



October/November 2019

## MAIN LINE CLASSICAL ACADEMY

*“Because children are never too young  
to learn great things”*

*Greeting from Head of School, Dr. Aya Sigelman, on MLCA Grandparents’ Day, November 27, 2019*

Welcome, Grandparents! It is our tremendous honor to host you this morning.

Traditionally, we hold Grandparents Day on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as a lead-in into the holiday. On Thanksgiving, we celebrate not only our own gratitude for the blessings of the New World, but also our gratitude for the courage and devotion of our spiritual ancestors—the first settlers, or Pilgrims, who persevered through incredible hardships during their first year on these new shores and bequeathed their legacy to us, the subsequent generations. Thanksgiving is very much about the continuity of generations, the cherishing of tradition.

It therefore feels particularly appropriate for our children to enter the festive weekend of Thanksgiving with a celebration of their grandparents and grand-friends.

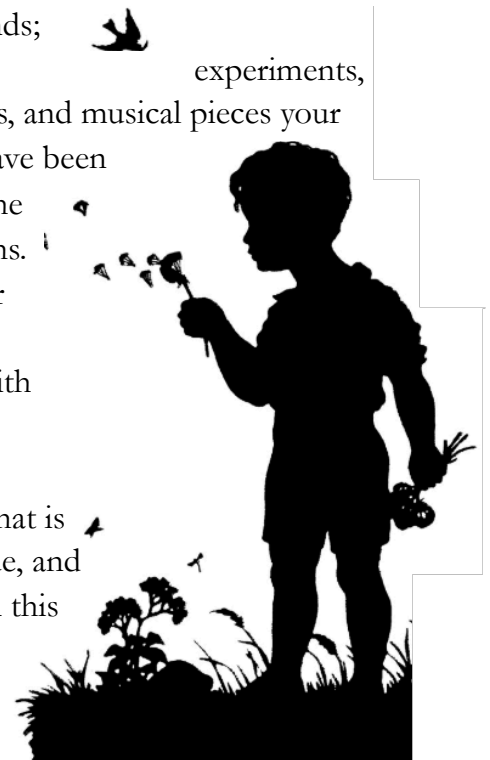
We live in a time when it is considered fashionable, even imperative, for young people to proclaim themselves wiser, kinder, more open-minded than the generations of the past. Armed with this self-righteous mantra, our society has been busy taking down statues and renaming monuments on college campuses and town squares, as well as abridging literary and poetic texts and deleting historical figures

and even entire epochs from school curricula.

At MLCA, by contrast, we believe that our children are inheritors of an august tradition which they must master. When we talk about the “great things” which children are never too young to learn, we mean the greatest literary, scientific, poetic, mathematical, artistic, musical, and historical achievements of the past, bequeathed to us over millennia. As our students embark on this adventure that is true education, they can have no better pilots than you, their grandparents.

Today, I invite you to step into our hallways and classrooms and take a look at the math and logic problems; at the poems, myths, and legends; at the science experiments, historical periods, and musical pieces your grandchildren have been exploring over the past three months.

Thank you for sharing your grandchildren with us every day, for all you do to guide them in what is beautiful and true, and for joining us on this journey this morning.



## Kindergarten English

Mr. Chilbert

In Kindergarten, we have completed the trilogy set of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. They included, “Gilgamesh the King,” “The Revenge of Ishtar,” and “The Last Quest of Gilgamesh.” After a thorough examination of each timeless story, we were able to do two remarkable things together as a class. First, the students retold the story--sometimes with words, sometimes with props-- from beginning to end. Their knowledge had become so intimate with the text that I could open to a page, ask a student to recount what was going on during that part of the story and how it fit into the overall story arch. Second, the students were able to have a discussion about what Gilgamesh had to learn before becoming a good king.

Since finishing Gilgamesh, we have started Egyptian mythology. We told the stories of the creation of the world and the Egyptian gods, the reign of the first and second Pharaohs, Ra and Osiris, the treachery of Seth, and the vengeance of Horus. We also told some stories of famous Egyptians such as Cleopatra. Here is a list of Egyptian gods and goddesses that the Kindergartners are familiar with: Ra the Shining One, Shu the Air, Tefnut the Rain, Geb the Earth, Nut the Sky, Nile the River, Egypt the Land, Isis the Queen, Osiris the King, Seth the Evil One, Thoth god of Wisdom, Wadjet the Snake Goddess, and Horus the Avenger.

For poetry, we have memorized “A Fairy in Armor” by Joseph Rodman Drake, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost, and “Fire and Ice” by Robert Frost.

## Kindergarten Math

Mrs. Shpilman

### Counting routine

In the past two months, the kindergarteners have been using the number line to learn to recognize and compare two-digit numbers. We are learning to tell the difference between 14 and 41, comparing 34 and 43, and finding numbers within a range (e.g, bigger than 20 but smaller than 35).

We are also working on skip-counting by 10s, 5s and 2s using the number line, so the students aren't just memorizing a set of words but actually see and understand what skip-counting means.

### Arithmetic practice

Our favorite tool for arithmetic practice remains 1-2-3 peek and see. The students

are getting quite good at this game! We are working on memorizing addition facts within 10 and learned now to add single digit numbers to 10 (e.g.,  $10+4=14$  is an easy problem for them now). We are also noticing patterns, and making connections such as if we know that  $5+5 = 10$ , we can easily figure out that  $5+6$  is just one more.. Additionally, we are applying this knowledge when we work on various addition and subtraction worksheets.

**Special topics** - we have had a lot of fun with a variety of special topics and holiday crafts!

Shapes - we have been working on identifying and properly naming quadrilaterals (e.g., square, rectangle, trapezoid, rhombus, etc), as well as some additional shapes such as pentagon and hexagon. We have done many fun activities with shapes, including drawing them on triangular graph paper, building pictures out of them and cutting them out. Ask your child what happens when you cut off a corner from a square - how many sides will the new shape have?

Coordinates - we started exploring the concept of coordinates with the kindergarteners. We practiced using coordinates by finding our seats in a pretend theater, figuring out which chess pieces will be eaten by the rook, queen and bishop and making holiday pictures using coordinates.

### **Jane Kats Mousematics workbook**

Each student now has his own workbook and we spend some time each week working on the various problems in the book. The assignments are varied and help not only build logic and spatial reasoning skills, but also help students write and color neatly, improving their fine motor skills.

### **Game time**

Every day, I aim to leave the last ten minutes of class for a fun game. Games help our students develop many important math-related skills such as spatial reasoning and logic, as well as social skills, such as waiting for your turn, graciously losing and encouraging your friends. We are still enjoying Swish, Blink, and Cats&Owls, Ask your children about their favorites!

## Kindergarten-First Grade History Mr. Gormley

Over the last month, we worked our way through the discovery of Acoma, or "Sky City," by Coronado; DeSoto's journey around the southeast; the French beginnings in Canada and their quarrel with the Spanish; Francis Drake, Walter Raleigh, and Roanoke. The children seemed to enjoy the mystery of the lost colony of the latter.

This week we're reading about the adventure's of John Smith and his time at Jamestown. If all goes well, we may try to build our own popsicle version of the colony. We'll also be moving on to the pilgrims and Thanksgiving (hopefully, just in time to coincide with our current Thanksgiving), the Quakers, and King Phillip's War in December.

