

Main Line Classical Academy
Newsletter
September, 2018

English, Kindergarten - Frank Chilbert

In kindergarten, we have begun studying the Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the oldest stories available to mankind. In our addition, we have three beautifully illustrated books to help us enjoy the timeless tale. Currently, we are on the first book, *Gilgamesh, The King*. We have explored the transformation of Gilgamesh due to a surprising friendship. We have asked what makes a good king and why friendship makes us better. For poetry, we have been studying "At the Seaside," by Robert Louis Stevenson. With the help of his words, we have hung on the memory of a summer beach scene as the days get shorter and chillier.

English, 1st Grade - Frank Chilbert



In first grade English, we have many things going on at once. We have been studying "A Chill," by Christina Rossetti. In it, we have learned some unfamiliar names for familiar animals. The poem has allowed us to ask tough questions about necessity, longing, and love. We have begun our "A is for Apple" phonics textbook which we have used so far to confirm our mastery of the short vowel sounds. We also have been building a list of sight words (listed below). We have also begun our italic penmanship workbooks, focusing on the italic "o", "i" and "l". Whenever we have time at the end of class, we will listen to a fable of Aesop that connects to another part of our curriculum.

Sight words: The, is, see, why, a, go, no, he, she, was, were, her, them, one, two, has, I, me, look, where, there, of, that.

English, 2nd Grade - William Walter

Each week the 2nd grade English class memorizes a stanza of poetry. This past September we (appropriately) have been going over John Keats' lovely ode "To Autumn." In the pauses between our recitations, I invariably go over the vocabulary, poetics, the author's biography and any topic directly related to the lines being memorized. In addition to going over the terms ode, personification, iambic pentameter, Romanticism, alliteration, rhyme, etc., we had a wonderful discussion of the seasons. Throughout our study of the poem, the students have been learning the way in which Keats is attempting to depict the season. Although autumn is a time of decline—flowers and grass begin to wither, trees lose their leaves, and the weather begins to get colder—, there is a burst of activity right before the winter season begins, which can be seen in animals making ready for the coming cold, in farmers' harvesting crops, and in Indian summers, all of which make it seem that—as Keats writes in his poem—"warm days will never cease."

The imagery of Keats' first lines certainly suggests the fecundity of an autumn harvest. The words swell and plump communicate the idea of fruitfulness and birth. Although autumn is the death or end of the year, the imagery suggests a beginning or new life, a theme taken up by Stevie Smith's poem "Black March," which one of our students wonderfully recited last year at our Poetry Night. Both Stevie Smith and John Keats, by the way, were dying when their poems were written—Smith of a brain tumor and Keats of tuberculosis.

Students need to understand that the great poets of the past were not gods descended from on high; rather, they were real people, with joys and sorrows, talents and deficiencies, virtues and foibles, just like us. With that in mind, I try to make my biographical depictions relevant and vivid—as if the poet were still alive and in our presence—and I was thus pleasantly surprised when one of the students asked after my introduction, "Is Keats here with us—in the hallways?" I inwardly laughed, pleased with myself that I had accomplished my task—the poet was very real to this second grader. But my self-satisfaction was soon disappointed when the student made a clarification. "I mean," he said, "is there a picture of him in the school?" "Oh, yes, I replied. We'll take a look at him when you go to your next class." (Have you noticed Keats' portrait in the school?)

English, 3rd Grade - Frank Chilbert

In 3rd Grade English, we have been enjoying the fruits of reading. We have read about many famous people such as Alexander and his horse, Bucephalus and Aesop, the great fable writer. We have also encountered various cautionary short stories about idleness, vanity, and mischief. These readings have helped us properly analyze the themes found in Isaac Watts' poem, "Against Idleness and Mischief." We have been added to our literary and poetic terms so that

our time reading and reciting becomes more and more rich. We have learned about syllables, stanzas, mood, imagery, and iambic “feet.” With grammar and punctuation, we have practiced writing with end marks, apostrophes, and quotations marks.

English, 4th Grade - William Walter

One unique feature of our English program is our stress on poetry and poetics. These past few weeks, the fourth grade students have been learning multifarious figures of speech, such as oxymoron, simile, metaphor, pathetic fallacy, personification, apostrophe—just to name a few. I gave this sentence as an example of synecdoche, a figure of speech in which the speaker or writer is using a part of something to represent a whole (or conversely, a whole to represent a part): “Mr. Walter has a nice set of wheels.” The 4th grade class (synecdoche—what I actually mean is certain members of the class) politely mentioned that my beloved clunker (an oxymoron) would not qualify as a “nice set of wheels.” (I own a 1995 Taurus station wagon.)

English, 5th Grade - William Walter

The 5th grade class began working on an essay that compares tragedy with comedy. Although the two genres seem utterly dissimilar, they are actually more alike than one might think. You might say that the two dramas—one that ends in death (tragedy) and the other that ends in marriage (comedy)—are opposite sides of the same coin. In particular, the students will be comparing Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* with *Romeo and Juliet*. If you have read the plays, you will be able to come up with at least one or two similarities in no time. Both involve potions (one effecting love, the other effecting the verisimilitude of death); both involve relationships forbidden by parents; and both involve the theme of mistaken identity or the idea that things are not what they appear to be.

English, 6th and 7th Grade - William Walter

I think that most people assume that the wonderful dramatic plots of *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *All’s Well That Ends Well* came solely from Shakespeare’s fertile imagination. However, with the exception of a couple of plays, Shakespeare got his plots from other sources, such as the 12th-century Welsh historian Geoffrey of Monmouth and Plutarch. This fact does not make me any less appreciative of Shakespeare’s unique genius. Last month, the 6th and 7th grade students began a comparison essay between Geoffrey of Monmouth’s “historical” rendition of the Lear story and Shakespeare’s. By doing the comparison, the students get a wonderful opportunity of discovering Shakespeare’s artistry. One difference between the original story and Shakespeare’s revision is the addition of the character Kent. The addition of this foil character effectively underscores the tragedy’s themes of loyalty and virtue. Although the character Kent is not related by blood to the king, he risks his life to serve him, while Lear’s own daughters—whose filial relation demands fidelity—cast their father out of house and home into a storm (the objective correlative in the play). I asked one of the students, “Would you let your

own dog (Barkley) stay outdoors in the rain, wind and lightning?” He said with a smile, no he wouldn’t, and I replied, “Then you can appreciate the egregious infidelity of daughters casting out their old, infirm father.”

