



Main Line Classical Academy

"Because children are never too young to learn great things"

September/October 2019 Newsletter

Kindergarten at Main Line Classical Academy_____

English with Mr. 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. We recently completed the first book, *Gilgamesh, The King*. In it, we have explored the transformation of Gilgamesh. Starting as a bitter and cruel leader of Uruk, he was changed after acquiring a surprising friendship. We have asked what makes a good king and why friendship makes us better. For poetry, we have already memorized "At the Seaside," by Robert Louis Stevenson and have recently begun "The Swing," by Robert Louis Stevenson.

History with Mr. Graham Gormley

We dove right in to our study on early American history this year, learning about the native Americans, the various ways in which they lived. We then went on to speak of the Vikings' discovery of North America. Most recently, we learned how the dispersion of new kinds of knowledge and means of navigation paved the way for Columbus to make his journey and we'll begin our lesson on his journey this week.

Next month, we'll continue with Columbus and we'll be moving ahead to other discoverers such as John Cabot, Americus Vesputius, Balboa, Magellan, and others.

Some of you requested a reading list of related materials at parents' night. The following are some suggestions: [*The American Revolution: Early America*](#), [*When Washington Crossed the Delaware*](#), [*Shh! We're Writing the Constitution*](#), [*Struggle for a Continent*](#), and [*Roanoke: The Lost Colony*](#).

Landmark Books. This is a series. Here's an example on [Jefferson](#), but there are others that are also good that are a more general history, such as this [one](#).

Science & Hands on Skills with Mr. Adam Darer

We began the year discussing the concept of categories and how items are organized into categories in the classroom. The students observed different categories and then proceeded to organize a pile of items I presented into categories. We realized that the items can be organized into more than one category (such as a yellow pencil and yellow marker are both writing implements, but may also be categorized as yellow items). We then explored how organizing items into categories helps our brain remember what we see. The students were able to memorize 16 items after only looking at them for 2 minutes by organizing the items into categories!

The students have been hard at work in the school garden! We weeded the garden beds and planted peas, kale, and chard. We also had to reinforce and stake the chicken wire fence after we noticed an animal got in and ate some of our plants. The students are currently assembling a wheelbarrow that just arrived, fertilizing the garden with organic compost, and watering the plants in the garden.



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Math with Mrs. Yulia Shpilman

Welcome to Kindergarten math at MLCA! Our 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 write down 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, 12 or 20? What about comparing three numbers - 9, 12, and 17? Or four numbers?
 - d. **Number order**: our kindergarteners can "count to 100" easily, but it is not as easy to name the next number, and it can be quite tricky to name the previous one. We have been practicing this with our teddy bear game, where I name a number and throw the bear, and the student has to throw it back to me and name the previous or next number.
2. **Arithmetic practice** - we have started working on recognizing and learning pairs that make 10, and will continue with more basic addition practice next month.
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. This month,



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we had a chance to work on some spatial reasoning building puzzles using tetrominos, melissa and doug wooden blocks and pattern blocks.

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 spacial reasoning and logic, as well as social skills, such as waiting for your turn, graciously losing and encouraging your friends. So far, we have played Blink and Swish 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.

French with Madame Betty d'Hervet

Bienvenue dans la classe de français! For the month of September, we introduced simple greetings and polite words. We learned the French colors and numbers (1 - 20) using games, and 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=JB1SXR0FH1g>) ; and « *L'Alphabet* »

We started to work in our French book, *Mes premiers pas* (book level 1), and introduced the Symtalk method so that we could study lessons 1 through 5. 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, Sylvie, Gérard, 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, la pomme (the apple), le gâteau (the cake), du jus d'orange (orange juice), du lait (milk), de l'eau (water), mange (eats), regarde (looks at), joue (plays), boit (drinks), avec (with)

Music and Art with Mrs. Karina Butterworth

Our Kindergarten and first grade group includes many students who are new to MLCA, so we started from the beginning, which has been good for all of them. We are learning/reviewing how to write G clef, 5 notes of the C major scale (C, D, E, F, G), 4 notes in the spaces that make the word FACE, 5 notes on the line that stand for Every Good Boy Does Fine, and four notes for violin (G, D, A, E).

We are learning/reviewing how to switch quickly, quietly, and safely between "desk work" and "orchestra time," especially how to be careful with violins and classmates nearby. The children are learning/reviewing how to hold a bow, and how to play open strings. They learned the pizzicato song "Hello, teacher," and "Pepperoni Pizza" and "Kitty Cat" with the bow. We also played "Kitty Cat" as a duet, with the more skilled students as helpers playing melody with their fingers, and the new students playing open strings. The children also had the chance to perform a few times with their piano songs.

In art the children have worked in colored pencil and watercolor to make several landscapes using a horizon line, scale and placement to create perspective. Kindergarten and first grade students were introduced to the basic proportions of a human face with a colored pencil portrait exercise, and painted several watercolor still lifes,



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incorporating toys to work on composition.

First Grade at Main Line Classical Academy

English with Mr. 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 such as Lambkin and Nestling. The poem has allowed us to ask important questions about comfort, 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.