## Kindergarten French

### Madame d'Hervé

In October, we learned the songs :

- “ Le facteur n'est pas passé ”(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QL12CDQEVC>)
- “ Brousse, brousse”[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMgi\\_Mdan9Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMgi_Mdan9Q)
- “ Pomme de reinette et pomme d'Api ” ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMgi\\_Mdan9Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMgi_Mdan9Q))
- “ Les petits poissons ” ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7ipjEOdceM>)
- “ Vieille sorcière ” (in tune of *Are you sleeping, Brother John ?*)
- “ Les sorcières ” (in tune of *Are you sleeping, Brother John ?*)

We worked on different French songs learned previously. The children also did a great job making French sentences with the words learned from the beginning of the year and then reading their own sentences out loud one by one. We also studied lessons 7 to 12 in the book *Mes premiers pas*. These lessons introduce two new characters: Gérard and Sylvie, and the colors (bleu, vert, rouge, jaune). We also studied the position of the adjective in French and how it interacts with the noun. We continued to work on numbers 1-69 and worked on making sentences. Orally, we answered the question « combien de ... il y a ? » (« how much/many... is/are there ? ») and we made sentences combining the numbers and colors. Lesson 9 introduced a new verb « veut » (wants). We made sentences using this new verb and all the vocabulary learned. In the lessons 10 and 11 of our book « Mes premiers pas », we used the adjectives of colors (jaune, vert, bleu, rouge) with new nouns « l'ours » (the bear) and “la maison” (the house)..

We have used our individual white boards to work on numbers, and on beginning letters of the French words... Each student read several times individually to the teacher the French sentences of our book.

We continued to play games (memory games, speed games...) about the colors, numbers, and new vocabulary.

**Vocabulary:**

Sylvie

G rard

veut (wants)

boit (drinks)

l'ours bleu (the blue bear)

l'ours vert (the green bear)

l'ours jaune (the yellow bear)

l'ours rouge (the red bear)

la maison bleue (the blue house)

la maison verte (the green house)

la maison jaune (the yellow house)

la maison rouge (the red house)

  la maison (at home)

un ballon rose (a pink ball)

un ballon violet (a purple ball)

un ballon gris (a ball)

un ballon orange (an orange ball)

un ballon blanc (a white ball)

un ballon marron (a brown ball)

une balle (a small ball)

il y a (there is/there are)

In November, we have learned the songs :

- Tourne tourne petit moulin (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xi6Hwl6RjE&list=PLyRmyyueQ8MChpp5zJ6btm3lg0vjAQmY> )
- 1st verse and refrain of Il est n  le divin enfant (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXUN7Yo98Iw> )
- Petit escargot (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Islf7AROIQ>)

We continued our routine about the numbers. We reached 100 counting one by one. We finished our book "Fran ais 1". I encouraged the children to read it to you. The children are more and more comfortable using numbers and colors to describe a picture. We continue to answer the question «combien de ... il y a ?» (« how much/many... is/are there ? ») orally, using sentences using numbers and colors. We continue to use our individual whiteboards to work on numbers, on beginning sounds of French words. The students read several times individually to the teacher the French sentences of our book, as well as, sentences that they created to describe pictures in our book. We also insisted on the difference between "au parc (at the park)" and "le parc (the park)". The children were very excited about our new book "Fran ais 2". We learned new vocabulary and read "color words". We wrote French sentences in our book by reading and then copying words in the correct order.

**Vocabulary:**

le parc (the parc)	une chemise (a shirt)
au parc (at the parc)	des chaussures (shoes)
va (goes to)	blanc (white)
a (has)	bleu (blue)
aime (likes)	violet (purple)
un gâteau à la fraise (strawberry cake)	noir (black)
un gâteau à la vanille (vanilla cake)	rouge (red)
un gâteau au chocolat (chocolate cake)	vert (green)
un chapeau (a hat)	jaune (yellow)
un crayon (a pencil)	marron (brown)
un ballon (a ball)	orange (orange)
un vélo (a bike)	rose (pink)

## Kindergarten-First Grade Science

### Mr. Darer

In Science class we explored how animals and plants are similar and different through class discussions and observations. After learning about and drawing pictures of food chains, we studied how plants get their energy from the Sun. From here, we began a basic discussion of what energy is (something that makes an object move, go, or change). We learned about different types of energy and observed how one type of energy can change into another type of energy (a pencil sharpener turns electrical energy into movement energy). We recently planted an Amaryllis bulb and are measuring its height every day and using this information to make a bar graph tracking how tall the plant is each day.

## Kindergarten-First Grade Music

### Mrs. Butterworth

During October and November our Kindergarten-First Grade group became more even in their skills. New students learned their first songs. The children are very excited about their performance day. First graders perform once a week, Kindergarten twice a week. If there are words in somebody's piano song the other kids are allowed to sing gently. They are learning to listen to each other and to keep one tempo.

In music theory, the kids can now write 4 measures of musical dictation with 5 notes from C to G, with whole, half and quarter notes. I play the song, they sing it with a syllable, "la," and show with their hand where the melody goes up or down. Then we decode it measure by measure, name the notes, and talk about rhythm. Finally, I write it on the board and they have to copy it. They learn to write the notes accurately, not to miss or add any note, and not to forget the G clef or bar lines. After dictation is done, one child has to play it on the piano.

During violin ensemble kids try to use all 4 fingers in the major pattern (with high 2nd finger). Students from last year are improving their violin and bow position, and provide strong support for our new students. We keep working on songs with open strings to improve bow position. Some of the new children can hold it well already, and others are close and know how to fix it if I remind them. The kids are pretty accurate with their instruments and always notice if somebody is holding it holds it unsafely. Also, the kids got to play on a xylophone; with all their skills, it was easy for them to read the notes.

## Kindergarten-First Grade Art Studio

### Mrs. Butterworth

To accommodate students who work at different speeds, we now complete our projects in 2 lessons, so fast workers can draw more accurately and slow perfectionists can finish on time.

During October and November students finished several pictures:

1. "Sick Teddy bear with honey" - still life portrait of toy bear, in watercolor.
2. "Halloween theme" - Students painted a cat and pumpkin following my example on the board, in watercolor. They had to show that the cat is in front of the pumpkin, so it is placed lower on the picture.
3. "Space theme" - After the whole school had a chance to see a transit of Mercury across the sun, Kindergarten and First Grade painted colorful pictures of space in watercolor. (Example by June Winfield, First Grade)
4. "Hedgehog" - The kids used colored paper, scissors and glue to construct a colored paper model.
5. "Chameleon" - The students painted watercolor chameleons following my example. (example on next page by Keelen Cooke)
6. "Black and white still life" - The kids depicted a composition of 3 objects: a bottle, kettle and cap. They had to determine and show what object is closer and what is farther away. Also, they were introduced to pencils with different graphite grading scales and used different pressure.

## Kindergarten-Third Grade Hands on Skills

Mr. Darer

In Hands On Skills class we have been learning how to identify trees based on the shapes of their leaves. We've been going outside most classes to learn the names of the trees that surround the school. The students can now identify the following trees around campus: White Pine, Norway Maple, Red Maple, Sugar Maple, Japanese Maple, Oak, Sassafras, Beech, Spruce, Cedar, Tulip Poplar, Black Walnut. We just began our bird ID unit and started learning how to use binoculars this past week.

## Kindergarten-Third Grade Christian Studies

Ms. Woo

The K-3 Christian Studies class has finished studying the main stories and characters in the book of Genesis. On Monday, November 11 we reviewed everything we have been learning (songs, stories, Bible verses) and I was amazed at how the students have retained everything! We will continue through our survey of the Bible with the book of Exodus.

We have also started rehearsing for the nativity play, which will be performed at the school's musical evening on December 7th. The students and I are really excited to show everyone the performance!

