

7th Grade LA/SS Newsletter

1-5-08

Happy New Year!

Reading

- This week we will begin a novel set in Afghanistan to connect to our studies of the Middle East.
- Students will complete prereading activities to help build background knowledge in order to enhance comprehension of the novel.
- One activity we will complete this week to help focus on key words and concepts in the novel is called “Probable Passage.”
- We will continue to work on active reading strategies
- Word study work will connect with the novel as we read

Book Clubs

- Our second book club was completed before break on change-themed books.
- Students will receive another change-themed book for the third book club this week.
- It is so much fun to observe the insight gained as well as the development of conversational skills during student discussions.
- Students completed brochures on Beverley Naidoo before break.
- The brochures culminated our author study and included information as well as student book reviews of her work.
- Please help remind your child to bring the book and book club assignment on Tuesdays.

Writing

- We have been focusing on argumentative writing this trimester.
- Students completed problem-solution papers with connections to the study of Africa.
- This paper represented one of four writing pieces students are to complete to meet state writing requirements as part of an electronic writing portfolio.
- Student papers are scored using the NC writing rubrics.
- To prepare to write, we completed the following activities: we read problem-solution papers, identified necessary components/attributes, created a plan for a completed paper, wrote a paper with small group instruction, and completed a research plan to help write the content paper.
- In order to help remember some of the elements we need to include in our writing, we had fun creating movements for each element.
- We also completed the state on-demand writing prompt before break.
- Students had to respond to a prompt without guidance during the process.

- Students will receive feedback on the papers in writing conferences.
- We will focus on individual areas of growth and get some skill practice using the computer. Look for some Internet practice activities soon.
- We are going to do some expressive writing through narratives and poetry as well as continue to build on our argumentative and informational writing skills.

-Social Studies-

Currently we are sociologists traveling throughout the Middle East

The following information is our 'pre-break' studies from our unit on the Middle East. We will begin our political scientist perspective of the Middle East this week.

*5 Major World Religions

- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Christianity
- Judaism

-We discussed the "golden rule" (treat others as you want to be treated) and "golden thread" that lies within each religion that connects people throughout the world

-We discussed groups and subgroups of religions including Sunni and Shiite (Islam)

-Together we discussed being tolerant and respectful of beliefs and religions even if you don't agree and that if you want to help CHANGE the world you have to UNDERSTAND the world

-Connected religions to the Middle East and noticed most of these religions started on the continent of Asia

-Participated in stations and learned about these major religions, worked with a partner to read and discuss information presented in stations

-Students completes a puzzle work product that links each religion's differences and similarities to other religions that were researched

*Mesopotamia -"When it is dark enough, you can see the stars." -Persian Proverb

-Students responded to the literal and figurative quote listed above and I shared a story from the book Three Cups of Tea that referenced this quote and how it applied to our studies in Pakistan and that one person CAN make a difference.

-Viewed a power point slide presentation on ancient Mesopotamia "the land between two rivers" and the Sumerians

-Attended the following stations on ancient Mesopotamia and civilizations:

- geography of Mesopotamia
- Assyria
- Babylon
- Sumer
- Daily Life
- Fun Facts

***Arriving in the Middle East**

- Students 'packed' their suitcases, were inspected by 'customs' departed Africa and headed on a 'plane' to the Middle East (Southwest and Central Asia)
- Upon arriving in the Middle East, students received an itinerary which included geography station work and getting to know the land.
- Students identified countries within Southwest and Central Asia, explored bodies of water, resources, landforms, major cities within countries, located latitude and longitude and investigated bordering countries.

***Social Studies Conferencing**

- students were conferencing individually with Mrs. Porter this week
- discussed strengths and areas of growth in social studies

***Africa Cultural Festival**

- Learned African drumming and dancing with Ahmed and Dr. Saleef from Ghana
- viewed video on "Life in an African Village"
- West African food tasting provided by parents
- Storytelling by Alpha Toure from Mali
- African station rotations: carry the water, hoe the field, mudcloth, art not trash, Ghanaian day names, batik stamping, grind it up and owari

Thank you David and Margo Cloniger who own *One Neighborhood* in Birkdale Village. They helped make this day possible for our students. Thanks to all the parents who helped coordinate, clean up and/or provide African foods for the students. It was delicious!