History, Kindergarten, Early American History - Graham Gormley

In kindergarten we are studying early American history as we are in first grade. Here, as there, I try to engage the children through storytelling. This is a perfect age for piquing their curiosity and a good story seems to do that effectively. We are also relying a bit more on projects, coloring, and acting out whatever the historical episode in question might be. My hope is to instill a curiosity into the lives of all those we study, whether it be Native Americans, Vikings, settlers, Founders, etc.

So far we’ve colored pictures of the Native Americans, made a papoose, tried on (fake) fur that some tribes might have worn in winter, and made compasses. We’re moving on to study Columbus just in time for Columbus day.

This is a very well-behaved and interested group. I look forward to moving on to the early settlers of North America.

History, 1st Grade, Early American History - Graham Gormley



As we begin studying early American history this year, my hope is to invite the children to think of the exciting lives and adventurous spirit of all those we’ll study. From the Native Americans, to the Vikings, to Columbus, to the first settlers, to the Founding there is always some aspect of a character or characters operating in some sphere far beyond that of our everyday lives. It requires an imagination to attempt to see the world from their perspective. Fortunately, that is something first graders do not lack.

We began the year learning the names and habits of many of the tribes native to North America. The children seemed to especially enjoy our discussion of the practice of “counting coup.” We made a papoose and tried on (fake) fur, as some tribes might have worn in the winter. We then moved on to discuss the Vikings and how their adventures had them settle ever further east until at last they came to North America to settle. Ferocious as they were, the natives harassed them until they left. Finally, we discussed the advantages of different types of navigation that were later developed in Europe, even making our own compass out of a pin, magnet, foam, and a bowl of water. We’re just learning of Columbus in time for Columbus Day. The children seem to be a very interested group and it looks like we’ll be moving ahead quickly.

History, 2nd Grade - Graham Gormley

The famous historian Herodotus began his Histories by suggesting that he wrote them in order that “the great and wonderful deeds [of the Greeks]... not go unsung.”

Although remembering names and dates will be required of students in part, it will not be the primary focus of our studies this year. In the spirit of Herodotus, I hope to bring the characters, lives, and deeds of the ancient Greeks to life insofar as possible. For example, it is necessary to know that the Peloponnesian Wars began in 431 B.C., however, far more important is to grasp the dire situation in which the Athenians found themselves with Spartan forces approaching, no good options for an engagement on land, and a plague within their walls. The truly serious human questions that Pericles, for example, had to contemplate under such circumstances cannot be conveyed by merely memorizing names and dates. We want to learn what they did. Did it succeed or fail? Why? What were the alternatives? Would we do the same in similar circumstances? Etc.

Of course, before turning to the ancient historians, we are first familiarizing ourselves with the mythological beginnings of each of the major polities. Not only does that help students become acquainted with each one, but it helps them to see the Greeks closer to the way they saw themselves. There was a time when a Corinthian, for example, would not have considered himself a Greek, so much as a Corinthian. On the other hand, we find in Homer a united Greek force composed of citizens from many polities with a somewhat precarious Greek leadership. Did a Mycenaean who saw himself as a descendant of Perseus, for instance, think of himself as having something substantial in common with a soldier from Sparta who thought he was descended from Hercules? Yes, they spoke the same language and worshipped the same gods, but was it enough to see one another as essentially like? If not was there something to be done to make it that way? These are the kinds of questions we’ll be exploring.

I look forward to going over the remainder of the mythological beginnings of Greece and a bit more geography before moving on to the mythology of Homer and Sophocles this coming month, as well as an overview of early Sparta and Athens.

History, 3rd & 4th Grade - Graham Gormley

Titus Livius prefaced his famous work on Roman history with the following: “Whether in writing the history of the Roman people... will be worth the effort, I do not really know...” (my italics). This is a striking admission coming from one whose account comprises 142 volumes. Why would one set out on such a monumental task when the rewards are in doubt?

Likewise, students may find the task of delving into Rome’s long and renown history daunting. I know I certainly feel that way teaching it. On the other hand, the material is so rich in tales of valor, treachery, nobility, virtue, and vice, that the magnitude of the task can be momentarily obscured. The pleasure involved can make learning history seem more like play than work. In time, one begins to see that Rome was led by men operating in a sphere far beyond our daily concerns. Their lives become a kind of guide, both in terms of what to do and what not to do. It turns out, I am persuaded, that having models of human excellence in mind is actually well worth the effort.

It certainly did not feel like labor as we read of Rome’s mythological origins involving Aeneas, Dido, Lavinia and others. Although the tale of Romulus and Remus was familiar to many students, they were far less acquainted with the incorporation of the Sabines after the Romans tried stealing their daughters and wives. Not only were the two tribes contentious, but we learned how the plebeian and patrician classes almost from their inception struggled with one another. We discussed how Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome (or perhaps the first actual king), tutored the population in abiding by laws and religious rites. Most recently, we read of Tullus Hostilius, the third Roman king, and the famous battle of two sets of triplets for sovereignty of the opposing army.

I look forward to working through the remainder of the ancient monarchy in the coming month and I get the sense the children are also eager. They even began chanting “Livy! Livy!” last class, because they wanted to hear the ancient historian’s account.