(Cat painting by Everett Yu, Kindergarten)





## First Grade English

### Mr. Chilbert

In First Grade English, we have many things going on at once. We have lately been studying “The Arrow and the Song” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The poem invites us to think about the power of invisible realm of sound, and particularly, the realm of music. How is it that something that we cannot see can still move us? We have also been working carefully with our penmanship. On top three rules that keep rehearsing are: 1) make counter-clockwise “O’s”, 2) pull our “L’s”, don’t push!, and 3) even spacing between letters. We have been mastering several new phonics sounds such as, “ea,” “ch,” “ew,” “sh,” and “th.” We also have added a lot to our list of sight words (listed below). Whenever we have time at the end of class, we will listen to a fairy tale of Hans Christian Anderson.

Sight words: 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, says, girl, boy, their, through, blue, green, used, other, goes, Mr., Mrs., said, put, whole, most, juice, fruit, father, mother

## First Grade Math

### Dr. Fradkin

A big focus of first grade math during the month of October 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.

November was largely spent on exploring 2-digit numbers as well as addition within 20. A lot of emphasis was put on the “teen” numbers. We discussed how “teen” literally means ten and so a number like seventeen means seven and ten. The students quickly picked on up how this helps us to easily add ten to a single digit number. We then explored how this can be used to add other single digit numbers by first making ten and then adding what is left over. We also started writing down numbers on the board during our morning counting routines. The students noticed a lot of interesting patterns that arise when counting by 10’s,

5's, 3's, and 4's. For example, they noticed that the units digit repeats after every five numbers when counting by 2 or 4, after every two numbers when counting by 5's, and after every 10 numbers when counting by 3's. Every day, the observations get deeper and more interesting!

## First Grade French

### Madame d'Hervé

In October, we learned the songs :

- . “ Alouette ” ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L\\_hFw\\_cWg9U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_hFw_cWg9U))
- . “ C'est Guguss ” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8eOX0Qk3lY>)
- . “ Il court, il court le furet ” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbGDY0Zs3Ss>)
- . “ Au jardin de ma grand-mère ”
- . “ Vieille sorcière ” (in tune of *Are you sleeping, Brother John ?*)
- . “ Les sorcières ” (in tune of *Are you sleeping, Brother John ?*)

We started the routine about the numbers. We have studied the lessons 5 and 6 of the book *Mon monde* as well as practicing the « dictée » exercice. We completed evaluations covering lessons 1 to 5. We started the lesson with the new vocabulary: écrire/écrit (to write/ writes), le sac/un sac (the bag/ a bag), dans (in), il y a (there is, there are). We practiced answering some questions with “qui” (who) and “combien de...il y a?” (how much/many... is/are there?) orally.

It took time to work on the French spelling of all the vocabulary. Every day, we have used our individual white board in order to practice memorizing French spelling as well as introducing French sounds (ain , on,...).

#### **Vocabulary:**

chez Alain (at Alain's)	dans (in)
chez Brigitte (at Brigitte's)	il/elle prend (he/she takes)
à l'école (at the school)	il/elle écrit (he/she writes)
l'école (school)	il y a (there is/are)
les frites (the French fries)	le cahier rouge (the red notebook)
le croque-monsieur (the grilled ham and cheese sandwich)	le cahier bleu (the blue notebook)
la télé (the TV)	le crayon (the pencil)
le chien (the dog)	le crayon bleu (the blue pencil)
le sac (the bag)	le crayon rouge (the red pencil)
	le crayon vert (the green pencil)
	le crayon jaune (the yellow pencil)

In November, we have learned the songs :

- Second and third verses and refrain of Il est né le divin enfant (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXUN7Yo98Iw> )
- J'ai perdu le do de ma clarinette ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXL\\_uFHDaCA&list=PL1-USJFDHtWmkVQefywUdsi7uTM0RTs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXL_uFHDaCA&list=PL1-USJFDHtWmkVQefywUdsi7uTM0RTs))

We continued to study the spelling of the new vocabulary, using our individual whiteboards. The children are more and more comfortable with French spelling. We started to use the pronoun subject “je(I), tu (you), il(he) and elle(“she)” and the pronoun object “moi (me) and toi (you)”. We started to conjugate verbs to the present tense. We learned the irregular verb “aller (to go)” in present tense with “singular subject”. Finally, we learned clothes, we combined the adjectives of color and nouns and played some games with this new vocabulary.

**Vocabulary:**

je ( I	une casquette bleue (blue cap)
tu (you)	des chaussures rouges (red shoes)
avec moi (with me)	une chemise jaune (yellow shirt)
avec toi (with you)	acheter (to buy)
je vais ( I go)	j’achète (I buy)
tu vas (you go)	tu achètes (you buy)
il va (he goes)	il achète (he buys)
elle va (she goes)	elle achète (she buys)
au magasin ( at the store)	porter (to wear)
une robe rose (pink dress)	je porte (I wear)
un short kaki (kaki shorts)	tu portes (you wear)
une veste marron (brown jacket)	il porte (he wears)
un pantalon vert (green pants)	elle porte (she wears)

(Chameleon  
By Keelen  
Cooke,  
1st grade)



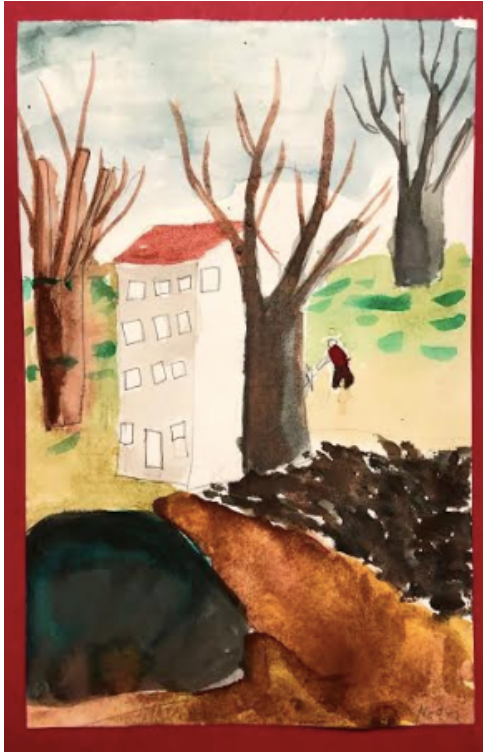
## Second Grade English

Mr. Walter

Some of the greatest works of literature are very simple to read and are very suitable for children. Such is the case with one of the poems the second graders read this past month, “Sweet and Low” by Alfred Tennyson. The poem was very famous in its day and continued to be quite popular into the 20th century. It inspired a 1914 film by the same title and a song written in 1863 which put the words to music. The song (a lullaby), in turn, inspired Sweet’n Low, the name for the ubiquitous artificial sweetener which comes in a pink packet, invented in 1957.

Typical of lullabies, the structure and language of the poem are straightforward with a lot of child-like repetitions. As simple as it might appear to be, the repetitions and other devices that the poem employs are complex and make it very powerful. One kind of repetition used by the poem is called epanalepsis, which is the repeating of a word that begins a line at the end: Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep. The poem also contains other kinds of repetition, such as plocé (the repetition of a word in a line of poetry), anaphora (repetition of beginning words) and epizeuxis (repetition of words successively).

