

THE BOOK THIEF

SCENE-BY-SCENE TEACHER MAP

Γ' Λυκείου • 6 διδακτικές ώρες • selected extracts • exact student prompts

Important timing note: The commonly listed film length is about 131 minutes, but editions/streaming versions can differ. The timecodes below are therefore working reference points, not universal frame-accurate markers. In your copy, bookmark the scene by its visual event and then adjust the start/end by a few seconds. The scene sequence itself is stable.

The film keeps Death as narrator, while the adaptation condenses the novel's material.

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How to use this map

- Do not tell students what happens after a pause. The pause is part of the learning task.
- At every extract use the same three-step routine: BEFORE → WHILE → AFTER.
- Students write in English. They may use one Greek word only when a vocabulary barrier blocks an otherwise strong idea.
- Require evidence: students should quote only very short phrases or refer to a precise visual/action detail; they should not copy long dialogue.
- Because the class is strong, factual comprehension is kept short. Most questions target inference, justification, cinematic technique and language production.

Master scene map

#	Approx. time*	Scene	Main objective
1	00:00–00:11	Train / Werner's death / grave / first stolen book	narration, prediction, symbolism, grief vocabulary
2	00:11–00:27	Himmel Street / school / Liesel cannot read / Hans begins teaching	characterisation, bullying, evidence, sound
3	00:27–00:38	Hitler Youth / book burning / Liesel takes book	censorship, power, visual symbolism
4	00:38–00:55	Ilsa's library / Hans & Liesel / Max arrives	books as refuge, trust, secrecy
5	00:55–01:16	Max & Liesel friendship / illness / reading / Rudy discovers secret	relationship arc, empathy, vocabulary
6	01:16–01:32	Lehman / Hans intervenes / Max leaves / Hans conscripted	ethical dilemma, conditionals, consequences
7	01:32–01:51	Liesel sees marching Jews / bombing preparations / basement writing	foreshadowing, tension, prediction
8	01:51–02:11	Bombing / Rudy / aftermath / Max returns / old Liesel /	narrator, loss, memory, final synthesis

		Death	
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*Use these as navigation anchors. Check your specific copy before class.

EXTRACT 1 — THE FIRST BOOK

Working reference: approximately 00:00–00:11. Stop after Liesel has taken the book and before the story settles fully into her new home.

BEFORE — 5 minutes

Board question: “Why would someone keep a book they cannot read?”

Students write exactly:

1. I think a person might keep a book they cannot read because _____.
2. The book might represent _____.
3. I predict Liesel will _____.

WHILE — 10 minutes

Pause A: after Death introduces himself. Students write:

I notice that Death sounds _____ rather than _____. This makes the story feel _____.

Pause B: immediately after Werner's death / at the graveside. Students write:

FACT: I can see/hear _____.

INFERENCE: This suggests _____.

QUESTION: I want to know _____.

Pause C: after Liesel takes the book. Students write:

She cannot read it, yet she takes it. I think she does this because _____.

AFTER — 8 minutes

Pair task: complete the sentence: “The first book is important not because of its content, but because...”

Best evidence from the scene: _____

Teacher board: BOOK = knowledge / memory / comfort / identity / escape. Students choose TWO and justify.

Language focus

Target words: grief, loss, graveside, tangible, comfort, attachment, bewildered, orphaned/fostered.

Extension: “The director introduces Liesel through loss before introducing her through reading. Why might this matter?”

EXTRACT 2 — SCHOOL, HUMILIATION & HANS

Working reference: approximately 00:11–00:27. Stop after Hans begins teaching Liesel and the emotional tone has shifted.

BEFORE — 4 minutes

Students write:

A child who cannot read in front of classmates might feel _____, _____ and _____.

Prediction: “I suspect Hans will _____ because _____.”

WHILE — silent viewing challenge

Play 45–60 seconds of the classroom humiliation WITHOUT sound. Students write:

1. Liesel's body language suggests _____.
2. The classmates appear to _____.
3. I think the situation is becoming _____.

Replay WITH sound. Students add:

The sound/dialogue changes my interpretation because _____.

Pause after the “dummkopf” sequence

Students complete:

CLAIM: Liesel is _____.

EVIDENCE: I noticed _____.

EXPLANATION: This suggests _____.

After Hans starts teaching

Students write a two-column transformation:

BEFORE HANS	AFTER HANS
Liesel feels...	Liesel begins to...
Liesel sees reading as...	Liesel sees reading as...
Her relationship with Hans is...	Her relationship with Hans becomes...

