**Hunger in the Ghetto**

**Opening paragraph**

The Nazis greatly restricted food supplies to the ghetto, which created food shortages and hunger.

In many ghettos people received food vouchers, which they could use for basic foods such as bread or potatoes. But the rations they were received were small, too small to satisfy their hunger.

Those who had money could buy food on the black market, but most residents of the ghetto were poor and had to search for food on a daily basis.

<Glossary>

- voucher – a slip of paper with which Jews in ghettos could receive food rations

- black market – an illegal market for buying and selling a variety of items

**Opening photo**

Girls in a public kitchen, Warsaw Ghetto, Poland

Yad Vashem Photo Archive

**Video testimony**

Testimony of Genia Reznick – 12:14 (I know) – 13:22 (each other)

<https://youtu.be/iGq_RkZLqkk>

Genia Reznick was 7 years old when she and her family were forced to move to the Warsaw Ghetto. Watch her testimony.

What can we learn from her testimony about coping with hunger in the ghetto?

**Photo section**

Look at the photo before you.

What are the people who are standing in line holding in their hands?

**A line of people waiting for soup in the Warsaw Ghetto**

In some ghettos organizations were created to try to help those residents who were unable to find food. Sometimes all they could offer was soup. Have a look at the following photos of the public kitchens in the Warsaw and Lodz ghettos.

Children in the public kitchen of the Warsaw Ghetto, Poland

Children in the public kitchen of the Lodz Ghetto, Poland

Soup line at the Lodz Ghetto

Soup line at a children’s home in the Warsaw Ghetto

**Written testimony section**

A boy is lying in bed, wanting to sleep. He cannot fall asleep. His hunger won’t let him … The room is quiet. Everyone is asleep, his mother, father, and little sister, and over there in the box lies half a loaf of bread. Maybe he’ll get up quietly and cut a small, thin slice? A very thin little slice that no one will feel. His conscience doesn’t let him. This bread is supposed to last two more days, and they’ve already cut off more than they’re allowed. It’s an argument between hunger and conscience. One way or another it’s not enough. Either way you’ve all eaten too much already. Take it! Take it! Just a small slice. No, says the conscience. This bread is your mother’s, your brother’s, and your little sister’s. Don’t take it from them, they’re as hungry as you are. Finally the hunger wins. The boy lies in bed with his head under the covers biting into dried bread dipped in salty tears…

Sara Plager-Zyskind, *Stolen Years* (Tel Aviv: Ghetto Fighters’ House and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1977), pp. 53-54 [Hebrew]

The paragraph before you describes a hungry boy having an imaginary argument between his hunger and his conscience. Highlight the sentences in which the hunger “tries to convince” the boy to take some of the bread.

Why do you think the boy cried when he ate the bread?

**Object section**

Here you see a bread voucher from the Lodz Ghetto.

Food vouchers could be used to receive small rations of food. Even children had food vouchers.

The food vouchers were usually handed out by the Jewish Council that was appointed to manage the ghetto (the Judenrat).

Food vouchers were a precious possession. If a food voucher was lost or stolen, one could not receive food.