Class Newsletter November 7, 2014

Dear Friends and Families,

Brrr, it’s cold out there! Next week will be the last week of Trimester I. I can’t believe how fast the first three months of school have flown by. These first graders have done such a wonderful job of transitioning into a rigorous academic year. Their eagerness to learn is reflected in the growth they have made this trimester, I am so proud of each and every one of them. Report cards will come home in backpacks on Friday, November 21st.

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 **questioning**. Readers ask questions before, during, and after reading a text, to help us keep our brains wide-awake, and understand text more deeply.  We learned about asking questions with fiction and poetry books. We’re learning how to ask questions across genres so we can be flexible thinkers and well-rounded readers. After reading the story *Grandfather Twilight* and recording our questions, we noticed that some answers to our questions were “right there” and some were “beyond the text.” The answers that were “beyond the text” require inferential thinking or more research to find the answer. Students are using the language “I wonder…”, “How come…”, “Who…”, “What…”, “When…”, “Where…”, and “Why…” to talk about the questions they have. You can support this work at home by asking your child to think about questions they have before, during, and after they read their reading homework books!

**Homework -** Thank you so much for all your support with reading at home!  Students come in excited to talk about having done their homework, and are doing a nice job remembering to bring in their bags to exchange their books.   **We 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 3 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 where a characters feelings change.*** 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. Right now, we’re working on stories about characters whose feelings change.  Ask your child to tell you about one of our favorite books, *Scardey Squirrel*, and all the things he was so afraid of at the beginning of the story.  Ask them if his feelings changed, and why.  You can support this learning at home by talking with your child about their own experiences and feelings, and helping them identify when their feelings might have changed.  For example, *“Remember when you were nervous to go to your first day of kindergarten, then you came home and were so excited to tell us all about your new friends?”*or, *“Remember how frustrated you felt trying to learn how to ride your bike, then how proud you felt once you got it?”*  The next step would be helping your child identify the “turning point,” or event that made them change the way they felt.  Writing personal narratives, or stories about our own lives, is such a great way for students to “be the expert” and feel like they’re the ones who know the most about their content.

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

We continued our work from last week on learning how to use the equal sign flexibly. Students were challenged to determine if an equivalent expression statement is true or false. If the statement was false, students changed one number to make the statement true. Here is an example of an equivalent expression statements we worked with; 5+3=2+4 is a false statement, it could be changed to 5+3=4+4 to make it true. This concept was linked to the commutative property of addition which states that changing the order of the numbers does not matter, the result stays the same. 5+3=3+5. This work with the equal sign precedes the lessons on commutatively in order to allow students to construct true number sentences such as 4 + 3 = 3 + 4 without misunderstanding the equal sign to mean that the numbers are the same. Students understand that when added together, two numbers make the same total, regardless of whether one of the numbers appears first or second in equations and expressions. To extend this learning at home create true and false equivalent expression that include the commutative property 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 digraph 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; **ships, locks, chins, chips, shuts**

Here are the sight words we practiced this week: **were, there, use, each, want**

Next week’s sight words are: **when, do, how, their, will**

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.
* **Picture retakes are on Monday, November 10th.**
* **Trimester I ends next Friday, November 14th. Reports will come home in backpacks the following Friday, November 21st.**

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

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