

Main Line Classical Academy
Newsletter
May & June, 2018

English, Kindergarten, 1st, & 2nd Grade - Frank Chilbert

The kindergartners have enjoyed many ancient stories throughout the course of the year. We have ended the year in Ancient Israel. They have heard about the Judeo-Christian creation story and been introduced to many biblical characters such as Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel, Joseph, Moses and many more.

The 1st graders have made it a long way into their "A is for Apple" curriculum and are ready for next year's "B is for Bear." They have also made great progress in their penmanship workbooks and dictation sheets. We have continued reciting old poems from the beginning of the year so that they can keep those and images with them as they enter their summer break.

The 2nd graders have continued working through the complex readings, activities, and lessons in the "B is for Bear" textbook. During the last week, the seconds graders have reviewed nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronoun, and prepositions. They have also review many literary terms such as theme, simile, and metaphor. We also made sure to finish reading "Charlotte's Web" by E.B. White as a class.

Kindergarten:

Most Recent Poem:

"The Lord Will Provide" by William Cowper

Stories:

Biblical Stories

1st Grade

Most Recent Poem:

"Going Downhill on a Bicycle" by Henry Charles Beeching

Stories:

Fables from "A is for Apple" curriculum

2nd Grade:

Most Recent Poem:

"The Bells" by Edgar Allan Poe

Stories:

"Charlotte's Web" by E.B. White

English, 3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th Grade - William Walter

3rd Graders

This month the 3rd graders learned the format for the comparison/contrast composition. One way students can get to know the world about them better is by observing differences between things and other things of the same kind—for example, between organic food and conventionally grown food, between public schools and private schools, and between the U.S. presidency and other leaders (prime ministers, monarchs and dictators). When we are called to make a decision, for example, on whether or not to buy something at the store, we must get to know more about it and products like it so that we make the right choice. Often we make the best decisions when we learn more about our choices. Making comparisons between the specific details of things forces the students to observe and think about things in a more thorough and systematic way.

After our discussion of the comparison format, the students read a simple example essay involving two friends. They were then given topics to choose from to write a one-paragraph comparison essay, including 1) a main idea 2) three supporting details of comparison and 3) transitions. The topics the students chose for the essay included two vacation places, mother and daughter, luxury cars vs. economy cars, and the poems of Christina Rossetti vs. the poems of Emily Dickinson.

4th Graders

One of the most difficult things to do in writing is make a reader laugh. Some of the greatest writers in the English language—Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, Jonathan Swift and Chaucer, for example—owe some of their success to this unique ability. The above-mentioned writers achieved humor in their writing mostly through satire, which involves the use of hyperbole to show the irrationality, ridiculousness, or hypocrisy of human behavior. This month the 4th grade class read James Thurber's satire "The Dog That Bit People," a work that shows the irrational relationship that people have with their pets. Unlike Twain and Dickens, who wrote about more serious human offenses, Thurber wrote in his personal narrative about people whose foibles were more ridiculous than noxious. He tells the story of "Muggs," one of the fifty-four or -five dogs he owned while growing up in Columbus, Ohio. "Probably no one man should have as many dogs in his life as I have had," he writes, "but there was more pleasure than distress in them except in the case of an Airedale named Muggs." Thurber then goes on to write about the mother's indulgence towards the dog, despite the fact that he was a terror to the whole neighborhood and even to the family. "We used to take turns feeding Muggs to be on his good side," Thurber says, "but that didn't always work." When Muggs bit the iceman, the mother blamed the incident on the iceman, saying, "If you didn't think he would bite you, he wouldn't." From the lesson on Thurber, the students learned not only the nature of satire, but also the importance of using detail, dialog and description in narrative writing—elements that Thurber amply uses. The students went on to write about their own experiences with pets (if they have one), using the elements found in Thurber's work.

5th/6th Graders

If you ever get stuck talking to me about poetry, you will soon learn that I have a special fondness for the Romantic poets. Although Wordsworth, Byron and Keats are at the top of the list, I do enjoy Shelley and Coleridge as well—two poets that the 5th and 6th graders read this month. One of the poems, written by Shelley, is titled “Mutability,” a poem about the transience of life. After reading the poem, the students looked at its metrical aspects, its rhyme scheme, and word choice. They also went over the literary terms involved with the poem, such as pathetic fallacy (a term that John Ruskin invented and applied to the way poets ascribe their own emotions to natural objects) and the philosophic term Platonism. I was pleased to find out that the students had already encountered the term in their art history class at the Classical Academy, and it was a pleasure to watch them apply what they already knew to the poem. At the end of the class, it was my hope that they had a deeper appreciation not only of the philosophic underpinnings of the poem, but also of the technical adeptness that Shelley had in expressing the sad fact that all good things in life will at some time pass away!

