

# *I Have Lived a Thousand Years*

**Synopsis** When the author was a teenager, the Germans invaded her country and forced thousands of Jews into concentration camps. This book is a memoir about the horrendous years the author and her family spent in these camps, surviving starvation, disease, and physical and emotional cruelty in Nazi Germany. The book ends as the author and her mother sail past the Statue of Liberty on the ship that brought them to America and freedom.

## Introduction: Explore Memoir

Explain to students that *I Have Lived a Thousand Years* is a memoir, which is an informational title of memories an author shares about a time in his or her life. While an autobiography tells about all of the author's life, a memoir is more narrowly focused on a part of the author's life. Explain that this author spent some of her teenage years as a prisoner in Nazi concentration camps. The memoir tells about what the author remembers about this time in her life.

## Vocabulary

**Tier Two:** aeons (81), affidavit (212), anteroom (21), apathetic (185), cacophony (56), confiscated (16), degradation (27), gesticulates (202), ghetto (37), Gothic (172), grande dame (223), inconsequential (78), internment camps (47), labor camps (47), liquidation (47), monotonous (82), sabotage (93), stamina (120), stupor (63), synagogue (13), tumultuous (69), voracious (29)

**Tier Three:** Aryan race (154), Auschwitz (71), concentration camps (47), Dachau (156), Krakow (100), shiva (211), swastika (19), yeshiva (85)

## Word Work

*5.8 Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Sensory Language. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about how an author's sensory language creates imagery in literary text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding.*

Explain that *I Have Lived a Thousand Years* contains many similes and metaphors. Have students refer to the listed pages, find the simile or metaphor, read it aloud and explain its meaning. If students discover another simile or metaphor on the listed page, follow the same procedure to discuss it as well.

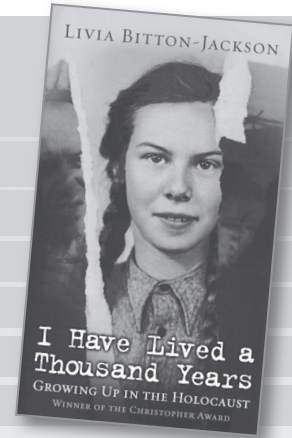
(page 29) *"The syllables erupted like bullets from a pistol."* (simile)

(page 37) *"Tension has converted him into a statue of stone."* (metaphor)

(page 69) *"Their faces aren't faces, they are grim masks."* (metaphor)

(page 96) *"The sharp, yellow bristles against a scarlet backdrop make my head look like a blushing porcupine."* (simile)

(page 97) *"I am a disfigured scarecrow."* (metaphor)



**Author:** Livia Bitton-Jackson

**Genre:** Informational Text

**Text Structure:** Memoir

**Guided Reading Level:** V

**TEKS:** 5.2, 5.8, 5.11.E, 5.24.A

## English Language Support

Offer realia, gestures, or photos to support the introduction of the new vocabulary. Explain that some of these vocabulary words are Nazi camps in which Elli Friedman was forced to live. Find information and photos online to share with students. Provide needed background on the Jewish persecution by the Germans before and during World War II.

## Understanding the Text

**Literal:** *What was Elli's life like before she was forced to leave her home? (She had a nice home, loving parents, and good friends and family members.) What was her life like after being forced to leave her home? (She was starved, lived in terrible places, forced to work hard for long hours, and in physical pain much of the time.)*

**Interpretive:** *Why did Nazi Germany force Jewish people into concentration camps? Why were the Jewish people treated so cruelly? Use evidence from the text to support your answers. (The Nazis forced Jewish people into concentration camps because Hitler intended to kill all of them to purify the bloodlines of the German people. They were treated cruelly because they were viewed as animals and not people and also because the Nazis felt that if the Jewish prisoners suffered cruel treatment, they would die without having to be executed.)*

**Applied:** *Not every German in the 1940s believed in treating Jewish people cruelly. Could they have somehow prevented the Holocaust? How? Could another Holocaust happen in the world today? How could ordinary people prevent it from happening?*

## Phonics and Word Recognition

Explain that meanings to unfamiliar text words can often be determined by dividing the words into syllables and noting their root words and affixes. Ask each student to find an unfamiliar word in *I Have Lived a Thousand Years* and use the above method to determine its meaning. Then have volunteers explain to the class how they arrived at the meaning to the unfamiliar words.

## Text Features

**5.2 Reading/Vocabulary Development.** *Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing.*

Discuss with students that *I Have Lived a Thousand Years* contains many German words because of its setting and that these words are in italics. Ask students to refer to the pages below, find the German words, and determine their meanings using surrounding context clues: pages 13, 24, 37, 73, and 76.

p. 13; meine Schönheit; “my beauty”

p. 24; Hej, zsidó lány, zsidó lány; “Hey, Jew girl, Jew girl”

p. 37; Judenrein; “Free of Jews”

p. 73; Goldene Haar!; “golden hair”/ Bist du Jüdin?; “Are you Jewish”?/ Wie alt bist du?; “How old are you”?

p. 76; Ruhe!; “Quiet!”/ Ruuhee! Wer versteht Deutsch? Deutsch! Wer versteht Deutsch, austreten!; “Who understands German? Step forward!;/ Sich auskeleiden! Alles herunter!; “Everyone undress! Everything off!”

## Reading Informational Text

**5.24.A** *Follow the research plan to collect data from a range of print and electronic resources (e.g., reference texts, periodicals, web pages, online sources) and data from experts.*

Lead a discussion with students about questions they may have about the Holocaust, such as how many people died in the Nazi concentration camps or how many people were liberated from the camps at the end of World War II. Record their questions. Discuss how students can find the information online. Then have students select questions to research. Remind them to use reputable sources and find two to three sources with the same answer for credibility. Provide time for students to share their findings with the group.

## Writing

**5.11.E** *Synthesize and make logical connections between ideas within a text and across two or three texts representing similar or different genres.*

Discuss with students that the relationship between Elli and her mother changes during the course of the book. Have students explain how mother and daughter feel about each other at the beginning of the book and the middle of the book and then how they treat each other toward the book's end. Ask students to write a few paragraphs explaining why they think the relationship changes and to give evidence from the book to support their opinions. Provide time for sharing.