

"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

The Five People You Meet in Heaven
By Mitch Albom

Please return this assignment to either your English or ESL teacher on September 15, 2010.

Section I – Characters

On a separate sheet of paper, write or type a paragraph to describe each of the characters. In each paragraph: Give the character's name, his/her likes and dislikes, what job he had, any problems he had in the story, and how he affected any of the other characters. (You will have 10 paragraphs when you are finished.)

Eddie	Person 1
Eddie's Mother	Person 2
Eddie's Father	Person 3
Joe	Person 4
Dominguez	Person 5

Section II - Setting

Setting is the time and place that a story happens or takes place. This story takes place in several different locations in both heaven and on earth. We see Eddie at Ruby Pier at different times of his life. The novel starts at Ruby Pier at the end of Eddie's life and flashes back many times to his youth. It also goes back to scenes with the five people in heaven.

List the places that Eddie "visits" in the order that they happen in the story. Tell how old Eddie was and write a paragraph about the setting. Mention what happened to Eddie and how he felt when it was happening in the past. Then tell how he felt about the past when he learned more about the flashback in heaven.

Section III – Quotations

- A. After each of his meetings in heaven, Eddie learns a lesson. Write out the quotation that teaches Eddie the lesson. Tell who said it and what page it is on. Explain what Eddie learned from the quotation and how it helped Eddie to understand his life on earth.
- B. What did you learn about life through the character's words? How did the words make you feel? Did you feel pity, contempt, admiration, exasperation, compassion, etc?
- C. Write out 3 – 5 more quotations that affected you. Tell who said it and what page it was on. Explain how the quotation affected you, and what the quote makes you understand about life.

Section IV – Conflicts

- A. Eddie had two conflicts in the book: Eddie versus himself and Eddie vs. his father. Explain both conflicts and tell how and when they were resolved.
- B. Choose another character and discuss his conflicts. (Consider the Captain, Eddie's father, the Blue Man...) Does he resolve his conflicts?

Section V – Theme

The main theme in this book is: ***There are no random acts in life.*** Think about Eddie's life and how it affected those around him while he was alive. Write an essay showing how Eddie affected the five people in heaven and how they affected his. In your conclusion, tell if you believe that all people are somehow connected to each other.

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