

# NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

Mrs. Hahn's 8th Grade ELA Classroom



Dear Parents,

We're paving new trails in 210B this year, doing things we've never done before. So far, so good!



## Advanced LA (ALA)

We wrapped up our *Outliers* unit by testing Gladwell's theories with other successful figures (that were not mentioned in the book). Did the 10,000 Hour Rule, perseverance, talent, parentage, culture, opportunity, and luck (among others) play a role in the lives of figures such as Leonardo DaVinci, Marilyn Monroe, Donald Trump, and Walt Disney? This is the kind of critical thinking students will be asked to do throughout the course of the year.

I do want to take a moment to mention that **many students had trouble following**

**directions** on this summative assessment. Even though I went through the directions orally and then gave students a written copy (as well as a rubric; both on Google Classroom), many pairs neglected important components of the assignment. If you're interested in seeing why your child earned the score he/she did, please ask to see my feedback on the grading rubric.

We began Quarterly AR projects today. Typically, the last week of each quarter is filled with the sharing of great books and engaging in creative interpretations of these books. I can't wait to see what your kids have come up with! We had a couple conversations in class these past couple weeks about how leaving all this work until the end of the quarter is not wise. Students feel overwhelmed and stressed when this happens, so I encouraged them to get an earlier start next quarter. Any support you could offer at home in this endeavor would be much appreciated! More than anything, I want to remind you that **your child should be reading 20-30 minutes every night**.

Next week, this group of students will be embarking on a study of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, through the lens of social issues. We will pair this with our argumentative essay unit. I take a very non-denominational approach to this unit, seeing as a number of our students do not celebrate Christmas. The unit is centered around the text as a piece of classic literature as well as its topics of kindness and generosity. I have a couple surprises up my sleeve that I will share with you in the coming weeks. Stay tuned!



## **ALA Passion Projects**

1/2: The staff of the *Firebird Feed* was so proud to share their hard work with the school last Friday; we are excited to share it with you, as well! Our first issue of the new school newspaper is blowing everyone away! Countless students, staff, and administrators have commended these talented, passionate students on the quality of both the paper and online copies. We would love for you to check out our work at [www.firebirdfeed.weebly.com/](http://www.firebirdfeed.weebly.com/) Our next issue is set for December 9.

4/5: I'm going to break my promise to the kids by spilling the beans...we are writing a play! I can't keep the news to myself any longer because I'm so excited to report that we had a video chat with C.B. Lee, the author of the 2016 YA novel *Not Your Sidekick* on October 17. After learning a little about Ms. Lee, students generated questions in advance and then asked them during our 30 minute chat, most of which tapped into her experience with starting a story, creating deep characters, and building a plot. Much of her advice resonated with the students, who are now in the next stage of planning. Our hope is to have a full-fledged play to share with you come May!

## **Language Arts (LA)**

We finished *The Outsiders* last week, and after a brief discussion one student said, "Can we go outside and scream? I need to scream." Haha! Loved it! As a whole, these students were so moved by this story; I believe this is, in part, because they see bits of themselves in the book's characters. We started the unit by reading a letter from the author, S.E. Hinton, to the reader, so we are



coming full circle by now writing S.E. Hinton about our feelings, connections, reactions, and questions about her book. This is a first for my students; fingers crossed we get some responses!

Another skill this group worked on this quarter was properly citing and formatting textual evidence. This is a tricky skill, as the placement of punctuation marks is very precise and important, but they are hanging in there and persevering!

Students will be beginning their first major piece of writing this week: a theme-based literary analysis. After that we will move into out nonfiction text analysis and argumentative writing units. AR points are due on Friday...more than anything, I want to remind you that **your child should be reading 20-30 minutes every night.**

As a side note, I always look forward to seeing this group of students because they are remarkably positive, active participants in class.