History, 5th, 6th & 7th Grade - Jacob Feeley

This year, students have the opportunity to spend an entire year learning Roman history. Our first unit has dealt with early Rome, particularly the monarchical period. We have focused on the expansion of the city-state of Rome, the development of key Roman institutions (e.g. the senate, the comitia centuriata), aspects of Roman society (e.g. patricians and plebeians, the Servian reforms), and Roman religion. Students have also learned some of the central legends about the founding of Rome: Romulus and Remus, the Sabine women, and the death of Lucretia. In doing so, they have read some excerpts from Livy, the Roman historian who under Augustus wrote a history from Rome’s inception until his own time. We are also devoting time to learning about the Roman genius for building. We have already looked at archaeological remains of the Cloaca Maxima, Rome’s first drainage system that was begun in the 6th century BCE. Our next unit will cover the fall of the monarchy and the rise of the Roman republic. We will focus in particular on Rome’s conquest of Italy, and then Spain, North Africa, and Greece. We will also study the government of the republic and compare it to our own form of government.

Math, Kindergarten - Yulia Shpilman



Welcome to kindergarten math at MLCA! Our kindergarten math classes are structured in a similar way most days:

1. **Counting routine** - aimed at promoting number sense and number literacy in the children.
 - a. **Recognizing numbers:** we practice recognizing numbers 1-10 in and out of order. For example, students lay out their sets of numbers and close their eyes, while I “mess up” their lines and they need to find and correct the mistake.
 - b. **Recognizing quantities:** We are starting out the year by learning to recognize smaller quantities of objects (up to 10). I hold up cards with a few objects in various configurations and the students need to hold up the card with the correct number.
 - c. **Comparing quantities:** the hungry crocodile opens his mouth and eats the side that has more food. What's bigger - 7 or 8, 6 or 9? The kindergarteners are very good at this game and absolutely love it!
2. **Arithmetic practice** - we have not formally started arithmetic practice yet, but in the coming month or two, we will begin doing various games and activities to learn basic addition of single digits.
3. **Special topic** - this time block includes a variety of non-number oriented topics, such as building structures based on diagrams, solving logic puzzles, playing with various geometric shapes, etc. Because of the many holidays, we have not had a lot of time to devote to these this month, but all these topics are rich and multi-faceted and we will continue to explore them throughout the year.

4. **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. Our favorite games so far are Swish and Blink, and we'll continue to add more to the mix in the coming months.

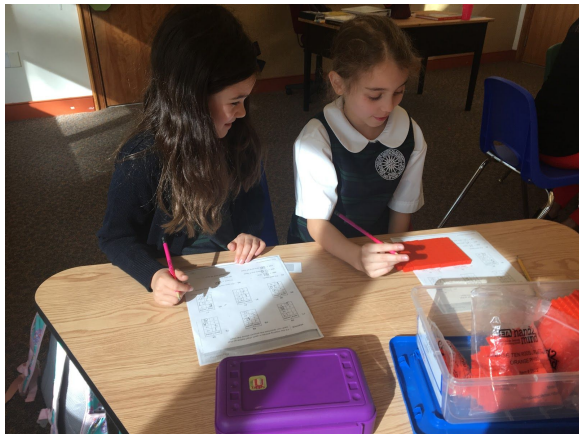
The MLCA kindergarteners are a wonderful group - very engaged, focused and enthusiastic to learn! It's a joy to work with them and I am looking forward to covering a lot of mathematical ground this year.

Math, 1st Grade - Sasha Fradkin

This month, first grade math was all about exploring the numbers 1-10. The students counted dots in various arrangements, put the numbers together and broke them apart in different ways, and solved both basic and tricky word problems involving the first 10 counting numbers.

Particular emphasis was put on the number 10; we discussed what makes 10 special in our number system and listed all the pairs of numbers that make 10. We then played some games and solved some puzzles involving these pairs.

Math, 2nd Grade - Sasha Fradkin



In 2nd grade math this month we did a lot of time travelling. We first went back many thousands of years, to a time before any numbers were invented and learned about different ways that people invented for “keeping track” and comparing quantities without using formal numbers (tally marks, using stones, making knots). We then went only a few thousand years into the past and learned some basics about a few ancient number systems (Babylonian, Egyptian,

Roman). After this, we began exploring our own, decimal, number system and the concept of place value. After working with the ancient number systems, students began to appreciate the efficiency of ours.

Math, 3rd Grade - Sasha Fradkin

This month in third grade math our main focus was on measurement, more specifically length. We began by making our own rulers using our thumbs or pointers as a unit. After measuring objects with our different rulers and getting different measurements for the same object, the students saw the need for standard units. We also discussed why it is important to have units of many different sizes. The students then measured many objects in inches and centimeters. They finished off the unit solving many conversion problems, both in standard units (inches, feet, and yards) and metric.

Math, 4th Grade - Tatiana Ter-Saakov

Grade 4 started this year with working on fractions. This is the first time we have gone so deeply into this topic. Students started with reviewing naming of the unit fractions. We learned to mark fractions and mixed numbers on the number line, deriving the rule of how to convert an improper fraction into mixed number and back. Students are currently working on recognizing equivalent fractions. We'll conclude the chapter by looking at fractions as parts of a whole, comparing and ordering fractions. This chapter contains numerous concepts new to the students. Everyone is working hard and taking time to understand new material. We should finish the chapter second week of October. We'll return to the important concept of fractions later this year. Next topic is going to be estimation, with the exciting peek into Fermi problems.

Math, 6th & 7th Grade - Tatiana Ter-Saakov

We began the year with the topic of sequences. It started with familiar questions on finding the pattern. However, a big conceptual leap this year is distinguishing between the term of a sequence itself and its numerical position in the sequence. Students are expected to write explicit formulas for some sequences using n as a notation for position. In case of arithmetic sequence, students also can use common difference in the explicit formula, as well as solve problems on finding common difference, given non-consecutive terms with known positions. Strategies for arithmetic series were discussed and applied to triangular numbers and variations. Fibonacci numbers were introduced. Currently, students are applying all above mentioned concepts to solve challenging problems. In October we will be working on ratios and rates.

