



level 4

LITERATURE DISCOVERY GUIDE

# The Book Thief

by Markus Zusak

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## How This Guide is Organized

This guide consists of the following elements:

### **Assignment Checklist**

Track, evaluate, and record student progress

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### **SECTIONS 1-4**

#### **Read**

Weekly reading assignment

#### **Journal**

Tracking of characters, themes, symbols, and motifs

#### **Acquire**

Vocabulary and quote acquisition and development

#### **Encapsulate**

Condensed summary of reading

#### **Reflect**

Contemplative reader response

#### **Discuss**

Questions for open-ended application

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### **SECTION 5**

#### **Glean**

Essay & Creative Project Prompts

**ASSIGNMENT      POINTS      TEACHER COMMENTS      GRADE**

**Section 1: Prologue thru Enter the Struggler**

- Read                    \_\_\_ /10
- Journal:
  - Characters        \_\_\_ /10
  - Themes            \_\_\_ /10
  - Symbols/Motifs \_\_\_ /10
- Acquire:
  - Vocabulary       \_\_\_ /10
  - Quotes            \_\_\_ /10
- Encapsulate        \_\_\_ /15
- Reflect              \_\_\_ /15
- Discuss             \_\_\_ /10

/ 100

**Section 2: The Attributes of Summer thru The Gamblers**

- Read                    \_\_\_ /10
- Journal:
  - Characters        \_\_\_ /10
  - Themes            \_\_\_ /10
  - Symbols/Motifs \_\_\_ /10
- Acquire:
  - Vocabulary       \_\_\_ /10
  - Quotes            \_\_\_ /10
- Encapsulate        \_\_\_ /15
- Reflect              \_\_\_ /15
- Discuss             \_\_\_ /10

/ 100

**Section 3: Rudy's Youth thru Frau Holtzapfel's Offer**

- Read                    \_\_\_ /10
- Journal:
  - Characters        \_\_\_ /10
  - Themes            \_\_\_ /10
  - Symbols/Motifs \_\_\_ /10
- Acquire:
  - Vocabulary       \_\_\_ /10
  - Quotes            \_\_\_ /10
- Encapsulate        \_\_\_ /15
- Reflect              \_\_\_ /15
- Discuss             \_\_\_ /10

/ 100

**Section 4: The Long Walk to Dachau thru The Handover Man**

- Read                    \_\_\_ /10
- Journal:
  - Characters        \_\_\_ /10
  - Themes            \_\_\_ /10
  - Symbols/Motifs \_\_\_ /10
- Acquire:
  - Vocabulary       \_\_\_ /10
  - Quotes            \_\_\_ /10
- Encapsulate        \_\_\_ /15
- Reflect              \_\_\_ /15
- Discuss             \_\_\_ /10
- Story Map

/ 100

**Section 5**

- Glean:
  - Essay              \_\_\_ /100
  - Creative Project \_\_\_ /100

/ 200

/ 600

**FINAL GRADE**

## About the Author

Markus Zusak once upon a time was a house painter, a janitor and a high school English teacher. The youngest of four children born to a German mother and Austrian father in Sydney, Australia in 1975, during an interview with Publishers Weekly, he recalled the family memories that sparked the writing of *The Book Thief*. He remembered the bombing of Munich through his mother's eyes, "Everything was red, like the sky was on fire. That was a memory that I could see really clearly as a child, a very visual image." He remembered the teenage boy who offered a crust of bread to an emaciated Jew being forced through the streets. He remembered that boy being whipped by a soldier who witnessed the act of compassion. And at the end of the interview he is grateful for his parents "...Lisa and Helmut Zusak - for the stories we find hard to believe, for laughter, and for showing me another side." And so Marcus began writing when he was sixteen years old, completing his first manuscript at eighteen, "I always had stories in my head. So I started writing them." *The Book Thief*, translated into more than 40 languages, has propelled Markus Zusak into the limelight as one of the most successful Australian authors. The book has been recognized with many prestigious literary awards and has been adapted into a major motion picture.

## Awards and Recognition

### 2006

- National Jewish Book Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature
- Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book (South East Asia & South Pacific)
- Horn Book Fanfare
- Kirkus Reviews Editor Choice Award
- School Library Journal Best Book of the Year
- Daniel Elliott Peace Award
- Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book of the Year
- Booklist Children's Editors' Choice
- Bulletin Blue Ribbon Book

### 2007

- Boeke Prize
- American Library Association's Best Books for Young Adults
- Michael L. Printz Honor Book
- Book Sense Book of the Year (Indie's choice)

### 2009

- Pacific Northwest Young Readers Choice Master List

### 2014

- Margaret A. Edwards Award honoring his significant and lasting contribution to writing for teens

# Section 1

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**Read »** Prologue *thru* Enter the Struggler

















# Story Mapping

Use this area to help you outline the arc of the story.

Use your completed story map as a reference tool to give context and support to your final essay.

**Climax:**  
Where interests collide / The point of greatest intensity in the story

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**Falling Action:**  
Movement of the story away from climax and toward resolution

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**Exposition:**  
Background and lead-in to the story

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**Resolution:**  
The final outcome of the story

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**Rising Action:**  
Movement of the story toward climax

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**Major Conflicts:**

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## Section 5

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### **Glean »** Essay & Creative Project

#### **Essay Prompts** 53

Questions for inspiration

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Use these pages to help guide you in crafting your essay

#### **Evaluation Forms** 62

Use these forms for evaluating and grading your essay

#### **Creative Projects** 65

Suggestions for further exploration

## Essay Prompts

Use one or more of the following questions as a springboard to respond thoughtfully to what you have read.

The resources on the following pages will help you give form and structure to your writing.

.....