Math with Dr. 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.

History with Mr. Graham Gormley

We dove right in to our study on early American history this year, learning about the native Americans, the various ways in which they lived. We then went on to speak of the Vikings' discovery of North America. Most recently, we learned how the dispersion of new kinds of knowledge and means of navigation paved the way for Columbus to make his journey and we'll begin our lesson on his journey this week. Next month, we'll continue with Columbus and we'll be moving ahead to other discoverers such as John Cabot, Americus Vesputius, Balboa, Magellan, and others.

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French with Madame Betty d'Hervet

Bienvenue dans la classe de français ! For the month of September, we introduced our routine regarding the date and weather, as well as counting in French, as a class, in addition to learning two traditional French songs :

« Santiano » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Uh249iQyj0>) the first and second verses and the refrain; and « Dame Tartine » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEHJLd8QRz8>) verses 1 & 2.

We started to work in our French book, *Mon monde* (book level 3 of the Symtalk method), and learned the French spelling of all the vocabulary, while we were studying lessons 1 through 4. We also wrote French sentences as well as reading them individually. Finally, we described pictures orally and in writing.

Vocabulaire: Gérard, Sylvie, Brigitte, Antoine, chez Alain (at Alain's), chez Brigitte (at Brigitte's), le chat (the cat), le chien (the dog), mange (eats), joue (plays), aime (likes), regarde (looks at), avec (with), de / d' (of, 's), le pain (the bread), la glace (the ice cream), le fromage (the cheese), la pomme (the apple), les frites (the French fries), le croque-monsieur (the grilled ham and cheese sandwich), la télé (the TV), le ballon bleu (the blue ball), le ballon jaune (the yellow ball), le vélo (the bike), au parc (at the park), le parc (the park), à la maison (at home), la maison (the house)

Modern Hebrew with Tal Gutman

In the first month of school the continuing students reviewed the *aleph bet* letters and vowels and were thrilled to started practicing writing the *aleph bet* in script. We also reviewed and expanded basic language structures and vocabulary related to food, numbers 1-20, colors, days of the week and family members. The students practiced their reading one-on-one with me and in a group setting. They are eager to learn more and more! It is great to see how they started to implement past and new knowledge and compose creative meaningful sentences on their own.

We also welcomed new students to our class. They were introduced to the first letters in the *aleph bet* through fun games and started composing a letter notebook with stickers and sight words. They also started to practice their writing and identifying different letters and sounds. We practiced daily expressions and manners such as hello - shalom, goodbye - lehitraot, thank you - todah, please - bevakasha, yes - ken, no - lo, and more. I look forward to seeing their growth in Hebrew throughout the year.

Wishing you all Shana Tova! שנה טובה ומתוקה!

Music and Art with Mrs. Karina Butterworth

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Good Boy Does Fine, and four notes for violin (G, D, A, E).

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Second Grade at Main Line Classical Academy

English with Mr. Bill Walter

This past September the second grade class has been memorizing and studying a poem by Helen Hunt Jackson titled “September”—a very appropriate work for the month! So much poetry mentions or describes the natural wonder of the world—kinds of birds, kinds of flowers, kinds of trees, etc. In today’s world, unfortunately, many children are separated from nature’s beauties by remaining indoors and have no idea, to the surprise of many older people, what a ram, a rose bush, or nettle looks like! Because much of the beauty of Helen Hunt Jackson’s poem depends on a basic knowledge of plants, much of the poetry lessons might turn to discussions of botany—such as goldenrods, asters, gentians, milkweed, and sedges—all of which bloom in September.

On the first day of class I asked the students what they think of when the word September is mentioned. The



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responses were various. September is harvest time. In many temperate regions of the world, like middle and northern parts of North America, northern Europe and England, the time of the year provides a respite from the hot, sometimes oppressive weather of July and August. September is a cooler month, but not cold. Like March and April, it is a period of pleasant transition, or as the Helen Hunt Jackson's poem mentions, a month that provides "summer's best of weather/And autumn's best of cheer." It is also the time of the autumnal equinox. I got to talk to the students about how the seasons are initiated by astronomical events, such as the autumnal and vernal equinoxes as well as the summer and winter solstices.

As many of the students had never heard of Helen Hunt Jackson, I gave a short biography. Both Helen Hunt Jackson (1830–1885) and her friend Emily Dickinson were born and raised in Amherst, Massachusetts and attended the women's college there. While Emily Dickinson achieved fame solely for her poetry, Helen Hunt Jackson was also a novelist and a non-fiction writer. In 1881 she published a book titled *A Century of Dishonor* in which she chronicles the federal government's mistreatment of the Native American. She is perhaps most famously known, however, for her romance novel concerning the plight of Native Americans, titled *Romona*.

Math with Dr. 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. We also explored a number of different addition strategies. After working with the ancient number systems, students began to appreciate the efficiency of ours.

