

EXAMPLES OF PERSONIFICATION AND OTHER FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN *THE BOOK THIEF*

Figurative language is language that is not meant to be understood literally. It includes such devices as similes, metaphors, and personification.

Personification, one type of figurative language, gives lifelike characteristics to nonliving things.

“The soft-spoken words fell off the side of the bed, emptying to the floor like powder” (65).

“In the times ahead, that story would arrive at 33 Himmel Street in the early hours of the morning, wearing ruffled shoulders and a shivering jacket. It would carry a suitcase, a book, and two questions. A story. Story after story. Story *within* story” (71).

“Oh, how the clouds stumbled in and assembled stupidly in the sky.

Great obese clouds.

Dark and plump.

Bumping into each other. Apologizing. Moving on and finding room” (79).

“Trust me, though, the words were on their way, and when they arrived, Liesel would hold them in her hands like the clouds, and she would wring them out like the rain” (80).

“Whatever the reason, they were huddled among the ashes, shaken. Survivors” (119).

“In translation, two giant words were struggled with, carried on her shoulder, and dropped as a bungling pair at Ilsa Hermann’s feet. They fell off sideways as the girl veered with them and could no longer sustain their weight. Together, they sat on the floor, large and loud and clumsy” (145).

“The scrawled words of practice stood magnificently on the wall by the stairs, jagged and childlike and sweet. They looked on as both the hidden Jew and the girl slept, hand to shoulder” (238).

“As the book quivered in her lap, the secret sat in her mouth. It made itself comfortable. It crossed its legs” (245).

“She gave *The Dream Carrier* to Max as if the words alone could nourish him” (328).

“The book thief saw only the mechanics of the words—their bodies stranded on the paper, beaten down for her to walk on. Somewhere, too, in the gaps between a period and the next capital letter, there was also Max” (381).

Example of personification or other figurative language	Analysis of passage and figurative language
<p>“The scrawled words of practice stood magnificently on the wall by the stairs, jagged and childlike and sweet. They looked on as both the hidden Jew and the girl slept, hand to shoulder” (238).</p>	<p>Zusak personifies words, giving them life, as they watch over Max and Liesel. Words help to comfort the two of them through the characters’ reading, but here, too, written on the basement wall, the words bring them together. The innocence of the “jagged,” “childlike,” and “sweet” words permeate the room and provide safety from the world outside.</p>
<p>“She gave <i>The Dream Carrier</i> to Max as if the words alone could nourish him” (328).</p>	
<p>“The book thief saw only the mechanics of the words—their bodies stranded on the paper, beaten down for her to walk on. Somewhere, too, in the gaps between a period and the next capital letter, there was also Max” (381).</p>	