

English II and Honors English II

Summer reading assignment: *The Book Thief*

This summer, you will read Markus Zusak's wonderful novel *The Book Thief*. It's not a short book, so give yourself plenty of time to read it (and you might want to keep some Kleenex handy too!). As you read, thoroughly **annotate** your text (see the guide to annotating on the next page).

After you have finished the book, thoughtfully answer the following questions. You may handwrite or type these answers. You should answer each question in a short paragraph: 6-10 full sentences, using at least two quotations from the book as evidence in each answer. **This assignment is due the first day of class for your first grade in the class.** We will spend the first week of class discussing the novel; there will be a test on the book as a whole.

*Remember, this is the first time I will see your writing, so make it your best work: try to avoid misspellings and grammatical errors; use vocabulary appropriate for an academic assignment; write as neatly as you can if handwriting.

1. Who is the narrator of *The Book Thief*? Why is it important that Zusak chose to make this character the narrator?

2. Explain the importance of colors in *The Book Thief*. Why would Zusak choose to make colors such a key theme in the novel?

3. Which character in *The Book Thief* has the greatest impact on shaping Liesel's character? Be specific and give examples to support your choice.

Annotating Literature:

Whenever you read a book for English class, you should do so with pen or pencil in hand, ready to add your own thoughts and questions to the book. This will help prepare you for class discussions and writing essays. In class, keep your pen handy to write down thoughts directly in the book. Don't ever be afraid to mark up your book!

How to Annotate:

- Mark passages that seem important. (You can highlight them, or put stars next to them.) These might be a hint about something to come, a key moment in the plot, a bit of dialogue that reveals character, clues about the setting, an arresting figure of speech or image, an interesting sentence pattern, etc.
- Write questions and comments to yourself in the margin. You might ask questions about information you don't understand, why a character would act in a certain way, or comment on something surprising.
- Look for patterns and label them. Is there an image that keeps reappearing? Or a repeated phrase? Or a similar action that keeps happening to a character?
- Circle words you don't know. Try to guess what they mean. If you can, look the word up in a dictionary (your phone is useful for this!) and write a synonym or quick definition in the margin (don't write the whole dictionary definition - put it in your own words). You can also use sticky notes to flag words you don't know and look them up later.
- At the end of each chapter, write a bulleted list of key plot events. This not only forces you to think about what happened, see the novel as a whole, and identify patterns, but also gives you a convenient record of the whole plot.