Science, Kindergarten & 1st Grade - Adam Darer

In science class, we began the year by learning about the scientific method and how it is used to help us test ideas about and build our knowledge of how the universe works. We briefly walked through the steps of the scientific method (1st grade) and then started practicing using the scientific method to examine the reaction of baking soda and vinegar. We observed what happened when we added one drop of vinegar onto a small pile of baking soda. We discussed what we observed and then then guessed what would happen if we added five drops of vinegar. We continued this process of predict, test, observe, and discuss to examine mixing the baking soda and vinegar in a graduated cylinder, capping the graduated cylinder with play dough, and mixing the baking soda and vinegar inside a sealed zip-lock bag. The students were very excited to see the foaming bubbles from the chemical reaction.

We continued our introduction to the scientific method by designing bridges using straws and tape, and testing how many quarters each bridge could hold. The students worked in small groups to design their bridge. Before building their bridge, each group presented their design and explained what features of their bridge make it extra strong. The students then built their bridges and we tested them by adding quarters one at a time to an empty cup hanging off of the bridge. Afterwards, we discussed where we saw each bridge start to bend or break, and reflected on what designs made certain bridges we tested extra strong.

Science, 2nd, 3rd & 5th Grade - Adam Darer

In science class, we began the year by learning about the scientific method and how it is used to help us test ideas about and build our knowledge of how the universe works. We walked through the steps of the scientific method and then started practicing using the scientific method to examine how fast different senses react. For this project the students worked in small groups. One student held up a ruler while the other student placed their fingers at the bottom of the ruler and attempted to catch the ruler as soon as they observed their classmate dropping the ruler (sight sense). After five trials, we repeated this procedure, except the student catching the rule had their eyes closed and was cued to catch the ruler by their classmate saying “now” (sound sense). Lastly, we repeated this procedure except the cue to catch the ruler was when the student dropping the ruler touched the student catching the ruler on the shoulder (touch sense). Before we started the experiment, the student worked in groups to come up with a problem statement and hypothesis for the project. The students learned how to take an average of the five trials (5th grade) and we put this information into a bar graph to help us see the results of our

experiment. Each student (2nd, 3rd, 5th grade) made their own bar graph using the results from their experiment. We discussed independent and dependent variables and determined the independent and dependent variables in the experiment we just conducted (5th grade). We also played a game in small groups where the students had to figure out the independent and dependent variables in different situations (5th grade). For example:

“You own a cupcake store and want to sell as many cupcakes as possible. To figure out which type of cupcake sells the best, you make half of the cupcakes with icing and the other half without icing. You then record how many cupcakes of each type sell in one week.”

We continued our introduction to the scientific method by designing bridges using straws and tape, and testing how many quarters each bridge could hold. The students worked in small groups to design their bridge. Before building their bridge, each group presented their design and explained what features of their bridge make it extra strong. The students then built their bridges and we tested them by adding quarters one at a time to an empty cup hanging off of the bridge. Afterwards, we discussed where we saw each bridge start to bend or break, and reflected on what designs made certain bridges we tested extra strong.

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

Students reviewed the structure of plants. We learned how scientific method was applied to discover as the plant grows where does the additional mass come from. After that we started a big topic of anatomy which we'll stay on for some time. Students were making models of “bones” by adding various flexible components to hard but easily breakable plaster. Last Friday we tested the “bones” by dropping them from a certain height. The only “bone” that did not survive the fall was one made completely out of plaster. Now we know how flexible collagen in human bones prevents them from breaking. Students will be learning a few names of particular bones before we move on to other organ systems.

Biology, 6th & 7th Grade - Danielle Nagelberg

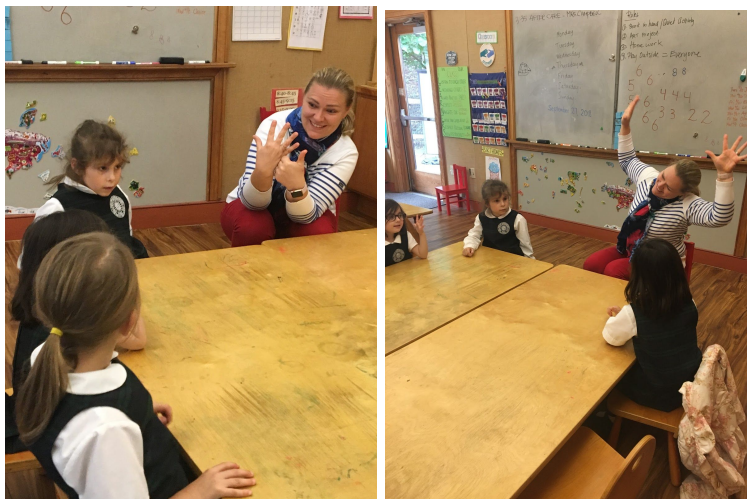
This month the sixth and seventh graders began their study of biology by investigating the question of how to organize living things. We started out by reading about how Aristotle approached this question by grouping organisms according to observable characteristics, and made dichotomous keys to sort organisms by developing our own examples of observable characteristics. We then learned the structure of the binomial classification system established by Linnaeus, a modified form of which we still use today. Next, we made Japanese Gytaku fish prints to learn basic anatomical terminology and to discuss examples of symmetry in living things. We then discussed the importance of lab notebooks while recording our observations of several fossils, and began to study the organization of living things throughout geologic time.

Robotics, Computer Programing - Tatiana Ter-Saakov

We started the year by exploring the physical components of a computer, looking inside an old desktop. The main point of this exercise is to help students distinguish between RAM and hard drive. 4th grade is learning to save their projects, as well as find and open the ones previously saved. 5th to 7th grade are reviewing those skills, as well as learning to keep files organized. Students looked at a few models of robot bases, each class discussed pros and cons, and one model was chosen by vote. Each class then took part in assembling the new robot bases. Since the size of wheels changed from last year, new odometry-base functions - called "my blocks" in EV3 environment - are required. Each class is contributing at their level: 4th grade explored the existing "move tank" block, changing various parameters and observing the robot performance. Learning fractions in math came very handy in reading the measuring tape. In 6th-7th grade every student practiced creating their own function that allows the number of inches the robot needs to move forward as an input. 5th grade is working on a "my block" that will allow the robot to perform an odometry turn a certain number of degrees. Once those basic adjustments to the new robot base are completed, students will start working on the actual missions from Animal Allies FLL challenge.

