

Sample Discussion Questions

Choose as many questions as you want to use during your class discussion. Adjust questions as needed.

CONTEXT QUESTIONS

1. Where was the survivor author born? What did you learn about their family life before the Holocaust?
2. When did the survivor author first encounter the Nazis and their collaborators and how did living under Nazi rule change their life?
3. How did the survivor author survive the Holocaust (e.g., with the help of a rescuer, going into hiding, living under a false identity, moments of luck)?
4. What happened to the survivor author immediately after the Holocaust (e.g., reunited with family, returned home, started to work)?
5. When did the survivor author arrive in Canada? Where in Canada did they settle?
6. Why did the survivor author come to Canada?

HIGHER-ORDER THINKING QUESTIONS

1. What themes are prominent in the memoir (e.g., family, education, Jewish life, discrimination/persecution, violence, politics/war, ghettos/camps, resistance, hiding, escape, rescuers, liberation)?
2. Discuss the title of the memoir — why do you think that title was chosen? How does it represent the story of the survivor author?
3. What was unique or interesting about the way the survivor story was written (e.g., language, literary devices, pacing, sections/chapter lengths, use of dialogue)? Why do you think the author chose to write their memoir this way?
4. Aside from the survivor author and their family, think about another person who was mentioned or played an important role in the story. How did that person respond to the persecution of Jews?
5. What is antisemitism? What role did antisemitism play in the unfolding of the Holocaust? What examples of antisemitism might we see in modern day?
6. How was reading a memoir different from reading another genre of literature?
7. Why is it important to learn about the Holocaust today?