



Team Fusion News

October 29, 2010



Announcements

Please read over this newsletter, sign the attached portion and return it to school with your child (if you received a hardcopy), or **email me a reply if you received an electronic version.** Thanks!!

Language Arts

We have finished our first unit in the *Daybook for Critical Reading and Writing*. It focused on the reading tool called Making Connections. Students practiced being active thinkers while they read and made connections to excerpts from longer texts such as *The Young Man and the Sea* and *Esperanza Rising*. We will use this tool among others as we move into a Literature Circle session starting next week.

Literature Circles

We will be starting our first Literature Circle this week. Our theme of Witches and Ghosts will be represented by the following books: *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, by Elizabeth George Spear; *The Great Ghost Rescue*, by Eva Ibbotson; and *Wait Till Helen Comes*, by Mary Downing Hahn.

Lit Circles will continue until we break for Thanksgiving, meeting twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays. Students will be responsible for reading an assigned selection of chapters from their book and filling out a graphic organizer role sheet before each Lit. Circle meeting. This reading will count towards students 20 minutes of reading a night and the book will also count towards their 25 book goal. Books have been assigned and students have been given the due dates and role sheets which have been filed in their binders. The role sheets

are due in the order they appear in the packet. It is okay for students to read ahead of the group if they need to adjust their pace to meet their home schedules as long as they keep their contributions to the Lit Circle relevant to the selected chapters that will be discussed. Students who do not come to school with their book and completed role sheets will work independently to complete a Literature Preparation Packet – a shortened version of all 6 role sheets rolled into one.

Thank you to our parent volunteers, Paige Manning and Jennifer Rettew for their help facilitating one of our Lit Circle groups.

Book Project – Due November 19

Students are expected to complete a book project by the end of the trimester. I have decided that we will all do the same project to have on display in the display case in our corridor for viewing during parent-teacher conferences.

The project is called, Literature Goes to the Museum, and it will require students to select 3-5 objects that show significance to a story they've read. They will explain the significance of each object on an exhibition tag to accompany the display.

Students can choose to work independently using a book of their choice, or to work with a partner or small group to exhibit the book they will be reading for our Literature Circle. Book choices need to be communicated to me by next Friday, November 5.

I have attached the planning sheet for this project as well as the rubric I'll use for scoring it to this newsletter and have posted it on our website.

Math

We have finished up **Investigations II, Unit: 1** – Number Puzzles and Multiple Towers. Students completed the End-of-Unit Assessment on Thursday. Our work with multiplication and division will continue in our next unit with increased focus on the U.S. Algorithms for multiplication and long division. This computational approach will help set the stage for our work on fractions and decimals later in the year.

Math Focus Points:

- Explain why doubling one factor in a multiplication expression and dividing the other by 2 results in an equivalent expression
- Solve multiplication problems efficiently
- Solve division problems efficiently

Science

Theme: Cells

Several weeks ago, we took a walk over to Mills Riverside Park to collect samples of grass and water to set up hay and grass infusions. The water we added to each jar has allowed a bustling microbial world to emerge, and students have been practicing preparing slides to witness these tiny creatures under the microscope. Next week, students will get an opportunity to view live samples of volvox, blepharisma, and vinegar eels. This week, students watched a puppet show to learn about these creatures (thanks to Mr. Hamilton for playing the role of Freddie in the show!!). Conversation starters about the creatures featured in the puppet show:

- Which live specimen did Freddie view as a colony?
- How does the ciliate, the blepharisma, move around and obtain food?
- What was so special about the vinegar eels method of eliminating waste?
- How do the volvox protect their young?
- What are the four things all living things, including cells, must do to survive?

Social Studies

Theme: Geography & Community

Students went on an Amazing Race around the school to locate information on the geographical regions that we have been studying. Thank you for helping your child study for the geography assessment.

We will be exploring how geography, natural resources, and culture relate to a society's function in the weeks to come.

Positive Working Conditions

You may have heard from your child that our classroom can get quite noisy. As a group, we are revisiting our Fusion Five goals of being respectful and responsible so that we may have a safe and quiet learning environment. I have been very clear with the class about my expectations and will be very consistent with disruptions in the classroom. So that you are aware, students will be given several opportunities to maintain self-control for their benefit and the benefit of those trying to learn and work around them. For minor disturbances I will issue a reminder, a first warning, and a second warning to students who are not showing self-control. The next step will be for students to fill out a Take a Break form describing the problem, how it affected the class, and what they intend to do to adjust the behavior being demonstrated. If these four steps fail to get kids back on track they will be sent to the planning room to problem solve with Mr. Cavanagh our planning room facilitator. In this case, you will be notified and asked to sign the plan established by your child. Larger issues such as safety may be fast tracked to the planning room or a visit with Mr. Hamilton or Mr. Martin, our school counselor, if necessary.

Halloween Candy

I wish everyone an exciting and safe Halloween this weekend. Please remember that snacks should be healthy portions of nutritious foods that will help students get through their morning until lunch. I ask that you please reserve the candy for treats at home and that it not be brought to school.

Have a great weekend!

At each literature circle meeting, you will follow the literature circle discussion directions. You will be graded using the literature circle discussion rubric. When your group finishes with the book, you will have three weeks to work on the literature circle presentations.Â

Discussion Director/Facilitator: This student is responsible for writing down 5 thought-provoking questions (see Reading Response Questions sheet)for the purpose of group discussion based on that dayâ€™s reading assignment.