

Welcome to Honors English 10!

Over the summer, you are assigned to read *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak. This novel will serve as a starting point to our year. This is a wonderful contemporary novel that we are sure you will greatly enjoy! You may find this book at any bookstore, online (amazon.com), or at the Lebanon Public Library.

Instructions for the assignments are attached. All assignments will be due on the first day of class.

While you read, you will be required to complete:

- Thematic Annotations
- Analysis through question-responses

We hope you enjoy this book; it will serve as a great springboard for other novels and units we will study this coming school year.

In the meantime, if you should have questions, don't hesitate to ask! The best way to reach us is via email at livesayc@leb.k12.in.us or shoverm@leb.k12.in.us.

Have a great summer! We can't wait to hear what you have to say about this great novel!

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Cathy Livesay' and the second signature on the right is 'Mary Shover'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mrs. Livesay and Mrs. Shover

Part 1: Thematic Annotations

Directions: Choose **one** of the themes listed below. Throughout your reading, keep track of quotations that relate to your chosen theme. This should be done through highlights, post-it notes in your novel, or a reading log. Consider including symbols that relate to your chosen theme. We will use this as a starting point for your first written essay and these will be checked when we return to school.

Words

Words, language, books, and reading are very important in the novel. Think about the power and influence of words, both positive and negative. Collect cited quotations about the importance of language in the novel.

Death

One of the unique elements of *The Book Thief* is that it is narrated by a personified Death. Think about the purpose of this narrator and how this voice is important to the novel. Collect cited quotations about the nature and purpose of Death in the novel.

Survival

Early in the novel, Death refers to Liesel as a “perpetual survivor” (Zusak 5). Think about what enables Liesel to survive as well as who else is a survivor in the novel. Collect cited quotations about the nature of survival in the novel.

Bravery

There are numerous acts of bravery in the novel. Think about what motivates these actions and why some succumb to their own cowardice. Collect cited quotations about these acts, both big and small, in the novel.

Stealing

Many things are stolen over the course of this novel: books, food, innocence, and even lives. Think about whether these acts are ever justified. Collect cited quotations about acts of thievery in the novel.

War

This novel is set during World War II. Think about the effect that this setting has on character development. Collect cited quotations about the influence of war in the novel.

Relationships

Relationships determine many outcomes throughout this novel. Think about the importance of relationships between characters and how these influence specific actions and outcomes. Collect cited quotations about the significance of relationships in the novel.

Part 2: Questions

Directions: Answer at least 5 of the following questions in paragraph form (5-7 sentences). These may be typed or hand written; you will submit these on the first day of class. Be prepared to defend your answers during class discussion.

1. What is ironic about Liesel's obsession with stealing books? Discuss other uses of irony in the novel.
2. *The Grave Digger's Handbook* is the first book Liesel steals. Why did she take the book? What is significant about the titles of the books she steals? Explain how Liesel's own attempt to write a book saves her life.
3. Liesel believes that Hans Hubermann's eyes show kindness, and from the beginning she feels closer to him than to Rosa Hubermann. How does Hans gain Liesel's love and trust? Why is it so difficult for Rosa to demonstrate the same warmth toward Liesel? Discuss how Liesel's relationship with Rosa changes by the end of the novel.
4. Abandonment is a central theme in the novel. The reader knows that Liesel feels abandoned by her mother and by the death of her brother. How does she equate love with abandonment, and does she ever understand this abandonment?
5. Guilt is another recurring theme in the novel. Hans Hubermann's life was spared in France during World War I, and Erik Vandenburg's life was taken. Explain why Hans feels guilty about Erik's death. Discuss how Hans channels his guilt. Explain Max Vandenburg's thought, "Living was living. The price was guilt and shame" (Zusak 208). Why does he feel guilt and shame?
6. Compare and contrast the lives of Liesel and Max Vandenburg. How does Max's life give Liesel purpose? At what point do Liesel and Max become friends?
7. Death says that Liesel was a girl "with a mountain to climb" (Zusak 86). Describe her metaphorical mountain climb along with its various stages.
8. Hans Junior, a Nazi soldier, calls his dad a coward because he doesn't belong to the Nazi Party. He feels that you are either for Hitler or against him. How does it take courage to oppose Hitler? Discuss how the Hubermann's demonstrate courage throughout the novel.
9. How does Zusak use the literary device of foreshadowing to pull the reader into the story?
10. Liesel Meminger lived to be an old woman. Death says that he would like to tell the book thief about beauty and brutality, but those are things that she had lived. How does her life represent beauty in the wake of brutality? Discuss how Zusak's poetic writing style enhances the beauty of Liesel's story.