

## **GRADE 10 - *Teacher Man*, by Frank McCourt**

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Students,

Your summer reading is a text that in its subject matter and style will prepare you for much of the writing you will do sophomore year. An inveterate storyteller, Frank McCourt's three autobiographies (*Angela's Ashes*, *'Tis*, and *Teacher Man*) detail his life growing up Catholic in Limerick, Ireland, before moving to America. In *Teacher Man* he brings his distinctive Irish sensibility to the task of explaining why a self-deprecating immigrant drifted into teaching in New York City vocational schools, where students were more interested in sleep than Shakespeare, in wrestling than writing.

Much of McCourt's writing style parallels the techniques you will be learning next year: the power of anecdotes, the importance of descriptive detail, and the effectiveness of tonal shifts. As you take notes in the text (and do take notes in the text), highlight the passages where the style creates humor, pathos, insight, or just makes you like the people you meet. When you return to school in August, we'd like you to bring a 2-3 page paper, typed, in MLA format, that responds to one of the tasks below:

- A. Referring to a specific passage in the book, find a parallel situation in your own life. Quote from the text and then tell your own story. Finally, explain why this passage got your attention. This last part—reflecting on the incident—will form the heart of your paper as you consider the importance of the event or why it still resonates with you.
- B. McCourt draws a pretty accurate portrait of what education entails for a teacher and a student. We are curious what you agree, or disagree with, in McCourt's assessment of the classroom. Referring to at least two or three passages from the text, reflect on some of your own educational experiences and how they shape your view of teaching and learning.

This work will be due the first day of class. As much as this is assigned in part to keep you honest, we sincerely hope you will take the time to reflect on McCourt's writing and ideas, applying them to your own thoughts.