History with Mr. Graham Gormley

We began our overview of the ancient world this year by discussing the way of life of nomads in early Mesopotamia and their eventual settlement into the region. Likewise we discussed how in the early days of ancient Egypt, the land was split into two kingdoms until Narmer united them by force. We tried our hand at some rudimentary hieroglyphs along with that. We went on to discuss the origins of the Akkadian empire and the rule of Hammurabi, making laws of our own to imitate the code of the latter. The story of Sargon of Akkad seemed to have been a favorite, given the unflattering description of the king of Kish found in Ashurbanipal's library.

Next month we'll be moving on to the Assyrian ruler Shamshi-Adad, the Mohenjo-Daro settlement in the Indus River valley, a bit about ancient China, and with any luck we'll move on to the Middle Kingdom of Egypt.

French with Madame Betty d'Hervet

Bienvenue dans la classe de français ! For the month of September, we learned two traditional French songs : « *Ouvrez la cage aux oiseaux* » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nsd8S9Duro>) 2nd verse and refrain; « *Santiano* » (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Uh249iQyj0>) the third and fourth verses.

We did some review of the book *Mon monde* (book level 3 of the Syntalk method), and then reviewed lessons 1 to 7 of the book *Gérard et ses copains* (book level 4 of the Syntalk method). We worked on conjugation of 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 ; Subject Pronouns (*je, tu, il, elle, on, nous, vous, ils, elles*); and Question sentences : *est-ce que/qu'* (yes/no questions). At the end of this review, we took a conjugation test.

We studied the lessons 8 to 11 as well as the beginning of the lesson 12 of our book *Gérard et ses copains*. Through these chapters, we studied the negative form of a sentence, using « *ne/n'...pas de* » with different verbs, and the expressions with *AVOIR* (to have) like « *il n'y a pas de* », « *avoir besoin de* » and « *avoir faim/soif/chaud/froid* ». We asked questions and answered them using these new expressions. We also learned how to ask for something politely.



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Vocabulaire: je n'ai pas de/d' (I don't have), tu n'as pas de/d' (you don't have), il/elle/on n'a pas de/d' (he/she/people doesn't have), Il n'y a pas de/d' (there is/are no), avoir besoin de/d' (to need), avoir chaud (to be/get hot), avoir froid (to be/get cold), avoir faim (to be/get hungry), avoir soif (to be/get thirsty), vouloir (to want to), je voudrais (I would like), tu voudrais (you would like), il/elle/on voudrait (he/she/we -the people- would like to), du jambon (some ham), des oeufs (eggs), du jus d'orange (some orange juice), du lait (some milk), de l'eau (some water), une trousse (a pencil case), un cahier (a notebook), des CD (some CD), un crayon (a pencil), un jeu vidéo (a video game), une casquette (a cap), une veste (a jacket), au/le magasin (at the store), le magasin (the store), à la librairie (at the bookstore), la librairie (the bookstore)

Art and Music with Mrs. Karina Butterworth

The students remember a lot from last year, which has allowed us to make a strong start. They are writing dictations with more complicated rhythms in 4/4 and 3/4 time, using dotted notes and sixteenths. In violin ensemble the students learned two songs with both low and high 2nd finger and slurs. They passed the test on their first song, and some have passed the test on the second song as well. We're also repeating old songs from last year.

In Art class the students started with a free drawing landscape exercise employing horizon line and perspective. They followed this with a watercolor copy of our "Autumn Landscape" painting, showing the house in proper angular perspective with light and shade. We've made several watercolor studies of still life compositions, studying the composition from their seats, and then transferring their underdrawing onto watercolor paper. They also had to show different shades of color in the reflections on a white pitcher. Another still life incorporated a teddy bear in an Eagles jersey, which the students used to study proportion: the head of the bear equals 1/3 of the whole toy. Finally, the students sketched their own left hands with small objects like car keys, markers, scissors, etc.

Science & Hands on Skills with Mr. Adam Darer

The second grade Science class began the year by observing different types of materials around the classroom (metal, wood, plastic) and exploring the properties of each type of material. We then discussed why different items were made from certain types of materials and then drew prototypes of an invention where the students had to explain why they chose to use a specific type of material. After reviewing the states of matter and the relative distances and speed of particles in each state, we began our lessons on air pressure with the ultimate goal of looking into weather patterns across the country. In our study of air pressure, we are discussing why balloons don't self-inflate, how straws suck up liquid, and why an inflated balloon pops when compressed.

The students have been hard at work in the school garden! We weeded the garden beds and planted peas, kale, and chard. We also had to reinforce and stake the chicken wire fence after we noticed an animal got in and ate some of our plants. The students are currently assembling a wheel barrow that just arrived, fertilizing the garden with organic compost, and watering the plants in the garden.



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Modern Hebrew with Tal Gutman

In the first month of school the continuing students reviewed the *aleph bet* letters and vowels and were thrilled to start practicing writing the *aleph bet* in script. We also reviewed and expanded basic language structures and vocabulary related to food, numbers 1-20, colors, days of the week and family members. The students practiced their reading one-on-one with me and in a group setting. They are eager to learn more and more! It is great to see how they started to implement past and new knowledge and compose creative meaningful sentences on their own.

