

The Book Thief

Parts Two & Three

Symbolism: Using animals, elements, things, places, or colors to represent other things.

Flashback: A transition in a story to an earlier time, which interrupts the normal chronological order.

Cliffhanger: A plot device that leaves the reader in suspense at the end of chapter.

1. “*The Shoulder Shrug*. It was a blue book with red writing engraved on the cover.” (p. 84)
For what might red be a symbol?
2. What does *The Grave Digger’s Handbook* symbolize?
3. What does finishing *The Grave Digger’s Handbook* symbolize?
4. Cite textual evidence that supports the author using flashback on page 104. How does this device help the reader?
5. Cite textual evidence that supports a cliffhanger on page 107. Why does the author use this cliffhanger?
6. The author uses personification to give life to flames. “The orange flames waved at the crowd as paper and print dissolved...” (p. 112) What do the flames symbolize?
7. What might the stolen books symbolize?
8. A flashback occurs on page 145. What is it? How does this flashback help the reader?
9. ...they noticed Fritz Hammer eating an apple.” (p. 150) What might the apple symbolize?
10. What does the standover man symbolize?

Parts Four and Five – Literary Devices

1. What does the accordion symbolize?
2. Why do you think the narrator provided a flashback to Hans Hubermann's WWI experiences?
3. The author uses a simile to describe Max's voice. "...there was humor in Max Vanderburg's voice, though its physicality was like friction—like a stone being gently rubbed across a large rock." (p. 217) What is being compared? Why is this comparison appropriate?
4. What did the dream of Max fighting with the Fuhrer symbolize?
5. Max and his friends painted over the pages of Mein Kampf. What does this symbolize?
6. The author uses personification to give the reader a vivid description of Liesel thinking about Max while she is visiting the mayor's wife. "As the book quivered in her lap, the secret sat in her mouth. It made itself comfortable. It crossed its legs." (p. 146). Two things are being personified. What are they? What visualizations does this give the reader?
7. "For Max Vandenburg, there was cool cement and plenty of time to spend with it. The minutes were cruel. Hours were punishing." (p. 150) The author uses personification to characterize time. How does this help the reader to understand how Max feels about time?
8. "Although the front and back pages were streaked with black tears of print..." (p. 147) What two things are being compared? Why do you think the author used tears as a comparison? Which literary device is this? Why?

Parts Six and Seven – Literary Devices

1. “They say war is death’s best friend, but I must offer you a different point of view on that one. To me, war is like the new boss who expects the impossible. He stands over your shoulder repeating one thing, incessantly: ‘Get it done, get it done.’ So you work harder. You get the job done. The boss, however, does not thank you. He asks for more.” (p. 309)
What two things are being compared? Which literary device is this? Why?
2. What is the cliffhanger at the end of page 324?
3. What is the symbolic significance of the last book Liesel acquired, *The Dream Carrier*?
4. “The book thief did not retreat. She took a few extra steps and sat down. Her cold hands felt for her sleeves and a **sentence dropped from her mouth**. ‘He’s not dead yet.’ **The words landed on the table and positioned themselves in the middle.**” (p. 330)
Which literary device is this? Why?
5. “...The sky was yellow, like burning newspaper.” (p. 336) Which literary device is this? Why?

Parts Eight - Epilogue

1. "Even when they made it around the corner, away from the center of the wreckage, the haze of the collapsed building attempted to follow. It was white and warm, and it crept behind them." (p. 433). What is being personified?
2. What did Rudy's lined-up dominoes, described at the beginning of Part Eight symbolize?
3. "A bandaged hand fell out of his coat sleeve and cherries of blood were seeping through the wrapping . . . the cherries of blood had grown into plums." (p. 465). What is being compared? Which literary device is this? Why?
4. "...I looked up and saw the tin-can planes. I watched their stomachs open and the bombs drop casually out." (p. 427) Which literary device is this? Why?
5. In Part Ten, the narrative shifts rapidly between past, present, and future. What effect does this have on the story?

