

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Mrs. Hahn's ALA/LA Classroom



Dear Parents,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a relaxing yet fun winter break. We are going to make the most of the five months to go until graduation by working hard and hopefully having some fun, as well.



We had a wonderful end to the calendar year in language arts. Our field trip on December 11 was fantastic. After admiring each other's fancy frocks, we hopped the bus and headed to the Jelly Cafe for a delicious breakfast. The kids were so mature and respectful--there were no strange concoctions of sugar and ketchup in the juice glasses as far as I could tell, and even the manager and our server complimented me on our group. :) The good folks at this restaurant really made our breakfast special, so if you are so inclined, I encourage you to stop by for breakfast or lunch sometime in the future. From the comments I heard that day, all the kids loved their meal.

We then headed to the Metropolis for the absolutely outstanding production of *A Christmas Carol*. Much of what we saw stayed true to Dickens' original tale, but there were a few clever interpretations and special effects that wowed us, as well. I have to say--as an audience, we were the "on point" (as the kids are saying these days). There was another school there whose behavior was embarrassing, to say the least, but our group remained respectful and attentive. I was so proud of them. Check out <https://picasaweb.google.com/116456901132960305562/AChristmasCarolFieldTrip?feat=embedwebsite> for a slew of pictures!

Advanced Language Arts

Students will be beginning two new units this week. In reading, we will launch into a study of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. I know I say this about every book we read in class, but this book truly is one of my favorites. We will focus on a number of Common Core-related skills throughout this unit, some of which include an analysis of the purposes of dialogue and symbolism in text. See below for our upcoming writing unit.

Regular Language Arts

Did you read *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton when you were in school? Written in 1967, this coming-of-age novel has found its place as an American classic that almost every kid has read by the time they leave junior high. Having read it over 20 times in my life, it certainly is among my top three favorite YA novels. I can't wait to read it with your kids. We will begin our unit this week. See below for our upcoming writing unit.

Both Classes

All students, after the field trip, took their summative assessment on *A Christmas Carol*. We had been focusing on determining theme for that unit, so the students were assessed on that skill. The test was assigned through the Classroom, so you are able to view it if you are so inclined. As a reminder, this year,

students are given the essential question at the start of the unit, then they are tested on the exact question at the end. Additionally, students are allowed to use all their notes, annotations, sample documents, and resources on the summative assessment. That being said, some students still did not perform well. My intuition tells me that students who are failing the assessments are not preparing the way they should be. For this last assessment, students were given a sample document in the exact same format in which the actual assessment would be formatted. They had the evening to prepare their answers. After taking part one of the test, they had another night to prepare for part two. A number of students struggled with the assessment simply because they did not follow the oral and written directions. I will impress upon them this week how important it is to do that, not only in eighth grade, but in life, as well. As I stated last month: **My hope is that students have learned the important lesson of prep work--all the formative work we do throughout a unit is meant to lead up to the summative task.** Students who do not do their classwork/homework are going to struggle this year (and in high school) if they're not willing to put forth the effort throughout the unit.

Independent Novel Projects are due Friday, January 15. I also want to remind you that students have an on-going extra credit reading opportunity through January 22. Please encourage your children to pick up any recommended book from the LRC or public library. Additionally, Mr. Hahn in the LRC is running a 2nd quarter program through the LRC called Cover 2 Cover. Students who reach their individualized AR goals will be invited to a celebration at the end of the quarter.

On the writing front, we will begin delving into the writing of an in-depth argumentative essay within the next couple of weeks. My goal is to break down the components of formal essay writing in a way that allows for mastery before heading into high school. Students will choose a topic they feel their classmates need to know about--one they are passionate about and deeply interested in. If you're in need of some dinner/car conversation, how about asking your child what local/personal/national/worldwide topics he/she feels passionate about? I'm sure sharing your own ideas couldn't hurt, too. :)

Important Dates to Remember:

1/15: Q2 INP written work and presentation due; 7th/8th grade dance

1/18: Martin Luther King Jr. Day observed--NO SCHOOL

1/19: MAP/FAST testing this week

1/22: AR extra credit due; End of 2nd quarter

1/29: Report cards go home

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

Sincerely,

Kristin Hahn

847.593.4350

hahn.kristin@ccsd59.org

<http://friendship.ccsd59.org/teachers/hahnkristin/>



Twitter: @mrshahnfjhs

Instagram: @mrshahnfjhs, @humansoffjhs