

November News

Fourth Grade



Reading:

The fourth grade curriculum emphasizes two major strategies during this term. The first is Making Connections. Proficient readers activate relevant, prior knowledge before, during, and after reading a text. They rely on prior knowledge to build mental models used to evaluate what they have read. When sharing together at home, get your child to make strong connections by saying: “This reminds me of....because....” and “This reminds me of something else I read or know, because.....”

The second strategy is Determining Importance. Proficient readers determine the most important ideas and themes in a text. They draw conclusions about important ideas to focus their reading and to exclude unimportant details from memory. They find the author’s purpose and the supporting details that further explain the main idea. Lessons include the use of text features in nonfiction, sequencing events, using cause and effect relationships, and identifying text clue words. When working at home with your child, use key phrases such as: “This text was mostly about....” “The message the author was trying to give is.....” “The big ideas I have learned were.....”

These strategies are taught in both whole group and small group settings with the use of a variety of leveled literature. We especially enjoy the Historical Communities series that assist us in preparing for our Naper Settlement field trip.

Writing:

As we wrap up our work with the writing trait of Ideas, our focus will be **personal narrative** writing. The narrative style allows students to recount and reflect upon a personal, significant and real experience from the past. Narrowed topic choices are a must. The narrative genre is written in first person using the pronouns *I, me, my, mine, our* and *we*. It moves through a sequence of time, includes descriptions of events and actions, and expresses reaction feelings. Answering the questions *Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?* will provide the reader with the necessary information to

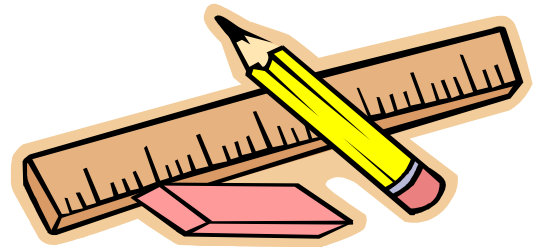
understand the retell. The use of graphic organizers allows the students to properly plan before drafting in paragraphs.

Students have reviewed the Writing Workshop stages of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Once the writing process begins, students independently move through the stages at an individual pace. Peer and teacher conferencing are included before the final stage of publishing.

We supplement our spelling program with activities from the *Making and Writing Words* program. These lessons are balanced with instruction in skills and strategies related to decoding, conventional spelling patterns, and word meanings. Phonics and word recognition are promoted with a high level of student engagement.

Math:

We have been working on multiplication concepts and related facts. Basic fact knowledge is applied to multiplying larger numbers. Students are required to solve multiplication problems in two different ways: using clustering and the traditional algorithm methods. Clusters are the partial products within the problem. In the past, you may have learned this as the distributive property of multiplication: $345 \times 5 = (300 \times 5) + (40 \times 5) + (5 \times 5)$. This concept helps in algebra and also with estimating products mentally. The traditional algorithm for multiplication is the one most of us learned in school with multiplication and regrouping (carrying).



Students must master their multiplication facts through 12. If any 4th graders are behind, they will need to continue studying at home. There are many websites available that use games to assist in this process. One such website is www.aplusmath.com where students can play a variety of multiplication games as well as reproduce flash cards. We would like the kids to have their multiplication facts mastered by December. If they master them earlier, they will go into division to keep them challenged. Studying the ones needed for mastery is the best idea. Some children just study the facts they already know in order to get the work done.

WORK TO LEARN - NOT TO GET DONE QUICKLY!

Near the end of November, the 4th graders will begin to study the concept and calculation of area and perimeter. This was introduced in 3rd grade, so we will expand on prior knowledge after a review. Area is the measurement of the square space on the **inside** of a closed figure while perimeter is the measurement of the distance **around the outside**. Area is calculated by multiplying the length by the width. Perimeter is calculated by finding the distance around two sides and doubling it, OR by adding all the lengths together. We will start the students off with tiles and manipulatives before the calculation process is introduced.