We also welcomed new students to our class. They were introduced to the first letters in the *aleph bet* through fun games and started composing a letter notebook with stickers and sight words. They also started to practice their writing and identifying different letters and sounds. We practiced daily expressions and manners such as hello - shalom, goodbye - lehitraot, thank you - todah, please - bevakasha, yes - ken, no - lo, and more. I look forward to seeing their growth in Hebrew throughout the year.

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Third Grade at Main Line Classical Academy_____

English with Bill Walter

The 3rd graders have read a lot of interesting selections this month—stories, fables, moral stories, biography, history, and poetry. Our poetry studies always include poetics, which I began by talking about chapter books. To start off the year's instruction on poetics, I tried to get the children to understand that there is "music" in poetry. That music involves, of course, the rhythm of words. We then get to talk about the syllables of words. I then mentioned that the word *squirreled*, according to some sources, is one of the longest words with only one syllable. Other words that the students enjoyed looking at included the long, multisyllabic word found in Shakespeare's



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comedy Love's Labor's Lost, honorificabilitudinitatibus, which comes out of the mouth of a character named Costard in Act V, Scene I. If it is broken up into syllables (hon-or-if-ic-a-bil-i-tud-in-i-ta-ti-bus), the students noticed that the 27-letter word has 13 syllables! They were happy to hear that I could pronounce it!

Math with Dr. Sasha Fradkin

Like the second grade students, the third graders began the school year with learning about some ancient number systems. In particular, they did some calculations with the Roman Numerals and the Mayan Numerals. The Mayan number system was particularly interesting because it is based on place value, just like our system, but it is base 20 instead of base 10.

The third grade students then moved on to the topic of big numbers, which they started last year. The students reviewed the place values in the thousands, millions, and billions. How does one write the number sixty-five million, five thousand, thirty-seven? How does one say the number 342,903,008,043? They then made some computations involving the big numbers and solved some puzzles involving them.

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The third grade Science class began the year by observing different types of materials around the classroom (metal, wood, plastic) and exploring the properties of each type of material. We then discussed why different items were made from certain types of materials and then drew prototypes of an invention where the students had to explain why they chose to use a specific type of material. After reviewing the states of matter and the relative distances and speed of particles in each state, we began our lessons on air pressure with the ultimate goal of looking into weather patterns across the country. In our study of air pressure, we are discussing why balloons don't self-inflate, how straws suck up liquid, and why an inflated balloon pops when compressed.

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French with Madame Betty d'Hervet

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We also reviewed conjugation of the présent tense 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...); Vocabulary of food, places, and class subjects ; Prépositions and conjunctions *CHEZ* (at someone's place), *AVEC* (with), *ET* (and); subject pronouns (*je, tu, il, elle, on, nous, vous, ils, elles*) and object pronouns (*moi, toi, lui, elle, nous, vous, eux*); question words and sentences : (*est-ce que/qu' -yes/no questions*), *où* (where), *comment* (how), *qui* (who) ; and negative sentences (*sujet + ne/n' +verbe conjugué+ pas*).

We studied up to lesson 8 of our fifth French book, *Le français en image*, book E. We reviewed the conjugation of the irregular verb "aller", the auxiliary verb "être" and of the pronominal verbs (like "s'amuser", to have fun, or "se reposer", to rest). We learned how to make negative sentences with these verbs. We also studied more adjectives and their different forms according to their gender and number. We learned the vocabulary of the family



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members and reviewed how to express possession in French with "de" and how to use possessive adjectives. We had one adjectives agreement quiz and we continued to practice "Dictée".

History with Mr. Graham Gormley

Having devoured the tales of Herodotus, Plutarch, Thucydides and others regarding ancient Greece last year, the third graders seem excited to move on to Livy and ancient Rome. His account begins with a variety of tales of intrigue, murder, and glory, all of which are sure to catch the ear of young students...

At this point, students should be able, not only to name the first seven (and a half) kings, but recount their stories in detail. A test on that topic will be coming the week after next (second week of October). This year, students will rely on the notes they took in class, rather than a study sheet.

After that, we'll be moving along to the early days of the republic. With any luck we'll make it to the dictatorship of Cincinnatus by the end of next month.

Modern Hebrew with Tal Gutman

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Wishing you all Shana Tova! שנה טובה ומתוקה!

Music with Karina Butterworth

We started this year on a good level; the students remember a lot from last year. We write dictations with more complicated rhythms in 4/4 and 3/4 time using dotted notes and sixteenths. During the violin ensemble the children learned 3 new songs with low and high 2nd finger, slurs, and sincopa. They all passed the tests and are almost ready for recording video! Half the group play without stickers, or with only 1 or 2; our goal for this year is to improve hand position so that everyone is playing without stickers by the end of the year.