1. An archetype is a typical character, action, symbol, theme, or situation that represents something universal. Explore the archetypes you encounter in this story. Give specific examples to develop your essay.
2. Choose three themes, three symbols, or three motifs (or one of each), and explore the significance of each in the story. Use passages from the story to support your ideas.
3. Do some research on a courageous person from WWII. Compare that person to a heroic character from the story. What do you learn about courage and cowardice from each? What is the difference between courage and heroism?
4. Exploring history helps us to gain understanding of the human condition—our very self and the self of others. *The Book Thief* takes us by the hand and guides us on a very dark journey of humans in conflict during the period when Germany was occupied by the Nazi regime. What lessons should be remembered from the Holocaust and why?
5. Explore some poems where death is personified. Read John Donne’s sonnet, “Death Be Not Proud,” and another sonnet by Edna St. Vincent Millay called, “And You as Well Must Die.” Read some less formal poems such as Emily Dickinson’s “Because I Could Not Stop for Death,” Rainer Maria Rilke’s “Death,” or “My Number,” by Billy Collins. In what ways is Death similar within *The Book Thief*. How does the author’s poetic choice to have Death narrate impact the storytelling? What is the effect of having Death serve as the narrator?
6. Watch *The Book Thief* in film form. Compare and contrast to the book.
7. What role do books play for the characters? Explore the symbolic significance of books in this story.
8. How does the novel explore the idea of family? How is family defined at the beginning of the novel and how does it transform by the end?
9. Which character do you think is most affected by the war, and how?
10. Explore the purpose, meaning and symbolic relevance of the book, *The Word Shaker*, that Max crafts for Liesel.
11. One of the most poignant comments made by Death comes near the closing of the story, “I am haunted by humans.” Trace the steps of the narrator over the course of the story. How does the arc of this character, Death, surprise you?



## Structure of an Essay

### INTRODUCTION

The first paragraph of an essay invites the reader into the writer's big idea. The essay begins with a general statement called the **hook** that *grabs the reader's attention*. The second sentence of your introduction provides **context** and sets the stage for your big idea. The introduction ends with a very important sentence called the **thesis statement** that clearly states the big idea and introduces the three sub-topics you will be using to support it.

### BODY

The body of the essay consists of three paragraphs, structured according to a **blueprint**, which will fully develop the **three sub-topics** of the thesis statement and allow the reader to explore the architecture of the writer's big idea.

### CONCLUSION

The last paragraph of the essay opens with a sentence that **weaves** the sub-topics together and leads the reader to the next sentence, an **echo** of the thesis statement. The essay ends with a thought provoking sentence called the **twist** that will leave the reader with a memorable snapshot of the writer's big idea.



## Student Self-Evaluation

This is your opportunity to **assess your rough draft** and evaluate the voice, content and structure of your essay. An honest and thorough evaluation is an opportunity for you to learn from your own writing and move through the process of revision thoughtfully and productively.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Checking the Blueprint »

The first step in the self-editing process is to make sure you have followed the blueprint. **Read through your rough draft** and with a red pen, **label each sentence** (hook, context, thesis, etc.) and **check it off** below as you go. If you find sentences are missing, out of order, or need refinement, make these changes. Remember this is why your rough draft is so important.

#### P1» INTRODUCTION (3 sentences)

Hook     Context     Thesis Statement

#### P2» BODY - Theme #1 (8 sentences)

Opener  
 Idea     Quote     Explain  
 Idea     Quote     Explain  
 Clincher

#### P3» BODY - Theme #2 (8 sentences)

Opener  
 Idea     Quote     Explain  
 Idea     Quote     Explain  
 Clincher

#### P4» BODY - Theme #3 (8 sentences)

Opener  
 Idea     Quote     Explain  
 Idea     Quote     Explain  
 Clincher

#### P5» CONCLUSION (3 sentences)

Weave     Echo     Twist

*Self-evaluation continued on next page »*

Now **read your rough draft a second time *aloud***. Circle the best assessment of each component and make notes about how you might strengthen your writing.

<b>1. Follows Essay Format</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>2. Clearly Communicates My Big Idea</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>3. Hook Grabs Reader's Attention</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>4. Thesis Statement &amp; Three Sub-Topics</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>5. Body Paragraph Openers</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>6. Details Support My Thesis</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>7. Good Transitions</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>8. Compelling Twist</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>9. Overall Readability</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>10. Interesting Vocabulary</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>11. Good Mechanics</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			
<b>12. Vocal Creativity</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs to Improve
Notes:			

***When you have completed this form and had someone else read your rough draft, it is time to write your final draft, incorporating revisions and refinements that have been made through the self-editing and conferencing process.***

***Now you are ready to type your final draft. Use double line spacing and 1-inch margins. Don't forget your "Works Cited" page.***

## Teacher's Feedback

Use this form to grade your student's **final draft**. Refer back to pages 6-7 for evaluation guidelines.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

### Process (6 points)

POINTS

COMMENTS

Rough (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Conference (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Final (2) \_\_\_\_\_

### Mechanics/Appearance (10 points)

Format (Margins, Indentation, Spacing) (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Spelling (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Grammar (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence Structure (Fragments, Run-ons) (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Neatness (2) \_\_\_\_\_

### Content (24 points)

Hook (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Context (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Statement (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Body Paragraphs on Topic (6) \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Facts & Details (6) \_\_\_\_\_

Clear Sequence of Ideas (6) \_\_\_\_\_

Weave (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Echo (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Twist (1) \_\_\_\_\_

### Style (10 points)

Sentence Variation (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Vocal Creativity (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Vivid Words - Concrete (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Precise Words - Concise (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Consistent Tense (2) \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL POINTS:**

**/50**

**FINAL GRADE:**

Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_