History, Kindergarten & 1st Grade, Early American History - Frank Chilbert

The kindergartners worked hard to follow the Continental Army all throughout the Eastern seaboard. They witnessed full length battles, skirmishes, and drawn-out sieges. They discussed the qualities and limitations of each army-- the American and British. They watched as an unlikely victor rose to a challenge that even they didn't know they could accomplish. We finished the year by completing D'Aulaire's biographies of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. We also celebrated our independence by making our very own tricorne hats as a end-of-the-year treat!

2nd, 3rd, & 4th Grade, Ancient Greek History - Frank Chilbert



During the month of May, we have kept a close watch on the effects of the Peloponnesian War on Athens. Certainly having lost the war took its toll, but we also discussed a more invisible consequence as we discussed the way that Athens had acquired many subjects throughout central and northern Greece that were a part of the "Delian League." Was Athens becoming an Empire? If so, what consequences came with this slow shift? What were some of the causes? Were all Athenians happy with their trajectory? Were they aware of it? As we discovered the complexity of these questions, we had to face the reality of some type of change as we watched Athens get conquered by the Macedonian Empire. It is hard to believe that the same city-state that stood up to the Persians so many years previously was so willing to cower to a much younger Empire.

Our attention for the last few weeks of the year has been on Alexander the Great and his many victories over the Persians. Be sure to ask your children to retell stories about his crowning, his horse Bucephalus, his legendary armor, his many siege warfare inventions, his glories in battle, and his tragic death.

History, 5th & 6th Grade - Graham Gormley

We began this month with an introduction to philosophy which, along with sophistry, had truly become a force to be reckoned with in Athens in the time between the Persian and Peloponnesian wars. It wasn't without hesitation that I introduced it, despite it being a favorite of mine, because even the Socratic understanding of philosophy actually has the potential to undermine whatever it sets its sights upon, no matter how orthodox it may seem to us today. Cicero would cite a particular brand of Greek (Epicurean) philosophy as the culprit that brought about the demise of the Roman republic. With all that in mind, we cautiously read through and discussed Plato's allegory of the cave from Book V of his *Republic*.

From there, we moved on to the Peloponnesian wars, relying heavily on Thucydides' account. There are so many points of interest during this era that it is difficult to pin down the most important. Warfare had changed to become more brutal, the dynamics of inter-city relations could not go back to relying on Sparta alone, Athens' desire to self-govern was tested beyond measure, and treachery abounded. We also wondered whether war could have been avoided or if it was inevitable given the respective constitutions of Sparta and Athens. Rather than supply stock answers to these questions we tried to have an open discussion about them when time permitted, as it is important that each student form his own opinion, provided he can support it plausibly.

As we conclude the year, we're looking at a fundamentally altered Greece. Athens and Sparta, worn out from decades of war, found themselves tired and weak. In the case of Athens, there were many who were practically eager to be ruled by another. How is it that the citizens from

the same stock could successfully eject the Persians from Greece at the battle of Marathon in one instance and look forward to having a master in another, a mere 150 years apart? Even Sparta, though she remained intractable enough to give Phillip (Alexander's father) pause, would stand by and watch as members of her Peloponnesian League either seceded or were taken by Macedon. It seems that Greece was never the same after the war between Sparta and Athens, but she would finally see something like unity, if not the easy way, the hard.

In any case, I was reflecting with pleasure on all the original texts we've covered this year and they would rival many a college course. We've read substantial portions of Herodotus' *Histories*, Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Homer's *Iliad*, Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian Wars*, Plutarch's *Lives* (Lycurgus, Solon, and Alexander), Plato's *Republic*, and Sophocles' *Antigone*. It would not have been possible, but for the outstanding students I had. I hope they return to these and more in the future.

Have a wonderful summer!

Math, Kindergarten - Yulia Shpilman



Here is a brief look into how we wrapped up the year in Kindergarten math:

1. **Counting routine** - in counting, we continued practicing naming three digit numbers and even ventured into four-digit numbers! The students are fascinated with large numbers, so we have been discussing how to name those as well.

