Class Newsletter October 31, 2014

Dear Friends and Families,

Happy Halloween! Today we celebrated the fall and this festive holiday by decorating pumpkin cookies. This week began with a fun, hands-on field trip to the Audubon Center. The kids walked through swamps looking for evidence of animal life, fished for snails, and worked together to build beaver dams. Look for photos on our website!

Here’s a summary of what we have learned:

**Readers’ Workshop** – **Our learning target for reading is *I can make inferences about what is probably true*. Comprehension Strategies:** Students are learning that reading is more than just figuring out what the words say;

**readers read for meaning.**  Much like our previous unit on figuring out tricky words, students will be learning some

concrete skills to help them think actively and read with a wide awake brain.

This week we started our work learning about **inferential thinking**.  When we make inferences, we are thinking about *what’s probably true*.  We use our prior knowledge, we think about what makes sense, and we make a “smart guess” based on what we know.  When we add our prior knowledge (our schema) to text clues (evidence) we infer what’s probably true in our text. We learned how to make predictions about our texts and think about what we think might come next in a fiction story, and also in an informational text. We’re learning how to make inferences across genres so we can be flexible thinkers and well-rounded readers.  Students are using the language, “I infer…” and “I predict…” to talk about their inferential thinking.  You can support this work at home by asking your child to make inferences with their reading homework books!

**Homework -** Your child’s reading homework bag includes a copy of our reading strategies bookmark so you can help support your independent reader at home.  When they get stuck on a word and ask you to tell them what it says, point them toward these familiar visuals and use the language on the bookmark to prompt them to use their strategies.   **I ask students to read their books to you as many times as possible throughout the week, and bring them back at the end of the week to trade in for new ones.**This means they are reading you the same 4 books several times throughout the week. Repeated reading is so important in first grade!  Students need to practice reading accurately and fluently, and every time they re-read a book they gain confidence, build their sight-word recognition, and are able to have deeper conversations about their books with you.

**Integrated Studies –** **Our learning target in writing is *I can plan and write personal narratives.*** Students continue to apply the writing process: plan, write, illustrate, revise, celebrate!  One of our first grade standards is for students to become independent authors.  We are learning how to make choices about what we need to do next, how to go back into a piece of writing to finish it or fix it up, and how to turn our own life experiences into stories that make sense to readers. First graders learned how to evaluate peer writing and provide feedback. During partner sharing, students listened closely to the author’s story in order to be able to provide valuable feedback on what parts they liked and what might need to be added. Feedback was focused on whether the story included all the story elements; character, setting, problem, solution, and a so what. Did the story include feeling or talking? Next week, we will be working on writing personal narratives where a characters feelings change. Students will focused on “proving,” or showing the characters’ feelings by including information about what they think, say, and do.

**Math** – **Our current Learning Target is *I can use the equal sign flexibly.***

Students worked with “number trees” this week to help them understand the concept of composing and decomposing numbers. This skill will allow students to think flexibly when solving subtraction or missing addend math stories. When a student is solving this math story*, There are 10 swings on the playground, and 7 students are using the swings. How many swings are empty?* They can use a “number tree” to organize these numbers into a whole and two parts:

Students ask themselves, “what number is added to 7 to make 10 or 10 minus 7 equals?” They recognize the 10 in this problem is the whole and the 7 and 3 are the two parts that make 10.

7

10

?

We also took a closer look at the equal sign and what it really means. There is often the misconception that the equal sign means the total because so often children see this sign used like this, 7+3=10. The class was challenged to look at equivalent expression to determine if a statement was true or false and to prove their reasoning. For example; 5+3=6+2. Students were able to model the two sides of the equation with unifix cubes and explain that each side equals 8, therefore the expressions are equal on both sides. Making the statement true. To extend this learning at home create true and false equivalent expression and have your child determine if it is true or false. Have them provide reasoning behind their solution.

**Word Work** – Our current *Fun*dations unit is: **suffixes –s to CVC words; s sounds /z/** A suffix is an ending that can be added to a baseword. These words are plural nouns and singular verbs. The letter s sometimes sounds like /z/ when it is added to words as a suffix. These words include; **bugs, zaps, pens, dogs, quits**

Here are the sight words we practiced this week: **says, but, what, all, your**

Next week’s sight words are: **were, there, use, each, want**

Current sight words and *Fun*dation skills are listed on our website [www.mrsgalushasfirstgrade.weebly.com](http://www.mrsgalushasfirstgrade.weebly.com/)

**Some other logistics:**

* **It’s important to arrive to school on time each day!**  The bell rings at 8:08am.
* **We’ll be having our annual Reading for Inclusion event on Friday, November 7th.**Each classroom will host a guest reader who will share a book and lesson about including people who are disabled or differently abled.  The learning goal is that children will understand the importance of including others and treating people with respect regardless of disability or other differences.

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

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