1. How has the author’s background influenced the topic of the speech? Explain.

Since Elie Wiesel and his family were imprisoned during World War II (and his mother and sister murdered), he is especially concerned about issues related to war and human suffering. He believes that if more people had cared about what was happening to European Jews, then he and his family – and so many others – might not have suffered. The author of the speech – Elie Wiesel – experienced the consequences of indifference, and that’s what motivated him to give this speech.

2. What is the purpose of the speech? Explain his argument.

Elie Wiesel argues that indifference is even worse than hatred. He believes that indifference leads to more human suffering and that if more people cared, more lives would be saved. He applauds President Clinton’s intervention in Kosovo and scolds (dead) President Roosevelt for not intervening on behalf of European Jews – either by bombing the railroads or allowing the passengers of the St. Louis to enter the US.

ALLUSION –

P. 2 – reference to himself as a young child

P. 4 – references to wars, leaders who were assassinated, countries where war or civil war has taken place

P. 7 – references to “Muselmanner” and Auschwitz

P. 13 – references to ghettoes and death camps (WW II)

P. 14 – references to Auschwitz and Treblinka (concentration camps)

P. 15 – Pentagon, State Department, FDR, Hitler

P. 16 – St. Louis, Kristallnacht

P. 17 – “Righteous Gentiles”, Christians who did not act to save Jews, American companies who worked with Germany until 1942

P. 18 – defeat of Nazism, communism, Israel, apartheid, Egypt/Israeli peace treaty, Ireland, Rabin, Arafat, Bill Clinton

P. 19 – US/NATO intervention in Kosovo, subtle reference to Slobodan Milosevic

P. 24 – reference to himself as a young boy (again)

Repetition

-the word “**indifference**” is repeated throughout (P. 10)

-a young Jewish boy from the Carpathian Mountains

P. 21 – “Does it mean…?”

P. 15 – 1st sentence – “we” and “knew”

-the word “**humanity**”

P. 8 – God, last 2 sentences

P. 3 – **gratitude**

P. 9 – last 3 sentences

P. 20 – “this time”

P. 23 – “..of them”

Ethos – ALL THOSE ALLUSIONS and personal anecdotes regarding the concentration camps (“Muselmanner”) are evidence that Elie Wiesel knows what he’s talking about! He knows his history and he has personal experience with the issue of injustice, human suffering. We can trust him. He is clearly knowledgeable.

Pathos

P. 22-23 – What about the children? ... Every minute one of them dies of disease, violence, famine. Some of them – so many of them – could be saved.

P. 24 - “…profound fear and extraordinary hope.”

P. 3 – all that gratitude

P. 5-6, 9-11 – impact of indifference

P. 7 – Muselmanner

P. 14 – We thought you didn’t know! ☹

P. 16 – St. Louis

P. 17 – Why didn’t more Christians help?

LOGOS

P. 9 – Indifference is more dangerous than anger and hatred

P. 11 – indifference is not only a sin, it is a punishment

P. 13 – we felt abandoned, forgotten

P. 15 – the world knew

-P. 16 – last three sentences

P. 20 – this time we intervene

P. 22 – when adults wage war, children perish (die)

P. 23 – so many people could be saved…if only more people cared

P. 24 – although I am still scared, I am hopeful

The title! (“The Perils of Indifference”)

AUTHOR’S ATTITUDE: SERIOUS

READER’S MOOD: SOMBER (sad, serious)

RHETORICAL QUESTIONS:

P. 4, 5, 16, 17, 21, 22

LOADED WORDS:

P. 4, 5, 6, 7, 21, 22, 24

Judged severely, failures have cast a dark shadow over humanity, bloodbaths, inhumanity in the gulag, tragedy of Hiroshima, crime and punishment, cruelty and compassion, good and evil, harrowing upheavals, awkward, troublesome, pain and despair, visible anguish, to be abandoned by humanity, anger and hatred, depressing tale, traumatic century, plight of victims of ethnic cleansing, terrorization of children, dictators, wage war, children perish, disease, violence, famine, their pain, their agony, profound fear, extraordinary hope, assassinations, Nazism, dies, indifference, black gates and barbed wire, invasion, dictatorship, liberation, flawed, tragic, miserable consolation,