

The Book Thief

Prologue and Parts 1–2

by Markus Zusak

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: animosity, apprehend, audacious, consummate, crux, foreboding, machinations, precarious, protestation, trepidation

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 · Prologue and Parts 1–2 · Liesel arrives on Himmel Street

Section 2 · Parts 3–4 · Secrets in the Hubermann house

Section 3 · Parts 5–6 · War comes closer to Molching

Section 4 · Parts 7–8 · Difficult choices in wartime Molching

Section 5 · Parts 9–10 and Epilogue · Liesel's story nears its end

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com
(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. The two rivals could not hide their **animosity** during the live debate.

- A. strong hostility
- B. growing boredom
- C. nervous unease

2. He stretched to **apprehend** the rope before it slid off the deck.

- A. to point toward
- B. to grab hold of
- C. to coil up neatly

3. The **audacious** rookie challenged the team's star to a race.

- A. highly talented
- B. boldly daring
- C. loud and cheerful

4. Critics called her a **consummate** pianist after the concert.

- A. famous and wealthy
- B. young and ambitious
- C. supremely skilled

5. Money was the **crux** of their long and bitter argument.

- A. the central point
- B. the final outcome
- C. the first small step

6. A sense of **foreboding** filled her as the sky grew dark.

- A. dread of coming trouble
- B. a flash of sudden anger
- C. a spell of quiet boredom

7. The duke's **machinations** slowly turned the king against his allies.

- A. careless, clumsy blunders
- B. bold, public boasts
- C. crafty, harmful schemes

8. The climbers inched across a **precarious** ledge high on the cliff.

- A. dangerously unstable
- B. cold and windy
- C. long and narrow

9. Her **protestation** of innocence finally convinced the skeptical jury.

- A. a forceful objection
- B. a quiet, mumbled excuse
- C. an earnest declaration

10. She felt great **trepidation** before her first day at a new school.

- A. deep sadness or grief
- B. nervous fear or dread
- C. puzzled confusion

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

misery born from happiness — Death's grim idea that the greatest suffering can grow out of what once brought joy

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	A
2	B
3	B
4	C
5	A
6	A
7	C
8	A
9	C
10	B

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 "HERE IS A SMALL FACT
You are going to die.

I am in all truthfulness attempting to be cheerful about this whole topic, though most people find themselves hindered in believing me, no matter my protestations."

As it is used in the passage, the word "protestations" most nearly refers to...

- A. his cheerful greetings to people
- B. his cheerful jokes about death
- C. his insistence that he is cheerful

2 "With great trepidation, he approached the cockpit and watched the pilot, gauging if he was alive, at which point, he still was."

The passage most strongly suggests that, as the boy approached the cockpit, he felt...

- A. confident he could help
- B. fearful of what he would find
- C. annoyed by the delay

3 "In fact, Rudy Steiner was one of those audacious little bastards who actually fancied himself with the ladies."

In the passage, Rudy Steiner is characterized as...

- A. charming and polite with girls
- B. boldly daring with girls
- C. popular among the girls

4 "You'd say that was all Liesel Meminger needed to apprehend her second stolen book, even if it smoked in her hands."

As it is used in the passage, the word "apprehend" most nearly means to...

- A. be arrested for the book
- B. understand the book
- C. take hold of the book

5 "... the act of stealing it triggered the crux of what was to come."

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to...

- A. explain why Liesel felt hungry
- B. mark the theft as a turning point
- C. question whether the theft mattered

6 "Instead of asking him what was wrong, Liesel began writing immediately, choosing to ignore the sense of foreboding that was quick to accumulate inside her."

It can reasonably be inferred that the feeling Liesel pushed aside was...

- A. a dread that bad news lay ahead
- B. eagerness to begin writing
- C. relief that her mother would reply

7 "When she wrote about that night, she held no animosity toward Rosa Hubermann at all, or toward her mother for that matter."

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. Liesel felt no resentment toward Rosa
- B. Liesel resented Rosa for the beating
- C. Liesel feared living with Rosa

8 "He was performing now what is called a Schreierei—a consummate exhibition of passionate shouting ..."

The author most likely calls the shouting "consummate" in order to...

- A. stress that it was masterfully done
- B. suggest it was forced and fake
- C. hint that it bored the crowd

9 "... warning the crowd to be watchful, to be vigilant, to seek out and destroy the evil machinations plotting to infect the motherland with its deplorable ways."

It can reasonably be inferred that the speaker portrays the nation's enemies as...

- A. weak and disorganized foes
- B. open and honest rivals
- C. schemers plotting secret harm

10 "As they walked past the precarious town hall shadows, the book thief winced."

The word "precarious" conveys that the moment is...

- A. fraught with danger
- B. sorrowful and grim
- C. physically exhausting

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	C	Here 'protestations' means Death's earnest insistence that he is cheerful, not objections -- the rarer sense students miss.
2	B	
3	B	
4	C	'Apprehend' here carries its older sense -- to seize or take hold of -- not 'understand' or 'arrest.'
5	B	
6	A	Event comprehension.
7	A	Character comprehension. Liesel bears no grudge though Rosa beats her and her own mother gave her up.
8	A	'Consummate' praises the skill of the shouting -- perfect of its kind -- not its vile content.
9	C	The word resembles 'machine' but means crafty, harmful schemes.
10	A	Event comprehension.

Teacher Context: Prologue and Parts 1-2

Death introduces himself as narrator and the book thief, Liesel Meminger, whose younger brother dies on the train to Molching. Liesel is placed with foster parents Hans and Rosa Hubermann on Himmel Street, befriends Rudy Steiner, and Hans teaches her to read, beginning her life as a book thief through Hitler's birthday and the public book burning. The Prologue folds into this opening section and Parts 1-2 are paired to size it.