



MLCA NEWSLETTER

ACADEMIC EDITION

November/December 2020



MLCA First graders Ediz Goktas, Rosie LaRue and Everett Yu revel in autumn's splendor!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD

I have been thinking a lot over the past week about something Jews say upon entering the synagogue for morning prayers: “How goodly are your tents, O Jacob!” The association between Jacob and tents stems back to the very first appearance of the brothers Jacob and Esau. “The lads grew up and Esau became one who knows hunting, a man of the field; but Jacob was a wholesome man, abiding in tents.” The tents referred to here are the tents of learning. For all of us here, MLCA is our tent. It is a place of learning – and, wherever there is learning, there is God. And so ours is a holy endeavor. How goodly is our tent.

It’s an appropriate quote for another reason as well. You might expect that such beautiful words would be the utterance of one of the great patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or our teacher Moses. But, in fact, they were the words of an enemy, the sorcerer Balaam. The Moabite king, Balak, had commissioned him to curse the Children of Israel out of fear even though they had come in peace. And yet every time Balaam would open his mouth to curse, God caused him to pronounce some of the most beautiful and memorable blessings. This year has brought upon us no shortage of curses. But they have served only to bring us together and to make us stronger for all of it.

This spring, as other schools made only peremptory attempts at education or abdicated all responsibility, our students were engaged in rigorous learning. This summer, even as realities and expert guidance kept changing week-to-week, we persevered in first developing and then fully reshaping our plans for reopening. We had a wonderful orientation week, a productive month of online learning, and now this magical return. Meanwhile, many of the innovations of this time leave us better: we added a class mentor program, extended our music program, created a geography program, added highly qualified scholars to our faculty, and made investments in our building.

I pray that the year has exhausted its supply of curses and that we can look ahead to more peaceful days. But no matter what lies before us, I know that we will come together, stand together, and rise together in the holy endeavor that is our tent of learning, that is MLCA.

Thanks as always,

Matt

KINDERGARTEN

TEACHER: MR. CHILBERT
SUBJECT: ENGLISH

Our Kindergarten English students have learned three poems that they can recite by heart: "At the Seaside", by Robert Louis Stevenson, "The Swing", by Robert Louis Stevenson, and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", by Robert Frost. Each student knows how to perform their poems with the correct posture, introduction, and concluding bow. Please ask them to do a performance at home during your family time.

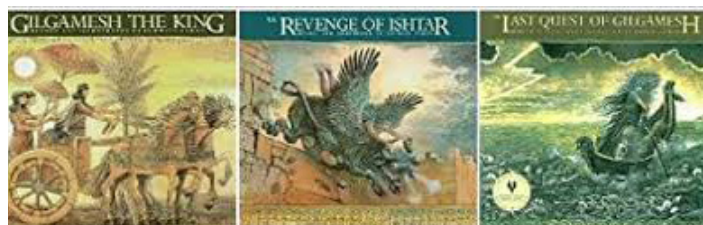
We have spent a lot of time laying the foundation for their training in English phonics which will begin more rigorously in First Grade. Each student can sing the alphabet, recognize every English letter, and pronounce each English consonant. We are beginning to learn about some of the simplest vowel pronunciation such as the "short vowel" sounds.

This Fall, we have been reading from a beautiful, illustrated retelling of The Epic of Gilgamesh. This story is in three parts: Gilgamesh the King, The Revenge of Ishtar, and The Last Quest of Gilgamesh. In this story, we find some of the questions that humankind has been asking for many thousands of years: What makes a good King? How do friends make us better? Should man fear death? These questions guided our discussions in class as we followed Gilgamesh to the ends of the earth. We created a few Gilgamesh characters to play with at our seats during these dramatic tellings of the oldest work of human literature.

TEACHER: MR. GORMLEY
SUBJECT: HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

So far this year, we've covered a number of explorers who ventured to the New World, including Erikson, Columbus, Cabot, Vespucci, Balboa, DeLeon, Cartier, the Huguenots, Drake, and Raleigh. We discussed how contested the New World was, given the native tribes, the different quarrels that European powers had with one another as they played out here, the disparate motivations for settlers (riches, religious freedom, glory, etc.). Of particular interest to the children was the story of John Smith, whose spirit of adventure always led him on into the unknown.

We will be moving on to Henry Hudson, the Puritans' settlement at Plymouth Rock, John Winthrop, Roger Williams, and King Philip's War. During this time of monumental growth, the conflict is only inflamed, for a time mostly between the English and various native tribes, but soon enough between the French and the English. Nevertheless, the settlers seem determined to govern themselves or perish in the endeavor, which is something I like to bring out with the students.



TEACHER: MRS. SHPILMAN

SUBJECT: MATH

We have been having a blast in Kindergarten Math class, despite the very unusual circumstances of the year that required us to adapt our program to today's realities. Since the beginning of the school year, we have been focusing on several key topics that are essential to building a strong number sense and a good mathematical foundation for the future.

Our counting activities are aimed at promoting number sense and number literacy in the children. We have been using the number line to learn to recognize and name two-digit numbers. We are learning to tell the difference between 12 and 21 and finding numbers within a range (e.g., bigger than 10 but smaller than 25)

We have been practicing counting forward and backwards along the number line, starting at different points on the number line, so that students don't simply memorize the numbers in order like a song. We have been identifying "number neighbors" - e.g., what number comes between 12 and 14.

For arithmetic practice we have been working on single-digit addition, and we practice this skill using a variety of tools. One of our favorite games is "1-2-3 peek and see", where I hold up cards with circles of two different colors for a few seconds and students have to figure out how many dots are on the card by remembering the picture and then counting in their head. The students are getting better and better every day!

We have also started learning subtraction (in disguise) by playing a game called "Splat", where we start out with ten circles on the board, and a few of them get covered by a large splat. Students then have to figure out how many circles got covered.

Special topics and games underwent the most modifications to work in the current classroom setup, but we're having a blast playing the logic game "Ghost" and "Woof-meow-quack".

We have also spent a lot of time building with a variety of different block sets (Qbitz and Snap cubes), and drawing our structures to scale. Our kindergarteners have gotten impressively good at these skills!

The MLCA kindergarteners are a wonderful group - very engaged, focused and enthusiastic to learn! It's a joy to work with them and I am looking forward to covering a lot of mathematical ground this year.



TEACHER: MME. NSELEL

SUBJECT: FRENCH

Since the beginning of the school year, students in Kindergarten have been working hard at learning a new language! As I type this newsletter, they just completed the Syntalk method Français 1 and are bringing the textbook home; if you have any time, please ask them to show you what they know already.

Throughout this book, they were introduced to different characters (Antoine, Brigitte, Sylvie, ect..), some animals (le chien, le chat, etc..), foods (la pomme, le gâteau) and drinks (de l'eau, du lait), 4 colors... With these characters, they've learned to describe and repeat actions like eating, drinking, playing, going places (au parc, à la maison) using French verbs conjugated at the 3rd person of the singular form. This first textbook introduces numbers 1-10 only but in class we've counted to 30 already a few times.

The goal of French Kindergarten is developing speaking skills and listening comprehension as well; therefore, in addition to reciting words associated with the pictures in their book, students have been listening to my words and pointing to the matching picture.

We have also learned 6 short French songs/nursery rhymes so far and the students have enjoyed this ritual a lot! "Frère Jacques" and "Le Furet" were the most popular in this class.

In addition to our regular 4 weekly classes, I get to see most of the students in French Enrichment. This is an opportunity for reinforcing the vocabulary learned through games like I Spy, Pictionary, Memory game, etc.. Students also get a chance to illustrate the lyrics of the songs learned the past weeks.

Another focus of Enrichment is practicing what I call "class routines" such as how to say in French "can I go to the bathroom?", "can I drink some water?", etc...

TEACHER: MR. DARER
SUBJECT: SCIENCE



We began the school year by learning about what a category is and practiced organizing items into different categories based on common properties. We then placed various objects into the categories of Earth-Made, Human-Made, and Living/Biological.

Next, the class planted bean seeds and learned about the structure and function of different parts of a plant. We discussed how plants use the sun's energy to make their own food (photosynthesis) and incorporated this idea into our unit on energy. We explored different types of energy and discussed how energy flows through a system.

The Kindergarten class also completed an experiment to determine how many pigments are in the different leaves we found around school. We crushed up leaves, poured in rubbing alcohol to help extract the pigments, placed a strip of coffee filter paper in the glass jar, and covered it for two days. When we came back, we observed the different types of pigment molecules traveled different distances up the filter paper and we saw three to four different color pigments in the Maple, Oak, and Tulip Poplar leaves.

We now are learning about how we can tell if something is a solid, liquid, or a gas, and also discussing how one state of matter can change to a different state, for example water boiling.

In Hands On Skills class, we have been practicing identifying trees around the school based on their leaf shapes. We discussed characteristics of the leaves that can help us tell them apart. The students have learned to identify sugar maple, red maple, pine, spruce, oak, beech, and sassafras leaves. We also have been observing birds that come to the bird feeders at school and learning to identify birds based on their physical characteristics. The students have learned to identify a downy woodpecker, white breasted nuthatch, tufted titmouse, robin, cardinal, blue jay, house sparrow, bald eagle, crow, black capped chickadee, and turkey vulture.



TEACHER: CANTOR PORTNOY
SUBJECT: MUSIC THEORY

The objectives of music theory are to develop a deeper love of music, which is an inherent human trait, and to journey towards an understanding of how music works, with the eventual goal of mastering to some degree sightreading, harmony and composition.

In early grades, we begin by applying Solfeggio (numbers or "do-re-mi") to lots of songs, such that the students develop a feel for melody, steps and leaps, and phrasing. Most of the children can already sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" with solfeggio.

We have reviewed the staff, the concept of time signature, the whole note, half note, dotted half note and quarter note. We have also worked on understanding the elements of music: rhythm, beat, tempo, pitch, melody, dynamics and expression. Beyond the technical aspects, however, my goal is for the students to enjoy music, and to realize how making music a part of their beings can be life-altering and immeasurably enhancing.

Beyond that, the students learn about musical "tradition", and the passing on of that tradition, whether in "composed" or "folk" music. To that end, we've had lots of stories and a few videos that demonstrate formal orchestral and music theatre traditions as well as more informal ones, such as country music.

