One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

By: Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Student Name: ___________________________________________
1. PACKET. The questions in the packet are due Monday of each week.

2. EXAM. Upon completion of the novel, you will have an exam along with an essay question. The essay question is found at the back of this packet.

4. VOCABULARY. You will have weekly quizzes. Please find this vocabulary on the Weebly. You will also find a list of vocabulary in this packet to help you with your reading.

Be sure to treat this packet like a book – keep it neat and tidy, and most importantly, do not lose it!
We will be reading a novel about Ivan Denisovich, an ordinary citizen imprisoned by Stalin’s regime and sentenced to 15 years of slave labor in Siberia. The author, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, was himself a zek (prisoner) in a Kolyma camp. He lived the material of his books as he says, "on the skin of my back, and with my eyes and ears." A survivor, Solzhenitsyn served his term, was “rehabilitated," and ultimately lived to write about his experiences. After he gained his freedom, he became a teacher and found time to write One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich. The changing political times in the Soviet Union allowed the publication of his first novel in 1962. The story was an instant worldwide success. For outsiders it was an inside glimpse into the unknown world of Siberia. This novel established Solzhenitsyn as a highly regarded author, and in 1970 he was awarded the Noble Prize for Literature.

Before we begin the novel, we need to learn more about the Soviet Union and Solzhenitsyn. We are going to use the Internet to explore the history of this man, his country, and the events that shaped his life and his literary works. Why study history, geography, and current events just to read a novel? For one reason, literature and history are inseparable, and knowing the setting of a story is important. Stories are written records about people, history, time, and place.

But what about an author’s purpose—is it to entertain, to teach? In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize, Solzhenitsyn says that writers and their stories have an important place in the world:

“I am, however, encouraged by a keen sense of WORLD LITERATURE as the one great heart that beats for the cares and misfortunes of our world, even though each corner sees and experiences them in a different way. . .

Meanwhile, no such thing as INTERNAL AFFAIRS remains on our crowded Earth. Mankind’s salvation lies exclusively in the people of the East being anything but indifferent to what is thought in the West, and people of the West being anything but indifferent to what happens in the East. Literature is one of the most sensitive and responsive tools of human existence, has been the first to pick up, adopt, and assimilate this sense of the growing unity of mankind. . .

I think that world literature has the power in these frightening times to help mankind see itself accurately despite what is advocated by partisans and by parties. It has the power to transmit the condensed experience of one region to another, so that different scales of values are combined, and so that one people accurately and concisely knows the true history of another with a power of recognition and acute awareness as if it had lived through that history itself—and could thus be spared repeating old mistakes.”
The Soviet Union

Forced labor camps in the Soviet Union.
Each dot represents a set of bearings, which in turn signifies dozens of camps.
Joseph Stalin (1879 - 1953). He was the second political leader of the Soviet Union, after Vladimir Lenin. He was a totalitarian ruler, and stayed in power by removing anyone he thought might be a threat to him. His ideas and policies turned the Soviet Union into a powerful, modern, nation, the largest state on earth, but also led to the deaths of millions of people. This form of communism was later called Stalinism.

Gulag describes a vast network of slave labor camps operated by the Soviet Union from the 1930s to the 1950s. From the time that the Soviet Union was founded in 1917, it imprisoned people who disagreed and spoke out against it.

During the 1920s, the Soviet Union imprisoned more and more people that disagreed with it. It believed that it was better to put these people to work and make their labor and goods part of the national economy.

The Gulag system was officially created in 1930. During the 1930s there was a lot of fear of the Soviet government. Police officials were encouraged to round up and imprison many citizens for the most trivial offenses, even if they were innocent, and this caused the Gulag system to swell. By 1939 there were 1.3 million people in labor camps. The Gulag system died during the 1950s after the death of Stalin.

It is thought that as many as 20 million people had been in a Gulag camp at one time or another.
Pre-reading Questions:

Please answer each question below with complete sentences.

Who was Alexander Solzhenitsyn?

Who was Joseph Stalin?

