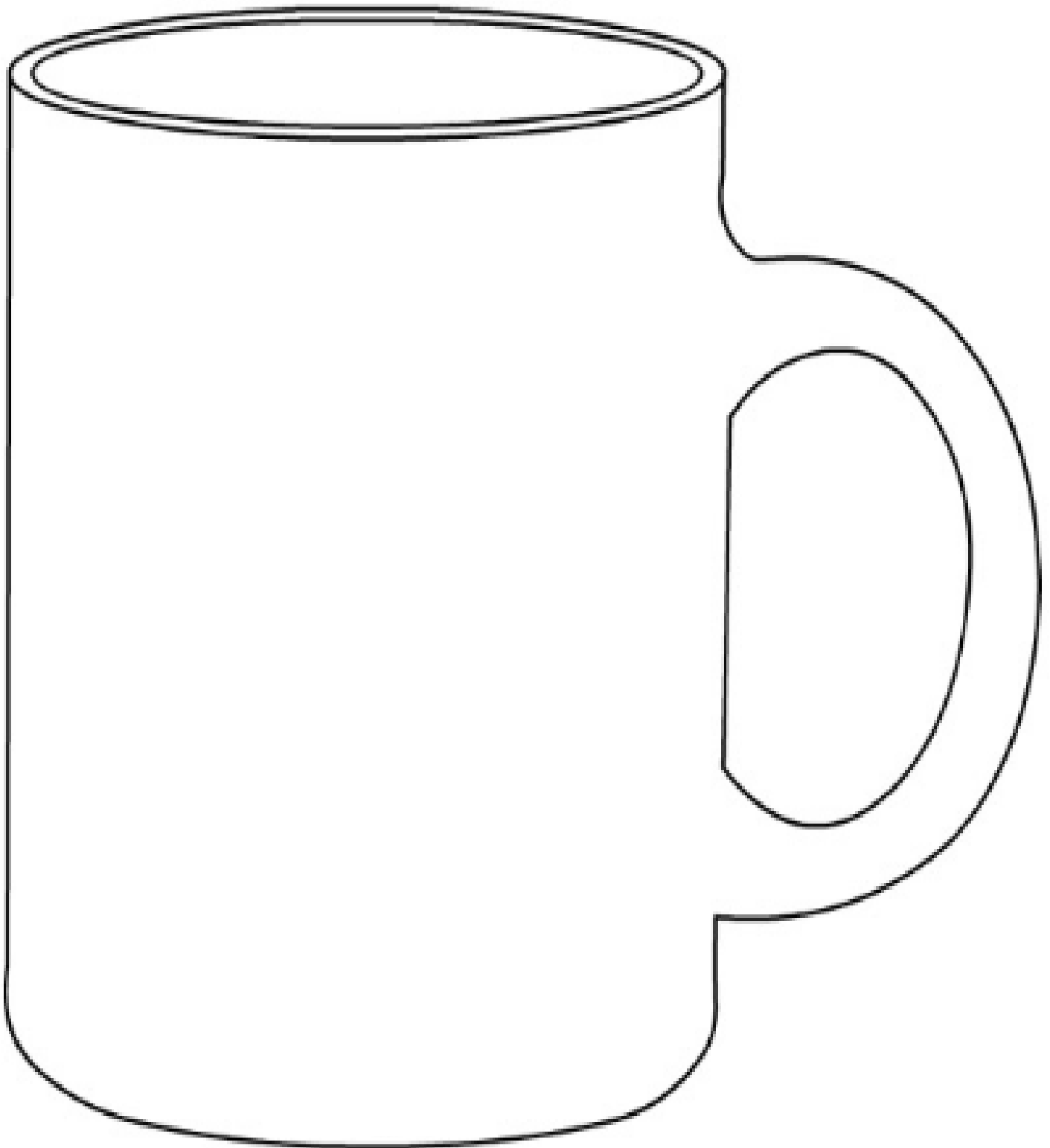
Design a Cup

Directions: Design a cup that represents the important things in Elly's life based on what you've read in the novel. Create the design on the cup below.



Design a Cup

Directions: Now, design a cup that represents the important things in your own life. Create the design on the cup below.



Making Inferences

Directions: Make three inferences about what life at Fallersleben might have been like based on the text in Chapters 24-27. On the chart below determine how you made each inference by including the text clues you read, what you already knew and your final-conclusion (inference).

