

**Blizzard Bag 5:**

Grade 8:

Literature: Read the article on Eva.Stories, an Instagram series that relates the events of a 13-year-old Holocaust victim, Eva Heyman. Answer the four questions that follow.

Writing: Create a skit (short drama or play) describing what you and your family and/or friends are doing/plan on doing/actually did this snow day! Remember to use stage directions to illustrate tone of voice and facial or physical gestures.

# Holocaust story on Instagram hopes to attract a younger audience

By Associated Press, adapted by Newsela staff on 05.06.19

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Level 1050L



The advertisement for a new Holocaust memorial project in Israel is hanging on a wall. The digital poster says in Hebrew: "Eva's Story. If a girl had had Instagram during the Holocaust." "Eva's Story" is based on the diary of a 13-year-old Jewish girl from Hungary who was murdered in 1944 in the German Auschwitz extermination camp. Her fate is recounted in Instagram stories in English. Photo by: Robert Messer/picture alliance via Getty Images

**JERUSALEM, Israel** — The testimony of survivors has been the centerpiece of Holocaust commemoration for seven decades.

However, the world's community of aging survivors is shrinking. Global understanding of the genocide that killed 6 million Jews is declining. Genocide is the planned killing of a large group of people primarily because of their race or ethnicity. Those who promote Holocaust remembrance are seeking new ways to share witnesses' stories with younger generations. The Holocaust was the imprisonment and mass killing of Jews in Europe during World War II by Nazi Germany.

"The Diary of a Young Girl" by Anne Frank gripped older generations. The book describes her Jewish family's experiences in hiding from Nazis during the war. Now an Instagram account based on a true 13-year-old Jewish victim's journal is generating buzz among youth. It is called Eva.Stories.

"If we want to bring the memory of the Holocaust to the young generation, we have to bring it to where they are," said the project co-producer, Mati Kochavi. He is an Israeli high-tech billionaire who comes from a family of Holocaust victims, survivors and educators. "And they're on Instagram."

Kochavi and his daughter, Maya, have created a series of 70 Instagram stories of Eva Heyman's life. They follow the downward spiral of her world in the spring of 1944 when the Nazis conquered Hungary. Hungary is a country in Central Europe.

### **Eva's Story Shown On Remembrance Day**

Eva was one of approximately 430,000 Hungarian Jews who were deported to Nazi concentration camps between May 15 and July 9, 1944. Of the estimated 6 million Jews killed in the Holocaust, around 568,000 were Hungarian. That number comes from Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial.

Eva's tale was produced as a Hollywood-style movie with a cast of foreign actors and a multimillion-dollar budget. It was shown throughout Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day, which began at sundown on May 1. The updates appear as if Eva had owned a smartphone during World War II and was using Instagram to share her story.

The story went live on the afternoon of May 1, opening with Eva's happier teen experiences and then darkening as night falls. The Nazis tighten their hold on Hungary's Jews, taking her family's business, belongings and home. Eva is sent to the ghetto, where Jews were separated from other people and forced to stay. Later she is sent to the Auschwitz death camp in Poland.

The story's climactic event was timed to follow Israel's two-minute siren that wailed nationwide on May 2. It brings the country to a standstill at 10 a.m. in a yearly commemoration of Jewish Holocaust victims.

Even days before the series' release, the account had gained over 180,000 followers.

One of them was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He posted a video to Instagram on April 29 urging Israelis to follow the account and spread stories of survivors via social media.

### **A Modern Take On A Holocaust Story**

"What if a girl in the Holocaust had Instagram?" asked an ad, released on April 28. The brief film shows simulated cell phone footage of Eva's imagined life. It shows her dancing with friends, a birthday with her grandparents and Nazi troops marching through the streets.

Dozens of Holocaust victims kept diaries of their experiences. The best-known one was written by Frank.

The Kochavis read dozens of the diaries before deciding on Eva. Maya Kochavi said she is the kind of girl "a modern kid in 2019 could connect to." She had a middle-school crush, family drama and grand ambitions to become a news photographer.

They hope Eva's account will engage otherwise disinterested or uninformed youth.

Yet the concept is not without controversy. While most of the feedback appears to be positive, some critics fear the story, with its Internet lingo, hashtags and emojis, risks making light of

Holocaust horrors.

### **An Attempt To Capture Young People's Attention**

"A cheapening of the Holocaust," one Instagram user, Dor Levi, wrote in Hebrew in response to the ad. He said commemorating the Holocaust should not be "on Instagram, between the butt of a random model and a video of a chocolate cake."

Maya Kochavi said she anticipated backlash. However, she defended Instagram as a place where "very powerful movements are happening," with potential to show history's relevance at a time when anti-Semitism is surging in parts of the world. Anti-Semitism is hostility toward or prejudice against Jews.

"It is frightening but quite clear to me. We might be the last generation that really remembers and cares about the Holocaust," said her father.

The Kochavis said that as part of their work, they found that a tiny fraction of social media conversations about the Holocaust in the U.S. and Europe are young people. Their research resonates with recent studies by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. Those reveal significant gaps in Holocaust knowledge among American youth.

Human memories are fading. However, Eva's Instagram story contributes to a push by Holocaust museums and memorials to capture young people's attention. They're using interactive technology, such as video testimonies, apps and holograms.

The efforts aim, Maya said, "to make monumental historical events tangible and relatable." They want to preserve stories of witnesses forever.

## Quiz

- 1 Which two of the following sentences from the article include CENTRAL ideas of the article?
1. *Now an Instagram account based on a true 13-year-old Jewish victim's journal is generating buzz among youth.*
  2. *Eva was one of approximately 430,000 Hungarian Jews who were deported to Nazi concentration camps between May 15 and July 9, 1944.*
  3. *He posted a video to Instagram on April 29 urging Israelis to follow the account and spread stories of survivors via social media.*
  4. *However, Eva's Instagram story contributes to a push by Holocaust museums and memorials to capture young people's attention.*
- (A) 1 and 3
- (B) 1 and 4
- (C) 2 and 3
- (D) 2 and 4
- 2 Which statement would be MOST important to include in a summary of the article?
- (A) Eva.Stories has received some backlash from people who believe that it takes away from the seriousness of the Holocaust.
- (B) Eva.Stories was made to look like a movie from Hollywood and it cost several million dollars to get produced.
- (C) The Kochavis are billionaires who are descended from people who experienced the Holocaust and teach people about it.
- (D) The Kochavis are a father and daughter team who have gained 180,000 followers on Instagram because of their project.
- 3 Which of the following MOST influenced the Kochavis to choose Eva Heyman for their project?
- (A) the fact that it was almost impossible to find other diaries from the Holocaust
- (B) the opinion they have that kids today would relate easily to Eva and her stories
- (C) the fact that Eva's diary provided more information about the Holocaust than other diaries
- (D) the opinion they have that Eva could become as popular as Anne Frank was
- 4 How did criticism affect Maya Kochavi's opinion about the Eva.Stories?
- (A) She was surprised by the criticism and began to question the decision to put Eva's story on Instagram.
- (B) She was surprised by the criticism and felt the need to retaliate against the people who made it.
- (C) She expected that there would be criticism but did not think the criticism would be that harsh.
- (D) She expected that there would be criticism but justified the decision to put Eva's story on Instagram.