Although I presented some of this information to the second graders (in digestible form), the bulk of my lesson involved discussing Tennyson’s lullaby as a poem that dramatizes a woman’s love for and concern about her sailor-husband. It is interesting that while the mother is trying to quiet her baby in a lullaby, she is also quieting her own anxiety for her husband. Before reading the poem inside class, I asked the students the following two questions: 1) When your father (or mother) goes on a long trip, do you often worry about his (or her) safety? 2) What would someone’s worries be when their loved one is going on a long and dangerous journey? After the students read and answered the multiple choice questions, I discussed the technical aspects of the poem, such as the effective use of repetition (discussed above), the setting (nighttime), caesura (a break in a line) and alliteration (repeating initial sounds in words). Here is the entire poem. Can you find the poetic devices used and can you tell how they help Tennyson communicate his theme?



Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
Wind of the western sea!  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dropping moon and blow,  
Blow him again to me;  
While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
Father will come to thee soon;  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
Father will come to thee soon;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west  
Under the silver moon:  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.  
(Landscape by Nadiya Posner, 2nd grade)

## Second Grade Math

### Dr. Fradkin

Second grade students spent October working on different strategies for doing 2- and 3-digit subtraction. First they learned the method of subtracting the hundreds, the tens and the ones separately, regrouping a ten or a hundred if necessary. Then they practiced solving subtraction problems by turning it into an addition problem with a missing addend (eg, to solve  $120 - 85$ , figure out how much you need to add to 85 to get 120). A third method involved subtracting a little extra to make the subtraction easier and then adding back the extra ( $72 - 38 = 72 - 40 + 2$ ), and a related method of shifting the difference ( $72 - 38 = 74 - 40$ ). We also spent a lot of time discussing which problems are best approached by which methods.

The month of November was spent on evaluating and simplifying mathematical expressions that involved positive whole number addition and subtraction, parentheses and some variables. The students explored strategies such as changing the order in which to perform the operations, grouping numbers that go nicely together, adding or subtracting a bit extra and later adjusting, among others.

## Second Grade History

### Mr. Gormley

It seems like we've covered quite a bit since last newsletter! We worked our way through several Egyptian kings and pharaohs: Amenemhet I, Thutmose I, Hatshepsut, Amenhotep IV, Ramses II, and Tutankhamen. We even got to talk about the archaeologist Howard Carter who discovered Tut's tomb. We went over Ashurbanipal II's brutal expansion of Assyria and the tale of Gilgamesh, a popular story among the class. I think the highpoint this month was our discussion of the battle of Qadesh, when Ramses II faced off against the Hittites.

Everyone faired well on their quizzes in addition.

I look forward to December, when we'll begin to learn of Mycenaean Greece, which will likely entail some speculation about its fall. From there, we'll touch on a bit of the Homeric era and the Greek alphabet, followed by an overview of the Medes and the Persians.

## Second Grade Science

### Mr. Darer

In Science class the students have been exploring properties of magnets through several investigations. The students observed how magnets are repelled or attracted to each other depending on which sides are facing each other, that certain types of metals are attracted to magnets, and that this magnetic attraction can go through other objects. We learned about magnetic fields through demonstrations with iron fillings (to visualize the fields) and horseshoe magnets. We then discussed the magnetic field of the earth and observed that a bar magnet hanging from the ceiling will align itself pointing towards the north pole. More recently, we planted an Amaryllis bulb and are measuring its height every day and using this information to make bar graph tracking how tall the plant is each day.

## Second Grade French

### Madame d'Hervé

In October, we have learned half of the song “ En sortant de l'école ” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT3jAJ4QHPg>) and we started to learn the fable “Le Corbeau et le Renard” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPkxWKrHVg8>).

We studied lesson 12 of our book *Gérard et ses copains*: we learned how to ask for something politely, we reviewed the conjugation of the verb “ écrire, lire, travailler, utiliser” and ask a

question with « que » (what). In the lessons 13 and 14, we made sentences with the preposition « pour » which is used for expressing « to (do) , in order to ».

We reviewed the infinitive form of all the verbs, using the preposition « pour » in front of them.

We also studied the lessons 15 about transportation. We conjugate the irregular verb « prendre » (= to take) and we made sentences noticing the difference between « prendre le bus » (= to take the bus) and « aller en bus à l'école » (= to go to school by bus). We made some question using the word “Comment”(=how).

« Comment vas-tu au parc ? » (= how are you going to the parc ?)

**Vocabulaire :**

écrire = to write

lire = to read

travailler = to work

utiliser = to use

en classe = in class

un ordinateur = a computer

les bandes dessinées = comic books

une gomme = an eraser

un taille-crayon = a pencil sharpener

faire = to do/to make

Mardis Gras = Fat Tuesday

un masque = a mask

les crêpes = the crepes

la fête = the party

de la farine = some flour

du sucre = some sugar

des pinceaux = paint brushes

de la peinture = some paint

du papier = paper

pour = to/in order to

des lunettes = glasses

de l'argent = money

un billet = a ticket

une mobylette = a moped

prendre = to take

je prends = I take

tu prends = you take

il/elle/on prend = he/she takes

le bus = the bus

en bus = by bus

le train = the train

en train = by train

In November, we have learned the second and third verses and refrain of Il est né le divin enfant (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXUN7Yo98Iw>) and we memorize the entire fable “Le corbeau et le renard”. The students recited it individually in front of the class.

In our book “Gérard et ses copains”, we studied the lessons 15 to 19 which were about transportation, the days of the week, the agreement in gender of the adjective and the verb “être”. We conjugated the irregular verb « prendre » (= to take) and we made sentences noticing the difference between « prendre le bus » (= to take the bus) and « aller en bus à l'école » (= to go to school by bus). We made some question using the word “Comment”(=how)

« Comment vas-tu au parc ? » (= how are you going to the parc ?)

We also conjugated the verb « venir » and combined it with the preposition « chez ». We worked on the vocabulary of the professions and on the places linked to them.

**Vocabulaire :**

le métro = the subway

en métro = by subway

l'avion = the plane

en avion = by plane

en voiture = by car

venir = to come

je viens = I come

tu viens = you come

il/elle/on vient = he/she/people comes

nous venons = we come

vous venez = you come

ils/elles viennent = they come

chez moi = at home

chez toi = at your house

chez lui = at his house

chez elle = at her house

le docteur = the doctor

l'infirmière = the nurse (woman)

l'épicière = the grocery owner (woman)

le boulanger = the baker

le chef = the cook

le serveur = the waiter

la libraire = the bookstore sales person

le conducteur = the driver

la prof = the teacher (woman)

le mécanicien = the mechanic

l'hôpital = the hospital

le restaurant = the restaurant

le garage

lundi = Monday

mardi = Tuesday

mercredi = Wednesday

jeudi = Thursday

vendredi = Friday

samedi = Saturday

dimanche = Sunday

je suis = I am

tu es = you are (singular)

il/elle est = he/she is

nous sommes = we are

vous êtes = you are (plural)

ils/elles sont = they are

français(e) = French

américain(e) = American

## Second Grade Music

### Mrs. Butterworth

During October and November Second graders learned two more songs on the violin. Now they have four songs: "The quail", "Sleep, my dear", "The Marmot" by Bethoven, "Teddy Bear and Doll". These songs have low and high 2nd finger, and slurs. The students are improving their position, sound and intonation. They try to play all 4 songs in a row to leave some time for practicing a new, more complicated song, "He's a Pirate". The students are very excited about their piano performance day once a week and show



improvement every week. During theory we keep working on the dotted note. Kids recognize it well but sometimes still need me to show it on the board.

