



## **Discussion prompts for the All Community Read, American War by Omar El Akkad**

Brooks School's 2023 All Community Read, *American War*, is set within a dystopian future, but touches on a number of contemporary problems and concerns. In *American War*, the United States is in a future sectional war as a result of disagreements over government regulation of fossil fuel use after climate change has severely altered the United States geography. The story follows a teenage girl, Sarat Chestnut, as she is swept up in the war, lives in refugee camps, and makes choices on how she will react to the war around her. As your student reads the books, you could engage with your student by asking them about some of the following topics:

### **Climate Change**

- How is climate change influencing your region, town, or state today?
- How will it affect it in the future?
- What laws, regulations do you believe should be put in place to counter climate change?
- What can we do, if anything, to counter the effects of climate change on our world?

### **States Rights vs. Federal Rights**

- What laws fall to the states and what fall to the federal government?
- What are some current laws that are governed at the federal or state level?
- What are some laws that used to be governed state-to-state that are now federal and vice versa?
- What are the pros and cons of each approach?
- How do you interpret the constitution on which rights fall to the state vs. the federal government?

### **Refugees**

- What would you do if suddenly faced with a war that threatened your family?
- How can or should we help refugees who are fleeing wars in their own country?
- What resources currently exist in the United States to assist refugees?

### **Character Motivation**

- Do you agree with the decisions of Sarat Chestnut?
- Why do you think she makes these decisions?
- How is she being manipulated by others?
- How is she making her own independent choice?