Social Studies:

In November, our classes will continue to study the geography of the NORTHEASTERN United States. Reference information is located on pages 130-189 (chapters 4-5) in the Social Studies text. There is a map on page 133 to assist in the learning of locations of states, major cities, waterways, and physical features. At the beginning of each region, students create a map to gain a visual understanding of the geography theme of *place*. This allows us to then become familiar with the natural and human features of the region. Natural features refer to the land and water forms, climate and natural resources. Human features are the man-made structures, as well as forms of industry and transportation.

Students will discover that the Northeast is unique in its population density, history time line, major city developments, industries and uses of natural resources.

Classroom Tidbits

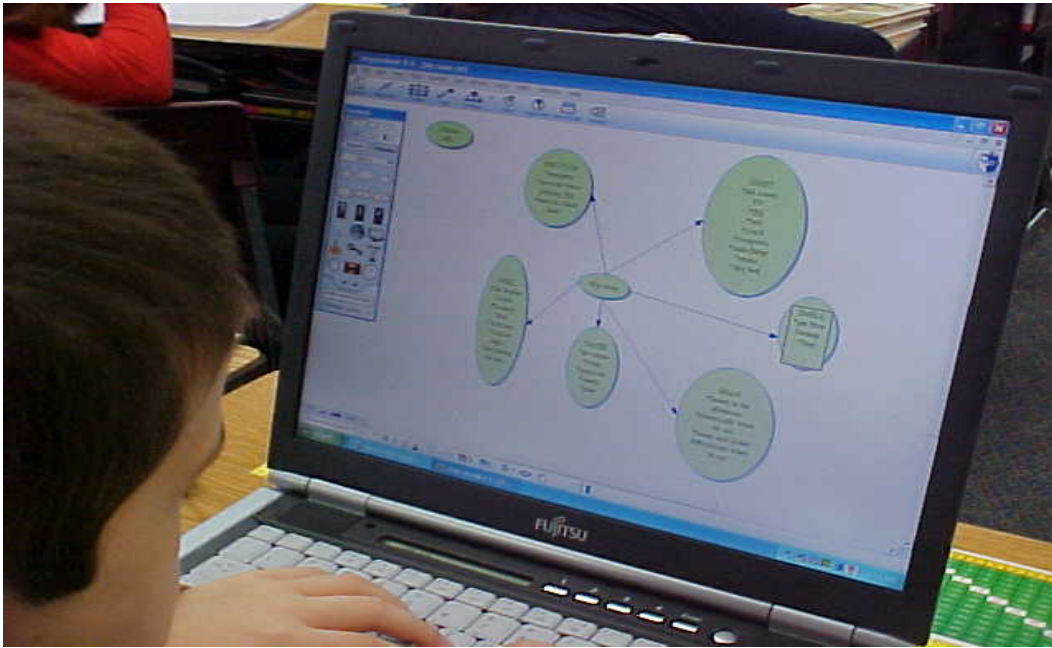
The fourth grade team would like to thank all the parents who volunteered for the Halloween/Fall parties either as a room helper or refreshment provider. The celebration was quite memorable.

Our field trip to Naper Settlement is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 9th. On this trip, we will visit assigned building sites to learn about the lifestyle of the early settlers of this area. The students will be instructed by interpreters and will try some hands on games and chores from the 19th Century. These activities will provide fitting background for our upcoming literature study about pioneers and the settlements of the Midwest and Western regions of the United States. Children will compare and contrast Naperville today with Naperville of the 1800's. Everyone needs to dress appropriately for the weather and pack a disposable lunch/drink for the trip. There is no direct fee. The Home & School payment allotment will cover the expenses.



Technology:

Students may electronically plan their writing with the software program *Inspiration*. This visual mapping web begins with a main idea concept in the middle of the screen. Connected categories are linked by arrows to show a flow of thinking. This alternative of brainstorming ideas provides students with another option to properly plan for written expression with all types of writing modes.



Important Dates:

- November 9: Naper Settlement field trip – all day
- November 10: Opera field trip – 9:30-11:15am
- November 11: Veteran's Day Ceremony at 8:15am – flag pole
- November 18: Trimester 1 report cards sent home
- November 25: Staff Development Day- NO SCHOOL
- November 26-27: Thanksgiving Break

Happy Thanksgiving!