## **Wishing you a wonderful Thanksgiving!**

### **Important Dates to Remember:**

11/4: End of 1st quarter; AR points due, regular LA

11/8: Election day and teacher inservice--NO SCHOOL for students

11/11: Veteran's Day: school assembly and 1st quarter celebration

Report cards go home

11/23-25: Thanksgiving holiday--NO SCHOOL

Sincerely,  
*Kristin Hahn*

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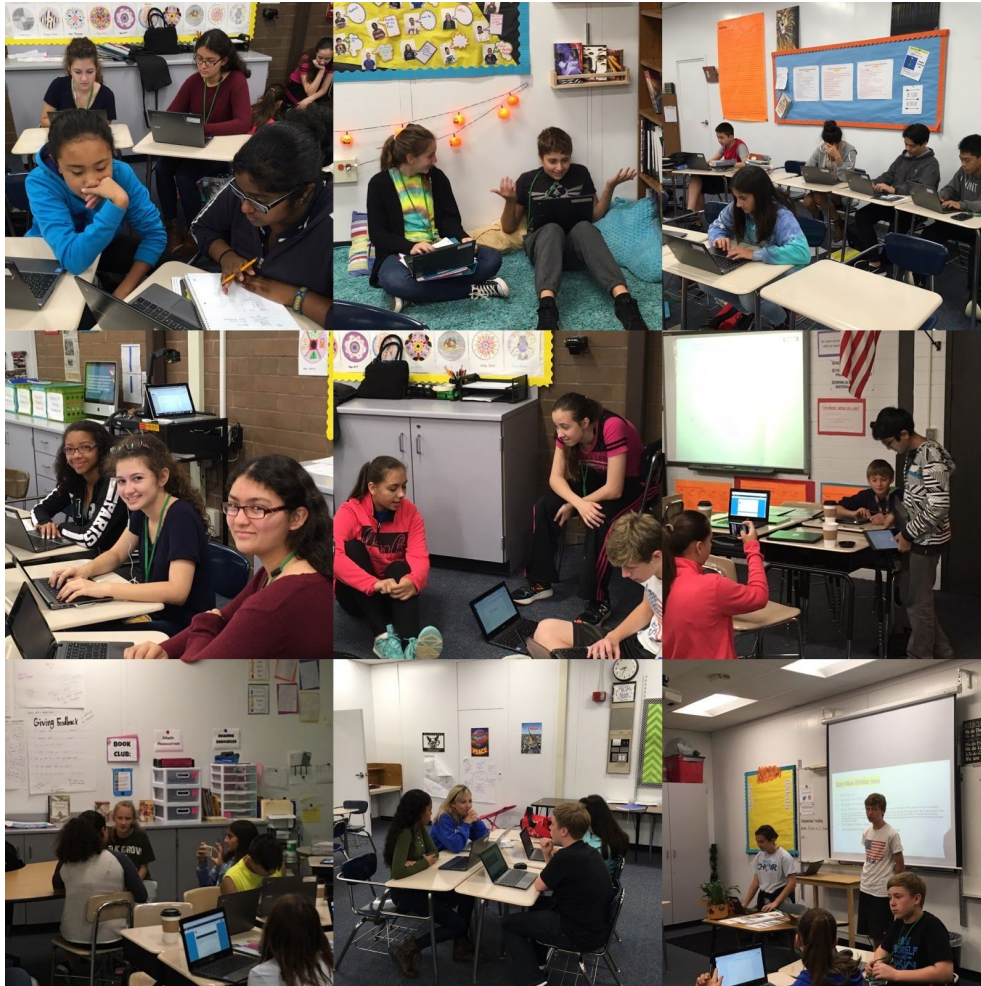
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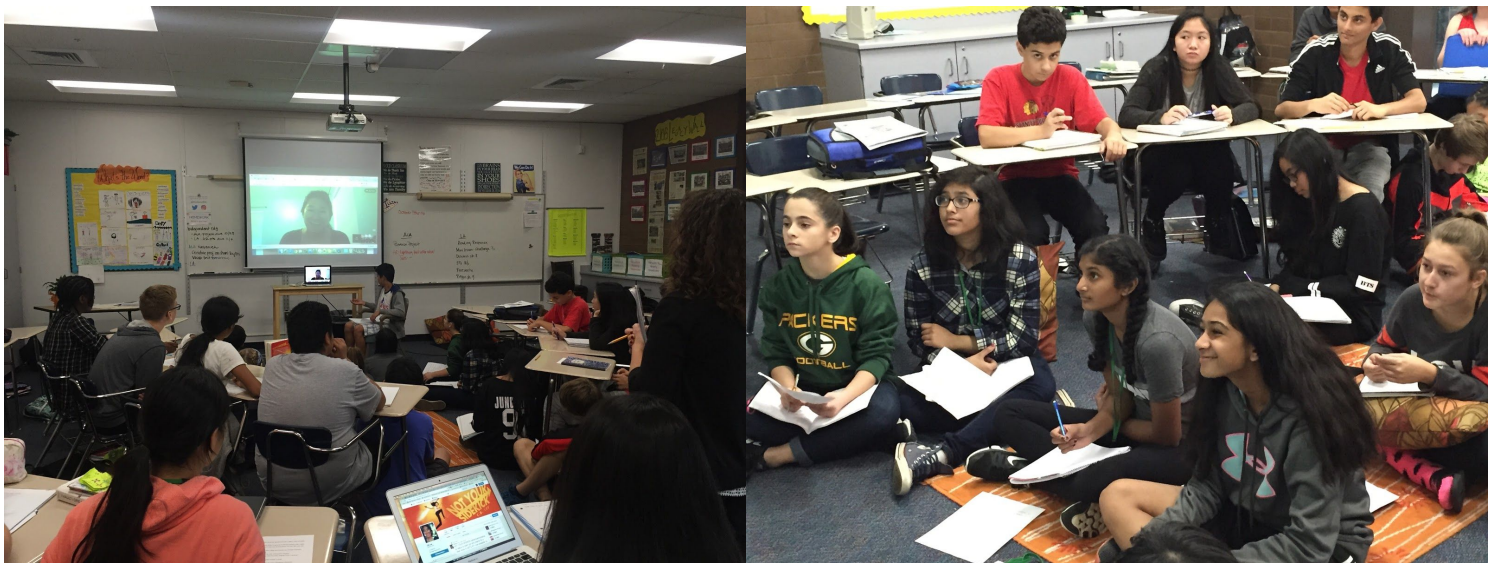
## Pictures

*Firebird Feed staff working hard*



Volume 1, Issue 1 published on  
10.28.16!

# Playwrights in Action!



Video chatting with author C.B. Lee



	Can Stay" from <i>The Outsiders</i> .
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