## Second Grade Art Mrs. Butterworth

Because we have kids who work at different speeds we complete each project in 2 lessons now, so fast workers can draw more accurately and slow perfectionists can finish on time. During October-November the students finished several projects:

1. "Hedgehog" - colored paper model. Kids had to use colored paper, scissors and glue.
2. "Halloween" - colored paper model. Kids were working with colored paper, scissors and glue.
3. "Chameleon" - Kids painted watercolors following my example on the board.
4. Triple Portraits - Kids reviewed the proportions of the human face from 3 different points of view: full-face,  $\frac{3}{4}$  face and side view. Also they were introduced to pencils with different graphite grading scales.
5. "Room in frontal perspective" - this project took several lessons. Kids "built" a room by using a ruler to draw through the vanishing point. They drew a "living room" and a "dining room" with only pencil. Then they chose one of those rooms to paint with watercolor.

(Chameleon by Evelyn Carpenter, 2nd grade)



## Third Grade English

Mr. Walter

This past week the third grade class read Leo Tolstoy's "Croesus and Solon," an interesting moral tale—Tolstoy was very fond of telling morals, but not following them—about an ancient Lydian king who thought that he was the happiest man in the world because of his great wealth. Although Solon, the Athenian wiseman, gave him advice to the contrary, Croesus refused to listen. Before going over the reading selection, I gave an introduction to the author, Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), one of the greatest novelists of all time, who like Croesus, was extremely wealthy. The students then were given a small lecture on Croesus (ca. 547 bc), who was the king of Lydia, located in what is now northwest Turkey. Like his father before him, he went on a campaign of taking over Greek city states, although he showed kindness to Solon (ca. 639 bc–ca. 559 bc), the wise lawgiver and founder of Athenian democracy. I prepared the students for the story by asking a series of questions: 1) Who are the happiest people in the world—kings and queens, farmers, children, adults, educated, uneducated, smart or not so smart people? 2) What makes people happy? 3) How can truth bring us happiness? How can it make us sad? 4) Why do people sometimes not like to hear the truth? Younger students, who are really better philosophers than adults from my own experience, came up with some wise answers to these questions. Here are couple of the answers that the students gave to questions 1 and 2: 1) One young lady said, "People who love and are loved are the happiest." 2) One student said, "Being loved and feeling secure in a family gives the greatest happiness" while another said, "Living on a farm and raising horses."

## Third Grade Math

Dr. Fradkin

The month of October in 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. In their Beast Academy practice books, they solved puzzles involving pentominoes and toothpicks.

The third graders have spent the month of November 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.

## Third Grade History

Mr. Gormley

This week we are just finishing the story of Cincinnatus: the man who freely abdicated power from which there was no appeal as dictator. We've covered quite a bit of the early republic this past month, from the founding story of Brutus and Lucretia, to the trouble with the plebeians over representation, to one of my personal favorite's: the story of how Menenius Agrippa reconciled the plebeians and the patricians - if only temporarily.

Coming up we'll learn of the harrowing invasion of the Gauls and the Samnite Wars, the latter of which leave Rome essentially in control of the Italian peninsula. We'll also continue with our Roman senate game, which seems to agitate the inner (little "d") democrat in them all by forcing them to reckon with inequality. What fun!

## Third Grade French

Madame d'Hervé

In October, we have learned the whole “ En sortant de l'école ” song (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT3>).

We studied until the lesson 10 in our fifth French book (*Le Français en image*, book E). We studied the conjugation of three regular “-ER” verbs : “chercher”(to look for), “écouter” (to listen to) and “acheter” (to buy). We learned the vocabulary of the family members and reviewed how to express the possession “ ‘s “ in French with “de”.

Vocabulary: Cf. homework vocabulary papers

In November, we have learned the songs :

- Colchiques <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Tgla6uJfI8>
- Second and third verses and refrain of Il est né le divin enfant (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXUN7Yo98Iw> )

We studied the lesson 11 (which is a very long chapter) in our fifth French book (*Le Français en image*, book E). We studied the conjugation of irregular verbs “boire” (to drink), “vouloir”(to want to), and “pouvoir” (to be able to). These two last verbs are followed by the infinitive verbs. It gave us the opportunity to review the infinitive form of the verbs studied before. We learned new vocabulary for cloths and classroom objects, the expressions “il y a/il n’y a pas DE” (there is/are, there isn’t/aren’t) and the affirmative answer by “SI” to a negative question.

Vocabulary: Cf. French composition book

## Third Grade Music

### Mrs. Butterworth

The Third Graders are pretty strong and even in their violin skills. They learn fast and now have 5 songs. "Perpetual motion" is for different bow stroke, martelé and détaché. "Slovak polka" is for sincopa "Silent Night" is for long legato and dotted eighths. Silent Night has division, kids play 2 different voices, they also try to play vibrato in this slow song. "The Marmot" and "Sleep, my dear" have long slurs. Those songs kids will play during Grandparents day. Also kids repeat/learn "He's a pirate", this song we plan to prepare for December 17 concert.

During October and November the kids made two piano duets and practiced to perform their solo pieces as well.

## Third - Sixth Grade Art Studio

### Mr. McCormick

In the past two months we have been working on pencil shading. Learning to discern value changes is critical for representational art work. After the pencil shading we moved into charcoal. This for some is completely new. The handling and responsiveness is quite different than graphite pencil therefore some adjustments must be made in approach and achievement of effect. Third and fourth grades have found this quite challenging but are making progress as we are now using toned paper and white drawing stick as well. Fifth and sixth/seventh grades have experienced this before and some of them are producing nice work. Soon we will be introducing a new technique for some which will have the potential for great results. We are looking forward to what's in store for the remainder of the semester.

## Third - Sixth Grade Poetry Club

### Mrs. Martindale

Poetry Club spent November exploring the ballad form. We read *Barbara Allen*, *The Ballad of Otterbourne*, *My Grandfather's Clock* and *Charlie and the M.T.A.* Ballads are an effective tool for tragic, heroic, supernatural and satirical narratives and lend themselves to oral performance. It has been fun to hear how some of the ballads we read have been put to music. The students wrote ballads in small groups and also wrote individual ballads. Some students have already practiced performing poetry by reading their ballads to the group.

## First - Third Grade Modern Hebrew Tal Gutman

During the past month, the students strengthened their reading and writing skills in Hebrew. We learned to write all the aleph bet letters in script rather in their print format, and practiced reading with all the vowel marks while paying attention to special phenomena such as soft and hard sounds, homophonic letters and final letters. Our reading and writing practice combined new and old common present tense verbs, such as sing, come, live, eat, want, know, like, and think. We also practiced using connectors and prepositions – also, but, near, at/in, and new vocabulary related to school subjects, languages and places. These allow the students to gradually develop their communication skills and create new meaningful connections between the various language components. In each lesson, we conduct class conversations and dialogues between the students asking and telling age, days of the week, things I have and don't have, where I live, as well as desires and preferences. The students enjoy expressing themselves and do so with confidence and joy!

