

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: CP English 9 Team    Grade: 9    School: OOHS

Book Title: The Book Thief    Genre: Fiction

Author: Markus Zusak    Pages: 564

Publisher: Random House Children's Books    Copyright: 2007

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

It's just a small story really, about among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist-fighter, and quite a lot of thievery. . . .

Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau. This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul.

([www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com))

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

- RL.9-10.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.9-10.3. Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- RL.9-10.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up

With Death as narrator, Markus Zusak's haunting novel (Knopf, 2003) follows Liesel Meminger, The Book Thief, through the fear-filled years of Nazi Germany. The story opens as the ten-year-old girl takes her first book shortly after her younger brother's death. Both children were en route to the foster home of Hans and Rosa Hubermann in a Munich suburb. Despite Rosa's sharp tongue and Hans's lack of work, their home is a loving refuge for the nightmare-ridden girl. It also becomes a

hideout for Max, a young Jewish man whose father saved Hans's life. Liesel finds solace with her neighbor Rudy and her creative partnership with Max. Accompanied by Rudy, the girl copes by stealing food from farmers and books from the mayor's wife. There are also good moments as she learns to read and plays soccer, but Hans's ill-advised act of kindness to a Jewish prisoner forces Max to leave their safe house. The failing war effort and bombing by the Allies lead to more sacrifices, a local suicide and, eventually, to great losses. Reading books and writing down her experiences save Liesel, but this novel clearly depicts the devastating effects of war. Narrator Allan Corduner defines each character with perfect timing. He's deliberate as the voice of Death, softly strong as Liesel, and impatient, but not unkind, as Rosa. With richly evocative imagery and compelling characters, Zusak explores behind-the-lines life in World War II Germany, showing the day-to-day heroism of ordinary people. Relevant for class discussions on wars both past and present. —Barbara Wysocki Copyright 2006 Reed Business Information.

## Review #2

### Kirkus Review

When Death tells a story, you pay attention. Liesel Meminger is a young girl growing up outside of Munich in Nazi Germany, and Death tells her story as "an attempt-a flying jump of an attempt-to prove to me that you, and your human existence, are worth it." When her foster father helps her learn to read and she discovers the power of words, Liesel begins stealing books from Nazi book burnings and the mayor's wife's library. As she becomes a better reader, she becomes a writer, writing a book about her life in such a miserable time. Liesel's experiences move Death to say, "I am haunted by humans." How could the human race be "so ugly and so glorious" at the same time? This big, expansive novel is a leisurely working out of fate, of seemingly chance encounters and events that ultimately touch, like dominoes as they collide. The writing is elegant, philosophical and moving. Even at its length, it's a work to read slowly and savor. Beautiful and important. (Fiction. 12+)

### **What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

Title: Night    Author: Elie Weisel

Title:                      Author:

Title:                      Author:

Title:                      Author:

Title:                      Author:

Title:                      Author:

### **Document any potentially controversial content:**

Very brief instances of strong language.

### **Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated ☒    Regular ☒    At Risk ☒

**GRADE LEVEL(S):**              6☐    7☐    8☐    9☒    10☐    11☐    12☐

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):**

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** 22 February 2012

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults