ESSAY ON The Book Thief - a generic plan for the exam essay

Introduction

1. Identify the main theme (a key theme) of the text: Start with “The main ideas the author is presenting to us are……………………
2. This idea or theme leads us to think about ……………………………………………………………………………………… (extend this into a paragraph if you can) about our own society (or world) / how we relate to people/ how we should live our lives. [our response to the text]
3. The author uses a variety of techniques or methods to convey his ideas and evoke a response from the reader.

Things you could use to discuss the way themes are presented and the cleverness of the author in gaining a strong reaction from us are:

1. **Key events**– be specific about what happens and what the significance is to the ideas in the story :
2. Eg if the theme is prejudice/inhumanity of people to others, some events might be the treatment of Hans when he shows his generosity towards Jewish people; the treatment of Rudy by the leader of the Hitler Youth; the arrival of Max at the Hubermann’s; the giving of bread to the Jewish prisoner paraded through the town
3. If the theme is about the power of words to hurt or heal some of the above plus the books in Liesel’s life.
4. Theme could be about the power of love: Rudy and Liesel’s friendship; Death?; Hans and his night time care of Liesel
5. **Characters -**  you could discuss the way certain characters are used to reveal the theme, the contrasts between certain characters, the relationships characters have.
6. **The use of Death as a narrator**  - you could discuss his different perspective on life, how he is a commentator leading us to think certain things. Discuss what he says and when he appears and how he reacts to what is happening in the world of the novel.
7. **Use of symbolism and/or imagery**–you could discuss the books, the aspects within some books, the idea of fire, colours, the many metaphors

EXPLAIN how these elements are working and HOW it reflects ideas linked to the central theme.

1. For all of the above, find quotes that link to these settings where possible
2. Conclusion

What did this film teach you? Has the way you view the world changed after reading this text?