



# January Newsletter 2019

## Happy New Year!

We came back from Christmas break and hit the ground running! Students transitioned nicely back in to first grade! ☺

## Word Work & Grammar

We have added many new words to our word wall so far this year including: *a, and, as, are, also, by, be, come, do, does, for, from, his, he, have, has, here, I, is, into, my, me, of, or, one, put, she, said, some, the, they, to, try, there, two, too, very, we, were, when, why, was, where, what, who, you, your.* \*Once a word is added to the word wall, we expect it to be read and written correctly. Earlier this week I sent home your child's individual word lists. Please designate time to frequently practice reading and writing our word wall words and individual word lists with your child. Also during this time through the month of January, we worked on reading and writing contractions. We had fun playing various contraction games including contraction bingo! ☺ Following our contraction study, we revisited punctuation, making sure students were recognizing punctuation being used and reading sentences with appropriate expression.

## Fundations

This month we have been working hard in Unit 7 of our Fundations program. This unit emphasizes glued sounds. Glued sound letters can be separated to make their own sounds, but are so closely "glued" together that students learn it is faster and easier to say/read/write the sounds together. The glued sounds students have learned include: *all, am, an, ang, ong, ank, ink, ing, ung, onk, unk.* Unit 7 introduced many new trick words as well: *why, by, my, try, put, two, too, very also, some, come.* Recently your child's unit 7 Fundations assessment was sent home, highlighting trick words and other Fundations skills that your child should continue practicing at home.

## Math

We spend time each day reviewing our addition and subtraction facts, looking for these facts to become memorized. Each day we review a different group of facts, for example, *+/-1 facts, +/-doubles, doubles +1/-1, etc.* The students enjoy our "challenge day" when we mix all the flash card sets together! ☺ Students are enjoying challenging themselves by adding 3 addend equations. In these equations, it's important they recognize the "quick adding" first, for example, recognizing and adding first doubles, sums or ten or near doubles, then adding on the third addend. Students have also become quite good at solving for missing addends ( $5 + \underline{\quad} = 9$  or  $\underline{\quad} + 4 = 9$  or with the sum written first). To solve these equations, students are reminded to count the difference between the known addend and the sum. We have begun to work on solving for missing subtrahends ( $9 - \underline{\quad} = 5$  or  $5 = 9 - \underline{\quad}$ ). When the subtrahend is missing, students count the difference from the sum up to the known minuend. A new math skill we have been practicing is balancing equations and understanding that in order for equations to be balanced they need to be equal (for example,  $3 + 4 = 5 + 2$  or  $2 + 9 = 15 - 4$ ). Students have also been working on recognizing when equations are false (for example,  $7 - 2 = 4$ ) and how to adjust the equation to make it true. Most recently, students have been working on adding and subtracting 10 automatically, *not using their fingers*, just changing the tens place. Place value/representing numbers with tens and ones continues to be an important skill we're building

upon in math. In the coming weeks, we will begin exploring adding and subtracting multiples of ten (for example,  $20+40$  or  $60-30$ ) and adding two digit numbers with one digit numbers, with and without regrouping. Whew...tricky stuff for our smart first grade mathematicians! 😊

## **Writer's Workshop**

We continue to spend about 50-60 minutes of our day doing Writer's Workshop. It's amazing to see students engaged in writing for this long length of time! This month we began our new writing unit: Opinion Writing. We began by reading many wonderful mentor texts with main characters expressing their opinions, trying to convince others of their opinion. Afterwards, questions were posed to students and they responded with their opinion, including details and reasons why this is their opinion. We also worked on a few writing activities that had students give their opinion of the characters in the texts. For example, after reading *The Three Little Pigs*, students gave their opinion and reasons why they thought it was ok or not ok for the wolf to try and eat the pigs. This week we worked on writing our opinions about the collections students brought in...judging the collections and providing reasons and details to support our opinions. Soon, we will begin writing our own book reviews...giving our opinions of books and supplying details trying to convince others to read and love the book as much as we do. The most important part of this unit that we are expressing to students, is the importance of giving many reasons and details to support their opinion, ultimately trying to convince their reader to agree with their opinion. First graders *always* have strong opinions, which makes this writing unit so fun! 😊

## **Reader's Workshop**

During Reader's Workshop, we have revisited the "good reader habits" we learned about at the start of the year. As we were re-introduced to each habit and we learned that these are "tools" that good readers should always use! Students were reminded that sometimes it takes good readers a few tries, using multiple "tools" before they can decode a tricky word. We are also spending time digging deeper into the roles of reading partners, learning about accountable talk and collaborative conversations...really listening to each other and building upon each other's comments relating to our books and characters.

## **Hallway Highlights**

Our hallway is filled with wonderful writing projects right now. At the start of the month, students worked on making a resolution for the New Year and wrote many supporting details telling why this is an important resolution and how they are going to go about achieving it. We read many books about Martin Luther King, Jr. and followed up our learnings by writing about our hopes and dreams for ourselves, our families and the world. These are also decorating our hallway.

## **Snow Gear**

Please remember to send your first grader to school with proper winter/snow gear every day. A warm winter coat, hat and gloves are necessary to help keep the students warm on these cold recess days. Wearing snow boots and snow pants are required for your child to be allowed to play in the snow at recess. Without both of those parts, they have to stay on the "black top" for recess. ***Please also send in a change of shoes for your child, so they aren't wearing their boots all day.*** Please contact school if you do not have warm or sufficient snow gear for your child, we can help supply it! 😊

## **Important Dates**

Monday, January 21<sup>st</sup>: No School for Civil Rights Day

Wednesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>: Early Release Day

Thursday, February 14<sup>th</sup>: Valentine's Day! More info to come at the start of February

Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup>: Vacation week begins!! 😊