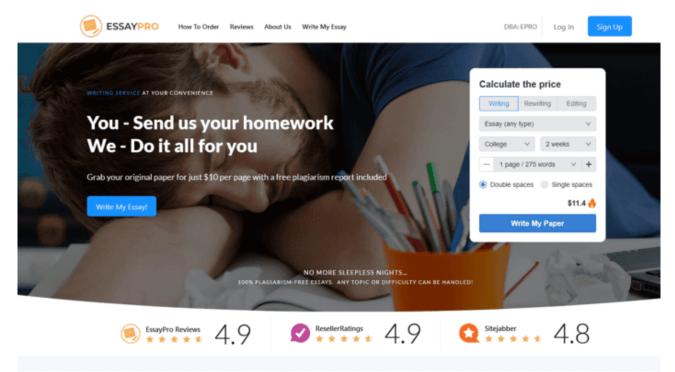
## Strength of the Human Spirit Revealed by Ivan Denisovich



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Strength of the Human Spirit Revealed in One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich
Life can be incredibly hard at times; nearly everyone encounters a period of time when circumstances become unbearably difficult. Imagine being assigned to ten years of unceasing and tremendous hardships, as is the plight of the protagonist in One Day in the Life of <a href="Ivan Denisovich">Ivan Denisovich</a> by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. This book describes in detail only one day of Ivan's ten-year sentence in a Russian work camp in the 1950's. During this day, which is like most others, he is starved, nearly frozen, overworked, and punished unjustly; however, as the day unfolds, it is obvious that Ivan will never give up and never give in. The character of Ivan Denisovich is a symbol of the human <a href="spirit">spirit</a> and its never-ending will to survive, even through the harshest of conditions.
Ivan's day begins with reveille at 5:00, "as always" (significant because this day is just like every other day has been for the past eight years). On most mornings after reveille, he jumps out of bed to have a little time to himself, but today he is not feeling well and rises slowly. Usually, there are many things he could do during this time before the morning roll

call: sweep up, carry something for someone, fetch the boots of the gang boss, gather and stack bowls at the mess hall, any number of little jobs.

On the surface, Ivan's actions look noble and kindhearted, as if the well being of others is his main concern. But like most kind gestures, there is an entirely different motive; for Ivan, it is just "another way of getting food"(2). He, like most people in a difficult situation, performs favors and tasks, not out of the goodness of his heart, but only out of his desir...

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Max Hayward, in his introduction to \_One Day In the Life of Ivan Denisovich \_, says the book "is a morality play in which the carpenter Ivan Denisovich Shukhov is Everyman" (xv). There are exceptions to the representation; Ivan is not a flat character, void of depth and definition, but through these examples, it is obvious that much of the time, Ivan Denisovich reflects the average human spirit and the way in which it reacts to difficult situations. Of course, the average human spirit does not endure the hardships presented in a Soviet work camp, but all hardships are related in their ability to destroy their victims or to strengthen them. In this case, Ivan is the spirit who is strengthened, the victim who will never give up, and never give in.

## Bibliography

Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich. New York: Bantam Books, 1963.

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