**“The Book Thief” – Markus Zusak**

**DEATH and Colours**

**The Prologue**

*“First the colours. Then the humans. That’s usually how I see things. Or at least how I try.”* (page 3)

**Death narrates as though “he” is weary from his role, tirelessly carrying the souls of humans away and watching the brokenness of those who are left behind. He must focus on beauty wherever he finds it and one form of beauty in the world he finds is colour:**

*“People observe the colours of a day only at its beginnings and ends, but to me it’s quite clear that a day merges through a multitude of shades and intonations, with each passing moment. A single hour can consist of thousands of different colours. Waxy yellows, cloud-spat blues. Murky darknesses. In my line of work, I make it a point to notice them.”* (page 5)

*“Still, it’s possible that you might be asking, why does he even need a holiday? What does he need a distraction from? Which brings me to my next point. It’s the left over humans. The survivors. They’re the ones I can’t stand to look at, although on many occasions, I still fail. I desperately seek out the colours to keep my mind off them.”* (page 5)

**In pairs, look at the first page references where Death uses colour imagery:**

White – **pages 7 - 9**

Black – **pages 10 – 12**

Red – **pages 13 – 15**

**TASKS:**

On your individual blogs, begin a new post: **“The Prologue: Colour Imagery”.**

**Questions:**

1. What do **EACH** of these colours represent **in these pages**? **What do they show is taking place? What atmosphere or feeling is created around the characters and events through this colour imagery? What do the colours make you think of?**

\* Include **quotations** from these pages for EACH colour, to support your explanation of the imagery.

1. Death says, “When I recollect her (Liesel, the “book thief”), I see a long list of colours, but it’s **the three in which I saw her in the flesh that resonate the most…Red, white, black.** **They fall on top of each other. The scribbled signature black, onto the blinding global white, onto the thick soupy red.”**

**Consider the Nazi flag during World War Two and its construction.** How does this reference to colour relate to the image of the Nazi flag in World War Two? Why would this image define so much about Liesel and her experiences in the text?

1. Use the **additional references to white, black and red in the text: the description of Frau Hermann, Rudy covering himself with charcoal, Max hidden in the darkness and the fire burning books.** **Select relevant quotations and explain what these colour references show in these sections of the text.**