



November Newsletter
Grade 2
Mrs. Whitehead's Class

Wow! it's hard to believe that two months have already passed. The days fly by, and the students are working very hard. That said, there is simply not enough time to do everything. Your help is really needed at home to practice and reinforce skills that are taught during the day.

Thank you for working to ensure that your child is completing his homework neatly and carefully. Some students continue to need to improve in that area. Part of the nightly homework includes reading for ten to fifteen minutes. Students should complete reading logs on a daily basis. During October, some students *rarely* completed the reading assignment. This month students will lose five minutes of recess the first time they do not complete their log, Thereafter, they will read to complete their homework assignment during recess time.

Math

I have been really encouraged, as have the students, by the progress they are making in Mad Minute to learn their math facts. When I ask the third grade teachers where incoming second graders are weak, the answer is always addition and subtraction facts. *Counting up and down are skills that several of the children continue to have difficulty doing quickly and easily. They should be able to count up or down 1, 2, or 3 without struggling. When given a fact such as $8+3$, some students begin counting with 1. They need to "put the larger number in their head and count up" for addition.* Please practice for a few minutes every night. While the goal is mastery and automaticity, not computation, this skill is a step in the right direction.

Currently, your child is practicing addition and subtraction facts and strategies. It is important for your child to see patterns of numbers whether

they are counting by twos, threes, fives or tens, as well as when they use strategies. They are learning that charts and tables are a way to organize information and see patterns clearly. The next chapter will also focus on addition and subtraction, including fact families, addition and subtraction as related operations, missing addends and adding with three addends.

Students continue to need practice identifying triangles and their attributes. They should be able to talk about congruent sides, congruent angles (acute and obtuse) and lines of symmetry. Triangle booklets were sent home earlier this week.

Reading

The students seem to enjoy working in their small groups. We feel that they are getting instruction truly geared to their specific needs during that time. Hopefully, all students will make progress with this assistance. We are monitoring their progress and making adjustments. Based on recently collected data, the groups and the focus of some groups will change next week.

Many of the students are going to Lexia on a regular basis. Again, this has been determined by need. If your child is working in level 4 or 5 in primary reading, he is at, or above level, in phonics. Some of the skills he might encounter have not been taught yet. On the other hand, if your student is struggling, he may most benefit from direct instruction by the teacher. I am glad to see that some of the children are also practicing at home. I have printed out some certificates, so they are progressing!

Phonics skills being addressed in this unit include: r-controlled words with ar, or, and ore; contractions, plurals, including adding -es after x, sh, ch, ss and tch as well as changing y to i and adding -es when a word ends with a consonant and y; r- controlled ur, er and ir; and the long a sound spelled with a, ai and ay.

In class, students are developing their vocabulary by completing word exchanges to use in their writing. They are also writing the meaning of selected "amazing" words and using those words in sentences. These words are added to their notebooks so that they can refer to them when needed.

Fluency is a skill that contributes to success in reading. Students are being encouraged to read in phrases rather than one word at a time. They pay attention to punctuation and use their voices appropriately. While fluent reading is important, it needs to be balanced with reading for meaning. If your child reads quickly, but is unable to recall, retell or respond to questions about the text, he is not an effective reader.

At this point, many students are able to read our basal reader. However, students are having difficulty responding to questions about what they have read. We are working on going back into the text to locate information as well as asking them to make connections between themselves and the characters in the story. For example, they might be asked to "put themselves in the character's shoes." How would they feel? What would they do? Have they ever had that happen to them? What did they do? Making connections is an area that is critical to reading success throughout the grades.

Comprehension skills addressed in this unit include: sequencing and identifying time order words; making predictions, using prior knowledge to aid understanding; character and setting; realism and fantasy; summarizing; visualizing; drawing conclusions and identifying author's purpose.

Language

Students continue to edit sentences during Daily Oral Language. When they explain their correction, it gives them the opportunity to use the vocabulary that is being taught. For example, they would tell us that the sentence needed a period because it was declarative or a statement. They discuss subjects and predicates, nouns and proper nouns.

Skills studied in this unit include: proper and common nouns, singular and plural nouns and possessive nouns. They also are beginning to use descriptive verbs and recognize similes.

Students have also been writing paragraphs. They recently wrote a response to a question about a character in a story; a retelling of a story including main idea, details, using sequence or transition words, and a closing or wrap up sentence. Main idea sentences continue to be difficult for many students. The main idea is the topic so all the following sentences need to be about that statement.

Report Cards

As you know, report cards will soon be sent home for the first quarter. It is important that you understand how your child is progressing in class. However, report cards are only one way to assess progress. I am available to meet with you to discuss your child's work, behavior and study habits any time throughout the year.

It is also important that you understand what the grades *E*, *S*, and *N* truly mean. Obviously, if your child receives an *E* in a particular area, he or she is doing exceptional work. This is the equivalent of an *A/A-* in the

upper grades. An S+ is equivalent to a B in the upper grades. An S means satisfactory. It is equivalent to a C in the upper grades. Therefore an S- would be below average. An *NI* indicates that your child's work in that area is in need of improvement. Again, it is below average.

Unlike the upper grades, your child's reading, math and language grades are broken down into several areas. It is possible to be a fluent oral reader, earning an *E* in that area, but still have poor comprehension and earn an *S* or *NI* in that particular area. Comprehension is measured not only by a student's performance on the weekly multiple choice quiz, but also on open response questions and class participation.

Math facts are graded based on performance on the Mad Minute quizzes. In second grade, the goal is *mastery* of the facts. The students have to complete Mad Minute exercises with increasing accuracy in shorter amounts of time. Their grade will be based on speed and accuracy.

Problem solving is a critical skill in math (and in life!) Your child's grade in that area is based not only on pencil and paper problems, but also on participation and skills practiced daily during our "calendar" lessons.

Effort and attention are crucial to your child's success in the classroom. Those areas deserve as much attention as the subject marks. Improve there and the others will follow!

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Tuesday, November 1st-	PTO Meeting A Day-Music
Thursday, November 10th-	Veteran's Day Program at 1 pm
Thursday, November 11th	Veteran's Day- no school
Monday, November 14th-	Report Cards
Monday, November 21st	Parent Conferences/ Early Release
Tuesday, November 22nd-	Parent Conferences/ Early Release (Reminders will be sent home)
Wednesday, November 23rd-	Early Release- Thanksgiving Break

Please watch for notices toward the end of the month about our second grade holiday service project as well as a social studies project that can involve the entire family. Hint: Think about your family's holiday customs and traditions. What country did they come from?

Have a great month and a peaceful, happy Thanksgiving!

