

The Book Thief

1. Question & Research Task

Death? Nazis? War? Love? Hope? This novel has it all! Set in Germany during World War II, *The Book Thief* explores a young girl's experiences during the Holocaust that is narrated through the eyes of Death. Although the Holocaust is a topic in literature that is frequently explored, *The Book Thief* is unique because it can fit in multiple genres.

Over the course of this project, you will explore three different types of literary genres to determine which you believe best captures the overall style of *The Book Thief*.

In this Slam Dunk, you will conduct brief, focused research to respond to the inquiry question:

Is The Book Thief a better example of historical fiction, postmodernism, or magical realism?



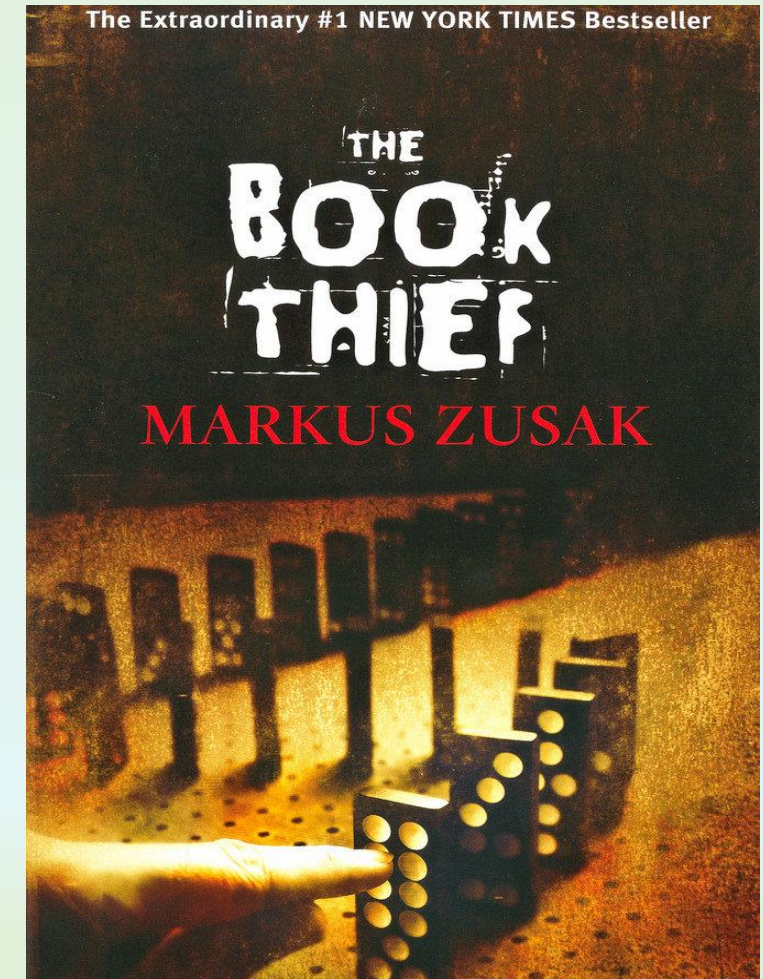
Select the image to show a video Interview with Markus Zusak about *The Book Thief*.

Video Source: [YouTube](#)

2. Information Sources

Choose several of the information sources linked here to complete the Student Activity on Slide 3.

Magical Realism	Historical Fiction	Postmodernism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Magical Realism • Introduction to Magical Realism • Characteristics of Magical Realism • Magical Realism Authors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Historical Fiction • Characteristics of Historical Fiction • Elements of Historical Fiction • Historical Fiction Books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Postmodernism Literature • Characteristics of Postmodernism Literature • Postmodernism Authors