<p>Text Clues:</p>	<p>What You Already Knew:</p>	<p>Your Final Conclusion:</p>
<p>Text Clues:</p>	<p>What You Already Knew:</p>	<p>Your Final Conclusion:</p>
<p>Text Clues:</p> <p>©GinaKennedy</p>	<p>What You Already Knew:</p>	<p>Your Final Conclusion:</p>

1. What type of plant was Fallersleben? Why do you suppose they used Jewish prisoners to help run their factory? _____

Chapters 28-31



Vocabulary:

air raid- a set of bombs coming from planes on a specific area

altered- to change or become different

crematorium- a furnace where human corpses are incarcerated.

gruesome- causing great horror

revolted- to defy authority and turn away

vessels- a large ship that travels on water

2. What conclusion did you draw as to who might have been performing air raids over Germany?

3. Describe Elly's job at Laadberg. _____

Use **air raid**, **altered** and **crematorium** in three sentences referring to the events in Chapters 28-31.

air raid: _____

altered: _____

crematorium: _____

4. Based on what you read in Chapter Twenty-Nine, why do you suppose working in the crematorium was the most gruesome job at Auschwitz? _____

"Fact-Opinion Chart"

Directions: List five opinions that Elly stated in Chapters 28-31 in *Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust*. Then provide the type of evidence that she might need to provide if she were to prove that the opinions were true.

Opinion



What information would make it true?



Character: _____
Opinion: _____



Information: _____

Character: _____
Opinion: _____



Information: _____

Character: _____
Opinion: _____



Information: _____

Character: _____
Opinion: _____



Information: _____

Freedom

Directions: Many thoughts most likely went through the minds of the prisoners once they were liberated. They possibly felt elated, hopeful, unsure, scared among other emotions. Write a four-stanza poem below that could have described the thoughts of Jewish prisoners when the war was over. Use inferences from the story to write your poem. In each stanza focus on one emotion that prisoners might have had. Add an illustration below to illustrate one of the emotions described in the poem.

Title

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[illegible]

VISA- non-U.S. citizens need a VISA to enter the United States to visit, work, and live.

[illegible][illegible]

compensation: _____

confiscated: _____

dowry: _____

[illegible]

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

newcomers: _____

ransacked: _____

VISA: _____

Reader's Theater

Directions: Elly and Ernest soon realized that newcomers in America faced challenges and were often discriminated against. What type of things would have Elly and Ernest talked about when they first moved to America and they were trying to start their lives over? What might have one of their conversation sounded like? Write a readers' theater script below of a fictitious conversation they might have had.

List of Characters: Elly, Ernest



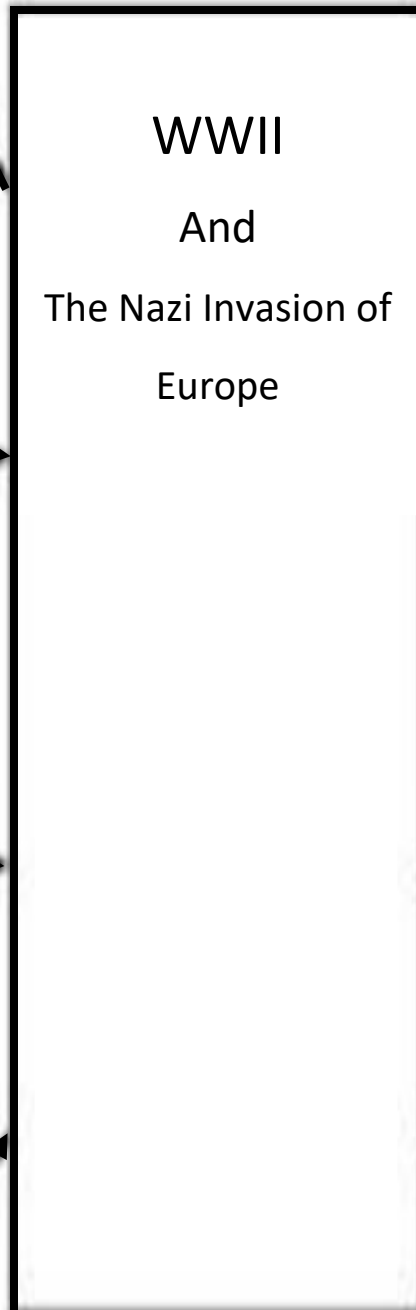
Script:

The Effects of WWII

Directions: Brainstorm how WWII changed the lives of the Berkovits family forever. Write the eight most important effects that WWII and the Nazi invasion of Europe had on the Berkovits family. Explain each effect with details.