Families will soon be receiving a sound file of professional recordings of the pieces we have learned to sing ("I Like Your Eyes" by John Denver, "Getting to Know You" and "Dites-Moi" by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, and the French children's song "Il Court, Le Furet"). We will soon be learning some patriotic and holiday songs, "Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram" for Diwali, "If I Had a Hammer" for Thanksgiving, "Happy Hanukkah, My Friend," and "The Christmas Song". We will also be taking a closer look at "The Star Spangled Banner".

TEACHER: MORAH CRAMMER BEN-TUV
SUBJECT: JUDAIC STUDIES

My goal is that by the end of the year the kindergarten students will get to know significant parts of the morning prayer, major Torah stories that appear in the weekly Parasha, important customs and values of Judaism. I also want to introduce them to the Hebrew language as it is in prayer, daily conversation, stories and Hebrew songs.

In order to achieve these goals, I see the Hebrew calendar, the prayer, the holidays and the Torah portion of the week, as frameworks that mark the course of progress in learning. We study prayers, hear Torah stories and other stories, draw and sing. I always explain the words of the Tefila and connect it to other subjects such as the week Parasha. Many times I speak to the students in Hebrew. I also ask them to repeat important words. We sing songs in Hebrew especially during prayer but not only. During this trimester, the students were exposed to Torah stories, Hasidic stories, songs and stories in Hebrew, and to Israeli artists: Mirik Snir, Yaakov Orland, Yehudit Ravitz, and YL Peretz.

In the month of Tishrei we learned about Repentance, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot. We talked about the meaning of prayer, the names of God, and different ways of speaking to God. Later in the trimester I expanded on the explanation of the Tfila by connecting it to characters, stories, and ideas which I taught in class, for example prayers that are praise to God, prayers about the creation of the world and the creation of men, Abraham our father etc.

In preparation for each holiday, we dealt with various holiday-related issues. For example, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we discussed our responsibility to others. Starting from Parshas Bereishit, we learned stories from the weekly Torah Portion.

The most important goal for me is to connect the children to Judaism in an experiential way using story, song, art and crafts. At each meeting we talk and pray and sing. Sometimes we look at art, and sometimes we hear stories or watch short videos related to the topics taught. It is important for me to be attentive to children and their interests in order to bring them into the world of Judaism.

TEACHER: CANTOR PORTNOY
SUBJECT: HEBREW

The children have for the most part learned to read, and write the cursive, for the first four alphabet letters. They are learning their colors, days of the week, and how to greet one another. In addition, we have frequent stories and songs to enliven and enhance our learning experience.



TEACHER: MS. WOO
SUBJECT: STORYTIME

Over the past two months, the Kindergarteners have read many, many stories! During MLCA@Home, the kindergarten class was at school and in between zoom classes, we had Story Time (then called "Enrichment"). Once we transitioned back to in-person learning, we have had a dedicated Story Time period almost every day. Our goal during Story Time is to read great works of literature and reinforce the stories by doing activities, making crafts, and/or retelling the stories. Recently we read stories from the Tales of King Arthur and Arabian Nights. I greatly cherish my time with the Kindergarteners!

TEACHER: MS. WOO
SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN STUDIES

The K/2 Christian Studies class has kicked off wonderfully this year. For the past two months, the students have had so much fun learning about the Bible, starting with God and creation (my plan is to try to get through an overview of the whole Bible this year). We have finished studying the main stories and characters in the book of Genesis and will continue through our survey of the Bible with the book of Exodus. To supplement the Bible lesson, the students have also been memorizing the books of the bible, making crafts, and playing review games. The students' enthusiasm each day makes me so excited for the rest of the year!

FIRST GRADE

TEACHER: CANTOR PORTNOY

SUBJECT: MUSIC THEORY

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Beyond that, the students learn about musical "tradition", and the passing on of that tradition, whether in "composed" or "folk" music. To that end, we've had lots of stories and a few videos that demonstrate formal orchestral and music theatre traditions as well as more informal ones, such as country music.

Families will soon be receiving a sound file of professional recordings of the pieces we have learned to sing ("I Like Your Eyes" by John Denver, "Getting to Know You" and "Dites-Moi" by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, and the French children's song "Il Court, Le Furet"). We will soon be learning some patriotic and holiday songs, "Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram" for Diwali, "If I Had a Hammer" for Thanksgiving, "Happy Hanukkah, My Friend," and "The Christmas Song". We will also be taking a closer look at "The Star Spangled Banner".

TEACHER: MME. NSELEL

SUBJECT: FRENCH

Since the beginning of the school year, students in First grade have not only continued to practice their speaking and listening skills like they did in Kindergarten but also started to spell in French. They get to practice many times by writing words on their own white board before writing them again in their book. French spelling is challenging and students shouldn't be discouraged if they make some mistakes in their weekly dictée!

We just finished studying lesson 10 of the Syntalk method Français 3 and in addition to reviewing words learned in books 1 and 2 last year, the new vocabulary covered so far includes clothes (le pantalon, la robe, les chaussures, etc.), places (le magasin, l'école), foods (le pain, le fromage), school supplies (le cahier, le crayon, le sac à dos)...

Another difference with Kindergarten is the introduction and use of the 1st and 2nd person of the singular form of verbs (je/'i' and tu) in addition to the 3rd (il/elle). Some of those verbs describe actions like writing, taking, eating, buying, going, playing.. Every time a new verb is introduced, we try to memorize and recite its conjugation of the singular form.

We have also learned 4 short French songs/nursery rhymes so far and the students have enjoyed this ritual a lot! "Alouette" was probably the most popular in this class.

In addition to our regular 4 weekly classes, I get to see the students in French Enrichment. This is an opportunity for reinforcing the vocabulary learned through games and activities such as I Spy, Pictionary, Memory game, words search, etc.. Students also get a chance to illustrate the lyrics of the songs learned the past weeks. Another focus of Enrichment is practicing what I call "class routines" such as how to say in French "can I go to the bathroom?", "can I drink some water?", "can I sharpen my pencil?", etc...

TEACHER: DR. FRADKIN

SUBJECT: MATH

The first month of first grade math was all about exploring the numbers 1-10. The students counted dots in various arrangements, put the numbers together and broke them apart in different ways, and solved both basic and tricky word problems involving the first 10 counting numbers. Particular emphasis was put on the number 10; we discussed what makes 10 special in our number system and listed all the pairs of numbers that make 10. We then played some games and solved some puzzles involving these pairs.

This was followed by units on addition and subtraction. The students worked on problems involving adding more than two numbers as well as missing addend problems. They also solved some addition and subtraction word problems.

Our next big focus was on interpreting word problems and drawing pictures to help solve them. Here is a sample problem:

"Alice lives on the third floor from the bottom and the fifth floor from the top. How many floors are in Alice's building?" The students very quickly found the answer - it was 8. And they didn't need to draw a picture, they insisted, they can add $3+5$ without it. But after I convinced them to draw those pictures after all, they discovered that somehow the answer was 7. For the next two problems, many more of them were willing to draw pictures and not just rely on their intuitions. Knowing how to draw useful pictures and diagrams will help them solve problems throughout school and beyond.

Another big focus for the first graders has been on skip counting. The first ten or so minutes of most math classes is devoted to this. The students have skip counted by most numbers from 2 to 10, both forwards and backwards (we have also done numbers such as 11, 20, and 30). The skip counting does not always start at zero! We may start at 3 and count by 4's. After we skip count and write all of the numbers on the board, the students spend some time looking for patterns. They always notice that the ones digit of our counting numbers repeats every some number of steps (usually 2, 5 or 10). Often there are patterns in the tens digits as well. Looking for (and finding) patterns is one of the most exciting and key aspects of mathematics, and the first grade students are doing an excellent job with it!



TEACHER: MR. GORMLEY

SUBJECT: HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

So far this year, we've covered a number of explorers who ventured to the New World, including Erikson, Columbus, Cabot, Vespucci, Balboa, DeLeon, Cartier, the Huguenots, Drake, and Raleigh. We discussed how contested the New World was, given the native tribes, the different quarrels that European powers had with one another as they played out here, the disparate motivations for settlers (riches, religious freedom, glory, etc.). Of particular interest to the children was the story of John Smith, whose spirit of adventure always led him on into the unknown.

We will be moving on to Henry Hudson, the Puritans' settlement at Plymouth Rock, John Winthrop, Roger Williams, and King Philip's War. During this time of monumental growth, the conflict is only inflamed, for a time mostly between the English and various native tribes, but soon enough between the French and the English. Nevertheless, the settlers seem determined to govern themselves or perish in the endeavor, which is something I like to bring out with the students.

TEACHER: MS. WOO

SUBJECT: STORYTIME

The First Graders asked to read a story of adventure or war, and so we are reading Tales from the Odyssey by Mary Pope Osborne, which retells Homer's Odyssey. The first graders have loved listening to and retelling the journey of brave Odysseus. We have finished Part 1 and will be moving on to Part 2. We reinforce the story by playing review games and acting out the story. I love that the first graders are captivated by a story that is almost 3000 years old!

TEACHER: MR. DARER

SUBJECT: SCIENCE

In First Grade Science, we began the school year by learning about how helicopters are able to fly. We discussed air pressure, lift, gravity, and the turning of the rotors. We then built and launched our own helicopters using a straw, tape, and piece of paper for the wings. The students practiced engineering design by making slight adjustment to their helicopter to make them fly higher.

We then learned about butterfly and bird migration to the South in the wintertime. We came up with the big question: how do butterflies and birds know which way to fly to head South? To answer this question, we began our unit on magnetism.

The students explored the properties of magnets and learned about magnetic fields through demonstrations and free play with magnets, paper clips, pennies, and iron filings. After several lessons on magnetism and magnetic fields, the First Grade class built their own compass by magnetizing a paperclip and floating it on a plastic guitar pick in a cup of water. The paperclip aligned with Earth's magnetic field and pointed North. We then practiced using a compass and a paper map together to determine which way we need to walk (or swim) to get to different countries. We then practiced drawing maps of the classroom and recess area.

The First Grade class also completed an experiment to determine how many pigments are in the different leaves we found around school. We crushed up leaves, poured in rubbing alcohol to help extract the pigments, placed a strip of coffee filter paper in the glass jar, and covered it for two days. When we came back, we observed the different types of pigment molecules traveled different distances up the filter paper and we saw three to four different color pigments in the Maple, Oak, and Tulip Poplar leaves.

We are now are learning about how we can tell if something this a solid, liquid, or a gas, and also discussing how one state of matter can change to a different state, for example water boiling.

