

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Brown/DeGiorgio	School:	Hyatts Middle School
Book Title:	The Book Thief	Genre:	historical fiction
Author:	Markus Zusak	Pages:	550
Publisher:	Alfred K. Knopf	Copyright:	2005

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.)

Trying to make sense of the horrors of WWII, Death relates the story of Liesel--a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors

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)

Targets:

Experience language rich text

Analyze the context of the setting

Identify structural elements of plot

Explain techniques used by authors to develop style

Analyze how figurative language shapes the plot, sets the meaning, and develops tone

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

This is from Kirkus Reviews:

"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+)''

Review #2

PW Reviews 2006 January #5

This hefty volume is an achievement--a challenging book in both length and subject, and best suited to sophisticated older readers. The narrator is Death himself, a companionable if sarcastic fellow, who travels the globe "handing souls to the conveyor belt of eternity." Death keeps plenty busy during the course of this WWII tale, even though Zusak (I Am the Messenger) works in miniature, focusing on the lives of ordinary Germans in a small town outside Munich. Liesel Meminger, the book thief, is nine when she pockets The Gravedigger's Handbook , found in a snowy cemetery after her little brother's funeral. Liesel's father--a "Kommunist"--is already missing when her mother hands her into the care of the Hubermanns. Rosa Hubermann has a sharp tongue, but Hans has eyes "made of kindness." He helps Liesel overcome her nightmares by teaching her to read late at night. Hans is haunted himself, by the Jewish soldier who saved his life during WWI. His promise to repay that debt comes due when the man's son, Max, shows up on his doorstep. This "small story," as Death calls it, threads together gem-like scenes of the fates of families in this tight community, and is punctuated by Max's affecting, primitive artwork rendered on painted-over pages from Mein Kampf . Death also directly addresses readers in frequent asides; Zusak's playfulness with language leavens the horror and makes the theme even more resonant--words can save your life. As a storyteller, Death has a bad habit of forecasting ("I'm spoiling the ending," he admits halfway through his tale). It's a measure of how successfully Zusak has humanized these characters that even though we know they are doomed, it's no less devastating when Death finally reaches them. Ages 12-up. (Mar.)

[Page 70]. Copyright 2006 Reed Business Information.

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

<u>Title:</u> The Boy in the Striped Pajamas	<u>Author:</u> John Boyne
<u>Title:</u> The Diary of a Young Girl	<u>Author:</u> Anne Frank
<u>Title:</u> Milkweed	<u>Author:</u> Jerry Spinelli
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

Document any potentially controversial content:

Language: German words translated, mild profanity, mature themes

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: January 30, 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