

"The best of a book is not the thought which it contains, but the thought which it suggests;
just as the charm of music dwells not in the tones but in the echoes of our hearts."

John Greenleaf Whittier

Summer 2010

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Secaucus Middle and High Schools are introducing a new summer reading program for the 2010-2011 school year. Our teachers strongly believe that reading is an essential component in helping our students to think critically and creatively. Reading instills in them a rich vocabulary, gives them food for thought, and encourages them to seek knowledge beyond the pages of books. When reading a class novel, students experience the sharing of unique ideas and perspectives with their classmates.

With that in mind, each grade/class will be assigned one novel to read and respond to over the summer vacation. It is our hope that by having students read the same book, we can begin the new school year in a more unified way. All the books that have been chosen can be found at any library or bookstore in paperback form or ordered online. Students will be responsible for completing the novel guide that corresponds to their assigned novel (see reverse), and should be prepared for class discussions about the book when they return to school in the September. We also encourage students to read books this summer that appeal to their own individual interests, and look forward to discussing the assigned books when we see them in September.

Sincerely,

Deidre Ertle
Principal
Secaucus High School

Robert Daniello
Acting Principal
Secaucus Middle School

Christine Candela
Summer Reading Chair
English Department Facilitator

Notes from the Midnight Driver
By Jordan Sonnenblick

This assignment is due to your English teacher on September 14, 2010.

Section I- Characters

Alex: Judge whether Alex’s experience with the car accident had a positive or negative effect on his life. Determine whether he has the ability to improve his life. Use examples from the story (two paragraphs).

Sol: Judge whether Alex’s presence had a positive or negative effect on Sol’s life. Use examples from the story (two paragraphs).

Section II-Quotations

Directions: As you read this novel, keep a double entry journal. On the left hand side of the page, write or type the quotations you have selected for analysis, and to the right of the quote respond to your selection. An example can be found below. Try to find at least 8-12 quotations and reflect on their meaning; however, you are encouraged to choose as many as you would like. Your journal, when it is complete, will look like the example below—quotations on the left, and reader response on the right.

Explain how and why the quote is important. Remember to identify the speaker, listener, and the context of the quotation. Be sure to examine all the quotations carefully, looking for any of the following to help you write your reflections:

- Character development: What is revealed in the quote about the character’s personality?
- Themes: Is there anything in the quote that relates to the author’s message.
- Literary devices such as: *simile, metaphor, irony, allusion, etc.* Consider the reason WHY the author creates this figurative language in the quote. What is the writer trying to highlight, did the words appeal to you in some way?
- What insights about life have you gained from the quote?
- Did the quote bring forth feelings such as pity, contempt, admiration, exasperation, compassion, etc?
- Was there any confusion over issues that the quote brought to light?
- Were there any humorous quotes/anecdotes you encountered along the way?

Example of journal entry for quotations:

1. “He probably thought you would prefer human-service time to jail time. And he knew how much I HATE drunk driving.”	1. The judge sentencing Alex seems to feel very passionately against drunk drivers and does not appreciate Alex objecting to his sentence. She feels contempt toward Alex in the beginning of the novel.
---	--

Section 3-Theme

Topic:

Consider why Jordan Sonnenblick thinks the theme of his novel is important to teenagers. Select important quotes, details, and examples from the story that you feel supports the theme. Be sure to fully explain how you connected parts of the story to the theme. Remember that theme is defined as the message of a book. The theme or message may be about life, society, or human nature. Often the theme of a book is timeless and brings to light universal ideas and truths that can be applied to people all over the world in any time period.

****Any word you do not understand in the above assignment, you are expected to look it up in the dictionary.**