Selection for 2016: *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

Summer Reading Assignments:

- Please acquire your own copy of the novel I have assigned. It does not matter to me if you have bought or borrowed your copy, but please make sure that the copy you have can stay with you for the summer and for about the first 2-3 weeks of school.
- Please finish reading the book BEFORE the first day of school.
- You will be tested on your reading of the novel. Your test will include the information I have indicated below. There will be questions to answer and passages to identify. My intention is not to trick you, but to ensure that you have adequate understanding of the work before we begin in-depth discussion and writing of it.

When you come to our first class meeting, please bring your summer reading novel and any notes/questions/stuff you have collected in your reading.

Things to look for in the novel:

- How is the novel structured? Is it linear? Recursive? What do you notice about point of view?
- What do you notice about the style of the novel? How has the author used the organization of chapters, point of view, language, visual layout, etc. to develop characters, plot and theme? Why are these elements important?
- How is the setting of the novel relevant to plot development? Character development? Consider how historical, geographical and cultural details are relevant to the author’s development of the narrative.
- What are the major themes expressed in this work? Remember, a theme is a universal truth that is implied through a fictional piece. Think of theme as kind of the “thesis” of the piece.

Now what?

I strongly suggest that you develop a system for marking the text, especially in consideration of the above items I have asked you to find. Sticky notes are particularly helpful here. Mark the important places in the novel, and also write ON THE STICKY NOTE so that you remember why you marked what you marked.

For some of you, a running vocabulary list is helpful. Record unfamiliar words and their definitions in a notebook or folder. We will compile a class vocabulary list when school starts.

I also encourage you to mark passages (could be 1 or 2 sentences or up to a whole page) that seem particularly meaningful, puzzling, revealing, poetic, whatever. Again, mark them and write yourself a note so that you can remember why you marked them.

Supplies for Next Year:

- plenty of loose leaf paper
- composition notebook devoted exclusively to English
- black pens
- colored pencils and highlighters
- assigned text
- small post-it notes

You will also be asked to bring one of the following items for classroom use. I’ll let you know which one once school starts.

Tissue
Loose leaf paper
Black pens
Hand sanitizer