Authentic Literacy: inspiring life-long, enthusiastic, inquisitive learners!

Our classroom is stocked full of fantastic reading material for all interests!

This is going to be an exciting year! Grade 5 students will be investigating all sorts of authentic information, and quality literature! Among other text forms, students will be reading and interacting with:

- Newspapers, Magazines,
- Menus, Instruction Manuals, Comic Books, Web Pages, Maps,
- Brochures, Letters, journals, diaries, Novels, picture books, short stories!

Among many other important things this year, students will learn to think about what is happening inside the brain of a good reader while they are reading! This is a fun process called ‘metacognition’. Students will have an opportunity to learn about themselves and how they interact with the world around them.

Watch out parents! Students will also be learning to make opinion statements and back them up with solid evidence!

Consumer beware! With the rapidly changing world of technology, our children need to be aware of bias, false advertising, and the mixed messages that bombard them through television, the internet, video games and other media. This year we will be looking more deeply at text to think critically about what the messages really are, what they were intended to be, or how they could be interpreted. This will be an insightful journey for students as they learn to realize that text is much deeper than the ink on the page!

Critical Thinking Big Idea
How do Communities improve life for everyone? Exploring the concepts of friendship, identity, rights, responsibilities and

What does it mean to be literate in 2008?

“To be successful personally and professionally, today’s students need to be independent, flexible, creative, critical, and strategic thinkers and communicators. They need to be proficient in many “literacies”—that is, they must be able to understand and communicate with people from diverse backgrounds by means of a wide and constantly expanding range of texts, media and communication methods. They need to be confident in their learning and motivated to continue to learn throughout their lives.”

—A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction 2006
Music and Art enhance literacy! We will explore many rhythms, beats, colours and forms.

Our classroom is a “Tribes” classroom.

The term “Tribes” has come to be known as “a large family or group that someone belongs to.” The “Tribes” program helps to create belonging for children in schools. It helps us as parents and teachers to instill deep values of respect, responsibility and relationship skills. Within the “Tribes” philosophy there are four agreements. These agreements will form the culture of our class.

1. ATTENTIVE LISTENING: To pay close attention to one another’s expression of ideas, opinions and feelings; to check for understanding and to let others know that they have been heard.

2. APPRECIATION/NO PUT-DOWNS: To treat others kindly; to state appreciation for unique qualities, gifts, skills and contributions; to avoid negative remarks, name-calling, hurtful gestures and behaviours.

3. RIGHT TO PASS AND TO PARTICIPATE: To have the right to choose when and to what extent one will participate in a group activity; to observe quietly if not participating actively.

4. MUTUAL RESPECT: To affirm the value and uniqueness of each person; to recognise and appreciate individual and cultural differences; and offer feedback that encourages growth.

Open Communication Policy

Communication on many levels is a crucial part of students achieving and maintaining success at school.

Parent-Student communication is the most important. Talk to your kids about their experiences at school. For time strapped families the “Best-Worst-Most Interesting” conversations are often great starting off points. Also, our class will soon be publishing a “Things to Talk to Your Kids About” list. Students will work collaboratively to come up with discussion prompts for dinner time conversation!

Student-Teacher communication is also very, very important. I will make myself available during daily ‘administration time’ which occurs during the last 15 minutes of every day. It is during this time that students can approach me with any administrative questions. This will become routine through practice! I am also available for 30 minutes before school for quite reading time conferencing time or extra conversation time. Students are welcome.

Parent-Teacher communication is last, but not least! This will be the last news letter you receive compiled by myself alone. From now on, students will be taking charge of the class news. I have also set up a class web page that will be up and running soon. On it you will find major assignments. Agendas are a part of our class routine, however student’s are in charge of their own. Also, feel free to write, email or call the school any time.

A Note To Students

I am looking forward to our year together. We have so much to learn, and so little time; I don’t want to waste a minute of it. Our time together is precious and will be dedicated to fun, exhilarating hard work, and learning. I bring my best work to school everyday for you to work with. I expect you to do the same!

Yours Truly;

Ms. Currie

The Ontario Language Curriculum was revised in 2006.

Let’s explore some reading expectations for Grade 5 students in September:

1.1 Read a variety of texts
Students will read a variety of texts from diverse cultures, including myths, plays, short stories, poetry, novels, graphic novels, diagrams, brochures, graphs, graphic organizers, and informational texts such as textbooks, non-fiction books on a range of topics, print and online magazines, reviews and emails or “zines”.

1.3 Comprehension Strategies
Students will learn about and practice a variety of reading comprehension strategies and use them appropriately before, during and after their reading to help them achieve meaningful understanding.

2.3 Text Features
Students will learn to identify a variety of text features and explain how they help readers to understand texts.

1.6 Making connections
Students will extend their understanding of texts by connecting ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights, to other familiar texts and to the world around
What else will we be learning in Grade 5?

Communication and Problem Solving in Math

Students will develop, select and apply problem-solving strategies as they pose and solve problems and conduct investigations to help deepen their understanding of math.

Students will work in pairs, in teams and individually to develop and apply reasoning skills as well as construct and defend arguments.

Students will make connections among ideas and concepts in math and relate them to daily life experiences.

Students will explore concepts of Geometry, Measurement and Patterning and Algebra.

New Arts Curriculum!

The Ministry has created a brand new Arts Curriculum! It is packed with incredible ideas and information. Teachers are still waiting to obtain the document, until we have the new one, we will continue with the old.

Students will examine the work of famous artists, musicians and performers. By critiquing famous works, students will develop their ability to infer meaning, celebrate beauty and acknowledge their own personal preferences.

Students will create their own works of visual art. A focus will be on design, form and use of color.

Students will create their own pieces of music ranging from drum beats to short jingles and longer lyrics. Singing will be an integral part of the Grade 5 program!

Drama will be closely linked with the texts that students are reading and writing. Oral expression enhanced with drama will be expected from students often.

How does Government play a part in our Community?

Students will explore the three levels of government and through engaging activities will identify how government plays a role in their community and how rights of groups and individuals and the responsibilities of citizenship apply to their own lives.

Physical Education and Health

Overall health and fitness awareness is crucial for our students. This term we will focus on setting fitness goals, fitness building activities, indoor and outdoor

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Writer’s Workshop

Writer’s Workshop is an ongoing process where students create, reflect upon, revise and share their written work. From this time students will produce many different types of text. They will conference with other peers to help improve their work, as well as conference with me! I love nothing more than to sit with a child and listen to them read their own writing!

Final Notes:

Technology

I believe that using technology in the classroom is a crucial means of engaging our students and preparing them for the world in which they live. We will explore web sites, wikis and blogs and discuss the issues of 'Digital Citizenship' that are so important for our students. You will soon be able to find our class newsletter on our 'Class Blog'!

Also, if you prefer to receive newsletters and communication electronically please be sure to give me your email address!

Homework

Students will have a variety of homework assignments that may range from having a conversation with someone at home, to completing work that needs to be done, to major projects.

Behaviour

Our classroom will be a safe learning environment for all students. Students need to feel welcome, respected and confident to try their best at all they do. If, for some reason, this environment cannot be achieved for all students, we will be required to problem solve through open communication and shared conversation until a solution has been achieved. I am committed to all students feeling safe and able to be themselves.

Watch for the ‘Ask Me About’ section in your child’s agenda! This will be some ideas for dinner conversation!

Ask me about:
- pentominoes
- classroom community responsibilities
- our classroom agreements
- benefits of working in a team

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