In Hands On Skills class, we have been practicing identifying trees around the school based on their leaf shapes. We discussed characteristics of the leaves that can help us tell them apart. The students have learned

to identify sugar maple, red maple, pine, spruce, oak, beech, sassafras leaves, eastern hemlock, and Norway maple leaves.

We also have been observing birds that come to the bird feeders at school and learning to identify birds based on their physical characteristics. The students have learned to identify a downy woodpecker, white breasted nuthatch, tufted titmouse, robin, cardinal, blue jay, house sparrow, song sparrow, bald eagle, crow, black capped chickadee, and turkey vulture.

TEACHER: MR. CHILBERT

SUBJECT: ENGLISH

In first grade English, we have progressed through our phonics, poetics, and penmanship curriculum. We have studied and practiced recognizing the following 15 phonics sounds: 'Short a, e, i, o, u, 'ow, 'y, 'ea, 'ou, 'th, 'two-letter words, 'sh, 'ch, 'ew, and 'oi'. Our class readings have begun growing from a few sentences to long paragraphs. Below, you may find our sight words list. We have also worked on sight words to memoirize. Here is our updated list:

'The, is, see, why, a, go, no, he, she, was, were, her, them, one, two, has, I, me, look, where, there, of, that, are, you, too, for, here, do, does, your, son, daughter, very, good, what, they, seems, some, woman, women, moon, white, off, house, mouse, sometimes, orange, tree, to, like, school, come, from, been, because, yellow, have, small, please, great, build, both, behind, any, when, then, none, and says.'

In poetics, we have studied the following terms: 'iambic', 'trochaic', 'stanza', 'verse', 'foot', and 'speaker'. We have nearly memorized our second poem, "The Lord Will Provide", by Isaac Watts. Our first poem of the year was Christina Rossetti's "A Chill". As we learn these poems, we also learn quite a bit of vocabulary such as 'ewe', 'lambkin', 'dew', 'keen', 'dismayed', 'aid', 'forbear', 'yon', 'prey', 'bare', and 'tarry'. This is only one of the benefits of studying poetry and the students enjoy the mastery of it.

In Penmanship, we have continued our work with italic print. So far we have studied the rules: 1) Leave you pencil on the page for as long as possible, 2) have slightly slanted letters, 3) make counter-clockwise circles, 4) create parallel lines, and 5) create consistent space between letters.

SECOND GRADE

TEACHER: MR. WALTER
SUBJECT: ENGLISH

Handwriting: This trimester students studied various connections between letters in cursive italic (swing-up, diagonal, shoulder, etc.) and reviewed fundamental skills, including holding a pencil, aesthetic spacing of words and letters, letter height, and letter shapes.

Poetry: Helen Hunt Jackson's poem "September" and John Keats' "To Autumn" were the poems selected for this trimester to memorize. While memorizing, the class went over various subjects brought up by the poems, such as botany (What are gentian, sedges, milkweed, Concord grapes, and aster?), tuberculosis (what John Keats died of), stubble fields, etymology (the root aster is found in not only aster the flower, but also astronaut, astronomy, asterisk, and asteroid). We also went over poetics (alliteration, imagery, rhyme, personification, apostrophe, epizeuxis, anaphora, place, etc.) and the poets' biographies. The students got an opportunity to listen to a letter written by Keats which reveals the inspiration behind his ode "To Autumn." They also read a section of a book written for children, *Letters from a Cat*, by the poet Helen Hunt Jackson.

Reading and Phonics: The second graders reviewed long and short vowels, digraphs and blends, as well as various letter combinations, including ow, ea, ou, ew, oi, ai, ee, y, ar, or, aw, oa, igh, ir, ay, oo, ow, all, oy and ind. The reading included not only passages about a lot of interesting, everyday subjects, such as skunks, ink and carpets, but also selections of literature and history, such as a story about King Alfred and Walter Raleigh, and a poem by Alfred Tennyson, which inspired not only a popular song but also the product name of an artificial sweetener, "Sweet and Low." Other reading selections include Jean La Fontaine's fable about a frog.



TEACHER: MME. NSELEL
SUBJECT: FRENCH

Since the beginning of the school year, students in Second grade have completed 7 lessons of the Sym-talk method Book D (*Gérard et ses copains*). Like in 1st grade, we focus on speaking and listening skills as well as spelling. Students continue to use their own white boards to practice spelling words before writing them again in their books.

The first lessons of this textbook offer lots of review but introduce also new vocabulary like sports/hobbies (*les boules, le baseball*), adverbs (*bien, un peu, mal*), and transportation modes (*à vélo, en voiture, à pied*), etc..

Many pages of the book provide opportunities for practicing interrogative sentences and their answers. Students also get to use negative sentences every time a new verb is introduced or reviewed. These book activities follow the characters they are familiar with (*Brigitte, Antoine, Sylvie...*), but I also try and engage the student directly by asking him or her in French the same questions (*Do you play baseball? Do you speak French? Do you like croissants?...*)

We have learned 2 French songs/nursery rhymes so far and the students have enjoyed this ritual a lot! A new activity this year is memorizing poems/fables. We have been reciting "*Le Corbeau et le Renard*" by Jean de La Fontaine for the last couple of weeks and I am very impressed with their work!

In addition to our regular 4 weekly classes, I get to see the students in French Enrichment. This is an opportunity for reinforcing the vocabulary learned through games and activities such as *I Spy*, *Pictionary*, *Memory game*, *words search*, *hangman* etc.. Students also get a chance to illustrate the lyrics of the songs learned the past weeks.

Another focus of Enrichment is practicing what I call "class routines" such as how to say in French "can I go to the bathroom?", "can I drink some water?", "can I sharpen my pencil?", etc...

TEACHER: MORAH CRAMMER BAR-TOV
SUBJECT: HEBREW

During this year, my goal is to teach the students the Hebrew language and to help them improve their skills in conversing, reading and writing in Hebrew. The primary vehicle for this instruction is the TalAm program, an internationally recognized Hebrew language teaching platform. This program imparts skills in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. The learning is done systematically, building tier upon tier.

To facilitate these skill acquisitions, we draw on topics such as friendship, ways to study and to remember Hebrew, experiences from home and from school, daily schedules, days of the week, family members and more. Two more topics we are dealing with this year are Holidays and weekly portion. Students learned about the holidays of the month Tishrei and expanded their knowledge and their vocabulary related to Shabbat and holidays.

During this trimester, the students have learned Hebrew related to the topics above. They listen to stories, express themselves in Hebrew, learn songs, do class work and artwork, and play games. In this way they may get the feeling of the Hebrew language as part of a broader culture.

In the Tal Am texts, as part of the study, we have completed the following sections of the workbooks: The Book about the Holidays (pages 6-7,9,11-13,17-23,25-26), and I Feel Good in Class and at Home (pages 5-15,18-24,26-28, 50-53).

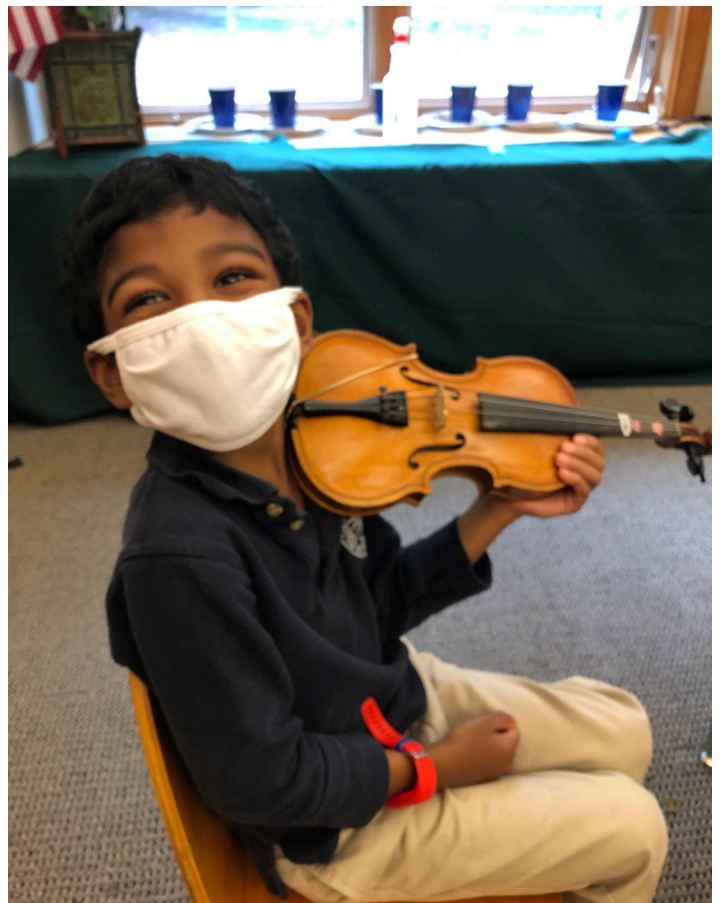
TEACHER: MRS. BUTTERWORTH
SUBJECT: VIOLIN ENSEMBLE

Teaching violin to young children under Covid-era restrictions poses undeniable challenges. Nevertheless, Main Line Classical Academy Music teacher Karina Butterworth has persevered to bring this extraordinary experience to our Kindergarten through 5th grade students. Kindergartener Kiran Ponnuru (right) clearly appreciates having Violin Ensemble as a regular part of our MLCA curriculum!

TEACHER: MR. GORMLEY
SUBJECT: HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

We've been steadily progressing through our survey of the ancient world so far this year. While covering the nomadic settlement into the Fertile Crescent and the development the empires of Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia, Assyria, etc. we also learned of some prominent figures of the time, such as Sargon of Akkad, Hammurabi, and Shamshi-Adad. To supplement these we read a children's version of Gilgamesh. Along the way we investigated several Egyptian kings (and queens): Narmer (Menes), Thutmose I, Tiye, and Hatshepsut as well. We also spent some time looking to the east, studying the settlements along the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers and their customs (pictograms and oracle bones), not to mention the lost settlement of Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus River Valley.

As we move forward, we'll be looking at Amenhotep, King Tut, and John Carter, who discovered Tut's tomb. We'll cover the Phoenicians and the mythical founding of Carthage. Returning to Mesopotamia, we'll learn of Ashurbanipal II's rise to prominence and the return of the Babylonians to power.



TEACHER: DR. FRADKIN

SUBJECT: MATH

The second graders started the year in math class by deepening their understanding of place value. How can we quickly add 1, 10, or 100 to a number? What number is the same as 77 tens? What about 77 ones?

