

English & Literature with Ms. Potter

Winter 2019

Happy 2019! With the new year comes a fresh start, so we've hit the reset button for our goals for the rest of the year. Even though I'm not a huge fan of winter, this time of year is my absolute favorite in terms of all of the lessons coming up and the fun reading we'll be doing. I've added some new texts and activities to the repertoire, and I think we'll have some really great learning experiences coming up!

6th Grade

For Now: The sixth grade got a bit of essay writing practice with a Christmas research paper just before break, and we'll continue to hone our grammar skills while also working on writing with various letter and short essay assignments. For literature, the students have already begun reading *Wringer* and are going to be continuing their study of story elements by focusing on character analysis, along with some social justice-focused writing. We're continuing to expand our vocabularies as well, and we keep trying out new vocabulary review games that have been fun and very productive!

Next Up: We'll be reading *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, which will lead to some writing and art assignments where students will design and plan their own museums, and then we'll use various pieces of art to further analyze story elements.

Upcoming Projects

6th Grade: Talk/News Show Clip of Book; Comic Book Edition of Book

7th Grade: Book-Inspired Board Game, 20-Year Reunion Project

8th Grade: Poet Project, TED Talk

7th Grade

For Now: The students are finishing up an argumentative essay debating the merits of the bannings of *The Cay* and *The Egypt Game*, and they're now in the revision and peer review stages before submitting the final products. We'll be reading *The Giver* as a companion to our unit on science fiction and dystopian literature, and I'm looking forward to a fun new reflection activity prior to kicking things off with "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street" and various Ray Bradbury stories. *The Giver* also always involves a lot of fun art projects, so I can't wait to see what the students come up with!

Next Up: In celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, the students will be creating proposals for new holidays celebrating their own personal heroes who are sometimes overlooked by society. After sci-fi, we'll do a mini-unit on mystery stories before switching to historical fiction with *Turtle in Paradise* and *The Color of my Words*.

8th Grade

For Now: The eighth grade is beginning a lengthy unit on poetry, and we'll be reading a novelization of *Beowulf* to accompany our readings. They're currently working on their poet project research, so English class will be consumed by research – finding appropriate and reliable sources, citing them, and narrowing down what information is important. We'll begin our poetry unit with a focus on African-American poetry to celebrate Black History Month, and the students will segue into a BHM research paper later in the month. In between, we'll be analyzing some recent and lesser known poems, along with classics like "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and "O Captain! My Captain!"

Next Up: We'll finish up our poetry unit with a look at Shakespeare's sonnets before transitioning into a class reading of *Julius Caesar*. Students will also be reading assigned books in small groups, and we'll connect the drama study to an intensive look at political speech and rhetorical techniques in English class.



Recent Memories



7. 6th Grade doing musical chairs-style peer reviews



8. 7th grade writing song lyrics



9. 8th Grade's study of Maus culminates in a murder trial



3. 7th grade reviews vocab with YMCA-inspired spelling practice



"Well, I know now: I know a little more how a much a simple thing like a snowfall can mean to a person." – Sylvia Plath



6. 8th grade enjoys some snacks



1. 6th grade's vocab review includes writing on the desks in chalk



5. 7th grade participated in a SpongeBob-themed murder trial



4. 6th grade brainstorms "fake news" together to learn about sources



2. 8th grade completes a gallery walk of WWII political cartoons



Meet the Teacher My name is Haley Potter, and I'm so happy to begin my sixth year of teaching at St. Peter's. This is actually the fifteenth school year that I've spent at the school, as I also attended St. Peter's! I continued my education at Villanova University, where I graduated with dual degrees in English and honors with a writing and rhetoric concentration and minors in Spanish, sociology, and gender and women's studies. I have since earned my master's degree in leadership in teaching, and I'm currently looking into programs for a second. I feel so lucky to have a job that feeds my passions, such as reading; writing nonfiction, poetry, and short stories; and learning new things. I hope to pass along those interests to my students and help them to not just know how to read and write well but to enjoy it as well.

