

GRADE 6 ELA UPDATE

"Today a reader; tomorrow a leader." - Margaret Fuller

February 2017

FEBRUARY'S CLASSROOM FOCUS

One of the most difficult skills for our sixth graders is to write a compare and contrast essay. This month, students will learn about two structures for writing compare and contrast essays: the block method and the point-by-point method. Our goal is to teach students that they cannot just *list* similarities and differences about an issue, but they must also expand upon each idea and

explain the importance of these likenesses and variations.

Learners will have the opportunity to review model examples of Batman vs Superman comparison essays. They will analyze how an author uses different techniques, such as statistics, anecdotes, or descriptive details using the five senses to elaborate on an idea. Students will learn writing strategies that they can carry into

other forms of writing as well.

Writing is one of the most difficult skills for a teacher to teach and one of the most challenging skills for a child to learn. In order to become a proficient writer takes practice, feedback, and reflection. It is a journey worth the dedication and effort.



EXTENDING THE LEARNING AT HOME

Ask your child to compare and contrast something familiar. Most children do not willingly elaborate on any topic with details, so follow up with questions that cause them to expand on their ideas. For example, ask them to compare their new middle school experience to

elementary school. They may first mention how lunch is so much better. Prompt them to further pursue this subject. Tell me about the food. Describe the people you sit with at lunch? What freedoms are you allowed at middle school vs. elementary school? How does this different "lunch

experience" affect your daily life at school? Explain why it is better or worse.

Sometimes adults have to prompt and probe students to think deeply. Thanks for taking the time to ask questions to practice critical thinking skills at home.

Reading Recommendations

<i>Percy Jackson's Greek Gods</i> by Rick Riordan	Gr 6
<i>The Thing about Jellyfish</i> by Ali Benjamin	Gr 7
<i>I am Malala</i> by Malala Yousafzai	Gr 8

*February: MA ELA State Standards

- RI.6.1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.6.3. Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (through examples or anecdotes).
- W.6.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

*Other ELA/Reading standards are addressed during the month of February 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