

# DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Mrs. Hahn's 8th Grade ELA Classroom



Dear Parents,

"It's the most wonderful time of the year" in 210B, and we are making use of every moment possible before break!

## Advanced LA (ALA)

Our *A Christmas Carol* unit is going well so far. The following are our essential questions for the unit:

1. How does annotating fiction differ from nonfiction?
2. What is the function of symbolism and allegory in literature?
3. How do readers cite evidence to support their claims?
4. To what extent does the filmed or live production of a story stay faithful to or depart from the text?
5. How can readers apply the themes and principles of literature to their own lives?

EQ #5 is centered around this quote by Karen Hess, an award-winning YA novelist, which appeared in the introduction of the book: "One kind deed, one compassionate act, one thoughtful gesture is enough to change the course of an entire lifetime." This was the inspiration for the students' summative assignment; thank you to all parents who are helping to make their child's idea come to fruition.

Our unit will culminate on December 16 when we visit the Metropolis Theater to see a live version of this classic tale. I hope your kids enjoy the field trip as much as I have in the past. We will discuss this in class, but **please remind them to dress nicely!**

## ALA Passion Projects

1/2: We decided to push back the release of issue 2 until December 16, primarily due to the meaningful "interruptions" we have had lately. On 11/18, ten staff members from EG's *The Guardian* newspaper came, along with their sponsor, Mrs. Larson, and hosted four learning sessions for our staff (pictured below). Students learned how to brainstorm ideas, interview, layout the paper, and improve their writing. I hope they will apply some of the tips they heard in future *Firebird Feed* issues! This Friday, we will don our new t-shirts (huge thanks to Mrs. Megerle for purchasing them for us!) and head over to EG to partake in a production day of *The Guardian*. I am very thankful that Mrs. Larson has been so willing to reach out and have her students mentor us, and I hope your kids are, too. Finally, the District took an interest in our project and featured us in an article last week. Check it out on the front page of the [ccsd59.org](http://www.ccsd59.org/news/friendship-junior-journalists-bring-school-paper-to-life) site: <http://www.ccsd59.org/news/friendship-junior-journalists-bring-school-paper-to-life>

4/5: Our small playwriting groups have been meeting for the past month to craft short stories that will eventually turn into a full script. Inspired by the advice from C.B. Lee, we did an activity that allowed us to take on the persona of our main characters. Ask your kids about our line game (pictured below). Our deadline for the short stories is next Friday; we will then share and polish the stories in preparation for our next steps.

## Language Arts (LA)

The students turned in their first major paper of the year--a theme-based literary analysis--and they were excellent! I am so incredibly proud of the effort the majority of the students put forth

on this challenge. I stressed the importance of now transferring this knowledge to other content areas as well as high school next year!

All regular 8th grade ELA classes are now studying argumentative writing. We have spent the last three weeks learning how to read, annotate, and take notes on nonfiction articles. This is a harder skill than we thought, especially when faced with an article that states two sides of an issue. Next week, we will delve into choosing our own topics of interest and learning about them so as to eventually write a full argumentative paper. We will use the MEL-Con format, which is what the high schools use, as well.

**I cannot stress enough how important it is for your child to read at home. PLEASE remind your child to read every night.** At our house, my children do their homework right after school, including reading. Granted, my kids are seven and ten years old, but my hope is that since it is built into their daily routine, they will continue throughout the course of their lives. I hope the same for my students, your children, because not only does reading improve their overall intelligence, it can entertain them in a way binge-watching Netflix and playing video games can't. :)

**Whether you celebrate a holiday in December or not, I wish you and your family a joyous, peaceful, relaxing winter break and the happiest of new years!**

**Important Dates to Remember:**

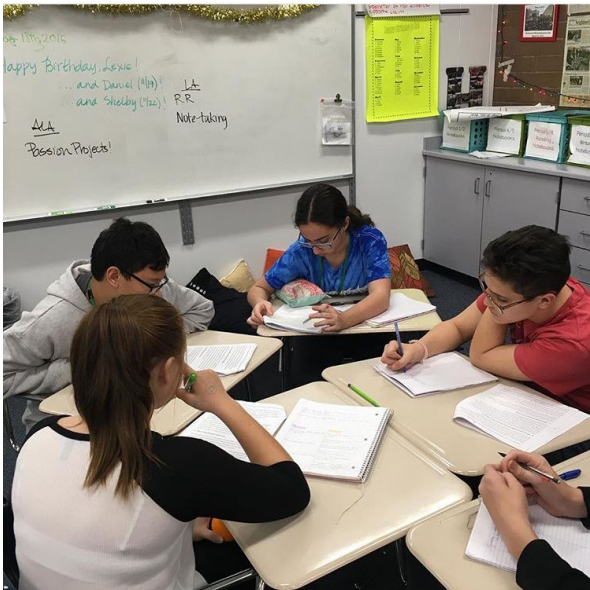
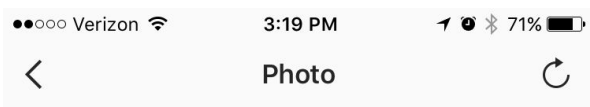
12/2: Per. 1/2 field trip to EGHS, 7:45-9:25AM  
12/5: School-wide Assembly--author visit by Steven Layne  
12/8: Classroom book talks from the DPPL  
12/15: Secret Snowman gift exchange (optional)  
12/16: ALA field trip, 9:30-1:30  
Early dismissal, 1:50PM  
12/17-1/2: Winter break  
1/20: ALA AR points and projects due

Sincerely,  
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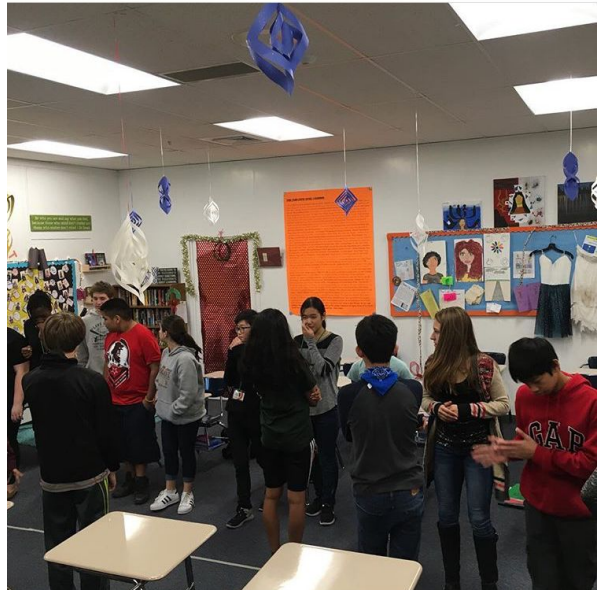
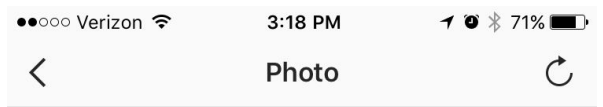
## Pictures



The journalists of the *Firebird Feed* and *The Guardian* came together to spread news to their school communities!



♥ gerberlife\_inla, akmoeller and 35 others  
mrshahnfjhs I am truly so proud of the way my 6/8 #fjhs210b students work together, especially on a dreary task like note taking. #luckyteacher



♥ gerberlife\_inla, fjhs\_firebirds and 39 others  
mrshahnfjhs Working Title 4/5 #fjhs210b group playing the line game as the main characters of their play.