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Fourth Grade at Main Line Classical Academy

English with Bill Walter

In one of their reading selections this month (about a poet and Harun al-Rashid), the students came across the word melancholy, which they were told meant “sad” and “gloomy.” I then gave the etymology, or history, of the Latinate word. Exploring a word is much like opening a treasure trove of history. I picked up several objects up in this particular “treasure chest,” so to speak, and laid them down for all of the students to see. Many years ago doctors taught that there were fluids in our bodies that made us either happy or sad, angry or calm. Four of these fluids were phlegm, blood, yellow bile and black bile. The Latin word for black bile was melancholy. These old doctors taught that black bile caused people to be gloomy. The Latin words sanguine (meaning blood), phlegmatic (meaning the fluid in our throat), and cholera (meaning yellow bile) are now used as English words to describe people’s moods or personality. A sanguine person is cheerful; a phlegmatic person is tired or lazy; and a choleric person is easily angered. In the past people thought these words described medical or physical conditions. Today, however, the words mostly describe personality types. The students then tried to classify themselves according to the four Medieval humors.

Math with Dr. Sasha Fradkin



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

History with Mr. Graham Gormley

Due to the number of students who entered mid-year last year or who are new to the school this year in fourth grade, we're going to be studying ancient Greece this year, though normally that would come before we study ancient Rome. We've already begun to learn about the mythological founding of various important city states and regions: Argos, Mycenae, Thessaly, Thebes, and Athens. We'll be getting to Sparta shortly. In the meantime we discussed several of the other myths that informed the Greek way of thinking, such as Homer's *Iliad*, Sophokles' *Oedipus*, and *Daidalos and Ikarus*.

Part of the reason we spent some of our time on the mythological aspect is to help us understand the tragic outlook on life often found among the ancient Greeks. This will certainly inform our own understanding when we get to such actual events as the battle of Thermopylae or Marathon, for example.

Next month, we'll move on to the story of Sparta's lawgiver, Lykurgus and all of his reforms as well as their war with the Messenians.

Science with Mr. Adam Darer

We began the school year by 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 filings (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. After reviewing the states of matter and the relative distances and speed of particles in each state, we began our lessons on air pressure with the ultimate goal of looking into weather patterns across the country. In our study of air pressure, we are discussing why balloons don't self-inflate, how straws suck up liquid, and why an inflated balloon pops when compressed.

Programming with Mrs. Tatiana Ter-Saakov

This year students will be working on Hydrodynamics FLL set. Right now students are working on getting the robot to their selected mission. Students will start working on attachments in the next couple of weeks.

French with Madame Betty d'Hervet

Bienvenue dans la classe de français ! For the month of September, we learned two traditional French songs : "Les champs Elysées" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9V-zUlrhEE>); and "Cadet Rousselle" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spVySFyW64E>) verses 1 to 4

We also reviewed conjugation of the présent tense of *ÊTRE* (to be), *AVOIR* (to have), *FAIRE* (to make/ to



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do), *ALLER* (to go), *PRENDRE* (to take), *VENIR* (to come), *regular -ER verbs*, *irregular -IR verbs* (as *LIRE* to read, *ÉCRIRE* to write...); Vocabulary of food, places, and class subjects; Prépositions and conjunctions *CHEZ* (at someone's place), *AVEC* (with), *ET* (and); subject pronouns (*je, tu, il, elle, on, nous, vous, ils, elles*) and object pronouns (*moi, toi, lui, elle, nous, vous, eux*); question words and sentences: (*est-ce que/qu'*-yes/no questions), *où* (where), *comment* (how), *qui* (who); and negative sentences (*sujet + ne/n' + verbe conjugué + pas*).

We studied up to lesson 8 of our fifth French book, *Le français en image*, book E. We reviewed the conjugation of the irregular verb "*aller*", the auxiliary verb "*être*" and of the pronominal verbs (like "*s'amuser*", to have fun, or "*se reposer*", to rest). We learned how to make negative sentences with these verbs. We also studied more adjectives and their different forms according to their gender and number. We learned the vocabulary of the family members and reviewed how to express possession in French with "*de*" and how to use possessive adjectives. We had one adjectives agreement quiz and we continued to practice "*Dictée*".

Music with Mrs. Karina Butterworth

We started Music Theory on a good level. The students write dictations with complicated rhythms in 4/4 and 3/4 time, using dotted notes and sixteenths. During the violin ensemble we rotate the easy and the more complicated songs and exercises so the new kids can catch up. We have learned three new songs with low and high 2nd finger, slurs, and sincopa, and we are preparing for the test and for recording video. Half of the group play without stickers, and the goal for the year is to improve hand position so that everyone can play without stickers by the end of the year.

Latin with Mr. Hugh Wynne

4th graders have begun their journey into the Latin language by reviewing their English. We have spent our first 3 weeks covering parts of speech, putting them on flashcards, and identifying the key terms used to define nouns and verbs, for example abstract noun, infinitive, and linking verb. Please feel free to check your children's instruction on these matters of great importance, and add your own knowledge to what they have learnt already.

Art History with Mrs. Jessica Todd Harper

Students have been studying medieval art by looking at examples of illuminated manuscripts. Each child has a notebook in which 8x10 reproductions are kept and copied. We have learned about monasteries and the process by which monks created illuminated manuscripts, using calf skin, precious stones and gold. 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 famous *Book of Kells* illuminated manuscript 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 recurring class exploration.



