

GRADE 8 ELA UPDATE

"The art of communication is the language of leadership." - James Humes

December 2017

DECEMBER'S CLASSROOM FOCUS

Our ELA classrooms will be looking at modern works of fiction to determine how they draw upon universal themes, patterns of events, and character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works. All eighth grade students will read a piece of classic literature that has influenced more contemporary pieces of writing and media. For instance, Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, has been "rendered new" many times over the century. "Scrooge" has become an allusion commonly used

throughout the Western world.

Students will be asked to explain how themes, events, and characters from current works of literature are based upon myths, traditional folk tales, or religious ideology. The beloved *Percy Jackson* series that many students have read immerses itself in the world of mythology. The popular *Lunar Chronicles* series by Marissa Meyers is loosely based upon childhood princesses such as Cinderella and Snow White, but it is set

in New Beijing and the moon 124 years after WW IV.

As we build our students' foundation of literature, they will have a better understanding of how it influences so many different elements of our world today.



EXTENDING THE LEARNING AT HOME

Many students are unaware of how modern day entertainment is based upon ideas that come from universal themes or replicate the same ideas from a past time. For instance, *SWAT*, an original TV show from the 1970's, has been resurrected to reflect

modern times. The remake of Stephen King's horror novel *IT* is one of the top10 highest grossing movies for 2017. Films such as *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings*, clearly draw upon the idea of good vs evil, the hero's journey motif, and the Trinity. Talking about these

common points we see in literature, entertainment, and even video games, gives us an opportunity to have conversations with our children about how these ideas play out in our own society. And isn't every parent looking for ways to connect with his or her children?

Reading Recommendations

<i>The Ruins of Gorlan</i> <i>The Ranger's Apprentice #1</i> by John Flanagan	Gr 6
<i>Courage for Beginners</i> by Karen Harrington	Gr 7
<i>The Book Thief</i> by Markus Zusak	Gr 8

*December: MA ELA State Standards

- RL.8.9. Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.
- W.8.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational text to support an analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 8 RL and RI text as needed.

*Other ELA/Reading standards are addressed during the month of December as well.

If you have any questions about WPS' ELA/Reading Curriculum, please contact Chris Tolpa, Supervisor of Humanities:

c.tolpa@schoolsofwestfield.org

413-642-9318