
Room Nineteen Wartik Tribune

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A Full Week

This was the first five-day week of the school year, but that wasn't the only reason for the title of this column. It was a very *full* week due to all that we accomplished. The class worked very hard as we packed quite a great deal into five days.

Starting with math, we continued our review of the fact families. We looked at the 5's, 2's and 4's. In addition to reviewing the basic facts through 12, I'm also trying to give the class the tools to solve any problem involving the multipliers that we're focusing on. We've shared and tried out a variety of tricks and/or techniques. I'm also trying to build mental math skills with the class, which is a component we'll continue to work on in the classroom. My goal is for the students to not just look at a problem and know how to solve it, but also understand the underlying number structures and how they interact. The 5's "trick" is a useful one, but also illustrates the relationship between 5 and 10. We've also spent a good deal of time with the Marcy Cook problem solving cards, allowing kids a variety of challenges – no matter where they are in their fact-family comfort.

We've also been working hard at Mad Minute Math. Hopefully your child has been sharing his/her progress with you. (The past two week's sheets have been included in the Friday Folder.) I've stressed to the class that they should only compare themselves to themselves! It doesn't matter how someone else is doing. Their only goal is to get better each and every time they sit down to do some MMM.

Our work with *Winn-Dixie* is going well. We've accelerated the pace a bit, trying to read two chapters each day during SSR and then having our follow-up discussion right away. This seems to be working out well. Yesterday, we had a "discussion on paper" instead of in a whole group. I asked the students to reflect in their Writer's Notebook about *Winn-Dixie* and what we've learned/appreciated so far.

More Info

There were plenty of firsts this week. We unveiled the official spelling book and the class began to get familiar with how we'll use it, the pre-tests and the post-tests. They're not all there yet, and that's fine. It takes some getting used to. As well, science kicked off. The 4th-graders were split into three mixed-class groupings and sent off to me, Mr. Burleson or Mrs. Amaral for the start of our science curriculum. I'll be teaching the Sound unit, Mr. B will work on Rocks & Minerals and Mrs. Amaral will do Hydroponics. The groups will be with each teacher twice a week (Wednesdays and Fridays from 1:00 to 2:00) for about eight to ten weeks, and will then rotate.

One of the highlights for me over the past two weeks has been our morning snack time, when we take a look at the Chicago Tribune headlines. We have only once made it past the front page – often we get stuck talking about just one topic. The class is incredibly interested and aware of what's going on. And when they don't get something, they don't hesitate to ask questions. I am *so* impressed with their attention and thirst for knowledge.

This desire for more information was also evident (and welcome) as we finished yesterday's *Voyage of the Mimi* segment, which dealt with time, the sun, and the movement of the earth. I had to cut off the discussion after twenty minutes, but there were still plenty of questions to be answered!

Looking Ahead

- GO TO SCHOOL NIGHT – Thursday night at 8:00 p.m. It is very important that at least one parent from each family attend. There is a lot to cover about our year together, as well as many important dates for your calendars.
- Have a great weekend! Happy New Year to anyone who may be celebrating.

My child, _____, and I have read this week's newsletter. We also looked through the contents of the Friday Folder and are returning all of the classwork that was included.

Signature

Date