

VOCABULARY ACTIVITY: MAGIC SQUARE

Night by Elie Wiesel

Directions: Select the best answer for each of the following terms from the number definitions. Put the number in the proper space in the magic square box. If the totals of the numbers are the same both across and down, you have found the magic number!

A	B	C	D	E
F	G	H	I	J
K	L	M	N	O
P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y

Magic Number: _____

Terms

- A. showers
- B. Kapo
- C. hooligan
- D. exterminated
- E. raucous
- F. frenzy
- G. ration
- H. extraction
- I. seize
- J. Numerology
- K. comrade
- L. assassin
- M. barracks
- N. manacle
- O. meister
- P. convoy
- Q. bespectacled
- R. quarantine
- S. Aryan
- T. death mask
- U. ceaselessly
- V. conscientious
- W. sanctity
- X. agony
- Y. SS officer

Definitions

1. a fellow member of a group
2. prisoners who were selected to supervise other prisoners
3. a period of time during which a person, or persons, is under enforced isolation for reasons of illness or questionable health
4. to take possession of by force
5. paramilitary officer of the Nazi party
6. rough-sounding and harsh
7. a group traveling together
8. a fixed portion of food give to a person
9. a condition of being considered sacred
10. a device for containing the hands; usually to mental rings fastened around the wrists
11. the master race, white skinned with blond hair and blue eyes
12. study of occult meanings of numbers and their supposed influence on human life
13. without stopping
14. one who murders by surprise attack
15. a tough and aggressive or violent youth
16. the process of pulling something out
17. suffering of intense physical pain
18. "master" in German
19. code word for gas chamber
20. wearing glasses
21. very thorough, with attention to detail
22. military housing
23. to get rid of by destroying completely
24. a mask made of a person's face after they have died
25. state of violent, wild, and temporary madness

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Purpose:

The purpose of the Magic Square vocabulary strategy (Vacca, 2005) is to make learning vocabulary enjoyable, interesting and engaging for students. A magic square is a square whose numbers can be added across, down or diagonally and always arrive at the same sum. It creates an interesting puzzle to solve, along with enabling students to discover new vocabulary.

Rationale:

I believe this would be a very enjoyable activity for students. It enables them to interact with the vocabulary words and definitions in a non-threatening and welcoming way. The students may know some of the vocabulary definitions outright, while other definitions may require more thought and knowledge about the word. I would use this activity towards the beginning of the novel, allowing students to have had some interaction with these words through reading, class discussion, and teacher lecture, but not so far into the novel that students would have read most of the novel without understanding the words. Obviously this is not the only activity that should be done with vocabulary, but it is one that engages the students in discovering meaning.

Steps:

Prior to this activity we would have learned some background information about the Holocaust and begun reading *Night*.

STEP 1

Distribute the worksheet. Explain the general directions, being sure to allow students to ask any questions they might have about how to complete the square. The students will have 3-5 days (depending on your evaluation of their skill level with this activity) to complete the square with only a portion of the class period to work on it, i.e. this should not be the only activity students are doing at this time. If they are having difficulty with it, you can give 1-2 answers at the beginning of each class period and/or discuss some of the meanings that students have connected with the words. Hint: The magic square number is 65. You may or may not want to give this to your students depending on their skill level.

Answer key:

19	2	15	23	6
25	8	16	4	12
1	14	22	10	18
7	20	3	11	24
13	21	9	17	5

Assessment:

This should not be the only activity you do with these words. I would suggest drawing the words out of the text as they are read and discussing meanings or why Wiesel used that specific word. Some of the words will come out when learning general history of the Holocaust. The worksheet should be treated more as a set of clues that are picked up on in other activities and put together to complete a puzzle here.