



November 2009
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First Grade Classroom Newsletter

Literacy News

Upcoming Dates!

- No school- Veteran's Day- Nov 11th
- Picture Retakes –November 12th
- Silent Auction- Nov
- Grandparents Lunch- Nov 19th
- Thanksgiving Break- Nov 25-27th
- Early Release 12:45- December 9th
- Field Trip to the Mint- December 15th
- Winter Break- Dec 21st- Jan 5th



Our first graders are in the middle of their second unit in the literacy Planning Guides. In reading this unit has a heavy emphasis on retelling stories. Since this is one of the primary ways we assess comprehension at this stage, understanding the qualities of "good retelling" is important. We have used a variety of picture books in our lessons, and worked on retelling in group and with partners.

Students have discovered that a good retelling includes:

- character NAMES
- events told in sequence
- details from the beginning, middle, and end
- interesting vocabulary and language from the text

This is something you can practice at home, too! After reading with your child, ask him/her to retell a few pages, a chapter, or the entire story. Read part of a story and review what happened "so far".

Discussing stories is essential for finding out what "sense" our readers are making as they read.

First grade writers are working hard on those Small Moments. We are currently focused on ending a story so that it sounds complete, doesn't jump away from the topic (Then I went home.) We are also trying to develop an ending that doesn't sound as if it could be tacked onto any story (It was awesome.) We are finding this is not necessarily an easy task. We have been discussing alternate endings to stories, finding great endings in stories from our books, revising endings in our own writing to make them stronger. Small Moment homework should begin to show attempts to write stories with endings that complete the story.

Character Education

One of my favorite parts of the day is morning meeting. This is a time where we check in on people's feelings, talk about positive pluses that happened that week and share certain moments or stories with one another. It's a way to build community and social skills and also to talk and learn about having good character.

This month, our character trait is responsibility with an overall theme this year on integrity. Having conversations at home with your child about their responsibilities as a first grader, family member, and community member can help to build an understanding that character is important in and out of school.



Congratulations to our October "principal preferral award" recipients for showing Character: Ashur Lacroix, Ella Turner, and Zachary Taylor. Keep up the good work Cougars!

Math Highlights

We have just finished Unit 3 in Everyday Math. Your little one has been working on noticed the patterns in number grids, solved simple addition and subtraction on number lines, started telling time to the hour and half hour, and finding the pattern and rule in frames and arrows to reinforce skip counting and number sense.

Our next unit focuses on time and measurement. We will be practicing using a ruler and tape measure to measure items accurately by inches as well as telling time to **quarter past** and **quarter till** on an analog clock, which is an end of year goal for first grade. We also will continue to build on and practice simple addition facts.

Social Studies Highlights

We have finished up our Science Unit and have now moved on to Social Studies. We are learning more about families and family structures. We will also be learning more about the needs and wants of families. The three basic needs for families are food, shelter, and clothing. We are discussing the difference between needing something to live, and wanting something for fun. We will also learn about some basic economic ideas, which will relate to our field trip to the Denver Mint in December.