French - Betty d'Herve

French - Kindergarten



Bienvenue dans la classe de français ! This month of September, we introduced simple greetings and polite words. We learned the colors and the numbers 1 to 10 in French, using games. We also learned four traditional French songs :

- « *Tête, épaules, genoux et pieds* » and « *Jean Petit qui danse* » : about the body parts in French (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ev9AwZgpF8U> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0j1oKhVPYE>)
- « *Pomme de Reinette et pomme d'Api* » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JB1SXrOFH1g>) ;
- « *L'alphabet* »

We started to work in our French book, *Français 1* (book level 1), and introduced the Symtalk method. We already studied lessons 1 to 4. Individually, with the cards, we created French sentences and we read sentences in our book.

We also played the game *Jacques a dit* (Simon says) about body parts and colors as well as memo games with the words of our French book.

Vocabulaire :

Bonjour (good morning, good afternoon)

Comment ça va ? Ça va bien/mal/comme ci, comme ça (how are you doing ? I am doing well/bad/so so)

Je m'appelle ...(My name is...)

Merci (thank you)

Au revoir (goodbye)

Brigitte

Antoine

le singe (the monkey)

le chat (the cat)

le chien (the dog)

le ballon bleu (the blue ball)

le ballon jaune (the yellow ball)

le ballon rouge (the red ball)

le ballon vert (the green ball)

le croissant

mange (eats)

regarde (looks at)

joue (plays)

avec (with)

French - 1st Grade

Bienvenue dans la classe de français! This month of September, we learned two traditional French songs:

- « Santiano » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Uh249iQyj0>) the first verse and the refrain ;
- « Dame tartine» (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBdJyFd9N_w) the verses 1 to 4.

We continued to work in our French book, *Mon monde* (book level 3 of the Symtalk method), and reviewed the French spelling of all the vocabulary lessons 1 to 3. We already studied lessons 4 and started on lesson 5. We wrote French sentences as well as read them individually. We described pictures orally and by writing.

Vocabulaire :

Gérard

Sylvie

Brigitte

Antoine

Alain

le chat (the cat)

le chien (the dog)

mange (eats)

joue (plays)

aime (likes)

regarde (looks at)

avec (with)

chez (at someone's house)

de / d' (of, 's)

le pain (the bread)

la glace (the ice cream)

le fromage (the cheese)

la pomme (the apple)

le ballon bleu (the blue ball)

le ballon jaune (the yellow ball)

le vélo (the bike)

les/des frites (French fries)

le croque-monsieur (grilled ham and cheese sandwich)

la télé (TV)

au parc (at the park)

le parc (the park)

à la maison (at home)

la maison (the house)

à l'école (at school)

l'école (the school)

prend (takes)
le crayon (the pencil)

French - 2nd & 3rd Grade

Bienvenue dans la classe de français! This month of September, we learned two traditional French songs :

·« *Ouvrez la cage aux oiseaux* » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nsd8S9Duro>)

second verse and refrain;

·« *Dame tartine* » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEHJLd8QRz8>) verses 1 and 2.

We did some review in the book *Mon monde* (book level 3 of the Symtalk method) and lessons 1 to 5 of in the book *Gérard et ses copains* (book level 4 of the Symtalk method) :

· conjugaison at the présent tense of *ÊTRE* (to be) , *AVOIR*(to have), *ALLER* (to go), *regular -ER verbs, irregular –IR verbs (as LIRE to read, ÉCRIRE to write...)* ;

· Vocabulary of places ;

· Vocabulary of transportations ;

· Pronouns subject (*je, tu, il, elle, on, nous, vous, ils, elles*)

· Questions sentences : *est-ce que/qu'* (yes/no questions).

At the end of the review sessions, we took a test about conjugation.

During the past two weeks, we started a new lesson in our French book: we completed lesson 6 about sports, adverbs and the question words *où* (where) and *comment* (how). The students presented some short dialogues in group of two using this new vocabulary. We also started the lesson 7 about negative sentences (*sujet + ne/n' + verbe conjugué+ pas*) ;

Vocabulaire :

jouer à/au (to play + sport)

au hockey

au baseball

aux boules (pétanque/bowls)

un peu (a little bit)

bien (well/good)

mal (bad/poorly)

on (we/people)

français (French)

américain(American)

en Louisiane (in Louisiana)

en France (in France)

au Québec (in Quebec)

où (where)

comment (how)

ne/n' ... pas (do/does not)

French - 4th Grade

Bienvenue dans la classe de français! This month of September, we learned two traditional French songs :

·« *Ouvrez la cage aux oiseaux* » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nsd8S9Duro>)
second verse and refrain;

·« *Dame tartine* » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEHJLd8QRz8>) verses 1 and 2.

We did some review about present tense conjugation of *ÊTRE* (to be) , *AVOIR*(to have), *FAIRE*(to make/ to do), *ALLER* (to go), *PRENDRE* (to take), *VENIR* (to come), *regular -ER verbs*, *irregular -IR verbs* (as *LIRE* to read, *ÉCRIRE* to write...), *regular -IR verbs*, *pronominal verbs* (*se reposer*, *s'amuser*,....). Then we took a test about conjugation. We completed lesson 19 in book E (*Symtalk method*) about the expressions *COMMENCER À* (to start doing something), *ÊTRE EN TRAIN DE/D'* (to be doing something) and *ARRÊTER DE/D'* (to stop doing something) following by infinitive verbs. We started the new book E "*Plein la vue*" (*Symtalk method*) by the "leçon préliminaire".

