

Carroll High School

**Gifted and Talented English I/II – Pre-AP**

Contact: DeAnn Barta, [bartad@cisdmail.com](mailto:bartad@cisdmail.com)

Due Date: August 24, 2009

Method of Evaluation: Essay, Test, and Classroom Discussion

This summer students entering Gifted and Talented English I/II – Pre-AP will need to read ***The Worst Hard Time* by Timothy Egan** AND ***Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck**. They will then have to write one essay comparing and contrasting the two books.

*The Worst Hard Time* is a work of nonfiction that chronicles the devastation caused by the Dust Bowl and provides historical context for Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Both books must be read by the first day of school, August 24, 2009. The essay may be given to me the first day of school, but I will continue to accept the essay until August 28<sup>th</sup> (for A day students only) or August 31<sup>st</sup> (for B day students only). I will not accept any summer assignments after that date. Students will be addressing these works in class before taking a test over them during the third week of school.

**Essay Prompt: Both Egan and Steinbeck vividly portray the lives of men and women caught in the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, although Steinbeck's characters are fictional and Egan's are not. According to Egan and Steinbeck, what qualities did a person have to possess in order to survive this desperate time in American history? As we experience our own economic recession, what can we learn from the way these men and women faced and dealt with adversity?**

Respond to the prompt above in a 1½ to 2 page essay (typed, size 12 font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1" margins). Your essay should include: an introduction, two or more body paragraphs that address the summer reading books\* (see below), one paragraph reflecting on what we can learn from this time period, and a concluding paragraph.

Books may be purchased at any bookstore, but if you go to Barnes and Noble in Southlake Town Square or to Borders, please ask to be directed to the classroom required reading table. Abridged versions of the book may not be used. Spark Notes do not substitute for reading the book in its entirety. If you have any questions, please contact DeAnn Barta at [bartad@cisdmail.com](mailto:bartad@cisdmail.com). During the summer months, I

will not be checking my email as frequently as usual, so please be patient with my response time.

*\*You must cite very specific scenes and incidents from the book to back up your points. Exact quotes are even better. When organizing your body paragraphs about the summer reading books, you could:*

- 1. devote one paragraph to each book*
- 2. compare the characters from both works in one paragraph and contrast them in the next paragraph*
- 3. use another organizational scheme of your own choosing.*