

Book Thief Motif/Themes Meanings:

- Power of Words - Words or phrases that can cause great harm and are emphasized in a way that makes the reader feel that those words are important and moving. EX: Hitler uses words to brainwash the Germans and convince them that Jews should be put into concentration camps to solve this problem.
- Survivor's Guilt - a deep feeling of guilt often experienced by those who have survived some catastrophe that took the lives of many others; derives in part from a feeling that they did not do enough to save the others who perished and in part from feelings of being unworthy relative to those who died; "survivor guilt was first noted in those who survived the Holocaust".
- Human Spirit — This refers to positive events and feelings during times of tragedy and great despair. Many times especially in war, the human spirit prevails in weddings, birthdays, holidays, and other celebratory times.
- Dehumanization- The act of demeaning a person. Animalize/brutalize a group of people in order to persecute and subjugate them.
- Cowardice- weakness, lack of bravery. In literature this could mean a character choosing not to speak up if he or she knows society may retaliate.
- Friendship- the manifestations of the different types of friendship in the *Book Thief* are plenty. Max and Walter, Max and Liesel, Liesel and Rudy, Rudy and Tommy, Liesel and the neighborhood kids, just to name a few. Think of the characteristics of a long term friendship.
- Conforming to Social Norms: This theme can be correlated with COWARDICE or the POWER OF WORDS. Sometimes a quiet dissent (or opposition) to the prescribed norms, ideals, practices of a society are more powerful than blatant opposition. Moreover, there are those who choose to conform out of fear of being ostracized (being shunned) or social retaliation.
- Colors- The colors have different connotations. The symbolism is two-fold. **Universal symbols** such as red mean passion, blood, love, violence. These symbols are ones where the meanings come from most peoples and cultures. Another type is **Contextual** where in the book, the colors mean certain things. The color white in the novel, for example, represents snow and signifies when the book thief stole her first book.

**TONE: Use DIDLS to help you with understanding Death's tone, irony and narration style. **