

First Grade Flyer

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Book Club

In our **Book Club** classes, students are currently reading *fictional texts*. We have named and described the four main literary elements in a good story - the characters, the setting, the problem, and the solution. Our students should be able to use this vocabulary and to identify these elements in the stories that they are reading at home with you. After reading a good book with your child, please ask him/her to tell you about these four elements in that story.

We are currently reading the books of and learning about the life of popular children's author and illustrator, *Kevin Henkes*. Most of his characters are mice, and some of their titles include Owen, Sheila Rae the Brave, Chrysanthemum, Wemberly Worried, and Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse. Ask your children to share these stories and their characters with you. If you are looking for children's books to buy or give as gifts, try some of these Henkes' books for they are delightful treasures!

We are continuing to write and illustrate for *personal expression*. We are in the process of writing about ourselves - our likes and dislikes, hobbies, favorites, pets, sports, and/or families. Our students are busy working on organizing, brainstorming, drafting, editing, and writing "flower and leaf" writing projects in school. Some of our students are also creating "All About Me" posters, which we are sharing in our homeroom classes. Please encourage your children to be creative when writing about themselves - they can include photographs, stickers, hand-drawn illustrations, stamps, clip art from the computer, and hand-written or typed captions. They should use bright colors and can use fancy scissors if they wish. Be sure your child's name is printed in large letters and placed in the center of his/her poster. We will display these in our first grade hallway as our students bring them to school.



Math

The main instructional focus of Unit One in the first and second grade math curricula is the study of **patterns, place value, basic addition and subtraction, and number relationships**. In this unit, students identify the place value of certain digits in numbers, compare numbers using the greater than and less than signs, write numbers in a variety of ways (including digit form, word form, expanded notation, and base ten block drawings), label numbers as odd or even, and identify and continue various numeric and geometric patterns. Many of our students will also begin their study of **data analysis**, using surveys, tally charts, pictographs, and basic bar graphs. Students are expected to create and then analyze graphs for information and/or trends.

At the beginning of each new unit, students will bring home a *parent information sheet* to inform you of the topics covered in this unit and ways in which you can help your child at home. The Unit 1 version of this sheet was copied on the back of our September newsletter.

Throughout each unit, students will perform a variety of tasks, including using manipulatives, flashcards, games, and worksheets, to master each indicator. We also give *formative assessments* (i.e. - quizzes) on a regular basis to assess our students' learning.

At the end of each unit, all of our students will take the *unit assessment*. These tests cover all essential learnings and indicators taught during a unit. They can be quite long, and therefore, may be spread out over several class periods. When all students' assessments are completed, scored, and entered into the computer, a *parent report* will be printed and sent home. Please look this over and then discuss your child's test results with him or her. The Unit 1 Parent Reports will be sent home in early to mid-November.

One way that you can help us at home is to encourage *nightly practice of addition* (and eventually subtraction) *facts* up through $10+10=20$. It is not enough for your children to be able to figure out the answers - they need to actually memorize them. We have found that daily practice with flashcards is the best way to achieve this. Use those brief moments on the way to soccer practice or while sitting in the waiting room at the doctor's office or while standing at the bus stop to practice. All of these minutes truly up. In fact, we have some students who have already progressed from just answering just 1-5 addition facts in one minute to correctly answering 20-30 facts in a minute! Ask your child if s/he is one of these students.

Be sure that your child completes his/her *math homework packet* each week. These worksheets are meant to reinforce and provide practice and review of the various skills, strategies, and key concepts presented in our math classes. It is not necessary that they be returned to us on Fridays. You may just review and check them at home with your children. We will assess mastery of these same items in the classroom.