

The Book Thief Literary Essay: Evaluating and Organizing Evidence

I. Evaluating

Review the Collecting and Evaluating Evidence chart for your claim. Consider the following as you plan which evidence you will use in each type of paragraph.

Extended-example-Which piece of evidence is a turning point or a key internal event for a character? Put an EE under ¶ type column on your chart. This example will likely be your first body paragraph since it is probably the most important example to support your claim.

Summary-Which examples show how a character changes or deals with conflict? You will need to find at least two examples that illustrate this. These examples give the reader the gist of the character. Put an S under the ¶ type column on your chart.

Connected Examples- Which examples seem connected to one another and make a key point to prove the claim? You will need to find at least two examples that connect to one another. Put a CE under the ¶ type column on your chart.

Literary Device- Which example(s) includes a purposeful use of a literary device? The device may be found multiple times across the novel, or it might be found at a key turning point. Put an LD under the ¶ type column on your chart.

II. Organizing

Review the types of body paragraphs you have started planning. Determine which order they will go in and write the types of paragraphs on the lines below. Remember: the strongest example will go first, which likely will be your Extended-example paragraph. Continue to rank them in order of importance.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Since your body paragraphs will be organized in order of importance, choose transition words from the following list to be included in your topic sentences: *additionally, again, also, as well, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, and then.*

Extended-example Body Paragraph
Extended-example—Key event that supports the claim

In order to write an extended-example body paragraph:

- Write a topic sentence that identifies a turning point or a key internal event for a character in the story that supports the claim.
- Briefly summarize the context for this moment in the sequence of the story.
- Use exact words from the text. (Lift a key phrase, sentence, or short passage.)
- Explain (interpret) how the line is connected to other details in the moment to illustrate the claim. **Note: The model paragraph would ideally have more than one sentence following this piece of evidence.**
- Repeat the two previous bullet points with a second piece of evidence from the same event. **Note: The model paragraph does not use a second piece of evidence, though to make your claim more effective, you should.**
- Repeat key words from the topic sentence to connect and explain the important moment.

Model – *The Giver*

CLAIM: The power of love is worth the cost of pain and suffering.

When Jonas flees on his bicycle to save Gabriel from “release” and himself from a solitary and burdened life, he is met with overwhelming obstacles. He is exhausted from riding his bike every night and hiding Gabriel during the day. He has little food and lacks proper clothing for the elements he is finding on his way. Jonas is starving, freezing, and lonely, but none of it is as important as his love for Gabriel. As the narrator describes, “He wept because he was afraid now that he could not save Gabriel. He no longer cared about himself” (173). The physical and psychological hardships are less meaningful than the love Jonas feels. The obstacles he faces as he takes flight on the bike are the price he pays for love.