We also started our new book *First start French* which is more focused on grammar. We completed the first three lessons about personal pronouns (*je, tu, il, elle, on, nous, vous, ils, elles*), articles (*un, une, des, le, la, l', les*), present tense of *AVOIR*, possessive adjectives (*mon, ma, mes, ton, ta, tes, son, sa, ses, notre, nos, votre, vos, leur, leurs*) and plural of the nouns.

French - 5th, 6th & 7th Grade

Bienvenue dans la classe de français! This month of September, we learned two traditional French songs :

·« *Ouvrez la cage aux oiseaux* » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nsd8S9Duro>)
second verse and refrain;

·« *Dame tartine* » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEHJLd8QRz8>) verses 1 and 2.

We did some review about present tense conjugation of *ÊTRE* (to be), *AVOIR*(to have), *FAIRE*(to make/ to do), *ALLER* (to go), *PRENDRE* (to take), *VENIR* (to come), *regular -ER verbs*, *irregular -IR verbs* (as *LIRE* to read, *ÉCRIRE* to write...), *regular -IR verbs*, *pronominal verbs* (*se reposer*, *s'amuser*,....). Then we took a test about conjugation.

We started the book "*Histoire d'une revanche*" by studying the vocabulary in appendix A (words and expressions to be known by the students) and appendix B (cognates, English vocabulary derived from the French vocabulary). Then, we read chapter one together, practicing reading

aloud and summarizing the settings of the story. We also started the book "*French First year*" and we completed chapter one about present tense of -ER verbs, the negative constructions and the interrogative constructions (with *intonation*, *est-ce que*, or *inversion*).

Latin, 4th Grade - Jacob Feeley

Fourth grade Latin is an introduction to the Latin language. We began by reviewing the basic building blocks of English grammar (e.g. types of nouns, verbs, and verbal phrases). Then we dove into learning Latin. Students began learning how Latin nouns work, and in the course of doing so began to build their Latin vocabulary (e.g. aqua, femina, domina, amica, equus, filius). We simultaneously devoted time to talking about what English words came from these Latin nouns (e.g. feminist, amicable, filial, dominate, equestrian). Students have also begun to learn about the basic Latin verb (e.g. portat, amat, laborat, spectat), and are now putting together simple Latin sentences! Class time is spent reviewing homework, learning new concepts, and, of course, playing Latin Jeopardy.

Latin, 5th Grade - Jacob Feeley

The fifth grade Latin students are continuing with the textbook that they worked with last year. They have accomplished quite a bit in this last month and a half: learning the future tense, infinitives, and past and present participles. In a few weeks, the students will finish the textbook, and be that much closer to reading ancient Latin texts! Class time is spent reviewing homework, learning new concepts, and, of course, playing Latin Jeopardy.

Latin, 6th & 7th Grade - Asya Sigelman

This year in Latin we will be working with Jenney's First Year Latin, a relatively fast-paced textbook with a special focus on grammar, vocabulary building, and reading.

In September, we worked through the first 3 lessons of Jenney's, which included all of the 1st Declension, masculine nouns of the 2nd Declension, and 1st Conjugation, as well as the irregular verb "sum" ("to be"). We studied several different prepositional phrases and the predicate nominative construction as well as 1st/2nd declension adjectives. The pace is much more dynamic than last year, but the students are taking it in stride!

Music, Kindergarten - Karina Butterworth



In our music lessons we usually do combination of few blocks - singing, theory (writing and card game), listening, piano solo, and violin ensemble. Sometimes we have time for all of those activities. During September, the children learned the following songs: "The Scary Sound," "The Magic Man," "Lazy Mary," and "C is for Cookie." The songs were song as a choir and solo, with role playing and acting. During theory block, the students were learning how to draw G clef and 5 notes, 2 notes, G and middle C. They will learn to recognize these notes as fast as they recognize mom and dad! They already started to play their piano solo pieces in front of each other. By doing this, they learn how to perform for an audience and how to listen quietly and respectfully. During the violin ensemble, the children learned how to hold the violin and the bow, how to play pizzicato. They can already play two simple songs on the violin!

Music, 1st Grade - Karina Butterworth

In our music lessons we usually do combination of few blocks - singing, theory (writing and card game), listening, piano solo, violin ensemble. Sometimes we have time for all of those activities. During September we had to put together completely beginners and more advanced students. Our beginners are catching very fast, maybe they do something intuitively, it is ok for now. Any way kids learned/refreshed in memory how to write G clef and a few notes(G, middle C and B, and notes in spaces - FACE), we repeated whole, half and quarter notes and already wrote few music dictations. During violin ensemble kids learned/refreshed in memory how to hold the violin and the bow, they played few songs with open string and now we will add fingers. Also kids were singing 3 songs and had chance to play piano solo in front of each other.

Music, 2nd & 3rd Grade - Karina Butterworth

In our music lessons we usually do combination of few blocks - singing, theory (writing and card game), listening, piano solo, violin ensemble. Sometimes we have time for all of those activities. During September, we refreshed our memory of the names of notes and durations and wrote a few music dictations. During violin ensemble, the children reviewed how to hold the violin and the bow, they played few songs with open string and add two fingers. Also kids were singing 3 songs and had chance to play piano solo in front of each other.

Music Theory, 4th - 7th Grade - Geert Ruelens

We are off to a good start in music theory class. The students are learning lots of new material and working hard to get a grasp on it. We started off with a discussion about what music theory and aural skills are and discussed the rules and expectations of the class. We then proceeded, during our second class, with a review of some basic concepts, such as note values and time signatures. After that, we watched a fun clip from "The Sound of Music". Many of us even sang along! This was the perfect way to introduce the concept of solfeggio, and led us to learn our Do-Re-Do song. During the next class, we held a competition, the students singing the do-re-do song the fastest (and accurate of course) won some fun prizes! The large majority of the kids participated eagerly in this little contest.

We then moved on to the concept of major scales, both singing and writing them. We did a few examples together, and I handed out a homework assignment. This proved a bit too difficult for many students, especially in the 4th grade. I dropped the subject for 4th grade and revisited it during the next class for 5-7th grades. After this review, they did a lot better.