They solved many such problems using virtual base-10 blocks (blocks of sizes 1, 10, and 100) to build their intuition, and then solved many more without them.

All of these questions and explorations were building the foundations for developing good number sense and coming up with efficient computation strategies.

The second unit of 2nd grade math was on comparing 3-digit numbers. We started by exploring the number line: labeling missing numbers and finding the distance between numbers. The students then solved many problems on putting numbers in order from least to greatest and from greatest to least. They then worked

on many puzzles that truly tested the depth of their understanding.

The final 2nd grade math unit of the trimester was on 2- and 3-digit addition. The students explored many strategies for adding numbers that deepened their understanding of the process and of our number system. First, they learned the more traditional method of adding, using the concept of place value. They then added numbers using the number line, by thinking of the numbers as balls that can be transferred between bins, and by making the numbers “friendly” and round and then adjusting the answer. They also looked for ways to rearrange or pair up the numbers when adding more than two of them. For example, they came up with two different ways of computing the sum $21+22+23+24+25+26+27+28+29$: one by pairing them up to make 50’s $(21+29)+(22+28)+\dots$, and another one by adding all the 20’s first, then all the ones, and finally adding the two sums to each other.

TEACHER: CANTOR PORTNOY

SUBJECT: MUSIC THEORY

The objectives of music theory are to develop a deeper love of music, which is an inherent human trait, and to journey towards an understanding of how music works, with the eventual goal of mastering to some degree sightreading, harmony and composition.

In early grades, we begin by applying Solfeggio (numbers or “do-re-mi”) to lots of songs, such that the students develop a feel for melody, steps and leaps, and phrasing. Most of the children can already sing “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” with solfeggio.

We have reviewed the staff, the concept of time signature, the whole note, half note, dotted half note and quarter note. We have also worked on understanding the elements of music: rhythm, beat, tempo, pitch, melody, dynamics and expression. Beyond the technical aspects, however, my goal is for the students to enjoy music, and to realize how making music a part of their beings can be life-altering and immeasurably enhancing.

Beyond that, the students learn about musical “tradition”, and the passing on of that tradition, whether in “composed” or “folk” music. To that end, we’ve had lots of stories and a few videos that demonstrate formal orchestral and music theatre traditions as well as more informal ones, such as country music.

Families will soon be receiving a sound file of professional recordings of the pieces we have learned to sing (“I Like Your Eyes” by John Denver, “Getting to Know You” and “Dites-Moi” by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, and the French children’s song “Il Court, Le Furet”). We will soon be learning some patriotic and holiday songs, “Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram” for Diwali, “If I Had a Hammer” for Thanksgiving, “Happy Hanukkah, My Friend,” and “The Christmas Song”. We will also be taking a closer look at “The Star Spangled Banner”.

TEACHER: MR. DARER

SUBJECT: SCIENCE

In Second Grade Science, we began the school year by looking at pictures of monarch butterflies in trees in Mexico in the wintertime and discussing why the butterflies were there. We learned about butterfly and bird migration to the South in the wintertime and came up with the big question: how do butterflies and birds know which way to fly to head South?

To answer this question, we began our unit on magnetism. The students explored the properties of magnets and learned about magnetic fields through demonstrations and free play with magnets, paper clips, pennies, and iron filings. After several lessons on magnetism and magnetic fields, the Second Grade class built their own compass by magnetizing a paperclip and floating it on a plastic guitar pick in a cup of water. The paperclip aligned with Earth's magnetic field and pointed North. We then practiced using a compass and a paper map together to determine which way we need to walk (or swim) to get to different countries.

We then learned how the Atacama Desert in Chile is one of the driest deserts in the world even though it is situated between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes Mountains. Even more puzzling is the fact that the other side of the Andes Mountains is green with lots of plants. We're working our way through solving this mystery of the Atacama Desert by studying the various clues we find in our discussions on the water cycle, the three states of matter (solid, liquid, gas), transitions between them, and concepts of air pressure and earth's atmosphere.

In Hands On Skills class, we have made several trips to the school garden where the students have harvested kale, radishes, and chickweed. We have also been practicing identifying trees around the school based on their leaf shapes. We discussed characteristics of the leaves that can help us tell them apart. The students have learned to identify sugar maple, red maple, pine, spruce, oak, beech, sassafras leaves, eastern hemlock, and Norway maple leaves. We also have been observing birds that come to the bird feeders at school and learning to identify birds based on their physical characteristics. The students have learned to identify a downy woodpecker, white breasted nuthatch, tufted titmouse, robin, cardinal, blue jay, house sparrow, song sparrow, bald eagle, crow, black capped chickadee, and turkey vulture.

TEACHER: MS. WOO

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN STUDIES

The K/2 Christian Studies class has kicked off wonderfully this year. For the past two months, the students have had so much fun learning about the Bible, starting with God and creation (my plan is to try to get through an overview of the whole Bible this year). We have finished studying the main stories and characters in the book of Genesis and will continue through our survey of the Bible with the book of Exodus. To supplement the Bible lesson, the students have also been memorizing the books of the bible, making crafts, and playing review games. The students' enthusiasm each day makes me so excited for the rest of the year!

TEACHER: CANTOR PORTNOY

SUBJECT: JUDAIC STUDIES

We begin each day with an abbreviated traditional prayer service from Modeh Anee, and we are currently through Ashrey. We also review the Jewish calendar, the use of letters as numbers for the calendar and for numbering chapters and verses in the Pentateuch. In addition, we feature the portion of the week with stories and discussion, and one of the students chants a verse from the parasha every Thursday morning. On Friday morning, we highlight our time together with Shabbat songs and stories. Our time together also features considerable practice in accurate Hebrew reading and cursive.

TEACHER: MS. WOO

SUBJECT: STORYTIME

The Second Graders are reading Stuart Little by E.B. White. They are excellent listeners and have greatly enjoyed the story. By the time the newsletter comes out, I think we will have finished the book (or will be almost done). We have been reinforcing the story by playing review games, in which I ask the students questions about what happened in the story. After the chapter about Stuart's boat race, we also made tin foil boats to see if they could float. Thank you, Second Grade for such an enjoyable time together!

THIRD GRADE

TEACHER: MME. NSELEL
SUBJECT: FRENCH

Since the beginning of the school year, students in Third grade have completed 9 lessons of the Syntalk method Book E (Le Français en images). Like in previous years, students work on their speaking, listening and spelling skills equally. The differences are the length and structure of the sentences: longer and more complex. For instance, they practice using "parce que" (because) and "mais" (but) to explain or nuance a character's action (or when they are talking about themselves).

New vocabulary learned so far includes rooms in a house, schools subjects, furniture, family members, etc...

Students have memorized or reviewed 8 verbs, many of them with irregular (être, aller) or reflexive (se reposer, s'amuser) conjugation.

Other grammatical structures approached are possessive adjectives, agreement between nouns and adjectives (a challenging concept for students as it doesn't happen in English)...

We have also learned/reviewed 4 French songs or poem/fable, the most recent one being "Colchiques dans les Prés", a song about autumn.

In addition to our regular 4 weekly classes, I get to see the students in French Enrichment once a week. This is an opportunity for reinforcing the vocabulary learned through games and activities such as Memory game, words search, hangman, crossword puzzles, etc.. Students also get a chance to illustrate the lyrics of the songs learned the past weeks. Once they are finished with their drawing, they have to describe it to the class. Another part of Enrichment is reviewing what I call "class routines" such as how to say in French "can I go to the bathroom?", "can I drink some water?", "can I sharpen my pencil?", etc...



MLCA Third Grader Elijah Mencin

TEACHER: MR. CHILBERT
SUBJECT: ENGLISH

Phonics and Spelling: We have covered seven review lessons of phonics sounds since the beginning of the year. Each lesson has included reading practice with each of these sounds. We have also encountered informative reading selections about ancient people and characters such as Aesop, Socrates, Alexander the Great, and Damocles. We have begun our first round of spelling practice and quizzes. As the students may have shared with you at home, I give them several exercises to choose from in order to fulfill their quota of spelling practice.

Poetry and Poetics: We have read many poems together as a class by Rossetti, Kipling, and Stevenson. To couple our recitation work in class, we have also been covering many poetic terms such as 'syllable', 'mood', 'image', 'iambic', and 'trochaic'. Together we have memorized "Hunting Song of the Seeonee Pack" by Rudyard Kipling. Each student recently received his/her own poem to memorize for poetry night. These can be found in the back of the book.

Grammar and Punctuation: We have reviewed the English punctuation marks and their usage in writing. We have given particular efforts toward using apostrophes and quotation marks--particularly in cases of dialogue and writing titles of literary works.

Penmanship: We have continued our working in italic cursive handwriting. Students who are new to this find that it is a simple and rewarding way of transitioning for italic print. We will continue working on the various connections required of students who will be writing a lot in class this year.

TEACHER: MORAH CRAMMER BAR-TOV
SUBJECT: HEBREW

During this year, my goal is to teach the students the Hebrew language and help them to improve their skills in conversing, reading and writing in Hebrew. The primary vehicle for this instruction is the TalAm program, an internationally recognized Hebrew language teaching platform. This program imparts skills in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. The learning is done systematically, building tier upon tier.

To facilitate these skill acquisitions, we draw on topics such as friendship, ways to study and to remember Hebrew, experiences from home and from school, day schedule, days of the week, family members and more. Two more topics we are dealing with this year are Holidays and weekly portion. Students learned about the holidays of the month Tishrei and expanded their knowledge and their vocabulary related to Shabbat and holidays.

During this trimester, the students learned Hebrew related to the topics above. They listen to stories, expressed themselves in Hebrew, learned songs, did class work and artwork, and play games. In this way they may get the feeling of the Hebrew language as part of a broader culture.

In the Tal Am texts, as part of the study, we have completed the following sections of the workbooks: The Book about the Holidays (pages 6-7,9,11-13,17-23,25-26), and I Feel Good in Class and at Home (pages 5-15,18-24,26-28, 50-53).

TEACHER: CANTOR PORTNOY
SUBJECT: JUDAIC STUDIES

We begin each day with an abbreviated traditional prayer service from Modeh Anee, and we are currently through Ashrey. We also review the Jewish calendar, the use of letters as numbers for the calendar and for numbering chapters and verses in the Pentateuch. In addition, we feature the portion of the week with stories and discussion, and one of the students chants a verse from the parasha every Thursday morning. On Friday morning, we highlight our time together with Shabbat songs and stories. Our time together also features considerable practice in accurate Hebrew reading and cursive.