Using Choice Boards

Choice boards give students the opportunity to participate in multiple tasks that allow them to practice skills they've learned in class or to demonstrate and extend their understanding of concepts. From the board, students either choose or are assigned tasks to complete. Individual tasks address the grade level specific Common Core State Standards and also learning style modalities.



To scaffold the activities for struggling readers, teachers can modify the tasks using the blank template provided or give more details for performance criteria. Some teachers like to assign point values for the different tasks.

In order to support teachers, the choice boards developed for BCSCR are coded for specific Common Core State Standards.



Choice Board-The Book Thief

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| <p>Create an illustrated book, as Max did, that tells in simple language and line drawings about someone you admire.</p> <p>CCSS 7-8.RL.10</p> | <p>Choose two characters, and then create a collage of the characters' characteristics using words and images.</p> <p>CCSS 7-8.W.1</p> | <p>With a partner, write a screenplay about Liesel's life from the time she reunites with Max until the time of her death.</p> <p>Perform your work for the class.</p> <p>CCSS 7-8.SL.4</p> |
| <p>Research Holocaust survivors.</p> <p>Find three survivors who interest you and write a short characterization of each survivor.</p> <p>Present the information to your class.</p> <p>CCSS 7-8.SL.5</p> | <p>Create a map of Europe and plot points of interest. Write a short summary of why these points are important.</p> <p>CCSS 7-8.RL.1</p> | <p>Select five adjectives that characterize Death and give an example of his commentary in the novel that illustrates each character trait.</p> <p>Give a presentation to the class</p> <p>CCSS 7-8.W.6</p> |
| <p>Research the purposes and organization of concentration camps in Germany and Eastern Europe.</p> <p>Give an oral presentation to your class with the use of visual representations.</p> <p>CCSS 7-8.W.7</p> | <p>Analyze Liesel's character and show how she develops over the course of the novel, how she interacts with other characters, and how she advances the development of the theme.</p> <p>Creatively display the analysis through the use of technology.</p> <p>CCSS 7-8 RL.3</p> | <p>There are many themes throughout this novel. Consider each theme and discuss how each is developed in the novel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual identity vs. social expectations • Coming to terms with abandonment and loss • Forming relationships with others • Concern with self vs. concern for others • The power of words • Overcoming stereotypes <p>CCSS 7-8.RL.2</p> |

Choice Board

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Using a RAFT Matrix

A RAFT matrix enhances students' comprehension of novels they're reading and information they're learning. It also provides a fun way to encourage student writing. RAFT is an acronym for *role*, *audience*, *format*, and *topic*:

- **Role.** The role is the person or people the student becomes for this project. Sometimes students take on the role of a book character, historical figure, or contemporary personality, such as Peyton Manning, and at other times, they are themselves.
- **Audience.** The audience is the person or people who will read or view this project. They may include students, teachers, parents, or community members, as well as simulated audiences, such as book characters and historical personalities.
- **Format.** The format is the genre or activity that students create. It might be a letter, brochure, cartoon, journal, poster, essay, newspaper article, speech, or digital scrapbook.
- **Topic.** The topic pertains to the book. It may be an issue related to the book, an essential question, or something of personal interest.

RAFT is an effective way to differentiate instruction by providing tiered activities. The BSCSR RAFT matrices are scaffolded and can be adjusted according to students' achievement levels, English proficiency, and interests.

RAFT Matrix

The Book Thief

| Role | Audience | Format | Topic |
|----------------|---------------------|----------|-------------|
| Liesel | Her Brother | Diary | Survival |
| Hans Hubermann | The German Soldiers | Song | Acceptance |
| Max | Liesel | Facebook | Freedom |
| Rudy | His Brother | Letter | Forgiveness |

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Seeds of World War II

During the 1930s Germany, soundly defeated in World War I, gathered strength under the leadership of the fanatical nationalist Adolf Hitler. Hitler and his Nazi Party rearmed Germany, breaking the Versailles Treaty of 1919 that had been designed to keep peace throughout Europe. Hitler's trained thugs murdered political opponents, clearing his way to power. The Nazi leader entered into a series of negotiations that would allow Germany to dominate Eastern Europe. Envisioning themselves as a superior or "master" race, the Nazis ultimately planned to rule northern Europe as well.

