

## Honors English 9 Summer Reading Discussion Questions

*Hello! Welcome to your first assignment for Honors English 9 here at Padua! I'm excited to be your teacher this year and to help guide you through these wonderful books and the many other texts we'll read together during the school year. Please give your best effort on this assignment, and get excited! This is going to be a fantastic year.*

*Ms. Bilancini*

**Instructions:** Please respond to each of the following questions in complete sentences using Times New Roman, size-12 font, which will be the required format for all assignments you'll type for this class. You may answer the questions for both books in the same document. You will be informed on the first day of class when this assignment will be collected, but please have the assignment completed at that point.

### **Discussion Questions: *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak**

1. In your personal opinion, what is the effect created by having Death serve as the narrator? In your response, be sure to discuss the symbolism of having death as the *omniscient* narrator.
2. At one point in the novel, Death states, "I'm always finding humans at their best and worst. I see their ugly and their beautiful, and I wonder how the same thing can be both." Explain what you feel is both "ugly" and "beautiful" about the following characters:
  - a. Liesel
  - b. Rosa and Hans Hubermann
  - c. Max Vandenburg
  - d. Rudy Steiner
  - e. Mrs. Hermann.
3. The Grave Digger's Handbook is the first book that Liesel steals. Explain the following:
  - a. Why did Liesel take the book?
  - b. What is significant about the titles of the books Liesel steals (explain/give a couple specific examples)?
  - c. What does the act of book thievery teach Liesel about life and death?
  - d. Explain how Liesel's own attempt to write a book saves her life.
4. Explain the meaning of the word foreshadowing, and then explain whether Mark Zusak's use of this literary device in *The Book Thief* was effective. (Be sure to provide at least two specific examples.)
5. In your opinion, what is the significance of colors in the book (provide quoted examples to support your ideas)?

6. In the novel, Death describes Liesel as a girl “with a mountain to climb.” In detail, explain the meaning of this statement.
7. In this novel, there are many instances of courage. Choose one act of courage by one character that you feel best illustrates the true definition of courage, and be sure to support your response in detail.
8. In the novel, words have the power to both destroy and save lives. Explain and support this statement.

**Extended Answer Prompt: *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli**

In the final pages of the novel, Archie says of Stargirl, "Star people are rare. You'll be lucky to meet another." At this point, Leo seems to realize what he has lost. According to Leo's actions throughout the novel, are we meant to believe as readers that Leo was mature enough to handle a friendship with Stargirl? Cite at least two quotes from the text to support your answer. Aim to fully answer this question in at least 6-8 sentences.