June 13, 2019

Dear Ninth Grade Students, Parents, and Guardians:

The goal of English 9 is to encourage all students to work to their greatest potential as thinkers and writers. All students should anticipate a rigorous year of English; Honors students should be prepared for more demanding expectations throughout the year.

Please be aware that any incoming ninth grade student who would like to participate in Honors English must read Markus Zusak’s novel *The Book Thief* and complete a related assignment over the summer. The directions for this related assignment are included on the back of this letter. Within the first two weeks of school, Honors students will write an on-demand essay in response to this novel; the assignment that the students complete over the summer will be collected by the ninth grade teachers on the date of the assessment.

Please be aware that *The Book Thief* must be read *in addition to* a book from the school-wide list.

Sincerely,

Ninth Grade English Teachers
Assignment for *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak.

Read pages 3 to 204. Select one passage from this page range to annotate.

Read pages 205 to 324. Select a second passage from this page range to annotate.

Read pages 325 to 451. Select a third passage taken from this page range to annotate.

You are responsible for turning in three annotated passages on the day of your in-class assessment.

How to complete an annotation:

➢ Choose a passage from the book that you find meaningful. This passage should be at least one paragraph, but no more than one page. Type or photocopy the passage. Make sure to include the page number on which the passage can be found.

➢ Each passage that you choose to annotate should focus on one particular main character: Liesel, Rudy, Hans, or Rosa. **Stay with the same character for each of your three annotations so that you develop a deep understanding of this character.**

➢ When you complete an annotation, you are essentially writing down the insights, ideas, and questions that you have about the passage as you read it. You begin by underlining interesting words, phrases, and lines, but then you must include your ideas about these underlined sections. These ideas, insights, and questions are written in the margins around the text to show what you are thinking and understanding about the character and text as you are reading.

➢ Annotations taken from outside the designated page range for the particular assignment will not be accepted.

Here are some questions to answer as you annotate your passage:

- What specific adjectives would you use to describe the personality of your chosen character as it is revealed in the passage? Why?
- What motivates the character to act as he or she does in the scene?
- What does the passage reveal about the character’s conflict?
- What words/phrases in the passage seem most important? Why?
- How does the passage connect to the larger ideas of the book as a whole?
- What questions do you have when you read the passage? Can you begin to answer some of these questions?