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***The Book Thief***  
BY MARKUS ZUSAK



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre-Reading

### Holocaust Testimonies

**Objectives:** Gaining historical context through primary sources  
Contemplating multiple perspectives about the Holocaust

#### Activity

*The Book Thief* takes place during World War II (1939-1945) and addresses the Holocaust (the genocide of approximately six million Jews). These victims of the Nazis suffered inconceivable horrors, and those who were caught trying to help were also punished and/or killed. In *The Book Thief*, you will encounter Jewish people who directly suffer from the Holocaust and also Germans who recognize the injustice and help the Jews at the risk of their own safety.

Only someone who experienced the Holocaust knows what it was really like, but we can gain a better understanding of it by reading or listening to firsthand accounts. Use the Internet (or an alternate source) to find two stories: one from a Holocaust survivor and one from someone who protected a Jew or Jewish family. Write 2-3 paragraphs about the testimonies, reflecting upon new information you have learned, the perspective you have gained, and/or the emotions you felt while reading.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part One: “The Jesse Owens Incident” – “The Heavyweight Champion of the School Yard”****#TweetTheirOpinions**

**Objectives:** Clarifying character stances on a central topic  
Understanding character voice and portrayal

**Activity**

In 1935, there was no Internet or social media. Today, however, people use platforms like Twitter to express their opinions about social and political issues.

Throughout this section, you will encounter a spectrum of opinions about Hitler and his reign. Review this portion of Part One again and take notes on how each character feels. Then, for each person listed below, devise a tweet from that character’s point of view that demonstrates his or her interpretation of current events. Assume that other characters will not be able to see the tweets, so each may speak his or her mind.

Your tweet must be 140 characters or fewer, including spaces. Tweets can (but do not have to) include hashtags that are meant to categorize tweets so that Twitter users can search by topic.

**Liesel:****Hans:****Rudy:****Frau Diller:****Mr. Steiner:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part Three**

**Motifs and Symbolism**

**Objective:** Analyzing several instances of a motif

**Activity**

A *motif* is a recurring concept in a work of literature.

In Part Three, “Tricksters,” Death comments on “the contradictory human being. So much good, so much evil. Just add water.” Here, Death is making a moral judgment.

Apply this idea to the motif of stealing. Identify each stealing incident in Part Three and explain how it has both positive and negative qualities. In other words, for each incident, how is the stealing both morally right and wrong at the same time? Then, in 2-3 sentences, answer the following question: What does stealing symbolize in *The Book Thief*?

Instances of Stealing:

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What does stealing symbolize in *The Book Thief*?

