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| **Approved for use in grade 10.** | |
| Summary of the Work:  It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier and will be busier still.  By her brother's graveside, Liesel's life is changed when she picks up a single object, partially hidden in the snow. It is The Gravedigger's Handbook, left behind there by accident, and it is her first act of book thievery. So begins a love affair with books and words, as Liesel, with the help of her accordion-playing foster father, learns to read. Soon she is stealing books from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library, wherever there are books to be found.  But these are dangerous times. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jew in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened up and closed down.  In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time.  (goodreads.com) | **Rationale:**  *The Book Thief* takes the reader into the home of a German family in World War II Germany. These characters struggle with moral questions: joining the Nazi party, participating in Hitler Youth, hiding a Jew, stealing books. Readers look at various questions—Is it possible to be a “good person” and do something “bad”? How can one stand up for his or her beliefs in the face of danger? What makes someone family? Students relate to this novel and characters through Liesel’s struggles with learning, how she connects with Max and their similar losses, how she deals with betrayal and forgiveness, and how they all handle the pressure to conform to the rules of Nazi Germany. Additionally, the story has great appeal to young people and is on required reading lists throughout the country, for grades 9 and 10 most frequently.  The Book Thief has sold “over 2.5 million copies in the United States alone,” and has enjoyed a lengthy stay on the New York Times best-seller list (“10 Questions with Markus Zusak”). |
| **Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:**  https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/markus-zusak/the-book-thief  <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/book-reviews/the-book-thief> | **Noted Distinction:**   * 2007 Best Books for Young Adults, American Library Association   **Readability**   * Lexile Score: 730 * Page Count: 560   **Learning Resources Guidelines**   * The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.   **Standard Alignment: *(link)***  **Approval:**  **Submitted to Committee:**  **Approved for Adoption:** |
| **Notes on the Text:**  (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)  The novel is a great way to look at point of view, style, and figurative language. Students not only experience the usual narrator but also see WWII from the perspective of a German family. | **Connection to the Curriculum:**  The book fits into the sophomore curriculum for reading literature and writing. The story focuses students on the essential question of what would I do in this situation? Students also focus on literary analysis writing and often do research/informational writing inspired by the novel. |
| **Additional Connections*:***  *(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*  Honors sophomores often use this book as a summer read. There is a film of the book that was released in 2013. | |