

First Grade News

November 2009

Highlands Elementary School 420-6335
Naperville Community Unit School District 203



Thanks for...

With the Fall Party behind us, the holiday season is creeping up! It's that time of the year already...the end of first trimester. While the students are busy showing off what they have learned, we are busy finishing assessments and preparing report cards. We are eager to share your child's progress with you. Report cards will be sent home Wednesday, November 18, so be looking for those in backpacks. Please remember that these are being brought home without conferences.

...a great trimester!

Contact us at:

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Mrs. Untch: buntch@naperville203.org

Dates to Remember!

November 11

End of First Trimester

November 18

Report Cards Home

November 25

No school

Staff Development

November 26 & 27

No school - Thanksgiving



Reading

First graders began focusing their attention on another comprehension strategy, Forming Sensory Images, as they read. Good readers use words from the text, as well as their schema (background knowledge), to create pictures in their mind. These images tap into the five senses and the feelings we have as we read. The mental pictures are details in the story that help us understand and remember the story better. As we read, we are thinking about the author's choice of words, details in the pictures, and our background knowledge to form the mental image. These images change as new information is revealed.

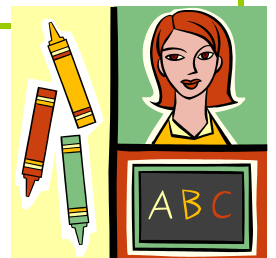
To practice forming images, the teacher may read a poem or story aloud without showing some or all of the illustrations. The first graders use words from the text and background knowledge to form their own mental image and draw what they see on paper. The students will then share their image with others to see how they differ. You can practice forming sensory images at home, too!



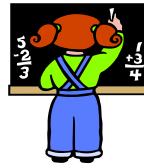
Word Study

In November, the first graders will continue to learn six or more high frequency words each week. In class, your child will begin to use each word correctly in a written sentence. We thank you again for your continued support at home in learning the word wall words. Also, when studying these words at home, remind your child when the words should be capitalized (at the beginning of a sentence, not in isolation).

We will take a close look at the vowel sounds. One activity called Making Words helps us practice the sounds for each letter. We will also be looking at word chunks and word families. For example, if a child knows how to spell an, that child can also spell fan, can, than, plan, etc.



Math



This month, our math focus will be on building number sense. Students will be developing strategies to organize collections in ways that make them easy to count and compare. They will be comparing quantities to determine which is larger. First graders will be playing games to explore number combinations including Counters in a Cup, On and Off, and Towers of Ten. Students will be reviewing numbers to 100, locating patterns on the hundreds chart, and counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s. We will also be learning to add using doubles facts. For example: $4 + 4 = 8$, $6 + 6 = 12$.

Science



Our umbrella question is "How does science exploration help me understand my world? We will answer this question through our Life, Earth/Space, and Physical Science units.

In Life Science, first graders have been collaborating with classmates to discover new things about familiar objects in order to generate ideas about science. Students explored familiar objects, asked questions, and discovered something new through self-directed investigations. Students have learned more about the "I Wonder" circle we use when we conduct science investigations.

Specifically, the students have focused on living vs. nonliving. Students collaborated to think and talk about what is alive. They looked at "mystery" substances and set up an experiment to discover which substance was actually alive. Then, our first grade scientists examined the results of the experiment. They looked closely at hatched brine shrimp and described what they saw. We have begun looking more closely at the characteristics of things that are living versus those that are nonliving. This unit will continue as we move through the school year.

We will also be starting our Earth/Space study with a closer look at the Earth's components, familiar objects in the sky and understanding what the sun does for Earth.



Handwriting

Please check to see if your child can spell and print their first and last name correctly.



Reminders:

- ❖ As the temperature starts to fall, students need to be prepared for outdoor recess. Please label your child's items (mittens, scarves, etc.) for easy identification.



- ❖ If your child is involved with Project LEAP or enrichment, please remember the tutors are unable to speak directly with you about your child's progress. If you have any questions, contact your child's teacher and she will keep you posted.

Books Worth Reading

Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

The Wall by Eve Bunting

Olivia by Ian Falconer



Writing

While we continue working on the Traits of Ideas and Conventions, we have added the Trait of Organization. From Seeing with New Eyes, organization is described as:

"Organization is the internal structure of writing - like the framework of a building or the skeleton of an animal. It holds things together, and gives the whole piece form and shape.



How This Looks at Primary Level

...think balance and harmony. Early signs of organization include filling the page with text or pictures in a balanced way (the writer literally "organizes" text, picture, and white space), and creating labels, titles, or other text that harmonize with a picture. Gradually, primary writers also develop a sense of sequencing, which may begin with chronological order (for storytelling), then grouping (putting like bits together in informational writing). This kind of beginning structure may show up in picture sequences (two or more pictures) first, then in multiple-sentence text. Primary writers may also develop a strong sense of beginning and ending from listening to text long before they are able to reproduce these features in their own writing."