---

---

---

---

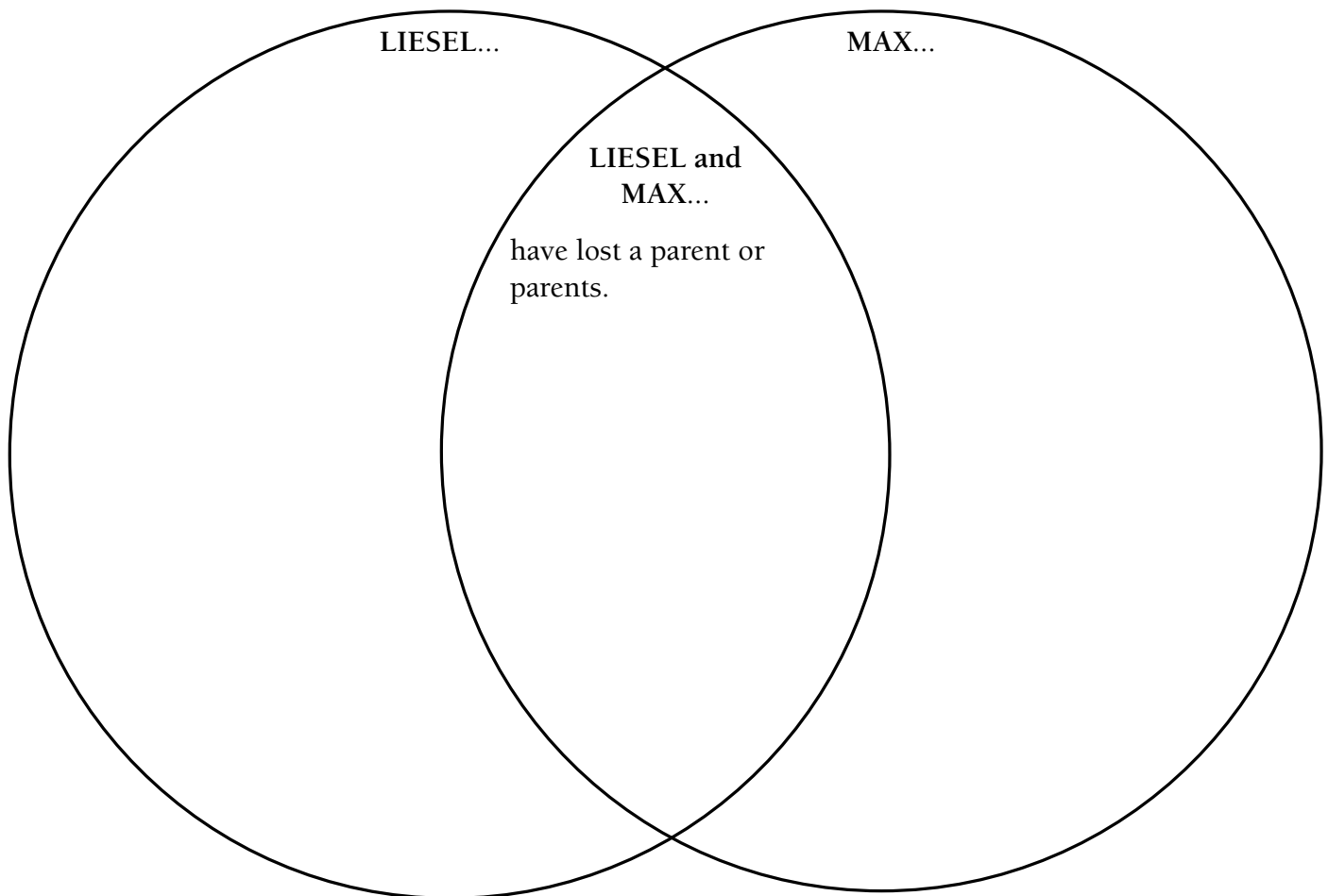
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part Four****Compare and Contrast****Objective:** Finding similarities and differences between two main characters**Activity**

In Part Four, Liesel and Max's stories merge. Throughout the book, you may have noticed that these two characters have many things in common.

Use the following Venn diagram to compare and contrast Liesel and Max, using specific details from the text. In the section labeled LIESEL..., write traits that only Liesel possesses. In the section labeled MAX..., write characteristics that only Max has. In the middle section, write the traits that Liesel and Max share. You should also include details that you remember from previous parts of the novel. We have provided the first similarity for you.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part Six

### Tone

**Objective:** Analyzing how tone communicates ideas to the reader

#### Activity

There are three chapters of Part Six in which the reader learns about Death's experiences during the war—"Death's Diary: 1942," "Death's Diary: Cologne," and "Death's Diary: The Parisians."

*Tone* is the attitude the author puts in the writing. The tone of these chapters helps the reader understand how Death feels about his involvement in war, in human suffering, and in this specific war.

Using the following chart, analyze how Death feels during the events of the three "Death's Diary" chapters. Specifically, pay attention to how Death's own words convey his attitude. Cite at least three of Death's quotations from each chapter and explain how they contribute to the tone. One response has been provided for you as an example.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part Nine****Character Motivation****Objective:** Inferring character motivation**Activity**

Part Nine introduces the reader to a new character, Reinhold Zucker, and provides further insight about Frau Holtzapfel. Both of these characters do something strange for which the reader does not receive direct explanation: Zucker demands to trade seats with Hans, and Holtzapfel refuses at first to take cover in the basement from the bombings.

Using the following questions, decipher the motivation behind the actions of both Zucker and Holtzapfel. Cite two examples from the text that support your inference.

Why do you think Reinhold Zucker demands to switch seats with Hans?

---

---

How do you know? (Cite two examples from the text.)

---

---

Why do you think Frau Holtzapfel refuses to take cover in the basement?

---

---

How do you know? (Cite two examples from the text.)

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Epilogue

### Narrator and Protagonist

**Objective:** Examining the relationship between the narrator and protagonist

#### Activity

The relationship between Liesel and Death is perhaps the most crucial one in *The Book Thief*; after all, Death tells the reader every detail of Liesel's pain, all of which he had no choice but to contribute to.

Reread the Epilogue, paying close attention to Death's words about and interactions with Liesel. Identify at least 5 quotations significant to their relationship. Use the following chart to explain how each quotation reveals what Liesel and Death mean to each other. One example has been provided for you.