2. **Arithmetic practice** - In addition to our usual daily arithmetic practice, we spent a lot of time this month on skip counting by various numbers. The students are quite good at counting by 2s, 5s and 10s if you start from “the beginning”, but need more practicing counting by other numbers. We also worked on skip-counting on our 100 charts and looking for beautiful patterns that result from counting by certain numbers. Finally, we have been working on recognizing that if we know certain “anchors” such as $5+5$ or $6+6$, it is easy to figure out answers to such problems as $6+7$ or $5+4$ without having to do all the work of counting. Please continue to reinforce and practice this skill over the summer!

3. **Special topics** -
 - a. **Patterns**: we have spent the past month talking about various number and visual patterns and worked on learning to recognize and continue them. We discussed that a pattern doesn't necessarily need to repeat, but needs to follow some rule, so we can predict the next item.
 - b. **Spatial reasoning**: what happens when you fold a square piece of paper in half and then punch a hole in it? What does it look like when you open it back up? What about when you fold it twice and punch two holes? We had a blast working on a set of such puzzles, predicting and checking our answers.
 - c. We also had a lot of fun talking about geometric progressions and reading “One grain of rice”, discussing ancient number systems and writing on actual clay tablets and cutting strips to paper to look for patterns.

I strongly suggest continuing arithmetic practice over the summer. Simple addition and subtraction worksheets are fine, but so are any number of games such as Pig 10, Tiny Polka Dots, 1-2-3 peek and see, rolling dice and finding the sum and difference of two numbers, etc. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need specific suggestions.

Math, 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Grade - Sasha Fradkin



The first grade class spent the last month of school exploring a number of topics, including time, money, and double-digit addition/subtraction. They all now use place-value ideas when adding multi-digit numbers and I am always impressed by the multitude of strategies that they collectively come up with when solving such problems.

The second grade class spent the month of May evaluating a multitude of mathematical expressions. After much exploration, they discovered that the order in which you evaluate a mathematical expression involving both addition and subtraction sometimes matters and sometimes not. For example, in the expression $100 - 50 - 25$, it doesn't matter whether you subtract 50 first and then 25 or 25 and then 50. However, you cannot subtract 25 from 50 and then the result from 100. They also practiced simplifying and evaluating expressions involving variables (and some were quite tricky!).

During the month of May, the third grade class learned about different types and units of measurement. They solved problems involving length, weight, capacity, temperature, time and money. As usual, the first few problems on each topic were straightforward while the later ones required the students to use their logic and reasoning skills in addition to their new knowledge about measurement.

The fourth grade class spent the month of May learning all about integers. Whereas all of the students had a vague knowledge of negative numbers, none of them had previously done much arithmetic with them. Thus, they learned how to add and subtract positive and negative numbers, first using a number line and then without it. They filled in gaps in skip-counting

problems that involved negative numbers and solved logic puzzles involving negative integers. They also learned about and solved problems involving the concept of absolute value.

Math, 5th & 6th Grade - Tatiana Ter-Saakov

5th-6th grade finished the year by thoroughly reviewing all operations with fractions. Students were working on understanding how the definitions of operations of multiplication and division are extended to fractions. We also practiced word problems involving fractions. Students had their last test of the year on both factorizations and fractions.

Overall, this was a great year. Students are getting used to encountering multistep problems that require more perseverance. Their knowledge of particular techniques is backed up with understanding of the reasoning on accessible examples, if not a formal proof. Please encourage them to find ways to review their math skills during summer. Next year we are moving on to Algebra course.

Science, Kindergarten & 1st Grade - Tatiana Ter-Saakov

We wrapped up the year with students in K-3rd by talking about weather and climate. We talked about measuring tools. Students got to compare the readings of two rain gauges of different diameter we set up in the schools yard, and many were surprised to find the height of the water the same.

Science, 2nd & 3rd Grade - Tatiana Ter-Saakov

2nd-3rd grade students made simple versions of hygrometer. Students observed experiments showing that condensation happens when temperature or air pressure goes down. We watched a video explaining the big picture of air flows on Earth, and talked about climate zone patterns.

Science, 4th, 5th & 6th Grade - Tatiana Ter-Saakov



4th-6th grades have been working on the fascinating topic of optics. Students made pinhole cameras, and we were even lucky to catch a sunny day to test them out. We also performed a number of experiments on refraction of light and the physics behind color.