TEACHER: MR. GORMLEY
SUBJECT: HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

The first trimester of the year is spent mostly familiarizing students with the mythology, geography, and pre-history of ancient Greece, in order to acclimate students to the places and ways of life they'll hear described in the original texts that we'll be moving on to very shortly. We covered the mythological beginnings of the major city-states and regions: Argos, Athens, Thebes, Thessaly, and Sparta. We also discussed Homer's Iliad and Sophokles' Oedipus Rex trilogy, given how deep those stories loomed in the Greek psyche.

We've begun to move through Plutarch's account of Lykurgus' laws at Sparta and we'll be moving on to his account of Solon shortly. From there, I'm eager to begin reading Herodotus with the class, which is where we really break into a higher level of sophistication than students have encountered so far in history. It ceases to be "little kid history" from here on out.



Fourth Graders Vivian Farwell and Vikram Ponnuru investigate volume before MLCA's social-distancing protocols were put into effect.

TEACHER: DR. FRADKIN

SUBJECT: MATH

The first month of third grade math was all about shapes. The students learned about three types of angles (acute, obtuse, and right) and learned to identify triangles by their angles as well as by their sides. They worked on problems involving triangles, quadrilaterals, and other polygons. They solved puzzles involving tetrominoes and toothpicks.

The second unit in third grade math was on skip counting. Skip-counting not only lays the foundation for multiplication, but also encourages students to look for patterns and ask questions about why they are there. For example, why do you only say numbers that end in even digits when you skip count by an even number (and only odd ones if you start the skip counting at an odd number)? Why does the ones digit repeat every 10 numbers when skip counting by 3, 7 or 9 (regardless of where you start from!)? The questions and patterns are endless and exploring each one leads to a slightly better understanding of numbers.

Finally, the third unit of the first trimester dealt with the concepts of Perimeter and Area. The students solved many problems involving the concepts. They discovered that a shape with a bigger perimeter will not always have a bigger area. Most of the focus was on rectangles and rectilinear shapes (those that can be divided into rectangles). The students explored what happens to the perimeter or area of a rectangle when it's height is increased by 1, or some other fixed amount. They also learned and discovered many tricks for finding the perimeter of rectilinear shapes that are not rectangles.

TEACHER: MS. WOO

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN STUDIES

The Third Grade Christian Studies class has been slowly making their way through the New Testament, specifically the life of Jesus. We are studying passages from the Gospels and are continuing to discover who Jesus is and what he has done. To supplement the Bible lesson, the students have also been memorizing the books of the New Testament, making crafts, doing fun activities together, and playing review games. I am grateful for the time we get to spend together!

TEACHER: DR. NAGELBERG

SUBJECT: SCIENCE

In third grade this trimester we have learned about different types of rocks, about how the way the earth moves around the sun generates seasons, about symmetry in living things, about flying squirrels and about forces. Also, as many of you may have observed, we talked a bit about aerodynamics and have worked to hone our paper airplane skills.

TEACHER: MR. DARER

SUBJECT: HANDS ON SKILLS

In Hands On Skills class, the students have been learning how to tie different types of knots. So far, they learned the overhand, figure eight, clove hitch, bowline, square knot, and sheet bend. We also discussed the uses for these types of knots: Stopper knots (overhand, figure eight) are tied at the end of a rope to prevent the rope from slipping through a small opening. Hitches (clove hitch) are used to tie a rope to a post. Bends (square knot, sheet bend) are used to tie two ropes together to form one longer piece of rope. And Loops (bowline) have many practical uses. In order to practice tying these knots, we went on an "adventure" to treasure island to find a hidden treasure. On the island, the students had to tie various knots to help them survive to find the treasure. For example, they tied a square knot to connect their two short pieces of rope into a one rope long enough to cross over the pit of snakes.

TEACHER: MS. WOO

SUBJECT: STORYTIME

The Third Graders are reading The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle by Hugh Lofting. The third graders have been listening intently to the story of Tommy Stubbins and how he came to know the Doctor. We are about a third of the way through the book. We have been reinforcing the story by playing review games, in which I ask the students questions about what happened in the story. I am very glad the students have been enjoying the story and look forward to reading the rest of the book!

FOURTH GRADE

TEACHER: MR. WALTER
SUBJECT: ENGLISH

Poetry and Poetics: Students memorized two poems this trimester: Christina Rossetti's "Consider" and William Cowper's poem "The Lord, My Banner." Written by two representative poets of the Victorian and Augustan Periods respectively, the poems make Biblical allusions to the judge of Israel Gideon and King David. The class discussed the significance of those allusions to the poem's theme. In their separate study of poetics, students first looked at the language of poetry, and compared William Wordsworth's poem "Daffodils," a poem based on a spectacle that the poet experienced one spring day in Grasmere, to Dorothy Wordsworth's prose rendition of the same event. Students also studied a variety of other subjects, including figures of speech (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, simile, irony, oxymoron), meter, alliteration, scansion, syllables, and rhyme.

Literature and Reading: This trimester the students studied a variety of literature, literary devices and topics suggested by it. In going over, for example, Rossetti's poem "The Lowest Place," we discussed the literary device of climax and anticlimax as well as the Greek maxim "Know yourself." In going over Joseph Addison's "Women and Wives," we discussed the periods of literature, such as the one to which Addison belonged, the Neoclassical Period, and the origin of the word Kit-Kat, named after Christopher Kat, the keeper of the inn where Addison's literary club met. Other authors and works included Lord Byron, Benjamin Franklin, Greek myths, H. E. Scudder, T. S. Arthur and history stories.

Writing: Students began their writing instruction with a narrative/descriptive paragraph. The accompanying literary work that inspired the assignment was an account of George Washington who was portrayed as a very serious, sober first president. Students are currently writing an expository essay.

Grammar: This year students are doing a systematic study of English grammar and began it by going over the sentence, nouns, action verbs, linking verbs, helping verbs, regular verbs, irregular verbs, voice and mood.

TEACHER: M. PORTIER
SUBJECT: FRENCH

It has been a pleasure to teach this lively group of scholars. We advanced much further in reading the novel, *Rémi ou le Mystère de St Péray*, than we anticipated. We have arrived at the moment in this adventure novel when the main characters discover the hidden cave of the smugglers. Meanwhile, we have reviewed the three forms of asking a question, how to introduce oneself, and the present indicative verb tense. The scholars have done a wonderful job memorizing and reciting the poem "Demain dès l'aube" of Victor Hugo. I look forward to advancing in the reading of our novel as well as exploring it's different themes through French conversation.



TEACHER: MR. GORMLEY
SUBJECT: HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Heretofore we've worked our way through portions of the works of historians Zosimus and Eusebius who give differing accounts of Constantine I who united Rome under the banner of Christianity, albeit for a short time. Was he a saintly, noble ruler or a vicious opportunist? Thereafter we read Ammianus Marcellinus' account of the later Roman Empire. In particular, we studied the battle of Amida and the Roman defeat by the Goths at Adrianople. His depiction of the Huns is also worthy of note as we transition to the historian Jordanes' account of the Hunnic invasion.

We will shortly be turning to Prokopios' description of Justinian and Theodora's reign in the East, both the good and the bad. His account in the *Secret Histories* provides a good opportunity for students to begin to grapple with an argument that has merit, but ultimately goes awry.

TEACHER: MR. MCCORMICK

SUBJECT: STUDIO ART

We are laying a foundation of drawing principles, learning to see by carefully observing the simple objects before us. Students are also learning to check their work by simple checking methods.

TEACHER: MR. CIALINI

SUBJECT: LATIN

The class was divided into two groups during remote learning, which allowed us to progress through the textbook at a reasonable pace. Once we returned to the classroom, however, we had to carefully establish and maintain regular routines in the classroom such as hand raising, recording homework assignments, and keeping our seats during class time. With these routines in place—and with frequent reminders—we have been able to find a steady pace as the students learn Latin for the first time. By the end of the trimester we have exceeded our goal of one chapter per week.

The initial eight chapters of *An Introduction to Languages* review those foundational concepts of language and re-familiarize students with parts of speech, syntax, etc. In seven weeks we covered the following:

- Proper and common nouns
- Concrete and Abstract nouns
- Verbs and verb phrases
- Infinitives & Helping verbs
- Adjectives & Adverbs
- Articles
- Subjects and predicates
- Prefixes and suffixes
- Roots of single words
- Inflections and inflectional endings
- Agreement of simple subjects and verbs

The speed at which we advanced was due primarily to the students diligence and well-established understanding of language. It was not uncommon for students to mention how much their English and French had enhanced their understanding of the material we were studying. Once we began learning Latin in chapter eight, students rapidly made connections to French in particular. In the final weeks of the trimester we covered Latin nouns (feminine and masculine), Latin verbs, and Latin sentences.

TEACHER: CANTOR PORTNOY

SUBJECT: HISTORY OF ART

Using Monet's *Impression: Sunrise* (1872), we began the year by learning to "Say What You See". This exercise involves not only a keen eye, but mastery of language, finding the exact word or phrase to express what is on the wall or canvas.

We reviewed the terms "century" and "decade", and the distinction between B.C., B.C.E., A.D. and C.E. We also defined the four elements of a painting: Line, Light, Color and Space.

Cave paintings in Spain, France, Indonesia and many other locales show us that humankind painted for tens of thousands of years before we could write. An examination of the cave paintings in Lascaux, France show us that prehistoric humans painted what humans have painted since - - subjects which they knew very well and cared about, ie, their own handprints, animals.

We looked at the traditional classification of historic "eras" from Upper Paleolithic to Ancient, and cautioned that many of these terms were devised by "western" historians. Not until recently were the great Eastern traditions of art studied comprehensively.

History is distinguished from prehistory by the advent of symbolic expression, i.e., writing. The longest lived civilization in world history, that of Egypt, developed writing, the calendar, and an understanding of how to master agriculture and animals. Its thirty centuries saw the development of art that was strictly controlled by the "Canon of Proportions" in a society that was strictly controlled by the Pharaoh. Its art was largely concerned with religion, in particular a fervent belief in the afterlife, and much of art developed in order for the wealthy to "take it with them" in lavish tombs. One such person was Nebamun, a granary accountant, whose tomb paintings we are now studying.

TEACHER: DR. NAGELBERG

SUBJECT: SCIENCE

In fourth grade this trimester we have learned about different types of rocks, about the solar system, about how the earth moves around the sun to generate seasons, about aerodynamics and we are beginning to learn about atoms and elements.