Hitler carefully laid his political groundwork. The 1934 non-aggression pact he signed with Poland was a ploy to keep the Poles from arming against Germany. Hitler then signed an agreement with Stalin, Russia's leader, dividing Poland between them. In 1936, the Italian leader Mussolini also signed a non-aggression pact with Germany. In 1938, the Nazi-run government incorporated Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia into an empire known as "the Third Reich."

The stage was set for another world war. When France and Great Britain failed to act quickly to stop Hitler, the Germans opened hostilities, launching a massive air offensive on Warsaw and the surrounding area. The Nazis gained control of Poland within three weeks. With Poland as its base, the German army launched its campaign across Europe, leaving destruction and death in its wake.

Hitler and the Jews

In 1933, when Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, a national census showed that the Jewish population of Germany numbered around 600,000 representing less than one percent of the country's total population. Of these, approximately eighty percent held German citizenship. The remaining twenty percent were mainly Jews of Polish descent. Why did this ethnic group pose such a serious threat to Hitler's ideal Germany?

The answer lies in the long history of anti-Semitism, particularly in Europe. Jews were persecuted in Spain and in Russia, where they were coerced to convert to Christianity or face dire consequences. In general, the Jews tended to retain their own religious and cultural beliefs, although some did convert in order to conform to social expectations. In addition to the religious issue, Jews sometimes acted as money-lenders and were then scapegoated for the economic problems of the citizenry.

Hitler was not Germany's first rabid anti-Semite. He was greatly influenced by Karl Lueger, mayor of Vienna, Austria from 1897 to 1910. The leader of the Christian Social Party, Lueger garnered voters with his platform of religious and racial homogeneity. He drew his support largely from the lower middle class, exploiting prejudices and attributing financial hardships to the practices of the Jews.

Hitler found it politically expedient to take the same approach. In *Mein Kampf*, he accused Jews of deliberately attempting to pollute the pure German gene pool, of robbing Aryans, and of destroying the nation's social fabric. His propaganda became effective during the Great Depression, when the economic collapse put many out of work. Hitler's government introduced a strict program of segregation of the Jews, prohibiting them from attending mainstream schools and from doing business with Aryans, or "pure" Germans. The government smiled on thugs who destroyed Jewish property and terrorized Jewish communities.

With the passing of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, German Jews lost their rights as citizens, and intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews was prohibited. As acts of violence and outrage against Jews increased, many fled Germany. Those who remained behind suffered greatly from lack of food and medicines. Organized death squads killed thousands in Germany and Eastern Europe. In 1938, the assassination of a German diplomat by a Jewish teenager touched off a Nazi retaliation of astonishing brutality *Kristallnacht*, or "night of broken glass," when Nazis and SS storm troopers smashed the windows in Jewish stores, committing murder and acts of violence along the way. There were also mass arrests that resulted in the expropriation of Jewish monies and properties by government officials.

In 1942, the Nazis instituted the concentration camps, where prisoners were worked to death, shot, or gassed. The vast majority of German and Polish Jews ended up in these camps; relatively few survived Hitler's Final Solution. The Allies liberated the camps in 1945, with the defeat of the Axis Powers. Hitler would not live to face trial for the genocide he had orchestrated. He committed suicide in April, 1945, when the Red Army invaded Germany.

Book Ties

Jesse Owens

James Cleveland Owens was born in Lawrence County, Alabama in 1913 and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. Owens, the grandson of a slave, was often sick as a child. He was given the name Jesse by a teacher in Cleveland who did not understand his country accent.