Exit sentence: “Hans does more than teach Liesel to read; he teaches her _____.”

EXTRACT 3 — THE BOOK BURNING

Working reference: approximately 00:27–00:38. A published scene analysis identifies a book-burning section around 00:30 in one version, but versions can differ. [↗cite↗turn1search24↗](#)

BEFORE — 5 minutes

Display: “A government burns books.” Students choose TWO hypotheses and justify:

A. It wants to control ideas. B. It wants to frighten people. C. It wants to erase certain identities. D. It believes books are dangerous.

My choices: _____ and _____.

Because: _____.

WHILE — 12 minutes

Pause before the fire becomes the focus. Students record:

What I SEE: _____

What I HEAR: _____

What the crowd is doing: _____

What Liesel is doing differently: _____

Pause after Liesel retrieves the book:

Is this theft, resistance, grief, curiosity, or something else? My interpretation: _____

Evidence: _____

AFTER — 12 minutes

Semantic field on board. Students add five words to each:

WORDS / KNOWLEDGE	CONTROL / CENSORSHIP
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

High-level response (80 words): “The book-burning scene changes the meaning of the title The Book Thief because...”

Film literacy

Students complete:

The director uses _____ (music / colour / crowd / close-up / silence / framing) to make the audience feel _____.

This is effective because _____.

EXTRACT 4 — ILSA'S LIBRARY & MAX ARRIVES

Working reference: approximately 00:38–00:55.

BEFORE — 4 minutes

Predict from the words LIBRARY / SECRET / BASEMENT:

These three places may be connected because _____.

PART A — Ilsa's library

Pause when Liesel enters the library. Students write:

The library is different from the public world because _____.

Choose one: sanctuary / prison / treasure room / classroom / escape. My choice: _____.

Evidence: _____

When Liesel's access is stopped, complete: "Removing access to books means removing _____."

PART B — Max's arrival

Before showing Max's face fully, pause if practical. Students predict:

I think this person is in danger because _____.

The family is likely to feel _____ because _____.

After the reveal:

Max needs _____. The Hubermanns risk _____. Liesel may feel _____.

AFTER — trust

Trust scale: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

At this point Liesel trusts Max: ____/10. Evidence: _____

At this point Max trusts the Hubermanns: ____/10. Evidence: _____

EXTRACT 5 — MAX & LIESEL: WORDS AS REFUGE

Working reference: approximately 00:55–01:16.

BEFORE — 3 minutes

Complete the prediction: “A person hiding in a basement might need more than food and shelter. They might need _____.”

WHILE — relationship arc

At three pauses, students give a 0–10 trust score and one piece of evidence.

Moment	Liesel → Max	Max → Liesel	Evidence
Early friendship	___/10	___/10	
Max becomes ill	___/10	___/10	
Liesel reads to Max	___/10	___/10	

Vocabulary upgrade: replace “nice” with two precise words: _____ and _____.

Replace “scared” with: _____ / _____ / _____.

Rudy discovers the secret

Pause after Rudy understands there is a secret. Students write:

Rudy now knows _____.

If he tells someone, _____.

If he keeps silent, _____.

I predict he will _____ because _____.

AFTER — Hot seat

One student becomes Max/Liesel/Rudy. Classmates ask questions beginning with WHY / HOW / WHAT IF. Every answer must refer to a scene detail.

EXTRACT 6 — HANS, LEHMAN & MAX'S DEPARTURE

Working reference: approximately 01:16–01:32.

BEFORE — dilemma

Students write one sentence:

“If helping someone puts my family in danger, I would _____ because _____.”

WHILE — pause after Hans intervenes

Complete the consequence chain:

Hans acts → immediate consequence: _____

The family becomes more visible because _____

Max may decide to _____

Hans may have to _____

Language task

Students write four conditional sentences:

1. If Hans _____, he may _____.
2. If Hans had not _____, _____.
3. If Max stays, _____.
4. If Max leaves, _____.

AFTER — perspective circle

Complete from THREE perspectives:

Hans thinks...	Max thinks...	Liesel thinks...
The greatest risk is...	The greatest risk is...	The greatest risk is...
I would choose...	I would choose...	I would choose...

Important teacher note: assess reasoning, not which choice students make.

EXTRACT 7 — THE MARCH & THE APPROACH OF DESTRUCTION

Working reference: approximately 01:32–01:51.

BEFORE — 3 minutes

Prediction from the previous scene: “What might Liesel do if she thinks she sees Max?”

WHILE

Pause when Liesel recognises the line of Jews. Students write:

Her reaction is _____. The soldiers react by _____. This contrast shows _____.

