

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Mrs. Hahn's ALA/LA Classroom



Dear Parents,

The month of September flew by, and I cannot believe we are already at mid-terms! Your students have been busy adjusting to our routine and learning a myriad of things this month.

Advanced Language Arts

Students are reading a complex text, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: an American Slave*. Our essential questions are: 1. **What personal realizations can we make from reading another person's memoir/autobiography?** 2. **What moments in Frederick Douglass' life helped define his character and bring him from slavery to freedom?** From our conversations, I can tell that the students are appalled by the realities of slave life, and this has led us to some good conversations. We have focused our instruction time on writing clear topic sentences and concise summaries. Later this month we will begin Socratic Seminars--discussions that are 100% led by the students themselves. It will be a great opportunity for students to write discussion questions and then engage in a meaningful, text-based conversation with their peers. This is an activity that they will build on in high school, as well.

The reading of your child's Independent Novel Project (INP) book is due tomorrow, Friday. I have been having 1:1 conferences with students each week, checking in with them about their books and their annotations. Students will be earning a summative grade for the AR test they will be taking tomorrow in class. From there, we are going to start working on the written, creative, and presentation components of the INP. Just as reading the book was nightly homework, working on the project is now, too. Click on the appropriate document on this page:

<http://friendship.ccsd59.org/teachers/hahnkristin/advanced-language-arts/> if you're interested in seeing the full INP assignment. All components of the INP are due October 28.

Regular Language Arts

We have been enjoying our novel study of *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Essential questions for the unit include: 1. **What personal realizations can we make from reading someone else's memoir?** 2. **EQ: How does Mitch's character evolve over the course of his life?** We did a great lesson today about ALS (the disease from which Morrie suffered), and I am excited about continuing on with a variety of activity for this unit. We have focused our instruction time so far on tracing the evolution of a character. Students are *starting* to come out of their shell a bit (many of us are very, very quiet and shy), and I am proud of the efforts they are making so far.

The reading of your child's Independent Novel Project (INP) book is due next Wednesday. I have been having 1:1 conferences with students each week, checking in with them about their books and their annotations. Students will be earning a summative grade for the AR test they will be taking Wednesday in class. From there, we are going to start working on the written, creative, and presentation components of the INP. Just as reading the book was nightly homework, working on the project is now, too. Click on the appropriate document on this page:

<http://friendship.ccsd59.org/teachers/hahnkristin/advanced-social-studies/> if you're interested in seeing the full INP assignment. All components of the INP are due October 28.

Both Classes

Both groups are engaged in a memoir writing unit. At this point, we have defined the term, looked at a number of effective and ineffective samples (including my own), devised "Rules for Memoirs" based on our reading, and started generating a list of memoir-worthy experiences. By next week, each student



will need to have a crystal clear experience from his/her life that he/she will be exploring whilst writing the memoir. If your child is having a difficult time choosing a defining moment in his/her life that had some kind of positive or negative effect on his/her life, please help. Any suggestions for topics you might have would be greatly appreciated by your kids, I am sure. By the end of the quarter, students will have written a full memoir, ready for publishing! I have a creative idea in mind for this that I'm excited to share with you next month.

Two Final Things Worth Mentioning

I spend a lot of time grading my students' work and providing written feedback to them. I have explained to the students that if they don't read my feedback, they cannot improve. I am asking for your help in this matter--please encourage your kids to check their electronically graded assignments and internalize my feedback. We will often do this in class together, but sometimes it will be left to them to check their work/grade/feedback.

Next week is goal-setting conferences. The set-up is the same as last year--drop in. You and your child will enter the 200 hallway, sit down, and go through the goal-setting slide show the students are working

on in class today. You will then have the chance to meet with at least some, if not all, of your child's teachers. **Note: I will be taking a dinner break from 3-4 PM on Thursday. The District did not schedule a common dinner break, so teachers have been asked by Mrs. Megerle to take a break when they see fit. Just wanted to let you know in advance! I sincerely hope to see you next week to discuss your child's progress so far.

Important Dates to Remember:

10/7: Goal-setting conferences, 4-7 PM

10/8: No school; Goal-setting conferences 12-7 PM

10/9: No school

10/12: No school--Columbus Day

10/16: 8th grade field trip to Harper College (ask your kids about this very cool opportunity!)

10/22: Retake and fall sports picture day

10/28: INP due

11/6: End of 1st quarter

As always, if you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please contact me!

Sincerely,

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