TEACHER: RABBI SINENSKY

SUBJECT: HEBREW

4th and 6th grade Hebrew focuses on both spoken and Biblical Hebrew through conversational Hebrew, direct instruction and practice writing and speaking in modern Hebrew, and in-depth study of the Bible, the canonical Hebrew-language text of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

This year the class is studying the narratives of Abraham, focusing on the parshiot of Lekh Lekha and VaYera in the book of Genesis.

As a cornerstone of the class' approach, each verse is read aloud by either the entire class or an individual student in the traditional cantillation. This enhances student enjoyment of the learning process, comprehension, and retention. Next, we translate each term, identifying the root, any prefixes or suffixes, and any broader principles of Biblical Hebrew grammar that help to explain the meaning of the verse.

Class notes are accordingly divided into a chart that comprises three sections: words and roots; principles of the language; and basic knowledge, which generally includes a summary of the verse. Notes are written in Hebrew. Additionally, 4th graders are studying a set of classic biblical roots, as well as practicing formulating verbs in various parts of speech.

TEACHER: MS. FRIDMAN

SUBJECT: PROGRAMMING

During this semester, the 4th graders were successfully introduced to Scratch and learned their way around the program. The first month was mostly dedicated to making them comfortable in that environment and making sure that they learn to have fun with it.

Since mid-October, the students began to learn more complex programming concepts. They learned what a condition is and how to use it with if and while structures. They were also introduced to the concept of formal logic and are right now in the process of learning to use compound conditions. They have also learned a concept of variables and began to use them in their programs.

TEACHER: DR. FRADKIN

SUBJECT: MATH

The fourth grade started the school year in math class by learning about the distributive property. The main focus was on exploring how one can use the property to help with certain computations. The students quickly became comfortable with breaking up 18×7 into 10×7 and 8×7 and then adding the partial products. However, they had a much harder time seeing how to use the distributive property in the other direction. For example, in order to compute how much money I have if I have 19 quarters and 25 pennies, it is much more work to figure out 19×25 and then add 25 than just notice that 25 pennies gives us another quarter and so the answer is 20×25 cents or \$5.00. Similarly, when we're computing $17 \times 8 + 17 \times 12$, we want to simplify our computation by using the distributive property and rewriting the computation as 17×20 .

Our second unit in fourth grade math was on estimation. When do we need to know an exact answer to a computation and when is an estimate good enough? How do we quickly obtain a reasonable estimate when an exact answer is not needed or not possible? These are the sort of questions that the fourth graders worked on.

If I add two 3-digit numbers and get a 6-digit result, is that reasonable or should I be concerned? What if I had multiplied the two 3-digit numbers? Being able to quickly get ballpark answers is helpful in checking the sensibility of the results of mathematical computations and is also a useful life skill.

The final unit of the first trimester in fourth grade math class was on area. The students learned not only how to find the area of rectangles and shapes made up of rectangles, but also the areas of different types of triangles. We started with right triangles, where it was easy to see why the area is half of that of the rectangle with sides equal to the legs of the triangle. Then, we pictorially derived why the area of an acute triangle is half that of a rectangle with the same base and height. The explanation for why this works with an obtuse triangle was a lot trickier, but many students persevered in trying to figure it out.

FIFTH GRADE

TEACHER: MR. MCCORMICK
SUBJECT: STUDIO ART

The arrangements under the Covid protocols are challenging. Nevertheless, we have been seeking to create fine art work.

Fifth grade has been engaged in a review of drawing principles and an emphasis on the problem of seeing accurately. Still life is implemented for this purpose.

(below) Fifth graders Anne Martindale, Matteo Posner and Avery Zhang confer with classmate Sasha Maslen over Zoom during Mr. McCormick's Studio Art class.

TEACHER: M. PORTIER
SUBJECT: FRENCH

After reviewing the three ways to form a question, the scholars sharpened their skill at writing complex and informative descriptions of images using different sentence structures and vocabulary. We worked on the present imperative verb structure, using them in scenarios where each student must ask questions to find their way in a typical French city. Luckily no one was lost along the way. This class genuinely enjoys reading our novel, *Historie d'une revanche*. Through the context of the novel, we explored the political complexities of the period after the French empire, the Restoration period. We created a fictional trial and each student enjoyed impersonating individuals with the different political points of view.



TEACHER: MR. WALTER

SUBJECT: ENGLISH

Poetry and Poetics: Students have memorized two poems thus far: Emily Dickinson's "The Pedigree of Honey" and William Cowper's "Light Shining out of Darkness." In memorizing the poems in class, we discussed the various structures of the poems, such as its rhyme scheme and metrical patterns. We also discussed the biographies of the poets. The students also began a systematic study of poetics and covered the following topics: definitions of poetry given over the centuries, the format of poetry, the various two- and three-syllable stress patterns of poetry (iambic, trochaic, spondaic, amphibrachic, amphimacer, anapestic, dactylic), meter (pentameter, etc.), scansion, putting poetry to music (common meter, long meter, short meter).

Literature and Reading: Students read a variety of stories and learned the vocabulary, literary terms, and genres associated with the specific work. The literary and historical pieces included such works as the story of William Tell, an adaptation of Romeo and Juliet and excerpts from Shakespeare's drama, William Henry Lee's memoir about his father Robert E. Lee, a biographical account of Otto von Bismarck, and various traditional ballads.

Grammar, Spelling and Writing: In grammar students have studied subject-verb agreement, case, pronoun agreement, and pronoun shift. Each week students are quizzed on a spelling list. So far, students have written a definition essay, a memoir and are currently working on an expository essay.

TEACHER: MRS. HARPER

SUBJECT: HISTORY OF ART

We are looking at the transition from Late Gothic to Renaissance art in Italy in the 13th and 14th centuries. Following our study of Cimabue, Masaccio, and Duccio, we are taking a close look at Giotto, specifically his masterful series of frescos in the Scrovegni chapel. Scrovegni, perhaps alarmed that his usurious father was given a special place in Hell as described by Dante in the Divine Comedy, sought to put himself and his family in a better light by giving money for this beautiful chapel. Giotto's moving scenes of lifelike individuals depicting the stories of Jesus, Mary, and Mary's parents, use novel compositional and color technique.

TEACHER: MR. CIALINI

SUBJECT: HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

The 5th grade covered quite a bit of history this trimester. We began with a review of the late Roman Republic before diving into the medieval era. Reading from H.A. Guerber's *The Story of The Romans*, we spent September following Julius Caesar through his days in the first triumvirate, his Gallic wars, the crossing of the Rubicon, the wars with Pompey, Caesar's dictatorship, and finally his assassination.

We then continued with the second triumvirate headed by Octavian, his war against Mark Antony and Cleopatra, and briefly covered his reign as Rome's first emperor. Ammianus Marcellinus' *The Late Roman Empire* and Jordanes' *The Origin and Deeds of the Goths* introduced students to the complex social realities of the late Republic and offered them a vivid picture of the series of Gothic incursions into Rome which lead to its eventual collapse.

As a supplement to these authors I spent a few classes lecturing on the significance of Emperor Constantine and his Edict of Milan which resulted in the empire's conversion from paganism to Christianity—a most crucial shift for understanding the character of early medieval Europe.

We concluded the trimester with Procopius and his *Wars of Justinian* which recalled the end of the empire in the West, the establishment of the new Gothic kingdoms, and the reign of Emperor Justinian in the Eastern Roman Empire. We'll begin the second trimester with Gregory of Tours' *The History of the Franks*.

Finally, we spent some time looking at and coloring maps of Europe in the 5th and 6th centuries in order to familiarize students with the many migrations of peoples from northern and eastern Europe into western Europe as well as the continent's most notable geographic features—i.e. rivers, mountain systems, plains, and seas. The students brought their remarkable knowledge of and enthusiasm for history which served only to enrich our time together. For this class, history is very much a live topic, and they relish opportunities for debate and wonder.

TEACHER: MR. CIALINI

SUBJECT: LATIN

Though we began the year with remote learning, in addition to launching the year with a new textbook, Jenny's First Year Latin, the 5th grade were able to carefully work through the initial chapters of the text without difficulty. The first weeks of school presented few if any problems as we got to know one another over zoom—an experience which I found both enjoyable and quite easy because of this class's readiness for learning. We have accomplished our goal of completing a chapter every one to two weeks, with the class now six chapters into the text. Thus far we have covered:

- First and Second declensions (masculine and neuter)
- Present tense of the first conjugation
- Agreement of verbs
- Conjugation and the uses of Sum in the present tense
- Ablative of place where
- Ablative of place from which
- Accusative of place to which
- Direct objects
- Genitive of possession
- Adjectives of the First and Second declension

The 5th grade has brought a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and energy to each class this trimester and each student continues to demonstrate their comprehension of the material through active and regular participation. Now that the students have been learning Latin vocabulary at a more rapid rate than last year, they frequently note many connections between Latin and French words, as well as grammatical patterns between Latin and English. One challenge this class enjoys in particular is translating English sentences into Latin.

TEACHER: DR. NAGELBERG

SUBJECT: SCIENCE

In fifth grade this trimester we have learned about Darwin, about evolution, about relationships between living things, about density, about the size and scale of the universe and things within us, about coronavirus, and about anatomy.

TEACHER: MRS. TER-SAAKOV

SUBJECT: MATH

5th grade students have been on a fast track to cover the remaining Beast Academy Level 4 material (mostly corresponds to standards of grade 5 and up). Students came from the summer break enthusiastic and ready to work hard. It took only two weeks for this group to cover the chapter of "Integers" and get great results on the test, after which we switched to a more sustainable pace of covering each topic in three weeks.

We are going to visit several topics twice this year, building on previous knowledge. Integers, Fractions and Decimals in Level 4 which we covered this fall are all examples of such topics. Students just had their initial experience of understanding negatives, and performing addition and subtraction of positive and negative numbers. When we encounter Integers again later this year, we'll move on to multiplication, long products, division, and exponents involving negative numbers. Right now students are in the middle of very exciting topic of Probability. We are going to explore the 3D Solids next.

TEACHER: MS. FRIDMAN

SUBJECT: PROGRAMMING

During this semester, the 5th graders were successfully introduced to Scratch. Those not familiar with it before have learned their way around the program. Those already familiar with Scratch have learned a number of additional skills and concepts. The first month was mostly dedicated to making sure they were comfortable with Scratch and know how to have fun with it on their own (outside of classroom) if they so choose.

