

**Summer Reading**  
**English II**

**REQUIRED:** *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

The narrator of *The Book Thief* is Death personified. The narrator is rather objective and simply reports what he sees as he follows the protagonist from the moment he meets her. The character of Death is rather benign and nonthreatening. Death is treated as a natural part of the life cycle. This is the story of a young girl who experiences the years of the Holocaust by observing the events and the circumstances that surround her. It is a story of resilience and survival.

**Choose ONE of the novels from the High School Battle of the Books list.**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
<i>Little Women</i>	Alcott, Louisa May
<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	Bradbury, Ray
<i>My Antonia</i>	Cather, Willa
<i>The Birchbark House</i>	Erdrich, Louise
<i>Whirligig</i>	Fleischman, Paul
<i>Out of Darkness</i>	Freedman, Russell
<i>Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption</i>	Hillenbrand, Laura
<i>The Secret Life of Bees</i>	Kidd, Sue Monk
<i>Kidnapped</i>	Stevenson, Robert Louis
<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	Twain, Mark
<i>Homeless Bird</i>	Whelan, Gloria
<i>Night</i>	Wiesel, Elie

**Assignment:**

Keep a reading response journal of at least ten entries for each book read. Each entry should be approximately 150-300 words in length. The journal should cover the entire book. (Do not worry about “spoilers.” I want to know that you read all the way to the end of the book!) I am attaching some prompts and questions to help you write these entries. You do not have to use all of the prompts.

1. Entries should be entirely your thinking about the books. Do not use the Internet to search for interpretations or analyses.
2. Entries may be handwritten or word processed.

We will discuss and complete a unit of study based on *The Book Thief* during the first few weeks of school as preparation for the school-wide trip to the Holocaust Memorial Museum during the Washington, D. C., trip this fall.

**Journals must be turned in during the first full week of school in August.**

## Reader Response Journal Prompts

After reading, choose one of the following prompts for your journal entries. Some of the prompts are more creative than others. You may do a prompt no more than three times, but please try to attempt each prompt at least once.

1. After reading, I wonder. . . .
2. Are the characters realistic (do they seem like they could be real people)? Why or why not?
3. Create a timeline of events from what you have read so far.
4. Create a WANTED poster for the antagonist. Remember to include physical and personality traits as well as an image of the character. You may draw the character or use an image from the Internet.
5. Describe a character from the book you would like to meet (which does mean that you think you would like the character, but that you think the character would be interesting). List four questions you would like to ask the character.
6. Describe something you have read (or seen, heard, experienced) that is similar to the events in the book.
7. Describe the major conflict. What side are you on? Why?
8. **Importance of an episode or scene.** Select what you consider the most important episode in the book. Explain briefly what happens, why you think it is important to the section, your reaction to the scene, and why you react this way.
9. **Setting:** What effect does the setting (time, place, social and historical background) have on the characters' thoughts, actions, and choices? What would be YOUR reaction to having to adapt to the character's environment? Why?
10. Create an illustration for the setting of an important scene in the book. Draw the scene and include details that capture the mood of the scene. Explain how the author created the mood in that scene.
11. Describe what was either believable or unbelievable about your reading. Defend your position.
12. **Theme:** Explain an idea or theme—either stated or implied by events, characters, conflicts, etc.—which is meaningful to you. Explain its importance to the book and why you find it meaningful.
13. **Character comparison #1:** Compare yourself to the main character. Point out your similarities and try to account for differences between you and him or her. Considering what you have discovered, what is your reaction to this character? Why? How do you think the character would feel about you?

14. **Character comparison #2:** Compare a character from your book to a character from another work of fiction (novel, play, film, short story). What are the similarities? What are the differences? Which character do you admire more? Why?
15. **Judgment:** Examine a character's actions, values, behavior, etc. with which you disagree. What is happening? Why is the character thinking and/or acting in this way? What do you see wrong with it? Why? What would you suggest as a preferable response or behavior or value?

### **Format for Your Reading Journal**

1. You should write your journal entries AS you read rather than when you have finished the book.
2. Each entry should be on a separate page.
3. Each entry should be dated, list the title and author, and the pages you read. You should also include the number of the prompt.
4. Each entry should be either handwritten, preferably in ink or word-processed in Times New Roman 12-point fonts (or something similar. (Avoid the script fonts, please, as they are difficult to read.)
5. Entries should be between 150 and 300 words, unless the prompt class for some other format, such as a timeline or an illustration. If the prompt calls for a written explanation, include that written portion.

### Rubric for Summer Reading Journals

Response is clearly labeled (title, date, prompt number)	<b>1 point</b>
The topic sentence included <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear reference to the author and title</li><li>• A restatement of the prompt</li><li>• A brief but purposeful statement of the main idea you will develop and support</li></ul>	<b>5 points</b>
The response is well supported and fully developed; it contains <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At least two specific textual references</li><li>• Explanation of how each piece of evidence relates to the topic</li><li>• Your reasoning, thinking, connections, conclusions</li><li>• A complete page of writing (150-300 words)</li></ul>	<b>15 points</b>
Writing is clear and easily understood. Spelling, grammar, and mechanical errors do not cloud the reader's understanding or distract the reader's attention from the content.	<b>4 points</b>