

Fifth Grade Newsletter

December 2011

Reading and Language Arts: Ms. Corrigan and Ms. Kouwenberg

1. We are completing the novel, *The Sign of the Beaver*, by Elizabeth George Speare. Through literature discussions, margin notes (flagging), and written responses, we have explored the differences between the main characters and how they were able to break through cultural barriers, develop deep friendships, and participate in a "cultural exchange" with respect for one another. We are now completing the novel test which is composed of short answers, two BCR's and one essay. We will also watch the movie version of the story and compare plots between both the novel and the movie.
2. Our next core novels will be *Number the Stars*, by Lois Lowry and *Waiting for Anya* by Michael Morpurgo. These novels have a common theme and again focus on befriending, learning, and helping those from other cultures. The setting for both novels takes place during the WWII Era and involves the Danish & French Resistance.
** If you know anyone who is a WWII vet or Holocaust survivor (or) anyone who is related to one, and who would be willing to come in as a guest speaker--- please email us to make arrangements.*
3. All 5th grade students will begin working on "mock" MSA tests & skills in reading for preparation of the test in March. Tests will be graded and reviewed with students, and BCR's were revised in class.
4. Students continue to practice non-fiction comprehension through the completion of their "Weekly Reader" magazine and social studies resource books entitled, *History Alive*.
5. Using the writing process of drafting, conferencing, editing, and revising, students completed their Thanksgiving letters to loved ones. (We hope you enjoyed them!)
6. Our next writing project will be a journalism unit in which students will write articles for a newspaper front page, using the inverted pyramid style of

journalist writing. That will be followed by a celebration called "Newspaper Day" (details forth coming).

7. We will also begin analyzing & creating poetry in a variety of forms. Students will learn different poetic styles and literary devices before beginning the creation of their Poetry Analogies (details forth coming).

Social Studies

We are now focusing on the 5 eras, 4 movements, and select turning points of U.S. History (1750--present day). Students will be working on a "turning point" project in which they will have summarized an important turning point in American history and created an illustration on the computer program, Image Blender. Students will also be working closely with the tech teacher, Ms. Tinney, in our tech lab to complete this project.

Next, we will study the events that led up to the American Revolution, paying particular attention to the Boston Massacre. Students will examine primary and secondary sources and write a persuasive essay on the focus question: "Who is to blame for the deaths in the Boston Massacre: the British soldiers or the Boston colonists?"

Fifth Grade Math

Students finished taking the final assessment for Unit 2 before Thanksgiving. We are now diving into Unit 3 which begins with decimal number theory, place value and comparing/ordering decimals. Then we will move into connecting these concepts to fractions. Students will be able to add, subtract, multiply and divide fractions and show fraction equivalents for decimals. Finally, students will learn how these concepts translate to percentages.

Sixth Grade Math

The sixth grade math students are well into Unit 2. The key concepts from part C dealt with multiplying and dividing fractions and mixed numbers. The students learned how to convert a division problem into a multiplication problem using a reciprocal of the divisor. We also worked on concepts related to adding and subtracting both positive and negative integers. We are currently working on part D, which is "Fraction, Decimal, and Percent Connections and Applications." Students have learned about ratios and rates and applied the concepts to proportions. The students are making great progress and

moving right along! Unit 2 still has one formative assessment and one summative assessment. The dates for these two assessments will likely end up being close to one another.

Fifth Grade Science

The current science unit is “Electricity and Magnetism.” The class started by learning about static electricity, what causes it, and its effects. The students are learning what make electric circuits work. They have had plenty of time to explore different configurations and to make discoveries. We are applying these findings to learning about parallel and series circuits. The students are also drawing diagrams using symbols as a way to communicate the different items in a circuit. The next main concepts will be insulators and conductors and their roles in electricity.

FIFTH GRADE CALENDAR

DECEMBER

- 8 & 9 – Drama Performance
- 15 – Beall-Dawson House field trip (Ott & Kouwenberg)
- 16 – Beall-Dawson House field trip (Corrigan & Vicino)
- 21 – Winter concert at B-CC
- 23 – Last day of school before Winter Break

JANUARY

- 3 – Students return to school
- 16 – No School – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 20 – End of the 2nd Quarter
- 23 – No School – Teacher Professional Day