Effects

Effects



A Character Sketch of Ely

Directions: Think about what you've learned about Elly in the novel. Write a character sketch of her based on what you have learned about her in the text. Write the character sketch below.

A character sketch is a short essay that informs others about a character in a book. When you write a character sketch, you want the reader to have a strong mental image of the person including how the person talks, acts and thinks.

Consider the following about your character:

- gender, age and name
- appearance
- physical and personal strengths and weaknesses
- likes and dislikes and feelings and behaviors towards other characters
- feelings of other characters towards the character
- feelings of character towards himself/herself
- personality at the beginning of the novel
- changes in personality as story progresses
- your opinion of the character

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Elly's Poetry

Directions: At the end of the novel, you had the opportunity to read some of Elly's poems. Choose the four poems you liked the best. Write the theme for each poem and a summary of what the poem is about.

Poem Title: _____

Theme: _____

Summary: _____

Poem Title: _____

Theme: _____

Summary: _____

Poem Title: _____

Theme: _____

Summary: _____

Poem Title: _____

Theme: _____

Summary: _____

"Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust" Story Pyramid

Directions: Write a story pyramid for *Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust*.

Line One: One word, stating the name of the novel's main character. (At the top of the triangle.)

Line Two: Two words that describe the main character.

Line Three: Three words that describe the setting of the novel.

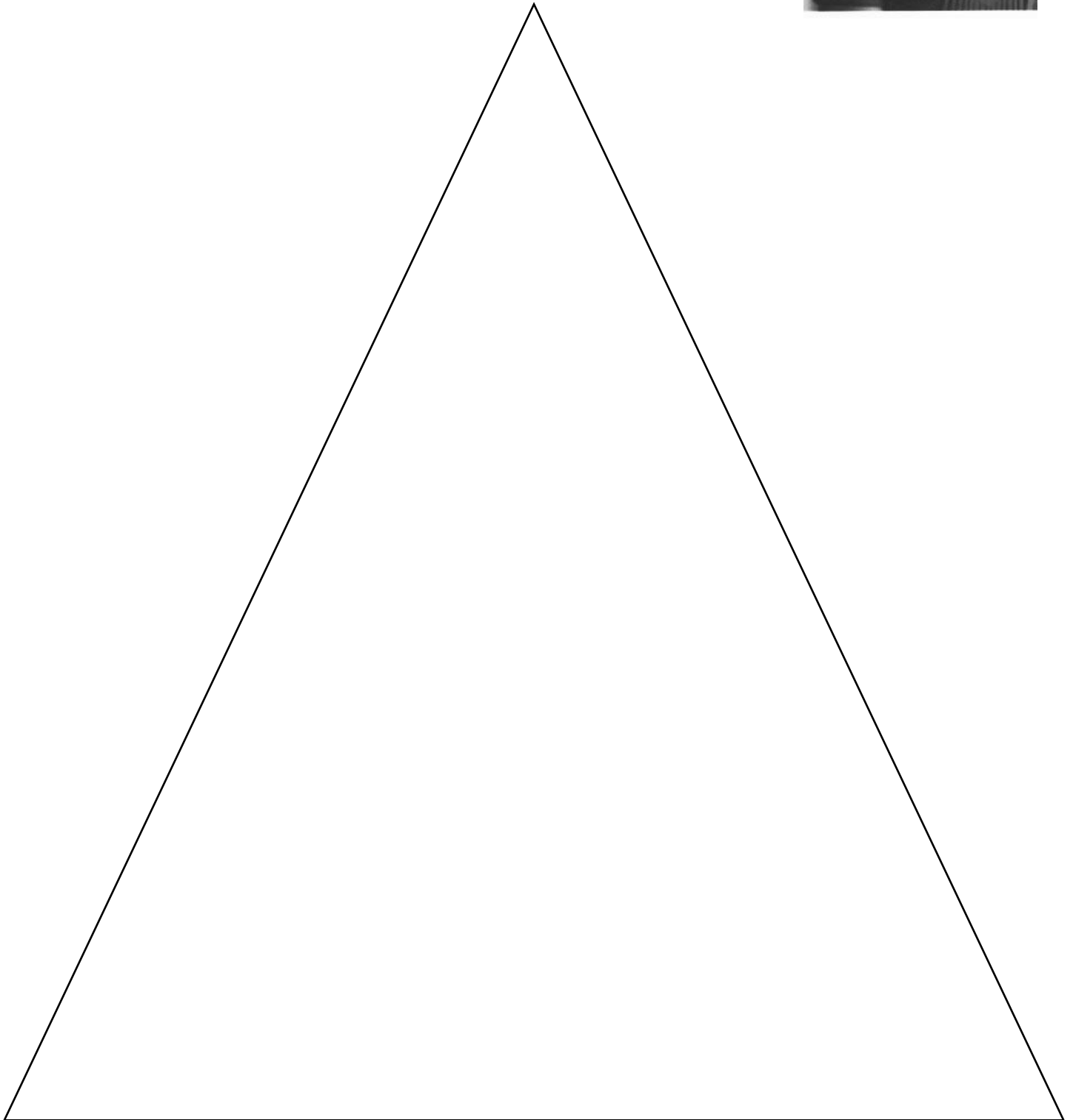
Line Four: Four words that discuss the main problem in the novel.