(Pumpkin by Nicole Fedorov, 3rd grade)



## Fourth Grade English

Mr. Walter

As part of the 4th grade language arts program, the students systematically study words contained in the literature that they read and then are tested on the words through analogies and fill-in-the-blank exercises. This past month the students read several Aesop's fables and three of the ten vocabulary words that they learned were docile, meaning teachable; admonish, meaning to give a warning; and inquire, meaning to ask a question. All of these words are Latin-based, and I encouraged the students to value their Latin education, as by memorizing prefixes and roots, they will learn multiple English words at the same time. I then illustrated this fact by going over the several words. The prefix of the word admonition, for example, is ad, which means to. The root of admonition is mon, which is from the Latin word for warn, monere. By learning the Latin root mon, they can learn so many other English words, such as admonish, which means to give a warning to; premonition, which means a warning that comes before something happens (the prefix pre means before); and the word monitor, which is someone who gives a warning. The word docile, which again means teachable or manageable, comes from the Latin word docere, which means to teach. When students are willing and eager to learn, we say that they are docile. Animals, too, may be called docile, like dogs and horses that obey their master's will. There are many animals, however, that are not docile; they are hard to train and hard to manage. One such creature is the donkey. Many Aesop fables have been written about the donkey that will stubbornly go its own way. Here is one of the analogies that the students had to complete with the word:

docile : stubborn ::

1. unsteady : firm
2. lazy : sealed
3. lost : fearful
4. orange : colorful
5. unbarred : free

## Fourth Grade Math

Dr. Fradkin

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 have been working on during the month of October.

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 students in fourth grade spent the month of November playing with geometry, focusing on the concept of area. They 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. They 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 is a bit trickier, but many students persevered in trying to figure it out).

## Fourth Grade History

### Mr. Gormley

Over the past month we've been delving into the origins of the regimes of classical Sparta and Athens, beginning with Plutarch's account of the law-givers of each: Lykurgus and Solon. We spent some time learning of the differences, but also the often overlooked similarities of each. A test on both will be forthcoming shortly.

We're entering the part of the year when we read Herodotus' account of the rise of Persia and their ultimate clash with Greece. This is a very exciting change, because he is such a fantastic story-teller, but also because, in my opinion, he's raising the question of what constitutes a fortunate life. This theme comes up often enough in the text and, therefore, in class, which helps to initiate the students into a philosophical view of history. We'll be working on this aspect through the end of the year, even when we continue to read of the Peloponnesian Wars and Alexander.

## Fourth Grade Science

### Mr. Darer

We began October learning about combustion reactions and what the reactants and products are when a wax candle burns. From there, we discussed how a candle burning is similar to respiration in humans and contrasted this chemical reaction with photosynthesis.

We studied the difference between a chemical reaction and chemical mixture as well as the difference between atoms and molecules. The students did a special Halloween lab learning about what happens on a molecular level when a solid dissolves into a liquid as we placed skittles in cups of water. We also tested to see which type of liquid (water, oil, vinegar) will dissolve skittles the best. From here we learned about the carbon cycle, how it's related to photosynthesis, respiration, and combustion, and more broadly global climate change.

More recently we've been studying potential energy and kinetic energy through demonstrations, laboratory experiments involving toy cars, and by working through some

calculations. This past week the students learned how to make line graphs to represent data they collected from a laboratory activity weighing different number of washers.

## Fourth Grade French

### Madame d'Hervé

In October, we have learned the whole “ En sortant de l'école ” song (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT3>).

We studied up to lesson 10 and we started the very long lesson 11 in our fifth French book (*Le Français en image*, book E). We studied the conjugation of three regular “-ER” verbs : “chercher”(to look for), “écouter” (to listen to) and “acheter” (to buy). We learned the vocabulary of the family members and reviewed how to express the possession “ ‘s “ in French with “de”.

We had spelling tests about the vocabulary of “la famille” (family members), and “les vêtements” (cloth). We studied the conjugation of the verb “boire” (to drink) and the conjugation of two irregular verbs like “pouvoir”(to be able to), and “vouloir”(to want to), as well as their special construction following with infinitive form of verbs.

Vocabulary:

Cf. homework vocabulary papers

In November, we have learned the songs :

- Colchiques <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Tgla6uJfI8>
- Second and third verses and refrain of Il est né le divin enfant (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXUN7Yo98Iw> )

We have finished the very long lesson 11 (which is a very long chapter)- in our fifth French book (*Le Français en image*, book E). We learned the vocabulary for classroom objects, the expressions “il y a/il n'y a pas DE” (there is/are, there isn't/aren't) and the affirmative answer by “SI” to a negative question. In the lesson 12, we studied several complicated sounds (“son complexe”) like “en/an/am”, “in/ein/ain”, “on/om”, “ou”, “oi”, “eu”, “eur”, “ier”, “aill”, “è”, “é”... and the conjugation of the verbs “apprendre” (to learn), “comprendre” (to understand), “prendre” and “attendre” (to wait for). We also practiced dialogues in class with a partner.

Vocabulary:

Cf. French composition book



## Fourth Grade Art History

Mrs. Harper

We have been studying medieval art by looking at examples of illuminated manuscripts: The Book of Kells and The Codex Aureus, each from the 9th century, and The Morgan Crusaders Bible, which was commissioned by King Louis IX (St. Louis) in the 1200's. We have learned about monasteries and the process by which monks created illuminated manuscripts, using calf skin, precious stones and gold. The children are learning to recognize and interpret the biblical iconography as well as to think about the specific cultural influences that influenced its expression. The notion of beauty and why these monks invested so much of their time and resources in pursuing it, is a reoccurring class exploration. We have learned about what "provenance" means and the especially fascinating provenance of the Morgan Crusader's Bible which made its way through many hands before ending up stuffed into the handbag of one of J.P Morgan's employees who, on the eve of WWI, ferried it away to New York, where it is today in The Morgan Library.

## Fourth Grade Latin

Mr. Wynne

Fourth grade has made tremendous progress after completing our comprehensive study of English parts of speech and sentence structure. We have recently learnt the three Latin genders (Masculine, Feminine, and Neuter) and the object and subject, and singular and plural endings for nouns of all these types. We have combined these nouns with present active tense 3rd person verbs to complete a good number of Latin sentences from the text and of our own creation.

## Fourth and Fifth Grade Programming

Mrs. Ter-Saakov

Many programs reached that frustrating stage when all the main steps are in place, but the program is only working one or two times out of five. The most efficient way to improve accuracy at this point is for the students to start using appropriate sensors. We'll keep you posted on the accuracy of the programs once the sensors are introduced.

## Fourth - Seventh Grade Math Club Mrs. Ter-Saakov and Dr. Fradkin

As the number of middle school students is growing, it's exciting to see students try out new events. AMC 8 took place Nov 14th this year. "8" in the name of this competition stands for eighth grade, meaning all students up to 8th grade are welcome to participate, working on the same questions. We hope to receive official results by the beginning of January, but we are proud of all the participating students of grades from 4th to 7th.

MathCounts is considered by many to be the most prestigious middle school competition, with national finals aired on TV, similar to the National Spelling Bee. For the first time a group of 6th and 7th grade students will be representing MLCA at chapter level competition February 8th. Students are spending a lot of time practicing. They'll be competing against the best students of schools in the region, mostly 8th graders. Let's wish them luck!

MOEMS is taking place once a month from November to March, both on elementary and middle school level. All students grade 4th to 7th are giving Level E a try. We acknowledge that those problems are much harder than the ones students encounter on the tests, so every correct answer is a small victory. Fourth graders are rewarded with math games played in class, while 5th grade and up get a chance to earn "late homework passes".



(Pears by Avery Zhang, 4th grade)

## Fifth Grade English

### Mr. Walter

Should auld acquaintance be forgot  
and never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
and auld lang syne?

I was surprised to learn that most if not all of the students had never heard the above stanza from Robert Burns' poem, which is sung round the world every year around New Years' Day—even when I sang it in my “beautiful” tenor-range voice. This month the students learned about Scotland's most famous poet, Robert Burns, and got to enjoy some of his most charming poems, including “To a Mouse” and “A Red, Red Rose.” After reading them, the students answered reading comprehension questions and a discussion ensued. In “To a Mouse” Robert Burns employs the poetic technique of apostrophe, a figure of speech which has nothing to do with punctuation. An apostrophe is an address to something or somebody that is merely made for rhetorical effect. In Burns' poem, the speaker is addressing a mouse, but in effect it allows him to philosophize on the condition of man in the world. One of the most famous lines in the poem was used for the title of a novel: *The best laid schemes of Mice and Men/Gang aft agley [often go awry]*. A bookmark to any parent who can name the novel's author!

