

## Debate 2023-2024

**\*Teacher:** Alexandra Hawksford

**\*Room:** 2314

**\*Prep Time:** 2nd hour (10:22-11:11)

**\*Phone:** 651-325-2500 x2537 (w)

**\*E-Mail:** alexandra.hawksford@spps.org or

**\*Courses:** ELA Workshop 8  
Debate

alexandra.hawksford@stpaul.k12.mn.us

**Mission:** to empower students to become engaged learners, critical thinkers, and active citizens who are effective advocates for themselves and their communities.

**Supplies:** 1 notebook for vocabulary, journaling and note-taking; highlighters; a fully charged iPad every day and access to Schoology.

**Overview:** Each year the National Forensic League (NFL) chooses a policy topic that debaters affirm (propose a policy to solve a problem) as well as negate (show why that policy won't solve the problem, will make things worse, or will cause other problems if enacted). During the 2023-2024 school year, the policy topic focuses on economic inequality and whether the federal government should enact policies that support guaranteeing jobs, expanding social security, or providing a basic income. We will briefly investigate this year's national resolution in class.

Since we are part of the MNUDL (Minnesota Urban Debate League), we will spend much of our class time researching, writing, and debating the topic of criminal justice reform. This is the topic selected by the UDL this year. Because we are part of the UDL, our students will have the opportunity to debate other middle schools from Minneapolis, St. Paul, and the surrounding areas in after-school debate tournaments that will happen later in the school year. Watch for more information to come about these tournaments.

In debate class, students must research, analyze, and defend different policy options, and in the process increase their critical thinking, reading comprehension and public speaking skills. During quarter two, students will also be exposed to the Lincoln-Douglas debate style that focuses more on values and ethics rather than policy-making.

**National Debate Topic for 2023-2024:** *Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase fiscal redistribution in the United States by adopting a federal jobs guarantee, expanding Social Security, and/or providing a basic income.*

- **Basic Income: Universal Basic Income**
- **Basic Income: Basic Income for Persons at or near the Poverty Level**
- **Federal Jobs Guarantee: Green New Deal**
- **Social Security: Medicare for All**

**UDL Topic for 2023-2024:** *Resolved: The United States federal government should enact substantial criminal justice reform in the United States in one or more of the following: forensic science, policing, and sentencing.*

**Forensic Science:** Limit use of Facial Recognition Software    **Sentencing:** Abolish Mandatory Minimum Sentences

**Policing:** Disarm the Police

**Sentencing:** Drug Decriminalization

## 8th Grade Year-long Focus ELA 8

We will be following the Common Core State Standards that have been adopted by Minnesota. They are comprised of the following five standards:

- Informational Text
- Language
- Writing
- Literature
- Speaking, Viewing, Listening, and Media Literacy

In our ELA Workshop model this year, reading and writing will be an integral part of each unit. There will be ample opportunity for the students to read personal choice books during the school week. Our reading framework has three distinct goals: to increase enjoyment in reading, to encourage students to pursue independent reading at appropriately challenging levels, and to improve reading fluency and comprehension. It also allows for teachers to use the student reading time to meet individually with students to provide individual instruction in strategy use as well as higher-order questions to challenge and engage readers. This reading model is designed to enhance, not replace, a solid foundation in language arts including conventions, vocabulary, and writing instruction.

| <b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> |                    | <b>Reading</b>  | <b>Writing</b>   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| Quarter 1                   | September          | Reading Analytically Across Genres: Themes, Archetypes, and Allusions                                   | Understanding and Identifying Theme, Allusion, and Archetype |
| Quarter 1                   | October - November | Critical Literacy: Unlocking Contemporary Fiction   | Narrative/Memoir   |
| Quarter 2                   | December - January | Argument Reading: Critical Nonfiction Research Across Text Sets   | Position Paper: Research and Argument                        |
| Quarter 3                   | February - March   | Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Dystopian Book Clubs  | Descriptive Setting Writing and Movie Trailers               |
| Quarter 4                   | April              | Analyzing Poetry: Literary Devices  | Poetry   |
| Quarter 4                   | May - June         | Approaching the Classics Through Close Reading, Discussion and Performance: "A Midsummer Night's Dream" | Literary Essay: Analyzing Craft and Theme Through Characters |

**Quarter Book Projects:** Each student will complete a book project at the end of each quarter. Projects are based on books the students have personally selected to read. We have a limited amount of time that we read in class during the week, so it's highly recommended that students are reading every day for a minimum of 25 minutes outside of class.