Robotics, Computer Programing - Tatiana Ter-Saakov

The students had a great year in the robotics class. They made amazing progress for just one year of studies. Several missions are completely finished, with appropriate attachments and sensors performing properly, robot navigating the mat autonomously to the mission, accomplishing it, and returning back to the base (designated area in the corner of the mat). Students were working on a few last-minute touches recently, and are wrapping up the year with a demonstration of each mission progress to their classmates.

French - Betty d’Herve

French - Kindergarten

This month, we continued to learn “traditional” French songs and poems:

- Y’a une pie dans l’poirier : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83QlhQXZzZw> ;
- Ma main est une fleur;
- Trois p’etits chats https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OfoUHcXNgY (this is the closest version I could find);
- Review of all the songs and poems learned this year.

We started our new third book “Mon monde.” In this book, we will write French sentences. We worked a lot together on how to learn, and memorize the French spelling of the vocabulary. We completely finished three lessons of this book. The children were very excited about their new book and did very well completing it.

Bonnes vacances!

Vocabulary:

Gérard

Sylvie

Antoine

Hiko

mange (eats)

aime (likes)

joue (plays)

regarde (looks at)

la glace (the ice cream)

le pain (the bread)

le fromage (the cheese)

le ballon bleu (the blue ball)

le ballon jaune (the yellow ball)

le vélo (the bike)

la pomme (the apple)

au parc (at the park)

à la maison (at the house)

de/d' (of)

avec (with)

French, 1st Grade & 2nd Grade - Betty d'Herve

avec elle (with her)

on (we/people)

en France (in France)

en Louisiane (in Louisiana)

au Québec (in Quebec)

Above is the list of the new vocabulary. We wrote a lot more sentences which incorporated vocabulary that we learned from the previous book (cf homework paper). This month, we continued to learn "traditional" French songs and poems:

- Le fermier dans son pré : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2UXqfi7Rqg> ;
- Pour ma mère , Maurice Carême;
- Trois p'tits chats https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0foUHcXNgY (this is the closest version I could find);
- Review of all the songs and poems learned this year

As we finished our book “Mon monde,” we did several evaluations: listening comprehension, vocabulary memorization, and writing sentences. We also continued to work on “dictée”(French spelling test). We started our new book “ Gérard et ses copains” and we completed 5 lessons. We continued to work on conjugating verbs in the present tense.
Bonnes vacances!

Vocabulary:

un croissant

un beignet (a doughnut)

un coca

avec lui (with him)

French, 3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th Grade - Betty d’Herve

This month, we continued to learn “traditional” French songs and poems:

- Le fermier dans son pré : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2UXqfi7Rqg> ;
- Pour ma mère , Maurice Carême;
- Le vieux piano d’la plage (first verse) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceRuplFuLHw> ;
- Review of all the songs and poems learned this year

We worked on conjugating irregular verbs in the present tense: prendre (to take), apprendre (to learn), comprendre (to understand), attendre (to wait for), lire (to read), écrire (to write), devoir + infinitive (to have to), savoir + infinitive (to know, to be able to), venir (to come), faire (to do, to make). We also studied the regular conjugation of -IR verb finir(to finish). We reviewed the infinitive form of all the verbs studied this semester. We also worked on reading comprehension and answering questions with full sentences.

Bonnes vacances!

Vocabulary and conjugation:

Cf. homework papers

Latin, 4th, 5th & 6th Grade - Asya Sigelman

This month, we did an in-depth review of all the grammar and vocabulary we learned this year. We also reviewed our list of quotes of the week. We finished reading the *Aeneid*. The students enjoyed this rendition of Vergil’s work so much, they asked if there is a sequel to it! In response, I brought in the next-best thing to a sequel: a children’s adaptation of Plutarch’s *Lives* of famous Romans. Plutarch talks about many of the great Romans who are depicted on

Aeneas' divinely-wrought shield. This year, we got through Plutarch's stories of Romulus and Remus, Numa, King Tarquin, and Mucius Scaevola. The students will re-encounter these figures next year in Roman History. Finally, as a special end-of-year project, the students had their first introduction to the principles of Latin poetic meter. We discussed dactylic hexameter and the differences between English and Latin poetry composition. Finally, we analyzed, scanned (= figured out the meter of), and memorized the first four lines of Vergil's *Aeneid*—perhaps the most famous and most often memorized four lines in all of Western history. The students did a fantastic job reciting the verses by heart in front of the class. Ask your child to recite them to you at home:

Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris
Italiam, fato profugus, Laviniaque venit
litora, multum ille et terris iactatus et alto
vi superum saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram.

