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**Response Journal**

*Reflections: A Student Response Journal*



*Angela's Ashes*  
Frank McCourt



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## Prestwick House

P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938

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## *Response Journal*

### **To The Student**

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

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*Angela's Ashes: A Memoir*

I.

1. Even as you begin reading *Angela's Ashes*, you will notice how rich the author's language is. To appreciate this, please rewrite the third paragraph of Chapter I, which begins with "People everywhere...." Your rewrite should use words that are close in meaning to the original but that would be more ordinarily used. An example of more ordinary word usage would be: "Everybody always" instead of "People everywhere."
2. Even though the setting for this first chapter is New York, there are many indications that the family is from Ireland. Make a list of things or words that you think are uniquely Irish. Beside each item on your list, write the page on which you found it and its meaning. The first item is given as an example.
  1. The Old IRA—pg.12: Stands for the Irish Republican Army that was secretly fighting against the English for Irish freedom.
3. In this chapter we meet many of the colorful people who affected the author's childhood. Make a list of all of the people written about in this chapter. Beside each name write at least one sentence, telling how that person affected the author. An example would be:

Malachy McCourt: This is the author's, father whose heavy drinking caused many problems in the author's life.



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26. Frank's search of the pubs for his father, who is spending the new baby's gift money, is very sad. Complete the following dialogue you might have with a parent about what you really think about Frank's father, or create your own dialogue on this topic.

**You:** That man is completely selfish! How can he claim to be any kind of decent father? He's done some rotten things to his family before, but spending the new baby's gift money is, as they say in the book, "beyond the beyonds."

**Parent:** He seems in so many other ways such a gentle, caring father and husband. Why do you think he does such awful things that hurt his wife and children?

**You:** Well, maybe...

## **XIII.**

42. Frank is now thirteen. He is hard-working, well-read, and very intelligent. Despite this, because he is poor, he is refused entrance to the Christian Brothers' secondary school. It looks as if he will not be able to finish his schooling and will have to work as a messenger boy. Imagine you are Frank and all this is happening to you. As Frank, write a journal entry describing what happened and what you think about how you are treated by the brothers when your mother asks them to let you in the school.
43. Angela's cousin, Laman Griffin, seems to leave a lot to be desired as a human being. Imagine that it is ten years after the events in this chapter have taken place. Write a detailed paragraph about what you think has happened to Laman, and what you think he is and had been doing, now and during the ten years.
44. One of the ways Mr. O'Halloran teaches the boys new vocabulary words is to have them use each new word in a sentence. Use each word below in a sentence, but before you do, write beside each word what part of speech it is (noun, verb, adjective, or adverb).
- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <u>furze</u>   | 4. <u>boding</u>     |
| 2. <u>cipher</u>  | 5. <u>vanquished</u> |
| 3. <u>presage</u> | 6. <u>rustic</u>     |

## Wrap Up

57. Although *Angela's Ashes* at times may read like a novel, it is still non-fiction because the events described in it are true. Below is a list of some subjects of non-fiction books. Be sure you understand the differences between them. Beside each subject, write a number showing your reading preference for the type of book. Write the number one for your favorite choice, and then number the other choices until you write number six beside your least favorite subject for a non-fiction book. When you finish numbering, write a sentence or two, explaining why you chose your favorite and least favorite.

1. History \_\_\_\_
2. Biography \_\_\_\_
3. Memoir \_\_\_\_

4. Science \_\_\_\_
5. Autobiography \_\_\_\_
6. True Adventure \_\_\_\_

58. There are many scenes in this book that are very dramatic and powerful. Choose the two scenes in the book that you feel are the most powerful; write a paragraph for each describing what happens.

59. When we read a book, we develop an opinion about it, viewing it as good, bad, or some combination of the two. Pretend you are the book reviewer for your town's local newspaper. Write a detailed review of *Angela's Ashes*, being sure to provide an overview of what the book is about and to explain your opinions about it as well.