

# GRADE 8 ELA UPDATE

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

January 2017

## JANUARY'S CLASSROOM FOCUS

In January, our 8th grade students will build upon the components of the argument that they learned in 7th grade. They will be strengthening their claims, counterclaims, evidence, and reasoning. An additional focus this year is examining logical fallacies, arguments that *sound* good, but in reality are not logical in their reasoning.

One technique that is popular in advertising

is "bandwagon," the idea that "everyone is doing it, and so should you." Another technique that was used quite often during the election was the "either/or" option, leaving the public to think that there was only two options when discussing issues.

Teaching students to analyze arguments and the reasoning a writer or speaker uses will inspire curious learners to question and investi-

gate those issues they believe in. It is our responsibility to encourage civic engagement in our society so that when our children venture into their own independence, they do so with the tools to make good decisions.



## EXTENDING THE LEARNING AT HOME

It is easy to get caught up in arguing our own beliefs, and it is sometimes more difficult to take an objective look at arguments. This month, take some time to objectively watch a political news interview or read an editorial. Examine the arguments that people make to support their issues and ask the following questions:

- *What issue is being argued?*
- *What kind of evidence does the person use to support his or her argument? To refute others arguments?*
- *What reasoning does the person give to connect his or her evidence to the issue?*
- *Is the argument logical?*

It is honorable to be passionate about issues, but we must also be educated about the issues we believe in. We must teach our children that issues cannot be logically argued for or against without credible evidence and sound reasoning. These skills take time and practice to develop, but asking the right questions sets the foundation.

### Reading Recommendations

<i>Fish in a Tree</i> by Lynda Mullaly Hunt	Gr 6
<i>The Outsiders</i> by S.E. Hinton	Gr 7
<i>The Eye of Minds</i> by James Dashner	Gr 8

### \*January: MA ELA State Standards

- RI.8.1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.8.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- W.8.1a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

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

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