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Fifth Grade at Main Line Classical Academy

English with Bill Walter

"What is poetry?" That question is much like asking "What is life?"—a question that philosophers had entertained for millennia. Scholars and critics have not come to any decisive conclusion about what poetry is either, but the 5th grade students at MLCA took a good stab at the question and came up with some very good answers. One said it was a rhythmical arrangement of words that sounds good, often using rhyme. Another said that it was a piece of writing that had deep meaning. All of the students had something relevant to say. They then read what poets in the past said about about poetry, such as Shelley's comment that poetry was the "expression of the imagination" or Wordsworth's belief that "all good poetry was the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling." There were six or seven definitions in all and I asked which they liked best. One of the students, a young man who has a good sense of humor, thought that the definition put forth by Walt Whitman was the best. He said that "The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem." A poem is a country—what was he thinking? I then explained why Whitman's definition was perhaps the best definition of them all!

History with Mr. Graham Gormley



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Due to an overzealous attention to detail on my part in our studies on ancient Rome last year, we've spent September tying up loose ends regarding the empire this year, before moving on to the Medieval era. We looked at Appian's and Cassius Dio's accounts of the civil wars and we're finishing up some of the stories of the various emperors with Suetonius' *Twelve Caesar's*.

Students will be tested on that era during the first week of October. They will rely on their notes from class to study. Unlike previous years, students will be answering longer essay questions on the substantial issues of the time. They'll receive the questions in advance and we'll discuss in class the kind of evidence one would need for a thoughtful response.

Next month, we'll be moving into the Medieval Era. We'll begin with Constantine reuniting the Roman empire under Christianity, moving on to Persia's threat to the empire under Shapur II, and ending the month somewhere around the story of the barbarian threat and eventual sack of Rome.

Math with Mrs. Tatiana Ter-Saakov

5th grade started the year working on operations with fractions. Students were introduced to multiplication and division of fractions, and multiplication of mixed numbers. We practiced using operations with fractions in word problems. We will have one more chapter on fractions later in the year, in which the same concepts will be used to solve more challenging problems.

Right now students moved on to decimals, and almost done with the chapter. Next is chapter on probability - very exciting!

Science with Mrs. Tatiana Ter-Saakov

Students started the year working on optics. We made cameras-oscuras, and even were able to take a picture of the tree tops outside school using one of the cameras:



Students were also studying mirrors and laws of reflection.



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Programming with Mrs. Tatiana Ter-Saakov

This year students will be working on Hydrodynamics FLL set. Right now students are working on getting the robot to their selected mission. Students will start working on attachments in the next couple of weeks.

Latin with Mr. Hugh Wynne

5th grade Latin has begun with review of the basics from last year: present tense verbs, nouns in the nominative and accusative Latin cases (subjects and objects), and, recently, the imperfect tense. All this is solely in its most basic format and the children will benefit from the review since the textbook picks up speed with Latin grammar concepts very quickly.

Art History with Mrs. Emily Rice

We are beginning the year with a whirlwind tour of the art of Ancient Egypt and Classical Greece and Rome so that students will have a shared foundation from which to discuss the artistic and cultural "Renaissance" of fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe. We started with the oldest historical artifact, the Palette of Narmer, depicting the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, and explored the connection between written language and pictures in narrative art. This early beginning facilitated a review of some of the characteristics of ancient river valley civilizations, and introduced more general questions of what constitutes a civilization and how art and beauty fit into the human experience. We also identified some of the artistic conventions of ancient Egyptian art, and considered the geographic and cultural factors which contributed to the remarkable continuity of this tradition.

Modern Hebrew with Tal Gutman



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We opened the school year sharing our experiences from the summer break. The students saw pictures from my summer trip to Israel including places, food and views from all over the country. They asked questions in Hebrew about each picture, and were especially curious about the western Wall, the Kotel, and the tradition of placing slips of paper containing written prayers into the cracks of the Wall.

Before we moved on to our first unit this year, which deals with friendship and social interactions, we reviewed and expanded last year's grammar, syntax and vocabulary items, mainly:

- Sentence structures and the function of each word in the sentence (such as verb, adjective, prepositions, question words, etc.)
- Present tense verbs and infinitive form
- Nominal sentences in the past tense
- Agreement between adjective and noun in gender and number and irregular nouns
- Impersonal phrases with infinitive forms (allowed/not allowed, possible/impossible, worthwhile/not worthwhile)
- The number system in masculine and feminine and the four forms of addressing the questions and answers "how much does it cost?"

For Rosh Hashana, we learned slang expressions related to the word "rosh" (head). The name for the holiday Rosh Hashana "ראש השנה", is composed of two words: Rosh, which is head and Shana – year. Together they mean the first of the year. Modern Hebrew slang has expanded the use of the word "head" to additional uses, such as: **Rosh Gadol** "ראש גדול" (big head) means a thinker;

Rosh Katan "ראש קטן" (small head) is used to describe someone doing only as told without thinking.

Rosh Tov "ראש טוב" (good head) describes a positive state of mind.