What was The Criminal Code and Article 58?

What was the Gulag?

What was the USSR?

What is communism?
Key Terms - One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

1. dispensary (n) - hospital
2. malicious (adj) - hateful
3. ingenuously (adv) - honestly
4. infirm (adj) - sick
5. morose (adj) - pessimistic
6. contingency (n) - predicament
7. trodden (adj) - pounded

Additional words:
- reveille
- zek
- magara
- chink
- cadge
- ration
- steppe
- kolkhoz
- rubles
- GULAG
- canteen

1. inert (adj) - Lifeless, not moving
2. commiseration (n) - consolation, pity
3. mason (n) - builder
4. swarthy (adj) - dark-skinned
5. irrespective (adj) - regardless: in spite of
6. exile (n) - person deported from a place
7. treason (n) - disloyalty

Additional words:
- kasha
- grovel
- oust
- expostulated
- flanks
- meticulously
- syphilitic
- kopecks
- oakum
- oprichinki
- barren

1. wangle (v) - to gain by trickery
2. hobnob (v) - to socialize or talk informally
3. forge ahead (v) - move forward quickly
4. allocate (v) - set aside
5. indelible (adj) - Not able to be removed
6. derisively (adv) - in a disrespectful way
7. kulak (n) - wealthy independent farmers

Additional words:
- proletarian
- hods
- censored
- POW's
- prince-nez
- intelligentsia
- pincers
- plumb
- Novy Mir
- Bolsheviks

1. furrowed (adj) - ridged, grooved
2. pogroms (n) - an organized massacre
3. propaganda (n) - information that is designed to mislead or persuade
4. liaison officer (n) - connects groups
5. bourgeoisie (n) - is the middle class
6. proletariat (n) - is a lower working class
7. prerogative (n) - right, privilege

Additional words:
- The Soviet Criminal Code
- counter revolutionary
- "special camps"
- KGB
- Krushchev's "secret speech"
- "cult of personality"
- concentration camp
- Pravda
- Stalinism
# The Men of the 104th - Major Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ivan Denisovich Shukhov</th>
<th>Tyurin</th>
<th>Alyosha the Baptist</th>
<th>Captain Buiovsky</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caesar Markovich (Tsezar)</td>
<td>Prisoner Y-81</td>
<td>Fetiukov</td>
<td>Kuziomin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Minor characters

“One and a half” Ivan:
The Tartar:
Pantleyev:
The Two Estonians:
Senka Klevshin:
Vdovushkin:
Lieutenant Volkovoi:
Andrei Tyurin:
Pavlo:
Gopchik:
Kilgas:
Der (Prisoner B-731):
The Moldavian:
“The Limper”:
Mess Chief:
The Lett:
Chapter Comprehension Questions

Week 1: Pages 1-32. Answer each question in a complete sentence.

Early Morning, Before Breakfast

1. Why does Shukhov linger in bed this morning? How does Shukhov’s decision to stay in bed go awry?

2. Describe the different types of footwear Shukhov has worn while a prisoner. How has this experience affected the way he treats his footwear?

Breakfast

3. Describe the typical breakfast served in the camp. What is the best and worst time of the year to eat in the camp?

4. Describe the rules of etiquette that Shukhov follows at breakfast. Describe Shukhov’s most prized possession and how he cares for it.

After Breakfast, Before Work

5. After his temperature is read, what are Shukhov’s options? What can be assumed about general health care in the camp?

6. How does Shukhov put his skill as a tailor to work to save his bread?

Morning Search and Departure

7. Why do the squad members immediately give Tiurin a share of any food they get from the outside?

8. Why does Tsezar give his cigarette butt to Shukhov instead of Fetiuakov?

9. How did the morning and evening prisoner searches differ? Why are the guards so vigilant in their counting of the prisoners?

10. Describe the rules the prisoners must follow during their march.
Week 2: Pages 32-67. Answer each question in a complete sentence.