We also started some ear training as part of aural skills. We are learning to hear the difference between major and minor seconds (whole and half steps). We learned that whole steps, when played together, sound "crunchy" but that half steps sound even crunchier or "extra crunchy". Many of the students have very good ears.

Next we will move on to tackle the subject of key signatures, which I'm sure will be very challenging!

Art, Kindergarten & 1st Grade - Karina Butterworth



The main topic of Art classes this month was horizon line and perspective. The children could draw objects as they are able to, but they had to show the line between the sky and the Earth, the wall and the table, between vertical and horizontal surfaces. They also had to show perspective by drawing far away objects smaller and higher and close up objects bigger and lower. The children were working on using light pencil pressure. They used color pencils and watercolor to complete the following pictures:

“My Family”

“The Girl in the Park”

“The Little Creature in the Forest”

“The Vase of Flowers”

Art, 2nd & 3rd Grade - Karina Butterworth





The main topic of the art classes this month was horizon line and perspective. The children had to show the line between the sky and the Earth, the wall and the table, between vertical and horizontal surfaces. They had to show perspective by drawing objects that were far away smaller and higher, and those that were close up bigger and lower, and also they had to show 3D objects. The children worked on using light pencil pressure. They finished following pictures:

“Still life with the American flag”

“The Person in the park”

“The Kitchenware”

“The Road in the Mountains”

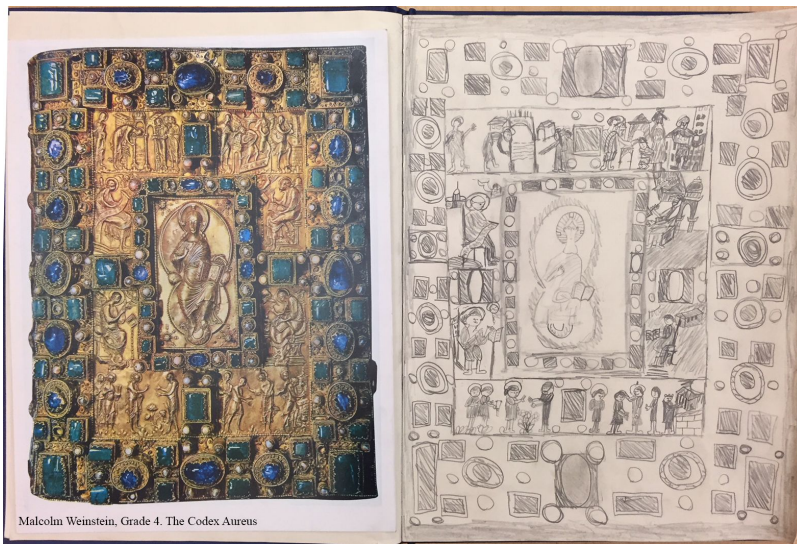
And they started “The room in frontal perspective.” This topic was based on a technical drawing, so we used rulers to help guide us.

Art Studio, 4th, 5th 6th & 7th Grade - John McCormick



Thus far we have taken the slow approach at learning how to see, accurately! The method to some of the children seems a bit like we are plodding along. Yet there is evidently need for all to learn at this pace. We have been taken up with simple, yet troubling boxes. The plan has been to train the eye and mind to see what is actually in front of them and not imagine a reality that is not there. Learning to check one's work has been a challenge indeed. The methods of this mastery are still being applied yet not fully understood by most. As this process is achieved, each one will be able to more confidently draw whatever, without the props and support of photography and it's near relative the computer. To be able to draw with confidence will give the students great liberty to express, with accuracy, their ideas at a later date. Yet now we forge ahead, looking forward to still life in pencil and charcoal as well.

Art History, 4th Grade - Jessica Todd Harper



Grade 4 students have been studying medieval art by looking at examples of illuminated manuscripts. Each child has a notebook with 8x10 reproductions to keep. We have learned about monasteries and the process by which monks created illuminated manuscripts, using calfskin, precious stones and gold. The children enjoy recounting how Charles the Bald (who was actually quite hairy, so his name was a joke of sorts) asked the monks of St. Denis to put as many sapphires and emeralds as they could fit on the gold cover of the Codex Aureus. They know that this is because his grandfather, Charlemagne, passed on to him his belief in the

spiritual powers of these gems. We are starting to be able to identify some common iconographic elements in medieval art such as if you see four men who look like they are writing, they are likely to be Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The children have learned that these men told the same story four different ways, each with his own style. So while the start of Matthew is perhaps not the most action packed exciting text ever, (lots of so and so begetting so and so, for generations upon generations), the monks who created the Book of Kells took this long list and turned it graphically into a fascinating network of repeated patterns culminating in the spectacular Chi-Rho (Christ's initials in Greek) page, which is thought to be the single most labor intensive page of illuminated manuscript existing today.

The notion of beauty and why these monks invested so much of their time and resources in pursuing it, is a reoccurring class exploration.

Art History, 5th - 7th Grade - Jessica Todd Harper

Grade 5-7 art history students have been studying the Baroque period and how it differs from the Renaissance period that preceded it. Looking at Bernini's *David* and *The Throne of St. Peter*; Caravaggio's *The Calling of St. Matthew* and Artemesia Gentilleschi's *Judith and Holofernes* the students have learned about the drama and emotional intensity of the Baroque style and the religious and political motivations that informed it. To help clarify their thinking on this topic, the students have worked on writing an essay. The essay topic, a comparison between Michelangelo's *David* and Bernini's *David*, was first introduced in a Khan academy homework video about Bernini's statue and then discussed over the course of two class periods. After the students had answered the essay questions verbally and the answers were discussed at length in class with opportunity to copy notes from the board, the students had everything they needed to go home and write a short essay, which was first turned in as a draft and then as a final effort. This will be the first of several opportunities for students to practice their logical thinking and argument skills in written form- not an easy task!