Wishing you all Shana Tova! שנה טובה ומתוקה!

Sixth/Seventh Grade at Main Line Classical Academy _____

English with Mr. Bill Walter

This year students will be focusing on their writing skills, and part of our approach will include reading and writing narratives—journals, autobiographies and biographies. We began by reading explorer/pioneer journals, such as by Captain James Cook and 19th-century pioneers of the state of Nebraska. (We are currently reading Quaker narratives.) These early pioneers were not celebrated writers, but the journal entries which recount their experiences are riveting. One woman named Edna M. Boyle Allen wrote about a grasshopper raid that struck her area in the summer of 1874 when she was just two years old. She remembers her father rushing home from his office saying, "The grasshoppers are coming!" and apparently all of the family knew what that meant. He and Edna's mother hurried to the garden to save all of the vegetables before the grasshoppers arrived, while two-year-old Edna put on a little pink sunbonnet (of which she was very proud). As quickly as possible the parents ran to the cellar door and tossed down all of the produce. Edna jumped up and down, thoroughly enjoying the excitement. Finally, she writes, the grasshoppers came from the northwest "like a dark cloud," and "father shut the cellar door. . . They had just filled their arms when the grasshoppers began to drop." Edna's little pink sunbonnet was "covered with big grasshoppers." From the kitchen window the family "watched every stalk of that garden disappear; even the



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onions were eaten from the ground."

Although the pioneer narratives that we read were very well-written and contain important history, they would not be classified as "classic literature"; the pieces are by unknown people writing about day-to-day life. However, the *best* classic essays are *not* about extraordinary things. They are about people's *ordinary life*—an idea that I sometimes have difficulty communicating to my students. I often give this assignment: "Write an essay about something that has happened to you in the past year or two." Students often reply, "But nothing ever happens to me!" What they mean by that is that nothing *extraordinary* happens. And when I finally get across to them what I want, they are still plagued by the idea that something ordinary cannot be as interesting as or more interesting than something extraordinary. I was so pleased, then, when one student remarked that she thought the accounts we read were better than fiction or works written by celebrated professional writers. They were more interesting, she said, because the experiences recounted were something she could relate to, and were more inspiring.

Science with Mr. Adam Darer

In Science class, we reviewed metric system units, discussed how to convert from one metric system unit to another, and how to use a conversion factor to convert from a metric system unit to a non-metric system unit. We then discussed the difference between accuracy and precision and followed up our discussion with a laboratory activity measuring our accuracy tossing several pennies towards a target on the floor. From the data, the students made bar graphs, and the students had a great self-led discussion about the trends they observed in the bar graph. We have had quizzes every Monday to review and reinforce the concepts the students have learned in class. We just finished a laboratory experiment measuring flow rate of water as a container is emptied and the students are currently making bar graphs to display the data.

History with Mr. Graham Gormley

Due to an overzealous attention to detail on my part in our studies on ancient Rome last year, we've spent September tying up loose ends regarding the empire this year, before moving on to the Medieval era. We looked at Appian's and Cassius Dio's accounts of the civil wars and we're finishing up some of the stories of the various emperors with Suetonius' *Twelve Caesar's*.

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Math with Mrs. Tatiana Ter-Saakov

6th-7th grade did a brief review of order of operations, then plunged right into algebra and solving equations. Students did wonderfully on quite challenging equations both in class and on the test. As we use algebraic tools again and again through the year, students will polish their skills to more automatic level.

Next students reviewed decimals, including converting any fraction to a decimal, possibly repeating, and any finite or repeating decimal into a fraction (the last one using newly acquired skills in setting up and solving equations).

Right now we are going through the review of ratios, rates and percent. Students are working hard, so it looks



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like a great start of quite a fast-paced year.



Programming with Ms. Olga Skorvkova

This month in Programming class students experienced working in different programming environments, such as Python IDLE, Thonny and CodeSkulptor3. They learned the basic Python language syntax, wrote their first Python program and worked on their “good code styling” skills. Students have finished the “Numbers and Arithmetic Operations” unit, completed their first computer Lab and took the first Quiz. Next step: Variables!

Latin with Mr. Hugh Wynne

This Latin course began with a review from chapter XX in the Ambrose and Buhner textbook. We are continuing with more review of noun and verb forms, which has required an extensive use of flashcards and templates to ease the load of memorization. We will begin new material shortly with principal parts of verbs and the perfect system following our review. This class also reviewed my translation of Ovid's Amores I.ix ("every lover's a fighter") as a reward for their frequent good behavior.

Latin with Dr. Asya Sigelman

"Latin S" (6th & 7th grades) started with a review of Jenny's *First Year of Latin* textbook, Chapters 1-15. The students breezed through review of Chapters 1-5, but as we got into more advanced territory, the review process became slower and more intensive.



