

GRADE 7 ELA UPDATE

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

December 2016

DECEMBER'S CLASSROOM FOCUS

As we move into the month of December, students will be focusing on poetry. Through Longfellow's poem, "Paul Revere's Ride," students will better understand how poets and authors of fiction sometimes distort factual history for special effects and specific purposes. We will be using primary source documents and our own research to support this learning.

Our learners will also experiment with creating poetry based on the structure of a sonnet. It is through this exercise that they will learn that text structure often contributes to the text's meaning. They will be challenged by reading Shakespeare and other poets, but a great deal of assistance will be provided to ensure all students are able to participate in this fun, culminating exercise.



Ultimately, students will be asked to explain their understanding of these literary ideas in a well constructed essay.

EXTENDING THE LEARNING AT HOME

Some students are excited to read complex texts, but, *most* students often enjoy watching movies. You can encourage your son or daughter to take a more critical look at historical films to determine how the director may have altered historical facts in order to fit his purpose.

For instance, after watching *Titanic*, students can do their own on-line research on what the movie "got right" and what it didn't. Was there such a thing as a diamond called, "The Heart of the Ocean" as worn by Rose in the movie? Where did that story

come from? This activity teaches our children to question what is presented and to find evidence to support the truth. Although altering facts may make a story more entertaining to an audience, it is important to always be able to discern between fact and fiction.

Reading Recommendations

<i>The Ranger's Apprentice, The Ruins of Gorlan</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.7.5. Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure contributes to its meaning.
- RL.7.9. Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.
- W.7.7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources.

*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:

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