

Exercises on analysing Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*

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Grade 7 English

26 March 2026

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Extract

Please read the below extract from [*The Book Thief*](#) by Markus Zusak, then attempt the exercises on Page 4.

DEATH AND CHOCOLATE

—Of course, an introduction.

A beginning.

Where are my manners? I could introduce myself properly, but it's not really necessary. You will know me well enough and soon enough, depending on a diverse range of variables. It suffices to say that at some point in time, I will be standing over you, as genially as possible. Your soul will be in my arms. A color will be perched on my shoulder. I will carry you gently away.

At that moment, you will be lying there (I rarely find people standing up). You will be caked in your own body. There might be a discovery; a scream will dribble down the air. The only sound I'll hear after that will be my own breathing, and the sound of the smell, of my footsteps.

The question is, what color will everything be at that moment when I come for you? What will the sky be saying?

Personally, I like a chocolate-colored sky. Dark, dark chocolate. People say it suits me. I do, however, try to enjoy every color I see— the whole spectrum. A billion or so flavors, none of them quite the same, and a sky to slowly suck on. It takes the edge off the stress. It helps me relax.

Exercise 1

A *literary technique* is a way in which an author uses *language* to convey meaning in their text.

Can you match the below definitions of techniques to Zusak’s use of them in *Death and Chocolate*?

Literary Technique		Zusak	
A	<p><i>Metaphor</i></p> <p>Describing something by saying that it is something else</p>	A	“A color will be perched on my shoulder”
B	<p><i>Personification</i></p> <p>Giving human traits to non-human things, in order to make them more relatable</p>	B	“the sound of the smell, of my footsteps”
C	<p><i>Figurative imagery</i></p> <p>Describing things using words that aim to stimulate the reader’s senses, to create an image in their head</p>	C	“enjoy every color I see ... a billion or so <i>flavors</i> ”
D	<p><i>Rhetorical question</i></p> <p>A question that is asked in order to create a dramatic effect, rather than to be answered</p>	D	“You will know me well enough and soon enough”
E	<p><i>Allusion</i></p> <p>Using language to make a reader think about something, without actually mentioning that something using words</p>	E	“Where are my manners?”

Exercise 2

Please state your opinion on the following questions and explain why you believe that your opinion is correct.

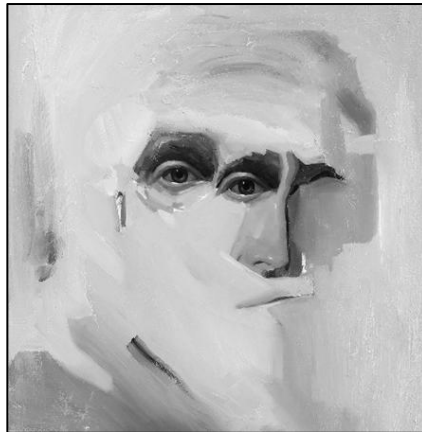


Figure 1. *The Lonely Painter Facing Death*

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1. How is Zusak trying to *characterize* death in *Death and Chocolate*? Meaning, what kind of person or being does he want the reader to picture Death as?
2. Why has Zusak decided to name this section *Death and Chocolate*? Do you think that this decision was random, or is there underlying meaning?
3. What does Zusak mean when he writes Death as saying, “You will know me well enough and soon enough, depending on a diverse range of variables.”?
4. When Zusak writes Death as saying, “I will be standing over you, as genially as possible”, what do you think he means by ‘genially’? And does this meaning tell us anything about how Death feels about his role in the universe?
5. Death asks the reader “at that moment when I come for you ... What will the sky be saying?” Do you think that Zusak means to say that the sky can literally speak? If not, what might Zusak mean?