

Weekly 6th Grade Newsletter: Second Half of March

Language Arts

We have been delving deeper into the structure of our homework reading books, looking at the literary elements within. Now we are proceeding to study these elements in fictional short stories from our textbook in class. These main elements include: Character (protagonist, antagonist, major, minor), Setting (how it is revealed), Mood (how it is created), Conflict (against another, nature, society, or self), and Plot (using Fryetag's Pyramid). We will also touch upon point of view, foreshadowing, and flashback.

The focus of this unit is to dissect the elements that an author uses in fiction. Students will use evidence from the text(s) to illustrate the various elements. Students will be reading the stories in class, completing structured questions using TTQA, and connecting their learning to their our reading book. Each story assignment will include enrichment opportunities. I can set up a learning contract with students who must complete enrichment, or students can undertake enrichment on their own.

Math

We will be finishing up with prime factorization, GCF, and LCM by the end of this week, and then we'll have a quest next week on Tuesday. Our next unit is on probability. Students will create a carnival game that has fair outcomes to explore theoretical and experimental probability. At our class carnival day students will play each other's games and record experimental probabilities to determine how close the connection between theoretical and experimental probability actually is (if it truly is a fair game!).

Math Points: Please remember that students need to earn 100 points before the end of the trimester. Get math points done early to ensure that enough points are earned on time; only correct answers receive credit. The due date for math points will be announced soon.

Science

Students spend the last couple of weeks working on their "Shell Dichotomous Key". They started by working in small groups where they helped each other by sorting, counting, and describing the physical characteristics of a container of shells. Then the groups started the process of making graphical keys, wherein the first split was the biggest difference between all the shells and the last split being the smallest difference between the shells that appear the most similar to one another. Using this graphical key

each student, as individuals, gave the distinct groups of shells scientific names based on the descriptive words at each split in the key and turned their graphical key into a written key (see Edline for links to a video and examples).

During the same time, I introduced the 6th grade to on-line simulations focusing on how organisms adapt to their environments and change over time with the “Evolution Readiness” activities. These 10 activities start with an introduction to a central concept of biology, have experiments then are set up, run, and the results captured for lab-book entries and have multi-choice questions relating to the concepts/experiments scattered through the activity. Students are currently on the first two and will be working on the other eight during the rest of the 3rd Trimester

This week we started taking notes on vocabulary and concepts related to Chemistry in preparation for a series of labs that will be conducted in the coming weeks. Mr. Scogin and I started a mini lab/graphing assignment using pumpkin seeds to find the effect that temperature has on the rate and amount of germination. We will also be participating in starting seeds for the school garden, watch for photos coming soon.

Social Studies

We will be continuing our study of Latin America for the next few weeks. We will look at the physical geography of Latin America, cultures and lifestyles of those who have settled in Latin America, as well as some present day countries in Latin America.

Please look in their social studies green binder for information.

Just a reminder that I am available after school on Monday - Wednesday nights, most weeks, for extra help or a quiet place to complete homework. Mrs. Sparks is available Monday - Thursday nights for homework help.

Both of these sessions end at 3:30.