Music, Kindergarten - Karina Butterworth



Music - Karina Butterworth

The students worked hard practicing for the final musical evening!



Art, Kindergarten & 1st Grade - Karina Butterworth



Art, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th Grade - Karina Butterworth



Art History, 3rd Grade - Asya Sigelman

Due to a couple end-of-the-year fieldtrips, we had only a few Art History lessons in May in June. However, we covered some exciting new ground, learning a bit about Byzantine sacred art which had important influence on medieval European art. We discussed the notion of icon and the great historical controversies surrounding iconography (iconoclasm). We also talked about the difference between early medieval attitudes toward the saints in Europe (worship of relics) vs. in Byzantium (worship of icons). We ended the year with a fun review exercise in the form of a jeopardy game.

Hands-On Skills - Adam Darer

In Hands-On-Skills this month, we finished our Outdoor Survival Skills unit by learning how to navigate using a compass. We talked about the different parts of a compass, and how to set the dial to find North, South, East, and West, in addition to many other bearings. We played several direction games inside, and then took our skills outside as we completed several orienteering courses around the school. We also practiced using the compass to find the bearings of trees/buildings outside. The students then learned how to read a map, how to navigate a trail with a map and compass, and how to triangulate using the bearings of two landmarks on a map to find their rough location. It was a pleasure having the students in class this year. I wish everyone a wonderful summer!

Hebrew - Tal Gutman

3rd grade



Our main topic in May was the house and furniture. The students practiced the vocabulary through discussions about the rooms in their homes and furniture they have in them using the adjectives we studied throughout the year. The students also wrote an essay according to leading questions they had to follow, like: Which street do you live on? Do you live in a house or in an apartment? How many rooms do you have in your house? How many bathrooms? Do you have a yard or a porch?

We also took another step forward in grammar as the students were introduced to the past tense with the verbs "was" and "were". We continued to practice the infinitive form of verbs in present tense. With some verbs, I let the students explore by themselves what the infinitive form is. Since the verbs in Hebrew are based on a 3-letter root system that determines their meaning, there is a pattern that the students can follow and analyze to discover what the infinite form of a verb is. The students did it well and enjoyed this challenge a lot.

The students also enjoyed reviewing our vocabulary units from the past year, which we did through fun games. The most popular activity was quizzes in which I described a word or phrase and the students guessed what the word was and wrote it on their whiteboards. One example from the tastes unit is: "food item, yellow, very sour" (lemon). it's not an easy task in a foreign language since the students should first have to fully understand the words in the sentence I am saying in Hebrew and then retrieve from their memory the correct word. Another game was to write words related to a subject I named. During this exercise, the students were so engaged that they wrote long and creative sentences, not only single words. On the last week of school, we summarized our year with the students' reflections on their learning. They

also enjoyed a small treat that arrived all the way from Israel, in the shape of a bear since the word of the year that the students chose is "teddy bear" – דובי ☺

K-1st grade

In May we continued our daily routine of practicing one-on-one reading according to the students' levels and needs. We also worked on the numbers, and made progress in counting to 500. This month we also reviewed our vocabulary from the past year with fun activities such as vocabulary competitions and tasks on the whiteboard like "write a word which starts with the letter x"/ "write a food item you like" / "write a word with one of the five terminal letters" and more.

In 1st grade, we progressed to a new textbook which focuses on vocabulary, grammatical structures and sentence construction. We also practiced the conjugations of verbs in present tense. When we practiced verbal sentences such as "Tal reads a nice book", the students had to suggest the subject and the object of the sentence from their previous knowledge, to encourage an active use of the language.

In kindergarten, our writing practice during the year was dedicated to strengthening the connections between the written words and their sounds. Now that this connection is established, we dedicated time to practice accurate spelling of words with special phenomena in Hebrew, such as homophonic letters and silent letters, as well as to writing conventions - size of the letters, directionality and space between words. On the last week of school, we summarized our year with the students' reflections on their learning. The students also chose the word of the year and enjoyed a small treat from Israel ☺

Christian Studies - Betsy Bashore

In Christian Studies we finished the Gospel of John where we see the transformation from Jesus calling the disciples friends at the last supper and then brothers after His resurrection. This pivotal moment symbolizes death being conquered and our status as sons and daughters restored to its original form. We finished off the year with individual projects on each student's favorite passage they learned about this year and presented it to each other while feasting on delicious treats! Thank you so much for such a wonderful year of Christian Studies!