Then identify one film technique:

Technique: _____. Effect: _____.

Foreshadowing task

Students list THREE clues that suggest danger is increasing:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Then predict the ending in 100 words. Mandatory language:

• 2 conditionals • 3 target vocabulary words • 1 modal verb • one sentence beginning “Perhaps...” • one beginning “I suspect that...”

Do NOT show the bombing yet if you want maximum suspense.

EXTRACT 8 — BOMBING, RUDY & THE ENDING

Working reference: approximately 01:51–02:11.

BEFORE — prediction check

Students underline ONE part of their prediction they now expect to be wrong. Then watch.

WHILE — bombing

Do not interrupt the most emotional part. Immediately afterwards give 60 seconds of silence.

Students write only:

One image I cannot ignore: _____

One emotion the scene created: _____

One technique that created it: _____

Rudy

Students write:

Rudy's final actions reveal _____ about his relationship with Liesel.

The fact that he cannot finish his sentence makes the scene _____ because _____.

Death as narrator

Final scene: students compare:

If Liesel narrated	Because Death narrates
The story would feel...	The story feels...
We would know...	We know...
The ending would mean...	The ending means...

Final inference: "Death is not simply a narrator; he also makes the audience think about _____."

Max's return & final synthesis

Complete:

Max's return changes the meaning of the earlier loss because _____.

The journal/book/story functions as _____.

The film's central idea about words is _____.

MASTER STUDENT SHEET — ONE PAGE TO CARRY THROUGH THE UNIT

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Evidence bank

Scene	One concrete detail	What it suggests
1. First book		
2. School/Hans		
3. Book burning		
4. Library/Max		
5. Max & Liesel		
6. Hans/Lehman		
7. March/danger		
8. Ending		

2. Vocabulary bank

grief • foster • taunt • shelter • refugee • censorship • propaganda • resistance • concealment • compassion • defiance • trust • sacrifice • resilience • rubble • conscripted

My own useful words: _____

3. My strongest interpretation

I used to think the film was mainly about _____. Now I think it is also about _____ because _____.

FINAL TASK — EXACT STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Part A: 60-second film review

Prepare and deliver a one-minute review. You MUST include:

1. The film is about...
2. One important relationship is...
3. One central theme is...
4. This is particularly clear when...
5. The director uses _____ to...
6. What makes the film memorable is...

You must use at least 5 target vocabulary words and refer to at least 2 specific scenes.

Part B: 180–220 word response

Prompt: “The Book Thief shows that words can be powerful even when people have very little power.” Discuss.

Your response MUST contain:

- a clear thesis
- two specific pieces of evidence from the film
- three target vocabulary items
- one cinematic technique and its effect
- one sentence acknowledging another interpretation
- a concluding sentence

Useful academic frames

- The film suggests that...
- This is particularly evident when...
- The director emphasises this through...
- This could be interpreted as...
- However, another reading is possible because...
- Ultimately, the scene demonstrates...

TEACHER KEY & FEEDBACK GUIDE

What counts as a strong answer?

- Specificity: “the close-up of Liesel” is stronger than “the camera makes it emotional.”
- Evidence before evaluation: students point to an action, sound, image, dialogue moment or narrative choice.
- Nuance: accept two interpretations when both are supported.
- Vocabulary in context: do not award full credit for a word inserted unnaturally.
- Prediction is not graded for accuracy; grade the quality of the reasoning and evidence.
- Ethical dilemma: do not grade the moral position. Grade language, evidence, consequence analysis and responsiveness to alternatives.

Suggested formative feedback codes

Code	Meaning
E+	Specific evidence used effectively
I+	Insightful inference
V+	Precise vocabulary
FL	Film-language analysis needed
DEV	Develop the explanation / WHY
EV	Add evidence
PR	Improve precision / avoid generalisation

Common misconception to avoid

Do not treat the film as a literal history textbook. It is a historical drama/adaptation. Use the historical context to support understanding, while making the English-language and film-analysis objectives explicit.

Source note for teacher

The film is generally listed at about 131 minutes and is directed by Brian Percival, with Sophie Nélisse, Geoffrey Rush and Emily Watson. The film's narrative arc and major scenes are corroborated by plot/timeline sources.

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A useful independent cross-check is the soundtrack track list, which identifies musical sections such as “Learning to Read,” “Book Burning,” “Max and Liesel,” “Revealing the Secret,” “The Departure of Max,” “Rudy is Taken,” and “Finale”; these can help you locate scenes in your copy, but should not replace checking the actual video. [?cite?turn1search10?](#)