

Ms.Joanna's Third Grade Newsletter March/April 2010

MATH

While we continue our quick, daily practice of using time and money in realistic formats, we are finished with our emphasis on these subject areas. Instead, we are deeply engrossed in our study of simple multiplication and division. Our students have learned that multiplication is a fast way of combining or adding equal groups. With this, our students understand that there are two ways to perform and code each multiplication problem, by switching the order of the factors to produce the same product. We are practicing our multiplication facts daily with flashcards, quick quizzes, worksheets, games, candy boxes, building multiplication cities and songs with videos. To help your child at home in the process of memorizing the Multiplication Facts, please encourage him/her by supplying flashcards, practicing the facts together, singing the songs we learned in class and watching these videos on youtube: Einsteinbot 0-12, Schoolhouse Rock Multiplication Songs, and the Multiples of 4, etc.

In our study of division, our students now know that division is backwards multiplication or a fast way to separate numbers into equal groups or pieces. Our students have realized that they already know how to divide because they have memorized both factors of most simple multiplication problems. They are also beginning to understand that fractions are actually division problems. We will continue to study fractions as we practice or division skills with manipulatives and working problems.

As our students gain more confidence in their multiplication and division facts, they will learn more complex multiplication with double digits and carrying and more complex division with the additional concept of remainders. We will also revisit the abacus and learn how to perform both multiplication and addition on this useful math tool.

INQUIRY NEWS

To much success, we have finished our unit on How We Express Ourselves through Creative Expression! Our students worked very hard and showed much progress in their work habits in these final projects. I was very impressed and pleased with their great effort and the amazing artistic talents that emerged during the creative process. In addition, our students learned to create and edit many different poetry forms throughout this unit, and we plan on continuing our study of poetry from now until the end of the year. In fact, each student is producing a book of very fine, original poetry to share with you during our student led conferences!

We are now thoroughly involved in our next unit of inquiry: Sharing the Planet. Our class is making inquiries in the central idea: The rainforest is an interdependent ecosystem with limited resources. For this central idea, we are following these lines of inquiry: responsibilities necessary for preserving natural resources, plants and animals have adaptations which allow them to survive, water and its relationship to life on earth and the relationship of organisms.

During this unit, our students are researching an animal of choice from the Amazon Rainforest by investigating the animal's physical description, lifestyle/habits and habitat. Our students will conduct this research using 3 different research sources, encyclopedia articles, internet sites and nonfiction books, and documenting these sources in a bibliography. With said research, your student will produce a three paragraph report, with each paragraph containing a topic sentence, three supporting sentences and a concluding sentence. In direct correlation, our computer classes will help our students to produce hyperstudio projects of their rainforest animal. Finally, the reports will include a creative element, such as a mobile or sculpture, that will reveal the interdependence of their animal in the rainforest ecosystem and the adaptations that allow their animal to survival in the ecosystem

Outside of this major research project, we will also be investigating and inquiring into food chains, webs and pyramids through books, diagrams and games. We will analyze and understand the cycles of the rainforest and how natural events and human influences can interrupt these cycles and affect the survival of different species in the rainforest ecosystem. In the end, our students will determine their responsibilities in preserving the rainforest.

As a culmination of this unit and an introduction to our next unit, Where We Are in Place and Time: Indigenous Peoples, we will be taking a field trip to the Botanical Garden in Parque Carolina. Students will be able to observe a variety of plants from different ecosystems, including some rainforest epiphyte plants, such as bromeliads and orchids. They will also be exposed to an Indigenous exhibit.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- * Student Led Conferences, April 13th
- * International Festival, April 17th
- * Earth Day, April 22nd
- * WCK Assembly April 23rd