-C.A.N (Changing Africa Now) Fridays-

If the world were a village:

-Students began with hearing the song "World". Students sang along and examined the meaning of the words

WORLD

Got a package full of Wishes
A Time machine, a Magic Wand
A Globe made out of Gold

No Instructions or Commandments
Laws of Gravity or
Indecisions to uphold

Printed on the box I see

A.C.M.E.'s Build-a-World-to-be
Take a chance - Grab a piece
Help me to believe it

What kind of world do you want?
Think Anything
Let's start at the start
Build a masterpiece
Be careful what you wish for
History starts now...

-A large brown box was placed in front of the students with the word A.C.M.E on the outside

-The question was posed to the students "What kind of world do you would want?" and we attached student answers on the box then discussed why you would want this kind of a world

-Dr. Cross introduced students into the world of 6 billion plus people and narrowed it down to a number we can understand---a village of 100. Students then compared millions and billions to seconds of time. (ask you student about these numbers)

-World as a Village Station Rotations

- air & water (Mrs. Patterson & Mrs. Knight)
- population (Dr. Cross & Mrs. Hobday)
- money & possessions (Mrs. Porter & Mrs. Keys)
- food, school, electricity, village of the past/future (Mrs. Kertesz & Mrs. Rieves)

-Movement of students: Students received a card listing the following categories then, traveled around the gym to locate the country, religion or language he/she represented. Students were able to see how big the world really is!

- Religions
- Nationalities
- Languages

-C.A.N groups: Students were able to choose which issue in Africa he/she was most interested in studying for the rest of the year. Students were assigned a teacher with the issue being studied and will help research this issue in Africa and become an 'expert' on this area of study. We will use this C.A.N project at the end of the year to wrap up our yearlong study on Africa.

- Water Issues with Dr. Cross & Ms. Audrey
- Poverty & Education Issues with Mrs. Hobday
- Genocide Issues with Mrs. Knight & Mrs. Porter
- Animal Rights Issues with Mrs. Rieves & Mrs. Keys
- Orphan Issues with Mrs. Kertesz
- Diseases Issues with Mrs. Patterson

-Look forward to: students researching issues in Africa, becoming more aware of the world, finding passion in an issue, teaching others about these issues, caring about people and creating an amazing end-of-the-year C.A.N project.

*The lessons today were based off the book "If the world were a village" by David J. Smith

Community Connections & Events of Interest

Pompeii Exhibit: http://www.discoveryplace.org/home/discovery_place-home.php

*If you plan to attend, see Mrs. Porter for a \$2.00 off coupon for the Pompeii exhibit

Greece secrets of the past: http://www.discoveryplace.org/imax/discovery_place-imax-greece.php

Gandhi Park: <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/244/story/143101.html>

Social Studies Links:

Southwest and Central Asia

Interactive Map of Asia:

<http://www.kidsgeo.com/geography-games/asia-map-game.php>

Name that Country-Interactive map of Middle East and North Africa:

http://www.rethinkingschools.org/just_fun/games/mapgame.html

Interactive tour of the country of Jordan: click on the places at the bottom of the page (i.e. Dead Sea)

http://www.phillipmartin.info/webpage/travel/middleeast/text_map_jordan.htm

Practicing facts and collecting food for those in need: www.freerice.com

*Please check the "Sign and Return" and "Take Home-Keep Home" sections of your child's accordion file. We are sending items home and notice that some items remain in the folders without parents seeing them.

*Check out our website for updates, information, and interesting links

<http://sites.google.com/site/spartanssla/Home>

Thanks!

Mrs. Hobday & Mrs. Porter