Since mid-October, the students began to learn more complex programming concepts. They have gone through using conditions, using if blocks and loops (repeat and repeat while blocks). They have learned the concept of variables and how to use them in their programs. Currently, they are in the process of learning to use more complex logical conditions and to create and use list variables. They have also learned about flowcharts and will continue to use these as a helping tool.

SIXTH GRADE

TEACHER: MR. WALTER
SUBJECT: ENGLISH

Poetry and Poetics: So far students have memorized three poems. The first poem of the trimester was William Wordsworth's "The Sun Has Long Been Set." In memorizing the work, we read journal entries by William's sister Dorothy who gave an account of William's composition of the poem. We also discussed various interesting details of the poem's content, including the sound of the European thrush (vs. the American wood thrush) mentioned in the poem, the sound of the "water gushing," which happened to be a river in the vicinity of Grasmere, and masquerade parties (which Wordsworth loathed, and I explained why). The other two poems that we covered this trimester included the very sad poem written by Christina Rossetti, "Buds and Babies" and Gerard Manley Hopkins' "Binsey Poplars." We discussed various philosophic and aesthetic questions raised by "Buds and Babies" as well Hopkins' interesting philosophy of instress and inscape in his poetry.

Grammar and Spelling: Students are studying a spelling list once a week and a chapter in Wombly's Grammar Notes once every two weeks. So far we have covered the sentence, subjects and predicates, the parts of speech, nouns, gerunds, and will soon be covering principal parts.

Literature: We are doing a chronological survey of English literature this year. We began with a study of works written about the period before the Germanic people arrived on the island, and are currently reading literature written in the Middle Ages.

The Briton Period: Selection from *The Death of Arthur* by Thomas Malory; "Boadicea: An Ode" by William Cowper; "King Leir" by Geoffrey of Monmouth; "King Lear" by Charles and Mary Lamb; *King Lear* by William Shakespeare (Excerpt); "The Lady of Shalott" and "Gareth and Lynette" by Alfred Tennyson

The Middle Ages: *Beowulf* (Anonymous); Excerpt from *Everyman* (Anonymous); "Harp Song of the



Joan of Arc, "Jehane la Pucelle" by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, (1882).

Dane Women" by Rudyard Kipling; "Robin Hood Turns Butcher" by Howard Pyle; "Bruce to His Men at Bannockburn" by Robert Burns; Geoffrey Chaucer by H. E. Marshall; "The Pardoner's Tale" by Geoffrey Chaucer; "The Maid's Sword and Banner" by Mark Twain; "The Douglas Tragedy" (Anonymous).

After reading the literature, students take a reading comprehension test; a discussion of the literature ensues. In going over the literature, students have learned about miscellaneous genres and literary terms, such as the Arthurian Legend, allegory, kinds of drama, symbol, and the morality and miracle (or mystery) plays. Writing: Students wrote an essay comparing Geoffrey of Monmouth's history of King Leir with William Shakespeare's drama in order for students to observe Shakespeare's technical handling of his source material.

TEACHER: MR. GORMLEY SUBJECT: HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

So far this year, we've invested time in tying up loose ends to the late middle ages that were left undone last year. We read of the intricate connections and complications related to England, Wales, Scotland, and France in the late 13th and early 14th centuries just prior to the Hundred Years War. Thus, we learned of Louis IX of France's involvement in the Seventh and Eighth Crusades. Afterward we learned of the weakness of the rule of Henry III of England, Edward I's persecution of the Jews, and his conquest of Wales, which tied into excerpts from John Carrick's account of William Wallace and the conflict in Scotland.

From there we moved on to an obscure but exciting account by the anonymous "Templar of Tyre" regarding Philip IV of France's thrashing of Pope Boniface and the burning at the stake of an entire order of Knights Templar. Currently we're working on the reigns of Edward II and III, with the unusual involvement of the former's wife, Isabella of France (known as the "She-Wolf") who marched on England at the head of an army against her husband leading to his abdication of the throne.

All of this sets the stage for the Hundred Years' War, Joan of Arc, The Black Death, Charles V and VI of France, with Henry IV and V not long after.

TEACHER: RABBI SINENSKY SUBJECT: HEBREW

4th and 6th grade Hebrew focuses on both spoken and Biblical Hebrew through conversational Hebrew, direct instruction and practice writing and speaking in modern Hebrew, and in-depth study of the Bible, the canonical Hebrew-language text of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

This year the class is studying the narratives of Abraham, focusing on the parshiot of Lekh Lekha and VaYera in the book of Genesis.

As a cornerstone of the class' approach, each verse is read aloud by either the entire class or an individual student in the traditional cantillation. This enhances student enjoyment of the learning process, comprehension, and retention. Next, we translate each term, identifying

TEACHER: M. PORTIER SUBJECT: FRENCH

This year I not only have the privilege of teaching this gifted class again, but I am also their Grade Mentor. It is a pleasure continuing our conversations during other moments in the day, and getting to know each of them more. During our French class, we worked on the comparatives and superlatives, the use of the pronoun "on," and verb agreements of the past tense (Imparfait and Passe Compose). The reading of *Vingt Mille Lieues sous les Mers* has offered us the lexical world of the deep sea, its creatures, and mysterious environment. This class particularly enjoys the personality of Captain Nemo, and the descriptions of the submarine, the *Nautilus*. They have had many conversations regarding this novel, and while there may have been some disagreements, no one has left the ship. However, the class has declared the independence of the "Free 6th Grade Republic," accompanied by a "national" anthem and Bill of Rights. To end with a final highlight from French class, we have also completed the analysis of the poem, "Albatros", by Charles Baudelaire, which also plunges us into a maritime theme.

מֵה-טָבוֹ אֱהָלֶיךָ

the root, any prefixes or suffixes, and any broader principles of Biblical Hebrew grammar that help to explain the meaning of the verse.

Hebrew Class notes are accordingly divided into a chart that comprises three sections: words and roots; principles of the language; and basic knowledge, which generally includes a summary of the verse. Notes are written in Hebrew, and 6th grade students are now increasingly called upon to read, translate, and summarize the verse independently in Hebrew.

Additionally, Sixth graders have been gaining proficiency in reading the so-called "Rashi script," the typesetting for the classic printing of the classic medieval commentator's highly influential biblical commentary.

TEACHER: MRS. RICE

SUBJECT: ART HISTORY

This year we are considering Renaissance art as a lens through which to observe the emergence of the modern world. Individual genius, secular humanism, and the application of Scientific Method are all on display in quattrocento Florence, where our study begins.

We spent several classes studying the work of Brunelleschi, from his magnificent dome over the cathedral, to his plans for the first Renaissance building (Ospedale degli Innocenti, or Foundling Hospital), to the embodiment of his theories of geometric order in the Santo Spirito. This last example recalled for students last year's study of the Parthenon as an expression of Athenians' understanding that the contemplation of beauty, specifically the beauty of perfect proportion, is a means to elevate the spirit.

Brunelleschi's friend and contemporary Donatello provided a very different view of Renaissance genius, displaying a fresh respect for the human condition in his subtle representations of a sweeping range of human experience.

We also considered how this new way of seeing the world was adapted by visual artists to achieve greater realism in the subject and setting of their paintings, studying Fra Angelico's Annunciation fresco at San Marco, and the painting of Sandro Botticelli.

Botticelli's work also provided an opportunity to consider the broader cultural implications of the Renaissance shift from religious to secular patronage and the art this shift demanded. Our semester ended with a discussion Lorenzo the Magnificent's Platonic Academy of Philosophy, an analysis of Botticelli's Primavera, and the tragic paradox of the Medici's extraordinary cultural contributions ending in Savonarola's bonfire of the vanities.

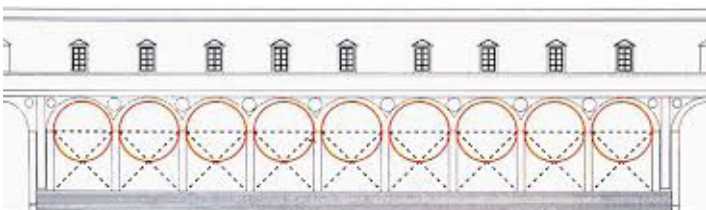


Diagram for the facade of Brunelleschi's Hospital of the Innocents, designed 1414 in Florence.

TEACHER: RABBI SINENSKY

SUBJECT: JUDAIC STUDIES

6th grade Judaic Studies combines prayer and prayer education with advanced study of the holidays, weekly Torah portion, and introduction to rabbinic texts.

Prayer runs for approximately 20-25 minutes, and comprises an engaging mix of joint recitation, singing, reading with the cantillation, and silent recitation of the Amidah (standing) prayer. 3-5 minutes are spent each morning examining a key text or theme of tefilla, with the goal being to make the prayer experience itself more readily understandable and more meaningful for the students.

Following prayer, on Monday through Thursday, we rotate units between the holidays and rabbinics. The study of Jewish holidays is designed to ensure that students have a comprehensive understanding of the central themes and halakhic practices of each holiday. Notes are structured in a clear, tight outline form to facilitate comprehension and retention.

Mishnah (the foundation for Talmud, the classic rabbinic text), which we began studying following the High Holidays, began with an introduction to the key distinctions between the Written and Oral sections of the tradition, and an outline of the historical context and literary structure of the Mishnah. We then turned to study the text of Tractate Berachot with an eye toward developing the skills to decode a Mishnah as well as acquire some key concepts pertaining to the study of Mishnah.

Each Friday we review the weekly Torah portion, summarizing the contents of each chapter. This enables students to develop a comprehensive understanding of not only each parsha but also of the continuity of subject matter of each chapter. In addition, each week at least one aspect of the Torah portion is reviewed in greater depth, with an eye toward fostering engaging conversation at home with family over Shabbat.

Instruction as well as class discussion is conducted overwhelmingly in Hebrew.

TEACHER: MRS. TER-SAAKOV
SUBJECT: MATH

Students will find many topics familiar this year. However, when the topic was first encountered in 5th grade as part of Beast Academy curriculum, the focus was on understanding and slow exploration of new concepts. This time around, students are expected to polish the material to the extent that will allow comfortable use both in math and in science classes in the future. With this goal in mind, students reviewed the order of operations, exponents with positive integer powers, and are now working on linear equations. Parallel to the main topic, students resumed weekly mental math assignments, as well as basic skills worksheets.

