



# 7th Grade Team Newsletter

1st Quarter

Volume 6, Issue 1, October 30, 2014



## Dates to Remember

October 31st---Half Day

November 10th---Institute Day (No Classes K-8)

November 11th---Veterans Day (No Classes K-8)

November 24th-25th---Parent-Teacher Conferences

November 26th-28th---Thanksgiving Break

December 19th---Early Dismissal (2:45pm)

December 22nd-January 2nd---Winter Recess

Message From the 7th Grade Team...

Today 1st quarter report cards came out. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact your child's homeroom teacher so that we can quickly assess the situation and take action. We are here to help your child learn.

Thanks,  
The 7th Grade



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# What's Happening in the Classroom...



## Language Arts/Literature

Ms. Fairbanks, Ms. Miller, Ms. Atkins, Mrs. Slattengren, & Mrs. Oenning

Students began the school year by reviewing the Elements of a Story and reading several short narrative stories to practice their identification skills of these elements. The *Twilight Zone* teleplay "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street" was a student favorite and the unit focused heavily on theme and the historical context of the story.

In Language Arts, students reviewed the 6 + 1 traits of writing. We also focused on narrative writing and had the students write a "Snapshot" memory, where they picked an important event in their life and provided a detailed description recounting this memory.

As we move into 2nd quarter, we will be focusing on writing an Informative research essay about the 1960's, which will lead into reading and preparing students for *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. To prepare for the 7th grade field trip on December 4th to the Metropolis Theatre, we will be reading the Charles Dickens classic *A Christmas Carol*.



## Spanish

Mrs. Rodriguez

The students that are taking Spanish have been learning how to greet people, introduce themselves and say goodbye in Spanish. They are learning word gender, definite and indefinite articles, pronouns, the verb 'ser', numbers and how to say time in Spanish. The culture they are learning is how people greet each other in Spanish speaking countries and El Dia de Los Muertos that is celebrated on Nov. 1st and 2nd. The lessons are aligned with the learning objectives for foreign language which are recognizing basic communication within the text, identifying grammatical structures, and producing and responding to basic communication in the target language.



## Math

Mrs. Swakow, Mrs. Corrado & Mr. Russell

The students started the school year with a smooth transition from 6th grade Digits to 7th Grade Digits. Through our instruction, students learned about ratios and how they are used to make comparisons between two amounts. The students also learned that equivalent ratios are proportional. Our classes were able to apply concepts of proportionality to everyday life situations. One of the biggest challenges for students was to realize that it is ok to have a ratio within a ratio.



## Science

Mrs. Wiemann, Ms. Lyons, & Mrs. Murphy

During the first quarter, seventh grade Science students learned about Diversity of Life. They conducted many labs and covered investigations called “What is Life?”, “Exploring the Microscope”, and “Microscopic Life”. They completed work on the following learning targets:

- I can determine the difference between a living and nonliving organism.
- I can name the 8 characteristics of life.
- I can differentiate between dead and dormant.
- I can identify the parts of a microscope.
- I can determine total magnification.
- I can determine the width of a field of view.
- I can estimate and measure the size of objects placed under a microscope at different magnifications.
- I can identify the basic unit of life.
- I can determine the difference between single-celled and multicellular organisms.
- I can identify the similarities and differences between paramecium cells and elodea cells.
- I can describe the difference between living cells that are organisms and living cells that are not organisms.
- Through observations, I can compare the paramecium with other microorganisms.

During the second quarter, students will work on a group project and learn about Populations and Ecosystems.



## Social Studies

Ms. Morris and Mr. Galetano

The beginning of our 2014-2015 school year began with students welcoming TCI-History Alive, the new digital social studies program into their classrooms. During the first few weeks of school students familiarized themselves with the components and features of the overall program. They also examined the vast number of lessons, sections, and activities that each chapter offers. Students had an opportunity to practice with opening reading, listening, notebook, challenge games, and assessment activities.

After ample time for practice, classes delved into our first studies of ancient history. Our initial lessons focused on the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia, including the civilizations of Sumer and Babylon. This is where the students learned and discussed essential characteristics that make up a civilization. A web diagram with the term civilization at its core was surrounded by examples such as government, stable food supply, arts, science, math, labor, religion, and education. Currently, the seventh graders are beginning their journey into ancient Egypt. Here, TCI will take them sailing down the Nile River with educational stops at viewing the pyramids, statues, and monuments. The accomplishments of the pharaohs will also be examined.

Second quarter studies will continue with the ancient Egyptians, and then transition into ancient China, India, and Greece. Remember, last spring headphones/earbuds were added to the school supply list so your child could maximize their benefits from using exceptional educational computer programs. If your child does not have this supply, there is still time to make sure your child brings their headphones/earbuds to school. We are positive that this will only improve your child's educational experiences.



## Reading Intervention

### Mrs. Dolan

Seventh grade students in Mrs. Dolan's Reading Intervention class have been using their before, during and after reading strategies while reading fiction and nonfiction articles this quarter. Using reading strategies helps our students to comprehend and better understand the text that they are reading.

Our first piece of text was a fictional article called "Following Boo" from Scholastic *Scope* magazine. Students were introduced to Nathan and his family as they traveled to St. Augustine, Florida on a family vacation. The family was still grieving the loss of their grandfather. A mysterious dog named Boo arrives, and Nathan discovers that Boo doesn't age. Boo likes to swim in a mysterious stream at the campground. Boo wants to be a part of the family, but Nathan isn't sure he should. Ask your child about the lesson that Nathan learns about life and death in this story. Students reviewed the use of their before, during and after reading strategies while working on this story.

Students listened to a true story from the book *What It's Like* about a firefighter and what it's like to save people from a burning building. Students had a chance to practice their visualization skills as they listened to the text being read aloud. It's important to think about and visualize what is happening in a story or article. Students then had the opportunity to read about fires when we read the article "The Fury of Fires" from Scholastic's *Scope* magazine. This article was about the deadly California wildfires in 2003. This article had important text features such as maps, pictures, captions, headings and special print to help support our reading. We learned that the family in the article lived in a town that did not have a disaster alert system. When the wildfires started during the night, the family was lucky to wake up in time and get evacuated. Now Valley Center, California has an alert system in place in case of another wildfire or disaster. Students then learned about the history of Smokey the Bear and how the United States National Park Service used the symbol of Smokey to inform people about the dangers of forest fires (now called wildfires). Students then used all this information to create a Public Service Announcement about the dangers of wildfires. Students could choose to create an informational poster, brochure or an interview to demonstrate their knowledge about wildfires and safety. Students used their non-fiction sources as they gathered important information.

The next piece of informational text that we read was "Dogs vs. Terrorists" from Scholastic *Scope* magazine. Students learned about the special dogs that become patrol dogs or "detection dogs" in the New York Police Department's Canine Unit. These dogs help to keep people safe in the New York City subway system. Students worked on understanding the Central Idea (Main Idea) of the article and locating text information details that were important to law enforcement.

Our next strategy will involve predicting and how good readers make valid predictions based on evidence from the text. Some scary stories are just around the corner!

Please encourage your child to read independently for at least 30 minutes each evening.

The Scholastic book fair will be held in the Algonquin LMC from Wednesday, November 19th through Tuesday, November 26th.

Parents are invited to come on conference days to shop with your child.

“The more you **read**  
the more **things** you know.  
The more that you **learn**  
the more **places** you’ll go.”  
-Dr. Seuss