

# US Literature Summer Reading Assignment 2010

## *Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* by Barack Obama

The autobiography from the current president of the United States tells the story of his sometimes unconventional childhood and provides insight into the choices he made on his journey to the White House. It was originally published in 1995 and has been a bestseller for much of that time. One of our main purposes in reading this book is to explore the idea and evolution of what it means to be an American. This is a theme we will continue throughout the year.

### The Plan

As you read the book this summer, there will be one major assignment to complete—an illustrated timeline. To help you complete this work, you should make note of important events in Obama's life. Be sure to note the date, the event, and its significance. See the explanation on the back for more details. NOTE: This is due on the first full day of school (Tuesday, August 10<sup>th</sup>).

When you return to school in August, you will be expected to discuss and apply this information. You may be given a quiz.

### A few cautionary notes:

- 1) **Buy the book soon.** The book may not be easy to locate in Seoul bookstores, so you should try to find it soon if you did not pick it up at the book fair. Do not put off getting your book. It is recommended that you have your summer reading book in hand by the end of June, even if you should have to order them for some reason. If you need to order them, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and [www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com) both do international shipping.
- 2) **There is no replacement for reading the book.** Online sources are NOT a replacement for reading books. You will NOT be able to pass assessments given over the books or participate effectively in class discussion if you do not read them. Summaries never effectively replace actual reading. Avoid Sparknotes and other cram sites, as they will not help you. Jotting down your ideas, questions and impressions in the book as you go WILL help you.
- 3) **Pace yourself.** You have a couple months to read this book and complete the assignment. Do not put this off until the last minute. Reading early can be great if you are sure to dialog or annotate and then reread the dialoging or annotations before you are assessed.

Enjoy your summer reading and summer break!

*Ms. Goldsborough & Ms. Jones*



### Illustrated Plus/Minus Timeline

As you read *Dreams From My Father*, complete a timeline to help you keep track of the major events in Obama's life. This assignment will be checked on the first full day of US Literature.

Directions:

- Choose between 10 and 15 items from the book that you feel were the most significant in Obama's life.
- Place the items in chronological order on a timeline (note: the book is not always in chronological order). Include dates for each event. If an actual date is not given, estimate the best you can.
- Events that you believe were generally positive for Obama should go above the timeline. Events that you believe were generally negative or problematic for Obama should go below the timeline.
- For each event, include a simple symbol that somehow reflects what the event was, its significance, etc.
  - A symbol is different from an illustration. You are not illustrating the events, but are creating a symbol that reflects that event and its significance. For example, if a character was nervous on the first day of school, you could draw a butterfly to symbolize the feeling of butterflies in the stomach that character was feeling.
- On the back of your timeline, include a 1-2 sentence summary for each symbol that explains it.

There is no right or wrong answer for your timeline (as long as the events you have actually were in the book)! It's all a matter of interpretation and how you support your ideas.

Here's how to set up your paper to begin adding events:

POSITIVE (+)	
NEGATIVE (-)	

Don't forget to add the event, the date, and a symbol on this timeline. Remember to include an explanation on the back.

#### RUBRIC

COMPONENT	SCORE				
Includes 10-15 significant events with dates	5	4	3	2	1
Events are arranged appropriately as being positive (+) or negative (-)	5	4	3	2	1
Includes symbols for each event that shows what it was or what it meant	5	4	3	2	1
Includes 1-2 sentence explanation of the event that includes why it was important	5	4	3	2	1
Looks carefully thought out and creatively presented	5	4	3	2	1
TOTAL	_____/25 points				