**2015-2016 English II Honors and Gifted Summer Reading Assignment**

This summer you will need to read **Frank McCourt’s *Angela’s Ashes****,* a Pulitzer-prize winning memoir about the author’s life growing up in Ireland.

As you read, select one excerpt from each chapter to reflect upon and analyze. An excerpt can be anything from one sentence to one paragraph. Copy the excerpt onto your paper (be sure to include page numbers); then explain two things - why that quote is significant to the author’s overall meaning at that point in the group AND how the author uses rhetorical and literary devices purposefully to impart his meaning.

There are 19 chapters, so you will have 19 entries. The last chapter is one word, so everybody will have the same excerpt to analyze. View the sample entry below to guide you. Be prepared to turn in your completed responses on the first day of school. They will be worth at least 4 grades. Additionally, we will have multiple assignments, including essays, during the first few weeks of school tied to this memoir; so please be prepared by having a copy of the book to bring to class.

**Sample Excerpt Analysis**

Chapter 1 Excerpt:

“People everywhere brag and whimper about the woes of their early years, but nothing can compare with the Irish version: the poverty; the shiftless loquacious alcoholic father; the pious defeated mother moaning by the fire; pompous priests; bullying schoolmasters; the English and the terrible things they did to us for eight hundred long years.” (p.11)

Chapter 1 Excerpt Response

This quote is significant to the author’s overall meaning thus far in that it succinctly characterizes the speaker’s childhood as well as the speaker himself. That he stereotypes all of the important authoritative figures in his life indicates that he may not have much respect for these individuals. This excerpt also sets up the tone for the overall book, which is likely to include specific instances of how growing up in Ireland was especially difficult. McCourt uses one long list to indicate that he groups all of these individuals together equally, not redeeming any one more than the other but also not criticizing any one more than the other. By starting with a generalization about how “people everywhere” complain about their childhood, he creates a comparison to his own childhood to emphasize just how much worse an Irish childhood can be. By including multiple adjectives to describe his father, mother, priest, schoolmaster and the English but none at all for the first item on his list (poverty), he indicates that this may in fact be the most oppressing factor in his life; no further description is needed because poverty is awful all on its own. Also, by including the English on his list, he indicates that the Irish in general have a history of bitterness that permeates their daily lives. Thus McCourt uses diction and syntax purposefully to help him characterize those in his childhood.

Please feel free to email Ms. Christina Alvarez at [calvarez@dadeschools.net](mailto:calvarez@dadeschools.net) or Ms. Jennifer Chovel at [jwylde@dadeschools.net](mailto:jwylde@dadeschools.net) with any questions or concerns. Be sure to start early and to obtain a copy of the book early. Getting a late start on the assignment is not an excuse for an extension. Assignments are due Thursday, August 27 and Friday, August 28, depending on what period you have your English II class. Manage your time throughout the summer wisely. Enjoy.