Another Burns' poem that we discussed was “To a Louse.” The poem uses the same device of apostrophe with a humorous effect. The setting is a church in which a speaker is watching a louse crawling on a woman's hat. The woman is unaware of the “ugly, creepin” creature, “detested, shunned by saint and sinner.” While the young lady little knows “what cursed speed the blastie's makin,” she proudly tosses her head about to “set her beauties a' abroad.” The poem ends with this homily:

O would some Power the giftie give us  
To see ourselves as others see us!  
It would from many a blunder free us,  
And foolish notion:  
What airs in dress and gait would leave us,  
And even devotion!

## Fifth Grade Math

Mrs. Ter-Saakov

Fifth grade students were working hard, tackling such advanced topics as probability and 3D geometry. Students were very brave, showing hard work and perseverance. We used hands-on materials as often as we could to help with understanding, especially for 3D geometry. Luckily, the current topic of operations with integers, as well as the next one on expressions and equations seem easy to this group of students. Students are enjoying this break, as we get ready for less intuitive topic of Statistics we'll start mid-January.

## Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Grade History

Mr. Gormley

At last we've begun discussing the Medieval Era, beginning with Constantine's ascension to power and the transition of Christianity to the dominant religion of the empire. However, we didn't arrive at this point without a wide assortment of tales involving intrigue, murder, deception, etc. throughout the first century or so of the Roman Empire, using the ancient historian Suetonius as our guide.

Students in all classes have performed very well on their tests involving complicated essay questions. You may have seen the first round come home, but the most recent test was very well done also. Both classes are beginning to learn how to construct an argument and I'm seeing progress.

In the coming month, we will begin learning of the Persian threat to the empire, especially its new capital in Constantinople, the Huns, and the fracturing of the empire in two.

## Fifth Grade Science

Mrs. Ter-Saakov

Students got a glimpse of Astronomy looking into the solar system, and the life cycles of stars. It was perfect timing for us that Mercury transit occurred November 11th. Boris Ovetsky, Ari's and Ben's grandfather, came over with his telescope to let students watch the transit. He also answered all the questions students had.

We are currently working on the topic of magnetism, students exploring electromagnets. January we'll move to studying rock formation.

## Fifth Grade Art History

Mrs. Rice

Students considered the stylistic evolution from archaic Kouros figures through Kritos boy (480 BC) to the Classical Greek ideal of beauty represented by Doryphoros, the spear bearer (450-440 BC). We talked about the classical Greek concern with analyzing and understanding the patterns which underlie the apparent chaos of the world around us, and how this impulse found artistic expression in the principles of symmetry and proportionality. We spent several lessons considering the Parthenon as an example of these artistic/spiritual ideals, and the paradox that the apparent “perfection” of this building is achieved by means of a variety deliberate optical illusions.

From the Greeks’ pursuit of beauty as a means of spiritual elevation, we turned to the Romans’ more pragmatic approach to art as a political tool. In this regard Lysippos’ portrait busts of Alexander the Great stand as a transition to and model for later Roman statues such as the Augustus of Prima Porta. The students were able to build on their knowledge of triumphal processions to see how monuments like Trajan’s column and the Arch of Constantine could serve the purpose of consolidating public support for Roman leaders. With regard to architecture, we discussed how the Romans were able to move beyond the structural limitations of post and lintel construction with their exploitation of the strength and versatility of the roman arch and concrete. In particular, we discussed aqueducts, amphitheaters in the style of the Colosseum, and Hadrian’s Pantheon. Finally, we had the opportunity to review some of the great variety of highly individualized portrait busts of ordinary Romans. Not only do these stand as a unique artistic heritage, but they also set the stage well for the transition from Medieval artists’ stylized portraits of saints to Renaissance humanists’ recognizable portraits of real people.

## Fifth Grade French

M. Portier

In 5th grade French class, the students have advanced in their reading of the book, *histoire de la revanche*, which takes place during the Restoration period in France. To bring this historical context to light, the students learned about and each took on the position of the different political parties at that formative time and participated in a full classroom debate. Key themes in the book are also the judiciary system and the Mediteranean sea trade of that time. The students are very interested in the plot of the novel even though the vocabulary can sometimes be challenging. While increasing their vocabulary and learning new expressions, they have been advancing in verb conjugations such as the futur proche and the imparfait. I recently began testing each student’s pronunciation and conversational skills with verbal exams in the classroom.

### Fifth Grade Latin

Mr. Wynne

Fifth grade has moved through four more lessons following our test on present and imperfect tense verbs and masculine and feminine nouns of the 1st and 2nd declensions. Since our test, we have moved onto the future tense, which is very similar to the imperfect in appearance, and neuter nouns of the second declension. Students have done a tremendous job at practicing their memorization and are preparing for translations that are more complex.

### Fifth Grade Modern Hebrew

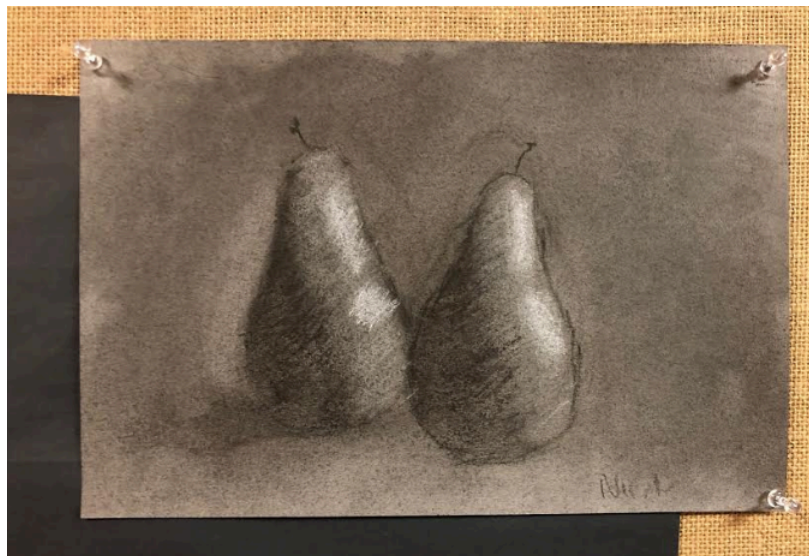
Tal Gutman

During October and November, we took another step forward in grammar and studied the past tense in verbal sentences. We focused on one verb category which contains common verbs such as live, run, rest, get up, sing and more. We learned how to conjugate the verbs to the past according to the consistent suffixes which each of the ten pronouns has. The students enjoyed this new challenge, and now continue practicing it in our oral conversations, texts and songs.

Another focus of our classes was temporal sentences and the different usage of connectors related to time such as – when, before/before the, after/after the, first and later. The students composed a paragraph which describes a typical day in their life, answering guided questions such as: What do you do first in the morning? What do you do after breakfast? What do you do first when you arrive to school? What do you do first when you get home? What do you do before dinner and after dinner? The students were highly engaged while writing their paragraphs and the results were clear, amusing and creative.

In addition, we have continued to read, respond to and discuss short stories, practice questions formatting and negative clauses, and to enrich the students' vocabulary.