We also enjoyed going to the original Biblical texts about David, Judith and St. Matthew and discussing how the artists chose to interpret them. We are starting to look at various artists who take on the same subjects as a way to learn about how texts are interpreted.

Hands-On Skills - Adam Darer



In Hands-On-Skills class, we began the year with our gardening unit. We first prepared our garden beds for planting by weeding them, adding compost, and turning over the dirt with shovels. We discussed how to plant seeds and transplants and then planted kale, spinach, peas, radishes, and lettuce. We also have been picking fresh raspberries from the raspberry patch! We are finishing up the gardening unit and are in the process of starting out the nature identification unit where we are going to learn how to identify common tree species by their leaf shapes.

Modern Hebrew, 4th Grade - Tal Gutman

The structure of our lessons, which are conducted in Hebrew, starts with a warm up conversation. I ask the students a lead question that relates to their day to day life. The students respond in Hebrew and this leads to discussion in which they practice complex patterns such as comparison, opinions, preference or wishes. This month our central topic was the celebration of the Jewish holidays. For example, I asked:

איזה חג את/אתה הכי אוהב/אוהבת ולמה? Which holiday do you like the most and why?

In the class after the Sukkot celebration in school, I asked:

האם היית היום בארוחת הבוקר בסוכה? אם כן, מה אכלת?

Did you attend the school breakfast in the Sukkah today? If so, what did you eat?

This is a way to practice natural situations and to learn new words and expressions through experience. Although we haven't officially learned the past tense, it is wonderful to see how the students are able to conjugate common verbs in first person to the past tense naturally, just from hearing me speaking.

The second part of our lessons involves introductions of new topics or continuation of a topic, with writing and reading practice. We did a comprehensive review of verbs in the present tense and infinitive form and studied new verbs related to the holidays such as to fast – צם, to ask - מבקש (ask for forgiveness on Yom Kippur), and to celebrate - חוגג. We also dedicated time to review and expand last year's topics: Cardinal numbers, forming of questions, prepositions and adjectives.

In the last part of the lesson we work on vocabulary items in a less formal way through games, comics, vocabulary competitions, or whiteboard practice. This month we focused on the topic we started later last year – the house and furniture, which include a wide range of vocabulary. The students received an architectural plan of a house, and had to describe the rooms, name the furniture and to count accordingly – how many rooms are in the house? How many bathrooms / porches / windows? Since some of the students moved to new houses this summer, they had the opportunity to tell us about the new house as well.

Modern Hebrew, Kindergarten - 2nd Grade - Tal Gutman



The structure of our lessons starts with a warm up basic conversation in Hebrew on daily topics from the students' lives. We discuss the school, which grade each student is in, and school subjects, holidays and holiday foods. The students learned to say which new grade they are in (gan, kita aleph or kita bet) and practiced school subjects such as Hebrew, English, music, and history.

After the conversation, each student practices the topics he or she is working on through writing and 1:1 reading with me.

In **2nd grade** we continue to work with the book started last year and finished 2 units.

The main topics were:

1. Demonstrative pronouns and distinguishing between feminine and masculine words:

זה סבא - זאת סבתא; זה ספר - זאת גלידה; זה אבא של נירה; זאת אמא של רם.

2. The prepositions "in" and "on": הספר על השולחן. הילקוט לא במכונית. העיפרון על הכיסא.

3. Conjugation of verbs in present tense in all persons such as:

לומד - לומדת - לומדים - לומדות

Additional verbs we practice: גר, אוהב, הולך, אוכל, שותה

In **K-1st grade** we worked on:

1. The aleph bet letters names and sounds

2. Final letters

3. Hard and soft sounds

The instruction is adapted according to the needs of each student, so every student practices reading and writing with her or his textbook.

The last part of the lesson is less formal and intended to practice vocabulary items with games, competitions, motion, craft or whiteboard practice. This month we worked on vocabulary from last year: clothing, family, numbers, colors, body parts and animals.

This year we will expand the current vocabulary items in each topic, as well as will learn new vocabulary in the topics: house and furniture, the city and places (supermarket, restaurant, shops, park), things we like to do, languages, health, cleaning and professions.

Judaic Studies, K-2 - Asya Sigelman

This year in Judaic Studies we are following the Lechavin u Lehaskil curriculum, which has a particular emphasis on the dikduk (grammar) of Ancient Hebrew. In September we have studied the following topics:

* Distinction between zachar (male) and nekeva (female); and how to tell which nouns are which gender.

* Classification of yahid (masculine singular), yahida (feminine singular), rabim (masculine plural), and rabot (female plural) and which noun endings correspond to which.

* Distinction between poal (verb) and shem etzem (noun)

In preparation for the high holidays (Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, and Simchat Torah) we discussed the various laws and customs and also read from the "Bina, Benny, and Chaggai ha-Yonah" children's book series. We read the Book of Jonah which is read in the synagogue on Yom Kippur and discussed its significance. Now that the chagim (holidays) are over, we do a weekly unit on parshat-ha-shavuah (weekly Bible portion), starting with the

beginning -- Bereishit (Genesis). In our daily davening (morning prayers), we have been focusing on the meaning of the individual tefillot (prayers).

Christian Studies, Kindergarten - 2nd Grade - Frank Chilbert

In Christian Studies, we have begun practicing the habits of praying together, contemplating Scripture, and singing praises to God. We have been learning about different kinds of prayer including prayers of thanksgiving and petition. At the end of each class, we have thanked God for our specific blessings and asked God to comfort our loved ones who are in need. We have been memorizing and discussing verses from Proverbs (1.7 and 2.6) and the Psalms (1). Using Mary Pope Osborne's *Book of Bible Stories*, we have, each day, examined a story from Jesus' life. So far, we have encountered the annunciation of Jesus' birth, his birth in Bethlehem, and his visit to the temple in Jerusalem. Here are a few of the words that you might hear on your child's lips:

Proverbs 1.7-- "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Proverbs 2.6-- "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."

Psalms 1.1-1.2-- "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."

Doxology- "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."