

The Book Thief

Parts 9–10 and Epilogue

by Markus Zusak

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: apocalyptic, contempt, damning, forlorn, innocuous, insufferable, irretrievable, loathsome, sadistic, whittle

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. After the storm, the coast looked **apocalyptic**.

- A. gray and gloomy
- B. strange and unfamiliar
- C. like the world's end

2. She stared at the cheater with **contempt**.

- A. honest pity
- B. nervous fear
- C. scornful dislike

3. The **damning** evidence convinced the jury at once.

- A. surprising and new
- B. condemning and ruinous
- C. complex and detailed

4. She gave a **forlorn** sigh as the bus pulled away.

- A. tired and weary
- B. sad and lonely
- C. bored and restless

5. Her comment seemed **innocuous** enough at the time.

- A. dull and boring
- B. clever and funny
- C. harmless and safe

6. His **insufferable** bragging drove everyone from the room.

- A. too annoying to bear
- B. loud and constant
- C. clever and amusing

7. The lost ring was **irretrievable** at the bottom of the lake.

- A. impossible to recover
- B. covered in thick mud
- C. hidden from view

8. A **loathsome** smell rose from the garbage.

- A. disgusting and hateful
- B. faint and stale
- C. strong and sharp

9. The **sadistic** guard was the most feared man in the prison.

- A. cruel and enjoying pain
- B. strict and demanding
- C. cold and unfriendly

10. Steady erosion can **whittle** a tall cliff over time.

- A. to crack and split
- B. to wear down gradually
- C. to reshape and smooth

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

Hans's accordion — to Liesel, the instrument represents her papa; its breathing sound and music make her feel his presence and love

Liesel's regret — her painful realization that some feelings were left unspoken and some chances were not taken before it was too late

haunted by humans — Death is deeply affected by the human lives, suffering, kindness, and cruelty he has witnessed

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	C
2	C
3	B
4	B
5	C
6	A
7	A
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 *"If he hadn't despised him, he might not have taken his place a few weeks later on a fairly innocuous road."*

As it is used in the passage, the word "innocuous" most nearly suggests that the road...

- A. was unfamiliar to the soldiers
- B. was rough and hard to travel
- C. seemed harmless and ordinary

2 *"He placed his uninjured hand in his pocket and shivered with contempt for the German wind."*

Which choice best describes the wounded soldier's attitude toward the German wind?

- A. scornful and dismissive
- B. fearful and anxious
- C. grateful and relieved

3 *"The air was sharp and flat, like the Watschen of a sadistic teacher or nun."*

The author most likely describes the air as the slap of a "sadistic" teacher in order to...

- A. stress its deliberately cruel sting
- B. recall Liesel's strict schooling
- C. show how unpredictable it was

4 *"She walked forlornly to the train station and waited for her papa for hours."*

The passage most strongly suggests that, as she waited at the station, Liesel felt...

- A. quiet relief
- B. nervous impatience
- C. deep, lonely sorrow

5 *"The houses were lovely and loathsome."*

It can reasonably be inferred that Liesel's feelings toward the wealthy houses are...

- A. completely indifferent
- B. purely envious
- C. admiring yet disgusted

6 *"... even though I have been insufferable (a word I looked up in your dictionary), and I think I will leave you alone now."*

In context, the word "insufferable" emphasizes that Liesel feels she has been...

- A. impossible to put up with
- B. dishonest with Ilsa
- C. unfair in her judgments

7 *"She did not know where she was running, for Himmel Street no longer existed. Everything was new and apocalyptic."*

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. the street lay in total devastation
- B. the bombing had spared a few houses
- C. the damage was serious but limited

8 *"Perhaps I was trying to avoid her face, for the book thief was truly an irretrievable mess."*

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to...

- A. explain that her parents had abandoned her
- B. convey she was wrecked beyond recovery
- C. suggest she was angry rather than grieving

9 *"Since the news had found him, Alex had been whittled away."*

It can reasonably be inferred that grief had, over time...

- A. left him strangely unchanged
- B. gradually worn Alex Steiner down
- C. suddenly broken his spirit

10 *"I wanted to ask her how the same thing could be so ugly and so glorious, and its words and stories so damning and brilliant."*

Which choice best describes Death's attitude toward human words and stories?

- A. convinced they are merely beautiful
- B. awed that they can ruin and dazzle
- C. certain they do only harm

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	C	The road's apparent harmlessness is ironic — it is exactly where Reinhold Zucker is killed.
2	A	
3	A	
4	C	Event comprehension. Liesel waits in despair just after watching Max marched away with the Jews.
5	C	
6	A	Liesel notes she 'looked up' the word in Ilsa's dictionary — the moment models a reader growing her own vocabulary.
7	A	
8	B	Event comprehension. The book thief lies beside her parents and Rudy, all just killed in the bombing of Himmel Street.
9	B	Character comprehension. The 'news' is Rudy's death; Alex is hollowed by guilt for not letting Rudy take the school place that might have saved him.
10	B	Theme comprehension. Death's paradox — words 'so damning and brilliant' — distills the novel's idea that language can both destroy and redeem.

Teacher Context: Parts 9–10 and Epilogue

Hans returns from the war and Himmel Street moves toward its devastating end during a night bombing. Death recounts the fates of the characters, and the Epilogue closes Liesel's story years later. The Epilogue folds into this final section, which runs to the end of the novel.