



**District of South Orange and Maplewood  
English Language Arts Department**

***Summer Reading Initiative for Grades 9 and 10  
2009***

We are excited to announce the first phase of our redesign of the Summer Reading Initiative. Incoming students in Grades 9 and 10 will have the opportunity to experience award-winning, high-interest, multi-cultural, non-fiction books over the summer. Students will be required to read two engaging books and then discuss key concepts about each book with classmates when they return in the fall. One book will be from a list of suggested titles (below); the second book will be a book-of-choice (any genre, any book). Since some books may contain controversial and/or sensitive material, parents are encouraged to be a part of their son/daughter's book selection process. For students and parents who are looking for more guidance with the book-of-choice, we recommend you review the College Board's website "101 Great Books Recommended for College-Bound Readers":

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/boost-your-skills/23628.html>.

Students are encouraged to complete a "Bookmark" and/or graphic organizer to assist in their reading comprehension as they read their books (a sample graphic organizer and "Bookmark" follow the book lists). In September, class time will be spent discussing the key concepts in the non-fiction texts. In addition, students will construct a letter to the author of the book-of-choice as part of the "Letters About Literature" essay contest sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The contest prompts students to write a letter to the author- discussing the effect the book had on the reader. The assignment is available online for review: <http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/letters/>.

In an effort to promote more independent reading during the course of the school year, a collection of the summer reading books will be housed in English classroom libraries starting in September. Students will be encouraged to read additional books based upon peer recommendations during the course of the school year. This new initiative is supported by the district administration, Words Bookstore in Maplewood, and a SOMEF grant.

Although the purchase of summer reading books is recommended, summer reading books are available in the Maplewood and South Orange public libraries. Please contact me via e-mail if there is any trouble locating a summer reading title.

We hope this initiative will broaden your child's love of literature and increase his/her interest in the art of reading.

Have a great summer.

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## \*Book Selections for Incoming Columbia High School Freshmen and Sophomores

### Grade 9 Selections:

- ✓ *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown
- ✓ *Close to shore: a true story of terror in an age of innocence* by Michael Capuzzo
- ✓ *In My Hands: memories of a Holocaust rescuer* by Irene Gut Opdyke
- ✓ *Funny in Farsi: a memoir of growing up in America* by Dumas Firoozeh
- ✓ *The Jump: Sebastian Telfair and the high stakes business of high school ball* by Ian O'Connor
- ✓ *Once Upon a Quinceanera: coming of age in the USA* by Julia Alvarez
- ✓ *Shadow Divers: the true adventure of two Americans who risked everything to solve one of the last mysteries of World War II* by Robert Kurson
- ✓ *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey

### Grade 10 selections:

- ✓ *The Glass Castle: a memoir* by Jeannette Walls
- ✓ *Dreams from My Father: a story of race and inheritance* by Barack Obama
- ✓ *Tuesdays with Morrie: an old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson* by Mitch Albom
- ✓ *One Writer's Beginnings* by Eudora Welty
- ✓ *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt

\*A detailed review of these books can be found on the Language Arts Department link on the district web site: [www.somds.k12.nj.us](http://www.somds.k12.nj.us)

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### Bookmarks

In *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content Area Reading*, Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman note: "Bookmarks can promote any of the thinking strategies good readers use- connecting, questioning, visualizing, inferring, summarizing" (page 116).

To use the "Bookmark" reading comprehension strategy:

- Fold a piece of paper in thirds
- When a key idea is encountered, write or sketch your thoughts on the bookmark.
- As an option, use multiple bookmarks. For example, separate bookmarks should be used for important ideas versus confusing ideas.
- Discuss your bookmark with someone else.

## Reporter's Graphic Organizer

The narrative structure that exists in a work of fiction may not be present in a work of non-fiction. Readers need to reflect differently when they read non-fiction; traditional fictional story mapping strategies may not apply. In turn, thinking like a reporter, may be helpful to process the ideas in a non-fiction book. The following is a variation of Jim Burke's "Reporter's Notes" strategy (modeled in Jim Burke's *Tools for Thought: Graphic Organizers for Your Classroom*). Good reporters (and good readers) ask the following questions:

**WHO** is involved? **WHO** is affected?

Most Important **WHO**

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**WHAT** happened?

Most important **WHAT**

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**WHERE?**

Most Important **WHERE**

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**WHEN?**

Most Important **WHEN**

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**HOW** did they act? **HOW** did others respond?

Most Important **HOW**

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**WHY** did they react this way?

Most Important **WHY**

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**What ideas emerge as a result of the events and information presented in the text?**

### *Works Cited*

*Burke, Jim, ed. Tools for Thought. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002. Graphic organizers provided for classroom use.*

*Daniels, Harvey, and Steven Zemelman. Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004. Provides a process approach to reading.*