

# West Seneca West Senior High School

3330 Seneca St.

West Seneca, NY 14224

June 2026

Dear Grade 10 Honors English Students and Parents/Guardians,

Summer reading is part of West Senior's English curriculum. Reading books during the summer helps develop lifelong reading habits. Also, it assists students in preparing for the New York State Regents Exam and the Advanced Placement Exam.

Listed below is the summer reading title for Grade 10 Honors English. We recommend purchasing the book so students can annotate the text as they read; however, the book may be borrowed from the public library, depending on the availability of public services. Students may also access an electronic version via by using SORA, accessible through the West Senior library's web site at <http://wswhs.wscschools.libguides.com/home>, or through the West Seneca Public Library's catalog of ebooks via Overdrive at [https://bepl.ent.sirsi.net/client/en\\_US/default](https://bepl.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/default). We encourage students to reach out to their English teacher or Ms. Knaze ([lknaze@wscschools.org](mailto:lknaze@wscschools.org)) if they need assistance utilizing these resources. Students will need to use their books to complete the *Honors Program Summer Reading Journal*.

Students should read the text and complete the *Honors Program Summer Reading Journal* by the end of August. Students will turn in their journals by **the second day of English class**. This assignment and additional classwork on the book will be assessed in the first marking period.

## Grade 10 Honors English

Read *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak and keep a reading journal according to the directions on the *Honors Program Summer Reading Journal* criteria. Directions for the assignment are found on the second page of this letter.

We believe this program will enhance our students' reading skills. If students have any questions during the summer, they can email Mrs. Leahy at [l Leahy@wscschools.org](mailto:l Leahy@wscschools.org). We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to an exciting and successful school year!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Leahy

## Honors Program Summer Reading Journal Criteria

Complete the following for *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak (Grade 10 Honors English).

As you read, complete journal entries according to the directions below. Complete 11 entries (1 per Part and the Epilogue) that reflect the complexity of the text you are analyzing for the class.

**Do not consult online resources or other literature guides for assistance.**

### Directions

- In the **Textual Evidence** column, record exact quotations from the text. Use quotation marks and ellipses (. . .) when necessary for longer passages. Include the page number and any other information necessary for recall.
- In the **Commentary/Analysis** column, identify the **Notice & Note Signpost** represented by the quotation and explain your thinking.
- Your commentary should move beyond simply identifying the signpost. Strong responses should:
  - Explain why the moment is important.
  - Discuss what the moment reveals about a character, conflict, relationship, or theme.
  - Consider why the author may have included the moment.
  - Whenever possible, explain **why the moment matters to the author's message**.
- Avoid simply summarizing what happened in the story.
- Your textual evidence should be collected evenly throughout the book, reflecting consistent journal-keeping effort.
- Please complete this assignment digitally in the Google Doc posted in the **English 10 Honors Summer Reading Google Classroom**. There will be additional resources posted to help you complete your assignment.

### Examples of Journal Entries:

TEXTUAL EVIDENCE	COMMENTARY/ ANALYSIS
1. "The only thing worse than a boy who hates you: a boy who loves you." (p. ____)	<b>(CC) Contrasts &amp; Contradictions</b> Normally, love is viewed as something positive, but Liesel describes it as painful. This contradiction reveals the complicated emotions that come with caring deeply about someone. It also suggests that love can bring both happiness and suffering, an idea that becomes important throughout the novel.
2. "I have hated the words and I have loved them, and I hope I have made them right." (p. ____)	<b>(AA) Again &amp; Again</b> Throughout the novel, words and language appear repeatedly. Their repetition emphasizes the power words have to hurt, comfort, persuade, and inspire people. This matters because Zusak explores how language can shape both individual lives and history itself.