Line Five: Five words that describe your favorite event in the novel.

Line Six: Six words to describe another event in the story.

Line Seven: Seven words that describe even another event in the story.

Line Eight: Eight words that describe another character in the novel. (At the bottom of the triangle.)



Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust

By Elly Berkovits Gross

List and describe two ways the author's writing style in this novel made the story more interesting.

1. _____

2. _____

Write a summary below for this novel that could appear on Amazon letting buyers know if they should purchase this novel.

Explain the author's purpose for writing this novel: _____

Explain the general mood of this story, or how the author made you feel while you were reading this novel. Use mood words such as silly, angry and so on in your description to defend your answer. _____

Based on what you have read in this novel, draw a conclusion as to why Elly decided to write this novel.



Elly's Timeline Sequence Chart



Directions: Brainstorm eight of the most important events in the novel: *Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust*. Use the sentence starters below to record those events.

First,

Next,

Next,

Next,

Next,

Next,

Next,

Last,



Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust Themes

Directions: Each of the following themes are among those used in *Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust*. Read the themes below and provide an event from the story to support how each theme was included by the author in the novel.

Safety:

Survival:

Desperation:

Perseverance:

New Beginnings:

Years have passed, but many people still won't buy Volkswagen automobiles because of what the company did to Jewish prisoners almost a century ago even though new owners have taken over and management has changed. What do you think? **Write a persuasive paper below stating whether you would purchase a Volkswagen car today based on the company's actions during WWII. Use three reasons to defend your opinion.**

[illegible]

Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust

Figurative Language

Directions: Explain how each form of figurative language below could be related to an event in *Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust*.

1. "Actions speak louder than words":

2. "Hoist your sail when the wind is calm":

3. "Got a raw deal":

4. "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer":

5. "Never bite the hand that feeds you":

6. "Don't dance on someone's grave":

“Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust” Conflict Chart

Directions: Conflict in literature refers to the clash opposing forces. There are three major forms of conflict. Use the chart below to record how each is evident in the novel. (Include two examples for each section.)

Person Vs. Person	
Person Vs. Nature	
Person Vs. Self	

“Book Jacket”

Directions: You will be designing a new book jacket for the book *Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust*. You will need to decide what image you would like to have on the cover. On the back you will need to write a summary of the book and two “one paragraph” reviews.

The form is a large rectangle with a thick black border. It is divided into three sections. The top section is a large rectangle intended for an image. The bottom section is divided into two equal-width rectangles by a vertical line, intended for text.



Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust

"End of the Book" Projects

★ Write a two-page letter to Elly Berkovits letting her know how you felt about her novel. In the letter include the reasons you did or didn't like the novel. Also include your thoughts on the author's writing style and ask her questions about her life. Add an illustration as well to accompany your letter.



★ What if Elly's story was recreated into a movie? Create a full-sized poster that could advertise the movie to get people to want to watch it at the theaters. On the fictitious poster, include a full-sized illustration, the main stars in the movie (you choose the stars), the title, the author and two critics' reviews.