TEACHER: MR. MCCORMICK
SUBJECT: STUDIO ART

The arrangements under the Covid protocols are challenging. Nevertheless, the students have been seeking to create fine art work. Sixth grade has been engaged in a review of drawing principles and an emphasis on the problem of seeing accurately. Still life is implemented for this purpose.

TEACHER: DR. FRIDMAN
SUBJECT: PROGRAMMING

Most 6-graders were already familiar with Scratch when the year began. They were surprised to realize that there is a lot to gain by having formal programming training.

So far, we have covered variables and list variables, two kinds of loops and conditional statements. The students have been introduced to flowcharts and we will continue to use them as a helping tool. They are learning to plan more complex, multi-step projects.

TEACHER: DR. NAGELBERG
SUBJECT: SCIENCE

In sixth grade this trimester we have learned about scientific notation, about measurement, about Isaac Newton's experiments with light, about stars and about speed, velocity and acceleration, with a particular focus on graphs.

TEACHER: MR. CIALINI
SUBJECT: LATIN

Though we began this year with a new textbook, Jenny's First Year Latin, the 6th grade made quick work of many chapters, being well-acquainted with most of the concepts. We exceeded our goal of completing one chapter a week, closing the trimester on chapter 11. Thus far we have covered:

- First and Second declensions (masculine and neuter)
- Present, imperfect, future, and perfect tenses of the first conjugation
- Agreement of verbs
- Principal parts of verbs
- Conjugation and the uses of Sum in the present, imperfect, and future tenses
- Ablative of place where
- Ablative of place from which
- Accusative of place to which
- Direct and Indirect objects
- Genitive of possession
- Adjectives of the First and Second declension
- Adverbs
- Interrogative particles

Always wanting to forge ahead, the 6th grade, as I say, demonstrated their mastery of the above concepts without trouble. In actual fact, we could have advanced faster through these concepts; however, having not taught this class last year and taking the time to discern their level of understanding, I opted to keep things at a regular pace while moving quickly where we could. The review was not fruitless, and the class's weak spots—which were few—were given extra attention as we moved along.

A particular highlight of the trimester—besides getting to know the students—was seeing just how seriously they take their studies. Though some more than others, every student participates of their own volition. I look forward to the coming trimester as we work deeper into the new challenges of Latin.

7TH & 8TH GRADE

TEACHER: MR. WALTER

SUBJECT: ENGLISH

Poetry and Poetics: Students are memorizing the long ode by John Keats' "To Autumn." In tandem with a memorizing sessions, the class has learned about poetic devices such as meter and stress patterns, personification, imagery, alliteration and apostrophe. The class listened to a contemporary critical review of the poem and read a letter written by Keats to his friend Hamilton Reynolds. From the letter, students learned the details of what occasioned his writing the poem, such as the fact that he was residing at Winchester where they had just elected a mayor.

Literature and Reading: In this year's course, students get an opportunity to see the development of the popular fantasy and science fiction and other symbolic and allegorical genres, with which our modern culture has a fascination. So far we have read and discussed the following works:

Fable, Fairy Tale, and Myth: Selected Fables by Aesop; Grimm's Fairy Tales: Mother Holle; Classical Myths retold by Thomas Bulfinch; "The Swineherd" by Hans Christian Andersen; the novel *Animal Farm* by George Orwell

The Ghost Story: "Mrs. Veal" by Daniel Defoe; "On Being Found Out" by William Makepeace Thackeray; "A Ghost" by Guy de Maupassant

Classic English and American Gothic: "Punishment in the Red Room" by Charlotte Brontë; Hawthorne's Gothic Journal Entry; "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" by Nathaniel Hawthorne; "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe; Franz Kafka's "The Hunger Artist"

Before reading and studying the works, students take extensive notes on the biographies of the authors and learn such things as the following: the possible reasons that Edgar Allan Poe had such an obsession with the macabre; Daniel Defoe's interestingly checkered employment resumé; Charles Dickens' disastrous hosting of Hans Christian Andersen at his house; why George Orwell turned to writing about totalitarianism; Nathan-

iel Hawthorne's melancholy cynicism, its possible origin, and how it is revealed in his works; and Kafka's 100-page long letter written to his father about why he is afraid of him.

Grammar and Writing: After doing a brief review of last year's grammar, students began their study with verbals and infinitives. Students wrote a critical paper on George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, analyzing it a satire of totalitarianism. They are currently working on an essay analyzing Kafka's "Hunger Artist" as a work that examines the alienated life of the artist.

TEACHER: MR. GORMLEY

SUBJECT: HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

So far this year, we've invested time in tying up loose ends to the late middle ages that were left undone last year. We read of the intricate connections and complications related to England, Wales, Scotland, and France in the late 13th and early 14th centuries just prior to the Hundred Years War. Thus, we learned of Louis IX of France's involvement in the Seventh and Eighth Crusades. Afterward we learned of the weakness of the rule of Henry III of England, Edward I's persecution of the Jews, and his conquest of Wales, which tied into excerpts from John Carrick's account of William Wallace and the conflict in Scotland. From there we moved on to an obscure but exciting account by the anonymous "Templar of Tyre" regarding Philip IV of France's thrashing of Pope Boniface and the burning at the stake of an entire order of Knights Templar. Currently we're working on the reigns of Edward II and III, with the unusual involvement of the former's wife, Isabella of France (known as the "She-Wolf") who marched on England at the head of an army against her husband leading to his abdication of the throne.

All of this sets the stage for the Hundred Years' War, Joan of Arc, The Black Death, Charles V and VI of France, with Henry IV and V not long after.

TEACHER: MR. CIALINI

SUBJECT: LATIN A

During the three weeks of remote learning, group A did an intense review of 12 chapters of Jenny's First Year Latin and completed two assessments. Once we returned to the classroom the students expressed their eagerness to move even faster in the hopes of joining group B. With that as our goal, we have been completing three to four chapters of the book a week and the students have taken two additional assessments. At the close of the trimester we have completed 25 chapters—an impressive total. Thus far we have covered:

- First, Second, and Third Declensions

- Adjectives of declensions 1-3

- Adverbs of declensions 1 and 2

- Conjugates 1-3 in the present and perfect systems in the active and passive voice

- Objective Genitive

- Ablative of place

- Ablative of means

- Ablative of manner

- Ablative of personal agent

- Interrogative particles

The class continues to perform well, and though our quick pace has proven to be appropriate in the first trimester, we will have to slow down as the material grows more difficult. Chapter 25 onward is entirely new material for this class, and so moving too quickly could do more harm than good. Ultimately, they cannot join group B at the expense of comprehension. The possibility of joining, however, remains present so long as they continue to work hard.

TEACHER: MRS. TER-SAAKOV

SUBJECT: MATH

The course of Geometry is traditionally used to introduce students to the axiomatic approach in mathematics. This fall started with reviewing familiar facts about shapes, sorting them into postulates and theorems. Keeping track of the order in which the statements are established comes naturally for some students, but many find it challenging. We explored pairs of parallel lines and related angles, as well as congruent triangles, practicing writing our own proofs. We'll move on to study quadrilaterals next.

TEACHER: MR. CIALINI

SUBJECT: LATIN B

Because group B opted for the homeschool track during remote learning, we spent the first week of in-person learning discerning where the class was, as a whole, in the book. It was evident that each student had reviewed the book at different degrees of intensity, and so quite a bit of review was needed before beginning where they left off last year. In quick succession we reviewed Third Declension nouns and adjectives; Fourth and Fifth Declension nouns; the Second, Third, and Fourth Conjugations; numerals and demonstratives; personal, relative and interrogative pronouns; partitives and objective genitive; and the passive voice of the present and perfect systems. That review encompassed 31 chapters. That this amount of material was covered attests not only to the class's experience with Latin but also their remarkable aptitude for the language. Now that the class will be learning new material in the second trimester, we will move at a regular pace of one chapter per week, and, most likely, have a quiz on each chapter.

TEACHER: MRS. HARPER

SUBJECT: HISTORY OF ART

We have been looking at Holland and the "culture of describing" in which Vermeer lived. At the same time that Amsterdam was the leader in mapmaking and globe making, Vermeer was creating meticulous, gem like, and intimate descriptions of private domestic moments that at once were so mundane they were about nothing and yet so transcendent they were about existence itself. Though it has not been proven, are historians believe that he used a lens-a camera obscura -to create these scenes, and students have been looking at Vermeer's canvases for the evidence. A lens organizes information in a very specific way, and it would have been fitting that a great artist in a culture that privileged categorization, observation, and description would have used one. How Holland's culture -and Vermeer- contribute their share of necessary ingredients to the miraculous (and accidental) soup we call the Enlightenment has been one of our prime focuses.

Eighth graders Hugh Nicholson, Ronan Myers, and seventh grader Marshall Zafriou at work in Studio Art.



TEACHER: MR. MCCORMICK
SUBJECT: STUDIO ART

The focus has been on drawing people. Much time is spent doing quick studies, and the balance focusing on solving problems in drawing hands, eyes, ears, etc. This will culminate in portrait drawings.

TEACHER: M. PORTIER
SUBJECT: FRENCH

This semester, this class worked particularly well, advancing their knowledge and acquisition of the French language. They have assimilated the complexity of the double negation while discovering the conditional verb tense and the hypothetical sentence structure. Through the practice of describing an individual's physical appearance, the scholars have also become comfortable with new sentence structures and vocabulary. In reading the novel *Cyrano de Bergerac* together, I have learned that the students are quite moved by the amusing and tragic personality of the main character. More recently, we began using multiple audio supports such as radio interviews and more to develop their comprehension and ability to process and reuse the new vocabulary they were exposed to in conversation. I look forward to challenging them in developing their oratory skills next semester.

TEACHER: DR. FRIDMAN
SUBJECT: PROGRAMMING

The first month of our course was devoted to reviewing last year material and determining how much the students remember and understand. Based on the results, we separated the students into two groups, regular and advanced. The regular groups is now doing more in-depth exercises with Python's core concepts, such as loops, conditional statements, lists and data validation. The advanced group is working on more using the same concepts to perform more challenging tasks. They are currently finalizing their sorting algorithms. Both groups are learning to use flowcharts to help with process planning in the future.

TEACHER: DR. NAGELBERG
SUBJECT: SCIENCE

In seventh and eighth grade this trimester we have learned about the organization of the periodic table, about how atoms are structured, about how atoms interact with each other, and about properties of water. We have also spent some time learning about how and where elements are formed, how we know about this, and the properties of some common biological molecules.