

The Book Thief

Parts 5–6

by Markus Zusak

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: altercation, antithesis, desecrate, desolation, epitome, inconspicuous, malice, nourish, prudently, repugnant

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 **altercation** at the bus stop drew a small crowd.

- A. a street performance
- B. a minor accident
- C. an angry argument

2. Their new plan was the **antithesis** of everything we expected.

- A. the logical outcome
- B. the exact opposite
- C. the perfect copy

3. Vandals **desecrate** the chapel when they spray graffiti across its altar.

- A. damage just for fun
- B. decorate without permission
- C. violate something sacred

4. After the flood, only **desolation** remained in the valley.

- A. calm and silence
- B. noise and confusion
- C. ruin and emptiness

5. She was the **epitome** of grace at the formal dinner.

- A. a perfect example
- B. a bold display
- C. a faint trace

6. A spy tries to remain **inconspicuous** wherever he goes.

- A. not easily noticed
- B. honest and loyal
- C. calm under pressure

7. She spoke with such **malice** that everyone fell silent.

- A. deep sadness
- B. cruel ill will
- C. nervous fear

8. Warm meals and rest **nourish** the tired hikers.

- A. to feed and sustain
- B. to guard and protect
- C. to clean and refresh

9. He **prudently** checked the weather before the long hike.

- A. wisely and carefully
- B. calmly and quietly
- C. boldly and quickly

10. A **repugnant** odor drifted from the old refrigerator.

- A. oddly familiar
- B. causing disgust
- C. barely noticeable

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

the basement snowman — the snowman Liesel builds for the hidden Max, bringing warmth, play, and kindness into a time of hunger and war; the snowman image returns later as a metaphor

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	C
2	B
3	C
4	C
5	A
6	A
7	B
8	A
9	A
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 “What great malice there could be in allowing something to live.”

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘malice’ most nearly suggests that allowing something to live can be:

- A. a sign of fading strength
- B. a deliberate act of cruelty
- C. an unexpected stroke of mercy

2 “The desecrated pages of Mein Kampf were becoming a series of sketches, page after page, which to him summed up the events that had swapped his former life for another.”

It can reasonably be inferred that describing the pages as ‘desecrated’ implies they had once been treated as:

- A. something poorly written
- B. something carefully hidden
- C. something sacred or revered

3 “No, the repugnant truth was this: She didn’t care about the food.”

Which choice best describes how Liesel regards the truth about her own motive?

- A. proud and unashamed
- B. puzzled and uncertain
- C. shameful and distasteful

4 “Inconspicuous as he was, however, he managed to take hold of the biggest potato of the lot ...”

Which statement about Rudy is best supported by the passage?

- A. he loudly bragged to the crowd
- B. he was the smallest boy there
- C. he drew little notice at first

5 “... Himmel Street was not exactly the epitome of idyllic Molching living.”

The passage most strongly suggests that Himmel Street was:

- A. a poor, plain place to live
- B. an average middle-class area
- C. the finest street in Molching

6 “Rudy would finish this particular altercation with a black eye, cracked ribs, and a haircut.”

The author lists ‘a black eye, cracked ribs, and a haircut’ in order to show:

- A. how badly the fight hurt Rudy
- B. why Rudy started the fight
- C. that the quarrel was friendly

7 “Did he respond prudently, or did he allow his stupidity to sink himself deeper into the mire?”

It can reasonably be inferred that a ‘prudent’ response would have been one that:

- A. carefully avoided more harm
- B. openly defied the older boys
- C. showed off his courage

8 “She gave The Dream Carrier to Max as if the words alone could nourish him.”

The comparison in the excerpt primarily functions to show that:

- A. she is teaching Max to read
- B. she hopes words can sustain Max
- C. Max is regaining his strength

9 “... which was essentially the complete antithesis of The Whistler—a book about an abandoned child who wanted to be a priest.”

Which detail best supports the claim that The Dream Carrier is the ‘antithesis’ of The Whistler?

- A. Liesel hid it under her jacket
- B. its hero longs to be a priest
- C. Liesel read it to Max daily

10 “In complete desolation, I looked at the world above.”

Which choice best describes the narrator’s state of mind as he looks at the world above?

- A. crushed by bleak sorrow
- B. quietly hopeful
- C. calm and detached

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	The line is deliberately paradoxical: prolonging a suffering life is cast as cruelty, so the word names intent to cause suffering rather than a wish to kill.
2	C	Worth surfacing the irony: by painting over Mein Kampf, Max violates the Nazi text the regime treats as sacred, turning it into art.
3	C	
4	C	
5	A	Wry understatement: 'not exactly the epitome of idyllic' means Himmel Street is poor and plain, not ideal.
6	A	
7	A	
8	B	Event comprehension. Max lies gravely ill in these pages, and the family fears he will die; the line casts Liesel's daily reading as an effort to keep him alive.
9	B	The Whistler is a dark crime story, so a tale of a child who longs to be a priest is its gentle opposite.
10	A	The narrator is Death; having just gathered the souls of gassed prisoners, his 'complete desolation' is a rare show of open grief.

Teacher Context: Parts 5-6

Air raids reach Molching and the neighbors shelter in basements, where Liesel reads aloud to calm them. Max's health falters and Death's presence draws nearer. Parts 5 and 6 are paired to hold the deepening war and Max's decline together.