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Thus far this year, we have reviewed the following topics:

- * 1st and 2nd declension nouns and adjectives
- * 3rd declension masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns
- * All 6 Latin tenses (present, imperfect, future, present perfect, pluperfect, and future perfect) in the active indicative of the 1st conjugation.
- * Present active imperative mood
- * Many different types of prepositional phrases and the cases which the different prepositions govern (e.g., 5 different uses of the ablative case).
- * Irregular verbs do, dare, dedi, datum (to give); sto, stare, steti, statum (to stand); and sum, esse, fui, futurus (to be).
- * We have also been reviewing all the vocabulary, chapter-by-chapter.

During our in-class exercises, we split time between oral and at-the-board drills and translations (Latin to English and English to Latin). We have been paying especial attention to the difference in syntax and word-order between English and Latin.

Art History with Jessica Todd Harper

The students are practicing oral presentations on various artworks. They are working on speaking loudly enough and crafting an argument for the meaning of a given work. Time period, patron, artist, iconography, point of view, palette, are all items the students consider when crafting their interpretations.

All School Classes and Before/After School

Physical Education with Ed Soto

Gym and recess provide an ideal environment to work on character values such as respect, sportsmanship, confidence, trust, honesty, and more. Teamwork will be a constant emphasis throughout the year. We've engaged the students in games designed to show them that everyone has a part to do in working together to achieve a common goal. Some classes did parachute activities, others played crazy ball soccer, and Indiana Jones, and Hula hoop capture the flag.

Studio Art with Mr. John McCormick, grades 3-7

From the first class we returned to the building blocks of drawing, using not only a metaphor, but actual blocks as well. The effort is being made to introduce or reinforce the principles of drawing from life, or what you see. This includes seeing the actual angles, proportions and alignment that help the students to achieve much greater confidence in drawing. Right now simplicity is stressed, but the more demanding drawing exercises will eventually be introduced as the semester progresses.

Poetry Club with Mrs. Rebekah Martindale



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Poetry Club spent the first couple of weeks thinking about ways to structure a poetic line. We looked at poems that count syllables, such as Haikus and Tankas, and poems that count accent/stress, such as ballads and nursery rhymes. We read examples of each of these forms and had a chance to practice writing in these styles.

Kindergarten Enrichment with Mr. Hugh Wynne

Kindergarten enrichment with Mr. Wynne has involved memorizing Frère Jacques in French and is following up this with memorizing Frater Johannes in Latin.

Second and Third Grade Enrichment with Mr. Anthony Barr

The activities in the 2nd and 3rd grade enrichment class are rooted in the understanding that inner formation - whether moral, poetic, academic - is dependent on the vocabulary of inner life. And so our class is focused on literature and language. We are steadily working our way through the story of Pinocchio which gives us plenty of material for talking about decision-making, emotions, and values as together we assess Pinocchio's moral development. In addition, we regularly play word-based games that support vocabulary development such as identifying rhyming words, brainstorming synonyms and antonyms, etc.. Finally, each class, the students have a few minutes of free imaginative time where they exercise their creativity through free drawing.

Enrichment with Madame Manuella Nselel

From reviewing French words learnt in Mme D'Herve's class, to helping our students with organization skills, to practicing routine questions in French, we have been busy in Enrichment!

Enrichment periods provide an opportunity to help Kindergarten and First Grade students with general review and organizational skills such as keeping their backpack and cubby organized, and checking their red homework folder daily. Reading French stories, reviewing sight words with flash cards from English class, and finishing math worksheets are some of the many activities we have been doing in Enrichment since the beginning of the school year.

The students have reviewed their knowledge of French vocabulary and spelling by playing *pendu* (hangman). Another great way of working on French words is having the kids solve *devinettes* (riddles). Recently the 3rd graders were even able to create some riddles by themselves about the objects and rooms in a home!

Through the course of the school day, many questions I hear while monitoring recess and/or lunch are somewhat predictable. Therefore I've also used Enrichment time to practice in French "Can I get my water bottle?" "Can I be dismissed?" and the like. That way, not only do I speak French to the students outside of the classroom but also invite them to talk to me using their French skills.

K-3 Christian Studies with Ms. Emily Woo

The K-3 Christian Studies class has kicked off wonderfully this year. For the past two weeks, the students have had so much fun learning about the Bible, starting with God and creation (my plan is to try to get through an overview of the whole Bible this year). To supplement the Bible lesson, the students have also been learning songs, memorizing verses, and making crafts (or baking!). The students' enthusiasm each day makes me so excited for the rest of the year!

4-7 Christian Studies with Mr. Craig Tavani

The first few weeks of class have been a time of introductory consideration, becoming familiar with one another and with expectations for participating in this extra-curricular course of study. We began with the question, "Who are we as a group gathered to study Christian belief here and now?" The next question we considered was, "What does the



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term 'Christian Studies' bring to mind?" Considering what needs to be said before going further into Christian Studies, we are presently discussing the art of reading, that is, "hermeneutics." The intent is to introduce students to the challenge of reading the Bible given any number of issues such as translation, transcription, illustration, version, publication, authorization, and interpretation. Families are strongly encouraged to discuss what takes place during class time. These discussions can help students process what has been presented in comparison and contrast to what is taught in each family concerning belief. We have, at present, 8 students taking this course. Students are not required to take notes in class, but the instructor's class notes can be made available upon request.