I. Character Expert

“Work was like a stick. It had two ends. When you worked for the knowing you gave them quality; when you worked for a fool you simply gave him eyewash.” p. 12

Read/consider the quote in the full context of the story.

A. Pick out any figurative language to illustrate. DRAW

B. One Paragraph: How does this relate to the story/plot: What are the circumstances leading Shukhov to ponder the nature of work?

C. One Paragraph: What do you think the quote means/ what does it say about Shukhov’s character?

D. One Paragraph: Is Shukhov right?

II. Motif Experts:

Several of the squad leaders who were on their way to the P.P.D had gathered near the pole with the thermometer, and one of the younger ones, a former Hero of the Soviet Union, shinnied up it and wiped off the instrument.

The others shouted advice from below:

“See you don’t breathe on it. It’ll push up the

temperature.”

“Push it up? Not f\*cking likely. *My* breath won’t have

any effect.”

Tiurin of the 104th—Shukhov’s squad—was not among them. Shukhov put down the pail, tucked his hands into his sleeves, and watched with interest. The man up the pole shouted hoarsely: “Seventeen and a half. Not a damn bit more.”

And taking another look to be sure, slid down.

‘Oh, it’s cockeyed. It always lies,” someone said. “Do you think they’d ever hang one up that gave the true temperature?” pp.9-10

Read/consider the passage in the full context of the story.

A. Pick out any figurative language to illustrate. DRAW

B. One Paragraph: How does this excerpt relate to a motif?

C. One Paragraph: What are the circumstances leading to this moment. Why would Shukhov stop and take such interest?

D. One Paragraph: How does the cold contribute to other story elements that enhance your understanding of the overall setting, mood, and/or tone of the book?

III. Setting Experts

They sat in the cold mess hall, most of them eating with their hats on, eating slowly, picking out putrid little fish from under leaves of boiled black cabbage and spitting the bones out on the table. When the bones formed a heap and it was the turn of another squad, someone would sweep them off and they’d be trodden into a mush on the floor. But it was considered bad manners to spit the fishbones straight out on the floor.

Two rows of trestles ran down the middle of the hall and near one of them sat Fetiukov of the 104th. It was he who was keeping Shukhov’s breakfast for him. Fetiukov had the last place in his squad, lower than Shukhov’s. From the outside, everyone in the squad looked the same—their numbered black coats were identical—but within the squad there were great distinctions. Everyone had his grade. Buinovsky, for instance, was not the sort to sit keeping another zek’s bowl for him. And Shukhov wouldn’t take on any old job either. There were others lower than him. p. 13

Read/Consider the passage in the full context of the story.

A. Illustrate the setting of this passage. DRAW

B. One Paragraph: How does this excerpt relate to the setting?

C. One Paragraph: Why would it matter, in these conditions, whether or not the prisoner’s spit fishbones directly onto the floor?

D. One Paragraph: What does Shukhov mean when he says “There were other’s lower than him”? How does the author use the setting of the dining hall to compare and contrast how the prisoners look versus how they rank among each other?

III. Plot Experts

Excerpt – p. 7: “At that very moment…. ,said the Tartar lazily.”

Read/Consider the passage in the full context of the story.

A. Illustrate the action of this passage. DRAW

1. One Paragraph: How does this excerpt relate to moving the story forward?
2. One Paragraph: Why is there good dramatic tension in this excerpt? What

had Shukhov been expecting, and why did it increase tension that he had been wrong?

1. One Paragraph: What does Shukhov mean when he says “With work—that wasn’t half bad. They gave you hot food and you had no time to start thinking. Real jail was when you were kept back from work.” How does this revelation serve the story, action, or future outcome of the novel?