Jesse grew up in poverty, taking odd jobs delivering groceries, loading freight cars, and working in a shoe repair shop as a young teenager. During this time, he realized that he had a passion for running, encouraged by his junior-high track coach.

Owens first came to national attention when he was a high school student and equaled the record of 9.4 seconds in the 100-yard dash and long-jumped 24 feet 9 1/2 inches at the 1933 National High School Championship of Chicago.

Owens attended Ohio State University where he won a record of eight individual NCAA championships. Although Owens enjoyed athletic success, he had to live off campus with other African-American athletes. When he traveled with the team, he had to eat at "black-only" restaurants, and sleep in "black-only" hotels.

In 1936 Owens was selected to compete for the United States in the Summer Olympics in Berlin. Adolf Hitler was using the games to show the world a resurgent Nazi Germany and the superiority of the Aryan race. Owens, however, won four gold medals. Hitler publicly snubbed Owens, shaking hands only with German victors.

When Owens returned to the United States, he was given a hero's welcome, but it was short-lived. As an African-American before the Civil Rights movement in America, Owens suffered the injustices of his race and eventually filed for bankruptcy. It wasn't until 1966 that his rehabilitation began and he lived out the rest of his life as a U.S. goodwill ambassador. Owens died of lung cancer at the age of 66.
(BookTies)

Extension Activities

The Book Thief

Writing – Research: W.7-8.7-9

Students will conduct sustained research projects to answer question (including a self-generated question) or solve problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. (W.7-8.7)

Students will gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation. (W.7-8.8)

Students will draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, claims, reflection, and research. (W. 7-8. 9)

Possible Research Topics:

- Concentration Camps
- Survivors
- Liberators/Rescuers/Resisters
- Starvation-lack of food and nutrition
- World War II- Important Leaders
- World War II-Important Events
- Nazi Propaganda
- Holocaust War Criminals
- Lessons learned from the Holocaust
- The Japanese American Internment Camp
- Voices of the Holocaust
- Anne Frank
- Tolerance/Intolerance
- Children of the Holocaust
- Nuremberg Trials
- What was the Final Solution?
- Hate Groups
- Nazi Beliefs
- Liberation
- Boxcar Horrors
- Acts of Courage
- Daily Life in the Camps
- Star of David
- Doctors of the Holocaust
- Medical Experiments of the Holocaust

- The Story of Raoul Wallenberg
- Death Marches
- Book Burning

Writing – Narrative: W.7-8.3-9

Students will compose narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Possible Narrative Topics

- An experience that led to renewed faith
- An encounter that changed your life
- An experience that left you disillusioned
- A significant misunderstanding
- A dangerous experience
- A moment of failure or success
- A frightening experience
- A memorable journey
- An encounter of someone or something you were afraid of
- A unique friendship
- Your bond between mother/father and child
- An occasion when you experienced rejection
- An occasion when you befriended an outcast
- An event that marked a turning point in your life
- A rebellious act
- A brush with death
- Two different versions of the same event
- An experience that altered your view of someone
- An imaginary encounter with a real person

Other Extension Activities:

- Scene Performance – Students will work in small groups and enact chapters from the novel. Switch up the chapters and students so everyone has the opportunity to perform.
- Fake Book <http://www.classtools.net/FB/home-page> - The students may use this site to create a web page that details the persons of the text. The students will choose images of actors, real people, historical images, primary source documents, etc... in order to portray the novel's characters, tone, theme, and style.
- Draw the Setting – Students will draw one of the descriptions of the setting in the text, or create a model of collage of the setting.
- Other Works – Students will read one of the author's other works and write a comparative paper discussing the similarities and differences in style, themes, and structure.
- Study Guide – Students will prepare a study guide for the class.
- Political cartoon – Choose a political cartoon regarding one or more of the novel's topics. Analyze the cartoon using the following resource:
http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/cartoon_analysis_worksheet.pdf

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