

Approved for use in English IV

Summary of the Work:

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich by Alexander Solzhenitsyn recounts the experiences of Shukhov, a prisoner at a Soviet work camp in Siberia, as he struggles for survival.

Ivan Denisovich Shukhov, a prisoner in a Stalinist labor camp in 1951, wakes on a bitterly cold winter morning with fever and aches. At the sick bay the medical orderly, tells him he should have been ill the previous night, since the clinic is closed in the morning. Shukhov's fever is not high enough to get him off work. He hides the bread he has taken at breakfast, sewing it into his mattress. With others he works at the Power Station, a building site in the open field. He works through the difficulties of the day, hiding his trowel lest he lose this valuable tool. At the mess hall he has been awarded 400 grams of bread, for his outstanding labor. As he falls asleep he says his prayers, and reflects that his day has been almost happy. The narrator adds that this day has been just one of the 3,653 days of Shukhov's sentence.

Rationale:

Solzhenitsyn's work presents a comment on the cruelty of the Russian prison gulag system, as well as on man's inhumanity to man. Solzhenitsyn, a bricklayer in the labor camps, based the experiences of his protagonist on his own prison experiences. Like Ivan Denisovich, Solzhenitsyn was also a prisoner in a Soviet work camp.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

Wilson's Senior High School 11/01/2002
Wilson's Fiction 04/01/2001
Books for the Teen Age (NYPL) 05/01/2004
Notable/Best Books (A.L.A.)
Booklist

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- Nobel Prize for Literature, 1970

Readability:

- Lexile Score: 900
- Readability Level: 9

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: *(link)*

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption: 1992

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The text reveals the injustice and inhumanity of the Soviet work camps. Despite Ivan's bleak admission that no one gets released from the camps, he remains positive about the present and hopeful about the future as he thanks God for allowing him to survive another day.

Connection to the Curriculum:

English IV

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)