

7 Gold Newsletter, May 23, 2016

English Language Arts:

In trimester 3, we hit the ground running! Students tackled the research paper, a major assessment of the 7th grade English Language Arts experience. For this paper, students chose a career they would be interested in pursuing as they got older. Every student conducted an interview with someone who is currently working in their “dream field” either via FaceTime, phone call, in person, or email. I was incredibly impressed by our students whose interests were so varied and who handled their interviews with both class and confidence. 7 Gold students spoke to people such as: agents in the FBI, NASA workers, Space Law Lawyers, practicing doctors, Engineers, EMTS’s, Athletic Coaches/Trainers, Graphic Designers, and more! This paper covered four standards: Standards 2, 3, 4, and 5. As you may notice, Standard 5 is new to this trimester and thus students will have grades in all five standards on their final report card. Please refer to the rubric in Schoology for further details on what I was looking for specifically in each standard.

Students are currently finishing up our second novel of the year, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*. This captivating and gripping story is set during the WWII era in Korea. I encourage you to ask your student a little bit about the novel, as well as what theme they’ve chosen to analyze in their final essay of the year.

The school year will culminate in the Fairy Tale unit, a fan favorite! We will be looking at how tales are passed down over time, how Disney changed the original tales which were written by the Grimm Brothers, and working on our comparison skills.

Social Studies

In Social Studies, students began Trimester 3 by working on a group project in which they researched and collaborated to propose solutions to the Israel/Palestine conflict. Each group crafted a proposal which addressed the issues of one or two states, Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, economic inequality, and personal reconciliation. Students honed their persuasive writing and presentation skills, all while practicing collaboration with the group members.

The class has recently moved on to study East & Southeast Asia. The students are undertaking an activity in which they earn Rupees by completing various mapping activities in which they will learn about the physical geography, political borders, climate, vegetation, economy, and religions of East & Southeast Asia. The more Rupees earned, the higher the grade!

Lastly, students have been filming and editing their third and final current events video. We view and discuss these in class, typically on Fridays. Looking forward to our best news stories yet!

Math

In Math, we wrapped up the unit on “Probability - What do you Expect”. In this unit, we learned about experimental and theoretical probability, tree diagrams, compound events and simulations. The students of 7 Gold got an opportunity to use “Project Based Learning” to learn this unit. They built “Carnival Games” and connected them to Probability. The students were excited to build their games and did an excellent job working in their groups. The groups researched different carnival games, came up with an idea, and then built it using different materials like cardboard, cups, recycled bottles, etc. Some examples of the carnival games which students made included “Match the Beads”, “Plinko”, “Drop and Pop”, “Potty Toss”, “Ping Pong Toss”, “Gold Rush”, etc. Students on 7 Gold were excited and proud of themselves while hosting 8 Green students, who played the games and had lot of fun. 7 Gold students got very nice and positive feedback.

We just started working on the “Geometry” Unit. We are starting another project using two-dimensional and three-dimensional figures. In this project students will create a 3D model of something they like (city, town, park, hospital, store, mall, etc). They will find the area, perimeter, surface area and volume of both 2 and 3 dimensional figures used in the model. These shapes can be buildings, cabinets, closets, doors, windows, and parks. The students are excited to start this project. We will end the year with the last unit “Sampling and Population” Unit.

Science

In science the students are currently studying the Protist kingdom. They started with some important science vocabulary and have been working in groups to create Protist posters showing and explaining the differences between Animal-like, Plant-like and Fungus-like Protists in order to help become familiar with this unusual group of organisms. They are going to be viewing living Protists using the WiFi microscopes. The students will have the opportunity to view the following living Protists: Amoeba, Paramecium, Volvox, Stentor, and Euglena.

We will continue onto the Fungi kingdom taking a closer look at yeast (unicellular-Fungus), molds, mildews, and mushrooms (multicellular-Fungus). During this unit we will do a mushroom dissection lab. Answering questions like what are the parts of a mushroom?, what are fungus made up of?, how do fungi reproduce?, how do they obtain food?, etc...

Then we will put all of the information together in our study of Ecology. Looking at the relationships between organisms and their environments. Finally, if there is time we will compare Viruses and Bacteria.

Learning Skills

In Learning Skills we have been working on a number of different things. Students have been doing some team building activities, developing their own study guides to prepare for upcoming assessments, breaking down long-term assignments, and have also been learning a variety of ways to take notes. Recently, we have been including movement breaks into our lessons, such as stretches and even dances. This has really helped students refocus themselves and prepare them for learning.

Currently, students are reading a novel in ELA entitled *So Far From the Bamboo Grove*. After having read, or listened to the audio of the novel, students come to class prepared to share notes on what they have read. Together, we create a “Brain Frame”, which is a type of graphic organizer, that ties all events and details together, as they are reading. This is a very useful tool and strategy students can learn to use in other subject areas as well.

For Math, students have been reviewing concepts and practicing skills that are relevant to the current math units. This is done through group activities and online practice. In the areas of Social Studies and Science, we have been practicing how to create different types of graphic organizers to gather information that is pertinent to the topics we’re studying. Students are also learning to break down assignments into smaller chunks.

Our goal in Skills is to equip students with the strategies and tools they will need to successfully organize and manage 8th grade expectations.

Enrichment

During the fifth cycle, the students in Enrichment had the opportunity to create a Geobot Scale Design project. In pairs, they designed a geometric robot on a 16” x 20” poster board using a ruler including 17 different elements. For example: equilateral triangle, non-rectangular parallelogram, hexagon, perpendicular segments, complementary angles, etc. They had to use an appropriate scale to fit from the 8 1/2 x 11 page to the larger project paper. The students used formulas to calculate the total area and outside perimeter of the entire Geobot. The winners of the Geobot contest were Yana and Luana with Mrs. Doubtbot! Congratulations on a job well done!

In the final cycle of the year, students are working on Genius Hour projects. The concept of “Genius Hour” comes from the Google company. Google encourages their employees to spend a certain amount of time perusing and learning more about their passion. On 7 gold, we are mimicking this idea by having students select a topic that they would like to have time in school to learn more about, research it, and create a product that shows what they learned. Our topics range from computer coding, to learning sign language or Japanese, how to make video games, how to bake with healthy ingredient substitutes, how to become faster, and how to build a business from the ground up.

Math Carnival Pictures!