The cover of *The Book Thief*

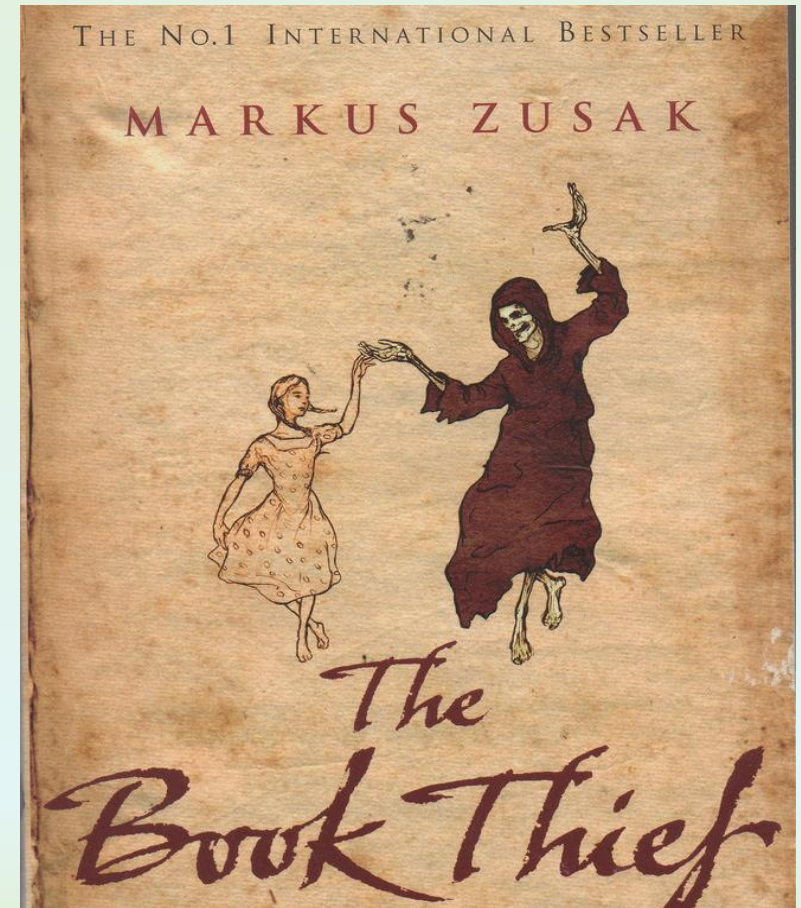
Image Source: Flickr

3. Student Activity

Use the resources on Slide 2 to complete this [graphic organizer](#) with information that will help you to identify the genre of *The Book Thief*.

Make sure to fully answer the question in each box of your graphic organizer. You will be using this graphic organizer to help you complete the Assessment Activity on Slide 4.

Remember, *The Book Thief* may reflect some characteristics and elements of more than one genre. Your task will be to use evidence from your research and reading to decide which genre the *The Book Thief* represents the most.



Liesel and Death from *The Book Thief*

Image Source: Flickr

4. Assessment Activity

Is the Book Thief a better example of historical fiction, postmodernism, or magical realism?

postmodernism, or magical realism

Now that you have completed your research you must present an argument to prove which type of literary genre you believe best captures the overall style of *The Book Thief*.

Create a visual product/poster to share your new knowledge using [DE Studio/Board Builder](#) or another digital or non-digital tool approved by your teacher. Make sure to use textual evidence from your research and provide clear reasoning to support your ideas.

Use the success criteria on this [rubric](#) to guide your work.



Image Source: Blue Diamond Gallery

5. Enrichment Activities



Image Source: Public Domain

The Book Thief is narrated through the unlikely eyes of Death. The persona of death in *The Book Thief* exhibits human qualities in his feelings about the horrible atrocities that humans are committing against each other in the novel. In a time of war, death was certainly an event that was expected by soldiers and civilians alike. However, how have humans viewed death in literature?

Read the following poems about death:

- [I Have a Rendezvous with Death](#) by Alan Seeger
 - [Because I Could Not Stop for Death](#) by Emily Dickinson
- (Click [here](#) if you need help understanding Dickinson's poem)

Then consider the following questions:

- What words do the speakers use to describe death?
- How do the speakers treat the topic or event of death?
- Do the speakers fear death?
- What tone or mood is being created about death in these poems?

6. Teacher Resources

Learning Standards Alignment

Content Learning Standards

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

Reading: 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing: 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

Think: Learners display curiosity and initiative by:

I.A.2 Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.

Create: Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:

I.B.1 Using evidence to investigate questions. I.B.3 Generating products that illustrate learning.

Share: Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

I.C.1 Interacting with content presented by others.

Grow: Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:

I.D.2 Engaging in sustained inquiry.

P21 Framework: 21st Century Student Outcomes

3. Information, Media & Technology Skills: Information Literacy: Access information efficiently and effectively; Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.

ICT Literacy: Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information.

SLIDE NAVIGATION

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Grade 8 GT companion to Markus Zusak’s *The Book Thief*

Time Frame: One 90-minute class period

Differentiation strategies for this lesson:

- Have students use learning supports provided in BCPS Digital Content found in the [Apps Portal](#). Refer to [Digital Content Snapshot/Support pages](#) as needed.

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- Provide students with login information as needed to authenticate BCPS Digital Content. Login information is available on the **BCPS Digital Content** page found via the [Apps Portal](#)
- Students should have completed their reading of Markus Zusak’s *The Book Thief* in order to complete the student activity and assessments in this slam dunk