(Pears by  
Anna  
Butterworth)



## Sixth and Seventh Grade English

Mr. Walter

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—owe some of their success to this unique ability. These writers achieved humor in their writing through satire. This month the sixth and seventh graders learned that satire involves the use of hyperbole to show the absolute irrationality, ridiculousness, or hypocrisy of human behavior. Their example satire was James Thurber's classic *My Life and Hard Times*, which is much less vicious than Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* and Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, but no less funny. Unlike Twain and Dickens, who wrote about more serious human offenses, Thurber depicted characters whose foibles are more charmingly ridiculous than noxious. In his collection of short semi-autobiographical narratives, Thurber encourages the readers to have a belly laugh with him as he observes the ridiculousness of life in a Midwest town. In one of his essays, "The Dog that Bit People," Thurber shows the irrationality of people and their pets through his depiction of his own mother who doted on their vicious pet dog named Muggs: "A big, burly, choleric dog, Muggs always acted as if he thought I wasn't one of the family. There was a slight advantage in being one of the family, for he didn't bite the family as often as he bit strangers. Still, in the years that we had him he bit everybody but mother, and he made a pass at her once but missed. . . . Lots of people reported our Airedale to the police but my father held a municipal office at the time and was on friendly terms with the police. Even so, the cops had been out a couple of times once when Muggs bit Mrs. Rufus Sturtevant and again when he bit Lieutenant Governor Malloy—but mother told them that it hadn't been Muggs' fault but the fault of the people who were bitten. 'When he starts for them, they scream,' she explained, 'and that excites him.' The cops suggested that it might be a good idea to tie the dog up, but mother said that it mortified him to be tied up and that he wouldn't eat when he was tied up."

## Sixth and Seventh Grade Math

Mrs. Ter-Saakov

Students may have noticed the terminology from math class coming up during science lessons, and vice versa. The notion of slope was first introduced in science class, and now we covered a whole chapter on graphing linear equations in math. We learned about variables being directly or inversely proportional, and now this vocabulary is being used in science. Meanwhile, most 6th graders are enjoying the comfortably familiar pace of the *Beast Academy* book, finishing the *Square Roots* chapter. Those who are ready to move faster are working on the same topic of *Prealgebra* by AoPS. This is a nice break before we plunge into two month of very detailed study of quadratic equations.

## Sixth and Seventh Grade Science

Mr. Darer

In Science class, we've been calculating and graphing velocity and acceleration. We discussed how to make a line graph from distance versus time data and then how to use that information to make a speed versus time graph. We also performed a few laboratory experiments where we measured the velocity of a hot wheels car going down a track. The students then built a car from playground items and calculated its acceleration as it rolled down the hill.

More recently, we've been studying forces and learning about friction, equilibrium, and free body diagrams. We worked on a lab graphing the mass versus weight of metal washers as measured by a spring scale. We also learned about friction forces, balanced forces, and equilibrium by using a computer program to explore different situations where forces are at play. The students completed their first test a few weeks ago and we will be preparing for a test before Winter break.



(Pumpkin by Raica Tarr, 7th grade)

## Sixth and Seventh Grade Art History

Mrs. Harper

We have moved northward to the English Reformation and all the complexities of the court of Henry VIII. Through the work of the brilliant Hans Holbein, we have a glimpse of some of the movers and shakers from this frenetic time in history. His portraits of Thomas More, Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII, Erasmus, and Thomas More's family tell us who these people were. And because Henry had him paint several of his wives (and almost wives) we know about them as well.

The students are writing a joint paper in Art History and English on "The Ambassadors" by Hans Holbein, a tour de force of a painting about this point in history that contrasts the active life with the contemplative life, the celestial with the earthly, and is packed with symbolism about all which is true but unseen. There is plenty to unpack in this image which at first glance is an elegant and accomplished portrait of two young ambassadors to the court of Henry VIII. The students can tell you it is about much more.



## Sixth and Seventh Grade French

M. Portier

In 6th and 7th grade French class, the students have been exploring the deep sea world as imagined by the 19th century author, Jules Verne. They have been developing a vast and precise vocabulary around this theme and enjoying our discussions around the mystery of what is possible or reality in the story. We have been working very hard on the different past tense conjugations such as the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*, and the comparatives and superlatives during our grammar modules. Students have substantially progressed in their listening skills as we have been listening together in class to certain portions of the novel. I plan and look forward to spending more time on conversations together in the new year.

## Sixth and Seventh Grade Programming

Mrs. Skvortsova

In Programming class Variables are not strangers anymore. Students are now familiar with why, when and how to use them. Last month we dove into interactive programming and everyone had fun testing each other's work. This month students were introduced to program flow management using conditionals, learned new troubleshooting skills and, with Snakify's help, discovered that there are drills in Programming too. Next stop: Functions and Loops.

## Sixth and Seventh Grade "The Good Life"

Wight Martindale

In December we tried to involve the entire family by asking that all the students watch Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol" with Alastair Sim playing Scrooge at home. In class we analyzed and did close readings of sections of Dickens' story, supplementing what they all saw at home. This is one of the best known stories in the English Language, and its conclusion, Tiny Tim's "God bless us, everyone," is surely the most famous conclusion of any English novel. So we are beginning to build in our students a mental library of great works of literature.

We will resume in January with a lighter touch, a discussion of comedy and laughter--clearly a part of any Good Life. To balance the heavy Christian message of Dickens' story, we will then examine the ten commandments--why these ten? What makes them so special?

If this class is working, you will know it before I do. I hope the kids find it helpful and enjoyable. They all seem to be doing very well.

## Sixth Grade Latin W

Mr. Wynne

Sixth grade has finished its unit on active indicative verbs and has begun to look at 3rd declension nouns. We are currently preparing for a test on this material before the holiday break. During this time of review, my students have practiced their memorization of 6 verb tenses and 8 noun patterns. Memorization is key at the moment, and students should prepare to keep all these patterns in mind after the break, when they will be assumed knowledge, and we will not have the time to re-memorize them as we press further into verb patterns, adjectives, and demonstratives, which require much more memorization.

## Sixth and Seventh Grade Latin S

Dr. Sigelman

The "Latin S" class (6th-7th grades) devoted September-November to an in-depth review of the first 18 chapters of *Jenny's First Year of Latin Grammar*. The review covered first- and second-conjugation verbs active indicative and imperative in all six tenses (present, imperfect, future, perfect, pluperfect, and future perfect). It also covered the first, second, and third declensions; many different uses of the cases; a wide variety of prepositional phrases, and a copious vocabulary list. As the students' mastery of these forms is getting better, we are beginning to read longer passages of Latin prose and students have just begun to discover one of the greatest challenges of Latin: almost every single word can have more than one meaning, and the translator must keep all these alternatives in mind while working through a sentence, in the end picking the one most appropriate translation for the word.

For example, the phrase *In oppido diu captivos servavimus* can mean "We protected the captives in the town for a long time" OR it can mean "We guarded the captives in the town for a long time" -- a translator must decide whether the verb "servavimus" implies that the subject of the sentence was *helping* the captives by protecting them or (more likely) was an *enemy* of the captives, keeping them...well, in captivity. Additionally, the translator must decide if it is appropriate to translate "servavimus" in this context as a present perfect ("we *have* guarded") or simple past ("we guarded").

My hope is that, even as students currently perceive this multivalency of Latin words as a challenge, they will come to appreciate the tremendous versatility of the language and the beauty that comes with this versatility.

Now that our review is complete, we will continue to progress through *Jenny's Latin* at a slower pace. I also hope to find time for some Latin poetry analysis and scansion later this year

