

AP Language & Composition/Mr. Richter
Summer Reading: Angela's Ashes and Growing Up

Below are some questions for each of these books to keep in mind as you read. Look at these before you read, and while I wouldn't expect you to annotate as you read, it's not a bad idea to jot a note or two after reading a section.

Angela's Ashes

1. In the AP Comp class we often consider a writer's rhetorical choices. Note McCourt's sparing use of commas and the absence of quotation marks. What do you think is the effect of these choices?
2. How, through a child's voice and perspective, does McCourt establish and maintain credibility?
3. McCourt titles his memoir *Angela's Ashes*, after his mother. What significance does the phrase "Angela's Ashes" acquire by the end of the book?
4. Despite the McCourts' poverty, starvation, and devastating losses, *Angela's Ashes* is not a tragic memoir. In fact, it is uplifting, triumphant even. How does McCourt accomplish this?
5. Irish songs and lyrics are prominently featured in *Angela's Ashes*. What do you think is McCourt's purpose for including this music? How does music affect Frank's experiences? How do you think it continues to influence his memories of his childhood?

Growing Up

1. How does Baker structure his memoir? What is the reason for this choice?
2. What hints do we get about issues of race and gender roles from this book? For example, Russell's mother prides herself on being open minded, independent, and progressive in her views. Is she? Is she for her time? How about the other characters?
3. Baker includes Oluf's letter to his mother (you may have found this reading tiresome). Why does Baker do this? What has he achieved by including these letters?
4. Do you feel Baker's memoir is more about himself or about Lucy. Be prepared to explain your answer.
5. How does the Great Depression shape Russell's values and ideas about life, work, leisure, relationships?