★ Write a ten page "What If" story book about Elly Berkovits' life. On each page, include a "What If" question, such as "What if Elly's dad had decided to move to South America like his brothers?" Then finish with two ways Elly's life would have been different if that question would have been a true statement. Add an illustration to each page as well. Then add a cover page that looks neat and attractive.

★ Create a "Cereal Box Tribute" of Elly's life out of a recycled cereal box. On the cereal box, cut out pictures of Elly from online or illustrate your own. Add captions for each picture. Also on the cereal box include facts about Elly's life as well as quotes of interesting comments she made throughout the novel. Cover the entire cereal box, make it neat and attractive.

★ Create a poster sized picture timeline of Elly's life based on what you learned in the novel. The timeline should include at least ten important dates in her life. By each date include an illustration, and 3-4 sentences that explain what happened on that date and why it was so important.



★ Research Auschwitz, the largest concentration camp in WWII. Write a two-page fact report in which each paragraph introduces different facts about the Concentration Camp and then is followed up by one of your personal thoughts. Add an introductory paragraph and a concluding paragraph as well. The report should be full of facts that others most likely didn't know.

★ Based only on what you have read in the novel, write a two-page biography of Elly Berkovits Gross. Within the biography add opinions of your own about important events in Elly's life. Add a portrait of Elly that you've created as well to your biography.



★ Author a WWII Poetry Book. Write five 4-stanza poem about the lives of WWII prisoners. Add a cover page with an attractive illustration and bind the poetry together neatly. Make sure that each poem has a different theme.



★ Write a twenty-question true or false quiz about the text in *Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust* for another student to take. Include an answer key.



Complete three projects in tic tac toe order.

"Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust"

Project Rubric:

The projects were complete and all the necessary components were included.....40 Points

Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar.....20 points

Creativity and Originality.....20 Points

Projects are Attractive and Organized.....20 Points

Total Possible.....100 Points

Student's Name:

Total Points:

Grade:

Vocabulary List:

devastated- overwhelmed with disaster

frostbite- injury to any part of the body after excessive exposure to extreme cold

gracefully- elegant form and beauty

hysterically- suffering from uncontrollable emotions

perished- to die through torture or mistreatment

sobbing- uncontrollable crying

collaborators- to cooperate, willingly or unwillingly, with an enemy nation, especially with an enemy occupying one's country.

harsh- unpleasant, very grim

looters- stealing other's belongings

prey- a person who is a victim of an enemy

seized- to take possession of or begin to control

treacherous- dangerous and hazardous

deprived- lacking the necessities of life

desperate- extreme need of something

elders- someone who is of greater age

encounter- to meet up with, usually unexpectedly

indispensable- absolutely necessary

scold- to find fault with in an angry manner

deportees- to be forcibly removed from a country

fate- something that will happen unavoidably

lunatics- an insane person

nourishment- food or nutrients to keep the body going

rejuvenate- to revive or restore to a former state

turmoil- a state of great confusion and disturbance

barracks- a group of buildings used to lodge prisoners

infested- to be overrun by unwanted animals

lukewarm- somewhere in the middle, having little enthusiasm or excitement

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air raid- a set of bombs coming from planes on a specific area
altered- to change or become different
crematorium- a furnace where human corpses are incarcerated.
gruesome- causing great horror
revolted- to defy authority and turn away
vessels- a large ship that travels on water

compensation- pay for doing a job
confiscated- items that are seized or stolen by foreign authorities
dowry- the money, goods, or estate that a wife brings to her husband at marriage
newcomers- a person who has recently arrived
ransacked- to messily search through someone's home and steal items
VISA- non-U.S. citizens need a VISA to enter the United States to visit, work, and live.

Vocabulary Word Wall



devastated



frostbite



gracefully



hysterically



perished



sobbing



collaborators



harsh



looters



prey



seized



treacherous



deprived



desperate



elders



encounter



indispensable



scold



deportees



fate



lunatics



nourishment



rejuvenate



turmoil



barracks



infested



lukewarm



metallic



sardines



tortured



detainees



disinfection



incarcerated



inedible



intense



notorious



air raid



altered



crematorium



gruesome



revolted



vessels



compensation



confiscated



dowry



newcomers



ransacked



VISA

