COMMON CORE CONNECTION: READ ALL ABOUT IT!!

WORK OF ART: Politics in an Oyster House, Richard C. Woodville, 1848

COMMON CORE CONNECTION: Reading English Language Arts and Literacy—Writing
Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

OVERVIEW
After conducting research and examining the painting Politics in an Oyster House, students will write an article for a 19th-century newspaper. Students will develop their topic with facts, definitions, concrete details and other examples related to the image and the time period.

ACTIVITY
➊ Examine Politics in an Oyster House. Ask students the following questions:
   a. What do you think is happening in this picture? What makes you say that?
   b. When do you think this painting was created? What do you see that makes you say that? How do you think these men were feeling? What do you think they were discussing? Where do you think they were sitting? Support your answers with visual clues.

➋ The gentleman on the right is holding a newspaper. Think about the time period when this painting was completed (1848). What do you think the headline reads on the newspaper? What do you think they could be talking about? Ask students to think about what happened in America during this time period to prompt discussion.

➌ Explain to students that they are going to write a newspaper article about an event that occurred in the 1840’s (like the Mexican-American War). The article must have a headline, state three facts about the event and use precise language to provide information about or explain the topic. The article should also include a concluding statement related to the information presented. When writing their article, students should consider the expression and gesture of the men in Politics in an Oyster House. Ask students to consider, “What type of news do you think they received? What are the reactions of each man and how do they differ?” The answers to these questions should help students determine the content of their article.

➍ When they have finished writing their articles, ask students to take turns reading their newspaper to the class. Other students can determine whether they agree or disagree with the way the information was presented. Not only should students discuss the validity of the article but also how its content and presentation relate to the painting.

➎ If time permits, print copies of this image for students and ask them to add speech bubbles to work. Students can fill in the speech bubbles with the conversation that they think is taking place as a result of reading their specific article.