



THE FACULTY CORNER

A WORD FROM THE ANACAPA SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT. . .

If you had stepped into an Anacapa Literature class over the past semester you might have witnessed some of the following: a performance of scenes from *Beowulf*, the creation of original lines in iambic pentameter, a round-table discussion of Bilbo's progression (or lack thereof) through a hero's journey, or students collaborating in small groups to analyze levels of irony in *The Canterbury Tales*.

In addition to practicing the traditional skills of reading and writing, students in Literature class are becoming active readers and critical thinkers- skills which will diffuse and spread beyond other academic classes into the world outside Anacapa School.

All students have been developing their reading skills by annotating each text we read. Annotating helps students become active readers by making the reader to stop and think about what has just been read in order to make a note about it. Annotating teaches a reader to engage more closely with a text on multiple levels by summarizing, asking questions, making predictions, identifying vocabulary, and recognizing figurative language and literary devices. Stopping to jot down a note allows a reader to make text-text, text-world, and text-self connections. Some students have even begun annotating their history books!

In AP and British Literature, students learn about the historical context and cultural background of each text. They are learning to recognize how literature reflects the social, political, and cultural needs of the time period. Having read and annotated a text, students work with a partner to move beyond summary into analysis. They read between the lines to understand irony, satire, and symbolism. In AP Literature, we focus on close reading and understanding how the smallest details affect the meaning of the work as a whole, dissecting sentences and scenes like a scientist.

Lower School Literature students are learning to broaden their thinking through group discussions where they listen and respond to other student's thoughts. This teaches them to build off what others say and have evidence from the text to back up their ideas.

Ultimately, Literature is about communication; all students learn vocabulary and practice proper grammar in order to have the right words to say what they mean and be understood. From *Twelfth Night* to *The Hobbit*, students are engaging with classic and modern texts, finding textual evidence to support their analysis in essays, and writing creatively to express their own unique thoughts.

By Emily Regan