Daydreams of Home and of the Kolkhoz

11. Why is Shukhov unexcited about the prospects of writing home? What is Shukhov’s wife’s dream for when he returns? What is his reaction to this dream?

12. What is the importance of the squad leader? How do his men treat him?

13. What is Shukhov’s opinion of Estonians?

The Workday, Before Lunch

14. Why are snowstorms both good and bad?

15. Why do the prisoners work so hard?

16. How are days and years different in the camps?

Ivan Considers His “Treason”

17. Why do the men consider Shukhov “lucky?” What is he skeptical about his “luck?”

18. Why is Shukhov in prison? What really happened?

Lunch (page 68-79)

19. How much grits does each man get for lunch? Why don’t they get more?

20. How does Shukhov use his wits to secure more food at lunch?
Week 3: Pages 67 - 99. Answer each question in a complete sentence.

A Discussion of Art

21. Why doesn’t Shukhov automatically get an extra bowl of food?

22. How does Tsezar’s job compare to that of the other men in the company?

Tyurin’s Story

23. Why is Tiurin in a good mood after lunch? Why is this important?

24. Why was Tiurin kicked out of the army?

25. How did Tiurin get on the train? What good fortune did he have once he was on board? How did he repay this good fortune in the future?

Building The Wall

26. What is the difference between the guards’ power over the men and the squad leaders’ power over them?

27. Why does Der threaten Tiurin, and how do Turin and his men react?

28. Why does Shukhov insist that Pavlo and Senka let him set the last few blocks of the day? What does Shukhov’s refusal to throw away the mortar tell us about him?

The March Back To Camp (Page 106 - 118)

29. How did Fetiukov mess-up the count? What was the guard’s response?

30. Why is S311 in the camp? What is ironic about this?
Week 4: Pages 99-139. Answer each question in a complete sentence.

An Unexpected Race Homeward

31. Why do the zeks refuse the guard’s order to “step lively?” Why do the zeks decide to run after all?

32. Who did Shukhov say was the zeks’ main enemy? Why?

The Risky Search

33. What does Shukhov realize just before the guards search him? Why does Shukhov fear being thrown in the prison?

Back in camp/Markovich’s Package

34. Why did Shukhov tell his family to stop sending him parcels?

35. Why does Shukhov offer to bring Tsezar his supper to the barracks?

Section 16. Supper Rations

36. Describe the head cook. Why is he so powerful?

37. Why does Shukhov say Gopchik will do well?

38. Describe prisoner U81. What makes him stand out?

Buying Tobacco (page 143-150)

39. Why is money not so important in the camp? What can be purchased with it?

40. What makes getting a parcel not as wonderful as it first seems?

Ivan Reviews the Day

41. What happened to Fetiukov that makes Shukhov prophesy he won’t make it to the end of his term? What is wrong with Fetiukov?
42. How does Tsezar demonstrate his lack of understanding of camp life? How does Shukhov help him?

**Small but Important Triumphs**

43. What does freedom mean to Shukhov? Why has he quit hoping for it?

44. Why did Shukhov go to sleep content?

**Essay Questions**

1. Besides Ivan, who is the most admirable character in the novel? Who is the least admirable? Explain your answers by giving concrete examples from the book along with the page number.

2. Write an essay that compares and contrasts Ivan Denisovich with Fetiukov. Give examples from the book along with the page number.

3. Describe one THEME found in A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich. Present examples to prove your point, along with the page number.

   - Inhumanity of the Soviet Gulag
   - Injustice
   - Survival
   - Trust vs. Betrayal
   - Surveillance
   - Waiting
   - God’s Presence
   - Group Dynamics
   - Resilience
   - Personal pride or dignity
   - Overcoming prejudices based on ethnic and cultural differences
   - Evil created by institutions

Your essay should be at least 5 paragraphs (approximately 500 words)

Include and introduction and conclusion, a clear thesis statement, three main points and three details to support each main point. You must give direct examples from the book; therefore, you may use your book during the second part of the exam.

Write formally, choose words carefully, and make use of transitions and other organizational techniques.